Darwinism’s Applications in Modern Chinese Writings

Submitted by Hsiu-Feng Chou to the University of Exeter

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Abstract

The core aim of this interdisciplinary research is to provide a critical analysis of the influence of Darwinism and Social Darwinism on a sample of modern Chinese writings. To achieve these aims, the researcher uses a range of both Chinese and English sources to explore their close affinities with Darwinism and Social Darwinism. Following this course, the research examines how Darwinian thought was introduced to the Chinese reading public in the late nineteenth century through a translation of Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* by Yen Fu, and the subsequent impact of this work and Darwinian thought in general on seven literary and political figures: K'ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong. From an historical perspective, the Opium Wars and imperial invasions of China in the nineteenth century severely weakened the country’s political, economic, diplomatic, military, educational and cultural power. For these reasons and others, from 1840 to 1949, China experienced a tumultuous period of social and political transformation, which has eventually led to her revival in the twenty-first century.

It will be seen that each of the literary figures examined here used evolutionary thought to justify revolution at various points on China’s long march to modernity. Progressive Darwinian ideas sharply contrasted with the old Confucian values upheld within Chinese communities. Nevertheless, the faults and weaknesses of Qing China awakened many pioneering revolutionaries who sought to reverse the status quo by initiating a series of radical reforms and revolutionary movements. Many within the Chinese intellectual elite looked to the tide of change and progress coming from the West, which they hoped might replace the recent historical stagnation and Confucian dogma embedded in Chinese culture and society. In this vein, many of these pioneering revolutionaries set about driving the historical transformation of China by selecting, translating and interpreting Darwinian ideas in their own writings. From Yen Fu in the nineteenth century to Mao Zedong in the twentieth century, evolutionary thought went hand in hand with China’s modernization.
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I myself, having been influenced by Yen Fu's studying overseas in order to accomplish his historic mission in Qing China and Great Britain, have endeavoured to learn the main currents of Anglophone thought such that have interacted with Chinese thought in cross-cultural and historical contexts. I am obliged to thank the efficient librarians at Exeter whose systematic service and provision of resources in the Forum Library have made it possible for me to carry out my research on a variety of comfortable reading desks. Lastly, I deeply appreciate my mother Tsai-Hsing Chou for her love, will and encouragement from Taiwan, and also my twin brothers Ching-Yao Chou and Sung-Shun Chou for the logistical and financial assistance they have given me, as well as their benevolence towards my needs in England.
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Research Objectives

This dissertation examines the dissemination of Western evolutionary thought in modern China. The key focal point is the far-reaching consequences of interdisciplinarity and cross-cultural exchange in initial interactions between Darwinism, or Social Darwinism, and Chinese intellectuals during both the late Qing Dynasty and the early years of the Republican era. In other words, the impact of Darwinism in modern China will be studied here not only in terms of its theory and translation; it will also be discussed in relation to biology, politics, culture, history, religion, aesthetics, philosophy, language, war, human nature and sociology among other things. With that in mind, it should be noted that Darwin himself was a model researcher whose quest for truth throughout his life greatly influenced the development of many academic fields from the nineteenth century up to the present day. Accordingly, this study will embark on an indisciplinary programme of research with the goal of responding to the research objectives and questions outlined below.

1 The late Qing period, it could be claimed, stretched between 1840 and 1911. Many Chinese academic works have focused on this period, which approximately encompasses the seventy years prior to the downfall of the Qing Dynasty. The so-called 'late Qing' period seems to be marked, from one side to the other, by China's fragility following the First Opium War (1839-42) and Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Revolution of 1911 (The Xinhai Revolution). However, in this dissertation, the researcher deems the 'late Qing' period as numerous discussions typified by national crises in China from the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 to Sun's overthrow of the Qing government in 1911. In March 1895, Yen Fu began to pore over the importance of Darwin's theory of evolution as proposed in Great Britain; consequently, he wrote "On Strength" [〈原强〉] to introduce Darwinian evolutionary thought to Qing China. Three years later, his book, Tien-yen Lun, was formally published, and gradually influenced the Chinese mode of thinking on evolution.
The beginnings of this cultural exchange between China and the West can be seen in the works of the Chinese Social Darwinist, Yen Fu (1854-1921). Crucially, he went on to do a paraphrastic Chinese translation of Thomas Henry Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* (1893), published in 1898 under the title, *Tien-yen Lun*. As will be discussed below, this work can be viewed as a signpost of the widespread, formal interaction between Social Darwinism and China. In addition, this study examines the works of seven other figures who followed Yen Fu in promoting evolutionary thought in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to the radical revolutions of modern China, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong would all be influenced by Darwinian evolutionary thinking in different periods of time respectively. Each of these pioneering leaders justified revolution through evolutionary thinking in the context of China’s long march to modernity. As will be seen, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu capitalised on Darwinian ideas in order to drive forward a revolution in modern Chinese language and literature. Likewise, in his vital role as a storyteller, Lu Xun applied evolutionary thinking to his writings in order to change the Chinese national character. Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen made use of Peter Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid to explain his world view in light of the causation of human evolution. Lastly, Mao Zedong, who famously led the Chinese Communists to victory over Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist troops during the Chinese Civil War, grounded his philosophy of struggle in the ideas of social evolution. All of these men, who are now counted as major figures in modern Chinese history and commonly recognised as reformers and revolutionaries by the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, became prominent leaders both in terms of literature and politics through several regimes in modern China. Accordingly, by focusing on the works of these individuals, this study aims to examine the period of revolution and transformation in China between the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) and the Chinese Civil War (1945-49).

Although many mainstream Chinese intellectuals were aware of the importance of evolutionary thought in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894, most had only a basic grasp of Darwinian ideas. They needed
to use Darwinian ideas as weapons of thought, with which to radically subvert the entrenched conservatism of the late Qing regime. Even from a twenty-first century perspective, Darwinian ideas and those derived from them continue to provoke debate and controversy on ‘testing evolutionary theory’ in the world today.  

The language barrier in this interdisciplinary research can be overcome through the translation of *wen-yen* Chinese into English, thereby helping to collapse the great wall isolating the West from the East. Prior to the Literary Revolution in modern China, the eight Chinese intellectuals mentioned above introduced Darwinian ideas into their writings, which they composed in the ancient *wen-yen* style. Interestingly, all of these authors used the *wen-yen* style in exceptionally elegant and concise ways, far outshining the literary style of the *wen-yen* essays read by most Chinese people of the time. Indeed, these eight revolutionaries were all top-class writers in the *wen-yen* style. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the *wen-yen* style presents the added challenge of requiring three consecutive steps of translation: the researcher must first comprehend the true meanings of *wen-yen* passages, then translate those into modern Chinese and finally deal with the problem of Chinese-English translation.

The major research objective of this study is to examine when and how knowledge of evolutionary biology influenced China’s literary revolution, political struggle and socio-cultural development. In addition, consideration will be given to how the influx of evolutionary thinking has led to the rise of China as a new international superpower in the twenty-first century. It will be seen that ideas about evolution and revolution combined to produce the momentum for change in China during the years between 1895 and 1949, ultimately leading to the revolutionary tide and a series of major social reforms. The interaction between Darwinism and the Chinese political elites happened during both the late Qing Dynasty and the early Chinese Republic. Change and progress were two important concepts during those revolutionary times. The threat of humiliation by both Eastern and Western imperialist nations, as

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well as the quest for the survival of modern China in an aggressive international environment, drove Sun Yat-sen, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu and Mao Zedong to adopt Darwinian evolutionary thinking as a way of justifying a series of reforms and revolutions in modern China. As will be discussed, Darwinism and other scientific knowledge challenged traditional Chinese social values and ideologies like Confucianism and Daoism. It will also be shown that Western thought helped to revive traditional Chinese thought.

1.2 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation consists of eight chapters, which proceed as follows: 1) Introduction; 2) Initial interaction between Darwinism and Chinese intellectuals; 3) Yen Fu’s tripartite roles in Tien-yen Lun; 4) Lu Xun as storyteller: the origin of life and cultural selection for social metamorphoses; 5) Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu: evolution and the Chinese literary revolution; 6) Sun Yat-sen’s thoughts on evolution and mutual aid; 7) Mao Zedong’s thoughts on social evolution and dialectics; and 8) Conclusions: the wheel diagram.

The introduction is divided into five sections: an outline of the study’s research objectives; a dissertation outline; a literature review; turning points in the eight leaders’ historic reflections; a discussion of Western evolutionary thought in China; and a conclusion. As mentioned above, by taking an interdisciplinary approach to a variety of research fields, including evolutionary theory, philosophy, modern Chinese history and literature and wen-yen–English translation, this study is intended to provide an integrated yet multifaceted perspective on how the concept of evolution has impacted on China’s development since the late nineteenth century. In addition, by pursuing interdisciplinary research, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a growing trend towards such studies in the twenty-first century. Although these different disciplines may generate many barriers or conflicting views, the promotion of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research is essential to
understanding how evolutionary thought has influenced the new development of modern Chinese language and literature.

Chapter Two delves into the evolutionary thought of some important Chinese intellectuals who came into contact with Darwin’s theory in the early stages of intercultural communication between China and the West. As will be seen, Darwin’s theory, or Darwinism, illuminated only a few within the Chinese elite at this time. By 1895 Qing China was facing up to a string of military defeats, national crises and humiliations. At this critical juncture, the Chinese literati attempted particularly to employ Darwinian evolutionary theory as an intellectual weapon in order to save China from its political woes. Nevertheless, those who were influenced by Darwinism, including the subjects of this study, went on to advocate radical changes to Chinese culture and society, which appeared to them backward. Influenced by China’s local tradition of ancient evolutionary thought, K’ang Yu-wei outlined his utopian ideal of the One World in his Ta T'ung Shu. On the other hand, meanwhile, Liang Qichao attempted to introduce Darwinism in his essay, “Initial Ancestor in the Study on Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his Biographical Sketch” [〈天演學初祖達爾文之學說及其略傳〉], with the aim of transforming the old feudal ideology of late Qing society. In so doing, K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao, each in their own ways, made substantial impacts on political reforms and the introduction of Western scientific thought into Chinese society. Moreover, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu and Lu Xun’s major contributions to the literary revolution would appear to mark a moment of radical change in the evolution of modern Chinese language and literature. The Twenty-one Demands imposed by Japan on China in 1915 triggered a series of student demonstrations which resulted in political, social and literary innovations and the formation of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Each of these historical figures made better use of evolutionary theory to justify revolutionary change of one sort or another; the idea that revolution was an essential means of social evolution was crucial in this regard.

Chapter Three discusses Yen Fu’s prioritisation of the integration of Chinese and Western culture through his tripartite roles, as explained below,
in his paraphrastic translation of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*, named *Tien-yen Lun* (1898). The latter work has made a significant contribution to modernizing China and influenced generation upon generation of Chinese readers. Accordingly, this chapter explores each of the three roles adopted by Yen Fu in *Tien-yen Lun* alongside Huxley’s original work in *Evolution and Ethics*. First, it discusses Yen Fu’s way of advocating social reform and cultural integration through his leading role as a social engineer. The focus then shifts to examine how, in his commentary on Huxley’s book, Yen Fu seemed content to use Spencer’s social thought to criticise Huxley’s ethical arguments. Finally, this chapter discusses how, in his role as an expounder of Eastern and Western philosophies, Yen Fu gave an intellectual critique of various lines of thought in *Tien-yen Lun*. This detailed study will have served its purpose if it helps to raise awareness of the value of research into *Tien-yen Lun*.

Chapter Four examines the major role that Lu Xun played as a storyteller in his writings: that is, telling stories on topics such as the origin of man or cultural selection. His essay, “The History of Mankind” (1907), presents many evolutionary concepts that he borrowed and adapted from Chapter Five of Ernst Haeckel’s *The Riddle of the Universe* (1900). As will be seen below, his chief motivation for doing this was to reform the Chinese character, which he considered crucial to China’s future cultural and national development. To this end, he developed a view of cultural selection inspired by evolutionary thought, which he used to justify China’s change and progress towards becoming a modern society. It is further noted that Lu Xun valued evolutionary ideas for the opportunities they offered for destroying the time-honoured creeds of Chinese feudal society, both before and after the May Fourth Movement. Consequently, there was no choice but to change the collective ideology in feudal China through his view of cultural selection. Lu Xun gave priority to address many pertinent questions about the reform of national character in his writings.

Chapter Five focuses on Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu’s advocacy of the Chinese literary revolution through the concept of evolution. These two literary reformers believed that all aristocratic, classic and eremitic literature
needed to evolve into a new simple form of vernacular literature. Hu Shih revealed these eight proposals in an article entitled “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature”, all of which concerned the ideological transformation of traditional Confucian society through evolutionary thought. In his times, Hu Shih’s actions and his eight proposals on the reform of literature took a fresh look at the conscious and guided application of an evolutionary process to modern Chinese vernacular literature. Along the way, he demonstrated that each dynasty developed its own unique literature in order to present its unique characteristics; in other words, different dynasties produced different literary contents and forms. In a sense, Hu Shih applied directly the concept of biological evolution to the evolution of Chinese literature. He was particularly concerned about the evolution of modern Chinese literature in terms of natural selection, because, as he saw it, the classical writing style had become unfit for his contemporary reading public.

By Hu Shih’s time, very few people fully understood the wen-yen style of Chinese literature, which was often used by intellectuals merely as an esoteric way of communicating among themselves. Similarly, in his essay entitled “On Literary Revolution”, Chen Duxiu presented literary, political and scientific evolutionary thinking influenced by European culture as inevitable drivers of the evolution of society and civilization. Therefore, it will be argued in this chapter that motivated by scientific and literary yearnings, both leaders set a clear course for the evolution of modern Chinese language and literature.

Chapter Six assesses the use made by Sun Yat-sen of Darwin’s theory of evolution and Peter Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid. Sun Yat-sen is best known for his having launched a revolutionary movement against the Manchu rule. His famous writings, which include General Plans of National Reconstruction and The Three Principles of the People, revealed his ambitious projects for overthrowing the Manchu regime and establishing a Western-inspired democratic nation in the early years of the twentieth century. Sun Yat-sen was significantly influenced by Darwinism and, as such, made a pledge to introduce Western evolutionary thought to the Chinese people with a view to changing the destiny of the nation. He was also conscious of the sense of national crisis in China at the turn of the twentieth century. In
particular, his book, *The Three Principles of the People*, reflects not only upon democratic ideas but also on the theory of evolution. In other words, the eponymous three principles of the people were not just intended as good ideas; they are also reflections on the three stages of social evolution. To achieve this, it will be seen that through his longing for world peace, Sun Yat-sen seemed to oppose the doctrines of Social Darwinism by insisting on mutual help as well as the unity of mankind in the world.

Chapter Seven explores Mao Zedong’s thoughts on social evolution and dialectics, focusing in particular on the specific connections between his dialectical materialism and evolutionary ideas, Social Darwinism and his philosophy of struggle. Amid the war with Japan, the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, and the floods and famines all faced by China in the first half of the twentieth century, Mao Zedong waged a number of class struggles and revolutionary movements. His ultimate concern, however, was to convert the widespread mode with Confucian past into a new progressive one with the hope of establishing China as a powerful new China or a substantial global power. Hence his philosophy of struggle was intended to bring about transformation and progress in China, and so improve the nation’s status on the regional and world stages.

Chapter Eight epitomizes concluding reflections on the impact of Darwinism in all three dynasties of modern China: the late Qing Dynasty, Republican China and the People’s Republic of China. These influences can be said to have brought about China’s revival in the twenty-first century. Ever since their defeat in the First Opium War of 1839-1842, the Chinese people have been searching for different ways of improving the wealth and strength of their nation. China’s leaders in different periods have used a variety of political systems to rule over their large dominion, wielding tremendous power through thousands of decisions over life, death and drastic change in society. Saving China through science and democracy was one of the major goals of the May Fourth Movement and its successors. China’s long journey to modernity has been aided by the impetus given by evolutionary thought for a succession of innovations, reforms and revolutions. The adaptability of
Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution to modern China has been manifold, thus leading to a remarkable transformation in politics, culture and society.

1.3 Literature Review

Through their deep reflections on the fragility of imperial China, these eight historical figures considered in this study produced writings which addressed both far-reaching concerns stemming from the Darwinian evolutionary thinking as well as the political dilemmas facing China during their times. Their individual actions concerning reform or revolution faced challenges from political corruption and traditional feudal thought with the domestic system, as well as from the threats posed by external imperial powers. Such challenges made each of the subjects of this study aware of the need to educate a majority of Chinese people about facing up to a competitive and cooperative world. Through their talents in different fields, these eight figures fought against poverty and oppression from both domestic and foreign conditions. Each of these figures has left a lasting legacy which can be seen in the gradual process of China’s modernization since the First Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895. These eight figures made distinctive contributions during their lifetimes, which show among other things the difficulties, challenges and barriers they encountered in old China. It is remarkable that their synthetic strength and anti-traditional spirit were sufficient to alter the course of modern China’s history: specifically, Yen Fu through translation and commentary; K’ang Yu-wei through his One World philosophy; Liang Qichao through his introduction to Darwinian philosophy; Lu Xun through cultural selection and novel writing; Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu through their revolutionary contributions to modern Chinese literature and language; Sun Yat-sen through his thoughts on mutual aid and Darwinism; and Mao Zedong through his dialectical method and concept of social evolution. Through their great, ambitious leadership, influenced by Darwinism or Social Darwinism, each was able to contribute towards the successful evolution of modern China.
It is difficult to define the exact time of China’s nascent modernity, yet many scholars claim that the May Fourth Movement marked a decisive turning point in the country’s history. However, it is the author’s view that China’s search for modernity may have begun with literary innovation during the late Qing period; the translation of Western novels could take as a starting point for the translation of Western texts into Chinese at that time. To establish links with modern Western civilization, the Qing government set up the Tongwen Guan in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, and the Western Learning School in Taiwan, thereby showing how much importance it attached to Chinese people learning from the West. In addition to establishing many such official institutions, the Qing officers also gave priority to the cultivation of a diverse range of China’s language talents by promoting the absorption of foreign knowledge from different fields; this change in outlook came even in spite of serious military defeats, social problems and a failing political system. Particularly, old Chinese literature was nevertheless very set in its ways, influenced by feudal ethics and memories of ancient wars. Even so, a few late-Qing literati did attempt to introduce Western literary works with the aim of stimulating the writing style of China’s old literature. For example, Lin Shu, who translated a version of Aesop’s Fables in 1903 as well as other textbooks, embarked on a wider plan with collaborators to translate Western novels with a view to elevating literary style in the late Qing period. Meanwhile, Yen Fu’s translation of Western canonical texts might have served different social purposes to make the transition to China’s transformation. In fact, contemporary Chinese translators and their translated works made a significant contribution to the early period of China’s modernity.

During the late Qing period, Yen Fu spent approximately 12 years translating eight contemporary and deeply important Western texts with the purpose of transforming China’s old intellectual system into a new synthetic one. Crucially, his translating of these books gave rise to modern views in China on evolution, liberalism, economics, sociology, logic, law, religion and politics. The activity of translation in itself as well as the consequent translated works may be viewed as tremendous contributions to modern China’s evolutionary development. Lu Xun, following in Yen Fu’s footsteps,
added to this legacy by introducing numerous foreign novels and other literary works in translation with the aim of modernizing Chinese literary writing styles in the areas of prose and novel writing.

In contrast, the reception and dissemination of Darwinian evolutionary theory in Victorian Britain revealed a rather different path from that taken by modern China; that is, the method and means of conveyance have produced very different modes of thinking towards tradition and modernity in these two nations. In Britain, Darwinian ideas had already encouraged further biological research into evolutionary processes and religious debate in the Victorian era. In China, however, they also led people to doubt two-thousand-year old Confucian teachings that caused social divisions during the incursions of international imperialism. At a critical period such as the May Fourth Movement, many Chinese intellectuals raised serious concerns about their nation’s intellectual heritage, particularly in publications like *New Youth* [*Xin Qingnian*] and *New Tide* [*The Renaissance*]. Meanwhile, they made use of Darwin’s theory and its attendant philosophy as a theoretical basis for taking action to change the course of China’s future, such as by improving political, social and cultural systems.

Modernization has occurred over three different phases of development in modern China. Francis Soo (1989) has interpreted China’s modernization as ‘multi-dimensional and dynamic’ with multifarious developmental stages, arguing that the concept of modernization today, sometimes, corresponds to westernization or industrialization; further stating, ‘we consider China’s modernization as a historical process of transformation from a traditional society to a modern society’. In other words, China’s modernization progressed over three different dynasties or eras: the late Qing era; the Republican era; and the PRC. China’s transformation, including its military,

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3 From a global perspective in the twenty-first century, however, both China and Taiwan have mutually set up many Confucian institutions, which have continued to deepen their regimes’ political propaganda and cultural reforms, and spread the ideal of *Datong* around the world. Therefore, the Confucian revival and its new relationship with modernity will have a hugely positive impact on the formation of a conspicuously synthetic view of tradition and modernity in China’s future development.

industrial and agricultural modernization, can be viewed as a set of diverse reforms and plans with many developmental goals at different periods. Soo further points out that Qing China’s military modernization during the 1860s under the leadership of Li Hongzhang, as part of the Self-Strengthening Movement, was the first attempt to modernize China. This programme of military modernization was ultimately a failure because Qing China’s military was defeated by the troops of Meiji Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895. During the early Republican era, the New Culture/May Fourth Movement could possibly be taken as a real touchstone of reform and revolution in the radical process of China’s modernity. These two movements could also be termed the Chinese Enlightenment since they brought about many new stimuli which challenged the national state of backwardness and people’s despair at that critical period. In contrast to Europe, the Ming and Qing Dynasties had ruled immense territories and local populations for over five hundred years with little change to the feudal systems they operated; it was for this reason that some European nations were so far advanced of China by the late Qing period. In other words, China had a very long history of cultural and social stagnation caused by the closed feudal thought that dominated the nation more than two thousand years. As Yu Ying-shih (1993) has argued, ‘The real trouble with China was that due to her long isolation from the outside world, she had lagged behind the West in social evolution’. In contrast, Europeans had pioneered their own modern societies in the wide fields of science, philosophy, religion, economics, culture, society and politics since the fifteenth century. The complexities of European development, however, could possibly reveal many conflicts and much dispute during the long history of European countries. Hence the issue of modernity in the development of modern states is entangled with a new synthetic power in the long process of politics, economics, science, education, culture and society, and so forth.

5 Ibid., p. 6.
Adopting a sociological viewpoint, Stuart Hall, David Held and Gregor McLennan (1992) have argued that definitions of modernity must take account of the long, historical evolution of Europe:

‘Modernity’ is that distinct and unique form of social life which characterizes modern societies. Modern societies began to emerge in Europe from about the fifteenth century, but modernity in the sense used here could hardly be said to exist in any developed form until the idea of ‘the modern’ was given a decisive formulation in the discourses of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, modernity became identified with industrialism and the sweeping social, economic and cultural changes associated with it.7

Western civilization has taken the lead in change and progress through many revolutionary eras, and has hitherto dominated our world for hundreds of years. However, through a series of reforms and revolutions stretching across different regimes, nowadays China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, keeps pace with advanced Western countries in the twenty-first century she has developed new ways of thinking about modernity. China, of course, still needs to face up to diverse political dilemmas as well as thorny social problems in the twenty-first century. Edmund S. K. Fung (2010) is deeply concerned about how the concept of modernity has been used to describe different and multi-faceted developments. He concisely points to the complexities of the European Enlightenment, noting that the New Culture/May Fourth Movement was a similarly complex expression of modernity in China:

The question of modernity in post-imperial China dates back to the New

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Culture/ May Fourth Movement (1915-23), which is often symbolically interpreted as the Chinese Enlightenment. Just as the European Enlightenment was a diverse and complex movement that developed in different ways in France, England, Scotland and elsewhere with thinkers as diverse as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire (Francois-Maire Arouet), John Locke and David Hume, so New Culture/May Fourth was a multi-layered movement that makes an excellent study in contrast.8

Numerous Chinese intellectuals adopted viewpoints towards a great number of cultural and social struggles that coexisted in modern Chinese community during the late Qing and the early Republican eras. Although Jiao Runming has tried to find eight key controversies9 in modern China, those same issues had been recognised and attempts made to address them by Chinese intellectuals since late Qing times. Conflicting viewpoints between bai-hua and wen-yen, new literature and old literature, respectful Confucian values and anti-Confucian doctrines, the abolition of Christianity, Oriental culture and Western culture, science and metaphysics, total Westernization and Chinese local culture, traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine had all become the subjects of contentious debates and political controversies during the process of China’s modernity. These issues arguably revealed cultural and social transitions between tradition and modernity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In short, the New Culture/May Fourth Movement adequately represented the milestone of social transformation in the Chinese quest for long-standing modernity, and in the process created a series of conflicts, contradictions and changes in the modern epoch.

9 焦潤明 (Jiao Ruming):〈導論： “歐化時代” 與文化論爭〉，《中國現代文化論爭》(北京：社會科學文獻出版社，2012) 第 1-19 頁。
Inveighing against Confucian orthodoxy, the intellectual followers of that movement wished to introduce the new Western currents of Mr. Te (Democracy) and Mr. Sai (Science) to China.\textsuperscript{10} Chow Tse-tsung (1980) also stresses that ‘Darwinism was the first scientific theory to exert a strong influence upon Chinese social thought’.\textsuperscript{11} To advocate Social Darwinism in the late Qing era, Yen Fu provided an introduction to the Darwinian theories of natural selection and adaptation in his book, \textit{Tien-yen Lun}, since he believed those ideas could enlighten a considerable number of Chinese people and thereby lead to a renewal of the social order. Nevertheless, those goals were hampered by many conservatives during the May Fourth Movement. Chow Tse-tsung maintains that the Kuomintang conservatives rejected the anti-traditionalism of the May Fourth Movement.\textsuperscript{12} Mao Zedong described the May Fourth Movement as ‘a form of expression’ of the ‘bourgeois-democratic revolution’.\textsuperscript{13} In addition, serious academic debates between \textit{bai-hua} and \textit{wen-yen} writing styles played out between 1917 and 1925. Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu launched the Literary Revolution during the May Fourth Movement in response to the Darwinian theory of natural selection. Hu Shih carried out his historic mission in contemporary China by proffering eight proposals for the reform of language and literature. By breaking through the fetters of feudal thought, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu took concerted action to accelerate the evolution of modern Chinese language and literature. Wu Kang (2005) has pointed out that Chen Duxiu’s aims found support in the development of new forms of national, realistic and social literature, which replaced the older literary styles of aristocratic, classical and eremitic literature; that is to say the subject of that literature changed from the aristocracy to the common people. These new literary techniques laid much emphasis on realistic representation, particularly of social life.\textsuperscript{14} Influenced by Marxism, Chen Duxiu also criticised capitalism and anarchism during the May Fourth

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 296.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 345.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 353.
\textsuperscript{14} 吳康 (Wu Kang):〈第三章 陳獨秀: 文學革命論〉，《新文學的本原》(長沙：岳麓書社，2005) 第145-46頁。
Movement. Fung (2010) critically evaluates the viewpoints of China’s Westernizers who tried to see their country as part of a global revolution of Westernization. He claims that evolutionism, Social Darwinism and a cultural universalism were key elements to promoting Westernized radicalism in China. Cultural reform and political revolution were motivated by a need to open up China to many new intellectual systems from the West during and after the May Fourth Movement, including Darwinism and Marxism.

Various scholars have expressed critical views on the visions of China’s search for modernity since the late Qing era. Harriet T. Zurndorfer (1997) has pointed out that the interactive relationship between China and modernity began from three different perspectives: those of Naito Konan (a Japanese scholar, 1866-1934), Liang Qichao (Liang Ch’i-ch’ao) and Yu Ying-shih (a sinologist at Princeton University). Zurndorfer mentions Naito Konan’s periodization of Chinese history, according to which China’s modernity could have started with the Sung Dynasty. Zurndorfer especially reiterates Liang Qichao’s vision that ‘modernity is integral to China’s cultural geography as well as history’, whereby he intended to spread the idea of China’s modernity as a spatial concept. In antithesis to Max Weber’s view of ‘the Confucius tradition as an obstruction to economic development’, however, Yu Ying-shih, however, offers an account of China’s modernity which highlights the role of the Confucian-style morality in promoting economic success. As Zurndorfer explicitly argues, by the early 1980s, the so-called neo-Confucian societies, such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, had achieved much economic success. Also noteworthy here is Arif Dirlik’s (2002) interpretation of modernity in respect of Jean-Marie Guehenno’s phrase ‘the resurgence of history’, which appears in his book, The End of the

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17 Ibid., p. 481.
18 Ibid., p. 477.
19 Ibid., p. 477.
In Dirlik’s view, ‘the resurgence of history’ implies that ‘modernity may no longer be approached as a dialogue internal to Europe or EuroAmerica, but is a global discourse’. In other words, the concept of modernity should not be limited to a merely Eurocentric modernity, but rather extended to include a global modernity. He further discusses the idea of Chinese modernity, which he believes goes beyond national boundaries as well. He draws attention to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s as good examples of ‘achieving a superior modernity by preserving tradition’. In addition, Dirlik declares studies of Shanghai as important evidence for exploring the problem of Chinese modernity. Thus, the problem of Chinese modernity is closely related to economics and politics as well. Hung-York Ip, Tze-Ki Hon and Chiu-Chun Lee (2003) have attempted a review of four major works on Chinese modernity: namely the plurality of Chinese modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911 by David Der-wei Wang; Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-37 by Lydia H. Liu; Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of New Urban Culture in China, 1930-45 by Leo-ou-fan Lee; and Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond by Wen-hsin Yeh. The arguments presented by these authors show how a complex and multi-faceted form of Chinese modernity has come about through complicated developments in many eras. For example, Leo-ou-fan Lee draws a close connection between modernity and urbanization, identifying Shanghai in particular as the embodiment of modernity in the 1930s. The long-term interaction between modernity and urbanization could be taken as historical evidence for the evolution of modern China.

This literature review has discussed numerous scholars who have commented on the issues surrounding China’s modernity since the New Culture/May Fourth Movement. This study will focus mainly on the crucial

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21 Ibid., p.17.
22 Ibid., p. 29.
24 Ibid., p. 503.
events that flowed out of a series of national crises and events that beset China and influenced the consciousness of her people from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century: the First Sino-Japanese War in the late Qing period; the May Fourth Movement and the Chinese Civil War in the Republican era; and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. In fact, the complex problem of China’s modernity in recent history can be seen in terms of the different visions of it which developed out of three political regimes: that is the Westernization of the late Qing period; the forced reforms and radical revolution that occurred on the mainland during the Republic of China; and the globalization that has taken hold during the current epoch of the PRC. The May Fourth Movement was a radical reform movement in modern China. The interactive connection between the May Fourth Movement and China’s modernity helps us to understand the reasons why and how the Chinese literati were eager to transform China by way of introducing Western thought; especially Darwinian evolutionary theory was able to stimulate new modes of scientific thought among Chinese intellectuals during the Republican era.

1.4 Turning Points in the Eight Leaders’ Historic Reflections

The eight authors examined in this study used the power of words to advocate Darwinism as a means to support radical reforms and revolutions in modern China. The emphasis on social and cultural reforms in Chinese society was caused by the trend towards the dissemination of Darwinian ideas in those authors’ writings. Most of them inveighed against the orthodox order of Confucian ethics and statecraft in modern China by justifying revolution through Darwinian evolution. Darwin’s theory, conveying the revolutionary scientific truths first promulgated in Victorian Britain, was initially spread in China in a formal written form approximately 116 years ago via the formal publication of *Tien-yen Lun* in 1898. At that time, China was still a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society. In his book, Yen Fu carried on the rule of
competition and the problem of the survival of the fittest for peoples or nations. By embarking on a project of translating key English texts into Chinese, Yen Fu and other Chinese literati clearly intended to create an influential cultural and social impetus which has driven China into modernity. In a sense, translators and their translated works made a gigantic contribution to China’s modernity. These historical figures fulfilled their missions and commitments to learning via the main currents of modern Western thought. Thus, Yen Fu, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu, and Lu Xun, as well as the Chinese literati in general, were inclined to advocate Darwinian ideas about competition and progress in order to demonstrate the eagerness and innovation with which people set up powerful nations for themselves.

The chief motivation underpinning Yen Fu’s writings can be summarised as his disappointment at China’s backwardness and failure to maintain its past glories as the ‘Middle Kingdom’. The collapse of Sinocentrism and anxiety about international imperialism, which occupied a majority of Chinese minds, were outcomes of China’s being a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in the late nineteenth century. This situation was largely the result of the series of military defeats China had suffered at the hands of Western countries and Japan earlier in that century. Confronted with the tumultuous history, Yen Fu saw China’s ceding of Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan in 1895, as laid out in the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, as evidence of humanity’s being caught up in the Darwinian process of the survival of the fittest along with all other animals. Yet despite Yen Fu’s eventual advocating of the idea of social evolution, it took him several decades until the early Chinese Republic to enthuse about Darwin’s evolutionary theory as well as Herbert Spencer’s views on social evolution. Because of the humiliation of sovereignty through a series of unequal treaties.

25 In considering the question of the origin of the ‘Middle Kingdom’ in ancient times, a majority of Chinese believe that Huaxia established their nation around the Yellow River. The Tribe of Huaxia referred to their nation as being situated at the centre of the world and thus coined the term ‘Zhongguo’, meaning the ‘Middle Kingdom’ or the Central Plains, to describe it. Huaxia, derived from the Han Tribe, has also been used as a name for ancient China for more than four thousand years. For further detail, refer to the interpretation of the term ‘Zhongguo’ on the online dictionary, The Dictionary of Han: http://zdic.net.
27 Ibid., p. 176-79.
under the rule of Qing government, Wang Jianlong points out that we can observe the political fact of international imperialism in the fragility of Qing China. The coming of Social Darwinism to China was incredibly important in this regard, since it suggested the view that in order to survive in the face of imperial aggression, people or nations must struggle for their existence against competing groups.

An essay entitled, “On Strength”, published in 1895 reveals Yen Fu’s expectations for revolutionary reform and social progress in China as illuminated by Darwin’s theory of evolution. His suggestions towards the establishing of a democratic China could provide crucial reflections upon the people’s strength, wisdom and virtue. His views on the problem of China’s politics mirrored the importance of the people’s search for freedom and independence in the long-term development of the state. Yen Fu argued that ‘in essence, wealth and power mean benefiting the people. But policies to benefit people must start with the people’s ability each to benefit himself, and the ability to benefit oneself starts with each one’s enjoyment of freedom’. Through his translation of John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1859), Yen Fu also heartily recommended individualism, liberalism and liberal political thought as alternative means towards the purpose of transforming China’s despotic system. As can be seen, Yen Fu’s statement would echo Mill’s own words in *On Liberty* on the concept of freedom:

> The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual.

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In terms of the dangers in diverse political conditions, Yen Fu’s dissatisfaction with the political corruption of the late Qing Dynasty led to his being influenced by translating Darwin’s evolutionary principles, Mill’s thought on liberalism, Adam Smith’s political economics and Montesquieu’s spirit of laws for the Chinese reading public. As a result, he needed to convey what modern Western political thought on freedom, equality, system and regulation offered for modern China. In contrast, China has lacked this sort of thought on freedom and administrative efficiency from ancient times up to the modern era.

According to Pi Houfeng, ‘Yen Fu mainly criticised Laozi and Zhuangzi by using Western evolutionism, freedom of thought, logics and so on to interpret them.’31 This was exactly what Yen Fu aimed at by his translating canonical Western texts for the Chinese reading public. Thanks to the cultural interchange between China and the West, what Pi Houfeng has found is that Yen Fu’s criticism of traditional Chinese culture corresponded to the perspectives in the tide of Western thought which swept through the late Qing society. However, he seems to ignore another aspect of Yen Fu’s thought; namely, that as a synthesizer of Eastern and Western philosophies, he attempted to integrate Darwin’s theory of evolution with traditional Chinese philosophy in order to change the traditional mindset of the Chinese people in the wake of their country’s disastrous military defeats against Japan in 1894.

In “On Strength”, Yen Fu stated that:

然而至於至今之西洋，則與是斷斷乎不可同日而語矣。彼西洋者，無法與法並用而皆有以勝我者也。自其自由平等觀之，則捐忌諱，去煩苛，
決壅敝，人人得以行其意，申其言，上下之勢不相懸，君不甚尊，民不甚賤，而聯若一體者，是無法之勝也。32

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31 皮後鋒 (Pi Houfeng):〈第五章: 統新故而視其通，苞中外而計其全—嚴復的文化觀〉，《嚴復評傳》[The Critical Biography of Yen Fu] (上) (南京: 南京大學出版社, 2011) 第 239 頁。
32 嚴復(Yen Fu):〈原強〉“On Strength”, 《進化論的影響力—達爾文在中國》[Darwinism’s Influence: Darwin in China]，陳思和 (Chen Sihe) 主編 (南昌: 江西高校出版社, 2009) 第 32 頁。
As for today’s Westerners, they are altogether different. How so? They both use and dispense with regulations, and in both ways they excel us. With respect to their liberty and equality, they reject taboos, discard onerous obligations, and eliminate cover-ups. People pursue their aims and speak their minds. There is no great gulf between the power of rulers and ruled; monarchs are not overly honored nor are the people too lowly. Rather, they are linked as in one body.  

As a Social Darwinist, Yen Fu demonstrated that the struggle for existence in both nature and society is indeed a long-term battle. On one level, Yen Fu’s most important influence on the Chinese elite was his advocating of survival and competition for the sake of the country in Tien-yen Lun. On another level, Dong Xiaoyan starts thinking about Yen Fu’s evolutionary principles as going beyond natural selection; that is, Yen Fu boldly encouraged the Chinese people to struggle against Heaven [與天爭勝]. In addition, Dong Xiaoyan argues that Yen Fu’s assimilation of Huxley and Spencer’s views on evolution revealed his own specific thoughts on social evolution. Yen Fu portrayed social development as a gradual process of change, rather than as abrupt progress in its development. This concept appears faithful to the Darwinian idea of evolution; however, Yen Fu applied Darwin’s gradualism to the development of human society. Like Yen Fu, Mao Zedong also obtained much pleasure from his idea of competing with Heaven. Considered from the angle of the extended meaning of natural selection, Yen Fu and Mao Zedong might be seen as having a common anti-traditional spirit with which they fought against the political dilemmas of their own times. Accordingly, the influence of the Darwinian ideas of struggle and competition in the writings of Yen Fu and Mao Zedong would ensure a bright future.

34 董小燕 (Dong Xiaoyan):〈進化與衍變的政治經濟主義〉，《嚴復思想研究》(杭州：浙江大學出版社，2006)第 43 頁。
36 See Mao’s philosophy of struggle in “7.2: Mao Zedong’s Poems: War and the Struggle for Existence”.

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future for social progress that those authors shared the common goal of precipitating China’s transformation into a modern state. In similar veins, all of the authors relevant here used evolutionary thought to defend reform or revolution, and so contributed to China’s long march to becoming a modern state. However, as will be seen, each one also interpreted their source materials in different ways and thus provided varying insights into the main problems posed by Social Darwinism. Seen from the angle of evolution, reform and revolution, many Chinese intellectuals have acquiesced in the accomplishments of their efforts that have underpinned China’s transformation.

Some of China’s ancient philosophical ideas appear similar to those found in modern Darwinian evolutionary theory. The Chinese concept of the Dao has many layers of meaning, encompassing the origin, change, transformation, motion, dialectics, evolution and progress of all things and phenomena in the universe. Likewise, the part meanings of Darwinian evolutionary ideas correspond to some philosophical connotations of the Dao. In an essay entitled "The Masters of Pre-Qin Period on Evolutionism", Hu Shih might well have been about drawing connections between modern evolutionary thought and the philosophies of a number of ancient Masters of the Pre-Qin era, including Laozi, Zhuangzi, Confucius, Xunzi and Han Feizi.37 A number of different ancient Chinese philosophers developed their own interpretations of natural phenomena, the transformation of things and the origin of the universe, while still stressing the uniqueness of their individual Daos. As Fu Fenge points out, ‘Laozi revealed the ontological Dao; Confucius showed the ethical Dao; Mozi offered the utilitarian Dao’.38 Hence Laozi’s and Zhuangzi’s Daos differed somewhat from that of Confucius’ by revealing the evolution of Nature; in contrast, Confucius’s Dao shows a more religious temperament. All ancient thinkers maintained that the Dao exists in all things in the world. The Daoist Dao or Way has specific ontological

37 See Hu Shih’s analysis about the writings of ancient Chinese philosophers in “5.2: Evolutionary Thought in Ancient China”.
38 付粉鴿（Fu Fenge）：〈老莊的生命本質論〉，《自然與自由: 老莊生命哲學研究》(北京：人民出版社，2010) 第 69 頁。
connections. Laozi observed that ‘reversal is the moving of the Way; weakness is the using of the Way’ [反者，道之動; 弱者，道之用。]. Such an ontological being in all things was explained by Laozi.

As Fu Fenge demonstrates, reversal could have two meanings in Laozi's observations: one meaning is the opposite side of things while the other is the return of a motion. Wang Keping also claims, ‘The motion of the Dao is reckoned as having a dialectical character that reflects the growth, change and decline of all things in a developmental cycle’. The Dao has its continuity of movement, yet it still returns to its original form. For example, if we observe the celestial bodies in the night sky, many stars will have their periodic motions. Some star, like Halley's Comet, will reappear and then disappear over a period of nearly 76 years. The Dao, as conceptualised in Laozi's dialectical thinking, could thus provide an explanation for the continuous movement of things in the universe. He further argued, ‘The world’s myriad things are generated from being; being is generated from beingless’ [天下之物生於有，有生於無。]. Numerous things might evolve from visible forms, following which visible forms come from invisible forms; as a result of the evolutionary process, both forms can coexist in the universe. Therefore, through his evolutionary concept, Laozi was able to explain the Dao as the origin of complex species, as he further argued in Daodejing: ‘the heavenly Way is flourishing; each thing returns to its roots’ [夫物芸芸，各歸

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39 In the chapter entitled “The Great and Venerable Teacher” of Zhuangzi, Zhuangzi himself gave us an ontological concept of the Dao. As he said,

The Way has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down but you cannot receive it; you can get it but you cannot see it. It is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed it was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the highest point, and yet you cannot call it lofty; it exists beneath the limit of the six directions, and yet you cannot call it deep. It was born before Heaven and earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than the earliest time, and yet you cannot call it old.


41 付粉鴿 (Fu Fenge), p. 84.


43 Laozi, p. 85.

44 Laozi, “Chapter 16”, p. 35.
Moreover, Zhuangzi was an ancient evolutionist who would love to use literary writing techniques to depict the interactive relationships between animal species and Nature. As Pi Houfeng has argued, ‘Yen Fu believed that many views in Zhuangzi corresponded to the concepts in Western evolutionism and some Westerners conceived of Zhuangzi as an ancient evolutionist.’

As Ma Honglin points out, K’ang Yu-wei may have come into contact with Western evolutionism from two important sources: either China or neighbouring Japan, or both. As early as 1873, the Translation Guan of the Jiangnan manufacturing Bureau [江南製造局翻譯館] formally published Charles Lyell’s Principles of Geology [《地學淺釋》]. In 1877, a Chinese scientific journal established during the late Qing times, Gezhi Compilation [Gezhi huibian; 《格致匯編》], also introduced some basic Western evolutionary ideas to the Chinese reading public. Furthermore, William Alexander Parsons Martin (丁韪良), who was an American missionary and important translator at the Tongwen Guan of Beijing, enthusiastically introduced Darwinian evolutionary thought in his translated book, The General Introduction to Western Learning [《西學考略》] published in 1883. Accordingly, it is possible that K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao and other Chinese literati initially encountered contemporary Western evolutionary knowledge prior to the publication of Tien-yen Lun in 1898 by reading Chinese versions of Western texts. In addition, it should be noted that K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao had access to Japanese versions of books concerning evolutionary theory, the contents of which both may have tried to disseminate in China. Like Yen Fu, Liang Qichao attempted to extend evolutionary thought to Social Darwinism because he wished to awaken in the common people from a sense of national crisis. It is worth noting that K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao were progressive intellectuals who were influenced by Western evolutionism during a time of crisis in the enfeebled late Qing regime.

45 皮後鋒 (Pi Houfeng):《第五章: 綱新故而視其通，苞中外而計其全—嚴復的文化觀》，《嚴復評傳》(上) (南京：南京大學出版社，2011) 第 267 頁。
46 馬洪林 (Ma Honglin):《第五章: 進化論與“公羊三世”說—康有為的進化觀念》，《康有為評傳》(上) (南京：南京大學出版社，2011) 第 174-76 頁。
Ideally, K’ang Yu-wei contributed his unique evolutionary concept to the reader by clarifying a synthetic view of ‘the Statement of Gongyang Three Ages’ [公羊三世說]; indeed, on this point of evolutionism he developed a specific utopian ideal about the progress of history in Ta T’ung Shu. Partly influenced by ancient Confucian utopian thought, he was thus able to divide the progress of human civilisation into three historical stages: the Age of Disorder, the Age of Increasing Peace-and-Equality and the Age of Complete Peace-and-Equality. As Ma Honglin clearly explains, ‘human beings develop themselves from feudal society [the Age of Disorder; 據亂世] via capitalist society [the Age of Increasing Peace-and-Equality; 升平世] to Datong society [the Age of Complete Peace-and-Equality; 太平世]’. 47 The evolution of human society will come to its final stage in the Datong society, in which individual nations have been replaced by a world ruled by a public government and its public law. K’ang Yu-wei designed this unique and detailed blueprint for a future utopian human society with a view to expressing his ultimate concern over history: the world of Datong. More, as Ma Honglin also points out, ‘in 1923, K’ang delivered a speech on the topic of Benthamite utilitarianism in Xi’an, capital of Shanxi Province’. 48 As with the principle of happiness in Benthamite utilitarianism, Wen-Shun Chi argues that the purpose of K’ang’s Datong world was ‘to bring to all mankind a level of happiness and well-being as had never hitherto existed’. 49 On this point of the pursuit of happiness, K’ang Yu-wei’s vision for a better life appeared to be the same as that of Jeremy Bentham’s. In particular, Wen-Shun Chi claims that ‘K’ang’s ideas of ta-t’ung have influenced two great revolutionary leaders—Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-tung’. 50 Sun Yat-sen considered the cardinal aim of human evolution as being the formation of the world of Datong as conceptualised in his The Three Principles of the People.

Very little literature has been published on Lu Xun’s “The History of Mankind” [〈人之歷史〉] (1907). Yet critical analysis and bilingual

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47 Ibid., p. 188.
48 Ibid., pp. 245-48.
50 Ibid., p. 42.
translations of this work show many intercultural parallels between Chinese and Western thought, influenced by evolutionary ideas, which justify its being researched. Chen Fangjing offers a general introduction to biological evolutionism in “The History of Mankind”, and he further points out that when Lu Xun studied overseas in Japan, his mode of thinking was somewhat influenced by science education in Japan. During his study abroad in Japan, Lu Xun talked frequently with many of his academic friends about topics ranging from Eastern literature to Western thought. In addition to reading Yen Fu’s *Tien-yen Lun* in China, Lu Xun’s evolutionary thinking was also influenced by his arduous studies of Western ideas in Japan. James Reeve Pusey has presented an overview and critique of Lu Xun’s “The History of Mankind”, and Zhang Yun has analysed the essay’s structure. However, Pusey seems unable to grasp the degree of Lu Xun’s ambition for his ideas to contribute to social reforms in China. Meanwhile, Zhang Yun ably describes the basic structure of the essay, but she does not provide any theoretical analysis of the text. Thus, while both of these scholars have made significant contributions to the interpretation of Lu Xun’s “The History of Mankind”, they have still left many gaps which the researcher aims to fill here by focusing on bilingual translations and providing critical analysis of the text itself.

Through his contact with Darwin’s scientific thought, Lu Xun possibly became sensitive to the growing crisis of faith in the traditional Chinese view of history as a cyclical process. Notwithstanding the fact that, as Lu Xun saw, evolutionary change does not abide by the Chinese view of the cycle of history. With this in mind, he made determined use of his pen to save the Chinese people by teaching them about Darwin’s theory of evolution through literature. Accordingly, the ideas expressed by Lu Xun in “The History of Mankind” can give us some understanding of how he drew on Haeckel’s arguments in favour of Darwin’s theory of evolution.

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51 陳方竟 (Chen Fangjing): 〈魯迅與中國現代文學批評〉，《魯迅與中國現代文學批評》 (北京: 北京大學出版社, 2011) 第 90 頁。
In his book, *Lu Xun and Evolution* (1998), Pusey shows that Lu Xun described the sense of crisis in Chinese consciousness among patriotic intellectuals. As Pusey states, ‘given the dreadful uncertainty of China’s fate and the uncertainty of Chinese patriots about what to do about it, the attraction of Haeckelian certainty about science and social progress was certainly understandable’. In view of this sense of national crisis, Lu Xun was able to pinpoint the fragility of Chinese society from the late Qing Dynasty up to the early Chinese Republic. As he saw it, the whole of society would need to be reconstructed, and the national character reformed in line with his understanding of evolution.

Some claims have been made in modern Chinese criticism, with reference to Lu Xun’s arguments and viewpoints, supporting the close relationship between evolutionary ideas and the reform of the Chinese national character during the twentieth century. For instance, in his study of Lu Xun, Zhou Congxiu mentions the relevance of the notion of human evolution to the reform of Chinese national character. In terms of human evolution, Lu Xun also associated natural science with the cultivation of the individual. All these elements are central to Lu Xun’s evolutionary thought. In addition, Sun Yushi considers the dissemination of evolutionism in late Qing society as a solid foundation for conducting research into the Chinese national character. Following this course, he has identified Yen Fu’s *Tien-yen Lun* as the earliest historical evidence of the introduction of Darwin’s theory into Chinese thought:

當時社會上廣泛傳播的進化論思想，是國民性研究的思想基礎。1898 年出版的嚴復譯的赫胥黎《天演論》，在中國最早完整地介紹了達爾文主義進化論學說。

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53 Ibid., p.75.
54 周憲秀(Zhou Congxiu): 〈一主兩翼: 魯迅啟蒙主義思想體系的內在結構〉，《魯迅研究論集》(*LuXun Yanjiu Lunji*) (北京: 中國文史出版社, 2005) 第 4-8 頁。
55 孫玉石(Sun Yushi): 〈走近真實的魯迅—魯迅思想與五四文化論集〉 (北京: 北京大學出版社, 2010) 第 27 頁。
At that time, the concept of evolutionism was widely circulated as the foundation of thought on studying Chinese national character in society. In 1898, the publication of Yen Fu's paraphrastic translation of Huxley in *Tien-yen Lun* was the earliest complete introduction to Darwinism.

(researcher’s translation)

In his essay, “Exceeding in ideology: Modern individual consciousness negating modern politics”, Zhang Fugui points out that in “On the Partiality of Culture” [*Wenhua pianzhi lun*; 〈文化偏至論〉] (1908), Lu Xun severely criticised the Chinese people for what he saw as their exceptionally hidebound and conceited nature as embodied in their feudal society. It was this he identified as the main reason for China’s ongoing stagnation in the early twentieth century. In light of the progress of human civilisation, one period of culture might replace another, and one thought could take the place of another.\(^5\) Lu Xun embraced cross-cultural encounters with enthusiasm as an overly direct way of addressing the cause of China’s backwardness and confusion in his writing. In June 1934, he published a famous essay entitled “Grabbism” [〈拿來主義〉], with the aim of criticising China’s conservatism as well as promoting his notion of ‘grabbism’.\(^6\) In other words, Lu Xun intended both that his cultural selection draw directly and swiftly from Western culture and that his advocacy of ‘grabbism’ should subvert the traditional shackles of Chinese feudal society. As he convincingly demonstrated in the essay, the cardinal significance of “grabbism” is that those who do not snatch essential elements from the cultural heritages of others fail to renew themselves [沒有拿來的，人不能自成為新人]. Moreover, he applied the same argument to literature and art, claiming that without absorbing the prime essentials of other cultural legacies, artisans are unable to develop new forms of literature and art [沒有拿來的，文藝不能自成為新文藝]. Lu Xun’s ‘grabbism’ is laced with a positive attitude toward the selecting of superior aspects of foreign cultures as

\(^5\) 張福貴(Zhang Fugui), pp. 18-19.

\(^6\) 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 《且介亭雜文•〈拿來主義〉》，《魯迅文集》第 4 册， 馮知明 (Feng Zhiming) 主編 (海口：海南出版社，2011) 第 21 頁。
replacements for inferior local customs and ideologies (Chinese feudal society being chiefly on his mind). With regard to his many writings, Lu Xun’s insistence on using Western culture to enhance Chinese characteristics formed part of his larger goal of reforming Chinese culture and society at the turn of the twentieth century. Lu Xun was also an outstanding translator of modern foreign literature into the Chinese language. As Wu Jun notes, through his translating of foreign novels, Lu Xun wished to promote social and literary reforms aimed at encouraging the writing of modern novels in China. In terms of the promotion of China’s modernity, Lu Xun’s ‘grabbism’ was used to justify the translating of foreign literature into Chinese with the aim of ameliorating social maladies and the many perceived flaws in the Chinese national character.

Zhang Fugui demonstrates that during the early period of his writing career, Lu Xun used modern Western culture as an intellectual weapon to attack the old Chinese Empire. Theoretically, he placed much emphasis on individualism as surpassing the rule of the multitude. In terms of his cultural options, Lu Xun was determined to accept Western ideas and theories over those stemming from traditional Chinese thought since, from his standpoint, China was no longer able to be the Middle Kingdom in the world. Social reform was definitely risky, especially when the Chinese literati instigated boycotts against conservatively-minded officers. If the process of China’s modernisation became weaker or less effective, then China seemed doomed to the social reforms favoured by the May Fourth Movement. The matter of how Chinese national characteristics should be reformed was crucial in determining the success or failure of the complete modernisation of China. Given these future prospects, Lu Xun was obliged to transmit Western thought to the younger generation, especially the way Darwin’s ideas were applied to his cultural selection. As Zhang Fugui argues:

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58 吳鈞 (Wu Jun):〈第一章: 總論 翻譯家魯迅〉，《魯迅翻譯文學研究》[Study of Lu Xun’s Translated Literature] (濟南：齊魯書社，2009) 第 27-33 頁。
59 張福貴(Zhang Fugui), pp. 18-19.
鲁迅早期文化選擇中，最早接受的西方外來思想無疑是以進化論為核心的西方近代理性主義。達爾文的進化論、海克爾的生物哲學一元論、約翰·穆勒和斯賓塞以及梅契尼珂夫的人類文明進化觀等，都對魯迅早期文化選擇中的人類文明整體觀提供了強有力的思想支持。但幾乎與此同時，他又接受了叔本華、尼采、施蒂納以及克爾凱郭爾的現代主義哲學的思想影響。

Among Lu Xun's cultural options in his early period, there is no doubt that evolutionism was accepted as the kernel of contemporary Western rationalism. Darwin's theory of evolution, Haeckel's monism, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer and Elias Metschnikov's views on the progress of human civilisation, and so forth—all these figures or theories, taking a holistic view of human civilisation, provided strong intellectual support for Lu Xun in terms of the pattern of cultural choice he made in his early life. Almost in the same period, he was influenced by the philosophy of modernism and accepted many figures such as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Max Stirner and Soren Kierkegaard as well.

(researcher’s translation)

Zhang Yun has claimed that through his long-term observations of social maladies, Lu Xun was evidently intent on identifying Chinese national characteristics as one of the most important reasons behind China's backwardness. Nonetheless, the challenge of changing deep-rooted national characteristics seemed immense to Lu Xun, since he expected the common people to find it hard to accept new ways of thinking. In addition, he believed in the progress and forward-looking aspect of history; hence, in his view, the future would be better than the past. The intent of transforming Chinese national characteristics by abandoning conservative customs and ideologies

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60 張福貴(Zhang Fugui), p. 18.
Inherited from the past was to ensure the survival of the Chinese people into the future. By taking an evolutionary viewpoint, Lu Xun became aware that his dominating purpose was to create a better environment for survival. It would take a considerable amount of time to transform Chinese national characteristics. Yet he was also aware of the course of China’s history to such an extent that he was able to break free of the country’s rigid social norms, and so combat what he saw as unreasonable or inefficient doctrines, beliefs, ideas and so forth. In this way, Lu Xun intended to combat the many symptoms of, as he saw it, an illness in the Chinese national character, which had been handed down from generation to generation. Seen from the angle of evolutionism, Lu Xun was exceptionally cautious about the future development of the Chinese national character after he discovered its darker side in the recent past. As Zhang Yun has pointed out, Lu Xun’s viewpoints reflected his own conceptualisation of the relationship between the changeability of time and the reform of national character:

As for Lu Xun, he wanted to take advantage of outer power through the introduction of new thought to change Chinese characteristics. Although it was difficult for Lu Xun, he attempted to persuade himself through the perspective of evolutionism. This reformation was possible: the muddle-headed thought of ancestry through the long river of time could be gradually diluted.

And:

While the historical viewpoint provided a hope for the改造 “國民性”, it originated from the evolutionism.
化論的微薄希望並不在魯迅的經驗範圍之內，只有將目光轉向不可知的未來之時才依稀可辨。\(^{61}\)

The viewpoints of progress in history provided a ray of hope for reforming Chinese characteristics. This little hope, coming from evolutionism, could be counted outside the range of Lu Xun’s experience. Only by turning man’s eyes to the unpredictable future could we roughly distinguish between good and bad.

(researcher’s translations)

In modern Chinese criticism, many commentators have argued that there is an obvious connection between evolutionary ideas and Lu Xun’s outlook on social reform. From an historical perspective, Yen Fu and Liang Qichao initially proposed reforming the Chinese national character in the late Qing period,\(^{62}\) thereby indirectly influencing Lu Xun’s thought on many flaws inherent in the same thing. Lu Xun once argued that ‘the future will be better than the past’, in support of which he provided numerous figures and stories to illustrate China’s national character in the past while remaining acutely conscious of its potential to develop into the future. In spite of Lu Xun’s efforts, however, time was working against China’s backwardness at the outset of the twentieth century. Lu Xun’s abundant good intentions led him to attempt to combat old ways of thinking in order to transform ‘bad past national character’ into ‘good future national character’.

Yen Fu and Lin Shu made great efforts during the late Qing period towards the task of bilingual \textit{fanyi} [translation; 翻譯] of the foreign texts to which they had access. Yen Fu also proffered three demanding principles of translation from ‘The Foreword to the Cases on Translation’ [《天演論·譯例言》]\(^{63}\) in


\(^{62}\)皮後鋒 (\textit{Pi Houfeng}): 《嚴復評傳》(上), 第 103-04 頁。

\(^{63}\)嚴復 (\textit{Yen Fu}): 《天演論》，第 15 頁。
Tien-yen Lun based upon his cross-cultural studies as well as practical experience gained through translating eight canonical Western texts: faithfulness [信], expressiveness [達] and elegance [雅]. First and foremost, a translator should be faithful to the original meaning of the text, no violating any fidelity of the text [意義則不倍本文]. Second, he must well express the contents of the original texts by taking heed of the subtle differences in grammar, syntax, message, spirit and style between Chinese and foreign languages. Finally, he may be particular about the high level of rhetoric, correctness and elegance in his translation. However, the third principle ‘elegance’ triggers controversial issues most among modern Chinese literati.

As his translating experience and special viewpoint in Tien-yen Lun, Yen Fu’s three principles on translation have set up a paradigm of modern Chinese translation theory.

This theory has informed how foreign texts have been translated into Chinese for more than a century and has become an essential point of knowledge for all modern Chinese scholars; in short, most Chinese scholars would tend to support Yen Fu’s three principles as a standard of translating. In other words, Yen Fu concluded translating experience in ancient wen-yen writing style, so this principle still functions today as guidance on translating foreign texts into Chinese. Nonetheless, the demerits of Yen Fu’s standard of translating are still evident when it comes to the problem of Chinese-English translation. In particular, his manner is either too general or too comprehensive when bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, thereby leading to some unnecessary misunderstandings and misinterpretations between the original texts and his wen-yen Chinese versions. For example, having compared and contrasted Yen Fu’s wen-yen translation with the original English text of Mill’s On Liberty, Huang Ko-wu, a research fellow in Taiwan’s Academia Sinica, has discovered that Yen Fu had some misapprehensions

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64 严复 (Yen Fu) : 《天演論》, 第 15 頁。
65 沈蘇儒 (Shen Suru) : 《第二章: 严復的信達雅說》, 《論信達雅: 严復翻譯理論研究》(台北：臺灣商務印書館, 2000) 第 38 頁。
66 沈蘇儒 (Shen Suru) , 第 37-54 頁。
about the concept of liberty. In actuality, when Yen Fu and Lin Shu translated many Western texts into wen-yen Chinese, they were both subject to the shortcomings of this old-fashioned writing system. It should also be noted that even at that time, it was extremely difficult for the common people to comprehend the whole content of the wen-yen writing style. It was not until the early years of Republican China that Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu initiated the literary revolution as part of the May Fourth Movement with the aim of reforming the modern Chinese language by taking immediate actions to make the vernacular Chinese the dominant medium of literature and culture in general. As Hu Xinhe points out, ‘the theory of evolution and the Social-Darwinist doctrine of survival of the fittest played an important role in Hu’s theory of literary revolution’. It took Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu nearly four years to achieve their literary mission, which came to fruition in 1920 when the Beiyang government directly ordered ‘replacing classical language textbooks with vernacular ones in primary school’. This victory for the literary reformers opened up a new era of simple language and literature in modern Chinese history.

Over the past three decades, a remarkable number of studies have been published in Taiwan, China and Western countries on Sun Yat-sen (or Sun Wen) and Mao Zedong, including innumerable books and magazines and journal articles in the fields of politics, economics and military history. Very little, however, has been published about these two great revolutionaries’ thoughts on evolution. The bulk of the aforementioned literature focuses in one way or another on the various aspects of Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong’s politics that have most affected the perspectives of the common people. In contrast, few scholars have considered either the specific connections between Sun Yat-sen’s evolutionary thought and Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid or Mao Zedong’s dialectical materialism and Social Darwinism.

69 Ibid., p. 84.
Some scholars recognise that evolutionary ideas played a dominant role in influencing the thoughts and actions of these two revolutionary heroes which led to their becoming political pioneers in modern Chinese history. For instance, Huang Mingtong has shed light on Sun Yat-sen’s writings about the evolution of the Universe and the evolution of society. Meanwhile, Yang Hai has discussed Sun Yat-sen’s thought on mutual aid and its negation of Social Darwinism. In other words, Sun Yat-sen seemed to oppose the doctrines of Social Darwinism through his promoting of mutual help as well as the great unity in the world for mankind. On the other hand, Maurice Meisner has claimed the following:

He [Mao Zedong] read the authors who had molded the thought of China’s new Westernized intelligentsia—Adam Smith, Darwin, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. The young Mao was particularly influenced by the Social Darwinism of Spencer, with its enormous emphasis on the inevitability of struggle.

Accordingly, Mao’s philosophy of struggle was formed in the light of his learning about Social Darwinism and Marxism. Furthermore, the leading role and military genius displayed by Mao during China’s revolutionary wars were both founded upon his learning from these Western authors and other figures, as well as from traditional Chinese history and literature.

In modern revolutionary times, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong created new Republican dynasties in modern China. Sun Yat-sen, the Founding Father of the Republic of China, instigated the Nationalist Revolution against the Manchu regime. He was an independent Chinese Social Darwinist, who

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70 黃明同 (Huang Mingtong): 〈系統建設觀〉，《孫中山建設哲學：中國現代系統思想的開啟及應用》 (The Constructive Philosophy of Sun Yat-sen: the Outset and Application of the Modern Chinese Systematic Thinking) (北京：社會科學文獻出版社，2006) 第29-34頁。
71 楊海(Yang Hai): 〈論孫中山的“互助”思想〉，《孫中山研究》第一輯 (廣州：中山大學出版社，2008) 第71-73頁。
openly declared that China should learn from Western methods. His book, *The Three Principles of the People*, reflects not only the principles of nationalism, the rights of the people and the livelihood of the people but also the theory of evolution. This means that *The Three Principles of the People* contains not merely numerous political ideas, but also reflections on the three stages of social evolution. Accordingly, Sun Yat-sen took Social Darwinism as part of his thought in *The Three Principles of the People*:

> According to natural laws of evolution, the fit survive and the unfit perish, the strong win and the weak lose. Have we a strong or weak race, a fit or an unfit race? Not one of us is willing to see our race perish or fail; everyone wishes the race to survive and to win out—these are natural, instinctive feelings.

Meanwhile, Mao Zedong, the Founder of the People’s Republic of China, developed a very different worldview from his readings of Marx and Darwin. During the Chinese Civil War from 1946 to 1949, Mao Zedong was convinced that only the fittest would survive. He and the People’s Liberation Army eventually won decisive encounters against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Army and thereby simultaneously proved they were the fittest. The Nationalist government, however, still exists in Taiwan today after a series of severe military defeats. Mao Zedong firmly believed that his truth was *tsao tan yu li* [Rebellion had a reasonable excuse]. This political slogan implied that rebellion was justified, because the *li* [reason] for revolution was grounded in evolution. Hence for Mao Zedong, revolution and evolution were two sides of the same coin. Pusey comments on Darwin’s influence on Mao Zedong:

> Darwin justified revolution and thereby helped the cultural

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73 Ibid., p. 335.
revolutions of Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, Hu Shih, and Mao Tse-tung (and, of course, so many others), and the political revolutions of Sun Yat-sen, Chiang K’ai-shek, and Mao Tse-tung. As things turned out, therefore, he seemed to help Mao Tse-tung the most, and indeed he did. He helped make the Marxists the fittest.\textsuperscript{76}

The results of many studies have confirmed that cooperation occurs in the natural environment among humans and in other animal species; for example, Daniel P. Todes (1987), Lee Alan Dugatkin (1997), Michael Glassman (2000) and Beth Eddy (2010) have all indicated the close connections between Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid, group selection and Darwinism. Thus, although little research has been undertaken into the influence of evolutionary thought and Darwinism on Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong, more work is needed to interpret how this knowledge affected their respective philosophies and actions. Both Darwinism and Social Darwinism would reach new heights of influence in fields outside of the natural sciences in the first half of the twentieth century. Driven by their respective wills, principles and ways of thinking, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong both searched for ways to reform, change and stimulate progress in China at different points in the country’s national reconstruction.

It is the researcher’s aim to use Darwin’s theory of evolution and Peter Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid to explore and interpret Sun Yat-sen’s ideas about evolution. A further aim here is to study the connections between Mao Zedong’s evolutionary ideas and Social Darwinism. These two great national figures gave a decisive impetus to the tide of China’s revolutionary eras, and were thus directly responsible for China’s rise as a new superpower in the twentieth-first century. This research question can be closely linked with the matter of the interaction between cooperation and competition in the hostile natural environment as conceived by Kropotkin, whose focal point was species groups rather than individual organisms as in Darwin’s theory of

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 450.
natural selection. Therefore, as Daniel P. Todes has argued, ‘mutual aid does not contradict Darwinism’ in the animal world.

1.5 Western Evolutionary Thought in China

During the Victorian era, there were huge strides in terms of scientific truth, and some outstanding scientists were able to put forward related theories in different scientific fields. Nevertheless, Victorian society was still deeply religious and God-fearing. It was in this context that Charles Darwin published his important book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) (hereafter *On the Origin of Species*), concerning evolutionary theory, in light of which he became a controversial figure who was attacked for his views. A major point of contention following the publication of Darwin’s book was whether he should challenge the biblical account of Creation by arguing for his theories of common descent, gradualism, adaptation and natural selection. However, nowadays Darwin can be counted as a Victorian pioneer who made a splendid contribution to numerous academic fields of botany, zoology, ornithology, geology, medicine, economics, sociology, anthropology and literature in modern world. Specifically, we can refer to a set of six British Charles Darwin stamps and another Italian stamp marking the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*:

Figure 1. A set of six British Charles Darwin stamps

Figure 2. An Italian Charles Darwin stamp

As D. F. Bratchell argues, ‘the theme of the Victorian crisis of faith is a large one and it has been aptly stated it is bigger than Darwin, bigger than
biology or all the natural sciences’. The rising credibility of classical science, as exemplified by the scientific approaches of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton and Darwin, among others, led to a decline in religious belief among some commoners in Victorian society. Another consequence which followed from the Industrial Revolution was that science tended to provide a new basis for social progress. Thanks to the prosperous development of Victorian society, the British public gradually accepted new scientific insights into daily life, and the values represented by scientific advances became stimuli for the whole of society. Yet, while science put humanity more in control, it also removed mankind from the centre of the universe and made people’s earthbound lives seem less rather than more secure. Commenting on modern scientific history, Stephen Jay Gould concludes:

Sigmund Freud argued that the history of our greatest scientific insights has reflected, ironically, a continuous retreat of our species from the center stage in the cosmos. Before Copernicus and Newton, we thought we lived at the hub of the universe. Before Darwin, we thought that a benevolent God had created us. Before Freud, we imagined ourselves as rational creatures.

Darwinism could be concisely explained in terms of the corollary of common descent or descent with modification, vivid biological evidence for which can be found in the fossil record and geographical distribution of organic beings on Earth. Having inferred this hypothesis from his observations of organisms subject to evolutionary processes on Earth, Darwin went on to propose the theory of universal common descent which states that all forms of life share a common ancestry. The theory of common descent is now widely accepted by scientists in various fields of scientific research. In

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his masterpiece on the theory of evolution, *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin wrote:

All the foregoing rules and aids and difficulties in classification are explained, if I do not greatly deceive myself, on the view that the natural system is founded on descent with modification; that the characters which naturalists consider as showing true affinity between any two or more species, are those which have been inherited from a common parent, and, in so far, all true classification is genealogical; that community of descent is the hidden bond which naturalists have been unconsciously seeking, and not some unknown plan of creation, or the enunciation of general propositions, and the mere putting together and separating objects more or less alike.\(^81\)

With regard to evolutionary science, Darwinism can be taken as a form of atheism.\(^82\) Indeed, Darwin, acting as a careful observer of the path of evolutionary progress in the natural environment, took issue with the points where modern biological science conflicted with the Bible. Darwin’s contemporary, Charles Hodge, explained the essential difference between Darwin’s scientific stance and religious faith thus:

The contrivances in nature may be accounted for by assuming that they are due to design on part of God. But, he [Darwin] says, that would not be science. Haeckel says that to science matter is eternal. If any man chooses to say, it was created, well and good; but that is a matter of

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faith, and faith is imagination.\textsuperscript{83}

At the core of Darwin's hypothesis was his academic debate towards the notion of God's craftsmanship, and religious myths about the origin of life as juxtaposed with his own metaphor of evolution as a tree of life.\textsuperscript{84} Therefore, Darwin conceived of the evolutionary change of speciation as the principle of natural selection, which accounted for divergence among living creatures in the natural world.\textsuperscript{85}

Being sensitive in his marriage to Emma Wedgwood, who was a devout Christian, Darwin was inclined to avoid offending priests, religious believers, or making any statements about religion in his public life. He also delayed publishing the theory of natural selection for many years. As a young man, Darwin had been influenced by William Paley's *Natural Theology* (1802), and so did not completely reject the idea of an intelligent Designer until the late 1830s.\textsuperscript{86} Even so, however, Darwin had diagnosed shortcomings in the Victorian frame of mind, and while he remained careful not to attack Christian doctrines in his public life, he was forced to cast doubt on the conventional Biblical account of Creation and the Christian faith in the 1840s.\textsuperscript{87} Yet even in *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin was reluctant to carry to their logical conclusion his proposed laws of variation and mutation in nature for fear of fatally undermining the Christian concept of intelligent design. His reluctance in this regard can be seen in his assertion that 'to admit this view is, as it seems to me, to reject a real for an unreal, or at least for an unknown, cause.

\textsuperscript{84} According to Darwin's term for biological evolution, the hypothesis on the tree of life is that individual organisms on Earth evolve from common ancestry. There is a complex genealogy between a host of species on the origin of life; therefore, these genealogical relationships have formed the shape of tree in common.
It makes the works of God a mere mockery and deception”. Due to chronic antagonism between scientists and theologians concerning the arguments of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, Thomas Henry Huxley participated in an academic debate with the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, in June 1860. Moreover, in a letter to Leonard Horner on 14 February 1861, Darwin argued that ‘I do not suppose that God intentionally gave the parent Rock-Pigeon a tendency to vary in size of Crop, so that man by selecting such variations should make a Pouter’. Darwin thus resolved himself to obviating the conflicting claims of intelligent design and gradual evolution. Nonetheless, as a consequence of the theory of evolution, the concept of intelligent design was severely weakened and rejected by many prominent thinkers, for the logical reasoning of Darwin’s view was that the whole process of evolution was without any intelligent design by the Creator. Evolution occurs as it is; Darwinism excludes teleology. This means that evolutionary theory rejects any teleological design. Evolution is ‘creative’ through the chance selection of small incremental biological adaptations that give organisms slight advantages over others in certain environments. Therefore, Darwinism has


\[\text{\textsuperscript{89}}\text{Charles Darwin, The Correspondence of Charles Darwin: Volume 9, 1861 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 28.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{90}}\text{Charles Hodge, “Darwinism excludes Teleology”, What is Darwinism? (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1874) 52. According to Darwin’s own scientific verification, Hodge had pointed out that Darwin unambiguously persisted in his denial of teleology in the following statement:}\]

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It is that Darwin rejects all teleology, or the doctrine of final causes. He denies design in any of the organisms in the vegetable or animal world. He teaches that the eye was formed without any purpose of producing an organ of vision.

As a leading researcher, Darwin collected and surveyed diverse samples of plants, wildlife, and fossils during his voyage on H.M.S. Beagle to the west coast of South America between 1831 and 1836. In addition to experiencing this scientific expedition, Darwin also used the gardens of his home, Down House in Kent, for four decades from 1842 as a laboratory where he scrutinised the growing processes of various species of wild plants and studied his notebooks and specimens to confirm the theory of natural selection. In 1858, Darwin initially seemed to have somewhat different opinions about Alfred Russel Wallace’s arguments following his reading Wallace’s essay, “On the Tendency of Varieties to depart indefinitely from the Original Type”. On 1 July 1858, however, he and Wallace took unified action at the Linnean Society of London to publish a joint paper. Yet this was only read out without any further discussion. Later, the Darwin-Wallace paper was published in No. 9 of the third volume of the Linnean Society’s Journal (Zoology): “On the Tendency of Species to form Varieties; and on the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection”. See Barbara G. Beddall, the Introduction of “Wallace, Darwin, and the Theory of Natural Selection: A Study in the Development of Ideas and Attitudes”, Journal of the History of Biology 1.2 (Autumn 1968): 261-62, 306. As a result of it, Darwin formally published his work on evolutionary theory in On the Origin of Species in 1859 when he was fifty years old.
survived numerous arguments contesting its validity such as intelligent design, the Creator as *Deus ex machina*, the laws of variation, and so on.

Nonetheless, many counter-claims against the theory of evolution were made by Darwin’s contemporaries. For example, defending intelligent design in America, Asa Gray argued in favour of the truth of God’s creation. Gray, a Professor of Natural History at Harvard University in the mid-nineteenth century, was in favour of Darwin’s theory in biology, but he still insisted that the design ultimately came from a Creator. As Edward B. Poulton has put it, ‘he [Gray] believed that the two conceptions could be reconciled, and that design in some way worked in and through natural selection’. As such, what he proposed was to reconcile intelligent design with the Darwinian principle: design on the instalment plan, so to speak. In other words, Gray adopted the argument that natural selection originated from a designer in order to explain biological phenomena in the natural world. Yet, Darwin’s argument that ‘the origin of species by natural selection precluded a belief in design in nature’ shows how he still insisted on the fidelity of his theory of natural selection. After intense academic debates with Darwin, Gray seemed to change his position and turned to side with Darwin’s theory of natural selection. They became academic friends eventually. A further challenge to Darwin’s theory of evolution came from another of his contemporaries, William Whewell, who presented two theistic hypotheses requiring divine intervention in the evolutionary process. Such concepts of evolutionary change may be called *theistic evolutionism*. Theists believe that the Creator observes the universe and imposes his laws upon all living creatures so as to meet his creative purposes. However, if atheists or scientists accept some version of the

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91 Charles Hodge, p. 22.
95 Edward Bagnall Poulton, p. 115.
intelligent design hypothesis, then scientific theories cannot contribute towards explaining human evolution. The concern is candid about why Elliott Sober concludes that ‘the theory of evolution is silent on the question of whether there is a God.’ In short, Charles Hodge also concludes that Darwin’s theory of natural selection is indeed atheistical, for teleology is excluded from the Darwinian worldview.

Darwinism can be credited for the theories of gradualism and natural selection. In *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (2002), Stephen Jay Gould emphasised the multi-layered meanings of gradualism in the theory of evolution by clarifying the gradual processes whereby changes occur in the geological record and organic beings in the natural surroundings. All beings on Earth evolve through a very long and slow gradual process, evidence for which can be observed in the fossil record. Above all, the idea of gradualism is closely related to the ‘creativity’ of selection on the grounds that natural selection is a slow long-term process in biotic evolution. In addition, Rémy Lestienne argues for mathematical chance in biology and the idea of progress in evolution; or, as he puts it, Darwinism is ‘the chance of variations, plus selection’. Meanwhile, the French historian, Charles Lenay, has declared that ‘Darwin advocates *systemic* chance’. In other words, variations can influence the various conditions of selection, while selection has little influence over variations. Darwin had already seen the distinction between selection and variation in biotic evolution. Hence, in *On the Origin of Species*, he was keen to show how perceptible his theory of natural selection works throughout the world in the following passages:

That natural selection will always act with extreme slowness, I fully admit. Its action depends on there being places in the polity of nature,
which can be better occupied by some of the inhabitants of the country undergoing modification of some kind.\textsuperscript{102}

And:

It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life.\textsuperscript{103}

The issue of evolution and its consequences for religious thought were not the only concerns of Darwinism. Another aspect of Darwin's thought was his manifest concern for the problem of slavery. On this point, it is noteworthy that Darwin was sensitive to apparent forms of slavery in the natural world. In \textit{Darwinianism: Workmen and Work} (1894), James Hutchison Stirling discussed Darwin's concerns about slavery as follows:

But Charles Darwin never had an enemy; and we shall presently see how he could face, on ship-board, the British captain that was over him, when what was concerned (slavery) \textit{[sic.]} was a truth and a principle that lay at his heart.\textsuperscript{104}

For instance, through his trenchant observations of ant colonies, Darwin discovered that red ants make black ones slaves in their nests so that the black ants must work for their red masters. Darwin's thought on this form of


\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 83.

ant slavery revealed his own repressed consciousness of slavery in human history. As James Moore proclaims, ‘he [Darwin] speculated on the evolution of ant slavery in Natural Selection’. Thus, Darwin took the slavery he observed among ants as a public metaphor in the natural world for the dark recesses of the human mind. In doing so, Darwin was inclined to justify the rights of black ants. As he put it in *On the Origin of Species*:

> The slaves are black and not above half the size of their red masters, so that the contrast in their appearance is very great. When the nest is slightly disturbed, the slaves occasionally come out, and like their masters are much agitated and defend the nest; when the nest is much disturbed and the larvae and pupae are exposed, the slaves work energetically with their masters in carrying them away to a place of safety. Hence it is clear, that the slaves feel quite at home.

In relation to adaptation, nature and the environment, Darwinism provides the justification for atheism, natural selection and human and animal rights. Many academic debates have been provoked by these vital issues from the Victorian era up to the present day; indeed, these three arguable points help us to understand the core principles of Darwinism and how the Darwinian concept of the struggle for existence illustrates the process of socio-cultural evolution. Richard Dawkins has coined the term ‘universal Darwinism’, which emerges from the Darwinian concepts of variation and natural selection, to explain the phenomena that Darwinism shares in common with social or cultural evolution. Stephen K. Sanderson equates a variety of phenomena in

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social evolution with natural selection as well.\textsuperscript{108} Thus, when we delve into initial interaction between Darwinism and China, we should understand these evolutionary theories in advance. Darwinism and its heritage have won widespread renown in the era of globalization. Darwin and the H.M.S \textit{Beagle} never sailed into any Chinese ports, but his theory of evolution, or at least parts of it, silently marched into the Chinese territories during the late Qing era and the early Chinese Republic.

Having suffered from a humiliating defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895, China signed up to the Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan on 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1895. Among other things, the treaty stipulated that China ceded Formosa (Taiwan) to Japan and paid a huge indemnity of 230 million taels. A few years later, in 1898, Yen Fu completed his Chinese translation of Huxley's \textit{Evolution and Ethics}. Up to that point, only a few people in China, including some political reformers or intellectual leaders, had learned much from Darwin's evolutionary thought, with most having remained indifferent. The publication of Huxley's work in Chinese marked a major shift, and greatly shocked many people in the late Qing period and the early Chinese Republic. As a consequence, the Chinese people began to understand Darwin's ideas approximately 40 years after they had come to be widely appreciated in Britain. As regards the timing of the translation, Pusey maintains:

\begin{quote}
The forty-year difference between China's age of Darwin and that of Europe and America was partly due to the accidental timing of translation. Very few in China had heard of Darwin before Yen Fu introduced him. Of course, if Rutherford Alcock could sound like a Social Darwinist before there really were any, we can well imagine that many bona fide Social Darwinists must have reached China from England and America during the four decades that formed a
\end{quote}

During the four decades which it took for Darwin’s ideas to reach China, there was the possibility that some missionaries, merchants or travellers informally conveyed many basic concepts of Darwinian thought to small numbers of Chinese people from 1850s onwards. Furthermore, as Pusey claims above, in 1855, prior to the formal publication of On the Origin of the Species, Rutherford Alcock, the British Consul in China, was already spreading similar ideas to those of Darwinism in Shanghai. As Pusey observes, Alcock incorporated the idea of struggle for existence into his diplomatic rhetoric:

Invariably—when the race to be benefited is inferior and weaker, intellectually and physically, than the nation civilizing—have had but one result: the weaker has gone down before the stronger.

This grim law, which seemingly gave Alcock great hope, was written four years before The Origin of Species, and forty years before The Origin of Species was really introduced to China, but it was precisely the law that the Chinese first thought Darwin’s book proclaimed: The weaker go down before the stronger, the weaker nation, the weaker race.\(^\text{109}\)

Moreover, Benjamin A. Elman points out that Qing officials and literati began to carry out a national policy of Xihua [Westernization] during the second half of the nineteenth century. As part of this policy, they embarked on an important plan for translating English texts into Chinese and thus of promoting cross-cultural communication between China and the West. Due to the paucity of modern scientific knowledge among the Chinese people, Elman briefly describes the breadth of the Xihua translation programme as


\(^{110}\) Ibid., p. 3.
one of the cardinal components for modernisation over its first two decades, from 1850 to 1870, as follows:

From 1850-1870, a core group of missionaries and Chinese co-workers in Guangzhou, Ningbo, Beijing, and Shanghai translated many works on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, as well as botany, geography, geology, mechanics, and navigation. Alongside the efforts of the arsenals and official schools, private initiatives popularized modern science (gezhi xue) in the treaty ports and among Qing officials and literati. During the second half of the nineteenth Century China’s modernization, which was initially perceived as Westernization (Xihua), began.\textsuperscript{111}

During the late Qing period, the Chinese people initially referred to Western science as gezhi, which could be taken as a general name for the natural sciences in late Qing China. Furthermore, the original meaning of gezhi should be dated back to ge wu zhi zhi in “Great Learning” of the Book of Rites, following which ge wu zhi zhi means to search for the truth of things in order to obtain knowledge therewith. As with today’s natural sciences, scientists must ardously research whatever phenomena are of interest to them in order to acquire knowledge of those things. In ‘preface’ to “Outcry” (1918-1922), Lu Xun stated, ‘when finally I arrived at the Naval Academy, I made many new discoveries: natural sciences, mathematics, geography, history, drawing and physical education’.\textsuperscript{112} In this portion of text, Julia Lovell, renders gezhi as ‘natural sciences’ in her English translation.

During the Self-Strengthening Movement from 1861 to 1895, the Qing government made two important decisions to improve foreign relations as well as its domestic predicament. First, in response to growing diplomatic problems, some Qing officials considered that China should establish a diplomatic institution to deal with the country’s general foreign affairs. On 13 January 1861, Prince Gong, Aisin Giro Yixin and Wen Xiang jointly proposed the establishment of Zongli Geguo Shiwu Yamen [the Office for the General Administration of the Trade Affairs of the Different Nations]; 總理各國事務衙門] to the Emperor Xianfeng.\textsuperscript{114} Zongli Yamen [總理衙門] is the abbreviated form of the full title of that office. Second, Qing officials decided to find a way to help them better understand the West and deal with the problem of international language barriers. On 24 August 1862, the Qing government set up the Tongwen Guan in Beijing. This official institution was in charge of the translation of foreign books, and of the training of foreign language talent and diplomats. The Qing government also set up another official body, the Tongwen Guan, in Shanghai in 1863 and Guangzhou in 1864 to fulfil the fundamental needs of language courses, translations, intercultural relations and Western scientific ideas. The Tongwen Guan maintained many linguistic and scientific curricula aimed at introducing some knowledge of Western science and languages to the Chinese people, including English, French, German and Russian, as well as Japanese. A similar institution to the Tongwen Guan, the Western Learning School, was also set up in Taiwan in 1887 by Liu Mingchuan, who was the first governor of Taiwan in the Qing government.\textsuperscript{115} Both the Tongwen Guan and the Western Learning School made significant contributions to foreign language learning, teaching and translation as supporting cross-cultural contacts between late Qing China, Japan and the West.


\textsuperscript{114} 季壓西 (Ji Yaxi) 、陳偉民 (Chen Weimin): 《京師同文館：洋務運動破除語言障礙第一步努力》, 《從同文三館起步》 (北京：學苑出版社, 2007) 第 9 頁。

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., pp. 174-79.
A prominent Chinese mathematician, Li Shan-lan (1811-1882), translated Herschel’s *Outlines of Astronomy*¹¹⁶ into Chinese in 1859—the same year as the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*. *Outlines of Astronomy* mainly discussed the evolution of the universe and the structure of the solar system. As Wu Pi claims, ‘the very year of 1859 might be taken as the starting point of Western evolutionary thought into China’ [1859 年可以看作西方進化思想傳入中國的起點].¹¹⁷ In fact, Yen Fu was not the first scholar to translate an evolutionary text into Chinese. Li Shan-lan could be taken as the first person to have introduced Western evolutionary thought to China, albeit mainly from the perspectives of cosmic evolution and astronomy rather than biological organisms as Darwin had originally intended. Crucially, Li Shan-lan challenged fundamental aspects of the time-honoured worldviews about the Universe held by the Chinese people. By reading his book, some Chinese people risked losing their faith in traditional ideas about China, but also gained a better understanding of modern astronomical knowledge. Since it was so threatening, few Chinese people fully embraced evolutionary thought upon their first encounters with it. In 1873, Hua Heng-fang (1833-1902), a Chinese mathematician, cooperated with Daniel Jerome MacGowan, an American missionary, to introduce Charles Lyell’s uniformitarianism about the gradual geological changes on Earth’s surface and to translate his *Principles of Geology* into Chinese.¹¹⁸ Although its impact was restricted to the scientific field, it would go on to have a far-reaching influence on modern Chinese society.

Thanks particularly to his translation of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*, Yen Fu’s social thought has had a profound impact on the Chinese reading public from the late Qing period to the present day. Yen Fu, who, as noted above, studied at the Royal Naval College in Great Britain from 1877 to 1879, endeavoured to learn Western thought on wealth and power in the Victorian era with the aim of liberating late Qing China from both domestic crises and

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¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 37.
the incursions of international imperialism. He became familiar with Western social structures, political systems and modes of academic thought during his academic training at the Royal Naval College. After he had finished studying in Britain in 1879, he continued his research into classic Western texts in China.\footnote{皮後鋒 (Pi Houfeng):〈第一章: 時代與生平〉,《嚴復評傳》(上) (南京:南京大學出版社, 2011) 第20頁。} It was incredibly important that Yen Fu understood very clearly what many key factors had inhibited China’s progress towards becoming a modern society in his times whilst ensuring he wished to convey progressive Western concepts and methods to China (\textit{i.e.} to change the nation and its people). He might need to form a unique integrative perspective on literary criticism in his writings. Hence, according to his published translation of \textit{Evolution and Ethics}, Yen Fu would introduce the biological concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest to modern China.

As mentioned above, Yen Fu’s translation of Huxley’s \textit{Evolution and Ethics} into Chinese, which he called \textit{Tien-yen Lun}, meaning \textit{On Evolution}, was published in 1898. Yen Fu did not faithfully translate the original title into Chinese; instead, he attempted to focus on the topic of evolution. Since Huxley distinguished between evolution and ethics, the title of his work could more literally be translated into modern Chinese as a literal translation of \textit{Evolution and Ethics}. Yen Fu, nonetheless, seemed to disagree, not least because he added his own specific viewpoint and critical commentary in the book, which included some adaptations of Herbert Spencer’s view that a variety of principles of evolution in wild species fit in with human society. Another linguistic problem with Yen Fu’s translation of Huxley’s work is that he used the ancient style of written Chinese—the \textit{ku-wen} of the \textit{T’ung-cheng} School as practiced during the Qing Dynasty—to introduce the book to the reading public, particularly the Chinese elite. As an ardent translator, Yen Fu made an effort to communicate the essence of Western thought to the reader, as Benjamin Schwartz points out:

The translation of \textit{Evolution and Ethics} is, in fact, not so much a
translation as an abridged summation of the original. In other cases, he
adheres more closely to the original text. What he tries to do, he
informs to us, is to grasp the essential meaning of whole sentences or
passages containing whole thoughts and then to communicate their
meaning in idiomatic Chinese. In actuality, the creation of new terms
required infinite pains. In his own words, he sometimes “pondered for a
month over one term.”

The hand-writing of the *ku-wen* of the *T'ung-cheng* School was one of the
most fascinating aspects of Yen Fu’s translation of *Evolution and Ethics*. His
classical style conveyed Darwin’s evolutionary thinking to the Chinese people,
thereby instilling the ideas of struggle for existence and natural selection into
the Chinese mind at a critical moment of national crisis. In his elegant preface
to *Evolution and Ethics*, written in his own handwriting, Yen Fu wrote in the
*ku-wen* of the *T'ung-cheng* School as follows:

Figure 3. Yen Fu’s Preface in *Tien-yen Lun*

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120 Benjamin I. Schwartz, “Chapter IV: Western Wisdom at Its Source: *Evolution and Ethics*,
*In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The
By translating *Evolution and Ethics* in this way, Yen Fu put forward valid criticisms on the crises of faith that afflicted late Qing China. The significance of the influence of *Tien-yen Lun* is noted by Fairbank and Liu:

Yen Fu’s writings and translations soon had an important impact on the reading public. His *Tien-yen Lun*, a resounding success after its publication in 1898, had had influence even prior to publication, since both K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch’i-ch’ao had read the text and became Yen’s admirers before it appeared in print.\(^{121}\)

Like a social engineer, Yen Fu fully intended to reconstruct the structure of feudal society starting with modern knowledge, writing and translation. His cultural selection of canonical Western texts revealed his literary mission to develop a synthetic epistemology between China and the West. As Li Xinyu commented, ‘Yen Fu attempted to take advantage of the theories of Western politics, economics and sociology to transform China’s old knowledge system and its values’.\(^{122}\) From 1896 to 1908, he embarked on the onerous task of translating eight Western masterpieces, as selected by him, into the *wen-yen* writing style on the basis of a cross-cultural exchange of ideas. The *ku-wen* of the *T’ung-cheng* School was extremely prosperous in the late Qing period, even though few people could comprehend such an ancient Chinese writing style. For this reason, among others, there was a language gap separating the rulers from the people. On formal occasions, officials and literati used the *wen-yen* writing style to communicate with each other, and it was therefore within this context that Yen Fu translated seven other Western texts into traditional Chinese:

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\(^{122}\) 李新宇 (Li Xinyu): 〈第五章 (上): 天演論旋風〉，《帶來學問回中國：盜火者嚴復》(天津：天津人民出版社，2010) 第 118-19 頁。
Yen Fu seemed content to translate each of these famous works into an archaic form of the Chinese language; however, many Chinese in the late Qing era may not have thoroughly comprehended the intended meanings of these works, especially when trying to read between the lines. Yen Fu used his archaic writing style when translating many Western works whereas, in contrast, the tide was turning towards the adoption of the Chinese vernacular during the time of the May Fourth Movement. Thus, many Chinese literati were openly opposed to Yen Fu’s archaic writing style and instead supported fitted a more modern colloquial style of Chinese writing better suited to the needs of the common people. Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei, Zhang Junmai, Fu Sinian and Qu Qiubai all held their differences of opinions about Yen Fu’s archaic writing style. Therefore, the literary revolution had the positive effect of demanding that the language barrier between the rulers and the people should be cleared away without hesitation. In addition, it is noteworthy that the language gap separating Yen Fu’s wen-yen Chinese from the English of his source texts proved problematic in a number of ways. For one thing, very few Chinese scholars are able to wholly grasp the substantial meanings in Yen Fu’s translations and writings, thus making it difficult to translate these into colloquial Chinese. For another, Yen Fu himself misunderstood and

misinterpreted some parts of his source texts. With these deficiencies in mind, Zhang Yanhua concludes that Yen Fu’s method of translating exposes the demerits of ancient Chinese as a medium for dealing with modern Western culture. Specifically, she notes that Yen Fu subjectively defended the dignity of ancient wen-yen Chinese while objectively exposing flaws in ancient Chinese as well.\textsuperscript{124}

Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu reflected upon the coming of the literary revolution with the goal of replacing the wen-yen writing style with modern vernacular Chinese as the dominant literary language. Their chief motivation for driving through this change opposed the wen-yen writing style amid concerns that the common people were unable to speak, listen, read and write in what they come to apprehend as this old-fashioned language. Even today, many Chinese scholars still cannot thoroughly comprehend or translate Yen Fu’s translated works into vernacular Chinese, let alone produce English editions of his paraphrasitic works. Meanwhile, many British writers, such as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy, wrote their novels using colloquial forms of English that would have been widely understood by their readers.\textsuperscript{125} Although vernacular literature had been fairly ordinary in Britain for many centuries, a similar trend had not played out in China. In brief, archaic Chinese was unfit and outmoded as a popular literary language in the early years of the twentieth century. Indeed, by this time Chinese as a written language was entering into a new era, not least thanks to Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu who were opposed to the use of archaic Chinese in both the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement.

K’ang Yu-wei was a political reformer in the late Qing period whose evolutionary thinking was quite distinct from Darwin’s theory of evolution. His theory of the progress of history stemmed from the Confucian ethical tradition. Independently of Darwinian ideas, he conceived of the principle of evolution as a process of passing through three ages: \textit{i.e.} from Disorder to Order, and then on to Great Peace. In other words, K’ang Yu-wei’s evolutionary theory

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 21.
proposed a chain of events which led through a series of ages. Using evolutionary thought in his way, he went on to apply his historical method to a fantastic utopian vision of the future society in the book, *Ta T'ung Shu* [*The Great Unity*]. In the Age of Great Peace, he proposed that all nations in our world would form a Great Unity; this was his one-world philosophy. In accordance with Confucian utopian thought on *Datong*, K’ang Yu-wei associated his central ideas in *Ta T’ung Shu* with an insubstantial dream. He claimed that ‘progress ceased when that track was lost, when the Confucian Way was misconstrued’. His vision of evolution, stemming from a Confucian belief in the harmony of cosmic order, was relevant to the concept of the progress of human history and its significance for an ideal world. His theory of ‘The Three Ages’ proceeds thus:

The meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* consists in the evolution of Three Ages: the Age of Disorder, the Age of Order, and the Age of Great Peace...The Way of Confucius embraces the evolution of the Three Sequences and the Three Ages.

And:

Thus there is an evolution from Disorder to Order, and from Order to Great Peace. Evolution proceeds gradually and changes have their origins. This is true with all nations...Thus, by observing the modifications and additions of the three successive eras of Xia, Shang, and Zhou, one can by extension know the changes in a hundred generations to come.

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Again, it is worth pointing out that K’ang Yu-wei was intent on grasping ancient concepts on the progress of human history through three ages in his writings. In this way, he and many other Chinese scientists influenced the worldviews and outlooks on life of the Chinese people in the nation’s darkest period. While the revolutionary road ahead would be hard, and regardless of whether Chinese scientists or scholars accepted Western thought, many challenged international imperialism while also being fiercely opposed to the old corrupt regime. As a consequence, they needed to change the status quo to allow a new regime to emerge.

1.6 Conclusion

A variety of academic disciplines that will make the crucial difference in individual chapters are integrated in order to achieve this study’s research objectives: biology, philosophy, modern Chinese history and literature, baihua-English and wen-yen-English translations. Each of these disciplines can be used to interpret the interaction between evolutionary thinking and new Chinese literature. Despite the differences between the disciplines, the purpose of this study is to provide an interdisciplinary exploration of complex messages inspired by Darwin’s theory of evolution in modern Chinese literature, taking account of differing viewpoints and assessing the profound influences on science, philosophy, history, literature and much more.

Through careful study of change and progress in modern Chinese literature, this study is intended to provide a clearer understanding of how Darwin’s theory of evolution became established in China through intercultural communication with the West. Since the publication of Tien-yen Lun in 1898, the scientific truth of evolutionary theory has gradually come to be accepted in China. In this book, Yen Fu revealed a reformist agenda as well as his determination to take advantage of Darwinian ideas to explain the evolution of society. A number of influential Chinese leaders have tried to employ Darwin’s theory through literature as a means of bringing about
change in the mentality and culture of the Chinese people. Modern China has evolved over three different regimes (i.e. the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China), gradually transforming into her present-day state. Admittedly, Marxism has replaced evolutionism in China's domestic politics today, primarily because Mao Zedong established a socialist state out of the revolutionary wars and social upheavals of the twentieth century.
Chapter Two
Initial Interaction between Darwinism and Chinese Intellectuals

2.1 Introduction

China was fraught with revolutionary ideas as well as social conflicts during the late Qing times. It was Mao Zedong’s public comment on some important historical figures influenced by Western thought that following China’s defeat in the First Opium War in 1840, Hong Xiuquan, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei and Sun Yat-sen were the progressive representatives of China, who sought new truths in Western thought prior to the birth of Chinese Communism.\(^{128}\) Instead of responding to recent innovations in Western thought such as Darwinism, in the late Qing period the Chinese people were stuck in a cycle of history in which autocrats fought to maintain their dominance over the common people so as to stabilize their control over the state.\(^{129}\) Having recognised this problem, Yen Fu launched a serious critique of Chinese feudal society and its core values based upon his belief in the applicability of the Darwinian theory of natural selection to peoples and nations. He thus took the view that China’s historic feudal society was the main reason for the country’s weakness and backwardness. In addition, he severely criticised the emperors and the autocracy which they represented; indeed, he denounced the Chinese Emperors from the very first among them, Qin Shi Huang\(^{130}\), as ‘bandits who had usurped the nation’ [竊國大盜].\(^{131}\) Yen

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\(^{128}\) 黃克武 (Huang Ko-wu): 〈第一章 導論〉，《惟識之安: 嚴復與近代中國的文化轉型》 (台北：聯經出版社，2010) 第11頁。

\(^{129}\) Ibid., p. 69.

\(^{130}\) Jiefu Xiao and Jinquan Li, “36: The Philosophy of Enlightenment in the Reform Movement of 1898”, A Concise History of Chinese History: Main Currents of Thought from Myth to Mao (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2012) 484. Jiefu Xiao pinpoints that Yen Fu had launched a severe critique of China’s monarchy of feudalism since Qin Shi Huang as follows:

The absolute monarchy of feudalism initiated by the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty,
Fu was fully aware that this historical cycle had allowed the Chinese Emperors to maintain the autocratic rule over many dynasties. Conscious of his country's lack of knowledge of modern Western science, Yen Fu thoroughly rebutted the time-honoured concepts in Chinese thought such as the intransience and unsteadiness of Heaven, Earth and the Way as viewed in the cycle of history in China’s customs and conventions. In antithesis to the latter view, as Yen Fu understood, Darwin’s theory of natural selection proposes that the evolution of animals and plants, including humans, is largely based upon continuous change and natural variation.

The British biologist, Thomas Henry Huxley, delivered an important lecture entitled ‘Evolution and Ethics' at the University of Oxford in 1893. This illuminating lecture formed the intellectual basis of Huxley’s later book, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*. Yen Fu’s translation and commentary of *Tien-yen Lun* in 1898 was a milestone in the widespread, formal interaction between Darwinism and the modern Chinese literati. This book especially represented initial cross-cultural historical literature between England and China. Like a beacon in the dark, Yen Fu’s tiny book, *Tien-yen Lun*, gradually made its impact felt in areas as diverse as nationalism, evolutionism, realism, liberalism, science, democracy, iconoclasm, the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. The cross-cultural exchange of evolutionary ideas which rules all the land, continually brings terrible misfortunes to the masses of the Chinese people.

131 黃克武 (Huang Ko-wu), p. 70.
132 劉夢溪 (Liu Mengxi) 主編: 〈救亡決論〉, 〈嚴復評傳〉, (石家莊市: 河北教育出版社, 1996) 第 563 頁。As regards the concept of change between China and the West, Yen Fu’s arguments were encapsulated in the following quotation:

天不變,地不變,道亦不變。此觀化不審似是實非之言也。

The Heaven has no change; the Earth has no change; the Dao also has no change. This view on change seems to be true; however, it reveals an errant allegation.

(researcher’s translation)

Yen Fu spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the fixed concept of there being no change in Heaven, Earth and the Way. This concept of no change is problematic in China. In fact, Yen Fu, influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theory, was convinced that change occurs as a continuous process in the natural environment, whereby animals and plants adapt themselves to the environmental context in order to survive and reproduce. Yen Fu seemed to imply that, in the same way, the Chinese people should positively adapt themselves to the changing global order, thereby replacing the concept of the cycle of history.
initiated by Yen Fu’s work influenced a series of social reforms as well as revolutionary movements in modern China.

The main focus of this chapter is on the far-reaching consequences of cross-cultural contact between China and the West in the areas of history, philosophy and literature, which have produced new questions and perspectives. Accordingly, by means of differing viewpoints from the Treaty of Shimonoseki to the Chinese Civil War, we should be able to differentiate between the newly developing social forces and China’s national humiliation, assessing the depths of their impacts on modern Chinese history and literature, philosophy, war and evolutionary thinking.

During the late Qing period, the wheels of international imperialism rumbled through China. Although China incessantly resisted the encroachment of these forces, the backwardness and fragility of the late Qing state generated huge despair in public consciousness and persuaded many of the necessity for massive changes. Some Chinese intellectuals turned to the progressive West to seek solutions to these problems in areas such as politics, economics, education, the military system, and cultural and social reforms. Yen Fu, as well as other Chinese intellectuals and patriots sided with bian fa [reform],\(^\text{133}\) which led to the formation of national policies aimed at turning around the fortunes of the Qing Dynasty. The slogan, ‘changing methods to increase the strength of the country’, stimulated action in every corner of late Qing society. British progressive ideas helped to shake up imperial China. The majority of Chinese were therefore surprised that China was losing its sense of itself as the ‘Middle Kingdom’: that is, after the Opium War it was no

\(^\text{133}\) This concept of bian-fa may date back to the Qin Dynasty. Shang Yang’s bian-fa successfully promoted Qin Shi Huang’s unification of China; however, during the Northern Song Dynasty, Wang Anshi’s bian-fa was motivated by the poverty and weakness of his country, which desperately needed new measures and methods to strengthen its fragile condition. Wang Anshi executed a number of political, military, agricultural, educational and economic reforms that resulted in serious financial problems and final failure in the eleventh century. In the late Qing period, Li Hongzhang, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao and many other patriots also attempted to initiate reforms aimed at reinvigorating the Qing Dynasty’s political and military fortunes. Nevertheless, these members of the Chinese literati or political reformers were rather crestfallen in the wake of the failure of the Hundred Days’ Reform in 1898. Many radical revolutions would follow upon these harrowing experiences of bian-fa in the late Qing period. A decade later, Sun Yat-sen determinedly agitated for an anti-Manchu revolution and was thereby able to establish the democratic Republic in Asia.
longer considered to be at the centre of the world.\textsuperscript{134}

It was for this reason that many Chinese literati called for ‘Mr Science and Mr Democracy’ during the May Fourth Movement. Bertrand Russell convincingly commented on the scientific aspect of this problem:

Unfortunately for China, its culture was deficient in one respect, namely science.

And

The fact that Britain has produced Shakespeare and Milton, Locke and Hume, and all the other men who have adorned literature and the arts, does not make us superior to the Chinese. What makes us superior is Newton and Robert Boyle and their scientific successors.\textsuperscript{135}

Indeed, China fell far behind Great Britain in the areas of science and scientific methods, although ancient China once had a splendid period for science. Commenting on one aspect of ancient China’s scientific success, G. E. R. Lloyd declares, ‘Chinese records of novae, supernovae, and sunspots are, for instance, the most complete we have down to the seventeenth

\textsuperscript{134} William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, comp., “Radical Reform at the End of the Qing”, Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume II, From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century (New York: Columbia UP, 2000) 268. First, the following quotation from K’ang Yu-wei’s “The Three Ages” describes why the Chinese people held a deep-rooted belief in their country’s central status in the world during the Confucian era: “In the Age of Order he [Confucius] considers China as the center, while treating the outlying barbarian tribes as on the outside.” Furthermore, Masataka Banno briefly describes the social condition of Qing China prior to 1840s as follows:

China before the Opium War (1840-1842) would not recognize any other state as equal to herself. Foreign relations were viewed as part of an hierarchical order consisting of “China at the center” (Chung-hua) and “barbarians on the periphery” (i or i-ti). (Banno 2)

In ancient China, i was an Eastern tribe; ti was a Northern tribe. The tribe of Huaxia lived in the central plains. Hence, the tribe of Huaxia considered themselves to be at the centre of the world—the other people, such as i or i-ti, were the barbarian tribes who lived on the peripheral areas. This old ideology had passed down to the modern Chinese people since the tribe of Huaxia in ancient China.

It is true that some Chinese scientists made enormous contributions to ancient astronomy, as well as in other areas. Most Chinese, however, remained ignorant of modern science under the autocratic political systems of most of the Ming and Qing emperors. Much like Yen Fu’s severe critique of China’s cyclical view of history, Pusey comments, ‘The Westerners’ secret was in their attitude, their philosophy… So the Westerners’ secret was belief in progress. Chinese believed in cycles and got nowhere.’

Spurred on by the desire for reform, elite intellectuals in late Qing China strongly advocated various methods of change aimed at increasing the strength of the country rather than leaving it a hostage to fortune. Meanwhile, Darwinism was gradually influencing people’s ways of thinking, to greater and lesser extents. Some intellectuals were helped in their understanding of Darwin’s ideas by Yen Fu’s brief introduction to Darwinian evolutionary thinking. Nonetheless, there were a great many Chinese who were confused and misunderstood the core ideas of Darwinian evolution at that time.

Matters were changed by the May Fourth Movement of 1919 which came to be one of the most influential events in Chinese history. As with the national humiliation that beset late Qing China, following the end of the First World War students and scholars were becoming more and more dissatisfied with the Chinese Beiyang government’s dereliction of duty in the Treaty of Versailles. Before the war, Germany had colonial interests in Shandong. Japan, which supported the Allied Powers, declared war against the German army in Kiaochow, Shandong (Shantung) Province, with the result that the Japanese army occupied Qingdao (Tsingtau) and thus gained control of Shandong Province. Japan used the Great War as a pretext for obtaining political and commercial interests in China. After the war had ended, Japan persuaded the Allied Powers to accept its demands at the Treaty of Versailles by claiming that it would take the place of Germany by occupying Shandong. It was a national humiliation for the majority of the Chinese that the Treaty of Versailles led directly to the loss of Chinese sovereignty over Shandong.

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Figure 4, a stamp issued by the German Post Office in 1901 with a Qingdao (Tsingtau) postmark, provides some historical evidence of Germany's colonization of Shandong Province (the German spelling ‘Kiautschou’ corresponds to the English ‘Kiaochow’).

Figure 4. A stamp of Kiaochow

2.2 K’ang Yu-wei’s One World in Ta T’ung Shu

Since ancient times, China has had her own unique evolutionary thought, particularly as described in K’ang Yu-wei’s Ta T’ung Shu [《大同書》] and Hu Shih’s “The Pre-Qin Masters on Evolutionism” 138 [〈先秦諸子進化論〉]. K’ang Yu-wei (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao (1873-1929) were influential writers and political reformers in the late Qing times. K’ang Yu-wei’s Ta T’ung Shu (1935), the original draft of which was named Universal Principles of Mankind, consists of ten chapters. Similar to Plato’s Republic or More’s Utopia, Ta T’ung Shu concerns the development of utopian ideals through social evolution and political reform. K’ang Yu-wei drew upon the Confucian ideal of the great unity of the world as the theoretical foundation of his work. In this way, he was inclined to integrate Western democratic thought, the ideal of Datong and evolutionary ideas in order to visualise the future development of our world. He saw the development of democracy in the United States and other nations as an historical process of evolution, claiming that ‘the progress of democracy from less to more is a natural principle. Hence after the United

138 See Hu Shih’s arguments for this essay in Chapter Five.
States had been established a great revolution in laws took place, and other countries followed this.\textsuperscript{139} K’ang further illustrated the progress of history as he saw it in \textit{Gongyang Zhuan}, thereby supplementing his observations on human society in \textit{Ta T’ung Shu}. K’ang Yu-wei provided a perspective in favour of political reform and social change based upon a theory of historical progress.

K’ang Yu-wei, who learned from Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian precepts and Buddhist canons, and Liang Qichao had an enormous influence on the Chinese people in the late Qing era.\textsuperscript{140} K’ang Yu-wei’s three most significant works are \textit{Forged Classics of the Hsin Period} (1891), \textit{Confucius as a Reformer} (1897), and the aforementioned \textit{Ta T’ung Shu}. Writing on the Confucian ideal ‘encouraging \textit{jen}’\textsuperscript{141} [universal love] in \textit{Ta T’ung Shu}, K’ang Yu-wei outlined his distinctive utopian ideal of the Age of One World.\textsuperscript{142} Following his teacher’s lead, Liang Qichao also advocated reforms in drama, poetry and novel writing. Qing China was defeated by Japan in the Sea War of 1894 following the rise of the latter nation during or after the Meiji Restoration. A majority of the Chinese people were awakened by this debacle which came as an unprecedented shock. At this critical moment, K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao mutually drafted a letter of petition, ‘The Gongche Shangshu’, which was sent to the Emperor Guangxu in 1895. In the letter, they recommended that Qing China followed the conditions set out in the Treaty of Shimonoseki: namely, ceding Taiwan and Liaodong to Japan and paying a large sum of money. Later in the political campaign held in 1898, they cooperated with each other in ‘the Hundred Days of Reform’ movement (actually lasting 103 days), which eventually failed because of inappropriate interference from the Empress Dowager, Cixi. Owing to the autocratic feudal rule of the Manchu government, K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao avoided the politics of persecution by flying to Japan and other nations for more than a


\textsuperscript{141} See K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, pp. 244-46.

\textsuperscript{142} Hao Chang, p. 53.
decade. K'ang Yu-wei fell out with Liang Qichao when the former supported the Manchu Restoration carried out by General Zhang Xun in 1917. Meanwhile, having taken up opposition against the imperial system, Liang Qichao championed the nascent Chinese Republic as a replacement for the Manchu regime and the feudal system.

Liang Qichao was both a learned Confucian scholar and a social reformer. His most famous work is The Chinese Academic History in the Past Three Hundred Years [Zhongkuo jinsanbainien xueshushi] published in 1924. In 1897, Liang Qichao’s evolutionary concepts were influenced by his close reading of Yen Fu’s Tien-yen Lun before its formal publication. From then on, he began more fully to comprehend Western evolutionary thought. The trend towards the transmission of evolutionism and pragmatism was greatly accelerated during the New Culture Movement, thereby creating a broader understanding of scientific progress among Chinese intellectuals and a number of other people who were eager to challenge old traditions in China. The coming of evolutionism, therefore, gradually contributed towards the development of modern China—a new era that would lead to cultural transformation as well as political reformation. From this standpoint, Liang Qichao deemed that both Eastern and Western thought mutually advocated a peaceful world order by harmonizing the value of mind and matter with their philosophical thinking. Thus, in “Travel Impressions of Europe”, he stated:

Now pragmatism and evolutionism are being promoted, the aim being to embrace the ideal in the practical and to harmonize mind and matter. In my opinion, this is precisely the line of development in our ancient systems of thought. Although the schools of the sages—Confucius, Laozi, and Mozi—are different, their common goal is to unify the ideal and the practical...¹⁴³

Liang Qichao was glaringly at odds with the stance of K’ang Yu-wei over the latter’s self-righteousness and his extreme opinions on the Chinese imperial system. K’ang Yu-wei continued to insist on his Confucian radicalism, which he preached and underscored with reference to classical readings of Confucianism. Liang Qichao, on the other hand, may have taken a different perspective towards Confucian heritage.

According to the original sources used by K’ang Yu-wei in Gongyang Zhuan, the progress of human history can be divided into three important stages in the universal One World: First, political chaos emerges during the Age of Disorder; second, a well-established political system develops during the Age of Increasing Peace and Equality; finally, during the Age of Complete Peace and Equality, the whole Earth comes to be ruled by a public government, which would bring about a great harmony around the world. This ideal of societal development was grounded in traditional Confucian doctrines, which K’ang Yu-wei explained in Ta T’ung Shu as follows:

神明聖王孔子早慮之憂之，故立三統三世之法，據亂之後，易以升平，太平，小康之後，進以大同。146

The sage-king Confucius, who was of godlike perception, in early [times] took thought [of this problem], and grieved over it. Therefore he set up the law of the Three Governments and the Three Ages: following [the Age of] Disorder, [the world] will change to [the Ages, first] of Increasing Peace-and-Equality, [and finally], of Complete Peace-and-Equality; following the Age of Little Peace-and-Happiness, [the world] will

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145 K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, pp. 105-28. See the chart of the three ages [in the evolution] of uniting the nations into one world.
146 康有為(K’ang Yu-wei): 〈大同書第一〉，《大同書》 (北京：中國人民大學出版社，2010) 第7頁。
advance to [the Age of] One World.  

As part of his exposition of the progress of human history towards the One World, K’ang Yu-wei referred to the historical progress of state boundaries in terms of natural selection; that is to say, he suggested a law of natural selection, as he saw it, governing the annexation of smaller countries by stronger and larger ones. He illustrated this point by drawing on a vivid example from Chinese history; namely the First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, used military force to unify seven states in 221 B.C. He also referred to examples from European history: ‘The twelve states of Greece lasted for two thousand years and were then united by Macedonia. They were later governed by Rome’. Indeed, he provided examples of this supposed process of natural selection from Germany, Italy, Russia, Japan, England, France and America, all of which had been formed out of many smaller and weaker states or nations. Following this line of reasoning, he therefore insisted on the abolition of states and their national boundaries so that a universal state could be established. K’ang Yu-wei’s view of the path towards his political ideal of the One World is encapsulated in the following passage:

蓋分併之勢，乃淘汰之自然，其強大之併吞，弱小之滅亡，亦適以為大同之先驅耳。  

The parts becoming joined thus being due to natural selection, the swallowing up by the strong and large and the extermination of the weak and small may then be considered to presage One World.

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147 K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, p. 72.
148 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
149 Ibid., p. 84.
150 Ibid., p. 84.
151 康有為(K’ang Yu-wei), 第 220 頁。
152 K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, p. 85.
Following the military defeats suffered by Qing China against Western countries and Japan in the nineteenth century, K’ang Yu-wei developed a passionate hatred of warfare aggravated by international imperialism. Disheartened by Qing China’s failures in these conflicts, he observed that the peoples on all sides of wars suffer tragedies and develop antagonistic feelings towards each other as a result. To avoid wars and nurture a more promising future, he argued for a policy of disarmament and the abolition of national boundaries in order to expedite the uniform development of all nations towards the One World as described in Ta Tung Shu. Through his advocating of the dissolution of all national boundaries on Earth, K’ang Yu-wei stated his opposition to war and the elimination of nationalism which he saw as a cause of the former. 153 Analysing this uniform development towards his utopian ideal, K’ang Yu-wei drew the conclusion that ‘the progress of state boundaries from division to union is, then, a natural thing’.154 He specifically mentioned the founding of a public parliament and government for all nations as essential steps to hastening human evolution towards the One World.155 Having considered the place of these political measures in the One World, he believed that far from being hollow dreams, Confucius’s Era of Complete Peace and Equality, the Buddha’s Lotus World, Lieh Tzu’s Mount Tan P’ing and Darwin’s Utopia156 all represented a common accomplishable goal:

然觀今之勢，雖國義不能驟去，兵爭不能遽弭，而以公理言之，人心觀之，大勢所趨，將來所至，有必詣於大同而後已者，但需以年歲，行以曲折耳。孔子之太平世，佛之蓮花世界，列子之甔瓶山，達爾文之烏托

154 Ibid., p. 84.
155 Ibid., pp. 91-104.
156 As a matter of fact, Darwin’s theory of natural selection could not be possibly existed in the utopian world, even though Darwin indeed considered the importance of progress and harmony in the complex relations of the natural world. In his utopian thought, K’ang Yu-wei conjectured that the political system would evolve into a single public government in the One World. His main concern also focused on the progress of history towards a great harmony in a future society. On this point, although Darwin may not have incorporated utopian vision in his evolutionary theory, he nevertheless hoped that human evolution might reach an optimal condition of a harmonious order. Therefore, K’ang Yu-wei saw his philosophy of One World as being compatible with Darwin’s ultimate concern over human evolution.
Yet viewing present conditions, [we see that] even though nationalism cannot precipitately be abolished and warfare cannot be eradicated [all at once], yet speaking in terms of universal principles, men’s minds do behold this [coming about]. That to which the general state of affairs tends will in the future be attained. It is certain that One World eventually will be reached. It is just that it will take an age and will be a complicated [task] to carry out. Confucius’s Era of Complete Peace-and-Equality, the Buddha’s Lotus World, Lieh Tzu’s Mount Tan P’ing, Darwin’s Utopia, are realities [of the future], and not empty imaginings.  

Nevertheless, K’ang Yu-wei’s cherry picking of idealised elements from four different worldviews left many people unconvinced of their veracity.

Prior to reading Yen Fu’s *Tien-yen Lun*, K’ang Yu-wei had already studied *I Ching* [*The Book of Changes*] and *The World News*, a popular journal in the late Qing China. From his reading of *I Ching*, even more significantly, he learned about ancient Chinese evolutionary ideas and their application to understand natural phenomena such as geology, cosmography and heavenly bodies. As a political reformer, K’ang Yu-wei identified a number of serious problems in his long-standing observations of Chinese society. Influenced by Confucian values, he drafted numerous plans for political, economic and social reforms that culminated in his ideals of the great harmony in the One World. This ideal poses a somewhat fantastical solution to the problems caused by the innumerable barriers raised between humanity, nations and states from ancient times to this day. From this peaceful worldview, K’ang Yu-wei strongly objected to competition and class struggle between humans,

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157 康有為 (*K’ang Yu-wei*), 第 220 頁。
158 K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, p. 84.
159 馬洪林 (*Ma Honglin*): 〈第五章: 進化論與公羊三世說—康有為的進化觀念〉，《康有為評傳》上冊 (南京: 南京大學出版社, 2011) 第 160 頁。
diverging radically from Darwinian evolutionary theory and Marxist concepts of class struggle. With the aim of ‘Abolishing Administrative Boundaries and Governing with Complete Peace-and-Equality’ in Ta T'ung Shu, he recommended that laziness, idolizing individuals, competition and abortion all be prohibited. Furthermore, in regard to Social Darwinist views of biological competition, K’ang Yu-wei condemned selfishness and competitiveness in human society:

The strong oppressed the weak; the bold cheated the timid; the artful deceived the ignorant; the majority harried the minority. This is all fantastic nonsense, and [to be described as] ‘when knowing, to but half-comprehend.’

For example, Darwin propounded the theory of evolution, considering that what is caused by nature [t’ien] is [therefore] right. [This] leads men to believe that competition is the great principle [of life]. Whereupon competition—which is the greatest evil to the public existing in the world, past or present—is carried on every day and month; and eminent men all pay their respects to it without shame. With this, the earth becomes a jungle, and all is ‘blood and iron’. This great evil is worse than flooding waters.

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160 See K’ang Yu-wei’s four prohibitions. The third prohibition was opposed to competition (第三禁競爭). K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, p. 258.

161 K’ang Yu-wei and Laurence G Thompson, p. 257.

162 康有為(K’ang Yu-wei), 第 315 頁。

In addition to his idealised vision of historical progress, K'ang Yu-wei also challenged inequalities linked to race, slavery and gender in his book, arguing that:

Of the sufferings of mankind due to inequality, none compare to [those which stem from] a baseless [distinction by] classes. There are three important kinds [of inferior classes]: the first is inferior races; the second is slaves; the third is women.\textsuperscript{164}

Above all, he posed ‘the woman question’ arising from the long-term oppression of women in China as a result of contemporary political thought and male chauvinism. In Qing China women were unable to serve as officials, take part in state examinations, participate in public affairs, choose free marriage, become scholars and assume a range of other roles in Chinese feudal society.\textsuperscript{165} He publicly discussed the unreasonable treatment and abject social status of women, with reference to human rights in \textit{Ta Tung Shu}.

K’ang Yu-wei’s argument that the principle of history would side with the weak nation over the strong country revealed his special politico-social vision. Again, he claimed that ‘civilization is always [highly developed] in weak states, and not in strong countries’.\textsuperscript{166} Yet this principle of history would differ greatly from that associated with Darwinian evolutionary theory. In Chinese history, for example, the military capability in the Mongol Empire was much stronger than that of in the Southern Sung Dynasty, while the Southern Sung Dynasty was much more civilised than the Mongol Empire.\textsuperscript{167} Arts, literature, economy, trade and science in the Southern Sung Dynasty were more highly developed than that of in the Mongol Empire, such as the achievements in painting, poetry, calligraphy, mathematics and astronomy. Like K’ang Yu-wei’s assertion, civilisation would be highly developed in the weak nation, rather than the strong one. Thus, he began employing this historical principle to support China’s long-suffering women and weaker nations in his writing. At

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., pp. 134-39.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., pp. 151-55.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p. 155.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., p. 155.
this point, *Ta T'ung Shu* teems with many progressive ideals and reformist plans which, at the time of writing, transported the reader to specific opinions and views on his philosophy of One World.

2.3 Liang Qichao and Darwinian Philosophy

In an essay entitled “Initial Ancestor in the Study on Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his Biographical Sketch” [〈天演學初祖達爾文之學說及其略傳〉], Liang Qichao introduced Darwin’s theory and *magnum opus, On the Origin of Species* to the Chinese intelligentsia in 1902. In the essay, he enunciated the Darwinian principle of the survival of the fittest to the Chinese people and described the circulation and reception of Darwin’s work around the world. This could have meant that Liang Qichao also intended to apply Social Darwinism to the Chinese community typified by the Darwinian principle. In a similar vein, M. J. Hawkins has discussed the Darwinian worldview in terms of both the struggle for existence and the cumulative effects of natural selection, highlighting the former as crucial to human evolution in line with Spencer. The relation between the Darwinian worldview and human evolution was suggested by an account of Darwinian evolutionary theory in which M.J. Hawkins’s statement was similar to the concept of Spencer’s social evolution. Accordingly, Liang Qichao took cognizance of the history of competition underlying human evolution and called on the Chinese people to be mindful of the importance of replacing fragility with strength. For this reason, he placed much reliance on Darwinian philosophy as a learning aid to help to stimulate the progress of Qing China, predicting that Darwinism would be widespread around the world in the twentieth century. Liang Qichao himself wrote to awaken the Chinese people with the Darwinian worldview in the following passage:

Over the past two decades, drastic changes have occurred in various fields totally differing from those of past millennia, stretching to politics, academia, religion, intelligentsia, or personnel circles. So-called competition means evolution: we should hold superior strength, rather than inferior weakness. Such an argument has been recapitulated and kept in mind by all from primary school pupils to statesmen in every country. In as far as its impact reached to the relationship between nation and nation, and, therefore, the policy of imperialism emerged. In regard to the relationship between different fields of knowledge, synthetic philosophy has arisen. As the twentieth century approaches in the future, the world will become completely dominated by the policy and the philosophy. And the progress of humans will create wonders. This trend? This news? Where did their origins come from? It has been said that this revelation originated in the very year of 1859 (namely, the ninth year of the Emperor Xianfeng’s reign). For what reason? In the same year, Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species*. 

169 梁啟超 (Liang Qichao); 〈天演學初祖達爾文之學說及其略傳〉 (“First Ancestor in the Theory of Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his Biographical Sketch”), 《進化論的影響力—達爾文在中國》[Darwinism’s Influence: Darwin in China], Ed. 陳思和 (Chen Sihe) (南昌: 江西高校出版社, 2009) 第5页。
In light of Darwin’s explanation of biological changes, Liang Qichao tried to distinguish further between natural selection and artificial selection. The species would continue its progress as a result of unending selection in the natural environment. He drew a link between creatures and the natural environment:

達爾文以生物變遷之原因，皆由生存競爭優勝劣敗之公例而來，而勝敗之機有由於自然者，有由於人為者。由於自然者，謂之自然淘汰；由於人為者，謂之人事淘汰。淘汰不已，而種乃日進焉。

The cause of biological transformations is explained by Darwin’s theory of natural selection. The universal example of evolutionary theory means that the superior will win, while the inferior will lose. The chance for victory or for defeat is either by nature or by humans. By way of nature, it is called natural selection; however, artificial selection is motivated by human intention. The continuity of selection generates the progress of species day by day.

And:

所謂天然淘汰者何也，此義達爾文初不敢武斷，其後苦思力索，旁徵博較，然後尋出物競天擇之公理。此物與彼物，同在一地，而枯莞殊科者，必其物有特別之點，與天然界之境遇相適，則能自存焉，能傳種焉。譬之沙漠，有各種色之蟲滋生其間，其所以受生者本相等也，但青紅紫黑等色之蟲，易於辨認，故飛禽蜥蜴諸物，輒博而啄之，日漸減之，其

170 陳思和 (Chen Sihe)，第6頁。
What is so-called natural selection? About the definition of this term, Darwin did not arbitrarily identify this theory from the outset. Subsequently, Darwin spent a great deal of time thinking about his theory of natural selection, and he thereupon used and compared crucial details and extensive evidence in his search for the theory of natural selection. Between two plants in the same area, the withered special species might have a unique quality, which would have fitted to the natural environment, and by which it could better survive and propagate itself. Take an example from the desert. A number of different coloured insects have reproduced in the desert. The chances for those to survive would have been equal, except insects born with blue, red, purple or black markings were more easily recognised by fowls or lizards. Thus, the colourful insects were devoured by them and gradually diminished in numbers and slowly perished. The survivors, with the same coloured markings as the desert, were harder to recognise.

(researcher’s translations)

Adaptation is one of the major concepts in Darwinian evolutionary theory. If some traits in a specific creature increase its adaptability to the changing environment as well as the climatic conditions, then these traits will have better chances of multiplying through the creature’s offspring. As Liang Qichao pointed out, one way that creatures can survive against keen competition from other organisms is by better fitting in with gradual changes in catastrophic circumstances; hence the survival chances of insects are closely

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171 陳思和 (Chen Sihe)，第 7 頁。
linked to how well their colours correspond to those of the surrounding environment.

Much like Yen Fu and K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao disseminated new ideas about Darwinism to Chinese readers in late Qing times using the wen-yen writing style. He also introduced Darwin’s other masterpiece, *The Descent of Man*, in his essay entitled “Initial Ancestor in the Study on Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his Biographical Sketch”. In this essay, Liang Qichao drew on the Darwinian theory of natural selection to explain the evolution of creatures. As he explained, it has been a long and slow process that has seen humans, among other things, evolved from lower species of animals:

> Nowadays there are numerous creatures in the biological kingdom, which have developed out of simplicity and purity to complexity and abstruseness, and in doing so have merely followed the great principle of natural selection in the wake of the past hundred thousand years. We humans also belong to this principle without exception. Darwin, therefore, based upon his geological examinations of ancient creatures buried underground, observed the order of change through evolution. He wrote *The Descent of Man*, published in 1871, to provide an understanding of how humans have slowly evolved from lower animals.

(researcher’s translation)

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172 陳思和 (Chen Sihe), 第 8 頁。
Just as Darwin’s contemporaries in Victorian Britain might have felt there to be something bizarre\(^{173}\) about the concept of natural selection when he first published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, so very few Chinese people could have understood Darwin’s theory of evolution in late Qing China. Nevertheless, the Chinese literati would kick-start the long process of writing about and translating Darwin’s and others’ ideas about evolutionary theory for the Chinese reading public. As a result, a number of Chinese perspectives of Darwinian evolutionism emerged, including those of K’ang Yu-wei, who resorted to express his utopian political ideals in his *Ta T’ung Shu*, and Liang Qichao, who wished to introduce natural selection and adaptation to reconstruct China’s traditional feudal society. Thus, as will be seen in this study, K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Qichao should give its explicit support to the political reforms and social changes in the Chinese mentality that took place in the late Qing period.

2.4 The New Culture Movement

The rule of warlords, such as Yun Shikai, Li Yuanhong, Feng Guozhang, Xu Shichang, Cao Kun, Duan Qirui, Zhang Zuolin and so on, was representative of the dark period of dictatorship in modern Chinese history. In particular, Yun Shikai, who usurped the Provisional President in the first year of the Republic of China in 1912, maintained his autocratic rule by suppressing democratic patriots. These warlords employed traditional Confucian ethics as a tool of political propaganda to control the thought of the common people. However, contemporary intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu, Hu Shih, and Lu Xun flew in the face of the Confucian Way, which had lasted for more than two millennia. To achieve its aims, the literary revolution needed new literature as well as new thought. Accordingly, scholars at Peking University compiled journals and magazines sympathetic to their

radical literary views and desires for reformation. These wise and brave scholars sided with their enthusiastic students who exerted huge pressure on the Beijing government of the time:

This incident appears trivial on the surface, but its repercussions were immediate and far-ranging. The Beijing students not only received strong support from their own teachers and their popular university chancellor, Cai Yuanpei, but also held together with remarkable tenacity and skill, forming their own amalgamated student union so as to exert maximum pressure on the government.¹⁷⁴

Yen Fu’s translation of Edward Jenks’s *A History of Politics* was published in December 1904. Importantly, this work included a note penned by Liang Qichao in which he railed against Confucianism, arguing that a new morality should replace the old Confucian ethics. Referring to this text, Pusey points out that Liang Qichao claimed ‘Yen Fu’s argument was leading “fanatical youths” to lose all respect for Confucius, but he [Liang Qichao] admitted Yen Fu’s argument’.¹⁷⁵

The study of Hu Shih and Lu Xun’s participation in revolutionary events might yield surprising results in the evolution of modern Chinese literature. Hu Shih believed that the development of vernacular literature in his own times reflected upon the evolution of ancient Chinese literature, and that this was a natural yet radical process of historical development in modern Chinese literature. Above all, Hu Shih rightly stressed the contribution made by evolutionary concepts to the reform of Chinese literature. Meanwhile, in a similar vein Lu Xun effectively yet unscientifically used Darwinian language in his essays to transform the Chinese national character.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 227.  
Movement provided a critique of Confucianism and old Chinese literature, and was succeeded in 1919 by the May Fourth Movement, which might be led to a decisive break in Confucian tradition. Both of these movements had a massive impact on modern Chinese history and literature. Some intellectuals who still believed in old literature and feudalistic doctrines faced serious questioning about their ideology, whereas others who grasped this historical opportunity for addressing the national crises in which China was then embroiled were able to change the tide of events.

In 1915, the New Culture Movement triggered the preliminary critical reconsideration of traditional Confucian values in China and became the basis for the subsequent May Fourth Movement of 1919. It was led by Chen Duxiu, a lecturer in Chinese literature at Peking University, between 1915 and 1919. Crucially, on 15 September 1915 Chen Duxiu started editing The Youth Magazine in Shanghai. Later, in September 1916, The Youth Magazine was renamed New Youth and carried the French subtitle, LA JEUNESSE. In 1917, Chen Duxiu was promoted to dean of the College of Letters at Peking University and moved New Youth to Beijing. In 1918, Hu Shih attempted to write new poems for New Youth using vernacular language and new forms of punctuation. Moreover, in the same year, Lu Xun’s first short story, “A Madman’s Diary”, written in vernacular Chinese and published in New Youth, made him the centre of the New Culture Movement. Many other vernacular literary works were also published for the advocacy of the literary revolution in New Tide, a journal published from Peking University. From then onwards, many writers and poets attempted to write using vernacular Chinese to such an extent that vernacular language became the mainstream in modern Chinese literature.

Chen Duxiu used New Youth to advocate the values of science and democracy as espoused by the New Culture Movement, and thus also as an essential counterweight to Confucianism and traditional ethics. In New Youth, and in the hundreds of other magazines which emerged in its wake, a number of writers and radicals were able to publish severe critiques of the Confucian heritage of modern China. As Y. C. Wang observed:

But most of all, it was the May Fourth incident that greatly boosted
the anti-Confucian campaign. In the following months *New Youth* achieved a circulation unprecedented for a journal of its nature in China. Over four hundred new magazines soon appeared, each concentrating its fire on tradition and the old ethics.\textsuperscript{177}

Figures 5 & 6: examples of the cover illustrations of *The Youth* Magazine and *New Youth* Magazine:

![Figure 5. The Youth Magazine](image1)
![Figure 6. New Youth](image2)

The major debate on the evolution of Chinese as a written language revolved around whether the ancient writing style should be maintained, as advocated by some conservatives, or discarded in favour of the vernacular style, as argued by Lu Xun and others. Influenced by the New Culture Movement, Lu Xun, in particular, mused about the ancient Chinese writing style in terms of the Darwinian idea of the struggle for existence, in this case of China. Pusey remarks that:

Lu Hsun still saw the New Culture Movement as a Darwinian matter

of life and death—China’s life and death. That was clear, he said, even in the realm of literature: “Hereafter, we really do have only two roads. One is to embrace our ancient writing style and die. The other is to discard our ancient writing style and survive.”

The New Culture Movement may be divided into six facets: anti-Confucian worship, the Literary Revolution, the new philosophy of life, the debate on science and the philosophy of life, the ‘doubting of antiquity’ movement, and the debate on Chinese and Western cultural values. Each of these six vital elements initiated an array of academic debates and social movements in the early years of the Chinese Republic. The conflicts between the old and new ways of thinking led to a series of historical reformations in modern China.

From an evolutionary perspective, Chen Duxiu considered Confucianism to be unfit for modern China and; therefore, he launched a major assault on Confucian doctrines of decorum. In an issue of New Youth focusing on the topic of ‘Ibsenism’ (Vol. IV, No.6, June 1918), Hu Shih championed liberal Western views on man’s social responsibility as a solution to the long-term suppression of Chinese women in feudal society. To illustrate this point, he drew attention to the protagonist, Nora, in A Doll’s House to support the liberation of women in China. His message in this regard was, therefore, that China must learn from the West, and particularly the values of human rights, in order to achieve social fairness and true equality between the sexes.

In considering the progress of human rights in the West, Chen Duxiu would ruminate on Confucian teachings, and that they might be the primary cause of China’s fragility in feudal society. He was firmly opposed to Confucius worship, according to which Confucius was praised as a god in Chinese society, and found support for his views in the atheism of Darwinism. In addition, he had realised that Darwinism also provided justification for human rights in relation to the adaptation of living beings to the environment. In seeking to address the problem of women in Chinese society, Chen Duxiu set

out by comparing Western customs with the Confucian Way from *the Book of Rites*. Thus, in an issue of *New Youth* (Vol.II, No.4, December 1916) entitled “The Way of Confucius and Modern Life”, he fulminated against the inequitable Chinese family structure and feudal ethics underpinning it as follows:

In the West some widows choose to remain single because they are strongly attached to their late husbands and sometimes because they prefer a single life; they have nothing to do with what is called the chastity of widowhood. Widows who remarry are not despised by society at all. On the other hand, in the Chinese teaching of decorum, there is the doctrine of “no remarriage after the husband’s death.” It is considered to be extremely shameful and unchaste for a woman to serve two husbands or a man to serve two rulers. The *Book of Rites* also prohibits widows from wailing at night [XXVII: 21] and people from being friends with sons of widows. [IX:21] For the sake of their family reputation, people have forced their daughters-in-law to remain widows. These women have had no freedom and have endured a most miserable life.¹⁸⁰

Despite these arguments, Chen Duxiu, as a lecturer at Peking University, should have understood the positive side of Confucian teachings. He would also have understood that Confucius laid a great emphasis on the importance of social responsibility for the gentleman [*junzi*] whom, he recommended, must be indomitable and resolute in order to act as lifelong role models for the rest of society. Moreover, Confucius’ follower, Mencius, reminds us that gentlemen should be alert to the value of righteousness so as to undertake altruistic deeds for their country. In this way, according to Confucian ethics, gentlemen should be charged with humaneness, and make serving others their mission and gift to society or country up to the end of their precious lives; they should sacrifice themselves without hesitation in defense of humaneness.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 816.
Confucius teaches us that the value of humaneness goes far beyond our own lives—as he himself stated, ‘the gentleman was alert to what was right and the petty man was alert to what was profitable’.\(^{181}\) Simply put, a gentleman with lofty ideals may abandon his self-interests, even to the point of sacrificing his own life in order to achieve his mission of promoting humaneness, social justice and altruism. As the Master states in Book Fifteen of *The Analects*:

The man of high ideals, the humane person, never tries to go on living if it is harmful to humaneness. There are times when he sacrifices his life to preserve humaneness.\(^{182}\)

Similarly, in the West, the common people not only paid homage to the Bible that enlightened the spirituality of their daily lives, but acknowledged the significance of the contribution made by Darwin’s theory to humanity as well. With this point in mind, Pusey comments objectively on the relationship between Darwinism and the Bible:

Darwinism revolutionized the way that most people would thereafter read the Bible, but it never caused Western civilization to throw the book away. After the initial Darwinian shock, most would-be believers happily found God as unprovable and as undisprovable as ever, and most concluded that they could have their faith and Darwin too.\(^{183}\)

The New Culture Movement highlighted the positive influence of cultural transformation on social progress, and thus set China on the path to a series of demanding reforms. Above all, Darwinism was revealed as a sort of philosophical foundation so as to liberate traditional rigid thought and launch a cultural transformation in feudal society.

### 2.5 The May Fourth Movement


\(^{182}\) Ibid., p. 107.

On 1 May 1919, many students at Peking University learned the unfortunate news from the Paris Peace Conference, being held at Versailles, that the great powers, namely Britain, France and the United States, had refused China’s requests that they protect Shandong Province from a Japanese invasion. This decision stemmed from the twenty-one unreasonable demands that Japan presented to China in 1915 after Japan had occupied the former colony. A meeting held by students at Peking University on the day of the Conference focused on the Beiyang government’s handling of the national humiliation resulting from the colonization and fall of Shandong. A great deal of dissatisfaction with the Chinese Beiyang government was expressed at the meeting, and the students decided to hold a further meeting two days later on 3 May. The subsequent meeting attracted a considerable number of students who gathered together at Peking University to discuss how to organise protests for the following day, Sunday, 4 May 1919, against Japanese imperialism and the twenty-one demands. These protests were initiated on 4 May by thousands of student protesters carrying white flags on the streets and chanting patriotic and anti-Japanese slogans. These slogans clearly highlighted the students’ main concerns as being, externally, the struggle for the sovereignty of China and, internally, resentment against traitors. Examples include:

(A) Concerning the struggle for Chinese sovereignty:

Return our Tsingtao [Qingdao].
We may be beheaded, but Tsingtao must not [be] lost.
Abolish the Twenty-one Demands.
Refuse to sign the Peace Treaty.
Boycott Japanese goods.
Protect our sovereignty.
China belongs to the Chinese.
International Justice.
Oppose power politics.
(B) Concerning traitors.

Down with the traitors.

The people should determine the destiny of the traitors.

Don’t just be patriotic for five minutes.\textsuperscript{184}

The protests led to the formation of the May Fourth Movement and caused a series of follow-on protests and reforms in China; it was also perhaps the first mass movement in modern Chinese history.\textsuperscript{185} In Beijing, three thousand students fulminated against the weakness of the Chinese Beiyang government. At a critical moment, the President of the Republic of China, Xu Shichang, gave a direct command to crack down on the protesters, but the students responded by protesting even more vehemently against the government. People in several major cities strongly supported the students’ protests and petitioned in support of the May Fourth Movement. As a result of the students’ actions and social discontent, the Chinese delegates refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Nonetheless, these events also aroused Japan’s resentment towards China so that, almost two decades later, China was ravaged by Japan in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). In several important respects, the astonishing impact of the May Fourth Movement was being felt in China long after the protests of 4 May 1919 had passed into history.


Figure 7. On the afternoon of May 4, 1919, thousands of student protesters gathered together in Tiananmen Square to protest against the controversial Shandong problem.

Above all, this literary revolution gave rise to a great many outstanding writers, some of whom have since become historical figures in both China and Taiwan. At the time this movement was active, a number of new theories encouraged many scholars and students to speak in the vernacular and to write vernacular literature, which, challenged traditional literary forms. Ling Chung Odell has described the actual condition of the May Fourth Movement as follows:

In the major journals of the May Fourth Movement, *Hsin Ch’ing Nien* (New Youth) and “New Tide Magazine,” Confucian ethics came under fierce attack. The new intellectuals rallied to the support of “Mr. Te” (Democracy) and “Mr. Sai” (Science). Novel theories, such as realism, utilitarianism, liberalism, individualism, socialism, Darwinism and Marxism, were introduced.\(^{186}\)

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\(^{186}\) Ling Chung Odell, “The Traditional Past in Modern Chinese Literature”, *Books Abroad* 47.2 (Spring, 1973): 290.
Hu Shih, who, as mentioned above, was a significant exponent of this movement, made a major contribution to *New Youth* by advocating that vernacular literature should replace the classical writing style typical of published Chinese texts. In other words, writers, he argued, ought to try to compose vernacular literature [*bai-hua*] instead of using the old literary language [*wen-yen*]. In the era of the Nationalist government in mainland China, Hu Shih was Chinese ambassador to the United States and chancellor of Peking University (1946-1948). After the Chinese Civil War, he followed the Nationalist government to Taiwan and was appointed as President of the Academia Sinica.

Another important literary figure at this time was Lu Xun (1881-1936), who is often regarded as China’s best essayist of the twentieth century. He made an enormous contribution to *New Youth*, and was commended by Mao Zedong as ‘the commander of China’s Cultural Revolution’. When Lu Xun was a twenty-year-old student, he was deeply influenced by Darwin’s ideas on evolution. He frequently satirized Confucian values and traditional Chinese ideology in his works.

How ‘new’ the ideas of the May Fourth Movement were, however, has become a matter of academic debate. Commenting on Darwinian ideas and the new thought in *New Youth*, Pusey states:

> The whole May Fourth period, which *The New Youth* did so much to inspire, has been vastly overemphasized as a period of new thought. It was a period of the propagation [dissemination] of new thought. What was new was China’s first “modern” student generation, ready at last to be affected by new thought. But almost all of the “new ideas,” with only a few notable exceptions, already had been had—by Yen Fu, Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, Sun Yat-sen, and Wu Chih-hui. At least this was true of Darwinian ideas. Darwinian ideas can be found in essay after essay, on page after page. Every Darwinian theme that we have yet seen can be found—but very few new ones.  

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When it came to the May Fourth Movement, the Nationalists and the Communists alike certainly viewed this historical movement as the embodiment of an Enlightenment or Renaissance in modern Chinese history and literature. During the May Fourth Movement, many of those who pioneered vernacular literature would become historical figures in both China and Taiwan. Hu Shih’s and Lu Xun’s works remain incredibly popular on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. As a result of the propaganda of both the Chinese literati and political elite, Darwinian evolutionary thought has become both enriched and highly influential in modern China. Indeed, what we are seeing today is China’s integration and transformation into a new global power as a direct result of the initial acceptance of Darwin’s theory of evolution during national crises in both the late Qing Dynasty and the early Chinese Republic.

2.6 The Evolution of Modern Chinese Literature

Modern Chinese literature and styles of writing evolved out of the literary revolution linked to the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement. Having pursued new lines of critical thinking in his *Hu Shih wencun*, Hu Shih stressed that ‘the tide of revolution was virtually the track of evolution’ [革命潮流即天演進化之跡]. Moreover, he insisted on gradual evolutionism or meliorism of literary, social and political reforms when he began to whole-heartedly embrace new content and form in modern Chinese literature. In this respect, Hu Shih’s views on the literary revolution were considerably influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theory. Many of the May

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189 Y.C. Wang, “The May Fourth Movement: Ch’en Tu-hsiu and Sun Yat-sen”, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West: 1872-1949* (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1966) 333. Due to the historic détente between both sides of the Taiwan Strait, both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party had hailed the May Fourth Movement as a turning point for many political, social, cultural and literary innovations in modern China.

190 耿雲志(Geng Yunzhi): 〈論胡適的實驗主義〉，《胡適研究論稿》 [*The Study on Hu Shi*] (北京: 社會科學文獻出版社, 2007) 第 94 頁。
Fourth pioneering intellectuals declared that radical revolution (geming) was in line with social evolution or the progress of history. Wu Pi deems his view on revolution that ‘revolution was an essential means to carry out social evolution’ [革命是實現社會進化的重要手段].

Thanks to this new way of thinking, Chinese literature naturally entered a new era: the virtually inevitable reform of literature.

In an essay entitled “The Classics and the Vernacular”, Lu Xun wanted to use Darwinian evolutionary thought to promote the literary revolution. By adopting this perspective, he did justice to pinpoint an important link between defending both evolutionary science and vernacular literature. Such an interpretation is Lu Xun’s critique of the ancient language and of the literary reform:

The ancient language is dead, and the vernacular is the bridge on the road to reform; for mankind is still progressing. Even writing can hardly have rules that will never be altered. It is said that somewhere in the United States they have forbidden the teaching of the theory of evolution, but in practice this ban will probably prove useless.

His interest in the topic of evolution stemmed from his reading Yen Fu’s Chinese version of Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics, Tien-yen Lun, reportedly on a Sunday afternoon in 1901. At this moment he experienced a kind of epiphany, and from then onwards became exceptionally interested in the idea of evolution. However, it was not until the last decade of his life that Lu Xun would embrace evolutionism with enthusiasm. Even so, his thoughts on evolutionism can still be found in his early writings. For instance, he

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employed biological evolutionism to explain how the role of fathers had changed from the viewpoint of the animal world. To be a father, he explained, one should act like animals to produce, preserve and develop human life. Moreover, he argued, fathers must come to understand what the true meaning of life is, as he himself explains in an article entitled "What is required of us as fathers today?":

What strikes me as sound at the moment is something extremely simple. That is, judging by the animal world, our first duty is to preserve life, our second to propagate it, our third to improve it (in other words, evolution). All living creatures behave in this way, and fathers should be no exception.\(^\text{195}\)

As one of the leading advocates of the Literary Revolution, Lu Xun delivered a lecture on ‘Literature of a Revolutionary Period’ to numerous cadets at the Huangpu Military Academy on 8 April 1927. He used the term, ‘revolutionary literature’, to refer to the ongoing evolution of Chinese literature rather than any efforts to imitate ancient Chinese literature. Following this course, he used the lecture to underscore the crucial function of literature in revolution.

Lu Xun mainly formulated his ideas about revolutionary progress with reference to biological concepts, especially the Darwinian ideas encapsulated by the tree of life hypothesis, which claims that all living creatures on Earth have evolved from common ancestors. In other words, apes, chimpanzees, monkeys and mankind are close relatives. Following this logic, Lu Xun was looking for a way to explain how human civilisation evolved from various revolutionary processes:

Mankind could only progress, evolve from protozoa to men, from barbarism to civilization, because of ceaseless revolutions. Biologists tell us, “Men are not very different from monkeys. Apes and men are cousins.” How is it then that men have become men

while monkeys remain monkeys? It is because monkeys will not change their ways—they like to walk on all fours. Quite likely some monkey once stood up and tried to walk on two legs, but many others protested, “Our ancestors have always crawled. You’re not to stand up!” Then they bit him to death. They refused not only to stand but also to talk, being conservative. Men, however, are different. They eventually stood up and talked, and so they won out. But the process is still going on. So revolution is nothing strange, and all races not yet moribund are trying to revolt every day, though most of their revolutions are merely small ones.\footnote{196}{Hu Shih, “The Renaissance in China”, Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs 5.6 (November 1926): 273.}

Slightly earlier in 1926, Hu Shih delivered a speech in which he gave an insightful commentary on causation of the literary revolution from the New Culture Movement to the May Fourth Literary Movement. In the historico-contextual vision, Jianhua Chen argues that ‘the Literary Revolution inherited Liang Qichao’s poetry revolution [shijie geming] and fictional revolution [xiaoshuojier geming].’\footnote{197}{Ban Wang, ed., “Revolution: From Literary Revolution to Revolutionary Literature”, Words and Their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2011) 19.} Above all, this literary revolution was historically progressive not only for demonstrating the evolution of language but also for establishing new modern Chinese literature. Hu Shih’s words were most succinct and precise:

During the last ten years, this Literary Revolution has spread and has affected various phases of Chinese life. I shall not describe those different phases in great detail. I shall confine myself to two particular phases: first, the intellectual changes, and secondly, the social and political developments.\footnote{198}{Ibid., p. 336.}

In addition to advocating the elimination of hackneyed language from Chinese
literature, Hu Shih also sought to improve writing techniques. His proposals supplied a new style of literature to the reading public, for he believed that ‘Chinese literature has long been withered and feeble and the time is at hand for a literary revolution’.¹⁹⁹ Thus, thanks to Hu Shih’s drive to replace the classical wen-yen style of Chinese literature, the emergence of modern Chinese literature was at hand. Above all, vernacular literature [bai-hua] characterised this revolution in Chinese literature in which respect it can be said that modern Chinese literature started with the Literary Revolution in 1919.²⁰⁰ Hu Shih looked upon the chief malady in writing as the use of conventional language without far-reaching thought or sincere feeling; in contrast, the common people, he believed, should write with substantial content. It was vital that each dynasty had its unique literature as each new dynasty had to present its uniqueness and scintillation in literature. Hu Shih explained these changes from a Darwinian perspective, as he added: ‘The Zhou and Qin dynasties had their literatures, the Wei and Jin had theirs, as did Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming’.²⁰¹ In other words, changes to Chinese literature naturally followed changes in dynasties as the progression of Chinese civilisation.

From an historical vision, a number of dynasties were characterized by their unique literatures and literary figures, among whom may be included: an historian of the Western Han Dynasty, Sima Qian, whose Records of the Grand Historian received public praise; Ban Gu of the Eastern Han Dynasty who wrote the Book of Han; Su Shi (Su Dongpo), who was renowned for his poetry during the Song Dynasty; Han Yu who was praised for his writings on improving the standard of literary language which had declined during the previous eight dynasties [文起八代之衰]; Zhu Xi, the famous neo-Confucianist of the Song Dynasty, who is acclaimed for compiling the Four Books, namely the Analects of Confucius, the Mencius, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine

of the Mean; Cao Xueqin who, during the Qing Dynasty, wrote the first 80 chapters of *The Dream of Red Mansions*, later to be completed by Gao E (Kao Hgo) who added a further 40 chapters. Therefore, each dynasty had its own great men of letters who wrote works representative of their times, and thereby contributed to the history of Chinese literature. Hu Shih’s contribution in this regard was to see the history of Chinese literature, as it had developed through a number of dynasties from ancient times up to the twentieth century, as an evolutionary process.

As recounted above, Chen Duxiu’s philosophy of life originated in the idea of evolutionary progress. The radicalism of his ideas led him to conduct an anti-Confucian campaign, which criticised the authority of Confucianism as that of a dogma of conservatism. He advocated cosmopolitanism, science and democracy during the May Fourth Movement. Influenced by Yen Fu’s Social Darwinism, he also proposed a philosophy of life which underscored individual, progressive, positive, world-wide, utilitarian and scientific thinking while rejecting any religious teachings, including those of Christianity and traditional Confucian values. The principal objection he raised to religious teachings, namely that they amounted to superstitions that could not solve the problems of daily life, was based specifically on evolutionism. Like many leaders of the Literary Revolution, Chen Duxiu equated evolution with revolution in order to facilitate the progress of history. Accordingly, he took the view that if the Chinese people did not adopt the radical way of revolution, then China would remain vulnerable to imperialist invasion. As he sardonically put it, ‘will time allow us the gradual progress of evolution?’

Furthermore, in an article published in *New Youth*, “Call to Youth”, he made a personal appeal to Chinese youth to adopt the following six attitudes in order to achieve a better life goal in the conception of science and democracy:

1. Be independent, not servile;
2. Be progressive, not conservative;
3. Be aggressive, not retiring;
4. Be cosmopolitan, not isolationist;

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5. Be utilitarian, not formalistic;
6. Be scientific, not imaginative.203

Chen Duxiu encouraged patriotically-minded youth to take heed of these six elements in life. Through these six sets of antithetical ideas, Chinese youth should have cosmopolitan views towards a competitive, progressive era, replacing isolated, conservative mode of thinking inherited from traditional feudal system. To distinguish between utilitarian and formalistic attitudes on individual career development, Chen Duxiu also offered some suggestions for Chinese youth to hold an independent character imbued with the spirit of science instead of the whimsical sentiment.

The debate over the origins of life between scientists and theologians is often called the ‘evolution wars’.204 Charles Darwin deliberately delayed the publication of On the Origin of Species until 1859 when he was fifty years old. Following his rejection of the biblical account of Creation, the reluctant Darwin was subject to spark intense criticism from the Christian Church. Darwin’s challenge to Christian theology left many among those of his contemporaries hostile to his work having to deal with mixed feelings and ideological discord.

204 There are still many controversial issues surrounding Darwin’s theory of natural selection. When it comes to the origin of life, adequate scientific evidence is needed for this to be proven. Darwin’s theory itself, however, lacks an adequate theory of heredity. Furthermore, scientific investigations need to match up with other specific research in the realms of chemistry and biochemistry. Scientists and theologians have produced academic debates about the origin of life from the nineteenth century up to the present, particularly with regard to the origin of the common ancestor. Very recently, in June 2013, a team of scientists published their research findings about a new specimen, which was discovered approximately 11 years ago in China’s Hubei Province. It is believed to be the oldest primate skeleton. The specimen is called Archicebus achilles and is reckoned to have lived about 55 million years ago. Importantly, this fossil may have implications for long-standing beliefs about primate and human evolution. According to this new scientific evidence that has the potential to rewrite history, the common ancestor of humans may have come from Asia rather than Africa. Therefore, the so-called ‘evolution wars’ continues to create many arguable points in our world. For further reading on these issues, see Michael Ruse, “Part 2: Evolution Matures: Chapter 6: Darwinism and Genetics: A New Frontier Opens” and “Part 2: Evolution Matures: Chapter 7: Life: The Early Years”, The Evolution Wars: A Guide to the Debates (Millerton, New York: Grey House, 2009) 155, 188-89. In addition, see the official websites of ScienceDaily and Nature: http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/06/130605133556.htm (5 June 2013) and http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v498/n7452/full/nature12200.html (5 June 2013).
The dilemma for Darwin was whether he should side with the notion of God's Creation or the theories of mutation and natural selection he proposed. Today Darwin's naturalism on life's diversity and complexity has revolutionised our understanding of the origins of life on our planet and has influenced social thinking far beyond his Kentish retreat.205

Influenced by evolutionary thought, Chen Duxiu also cast doubt on the Christian philosophy of life by promoting atheism among the Chinese public; if, as he asked, God created human beings, then who created Him? Moreover, he expressed his philosophy of life to individuals as a means of achieving individual happiness, in which respect it represented—a kind of individualism. In his article “The True Meaning of Life”, he stated:

The teachings of Christianity, especially, are fabrications out of nothing and cannot be proved. If God can create the human race, who created Him? Since God’s existence or nonexistence cannot be proved, the Christian philosophy of life cannot be completely believed in. The rectification of the heart, cultivation of the person, family harmony, national order, and world peace that Confucius and Mencius talked about are but some activities and enterprises in life and cannot cover the total meaning of life.

And:

In a word, what is the ultimate purpose in life? What should it be, after all? I [Chen Duxiu ] dare say:

During his lifetime, an individual should devote his efforts to create happiness and to enjoy it, and also to keep it in store in society so that individuals of the future may also enjoy it, one generation doing the same for the next and so on unto infinity.206

Hu Shih, on the other hand, laid great stress on the fact that Darwin’s theory of evolution pertained to pragmatism; indeed, it had influenced pragmatism, even though these two theories were somewhat different in their precepts and ideas. According to Darwin’s theory of natural selection, the development of species was adapted to their environment and changes to it. With respect to his study, it is important to acknowledge the influence on Hu Shih of his research supervisor at Columbia University, John Dewey, whose idea of ‘experience’ was closely linked to the Darwinian concept of man’s adaptation to the environment. In *How We Think* (1910), Dewey defined ‘experience’ as opposed to ‘the reasonable, the thoughtful’, adding that experience also encompasses ‘the reflection’ beyond the influence of tradition.\(^{207}\) Thus, by dint of the idea that man survives by adapting to the environment, Dewey was able to connect his notion of experience with Darwin’s theory of natural selection.

Under Dewey’s guidance and influence, Hu Shih positively introduced pragmatism and its precepts to the Chinese people with the intention of moving China onwards from its fragile old feudal system. In this sense, Dewey’s pragmatism seemed to correspond to Hu Shih’s Darwinism\(^{208}\), as the latter himself pointed out in an essay entitled “Pragmatism”:

There was in the nineteenth century another important change which also had an extremely important bearing on pragmatism. This is Darwin’s theory of evolution... When it came to Darwin, he boldly declared that the species were not immutable but all had their origins and developed into the present species only after many changes. From the present onward, there can still be changes in species, such as the grafting of trees and crossing of fowls, whereby special species can be obtained. Not only do the


species change, but truth also changes. The change of species is the result of adaptation to environment and truth is but an instrument with which to deal with environment. As the environment changes, so does truth accordingly.  

In light of his pragmatic method, Hu Shih placed especial emphasis upon the pragmatic aspect of Dewey’s experimentalism by referring to epistemology and metaphysics. Moreover, he noted that evolutionism had had a tremendous impact on Dewey. Adaptation to the environment is essential to all living creatures, for life, through keen competition and natural selection in any given environment proves ‘the survival of the fittest’. Hence, it is the conditions for altering those individuals towards the moving equilibrium that Herbert Spencer considered this phrase to be implied ‘multiplication of the fittest’.

In Victorian Britain, Darwin had long observed biotic competition or evolutionary wars among different species in the animal kingdom; consequently, he believed those species that emerged victorious through natural selection must hold different variations of certain biological characteristics in order for them to successfully adapt to the constantly changing environment. John Dewey analysed ‘experience’ in terms of the interactions between living organisms and the natural environment. In dealing with this perspective on bio-evolutionism, Hu Shih wrote:

\[\text{[Equation]}\]


This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr Darwin has called “natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life”. That there is going on a process of this kind throughout the organic world, Mr Darwin’s great work on the Origin of Species has shown to the satisfaction of nearly all naturalists.

About five years later, Charles Darwin began to adopt this term to explain his theory of evolution in the fifth edition of On the Origin of Species published in 1869.
Dewey was greatly influenced by the modern theory of biological evolution. Consequently, his philosophy is completely colored by bio-evolutionism. He said that “experiencing means living; and that living goes on in and because of an environing medium, not in a vacuum.... The human being has upon his hands the problem of responding to what is going on around him so that these changes will take one turn rather than another, namely, that required by his own further functioning.... He is obliged to struggle—that is to say, to employ the direct support given by the environment in order indirectly to effect changes that would not otherwise occur. In this sense, life goes on by means of controlling the environment. Its activities must change the changes going on around it; they must neutralize hostile occurrences; they must transform neutral events into cooperative factors or into an efflorescence of new features.”

Likewise, Hu Shih put forward the concept of the survival of the fittest to interpret initial contact between the cultures of China and the West. Just as evolutionism would be a new force competing with the old, conservative Confucian values, so this new trend could partially destroy the resistance of the old tradition. In an essay entitled, “Criticism of the Declaration for Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis”, published in a collection of his works published in 1935, *Hu Shih wencun*, Hu Shih declared,

When two different cultures come into contact, the force of competition and comparison can partially destroy the resistance and conservatism of a certain culture.... In the process of survival of the fittest, there is no absolutely reliable standard by which to direct the selection from the various aspects of a culture.213

The fact that Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu were two major literary figures during the May Fourth Movement showed the importance of the literary reform. The

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213 Ibid., p. 389.
prospect of galvanizing this evolution of old *wen-yen* literature into a new vernacular one was slow but sure. This literary movement was presented as the inevitability of social evolution involving various social strata. Considering traditional Confucianism and time-honored literary thought, both Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu made an attempt to change a long tradition of ancient Chinese literature and writing style during and after the the May Fourth Movement.

### 2.7 Conclusion

Through a series of positive reforms as well as radical revolutions in modern China, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong made great achievements in the domains of politics, literature, culture and society, justifying revolution through evolutionary thinking for China’s growth and development. During the periods of social and political upheavals in modern Chinese history, each of the revolutionary pioneers made extraordinary contributions to China’s modernisation, not only to bringing about political, social, cultural and literary changes, but also to combating the main causes of national backwardness, social corruption and literary stagnation. First and foremost, Yen Fu’s *Tien-yen Lun* may be seen as a signpost of the widespread, formal interaction between China and the West as reflected by the dissemination and usage of Darwinism in modern China. Meanwhile, having used the modern concept of evolution to synthesise ‘the Statement of Gongyang Three Ages’, K’ang Yu-wei expressed his utopian vision of a future world ruled by one public government (*i.e.* the ‘one world’). Liang Qichao likewise made use of progressive Darwinian ideas in his mission to change the Chinese national character. His book, *On New Citizenship* [《新民說》], was extraordinarily important for advocating the reform of the Chinese national character in late Qing China. Liang Qichao wished to provide Qing officials and the common people with reasons as to why they should replace, as he saw it, certain corrupt aspects of the Chinese national character, thereby helping them to
curb deep-rooted social maladies and cultural stagnation. Moreover, as regards the political struggles of modern China, both Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong saw in Darwin’s ideas about the struggle for existence and natural selection with reinforcements for their own views on the importance of social metamorphosis as a means of challenging traditional Confucian thought as propagated under the Chinese feudal system. Subsequently, evolution also made way for the rise of Marxism, which shifted the focus away from the struggle for existence to class struggle in politics. Finally, another far-reaching application of Darwinian evolutionary thought was the transformation of the Chinese writing style. In retrospect, Darwinian evolutionary thought enlightened only a few within the Chinese elite on its initial contact with them. Yet, although they initially hesitated to fully embrace evolutionism, they were also sceptical about traditional Confucianism.
Chapter Three

Yen Fu’s Tripartite Roles in *Tien-yen Lun*

3.1 Introduction

Yen Fu (1854-1921) contributed to the dissemination of evolutionary thought in modern China through his highly idiomatic paraphrastic translation of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* in three important ways: first, through his Social Darwinism; second, through his unique writing style; third, by providing Chinese intellectuals with an introduction to evolutionary thought which bridged a gap between Eastern and Western philosophies. Yen Fu was known as an outstanding translator who had the goal of integrating Chinese, Indian and Western philosophies in his own commentaries, as well as providing his own philosophical insights. In the aforementioned work, he combined Western evolutionary thought, stemming from classical Greek and Roman philosophy and modern Darwinian ideas, and ancient Chinese evolutionary concepts from *I Ching* (*Yi Jing*), *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, and Indian philosophy and Buddhism, into his own unique interpretation of the evolution of life in the world. Therefore, *Tien-yen Lun* could be regarded as a grand synthesis of the main currents of Eastern and Western philosophical and religious thoughts from ancient times up to the modern era.

This chapter explores each of the three roles as they were adopted by Yen Fu in *Tien-yen Lun* and also Huxley in *Evolution and Ethics*. First, it discusses Yen Fu’s way of advocating social reform and cultural integration through his leading role as a social engineer in *Tien-yen Lun*. The focus then shifts to examine how in his commentary on Huxley’s book, Yen Fu was thinking of using Spencer’s social thought to criticise Huxley’s arguments as
he considered many aspects in a deeper sense from the perspective of Social Darwinism. Finally, this chapter discusses how, in his role as a synthesizer of Eastern and Western philosophies, Yen Fu offered an intellectual critique of various lines of thought in *Tien-yen Lun*. The chapter will also consider how we might reconcile Yen Fu’s goals of encouraging people power [鼓民力], enlightening the people [開民智] and renewing people’s morality [新民德] with Social Darwinian evolutionary views in *Tien-yen Lun*.

3.2 Huxley’s Ethical Arguments on Evolution

In the opening paragraphs of *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley presented a version of the ‘Jack and the Bean-stalk’ story, by which he drew an analogy with the development of life and culture’s imbrication with evolutionary discourse through cyclical change or evolution. Noting how the heavenly bodies wax and wane in cycles, Huxley emphasised the importance of cyclical processes in explaining evolution; hence for Huxley, the Sisyphæan process highlighted how cyclical evolution proceeds from initial simplicity to complexity, before again returning to primordial forms. Huxley saw the cosmic process of evolution as being full of wonder, beauty and pain, while also stating that ‘laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process’. In this way, the cosmic process reveals that man should be adapted to the natural environment, wherein the fittest are able to survive through keen competition. As one of Darwin’s acolytes in Victorian Britain, Huxley tended to recognise and accept certain important facts stemming from Darwin’s evolutionary theory. In *Darwiniana* (1893), Huxley expounded further upon the phenomenon of adaptation as conceived within Darwin’s

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216 Ibid., p. 53.
217 Ibid., p. 82.
theory of natural selection; in particular, he convincingly argued, with reference to the cosmic process, that ‘the process of natural selection is, in fact, dependent on adaptation—it is all one, whether one says that the competitor which survives is the fittest or the best adapted’. The direct influence of survival over the process of selection would rely on the adaptation of species to changing environmental conditions. Nevertheless, Huxley wished to persuade the reader to accept the science of ethics, whose principles are based on a need for ‘a reasoned rule of life’ instead of the law of the jungle. If Darwinism is applicable to human society, then the cosmic process would lead to human disasters and misfortunes. In this way, Huxley sought to oppose many of the dangerous aspects of Social Darwinism. Meanwhile, Spencer coined the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’ in relation to his sociology or social theory. From the perspective of evolutionary ethics as adopted by Huxley, the cosmic nature does not fit in with human society; in contrast, Spencer considered how the moral aspect in evolution reaches towards a moving equilibrium.

According to Spencer’s physical view, a better moving equilibrium is required to maintain a balance between the internal actions and the external ones. He illustrated his views on the state of equilibrium to explain its balanced status between physical phenomena and moral principles in evolution. He also used this law of equilibrium to elucidate the evolution of the solar system, the Earth and so forth. As he said, ‘each planet, satellite, and comet, exhibits at its aphelion a momentary equilibrium between that force which urges it further away from its primary, and that force which retards its retreat’. Thus, Spencer used his concept of the moving equilibrium described above, and answered it by saying that there had been balanced conditions or other phenomena in both human and cosmic evolution in First Principles (1862) and The Data of Ethics (1879). In addition, in First Principles, Spencer also illustrated the concept of the moving equilibrium to

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219 Thomas Henry Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*, pp. 52-53.
221 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
further account for the motion during evolution, such as in the following passage:

Evolution is a decrease in the relative movements of parts and an increase in the relative movements of wholes—using the words parts and wholes in their most general senses.\(^{223}\)

Although Spencer generally accepted Darwin’s theory of evolution, he was nevertheless inclined, as J. D. Y. Peel explains, to ‘defend the Lamarckian principle of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, since he did not think that natural selection was adequate by itself to explain organic evolution’.\(^{224}\) In this regard, Spencer deviated from Darwin’s theory. Spencer’s theory is fundamentally distinct from that of Darwin, primarily because he saw the struggle for survival as played out in human society. With regard to the points of conflict between Spencer and Huxley, Huxley was much more concerned about clashes between ethical factors and the cosmic nature, whereas Spencer applied Darwin’s ideas to the evolution of human society. Peel maintains that “the most direct Spencerian paradigm” is the struggle of man against man, not man against nature.\(^{225}\) Thus, Spencer applied Darwinian struggle to his synthetic philosophy or social evolution as well; he insisted on his views on social evolution in virtue of his numerous ideas in sociology or social theory. In *Tien-yen Lun*, Yen Fu employed many aspects of Spencer’s social evolutionism to complement or criticise Huxley’s ethical arguments as presented in *Evolution and Ethics*. Yen Fu, Huxley and Spencer all from their own particular viewpoints recognised some conceptual problems with Darwin’s theory of natural selection. Hence while Yen Fu used Darwin’s worldview to develop a version of Social Darwinism relevant to social reforms in China, Huxley instead focused on developing an evolutionary ethics and Spencer on further illuminating his social theory or sociology.

\(^{223}\) Ibid., p. 347.


\(^{225}\) Ibid., p. 146.
In *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley appears to have applied his ethical consciousness to address certain questions about human evolution which lacked sufficient explanation. According to Huxley, the ethical process involves the cultivation of man-made environments in which the growth of animals and plants is dependent on many adjustable conditions in the environment. Such an environment might be divided into two different types of surroundings: the natural and the artificial. The cosmic process is the way of the natural environment, while the horticultural process is structured by human activities. As David Amigoni argues, ‘horticulture is “antithetic” to the “cosmic process”, conditioned as it is by “the struggle for existence”’.\(^{226}\) Since biological evolution is influenced decisively by conditions in the environment, the possible outcomes of selection are decided by either natural selection or artificial environments. In this account, human efforts to subvert the cosmic process via the horticultural process are instrumental to the outcomes of natural selection. In the “Prolegomena” of *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley accounted for the cosmic and the horticultural processes as follows:

> The tendency of the cosmic process is to bring about the adjustment of the forms of plant life to the current conditions; the tendency of the horticultural process is the adjustment of the conditions to the needs of the forms of plant life which the gardener desires to raise.\(^{227}\)

In this way, Huxley challenged the view that the cosmic struggle for existence could alone explain why the strongest are the best adapted to the environment. Instead, he believed that laws and moral precepts are capable of curbing the cosmic process and the conditions of competition. In an essay entitled “Ethics and the Struggle for Existence”, Leislie Stephen argues in favour of the views presented by Huxley in the Romanes lecture, stating that ‘the ethical process of society depends upon our combating the cosmic

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\(^{226}\) David Amigoni, p. 19.

In other words, Huxley insisted that goodness and virtue counteract the cosmic process, primarily because of the ethical progress made by human society, which embodies the moral backbone of humanity far beyond savagery. Thus, Huxley seemed to disapprove of severe competition in human society, since, from his didactic perspective, he situated morality in a social context. As he himself put it:

Men in society are undoubtedly subject to the cosmic process. As among other animals, multiplication goes on without cessation, and involves severe competition for the means of support. The struggle for existence tends to eliminate those less fitted to adapt themselves to the circumstances of their existence. The strongest, the most self-assertive, tend to tread down the weaker. But the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater the more rudimentary its civilization.

One problem with this critical view about Huxley’s comment is that the cosmic process threatened those men and women who were ethically better. Nevertheless, he held that such people could still have better chances of survival than those who were best adapted to the changeable environment. In contrast to Darwin’s positing of a process of keen competition between species, Huxley underpinned the notion of how the ethical person can be well-adapted to the dynamic causation of evolutionary theory. In his way, Huxley contended that self-restraint became more important than self-assertion in the development of human society. His view on ethics differed in important respects from the Darwinian concept of the struggle for existence as he wrote:

But the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is

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229 Thomas Henry Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics, p. 81.
the greater the more rudimentary its civilization. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which exist, but of those who are ethically the best. As I have already urged, the practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence.\textsuperscript{230}

In this passage, Huxley offered a concise exposition of poetic justice, which is to say the idea that virtue should be rewarded and vice punished. As he commented: ‘What is a more common motive of the ancient tragedy in fact, than the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things’.\textsuperscript{231} The ancient tragedy was emphatic concerning the Olympian order in the Greek culture, which could be explained by the protagonist's implied motivation. Huxley further pointed out the limitations of the understanding of good and evil provided by cosmic evolution, stating that ‘cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about; but, in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before’.\textsuperscript{232} Hence, he could treat the ethical process as a checking of the cosmic process. Within Huxley’s argument, the development of ethics would even surpass the biological struggle inherent in the cosmic process.

Taking the most noteworthy confrontation between the spheres of politics and ethics in Greek drama for instance, the researcher believes that Sophocles’ tragedy, \textit{Antigone}, had philosophical and religious implications that reflected upon the importance of the ethical consciousness in the Greek mind. In the play which concerns conflict between ethical consciousness and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{230} Ibid., pp. 81-82.
  \item \textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p. 59.
  \item \textsuperscript{232} Ibid., p. 31.
\end{itemize}
tyrannical power, Creon maintained his private dictatorship towards his political stance. Meanwhile, Antigone, based upon the ethical process in the unwritten law of justice, should have buried the body of her brother, Polynices, after the civil war. This was because Teiresias’ prophecy presented the contrasting views of two chief figures over this dramatic confrontation. Antigone had passed away for the public Olympian order and her ethical conduct so as to bury Polynices. Sophocles’ Antigone has been likened to attempts to establish Athenian democracy under the rule of oligarchy. Creon and Antigone mutually created a dialectical relationship between their individual positions, with both eventually being left in despair. However, Antigone seemed to emerge as a heroine in as far as she sacrifices herself for Zeus’ law rather than Creon’s edict. Creon stubbornly carried out his own edict in contravention of the divine law, and ended up losing the hearts of his people. The poetic justice happened in the denouement of the play where Antigone could be interpreted as transcending herself for the sake of her ethical consciousness. In line with Aristotle’s definition of tragedy in terms of pity and fear, Antigone believed in the law of Heaven by means of her anguish and downfall. In reference to just such an ethical process, as made by Antigone, we might refer back to Huxley’s view that ‘the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it’. Simply put, the ethical process is far more important than the cosmic struggle for existence. He further argued that ‘the cosmic process in man has been restrained and otherwise modified by law and custom’. Taken together with many aspects on human life, human society, differing from that of the animal kingdom, involves laws and customs that encompass its ethical nature in the development of human civilisation.

Having discussed the case of Antigone, we might comprehend why Huxley needed to comment on the idea of justice in order to further explain the importance of the ethical process for the common people. As he put it:

233 Ibid., p. 34.
234 Ibid., p. 35.
The idea of justice thus underwent a gradual sublimation from punishment and reward according to acts, to punishment and reward according to desert; or, in other words, according to motive. Righteousness, that is, action from right motive, not only became synonymous with justice, but the positive constituent of innocence and the very heart of goodness.\textsuperscript{235}

It seemed to Huxley that the close connections between evolution and ethics were few and far between—whether the Indian or Greek sages were in the ancient times. Nonetheless, Huxley declared that the connections between evolution and ethics were not clear in the eyes of the sages of ancient Greece and India. Huxley tried to explain the bearing of this difficulty on the relationship between evolutionary concepts and the ethical ideal in the following passage:

Now when the ancient sage, whether Indian or Greek, who had attained to this conception of goodness, looked the world, and especially human life, in the face, he found it as hard as we do to bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good.\textsuperscript{236}

Huxley designated Oedipus and Shakespeare’s character, Hamlet, as two examples of the cosmic process playing out through man. He attempted to interpret Oedipus’s predicament in terms of the cosmic process which led to the latter’s moral deterioration in spite of his innocence:

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., pp. 57-58.  
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., p. 58.
Surely Oedipus was pure of heart; it was the natural sequence of events—the cosmic process—which drove him, in all innocence, to slay his father and become the husband of his mother, to the desolation of his people and his own headlong ruin.\textsuperscript{237}

Huxley stretched his analysis further to Hamlet, whom, Huxley claimed, was dragged into a world of anarchy as a result of the cosmic process. As Huxley quipped, ‘the cosmos might well seem to stand condemned before the tribunal of ethics’,\textsuperscript{238} adding further:

Or to step, for a moment, beyond the chronological limits I have set myself, what constitutes the sempiternal attraction of Hamlet but the appeal to deepest experience of that history of a no less blameless dreamer, dragged, in spite of himself, into a world out of joint; involved in a tangle of crime and misery, created by one of the prime agents of the cosmic process as it works in and through man?\textsuperscript{239}

Huxley also argued over the conflict between theology and science in the Victorian Age. The Victorian crisis of faith emerged from all walks of life. However, Huxley considered reason and morality to be two essential factors in the development of human evolution, partly because people seemed unable to endure two weights in society. For one thing, Darwin’s theory of evolution challenged traditional Christian doctrines and, for another, Victorian science came to seem invincible, thus influencing a number of dissenters to create a sense of agnosticism in Victorian society. On this subject, Huxley wrote:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[237] Ibid., p. 59.
\item[238] Ibid., p. 59.
\item[239] Ibid., p. 59.
\end{footnotes}
The present antagonism between theology and science does not arise from any assumption by the men of science that all theology must necessarily be excluded from science; but simply because they are unable to allow that reason and morality have two weights and two measures; and that the belief in a proposition, because authority tells you it is true, or because you wish to believe it, which is a high crime and misdemeanour when the subject matter of reasoning is of one kind, becomes under the alias of "faith" the greatest of all virtues, when the subject matter of reasoning is of another kind.240

The suggested answer is that Huxley stressed the importance of ‘the evolution of ethics’ as opposed to ‘ethics of evolution’, the latter of which he considered a fallacy to be avoided. He further argued that this fallacy could be traced back to the ambiguity of the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’. He questioned the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’, which he saw as irrelevant to the ‘ethics of evolution’. He highlighted what he considered to be the root of this fallacy as follows:

There is another fallacy which appears to me to pervade the so-called “ethics of evolution.” It is the notion that because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organization by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent ‘survival of the fittest’; therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them towards perfection. I suspect that this fallacy has arisen out of the unfortunate ambiguity of the phrase ‘survival of the fittest.’ ‘Fittest’ has a connotation of ‘best’; and about ‘best’ there hangs a moral flavour. In cosmic nature, however, what is

‘fittest’ depends upon the conditions.\textsuperscript{241}

The following table (Figure 8) outlines the four processes that Huxley treated as different features of evolution in his \textit{Evolution and Ethics}. As explained, Huxley pitted the cosmic process against that of ethics, with only the latter being applicable to the development of society. The emphasis placed by Huxley on this view provided some insights into biological evolution. However, as will be explained below, Yen Fu’s social evolutionary concepts seemed to be somewhat uncommensurate with Huxley’s views in \textit{Evolution and Ethics} and consequently favoured Herbert Spencer’s Social Darwinism in his \textit{Tien-yen Lun}.

Figure 8 The Characteristic Features of the Four Ways of Evolution in Huxley’s Debates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts Terms</th>
<th>Huxley’s Arguments on the Four Evolutionary Modi Operandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cosmic Process</td>
<td>This process is identified with the struggle for existence in the natural world, and hence—the theory of the survival of the fittest. It is a perfect mechanism, and as beautiful as a work of art. In addition, Huxley described how cosmopoietic energy works through sentient beings, and saw this process as full of wonder, beauty and pain. The stoic concept of the duty of man is that the cosmic process is an exemplar for human conduct. However, the latter has been specifically restricted and modified by law and custom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Horticultural Process</td>
<td>The process conveys the gardener’s desire or necessity for cultivation and involves both direct and artificial selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ethical Process</td>
<td>The process highlights the gradual strengthening of the social bond and involves imitation, the sympathetic emotions and close cooperation among humans. Moreover, social progress means a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sisyphæan Process

Since the process of life pervades cyclical evolution or cyclical change from its simple and potential form via the highly differentiated type to its initial developed condition, the Sisyphæan process refers to the ebb and flow of everything from waters to dynasties and states. It also covers the cyclical movements of the heavenly bodies and reveals the inexorable sequence of the stages of people’s lives.

Figure 9 shows how Huxley related the numerous features of different schools of philosophical thought and religious beliefs to his conception of the ethical process; these various perspectives show the extent of Huxley’s academic learning.

Figure 9. The Characteristic Features of Various Philosophical Perspectives or Religious Beliefs in Relation to the Ethical Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewpoints</th>
<th>Huxley's Philosophical Perspectives on the Ethical Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian &amp; Buddhist Philosophy</td>
<td>Every individual, whether human or divine, is the most recent inheritor and result of the Karma accrued by a long series of past individuals. Much like the doctrine of evolution, each new life along a Karmic chain of transmigrations is modified by its own conduct. If people want to escape from the heritage of evil, then they must destroy the fountain of desire and withdraw from the struggle for existence in the cosmic process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brahminical Doctrine</td>
<td>The whole cosmos shows the recurring cycles of production and destruction. Gautama reduces the cosmos to a flow of sensations, emotions, volitions and thoughts. Nirvana reveals the end of life’s dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socrates</td>
<td>When Greek intellectual activity shifts to Athens, the leading minds paid particular attention to ethical problems. For example, Socrates advocates a kind of inverse agnosticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stoics</td>
<td>This school of thought highlights intuition, and the Theodicy, but ignores the reality of evil. It also tries to understand Nature, while it has no support of justice. The stoical doctrine for man’s duty is that the cosmic process is an exemplar for human conduct. The Stoics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
were materialists and pantheists of the most extreme character in the Roman world. For several centuries, the best public men were strongly inclined to Stoicism. Moreover, the disciples of Heracleitus would study the idea of evolution systematically.

| Pascal         | Man is a thinking reed. Man, with his energy, wisdom and will, can influence and modify the cosmic process. |

Huxley’s assertion that the four evolutionary patterns were conveyed to his different ways of statement on evolution was his problematic conceptualization of evolutionary processes. He advocated evolutionary ethics as a way of transforming the cosmic struggle for existence into the harmonious order he saw embodied in law and morality in human society. Furthermore, he championed the ethical process as a tool for interpreting both evolutionary processes and philosophical perspectives. A number of schools and thinkers came up with their specific points of view on the individual ethical and cosmic processes; particularly the ancient Greeks and Indians. Specifically, Huxley concluded by observing that while Indian philosophy and Buddhism encourage people to abandon their desires and pleasures in the illusive phantasmagoria of life and withdraw from keen competition in the cosmic process, the Stoics placed great emphasis on man’s duty and optimism in the cosmic process. Thus, Greek and Indian philosophy heterogeneously taught their disciples and believers to develop rather different physical and moral conditions in the world. By delving into the contents of *Evolution and Ethics*, it is possible to gain some insights into why Yen Fu decided to generate a highly idiomatic translation of that work and why he interpreted it in the ways he did.
3.3 The Translator as Social Engineer

In *Tien-yen Lun*, Yen Fu embarked on a plan to transmit Darwin’s theory of evolution and other aspects of Western thought, such as law, liberalism, economics and sociology, to the Chinese reading public in a positive light. There is a direct link between *Tien-yen Lun* and Yen Fu’s role as the voice of Darwinism or Social Darwinism. In the present day, Darwinism has essentially become synonymous with the theory of natural selection. By translating Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* into Chinese, Yen Fu served as an important adviser on Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection in China. In this respect, Yen Fu, who played the role of a social engineer with an intention of designing a blueprint for transcending social division as well as cultural contestation, wished to guide the Chinese people to take advantage of Darwin’s theory in order to change old ways of thinking in China, and to encourage people to embrace the new progressive thought coming out of Great Britain at that time. Indeed, he believed that the ideas of biological evolution would help the Chinese people to better understand their own blindness and faults. It is noteworthy that Yen Fu laid much emphasis in *Tien-yen Lun* on the evolutionary process as a means of natural selection. He saw this selection process as a competitive mechanism from which all living creatures have evolved, primarily because it pivots on the principle of the survival of the fittest: that is, the process whereby organisms compete with each other in the natural environment, with the varied results of increased or reduced levels of mortality and reproduction among them leading to some outcompeting others. These two ideas—struggle for existence and natural selection are what biologists call ‘survival value’. Consequently, a huge number of different species naturally change over time and space. In the first chapter of *Tien-yen Lun* entitled “Scrutinizing Change”, Yen Fu argued for the

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243 Since Darwin thought of this selection as a metaphor, Wallace urged him to replace with the alternative phrase, ‘the survival of the fittest’. However, Darwin made it clear that he could imagine the process of the theory of descent by modification through natural selection, and thus. Darwin opted to use the concept of natural selection instead of survival of the fittest. For more details on this issue, see George Levine, *Darwin: the Writer* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011) 8-12.

process of evolution by natural selection in favour of his leading role as the 
upholder of Darwinism among the Chinese reading public:

And in the living world, one of the most characteristic features of 
this cosmic process is the struggle for existence, the competition 
of each with all, the result of which is the selection, that is to say, 
the survival of those forms which, on the whole, are best adapted 
to the conditions which at any period obtain; and which are, 
therefore, in that respect, and only in that respect, the fittest.

In Chapter Eleven entitled “A Colony of Bees”, Yen Fu portrayed the 
phenomenon of cooperation between honeybees as an example of altruistic 
behaviour. He pointed out that mutually beneficial cooperation between the 
Queen, drones and workers of a colony produces a close relationship 
between them all that enhances their altruistic behaviour as well as their 
survival opportunities. Hence in this way Yen Fu portrayed the society of 
honeybees as a close knit organization in which each member of the 
community understands where their tasks begin and end. In short, teamwork 
is a key to the success of bee colonies. Yen Fu dealt with altruism as one of 
the major ideas stemming from Darwin’s theory. In this respect, he saw 
cooperative and altruistic behaviours as being essential to the success of bee 
colonies in the struggle for survival. He advocated this view of group 
cooperation for his modern audience as follows:

245 严复 譯: 〈察變第一〉， 《天演論》， 第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館， 2009) 第 5 頁。
246 Thomas Henry Huxley. “Prolegomena”, Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays (London: 
Macmillan, 1894) 4.
夫蜂之為群也，審而觀之，乃真有合於古井田經國之規，而為近世以均富言治者之極則也。（復案：古之井田與今之均富，以天演之理及計學公例論之，乃古無此事，今不可行之制，故赫氏於此意含滑稽。）以均富言治者曰：財之不均，亂之本也。一群之民，宜通力而合作。然必事各視其所勝，養各給其所欲，平均齊一，無有分殊。為上者職在察貳廉空，使各得分願，而莫或並兼焉，則太平見矣。此其道蜂道也。夫蜂有後，蜂王雌故曰後。其民雄者惰，而操作者半雌。採花釀蜜者皆雌而不交不孕，其雄不事事，俗誤為雌，呼曰蜂姐。一壺之內，計口而稟，各致其職。昧旦而起，吸膠戴黃，制為甘薌，用相保其群之生，而與凡物為競。其為群也，動於天機之自然，各趣其功，於以相養，各有其職分之所當為，而未嘗爭其權利之所應享。247

Social organization is not peculiar to men. Other societies, such as those constituted by bees and ants, have also arisen out of the advantage of cooperation in the struggle for existence; and their resemblances to, and their differences from, human society are alike instructive. The society formed by the hive bee fulfils the ideal of the communistic aphorism “to each according to his needs, from each according to his capacity.” Within it, the struggle for existence is strictly limited. Queen, drones, and workers have each their allotted sufficiency of food; each performs the function assigned to it in the economy of the hive, and all contribute to the success of the whole co-operative society in its competition with rival collectors of nectar and pollen and with other enemies, in the state of nature without. In the same sense as the garden, or the

247 嚴復 譯：〈蜂群第十一〉，《天演論》，第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館, 2009) 第 40-41頁。
colony, is a work of human art, the bee polity is a work of apiarian art, brought about by the cosmic process, working through the organization of the hymenopterous type.\textsuperscript{248}

By illustrating the success of honeybees through their acting as a cooperative society, Yen Fu acted as a social engineer in as far as he promoted others to consider how they could re-organise wasteful and sporadic human resources in ways that challenged the repressive bureaucracy of the Qing government. Yen Fu was eager to harness the strengths of people from all walks of life to maximize their performance and thus create a powerful, renewed society. However, this might be Yen Fu’s deep reflection, humanitarian ideal and social concern in the late Qing society. In other words, the majority of Chinese are not easy to unite toward the goal of constructing an efficient and responsible society. Sun Yat-sen in the Republican era still believed that the Chinese people should fully employ their talents (人盡其才); however, because of the chaotic political and military conditions at that time of turbulent struggle, he was barely able to realise his goals for Chinese society. Only with the establishment of a new China did Mao Zedong successfully harness the various talents of the Chinese people to bring about his reformist dreams during the early period of the People’s Republic of China. In short, by using the analogy of bees’ social organization of the hymenopterous type to criticise discord among the different strata of Chinese society, Yen Fu, playing the role of social engineer, demonstrated his desire to establish a more efficient, cooperative and competitive society replacing certain maladies that he perceived in the late Qing regime.

On the basis of its need and capacities, a colony of bees conducts its duties through the social organization of the hymenopterous type in order to boost the probability of its surviving in a hostile and competitive environment. Darwin held that both human beings and animals share some traits in common which involve collective actions and emotional states such as reciprocity, empathy, sympathy, love and cooperation, and also the

development of things such as moral obligation and ethical ideologies. However, the drive for survival in a highly competitive environment may also motivate—these beings to behave in selfish, ignorant and violent ways. In other words, conflict and cooperation are two sides of the same coin in the context of human society as well as the animal kingdom.

In regard to mutualistic benefits between different kinds of species in the natural environment, helpers can obtain immediate benefits from their actions being recognized as cooperative behaviour. Accordingly, altruistic activities frequently happen in the animal kingdom. For example, in *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin’s striking observations of that the mutualistic behaviour between ants and aphides helped to reveal altruistic behaviour among non-human species. Specifically, Darwin observed that the ants and aphids shared a symbiotic relationship beneficial to both species whereby the ants helped the aphides by dislodging waste products from their bodies and the aphides provided the ants with nutrition in the form of their own waste products. The key point for the Darwinian account of cooperation was that this relationship increased the survival chances of both species. As such, they were, in effect, mutual friends in the natural world. Referring to the example of ants and aphides, Darwin confirmed the existence of mutual behaviour in the natural world. The following passage from Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* shows that biological altruism truly does exist:

Again as in the case of corporeal structure, and conformably with my theory, the instinct of each species is good for itself, but has never, as far as we can judge, been produced for the exclusive good of others. One of the strongest instances of an animal apparently performing an action for the sole good of another, with which I am acquainted, is that of aphides voluntarily yielding their sweet excretion to ants: that they do so voluntarily....

Under some circumstances, one person may be willing to rescue another from its immediate suffering, yet the question remains: what motivates that person to serve the other even at the expense of his own life? In *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin explicitly stated that the crucially important factors in that regard are the social instinct and sympathy. Hence it is these things, Darwin argued, that in some cases drive people to rescue their fellow creatures from suffering. In other words, the primary impulse for the happiness of mankind consists in the evolution of the social instinct and sympathy in human behaviour. Then, the secondary guide was known as the principle of greatest happiness in utilitarianism. Darwin outlined his perspective as follows:

When a man risks his life to save that of a fellow-creature, it seems also more correct to say that he acts for the general good, rather than for the general happiness of mankind. No doubt the welfare and the happiness of the individual usually coincide; and a contented, happy tribe will flourish better than one that is discontented and unhappy. We have seen that even at an early period in the history of man, the expressed wishes of the community will have naturally influenced to a large extent the conduct of each member; and as all wish for happiness, the 'greatest happiness principle' will have become a most important secondary guide and object; the social instinct, however, together with sympathy (which leads to our regarding the approbation and disapprobation of others), having served as the primary impulse and guide.\(^\text{250}\)

Influenced by these arguments, Yen Fu duly described the altruistic behaviour of honeybees with the aim of highlighting the importance of cooperation to enlighten the Chinese reading public. From a comparative perspective, he saw benevolence and mutuality as being consistent with altruism, since the behaviours of both humans and animals demonstrate the importance of teamwork in increasing overall chances of survival in a highly competitive environment. Thus, on account of the mutualistic relations between organisms of the same or even different species, a variety of demanding tasks can be dealt with more easily: many hands, so to speak, make light work. It is in this vein that a colony of bees cooperates to maximize the breeding potential of a single queen, and sometimes a single bee may sacrifice itself for the common good of the whole colony, or that some birds make alarm calls that warn others of hazards. The decisive point is that altruistic actions are not merely benevolent or cooperative deeds; they also reflect the survival strategies adopted by human beings and other animals in the changing environment. Hence as a social engineer living through the invasion of China by outside imperial powers, Yen Fu endeavoured to introduce new scientific ideas coming out of Darwinism or Social Darwinism in order to transform Chinese culture and society, and in particular traditional modes of thought which had been passed on from the ethical doctrines of Confucius and Mencius for over two thousand years.

3.4 The Translator as Commentator

Thanks particularly to his being the first Chinese translator and commentator of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*, Yen Fu became renowned as a distinguished figure in debates on Social Darwinism in China and rightly achieved fame for his vigorous studies of British social and political thought. Given his admiration for British culture, philosophy and literature, Yen Fu may be viewed as a transmitter of the English voice to the Chinese reading public. Thus, it can also be argued that, in one respect at least, Yen Fu has proven
highly influential on modern Chinese culture and history through his translations of modern Western writings.

In the first chapter of Tien-yen Lun, entitled “Scrutinizing Change”, Yen Fu presented two terms coined by Darwin as exhibiting how the struggle for existence relates to natural selection. The question of how we might benefit from an analysis of Tien-yen Lun is inseparable from our conceptions of what Darwinism was and had been. Although Yen Fu used the terms ‘the struggle for existence’ and ‘natural selection’ to denote the evolution of life on Earth, he also employed them in the broader senses of struggle and selection from Nature to human society. As a consequence, Yen Fu, who is widely regarded as a cross-culturally eminent scholar thanks to his excellent Chinese translations of modern Western writings, tended more and more to side with Spencer’s Social Darwinism as espoused in the latter’s critique of Darwin’s On the Origin of Species:

復案。物競、天擇二義，發於英人達爾文。達著《物種由來》一書，
以考論世間動植種類所以繁殊之故。251

Yen Fu’s commentary. The two definitions of “struggle for existence” and “natural selection” originate from the Briton, Charles Darwin. Darwin writes On the Origin of Species in order to test why many species of animals and plants would have been either prosperous or sparse in the world.

(researcher’s translation)

Having provided a critique of the unscientific belief in there being a creator of all living creatures on Earth, Yen Fu devoted himself to introducing Darwin’s evolutionary thinking to the Chinese reading public. Following this

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251 嚴復：〈察變第一〉，《天演論》，第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館, 2009) 第 5 頁。
course, he particularly referred to *On the Origin of Species* published in the ninth year of the Emperor Xianfeng’s reign (1831-61). Yen Fu’s arguments against the notion of a creator interfering with the long-term process of evolution initiated a shift towards non-religious scientific attitudes and away from traditional Confucian values like *ren*, *li*, *Datong* and so forth in late Qing society. In essence, the growth in awareness of Darwinian scientific theories not only helped to revitalize the nation, but also contributed enormously towards the rapid transformation of society.

Nevertheless, the perspective on the late Qing society provided by Yen Fu was at first fundamentally at odds with that held by many Chinese intellectuals and wider society. Yen Fu briefly commented on Darwin’s work and that of many European biologists as follows:

如法人蘭麻克、爵弗來，德人方拔、萬俾爾，英人威裡士、格蘭特、斯賓塞爾、倭恩、赫胥黎，皆生學名家，先後間出，目治手營，窮探審論，知有生之物，始於同，終於異。造物立其一本，以大力運之，而萬類之所以底於如是者，咸其自己而已，無所謂創造者也。然其說未大行也，至咸豐九年，達氏書出，眾論翕然。自茲厥後，歐美二洲治生學者，大抵宗達氏。^{252}_Ibid., pp 5-6.

Lamarck and Geoffroy in France; Buck and Baer in Germany; Wells, Grand, Spencer, Owen and Huxley in England; all these figures are famous biologists who conducted research into the origins of life. Organisms share common descent if they have common ancestry, but they produce different species. The creation of all living creatures leads back to the same origin, energetically operated by Nature. However, all living creatures on Earth are able to reach their current conditions by means of individual development rather than being created by the Creator.
But Darwin’s theory was not very popular until the ninth year of Emperor Xianfeng’s reign (1859), when he published *On the Origin of Species*, which later won the public consensus. From then on, biological scholars in Europe and America largely accepted Darwin’s thought.

(researcher’s translation)

Yen Fu might have been inclined to provide an understanding of the origins of mankind and primates by drawing on three now classic books: Darwin’s *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*; Haeckel’s *The Evolution of Man*; and Huxley’s *Man’s Place in Nature*. In other words, he advisedly persisted with the perspectives of these three authors in order to provide a synthesis of their views on the evolution of human beings and primates. In this vein, Yen Fu made the following argument about the common origin shared by gibbons, orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees and the man-like primates:

復案。達爾文《原人篇》，希克羅德國人《人天演》，赫胥黎《化中人位論》，三書皆明人先為猿之理。而現在諸種猿中，則亞洲之吉賁音奔、倭蘭兩種，非洲之戈票拉、青明子兩種為尤近。何以明之？以官骸功用，去人之度少，而去諸獸與他猿之度多也。自茲厥後，生學分類，皆人猿為一宗，號布拉默特。

Yen Fu’s commentary: Darwin’s *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Haeckel’s *The Evolution of Man* and Huxley’s *Man’s Place in Nature*—these three books all recount how the long historical process of human evolution started with the primordial forms of man-like apes. Among a variety of the apes nowadays, there are close

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253 严复 译: 《人群第十二》，《天演论》，第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館, 2009) 第 45 頁。
ancestral relationships between gibbons and orangutans in Asia, and between gorillas and chimpanzees in Africa. This is why this statement is so evident. According to the functions of the body, the man-like apes acted to a lesser degree like man, but behaved to a much greater degree like animals and other apes. From then on, the classification in biology shows that the man-like primates and the apes share common primate ancestry.

(researcher’s translation)

Darwin intended to explain that the survival chances of all living creatures are determined by how well they adapt to their environments. In other words, the environment naturally leads to a progressive process of struggle. In light of this observation, Yen Fu argued further that certain factors have accelerated the pace of transformation and thus led to radical changes in modern times. Fluctuations in the speed of change, according to Yen Fu, have mainly hinged on oppressors whose influence is essential to all living species.

Intrigued by the geological proofs, Yen Fu had realised that the process of evolution can be traced through the fossils of ancient animals in geology, which together provide a faithful record of evolutionary processes. In this vein, he noted it as significant that when Napoleon was leading his troops to invade Egypt, French biologists saw the value of the remains of ancient animals which they insisted on carrying away to examine. Hence, fossils provide the vivid evidence of the process of evolution. He made adequate comment upon these matters in Chapter Sixteen of Tien-yen Lun, entitled “Evolutionary Profundity”:

復案。天演之學，肇端於地學之殭石古獸。故其計數，動逾億年，區區數千年數百年之間，固不足以見其用事也。曩拿破崙第一入埃及時，法人治生學者，多挾其數千年骨董歸而驗之，覺古今人物，
無異可指，造化模范物形，極漸至微，斯可見矣。雖然，物形之變，要皆與外境為對待。使外境未嘗變，則宇內諸形，至今如其朔焉可也。惟外境既遷，形處其中，受其逼拶，乃不能不去故以即新。故變之疾徐，常視逼拶者之緩急。不可謂古之變率極漸，後之變率遂常如此而不能速也。即如以歐洲政教、學術、農工、商戰數者而論，合前數千年之變，殆不如輓近之數百年。至最後數十年，其變彌厲。

Yen Fu's commentary. The study of evolution can be dated back to the fossils of ancient animals in geology. Knowing the age of the fossils is critical to calculating whether they are over 100 million years old rather than merely hundreds or thousands of years old. In the past, when Napoleon first invaded Egypt, the French scholars in biology mostly took back bones dating back thousands of years to inspect. I [Yen Fu] understand that ancient and modern figures unanimously identify nature as the source of all living beings which have gradually evolved from change in the environment. However, changes in the form of things must interact well with the external environment. If the external environment did not ever bring about change, then the earth and its creatures would exist in approximately their original conditions. Yet, the external environment has generated considerable changes; the forms of things in this circumstance are oppressed by the milieu. The old forms of things will be forced to transform into new things. In doing so, the speed of changeability often depends on the priorities of oppressors. We should not state that the changing rate in the ancient times was relatively slow and thus failed to accelerate in later times. For instance, with many factors such as polity and education, academics, agriculture and industry, and trade war, the changeability of the totality of the previous thousands of years in these fields has exhibited a slower pace than in the recent hundreds of years. Indeed, during the last few
decades, the changeability has become drastically faster in these fields.

(researcher’s translation)

A holistic view of Yen Fu’s translations of numerous modern Western writings has been provided by Chow Tse-tsung. Specifically in regard to Yen Fu’s introduction to modern Western philosophical writings, Chow Tse-tsung commented:

During the two decades before 1919, various Western philosophic ideas had been popularized in China. Utilitarianism, the theory of evolution, and empiricism were introduced by Yen Fu’s translations.254

Yen Fu’s interest in modern Western thought was driven by his literary zest and social concern for introducing progressive Western ideas in modern China. The critical commentaries expressed by Yen Fu in his translation of Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics affected many pioneering Chinese leaders and intellectuals. Even so, however, Yen Fu’s expertise still remained in the field of ancient Chinese philosophy; hence the synthetic perspective on Chinese and Western philosophies provided by Yen Fu teemed with his own commentary and opinions, aimed at transforming an old feudal society into a new Modern one, particularly in his famous book, Tien-yen Lun.

3.5 The Translator as Philosopher

Yen Fu was motivated by the outcome of the First Sino-Japanese War to introduce a number of Western philosophers and their writings to the Chinese reading public. It should be noted that although some members of the official *Tongwen Guan* also worked on translating Western literature into Chinese, a majority of Chinese were still unfamiliar with Western philosophers and the importance of their writings in the late Qing era. By introducing and translating many works of Western philosophy into Chinese (particularly those coming out of Victorian Britain at the time), Yen Fu helped many Chinese to understand why the British Empire had become so wealthy and powerful. By his own account, Yen Fu wished to recommend many different types of talents\(^{255}\) to the Chinese reading public.

However, the *ying-yang* theory in *I Ching* states a dialectical and complementary relationship between a binary set, wherein the *Dao*\(^ {256}\) is

\(^{255}\) In *Tien-yen Lun*, Yen Fu mentioned many prominent Western thinkers and historical figures, most of whose academic expertise or significance did not extend to the field of evolution; for this reason, they are not directly discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, there is some value in listing the names or official titles of these figures to give a sense of the breadth of learning displayed in the book:

- Homer, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Socrates, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Epicurus, Copernicus, Queen Elizabeth, Bacon, Galileo, Shakespeare, William Harvey, Descartes, Locke, Newton, Alexander Pope, Hume, Adam Smith, Kant, Lamarck, Malthus, Dalton, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Tennyson, Darwin, Queen Victoria, Spencer, Huxley, Haeckel, and so forth.

Thus, *Tien-yen Lun* might be taken as a dictionary of philosophy, which is full of ideas about statecraft and philosophy. Apart from Western philosophers, Yen Fu also discussed a number of philosophical views stemming from ancient Chinese philosophers in this book. \(^{256}\) As regards Laozi’s *wuwei* [nonaction], the concept of *Dao* [Way] was at the centre of his thought in *Daodejing*. By virtue of the specific perspective it provides on the origin of life, the *Dao* can be explained in terms of its latent meanings and connotations; namely, the origin of life that gives birth to the myriad of things. According to Laozi, there is a *ying-yang* relationship in the *Dao* of the universe; this correlates to the unity of *yin* and *yang* in *I Ching*. Crucially, the unity of *ying* and *yang* generates the myriad of things in the cosmos. Following this cosmology in Chapter 42 of *Daodejing*, Hu Shih proclaimed Laozi’s evolutionary thought as a true reflection of the origins of life in the following passage:

The Way generates the Unique;
The Unique generates the Double;
The Double generates the Triplet;
The Triplet generates the myriad things.
The myriad things recline on *yin* and embrace *yang*
described in terms of the cyclical evolution of *ying* and *yang*. In other words, the duality of *ying* and *yang* represents a process of cyclical change or the process of dynamic, reciprocal evolution. The *Dao* exhibits ‘a provident source of renewal’. In *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley also, as explained above, used the story of ‘Jack and the Bean-stalk’ and the Sisyphæan process to explain cyclical evolution or change. Hence Yen Fu applied *I Ching* and Laozi’s *Dao* to explain cyclical evolution, which largely corresponds to Huxley’s evolutionary concept. Moreover, Yen Fu proffered Laozi’s *Dao* as the impartial way of Nature, which is beyond the estimation of inhumaneness. The concept of the *Dao* is central to Laozi’s thought in his book, *Daodejing*. In terms of the origin of life, *Dao* may be clearly explicated by its in-depth meanings and connotations. Yen Fu learnt much about evolutionary thought from Spencer’s social theory. As explained in *Tien-yen Lun*, the *Dao* refers to the origin of life that gives birth to the myriad of things. Yen Fu interpreted the *Dao* of the universe as follows:

復案。此篇之理，與易傳所謂乾坤之道鼓萬物，而不與聖人同憂。老子所謂天地不仁，同一理解。老子所謂不仁，非不仁也，出乎仁不仁之數，而不可以仁論也。斯賓塞爾著天演公例，謂教學二宗，皆以不可思議為起點，即竺乾所謂不二法門者也。其言至為奧博，可與前論參觀。

Yen Fu’s commentary. The truth of this chapter is consistent with

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While vacuous qi holds them in harmony.

In order to explain the creation of a harmonious order out of disorder, Darwin and Laozi, in different ages, observed and explored the truth of human nature and changes to natural phenomena respectively. Their studies of these things encouraged each of them to form insights and develop theories that, in their own ways, had tremendous impacts on science and philosophy. See Ouyang Zhesheng (ed.), *Hushi Lun Zhexue* (Hefei, Anhui: Anhui Education P, 2006) 154.

258 Ibid., p. 216.
259 严复 譯：〈天刑第五〉，《天演論》，第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館，2009) 第 92 頁。
the so-called Dao of the universe in *I Ching*. This truth is not the same as the concern of a sage’s. The truth, however, is the similar comprehension of the inhumaneness of Laozi. And Laozi’s inhumaneness is not relentless, but rather beyond the estimation of inhumaneness, so it could not be seen as inhumane. Spencer’s writings on evolution is pertinent to teaching and learning to varying degrees; it starts with a mystery which is the so-called only way in Indian philosophy. This statement is incredibly profound and it can compete with the preceding remarks.

(researcher’s translation)

In ancient China, however, the faith of the common people was that Heaven is the Creator of all things because it is the origin of all things as well. Hence Confucius viewed the Way of Heaven as the laws of Nature. Although Heaven is always silent, animals and plants live in the world generation after generation. Thus, the Dao of Confucius differs from that of Daoist thought in the respect that—Confucius intended to cherish the values of human nature. In his time, Confucius tended to convey his teachings or the Dao to others. Yet, when his teachings proved ineffective in educating people, he resorted to following the example of Heaven by saying nothing. Through his silence, Confucius was thereby able to reveal the Dao of Heaven, as is recorded in his *Analects* (*Lunyu*):

The Master said, I wish I could just say nothing. Zigong said, But Master, if you do not say anything, what will we, your followers, have to pass on to others?
The Master said, What does Heaven say? The four seasons proceed in order, the hundred creatures live their lives, but what does Heaven
Yen Fu further discussed the concepts of *li* [principle] and *qi* [material force] as they fit to Song-Ming Neo-Confucian philosophy. Focusing in particular on the evolution of human nature, he emphasised *li* and *qi* in order to explain *xin* [human nature], with reference to the common characteristics of Neo-Confucian philosophy. As a deep thinker on Neo-Confucian philosophy, Yen Fu commented on different aspects on human nature in Chapter Thirteen of *Tien-yen Lun*, entitled “On Human Nature” [〈論性〉]:

復案。此篇之說，與宋儒之言性同。宋儒言天，常分理為兩物。程子有所謂氣質之性。氣質之性，即告子所調生之謂性，荀子所謂惡之性也。大抵儒先言性，專指氣而言則惡之，專指理而言則善之，合理氣而言者則相近之，善惡混之，三品之，其不同如此。^262

Yen Fu’s commentary. The statement of this chapter is similar to that of Neo-Confucianism. In the Song Dynasty, Heaven falls into *li* and *qi*. Cheng Yi said, the *xin* of temperament is the same as Gaozī’s human nature. Xunzi insisted that human nature is evil. Confucian scholars argued over human nature, referring to *qi* as evil, but referring to *li* as good; however, some of them thought of it as mixed feelings between good and evil. Therefore, human nature would exhibit various levels of interpretation.

(researcher’s translation)

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^262 嚴復 譯: 〈論性第十三〉，《天演論》，第二版 (台北: 臺灣商務印書館，2009) 第129頁。
In his primary ethical theory, Mencius deemed that human nature shows innate goodness, likening it to the downward course of water. Furthermore, he stressed that moral self-cultivation consists in humanity’s capacity to reflect upon the past and present. As a consequence, human beings have the potential to enhance their moral goodness through self-cultivation. Mencius used analogy to describe his theory of human nature. The dialogue between Mencius and Gaozi shows their different viewpoints concerning the evolution of human nature:

Gaozi said, “Human nature is like swirling water. Open a passage for it in the east, and it will flow east; open a passage for it in the west, and it will flow west. Human nature does not distinguish good and not-good any more than water distinguishes between east and west.”

Mencius said, “It is true that water does not distinguish between east and west, but does it fail to distinguish between up and down? The goodness of human nature is like the downward course of water. There is no human being lacking in the tendency to do good, just as there is no water lacking in the tendency to flow downward. Now, by striking water and splashing it, you may cause it to go over your head, and by damming and channeling it, you can force it to flow uphill. But is this the nature of water? It is force that makes this happen. While people can be made to do what is not good, what happens to their nature is like this.”

According to Mencius’ argument, human nature is regarded as innately good. On the other hand, however, Xunzi argued that human nature is innately evil, thus opening up the question of which view is correct. Any direct answer to such a question could hinge on one’s own philosophical position. Yet, far from being contradictory, Mencius’ and Xunzi’s theories of human nature can in fact be seen as complementary to each other. As Xunzi articulated:

Man’s nature is evil; goodness is the result of conscious activity. The nature of man is such that he is born with a fondness for profit. If he indulges this fondness, it will lead him into wrangling and strife, and all sense of courtesy and humility will disappear. He is born with feelings of envy and hate, and if he indulges these, they will lead him into violence and crime, and all sense of loyalty and good faith will disappear.\textsuperscript{264}

Xunzi was inclined to see the concept of Heaven as encompassing all phenomena in Nature. Regardless of the extent to which natural phenomena are ordered or chaotic, Heaven treats all living things on Earth in an impartial way. Thus, Heaven cannot be influenced by either a good emperor or a dictator, for Heaven is always impartial and just. As Xunzi wrote:

Heaven’s ways are constant. It does not prevail because of a sage like Yao; it does not cease to prevail because of a tyrant like Chieh. Respond to it with good government, and good fortune will result; respond to it with disorder, and misfortune will result. If you encourage agriculture and are frugal in expenditures, then Heaven cannot make you poor. If you provide the people with the goods they need and demand their labor only at the proper time, then Heaven cannot afflict you with illness. If you practice the Way and are not of two minds, then Heaven cannot bring you misfortune. Flood or drought cannot make your people starve, extremes of heat or cold cannot make them fall ill, and strange and uncanny occurrences cannot cause them harm. But if you neglect agriculture and spend lavishly, then Heaven cannot make you rich. If you are careless in your provisions and slow to act, then Heaven

cannot make you whole. If you turn your back upon the Way and act rashly, then Heaven cannot give you good fortune.\textsuperscript{265}

Similarly, in modern times, we can compare Xunzi’s concept of Heaven with that of John Stuart Mill. In spite of these two men approaching the matter from very different philosophical perspectives, they had almost identical views on the subject of Nature. Mill outlined his views on Nature in \textit{Three Essays on Religion} (1874) thus:

As the nature of any given thing is the aggregate of its powers and properties, so Nature in the abstract is the aggregate of the powers and properties of all things. Nature means the sum of all phenomena, together with the causes which produce them; including not only all that happens, but all that is capable of happening; the unused capabilities of causes being as much a part of the idea of Nature as those which take effect.\textsuperscript{266}

Zhuangzi liked to use allegory in his literary works to pinpoint various transcendent viewpoints. This can be seen from the following passage where he refers to a giant fish named Kun who transforms into a bird called Peng. As Zhuangzi said:

In the northern darkness there is a fish and his name is Kun. The Kun is so large I don’t know how many thousand li he measures. He changes and becomes a bird whose name is Peng. The back of the Peng measures I don’t know how many thousand li across and, when he rises up and flies off, his wings are like clouds all over the sky.

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., p. 79.
When the sea begins to move, this bird sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven.\textsuperscript{267}

By underlining the largeness of Kun and Peng, Zhuangzi suggests to us that the allegory might be broadened to include our own views of the world. Transcendental as this tale is, the transformation of Kun comes from the Dao in Zhuangzi’s thought. This in turn invites questions about how Kun or Peng might view the role of man in the Universe.

In \textit{Tien-yen Lun}, Yen Fu used alternative methods to show that he wished to integrate certain aspects of modern Western thought into ancient Chinese philosophy, especially explicating the scientific and philosophical perspectives of Darwin, Huxley and Spencer. As a consequence, Yen Fu can be treated as a synthesising philosopher in modern China, and particularly a social engineer who had strong ambitions to transform a sickly old society into a healthy new one. His paraphrastic translation of \textit{Tien-yen Lun}, provides us with insights into Yen Fu’s concerns for and expectations of Chinese society in the late Qing Dynasty, as well as the difficulties faced by China at that time.

3.6 Conclusion

First and foremost, Yen Fu, who took the role of the social engineer with the aim of changing and reforming traditional Chinese society, was committed to promoting the use of evolutionary thought to ensure that Darwin’s theory of evolution could be taken as a timely cure for the ills of late Qing society. Next, to make a comment on a number of philosophical ideas, Yen Fu acted as commentator of \textit{Evolution and Ethics} in accordance with his evolutionary knowledge as well as social responsibility. Through his commentary on \textit{Evolution and Ethics}, he provided a wider analysis of various philosophical

ideas which he saw as relevant to his times. Finally, like a synthesising philosopher, he was able to use the works of ancient Chinese philosophers, Darwinian ideas, and others to develop his own critique of Chinese culture and society. Accordingly, *Evolution and Ethics* and *Tien-yen Lun* offer remarkable insights into the social evolution of modern China.

Much of what we understand about the theory of evolution in China comes from Western biologists in modern times. However, it remains significant that instead of merely reporting the views of Western thinkers, Yen Fu provided many of his own insights which in turn helped many Chinese people to accept and adapt Darwin’s theory to address the fragility of late Qing China. In this respect, Yen Fu made his greatest impact by conveying evolutionary thought to Chinese society through his translation of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics*, albeit on his own terms. Thus, whereas in his Romanes lecture of 1893 Huxley distinguished ethics and practices in human society from the mechanisms of evolution in the animal kingdom, Yen Fu evidently taking a different view, presented evolutionary thought as being totally suited to human society in *Tien-yen Lun*. In a word, *Tien-yen Lun* represents Yen Fu’s extraordinary achievement of connecting the Western scientific spirit with Eastern philosophical thought, with the aim of identifying the infirmities inherent in late Qing society.
Chapter Four

Lu Xun as Storyteller: the Evolution of Life and Cultural Selection for Social Metamorphoses

4.1 Introduction

Lu Xun (1881-1936), one of China’s literary reformers in the May Fourth Movement, has been hailed as the most well-known man of letters in modern Chinese literature. Lu Xun, whose birth name was Zhou Shuren, developed a strong international reputation under his pen name from 1918 onwards. The special revolutionary traits of his writings, truly depicting the development of human nature, have been lauded for their uniqueness in Chinese literature. When it comes to his huge literary influence, Lu Xun has been revered alongside Western counterparts in world literature such as Mark Twain, Shakespeare, Goethe and Tolstoy. Due to his insistence on an anti-traditional spirit and far-reaching reforms to the Chinese national character, Lu Xun spent much of his life trying to bolster efforts to combat certain cultural and social phenomena that he perceived as contributing to China’s weaknesses. In other words, Lu Xun believed that China needed to be fundamentally changed by way of cultural evolution or social reform. Furthermore, he wished to devote his ideal of individual cultivation to the Chinese people in order to help them liberate themselves from the old feudal ways of thinking and so transform themselves into new cultural individuals.

269 Ibid., p.1.
As will be seen below, Lu Xun’s writings teem with revolutionary ideals and social expectations which emerged through his cultural selection. It was by these means that he could be viewed as having fought with his pen against the social maladies and enemies of his day. His famous couplet [横眉冷對千夫指, 俯首甘為儒子牛] shows not only Lu Xun’s remarkable endurance of the condemnation of his numerous enemies, but also the strength of his desire to serve future generations. When the Chinese people commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of Lu Xun’s death in 1951, commemorative postage stamps were issued by China Post with the couplet printed on them:

Figure 10: A commemorative postage stamp bearing the couplet which was released on the fifteenth anniversary of Lu Xun’s death.

Two momentous stages in Lu Xun’s acceptance of Darwin’s theory of evolution coincided with the critical moments in the national crises that beset China around the turn of the twentieth century. First, while in Nanjing, Lu Xun was introduced to and came to accept Darwin’s theory of evolution through his reading of Yen Fu's *Tien-yen Lun* in 1898. Lu Xun’s initial contact with evolutionary ideas from *Tien-yen Lun* is depicted in his book, *Dawn Blossoms*
*Plucked at Dusk.* He drew attention to the cosmic process by referring to the translator’s preface to a Chinese edition of *Evolution and Ethics.* In the opening lines of the Prolegomena of the book, Yen Fu started speculating on Huxley’s thoughts about how the English landscape had changed since ancient times:

> Then it became fashionable to read new books, and I learned that there was a book called *Evolution and Ethics.* On Sunday I went to the south city and bought it: a thick volume lithographed on fine white paper, costing five hundred cash. Opening it—it was written in fine calligraphy—I read the preface:

> “Huxley, alone in his room in southern England, with mountains behind the house and plains in front, had a fine view from his window. He wondered: What was this place like two thousand years ago, before Julius Caesar came here? There must have been nothing here but primitive wasteland….”

Second, when Lu Xun studied overseas in Tokyo, Japan, from 1902 to 1909, he delved into many Japanese books concerning biological evolution. For instance, he read *Shinkaron kōwa* (1904) or *The Lecture on Evolution* written

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Prior to studying in Japan, Lu Xun had already begun to develop an understanding of evolutionary thought via *Tien-yen Lun*. He built on this knowledge by studying the general theory of evolution in Tokyo through careful reading of Asajirō Oka’s *Shin aron kōwa*, eventually developing a well-rounded understanding of evolutionary thought. Meanwhile, late Qing China was inevitably facing political turmoil, engendered in part by a series of waves of revolutionary activity.

Darwin’s theory of evolution was conveyed to Japan earlier than to China in the nineteenth century. From the perspective of biological evolution, the works of some Japanese scholars did indeed influence many of the Chinese literati, including Liang Qichao, Chen Duxiu and Lu Xun. During his period of study in Japan, Lu Xun may have come into contact with Ernst Haeckel’s scientific writings, which, in turn, appear to have influenced how he comprehended Darwin’s theory. He was significantly influenced by Haeckel’s faith in Darwinism and other related Japanese and Western texts. Together, those authors provided Lu Xun with foundations for his own scientific knowledge. Through his studying and translating of some works of Marxist theory, he also gradually came under the influence of Marxism which led him away from evolutionism in his later years.

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271 周作人《論魯迅的國學與西學》，《魯迅的青年時代》(石家莊：河北教育出版社，2001) 第 45-46 頁。
272 In 1877, Edward Sylvester Morse, an American zoologist, was offered a teaching post at the Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) during the Meiji Era. Meanwhile, he began conveying Darwin’s evolutionary theory to academic circles in Japan, thus gradually bringing evolutionism to light in that country. Some Japanese books concerning Darwinian ideas may have been published earlier than Morse’s introduction in 1877. Nevertheless, Morse’s lectures on biology and zoology might be seen as a formal academic exchange on evolutionism in Japan. See 王中江《中國進化主義與日本的中介作用》，《進化主義在中國的興起：一個新的全能式世界觀》 *[The Rise of Evolutionism in China]* (北京：中國人民大學出版社，2010) 第 43-46 頁。
273 張芸《第三部分：魯迅的精神態度與西方哲學》，《別求新聲於異邦—魯迅與西方文化》(北京：中國社會科學出版社，2004) 第 277-78 頁。
274 According to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, evolutionism describes ‘evolutionary assumptions or principles’ by showing the antonym of creationism. Evolutionism could possibly be applied to a variety of academic fields, such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, language, or literature. See *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles: Volume 1 A—M.* Ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 868. Another definition of this term in *Chambers Encyclopedic English Dictionary* refers to ‘a widely-held 19c belief that organisms were intrinsically bound to improve themselves, that changes were progressive, and that acquired characters could be transmitted genetically. The belief was also extended to cultures and societies, and to living
In developing his incisive critique of the rigidity of Chinese feudal culture, Lu Xun depended crucially on the evolutionary knowledge he gathered through his reading or translating of a variety of the works of Yen Fu, Haeckel and other foreign writers. Indeed, in spite of the preoccupation with revolutionary literature among students of Chinese literature for more than a century, through careful reading of Lu Xun’s work we can see how powerful the influence of Darwin’s theory of evolution has been on many Chinese writers. For instance, in “The History of Mankind” (1907), Lu Xun discusses some evolutionary concepts which can be traced back to Chapter Five of Haeckel’s book, The Riddle of the Universe. This link shows that he shared Haeckel’s concern for the condition of modern biological research. Zhang Yun suggests that Lu Xun translated the gist of Haeckel’s Chapter Five into Chinese, while also adding his own comments in some parts of “The History of Mankind.” It is therefore important to reemphasise that Lu Xun exhibited the modern synthetic view of evolution through his translating and introducing of Haeckel’s Darwinism to the Chinese reading public from his early writings in Japan.

Thus, in addition to studying Huxley via Tien-yen Lun, Lu Xun learnt much from Haeckel with regard to scientific knowledge of evolution. Haeckel supported Darwin’s theory because of the evidence it provided for evolution, while, on the other hand, in his Descent of Man, Darwin heartily commended Haeckel’s Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte [The History of Creation] (1868). Thus, in an important respect, Darwin might be called a Haeckelian.

As Robert J. Richards argues, Haeckel took on the role of Darwin’s defender in Germany:

275 Zhang Yun, pp. 277-91.
276 Zhang Yun, p. 278.
Haeckel was Darwin’s great champion of evolutionary theory in Germany; he was a principle in the theory’s introduction there and a forceful defender of it from the mid-1860s until 1919, when he died. Haeckel’s work on evolution reached far beyond the borders of the German lands. His popular accounts of evolutionary theory were translated into all the known and unknown languages—at least unknown to the West—including Armenian, Chinese, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Esperanto.278

Lu Xun’s literary renown consisted in his conveying of evolutionary thought and the idea of revolution to the Chinese people, among whom expectations and dreams of a wealthy and strong nation, based on change and progress, were mounting. He used his writings as weapons to deal with the long-standing tensions between the shackles of tradition and new Western ideas in China. Pusey’s statement that Lu Xun was intent on saving the nation through literature is therefore convincing.279 Taking advantage of widespread dissatisfaction among the Chinese people, Lu Xun devoted considerable attention to revolutionising the old literary writing style with a view to strengthening China’s fragile national characteristics and bolstering efforts to make gigantic social reforms. To further enhance his appeals to the people, Lu Xun made use of satirical writing to highlight the demerits of China’s long-standing feudal society in literature.

4.2 Between Evolution and the Liberation of Thought

During his period of study in Japan, Lu Xun’s historical record of the natural development of mankind was of considerable interest to attentive readers. In “The History of Mankind”, published monthly in Henan magazine in Tokyo, Lu Xun developed a passion for the evolution of humanity. As noted

278 Ibid., p. 500.
above, this article takes as its basis the concise arguments made by Haeckel in Chapter Five of *The Riddle of the Universe*. Using a sort of chaotic structure, Lu Xun intended to edit and reinterpret “The History of Our Species” from *The Riddle of the Universe*. He discussed evolutionary thought and resistance to it through various periods of time from Thales’ philosophical ideas in classical antiquity to Darwinism in the modern era. The need to explain such considerations is shown by numerous passages which, reading between the lines, show a preoccupation with various views of evolutionary biology and the philosophical understandings of life.

Various scientific explanations or philosophical hypotheses about the origin and process of biological evolution remain a debatable point from ancient times to the present day. For instance, in *On the Parts of Animals*, Aristotle thought of teleology as a variety of hypothetical necessity in different modes of animal life. He came up with the notion of hypothetical necessity as a systematic statement of natural teleology.\(^{280}\) Monte Ransome Johnson further explains Aristotle’s concept on the goals of animal evolution based upon their adaptation to the natural circumstances: ‘animals are completely focused on their own survival and reproduction and their various activities in accordance with these functions are natural, even if not deliberate or intentional’.\(^{281}\) That is to say, the purposes of species evolution are commensurate with individual optimal advantage to the functions of survival and reproduction in the natural environmental conditions. Especially, he drew attention to deer antlers as vivid evidence of his natural teleology, since the ultimate goals they perform are hypothetically necessitated by nature. Aristotle explained his point as follows:

> Deer alone have horns that are solid throughout; and deer alone shed their horns:  this is done (a) on purpose to get the advantage of the extra lightness, (b) of necessity, owing to the weight of the


horns. In other animals the horns are hollow up to a certain distance, but the tips are solid because solid tips are an advantage when striking. And to prevent undue weakness even in the hollow part, which grows out from the skin, the solid piece which is fitted into it comes up from the bones. In this way the horns are rendered most serviceable for offensive purposes and least hampering during the rest of the time.

This completes our statement of the purpose for which horns exist and the reason why some animals have them and some have not.

We must now describe the character of that “necessary nature,” owing to which certain things are present of necessity, things which have been used by “rational nature” to subserve a “purpose.”

Furthermore, if the above reading of Aristotle’s argument is correct, then it is apparent that he discussed his own version of evolutionary biology in terms of teleological creation. In his book, Aristotle on Teleology (2008), Johnson explicitly holds that teleological explanations show how complex they are closely related to the problem of ends and goals in organisms, animal behaviour, human activity and the cosmos. A huge number of complex interactions of animals should be involved in the evolutionary process of animal species in that this complexity could possibly be linked to serve some purposes in natural phenomena. In other words, Aristotle’s teleological explanations on individual species, nature and the cosmos revealed underlying causes or goals, primarily because they could have coexisted in the world if these explanations had showed some signs at the root of the problem. Thus, it is no wonder that in order to explain nature, Aristotle made effective use of metaphors, which in turn affected his systematic teleological interpretations of many close ties between species and nature. This is

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abundantly clear in a passage where he stressed the need to account for the supposedly unique concentration of hair on the human head in terms of teleology, which might be interpreted as a kind of evolutionary demand:

Man has the hairiest head of all the animals. This is (a) due to *necessity*, because the brain is fluid, and the skull has many sutures; and a large outgrowth necessarily occurs where there is a large amount of fluid and hot substance. But also (b) it is *on purpose* to give protection; that is, the hair affords shelter both from excessive cold and from excessive heat. The human brain is the biggest and the most fluid of all brains; therefore it needs the greatest amount of protection. A very fluid thing is very liable both to violent heating and violent cooling, while substances of an opposite nature are less liable to such affections.²⁸³

During the early nineteenth century, prior to the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, Lamarck’s ideas about the ‘transmutation of species’ or ‘transformism’ were the main source of ideas relevant to biological development in the natural word. In “The History of Our Species”, Haeckel briefly outlined the doctrines of creationism as presented in the Bible, according to which all living creatures were made by God’s manifold creation in six days. Divine revelation, however, cannot be counted as a field of science.²⁸⁴ Additionally, mythological or scriptural interpretation failed to satisfy the fundamental need for scientific progress, out of which Darwin’s theory emerged through empirical experiments. As explained previously in

²⁸³ Aristotle, p. 191.
²⁸⁴ Norman D. Newell, “Trouble in Eden”, *Creation and Evolution: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 16. According to the concept of intelligent design, our world is created by a creator’s direct intervention. Accordingly, an evolutionary worldview involving intelligent design could be called *theistic evolutionism*. One proponent of theistic evolutionism, William Whewell, attempted to refute Darwinian evolutionary theory by proposing that the evolutionary process requires divine intervention. For more detail on this debate, see Elliott Sober, “Intelligent Design”, *Evidence and Evolution: The Logic behind the Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008) 110.
Chapter One, contacts, debates and conflicts were swiftly aroused in the nineteenth century between proponents of Darwinism and intelligent design. As Haeckel declared:

Every serious attempt that was made before the beginning of the nineteenth century to solve the problem of the origin of species lost its way in the mythological labyrinth of the supernatural stories of creation. The efforts of a few distinguished thinkers to emancipate themselves from this tyranny and attain to a naturalistic interpretation proved unavailing. A great variety of creation myths arose in connection with their religion in all ancient civilized nations. During the Middle Ages triumphant Christendom naturally arrogated to itself the sole right of pronouncing on the question; and, the Bible being the basis of the structure of the Christian religion, the whole story of creation was taken from the book of Genesis.  

Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) continued the Linnaean quest for a natural taxonomy and comparative anatomy in zoology. Haeckel asserted that Cuvier’s ‘catastrophic’ theory obtained almost universal recognition until the emergence of Darwin’s theory:

Since Cuvier held firmly to Linné’s idea of the absolute permanency of species, he thought their origin could only be explained by the supposition that a series of great cataclysms and new creations had marked the history of the globe; he imagined that all living

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creatures were destroyed at the commencement of each of these terrestrial revolutions, and an entirely new population was created at its close. Although this “catastrophic theory” of Cuvier’s led to the most absurd consequences, and was nothing more than a bald faith in miracles, it obtained almost universal recognition, and reigned triumphant until the coming of Darwin.287

Instead, as Haeckel pointed out, Darwin’s theory of natural selection does not just explain the struggle for survival in biological evolution; it also sheds light on the problem of common descent. Thus, Haeckel argued in favour of Darwinism, noting that Lamarck had missed the essential point of the theory of evolution:

We can thus understand how it was that the success of Darwin was just as overwhelming as that of Lamarck was evanescent. Darwin, however, had not only the signal merit of bringing all the results of the various biological sciences to a common focus in the principle of descent, and thus giving them a harmonious interpretation, but he also discovered, in the principle of selection, that direct cause of transformation which Lamarck had missed. In applying, as a practical breeder, the experience of artificial selection to organisms in a state of nature, and in recognizing in the “struggle for life” the selective principle of natural selection, Darwin created his momentous “theory of selection,” which is what we properly call Darwinism.288
As regards Haeckel’s evolutionary morphology, he proposed that ‘phylogeny was the mechanical cause of ontogeny’.\textsuperscript{289} Haeckel used the biogenetic law to highlight the importance of embryology:

I established the opposite view, that this history of the embryo (ontogeny) must be completed by a second, equally valuable, and closely connected branch of thought—the history of the race (phylogeny). Both these branches of evolutionary science are, in my opinion, in the closest causal connection; this arises from the reciprocal action of the laws of heredity and adaption; it has a precise and comprehensive expression in my “fundamental law of biogeny.”\textsuperscript{290}

To underscore his point, Haeckel also addressed one of the major themes of Darwinism—man’s descent from the apes. In particular, he noted that Lamarck, Darwin and Huxley all contributed towards a heated argument that the origin of humans can be traced to the evolution of apes.

He [Lamarck] had even indicated the agencies by which it might be possible to explain man’s descent from the apes as the nearest related mammals. Darwin, who was, naturally, of the same conviction, purposely avoided this least acceptable consequence of his theory in his chief work in 1859, and put it forward for the first time in his \textit{Descent of Man} in 1871. In the mean time (1863) Huxley proved that the “descent of man from the ape” is a necessary consequence of Darwinism, and that no other scientific explanation of the origin of the human race is possible.\textsuperscript{291}


\textsuperscript{290} Ernst Haeckel, p. 80.

\textsuperscript{291} Ernst Haeckel, p. 82.
Haeckel pointed out that the discovery of the fossilized ape-man of Java was conceived of by many as one of the most intriguing events of the late-nineteenth century. The name given to the fossils, *pithecanthropus erectus*, commonly known as Homo Erectus, provided evidence of the descent of man from apes, and in that respect comprised a historic record of the origin of humans. By focusing on the light shed by this fossil discovery on the development of human beings, Haeckel provided his readers and other researchers with clues about the evolutionary history of mankind:

The most famous and most interesting of these discoveries is the fossil ape-man of Java, the much-talked of *pithecanthropus erectus*, found by a Dutch military doctor, Eugen Dubois, in 1894. It is in truth the much-sought “missing link,” supposed to be wanting in the chain of primates, which stretches unbroken from the lowest catarrhinae to the highest-developed man….Thus, by the discovery of this fossil man-monkey of Java the descent of man from the ape has become just as clear and certain from the palaeontological side as it was previously from the evidence of comparative anatomy and ontogeny. We now have all the principal documents which tell the history of our race.292

In “The History of Mankind”, Lu Xun coherently outlined his theoretical arguments in favour of different evolutionary perspectives, which were based upon a number of evolutionary theories explained and championed by Haeckel in Chapter Five of *The Riddle of the Universe*. Thus moving from Thales’ hypothesis about the importance of water in natural phenomena up to Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection, Lu Xun sought to provide the

292 Ernst Haeckel, p. 87.
Chinese reading public with a brief and enlightening survey of the evidence for biological evolution as well as a history of the same.

4.3 The Story of Evolution and the Evolutionary Philosophers

Lu Xun was one of the first Chinese intellectuals to inform the Chinese reading public about a variety of Western exponents of evolutionary thought, including the classical Greek philosopher, Thales, and modern thinkers such as Darwin, Haeckel and Huxley. From an evolutionary perspective, Thales thought of water as ‘the primordial matter and the universal substratum of everything in nature.’ For this reason, he hypothesised that water could be the origin of life, thus revealing a key link between the evolution of species and the environmental conditions in which they live. What is more, Lu Xun praised Haeckel, above even Huxley, for his efforts to promote Darwinism and make sense of evolution through his biological research in the nineteenth century:

進化之說，貼[shǎn，古同“閃”，閃爍]於希臘智者德黎(Thales)，至達爾文(Ch.Darwin)而大定。德之黑格爾(E. Haeckel)者，猶赫胥黎(T. H. Huxley)然，亦近世達爾文說之謳歌者也，願亦不篤於舊，多所更張，作生物進化系圖，遠追動植物之繩跡，明其曼衍之由，間有不足，則補以化石，區分記述，蔚為鴻裁，上自單ㄠ，近迄人類，會成一統，征信歷然。雖後世學人，或更上征而無底極，然十九世紀末之言進化者，固已大就於斯人矣。294

294 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉[The History of Mankind]，《魯迅文集》第 1 册 [The Collected Works of Lu Xun: Vol. 1]. Ed. 馮知明 (Feng Zhiming) (海口: 海南出版社，2011) 第 5 頁。
The theory of evolution was crystallised through the Greek sage Thales and was gradually evolved by Darwin. In Germany, Earnst Haeckel was the counterpart of T. H. Huxley. Haeckel, who commended Darwin’s theory in modern times, was willing to reject established rules and pursue change. He drew the diagram of biological evolution, traced the tracks of animals and plants and grasped the causation of propagation. Furthermore, if there were some gaps in his research, then he would compare fossils to distinguish between them and reinterpret their significance. From small creatures to humans, he tried to unify and confirm them. Although the next generation of scholars further examined evolution, it was the achievements of its advocates in the nineteenth century that firmly established the importance of evolution.

(researcher’s translation)

During his overseas study in Japan, Lu Xun came to accept Haeckel’s evolutionary thought by his reading of many Japanese books and magazines about human evolution. In order to explain how humanity had evolved from lower animals to become the most advanced species on Earth, Lu Xun stressed the importance of Haeckel’s notions of ontogeny and phylogeny as explanatory tools. He expounded Haeckel’s contribution to the study of biological evolution by proposing the biogenetic law. Haeckel also coined the phrase ‘ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny’ in regard to the development of human beings from embryos to adults. The biogenetic law, however, had become a controversial theory by that time. In effect, Lu Xun lauded Haeckel’s theory of recapitulation:

雖然，人類進化之說，實未嘗濫靈長也，自卑而高，日進無既，斯益見人類之能，超乎群動物，系統何昉？[fāng，明亮；起始]，賢足恥乎?
Yet the claim of human evolution had not merely been from the low species of primates to more complex ones; all were inexorably caught up in evolutionary processes of change and development. This statement improved the visibility of human competence, which surpasses that of many species of animals. We were ashamed to confess our ignorance of the genealogy of mankind and what its origin was. Haeckel was a prolific writer, who authenticated the truth of evolution and formulated his theory, so that ontogeny recapitulated phylogeny. Through his determined efforts, Haeckel traced the origin of man through gradual developments while clearing up a number of doubts on this matter. The biogenetic law had reached an apogee in modern biology.

(researcher’s translation)

In this section of “The History of Mankind”, what Lu Xun wanted to stress was the origin of human evolution. As for the theory of human evolution, Lu Xun heaped praise on Haeckel for proposing the biogenetic law, which, Lu Xun argued, had reached its zenith in the field of biology.

The myths of Pangu and Nu Wa exemplify the ancient legends of Chinese mythology [Zhongguo shenhua], concerning how the Universe evolved. Lu Xun mentioned these two ancient legendary figures in order to describe the initial state of our world. Much like its Greek counterpart, Chinese mythology is often concerned with the origin of the Universe. Thus, according to Chinese myth, the God, Pangu, created the world by separating the Sky and...
the Earth [盤古開天闢地]. Meanwhile, the Goddess, Nu Wa, is said to have tempered the rocks and mended the Sky, and then, having done all this, passed away to save the World [女媧煉石補天]. Lu Xun supplemented these stories by giving a short account of the origin of mankind between the East and the West. In addition, in opposition to some philosophers and religious believers who held fast to ancient superstitions about human beings, Lu Xun presented an incisive critique of the Chinese myths which, in his view, led to misunderstandings about the origins of humanity. In the following passage, Lu Xun offered his concise critique of the ancient Chinese myths of Pangu and Nu Wa:

人類種族發生學者，乃言人類發生及其系統之學，職所治理，在動物種族，何所由昉，事始近四十年來，生物學分支之最新者也。蓋古今之哲士宗徒，無不目人為靈長，超邁群生，故縱疑官品起原，亦徬徨於神話之歧途，詮釋率神閟而不可思議。如中國古說，謂盤古闢地，女媧死而遺骸為天地，則上下未形，人類已現，冥昭瞢[méng，目不明]暗，安所措足乎?

Scholars of human phylogeny have referred to the genesis of humans and the study of systematic development, and dealt with the origin of animal species. Over the last four decades, phylogeny has become the latest branch of biology. From ancient times to this day, humans, seen as the primate by philosophers or religious believers, were superior to many creatures. They abandoned their doubts over the origin of the species, having been led astray by myth. It is inconceivable that they put a random interpretation on the myth. Taking an ancient legend in China for example, we all know that Pangu separated the Earth from the Sky. When Nu Wa passed away,
her body was taken as the Sky and the Earth. The Sky and the Earth were not formed yet; however, human beings had appeared around the world. The world was in a state of chaos in which human beings seemed to have no place on the Earth.

(researcher's translation)

In terms of influence, Goethe (1749-1832), the German poet, became internationally renowned due to his understanding of modern literature, science and nature. He became particularly involved in the study of morphology through which he recognised the principles of transformation as 'governing the universal metamorphosis in nature'. Lu Xun was aware that the idea of an unchangeable form had not been satisfying for many European scholars in the late eighteenth century. Goethe, for instance, believed that the principles of nature are transformational. As can be seen in his book, *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790), Goethe held a pre-Darwinian view of the science of plant biology. Lu Xun referred to Goethe's evolutionary ideas (in particular his view that all species share a common origin) in the following passage:

雖然，不變之說，遂不足久饜\[yàn，吃飽，滿足\]學者之心也，十八世紀後葉，已多欲以自然釋其疑問，於是有瞿堤(W. von Goethe)起，建“形蛻論壇”。瞿堤者，德之大詩人也，又邃於哲理，故其論雖憑理想以立言，不盡根於事實，而識見既博，思力復豐，則犧然知生物有相互之關係，其由來本於一原。298

Yet the statement of the unchangeability could not satisfy the mind of the learner. In the late eighteenth century, many learners intended to

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298 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 7 頁。
explicate their suspicions by means of exploring nature. Thus, Goethe, a great poet of Germany, profoundly immersed himself in philosophy, establishing the forum of metamorphosis. His argument, therefore, was based on his idea that creatures have some connections between themselves through which they have a common origin.

(researcher’s translation)

In this way, Lu Xun presented Goethe’s sensitive observations about nature. Furthermore, having read Goethe’s prolific writings, he briefly lauded Goethe’s great achievements as a poet in Germany as well. In short, Lu Xun provided his Chinese readers with a digest of Goethe’s principle of metamorphosis in nature and his thoughts on biology in general.

Jean Baptiste de Lamarck (1744-1829), the founder of evolutionary thought in France, has been acknowledged as a pioneer of modern zoology. Lamark established his specific theory of evolution through academic debates he had on the development of life with European scientists between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His pre-Darwinian vision provided considerable and intriguing explanations for the evolution of animal species involving what have come to be recognised as Lamarckian elements. Even so, Lamarck’s theories were frequently attacked by the French botanist Georges Cuvier. Cuvier in contrast, having been influenced by Aristotle’s views on living things, seemed to have considered ‘organisms’ to be ‘functional wholes’; hence Cuvier started out from a teleological view of the natural world. Thus, his anti-evolutionism differed in extremis from Lamarck’s theory of evolution. Moreover, Lamarck was one of the first authors to use the word ‘biology’ in his book, Hydrogeology (1802), which is now in common usage. Lamarckism gave its name to the idea that the main evolutionary mechanism is ‘the inheritance of acquired

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In his book, *Zoological Philosophy* (1809), Lamarck’s theory of heredity led to some highly theoretical arguments that have since proven controversial and been subject to a great deal of critical assessment among modern scientists. Translator and commentator of Lamarck’s *Zoological Philosophy*, Hugh Elliot, comments on an arguable point of ‘the inheritance of acquired characteristics’ as follows:

Acquired modifications, as distinct from the so-called spontaneous variations, are of two different kinds. In the first place, there are those modifications which are due to the direct action of the environment, without reference to any active efforts on the part of the organism…. In the second place, there are those modifications which arise from the greater or lesser use of any part, due to some environmental cause, which requires the organism to exert certain parts to a greater or lesser extent than the average.

Lamarckism and Darwinism provided different explanations for the mechanisms of biological evolution. Both recognised the impact of environmental factors in driving biological change; however, Lamarck seemed to argue that species are merely adapted to the environment because they gain a better chance for survival. Yet even though species surely must adapt to their environment, they must also embody the individual traits that they have inherited from their ancestors. In light of the crucial discovery of the role played by DNA sequencing in heredity, the Lamarckian view of inheritance has become unacceptable to many modern scientists. For example, in his book, *Darwinian Populations and Natural Selection*, Peter Godfrey-Smith points out three key types of hereditary trait based on the theorist Richard Lewontin’s view that evolution by natural selection involves the principles of

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variation, heredity and fitness\textsuperscript{303}: namely, behavioral, morphological, and physiological, all of which may vary in terms of their inheritance. Offspring tend to resemble their parents as a result of the heredity of DNA. Accordingly, variation, heritability and differences in fitness—all profoundly affect the individual in the process of evolution by natural selection. Darwinism is much more convincing than Lamarckism with regard to the influence of DNA on heredity. Nonetheless, Darwin’s ideas and those derived from them also continue to provoke academic debates and theoretical controversies in the world to this day.

H. Graham Cannon has pointed out that Darwin and Lamarck were both influenced during their formative periods by certain other scholars who made lasting impacts on the future development of their ideas. During his undergraduate years at the University of Cambridge from 1828 to 1831, Darwin learnt how to conduct scientific research from his mentor, Professor John Stevens Henslow. After his graduation, one decisive factor that affected Darwin’s future development was Henslow’s arranging for him to take part in the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle. During this scientific expedition, which lasted from 1831 to 1836, Darwin collected and surveyed diverse specimens of plant and animal life, as well as fossils found along the west coast of South America, especially in the Galapagos Archipelago. On the other hand, Lamarck was greatly influenced by his contemporary Frenchman, the philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau. As Cannon argues:

Both Darwin and Lamarck studied medicine and for the Church, but in reverse order. Lamarck chose his own studies whereas Darwin’s father chose the studies for his son. Both met distinguished scholars in their spare time rambling. Darwin met Henslow, who was to have such an impact on his mind, and Lamarck met Rousseau.\textsuperscript{304}


\textsuperscript{304} H. Graham Cannon, p. 3.
In one section of “The History of Mankind”, Lu Xun depicted Lamarck as an eminent scientist whose most famous book was his *Zoological Philosophy*. Furthermore, Lu Xun indicated that Lamarck drew attention to the interactive relationship between animals and the environment. As Hugh Elliot notes, ‘any change in the environment necessitated a corresponding change in the species’. Lamarck demonstrated that the biological traits of animal species may be responsive to alterations in the environment, and that the organization, shape and structure of animals are based on the influence of the environment. Lamarck asserted his viewpoint in the following passage:

But great alterations in the environment of animals lead to great alterations in their needs, and these alterations in their needs necessarily lead to others in their activities. Now if the new needs become permanent, the animals then adopt new habits which last as long as the needs that evoked them. This is easy to demonstrate, and indeed requires no amplification.

However, subsequent scientific discoveries have shown that this claim is not entirely correct. In his essay, Lu Xun did not throw any doubt on Lamarck’s evolutionary ideas, and indeed declared that evolutionism began by subverting creationism. Lu Xun accepted Lamarck’s theory:

Jean Baptiste de Lamarck was a great scientist in France. In order to

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305 J. B. Lamarck, p. xxx.
307 鲁迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 7 頁。
advocate the truth of philosophy, he wrote *Zoological Philosophy* published in 1802 [1809], where he first presented his crucial viewpoint on different species, because of man’s individuality.

(researcher’s translation)

And:

試翻《動物哲學》一書，殆純以一元論眼光，燭天物之系統，而所憑借，則進化論也。故進化論之成，自破神造說始。308

If we consulted *Zoological Philosophy*, we can see that this book displayed a purely monist viewpoint. However, the system of all kinds of things in nature comes about by virtue of evolutionism. Thus, evolutionism developed itself to some complete condition, starting with breaking through creationism.

(researcher’s translation)

In this part of “The History of Mankind”, Lu Xun referred to Lamarck’s theory, which he saw as applicable to interactions between animals and the environment. Lu Xun, however, did not consider whether Lamarck’s theory was correct or not. According to research on modern evolutionary biology, Lamarck seemed to stress the interactive relationship between animals and the environment while ignoring the factor of inheritance through today’s medical concept of DNA. For this reason, modern scientists do not consider Lamarck’s theory to be completely correct.

In 1858, Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace took action at the Linnean Society of London to publish a joint paper regarding the theory of natural selection. It can be said that both of these men were ‘the co-discovers of the

308 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第1冊，第8頁。
selection theory'. It is also true that Wallace acted as ‘the founder of modern biogeography’, as Darwin acknowledged in the geographical chapters of his *On the Origin of Species*. Hence, Lu Xun accentuated these facts as follows:

迫[ dài，等到] 千八百五十八年達爾文暨華累斯(A.R. Wallace)之‘天擇論’現，越一年而達爾文《物種由來》成，舉世震動，蓋生物學界之光明，掃群疑於一說之下者也。311

Until 1858, Darwin and Wallace had published their theory of natural selection together. One year later, Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species*, which shocked the world. Darwin’s theory lit up the biological field and cleared up a number of doubts.

(researcher’s translation)

True, Lu Xun mentioned two key events in Darwin’s career in the next passage: namely, his travelling to South America from 1831 to 1836 aboard H.M.S. *Beagle* and his establishing of the theory of natural selection. Meanwhile, he was apparently influenced by Charles Lyell’s notion of uniformitarian geology as published in the latter’s *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833). Accordingly, Darwin sought some evidence that would confirm the Lyellian perspective, although he also held some opinions about ‘Lyell’s proposed mechanism for the formation of coral atolls’. Having studied fossils and related materials in line with Lyell’s principles during this expedition, Darwin declared that biological evolution can be proven with

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311 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 8 頁。
312 The Scottish geologist, James Hutton, uses the uniformitarian method to geology in which “past changes can be explained only in terms of observable process”. See Peter J. Bowler, p. 61.
313 David N. Reznick, p. 9.
certain evidence pertaining to the gradual change of geological features on
the Earth, including the sea-bed, volcanoes, the oceans, reefs, and so forth.
He himself placed a good deal of emphasis on the role that geology could
play in providing evidence in support of his theory of evolution. By following
this course, he placed his evolutionary viewpoint on a solid theoretical
foundation through long-term empirical observations as well as practical
surveys. Lu Xun made it clear that Darwin’s research on biology revealed the
excellence of his accomplishment:

達爾文治生學之術，不同蘭麻克，主用內籀[zhòu，指“籀文”]，集知
識之大成，年二十二，即乘汽舨壁克耳，環世界一周，歷宙生物，因
悟物種所由始，漸而搜集事實，融會貫通，立生物進化之大原，且曉
形變之因，本於淘汰，而淘汰原理，乃在爭存，建“淘汰論”，亦曰“達
爾文說”(Selektionstheorie od. Darwinismus)，空前古者也。³¹⁴

Having his main way of study through the inductive law,
Darwin’s research method on biology differed from that of Lamarck.
Darwin thought it worthwhile to collect and apply knowledge in the
biological field. When Darwin was twenty-two years old, he
embarked on the H.M.S. Beagle voyage to travel around the world.
Due to his fully apprehending the origin of the species, Darwin
gradually collected facts about diverse specimens of plants,
wildlife and fossils. Thus, to establish his theory on the origin
of biological evolution through his comprehension, he figured out
the cause of transformation that lay in natural selection. The
theory of natural selection was tantamount to a struggle for
survival. He formulated the theory of natural selection that is called
Darwinism. This theory was historically unprecedented.

³¹⁴ 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 8 頁。
Various other authors had attempted to explain the origin of man in terms of evolutionary processes. Lu Xun had already declared two English biologists—Darwin and Huxley—in their original texts relevant. More importantly, however, Lu Xun drew especial attention to the views of the German biologist, Haeckel, who claimed, in his book, *The Evolution of Man*, that paleontological ontogeny and morphology can prove the branching tree of human evolution. Apparently, Haeckel was convinced that the evolutionary process of animals is similar to that of the development of the human foetus. Lu Xun described these connections and Haeckel’s essential views as follows:

When it comes to the writings of past authors on human evolution, there are Darwin’s *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* and Huxley’s *Man’s Place in Nature*. In addition, Haeckel’s *The Evolution of Man* portrayed paleontological ontogeny and morphology as evidence of the system of mankind. This book depicts the evolution of animals as presenting the same pattern as the development of the human foetus.

After having apparently underscored the relative success of evolutionary research in biology, Lu Xun thought it was especially important to mention these two co-discoverers of the theory of natural selection in his essay. The first two theorists on British evolutionary history—Darwin and Wallace—were

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315 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 9-10 頁。
typical of Victorian scientists who worked on establishing new theories of biological evolution. In addition, Huxley and Haeckel published their own books in which they provided additional evidence and arguments in support of Darwinism. Regardless of whether Lu Xun actually understood these evolutionists and their related theories, it is clear enough that he intended to enlighten the Chinese people by providing them with basic clear-cut notions of evolution.

4.4 Lu Xun’s Cultural Selection\textsuperscript{316} and Chinese Characteristics

This section argues in favour of the cultural relevance of Lu Xun’s writings on the reform of the Chinese outlook and mentality during the early twentieth century. Lu Xun capitalized on evolutionary thought by bringing it into his literary world. He saw Darwin’s theory as a counterweight to certain cultural phenomena, which could thus be employed as a cultural remedy for China’s social maladies. Through his fighting of those people in feudal China whom he considered weak-minded, Lu Xun saw parallels between natural selection and cultural selection, and therefore it was important for him to underscore the potential for the replacement of an old regressive culture with a new progressive one. This was a conscious choice that, in Lu Xun’s view, could be made by mankind.\textsuperscript{317} With this choice in mind, Lu Xun focused on certain aspects of Western culture when he embarked on the task of translating numerous Western novels. This standpoint on cultural selection is briefly explained by Agner Fog in his book, \textit{Cultural Selection} (1999):

\textsuperscript{316} As a pioneering reformist during the May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun had a clear understanding of the idea of cultural selection. There can be no doubt that he opted for progressive Western thought in his writings. According to Agner Fog’s theory of cultural selection, the term ‘cultural selection’ becomes involved in an interaction between innovation, reproduction and selection for a cultural phenomenon in society. Thus, Lu Xun was intent on advocating evolutionary elements in cultural selection and thus replacing the old Confucian doctrines in Chinese feudal society. He wished to transform certain weaknesses of the Chinese national character into a new cultural impetus for the development of human nature in modern China. See Agner Fog, \textit{Cultural Selection} (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999) 60-73.

This model of cultural selection very much resembles Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection. The three fundamental processes are the same: variation (innovation), reproduction, and selection. The difference is that Darwin’s theory is about genetic inheritance, while the cultural selection theory deals with cultural inheritance.\textsuperscript{318}

Biological evolution is closely linked to change and progress in diverse species, and their genetic inheritance to the interaction between species and their environments. Cultural inheritance, however, reflects the significantly multi-layered nature of society, in regard to which it can be viewed as a key social phenomenon in the development of human civilisations. Human cultural heritage, whether good or bad, is inherited from the precious legacies of innumerable past generations. Yet when local culture encounters a series of challenges from a newer foreign culture, the local people should try to adapt to the essence of the new culture to make up for the shortcomings of their own. In this way, they will be able to spur on the development of their own culture. Either learning from genetic inheritance or from cultural inheritance, or from both, Lu Xun believed that in order for Chinese culture to progress, the Chinese people of his time needed to change many traits of their national character. In this way, he believed that as reform (or evolution) occurs over many generations, China could be metamorphosed into a new, stronger nation in the future. Therefore, concerning his concept of grabbism, Lu Xun felt a great responsibility to learn ways from Western culture by which he could transform rigid, corrupt and unfit aspects of Chinese culture.

To an extent, Lu Xun’s attempt at a solution was to change certain elements of China’s cultural predicament. In his many works, he observed the reform of the Chinese national character, from a humanistic perspective, as a major impetus for China’s future development, with the broader aim of initiating the cultural reform of the nation. Strikingly, Pusey argues that

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., p. 60.
‘Chinese who believed in the struggle for existence and in national selection, and who believed that “Chinese characteristics” were for the most part now unfit, had to believe there was a creative element in evolution’. This ‘creative element in evolution’ could possibly have transformed some unfit Chinese national characteristics into better and more appropriate ones by means of cross-cultural communication: particularly the reading of literature. Lu Xun’s pen was seen by many of his contemporaries as a shining sword against all social maladies, cutting through the rotten roots of the deep-seated national character of the old feudal society. Lu Xun should be recognised as the humanistic embodiment of recent Chinese cultural evolution, whose impact on Chinese thought about Western cultural dominance and scientific advances was far-reaching. In seeking to replace the Confucian heritage with new evolutionary theories in his literary works, Lu Xun might be thought of both as underrated and deserving of the title of ‘the father of modern Chinese literature’. No Chinese writer before him had created such a quantity and variety of writings on the reform of the Chinese mentality. Lu Xun himself considered his fiction as ‘a kind of cultural medicine’ for the Chinese national character. National characteristics, however difficult they may be to change, can nevertheless be refined through a more sophisticated education of humanity.

Research on patterns of cultural conversion has shown that China’s cultural transformations were sure to occur in the three eras of social upheavals. These three important cultural transformations, which changed the ideology and customs of the Chinese people in different periods of their history, created conceptual revolutions as well as new faiths. In his book, *Alive Lu Xun: Contemporary Significance of Lu Xun’s Culture Choice* (2010), Zhang Fugui intends to do justice to the theme of China’s three cultural shifts. According to his point of view, the third cultural transformation in the

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late nineteenth century was closely linked to modern Western thought. To understand how this cultural transformation came about, we have to first understand how the modern Chinese literati attempted to apply a wide variety of progressive Western ideas to their writings in order to change and save their nation.

Even though China experienced these cultural shifts during the Spring and Autumn era (771 BC-476 BC), the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) and the late Qing Dynasty\(^\text{322}\) respectively, many readers know surprisingly little about them. Each of these three decisive periods had a huge impact on China’s cultural development, whereby traditional culture and authoritative politics may have become integrated and metamorphosed into new cultural constructions. From an historical perspective, after his military victory during the Eastern Expedition over the Rebellion of the Three Guards, Zhou Gong (the Duke of Zhou) began to enact *The Rites of Zhou* in 1019 BC.\(^\text{323}\) These rites, which incorporated a patriarchal clan system\(^\text{324}\), were intended to maintain rule over the country, with the broader goal of establishing a hierarchical order for the various social classes. *The Rites of Zhou* were enacted through various rituals involving music and dancing, and were aimed at establishing unified standards of political ethics, social etiquette, celebration and ceremony, religious rites, military strategy and so forth among officials and other social groups. Acting as regent for the young King Cheng of Zhou for about seven years, Zhou Gong set up a collection of national systems and institutions that were vital to maintaining stability and prosperity in society.

\(^{322}\) See footnote 1.  
\(^{323}\) Zhou Gong was an outstanding statesman in the Western Zhou Dynasty. Having vanquished the Rebellion of the Three Guards, he established the eastern capital in Luoyi (now Luoyang in Henan Province) to maintain his control over the area’s rebellious people as well as enacting the official system, *The Rites of Zhou*, to change the chaotic condition of society. This official system led the people to obey social order as well as national laws and command structures, and had a far-reaching influence on Confucius and his thought in the feudal era. Nowadays a considerable number of Chinese people pay much respect to Confucius and Mencius, whereas Confucius and Mencius in their times paid homage to Zhou Gong as a talented sage of ancient China. See 姜正成 (Jiang Zhengcheng): (第三章: 制禮作樂, 敎化四方), *天下歸心—周公旦* (北京: 中央編譯出版社, 2014) 第 1-2, 121 頁。  
during the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC-771 BC). His contribution to the development of official systems during this period can be regarded as a sure sign of progress toward the creation of a unified Chinese state. However, when the Western Zhou’s feudal system collapsed, the connected aristocratic and militaristic culture was replaced by a civilian culture. In other words, civilian culture became the mainstream culture of China at this stage. Thus, the first stage of the transformation of Chinese Culture was essential to ancient Chinese politics, spanning almost the entire Spring and Autumn period, the Warring States period (475 BC-221 BC), and the Qin and the Han Dynasties (221 BC-AD 220). The academic knowledge of the old ruling class held by its former officials was scattered among the common people, with the result that Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, Legalism, Sun Zi’s military thought and other belief systems began to grow. The second stage of Chinese cultural transformation spanned the North-South Dynasties (386-589 AD), and the Tang Dynasty. Owing to the promulgation of Buddhism and Buddhist scriptures around this time, Buddhism initiated the formation of a new religious faith in China. Thus, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism have been the three main religious faiths of the Chinese people since the Tang Dynasty. The third stage of Chinese cultural transformation appeared in the late Qing period, and was perhaps the greatest shock in Chinese history. During this time, the Chinese political elite and literati encountered the unprecedented challenge posed by Western culture. Science and democracy were still the two chief areas of learning coming from Western culture; in stark contrast, China’s science lagged far behind that of Western countries and its feudal system prevented the development of a democratic society. As a consequence, Western culture was taken as a touchstone from which much could be learnt during this period of cultural transformation, no matter how different the cultural characteristics of the East and the West may have been.

One of the main purposes of this study is to examine Lu Xun’s cultural selection during the third phase of Chinese cultural transformation; in
particular, his cultural consciousness, high expectations and reformist strategy in regard to China’s old Confucian society. A further reason for exploring Lu Xun’s cultural selection is simply that during the third phase of Chinese cultural transformation, the challenge posed by the intelligentsia to the old order was much more serious than had been experienced during the two previous stages of cultural change. It is apparent that Lu Xun used his pen as a weapon against what he considered to be an old stationary society, and in the process pinpointed long-standing social problems within the Chinese national characteristics. W. G. Runciman once argued that ‘Darwinian theory can be applied to the evolution of human cultures and societies’. Darwinism could be applicable to cultural change for improving the prospects of humans in terms of social redevelopment. What is clear is that Lu Xun’s cultural selection thus presented questions of great concern regarding evolutionary thought.

As well as drawing inspiration from his portrait of the possibilities of new scientific education in his times, Lu Xun took on the task of awakening the Chinese people to what he considered the bad old habits they had inherited mainly from the old ideology of their ancestors while also wishing to establish new individual characteristics (the notion of li ren) based upon elements of modern Western thought, such as natural science and social science. He stressed the concept of li ren, which is to say the cultivation of the individual in terms of science. The so-called li ren can be explained in two ways; either as outlined by Lu Xun or as outlined by Confucius. Lu Xun’s li ren shows a stronger contrast between scientific education than that of Confucian values. Confucius’ li ren was central to the construction of morality, while Lu Xun’s perspective on it involved the making of man through science. In other words, Lu Xun laid stress on the need for creating an interactive relationship between man and science; hence he actively advocated scientific thought around man. Although Lu Xun objected to the Confucian values of his times, which he believed led people to blindly abide by the old ways of society, he appeared to

328 周章秀(Zhou Congxiu):〈一主兩翼: 魯迅啟蒙主義思想體系的內在結構〉《魯迅研究論集》[LuXun Yanjiu Lunji] (北京:中國文史出版社, 2005) 第4-6頁。
have pinned his hopes for China on future developments driven by evolutionary change. In this sense, Lu Xun was a champion of Darwin's theory.

In his essay, “On the Partiality of Culture” [Wenhua pianzhi lun], Lu Xun highly commended nineteenth-century European civilisation, while, on the other hand, he severely criticised China, primarily because she was relatively self-reliant and insular with regard to the rest of the world. If China maintained this conservative attitude, as Lu Xun saw it, then she might well perish in the future. Apart from this warning, Lu Xun also pointed out that when the Roman Empire rose up in Italy and throughout the Mediterranean world, the Chinese people did not learn from the advances made by the Romans; in particular, its literature, art and thought were rather splendid in the world. Nonetheless, as Lu Xun pointed out, the people of the Zhou and Qin Dynasties were extremely arrogant and complacent. Until the Yuan and Min Dynasties, very few Christian priests from the West brought religious doctrines, mathematics, physics and chemistry to China, since these cultural and scientific ideas were not very popular in China at that time. China’s political environment was rather closed and too conservative, and most people rarely thought about learning from the West. It was in response to this closed condition that Lu Xun launched his attack against a history of bigotry in China:

中國既以自尊大昭聞天下，善詆諆者，或謂之頑固；且將抱守殘闕，以底於滅亡。近世人士，稍稍耳新學之語，則亦引以為愧，翻然思變，言非同西方之理弗道，事非合西方之術弗行，挖擊舊物，惟恐不力，曰將以革前繆而圖富強也。329

China was known for her self-respect and arrogance in the world. Those who were apt to slander others would say that China had been

stubborn and would be conservative until her destruction. More recently, some people learned from some new remarks and thus felt ashamed, and were eager to bring about reform. They did not say if their remarks did not correspond with Western ideas; they did not do if those things did not fit Western methods. They strongly criticised old things. They proclaimed that they would like to work hard so as to reform previous mistakes in search of wealth and power.

(researcher’s translation)

Above all, Lu Xun valued the establishment of the individual; to cultivate the individual, he argued, could potentially make a nation stronger in the long term. Lu Xun stressed that China could become a stronger nation, provided that she learned from America and Europe especially in regard to individual education. He strongly supported scientific education for individuals in order to help the individual make progress in the prosperous future:

然歐美之強，莫不以是炫天下者，則根柢在人，而此特現象之末，本原深而難見，榮華昭而易識也。是故將生存兩間，角逐列國是務，其首在立人，人立而後凡事舉。330

America and Europe could show off their strengths in the world, the foundations of which were based on the individual. Such a special phenomenon was profound and hard to see. Their pre-eminence and essence were clearly to be recognised. Hence, in order to survive in competition with many nations, the priority consisted in the making of man. If we were able to cultivate the individual, then everything else would be established.

(researcher’s translation)

330 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 〈人之歷史〉，《魯迅文集》第 1 冊，第 28 頁。
Finding the best way to establish or to educate the individual and thus to reshape China’s culture and society was Lu Xun’s lifelong quest. He was willing to offer his opinions about the cultivation of man from an explicitly Western perspective in “On the Partiality of Culture” (1906). In his incisive critique of China’s arrogant and bigoted attitudes toward the West, Lu Xun recognised Western scientific thought as an impetus for change and progress in China. In this respect, Lu Xun seemed to underscore a Western style of individualism in the cultivation of the mind and character of a person.

In “Random Thoughts (25)”, Lu Xun discussed the development of humanity in terms of the process of evolution—from the past to the future via the present; he employed evolutionary thought as a solution to seek out a new humanitarian spirit, particularly in regard to the reform of the Chinese mentality. He considered the flow of time consciousness as exhibited by the evolutionary process undergone by humanity, taking the view that the future development of humanity would be better than that of the past. This flow of time consciousness exemplified Lu Xun’s evolutionary thought about the future development of human beings. From this evolutionary perspective, he explicitly linked China’s future development to the current state of her youth:

So by looking at boys and girls in their teens you can guess what China will be like twenty years hence. By observing young men in their twenties—most of whom have children of their own who call them “Daddy”—you can tell what their sons and grandsons will be like, and what China will be like in fifty or seventy years.  

In “Diary of a Madman” (1918), Lu Xun adopted a questioning attitude towards the traditional Chinese ways of thinking that had lasted for several thousand years. In this compelling account, he cast doubt on Confucian

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values and other cultural problems chiefly caused by long-term social customs. The argument that Confucianism and the Confucian educational system were outmoded had been publicly debated in the early Chinese Republic. Lu Xun employed an idealistic, realistic and symbolic protagonist to reveal what he represented the true nature of Confucian doctrines, which had controlled and misguided the common people for two thousand years. He compared Confucian dogma to ‘cannibals’ who are able to eat human flesh; his essential point being that like ‘cannibals’, Confucian dogma might lead many people to the edge of the abyss. Lu Xun’s disparaging attitude showed that people should get rid of rigid thought stemming from Confucian creeds. Lu Xun looked on cannibals in surprise:

Only thorough investigation will bring clarity. I seem to remember, though only vaguely, that people have been eating each other since ancient times. When I peruse the history books, I find no dates, only those fine Confucian principles ‘benevolence, righteousness, morality’ snaking their way across each page. As I studied them again, through one of my more implacably sleepless nights, I finally glimpsed what lay between every line, of every book: ‘Eat people!’

Cannibalism carries a variety of social and cultural meanings. For example, the Aztecs considered the consumption of human flesh as transmitting divine power to human beings; meanwhile, Fijian cannibalism shows ‘the part of the foundation of the social order’. In the paragraph of Lu Xun’s text cited above, cannibalism is not merely about the eating of human flesh since it also relates to the symbols and ritual behaviours of culture. Cannibalism, therefore, carries certain social or cultural meanings, such as upholding the relationship

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334 Ibid., p.22.
between humanity and the divine, which may be conveyed through the symbolism of cannibal practices. Peggy Reeves Sanday has distinguished between two different types of cannibalism: exocannibalism and endocannibalism. Well-symbolised as it is, endocannibalism essentially brings about some form of communion with common ancestors:

Exocannibalism (the cannibalism of enemies, slaves, or victims captured in warfare), characterizes the majority of cases. In the few instances of endocannibalism (the cannibalism of relatives) human flesh is a physical channel for communicating social value and procreative fertility from one generation to the next among a group of humans tied to one another by virtue of sharing certain substances with common ancestors.335

In “Diary of a Madman”, Lu Xun set out to describe a paradox in social phenomena and thus to challenge the tenacity of traditional ways of thinking in China. He seemed to imply a certain contradiction between traditional etiquette and anthropophagy in old feudal society. To reveal the maladies of the family system and the feudal ethical code [家族制度和禮教的弊害]336 in China’s long history, he cast many people in the different roles of ‘cannibal’ in this startling, threatening behaviour. Lu Xun saw in the subject of cannibalism a potential for creating a sense of hatred as well as moral defeat. Accordingly, Lu Xun’s satirical representation of a disastrous scenario in Chinese feudal society intended to convey his view that maintaining the same sense of morality over several thousand years corresponded closely to the abnormal behaviour of eating human flesh. Hence Lu Xun showed that the cannibals ready to eat human flesh were simply being hoodwinked by the false benevolence, righteousness and morality of the ancient ethical doctrines they upheld. In that way, Lu Xun underscored in his counterposition that the

335 Ibid., p.7.
336 魯迅 (Lu Xun): 《且介亭雜文二集•〈中國新文學大系〉小說二集序》，《魯迅文集》第 4 冊，馮知明 (Feng Zhiming) 主編 (海口：海南出版社，2011)第129頁。
social tendency to believe in the old ethical code of the feudal system had to change. Through the satirical roles in which Lu Xun cast them, many characters, including the madman, develop a niggling paranoia due to the mixture of barbarity, stubbornness, suspicion and sensitivity. Through this ironic discourse, Lu Xun expressed his own scepticism of China’s time-honored feudal tradition and its ethical values while also attempting to educate people away from the associated social practices:

I now realize I have unknowingly spent my life in a country that has been eating human flesh for four thousand years. My sister, I remember, died while my brother was managing the household. He probably fed her secretly to us, by mixing her into our food. I, too, may have unknowingly eaten my sister’s flesh. And now it’s my own turn . . . . With the weight of four thousand years of cannibalism bearing down upon me, even if once I was innocent how can I now face real humans?337

In light of the reform of Chinese characteristics, Lu Xun was concerned with certain flaws in the Chinese national character in “Diary of a Madman”: suspicion, stubbornness and sensitivity. The madman develops a special psychological condition symptomatic of paranoia in this short essay, as he casts doubt on many people who ‘are planning to eat me’.338 In addition, Lu Xun satirically presented some sense of what Peggy Reeves Sanday has called endocannibalism; that is, cannibalism among relatives. Instead of persisting in embracing Confucian principles, Lu Xun aspired to transform the darker side of the madman into an idealistic future figure who could combat feudal thought and face the future with confidence. In this way, he was clearly

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337 Lu Xun, p. 31.
able to illustrate opposing social phenomena representing feudal thought and anti-feudal power in his contemporary China.

In another of his short stories, “The Real Story of Ah-Q” (1921-1922), Lu Xun developed the eponymous character Ah-Q to represent an archetypal farmer around the time of the Nationalist Revolution in 1911. In doing so, he wished to examine the weakness caused by arrogance and complacency in the Chinese psyche. Through his contemptible attitude towards others, Ah-Q can be taken to represent the kind of man for whom complacency and excessive self-regard lead to problems. As Lu Xun wrote:

Ah-Q had a robust sense of his own self-worth, placing the rest of Weizhuang far beneath him in the social scale. Even the village’s two aspiring young scholars—the Zhao and Qian sons—he considered with haughty contempt.339

Ironically, Ah-Q sees himself as a spiritual victor over his opponents; yet in reality, he is always defeated by them. This is the so-called ‘spiritual triumph’340 with which Ah-Q faces up to his failure without admitting it. Thus, Lu Xun’s insightful representation of weakness in Chinese characteristics in “The Real Story of Ah-Q” points to his careful observations of human nature:

But his interlocutors wouldn’t let it lie. On they went needling him, until the whole thing ended in blows, and Ah-Q’s formal submission: with the seizing of his sallow queue and the robust knocking of his head four or five times against a wall. After which, his adversaries would at last depart, their hearts fairly singing with the joys of victory. ‘Beaten again by that scum,’ Ah-Q would stand

340 史志愷 (Shi Zhijin): 〈阿Q正傳解讀〉，《魯迅小說解讀》(北京：中國社會科學出版社，2004) 第221頁。
there, thinking to himself. ‘It’s like a father getting thrashed by his sons. What’s the world coming to …’ Then, he, too, would jubilantly leave the scene of his triumph.\textsuperscript{341}

In another episode involving a lice-capturing game, Ah-Q is intent on competing with Wang. In effect, Ah-Q overlooks the truth of things by failing to recognise his lack of an effective strategy to beat his rival in a fair competition. This story focuses on Ah-Q’s attitudes to inefficient working methods, inefficiency having been identified by Lu Xun as another weakness in the Chinese national character:

Ah-Q also took off his tattered jacket, turned it inside out and began checking it over for lice of his own. Perhaps because he had washed it too recently, or because he didn’t look hard enough, after expending much time and effort he succeeded in locating only three or four. He glanced across at Wang, catching one after another and popping them between his teeth. Disappointment quickly gave way to a sense of the tragic injustice of it all. His paltry harvest, next to the bumper crop enjoyed by the vilely hairy Wang: what an extraordinary affront to his dignity it was! He searched desperately, and yet in vain, for a couple of outsized specimens, eventually turning out a middle-sized example of the genre. He stuffed it vengefully into his mouth and bit hard down on it; and yet still the resulting crunch was nothing to the percussive effects that Wang was achieving.\textsuperscript{342}

\textsuperscript{341} Lu Xun, pp 85-86.  
\textsuperscript{342} Lu Xun, p. 89.
As a cultural warrior, Lu Xun wanted to figure out what he considered to be the dark side of human nature as embodied in the Chinese national character, and then to demolish those faults through his satirical writings. Hubris, spiritual triumphalism and inefficiency were the three main flaws in Chinese national character as Lu Xun saw it. It was for this reason that he wrote three different stories in order to improve the character of the Chinese people, and in particular to address the general psychological sickness, as he saw it, and cultural problems hampering Chinese society. As can be seen in the above episode, even though Ah-Q was definitely defeated by his opponent, he could not admit to this fact. Ideologically, Lu Xun specified these chief weaknesses in the national character in his writings; however, as he recognised, considerable time and many generations were needed to change these ingrained habits.

Lu Xun also drew on the many examples of the fatal attractions of women for some Chinese emperors in history. He was emphatic that unwise emperors, with priggish attitudes towards their people as well as autocratic national policies, had over-indulged in their beloved concubines. Those women who destroyed certain emperors did so by exploiting their feminine beauty and attractions. Hence to such emperors, good advice was of no avail. In Western culture, femme fatales also seduced men, using their feminine charms unknown to the common people. Lu Xun might have focused on the supposed dangers of women in politics as a warning to all Chinese men that they should not succumb to extremes of desire, since doing so could lead to their downfall. As Lu Xun declared in the following passage:

The great majority of Chinese men in history would have become saints and sages had they not been ruined by women first. Just look at the Shang dynasty—destroyed by the licentious concubine Da Ji; while Bao Si performed the same service for the Zhou. The Qin dynasty, now . . . well, the sources aren’t entirely unequivocal on this, but were we to surmise there was a woman involved
somewhere, we probably wouldn’t be wandering too far from the truth. Moving swiftly on to attested fact and the Later Han, it was of course yet another concubine, Diao Chan, who led Dong Zhou to his death.\footnote{Lu Xun, p. 94.}

In Lu Xun’s story, Ah-Q does not abide by the sayings of Confucius that men should always behave in a gentlemanly manner. In this respect, Ah-Q is opposed to what Confucian creeds had taught for more than two thousand years. However, even if those creeds were as good as any for explaining harmony in society in ancient times, modern Chinese society was constantly changing in dynamic ways. In the following passage, Lu Xun tried to subvert traditional ethics by providing a satirical account of Ah-Q’s psychological encounter with a nun and his later attempt to woo a woman in an opera house:

Yet here he was, at the age of thirty—the year in which Confucius enjoined men to ‘stand firm’—losing his head, in a thoroughly un-Confucian way, over a nun. What abominable creatures women truly were; if only that nun’s face had not been so bewitchingly smooth, or if it had been modestly veiled, Ah-Q would not, in turn, have submitted to being bewitched. Some five or six years past, wedged within a packed opera audience, he had taken the opportunity to pinch a woman’s thigh, but her intervening trousers had protected against this debilitating light-headedness. The heretic vixen of a nun, with her shameless naked face. ‘Woman . . .’ Ah-Q went on thinking.\footnote{Lu Xun, p. 94.}
In this way, the priggish Ah-Q adopts an ambivalent attitude towards women, on the one hand viewing them with disdain while, on the other, nurturing a desire for them.

It needs to be stressed that in an historical context, much of Lu Xun’s concern for the reform of Chinese national characteristics involved challenging the received wisdom of Confucian values. Lu Xun revealed and dissected the prejudices and weaknesses of men towards women as seen through the lens of Confucianism. In turn, his critique of Confucian attitudes towards women enabled many Chinese to understand the unequal social status of women who lacked esteem and freedom under the feudal system. Chinese women had neither esteem nor freedom prior to the early Chinese Republic. Indeed, Chinese women were only able to gain respect for their social status through comprehensive change in national attitudes which were of vital importance.

4.5 Conclusion

In “The History of Mankind”, Lu Xun narrated the story of the origin of mankind. Haeckel’s chapter, “The History of Our Species” in The Riddle of the Universe has been widely interpreted as the source material for Lu Xun’s “The History of Mankind”. Like a Haeckelian, Lu Xun wisely re-edited and reinterpreted Haeckel’s evolutionary ideas as found in The Riddle of the Universe. Lu Xun’s aim in adapting Haeckel’s work was to express modern Western scientific thought in a manner that would influence and bring about change in China’s conservative social attitudes, which were still dominated by feudal thought as it stood during the late Qing Dynasty. The influx of Western ideas became a necessary evil for China, chiefly because ‘the closed door policy’ had been adopted during the time of the Emperor Qinglong and remained in place for a number of decades. Nonetheless, if Lu Xun had not employed Western evolutionary ideas alongside his own insights to change the many demerits he saw in the Chinese national characteristics, then other
men of letters would have done the same. Despite the slowness of progress in China’s national development, numerous contemporary Chinese intellectuals, alongside Lu Xun, had no choice but to change the status quo in order to revitalize the power of the nation. Nevertheless, as a leader of social reform who continuously re-evaluated the nature of traditional Chinese culture, Lu Xun was eager to unfurl the banner of literary revolution again so that he could be counted as one of the influential pioneers of his times.

This chapter also explores how Lu Xun’s cultural selection was made during the third phase of Chinese cultural transformation. As explained above, China has undergone three crucial stages of cultural change in its nearly five-thousand year history. Above all, the cultural transformation that took place in late Qing Dynasty was the most remarkable stage in Chinese history. Lu Xun’s cultural selection revolved around pertinent questions raised by the interpretation of evolutionary thought. In other words, he represented and explored the deep-rooted Chinese national character in his writings in order to corroborate his views and arguments concerning the future development of man along evolutionary lines. While facing many cultural dilemmas, Lu Xun tried to boost the possibility of the evolution of human nature and so change certain flaws in the Chinese character. Nevertheless, it was not easy for Lu Xun to transform Chinese national character even with the influence of progressive ideas from the West. He thus seemed crestfallen and dissatisfied with his achievements during his lifetime. To be sure, considerable time is required to change the Chinese national character; however, even up to this day the changes that have occurred have yet to meet Lu Xun’s overall expectations.
Chapter Five
Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu: Evolution and the Chinese Literary Revolution

5.1 Introduction

The influx of evolutionary thought into China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was manifold, leading to the rise of China in the twenty-first century. Of the numerous applications of evolutionary thought during this hard time, one key area covered here is its role as a means of promoting innovation in modern Chinese literature. Accordingly, this chapter examines the concepts of evolution and revolution, first, to provide a theoretical synthesis of modern Chinese vernacular literature and second, to show the relationship between the evolutionary process and the progression of the literary revolutionary movement in modern Chinese history. As will be seen, literary reformers in both the late Qing period and the early Chinese Republic used the idea of evolutionary selection to justify the literary revolution.

From an historical perspective, when it came to the far-reaching reform of the Chinese language and literature in the twentieth century, it can be argued that a great deal of the credit belongs to Hu Shih (1891-1962) and Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), each of whom made significant contributions to the evolution of modern Chinese literature. Nevertheless, it should be noted that vigorous reforms to the Chinese writing style had been proposed, even before Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu became active as reformers, by Huang
Zunxian\(^{345}(1848-1905)\), an official at the Chinese Embassy in Japan in the late Qing era. These preliminary proposals sought to lift traditional restrictions on the classical *wen-yen* writing style, thereby proceeding from the practicability of Chinese characters that eventually opened up the road to evolution in vernacular or *bai-hua* literature. In fact, Huang Zunxian’s suggested reforms preceded Hu Shih’s insistence on the use of Chinese vernacular literature by at least two decades. On the other hand, the Qing government formally abolished the civil service examinations in 1905,\(^{346}\) thereby precipitating the end of ancient *wen-yen* writing examinations and thus the dogmatic maintenance of legal procedures which had been in place for more than 1,300 years since the Sui Dynasty. This was China’s opportunity to galvanise many Chinese literati into taking action, as they were actively interested in learning much from new, Western-inspired literary thought. From then on, few Chinese placed much reliance on the official system of the civil service examinations for promoting their social status. Thus, the abolition of the Chinese civil service examinations might have marked a turning point with implications for the drastic reforms of the Chinese language and literature that were to take place in the future. As will be seen in this chapter, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu, along with Huang Zunxian, shared broadly similar ambitions for the reform of modern Chinese language and literature.

As noted previously, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu have been lauded for their championing of reforms to the Chinese language and literature in the early twentieth century. They recognised in common that all aristocratic, classical and eremitic literature needed to be transformed into a new simpler form of vernacular literature. Hu Shih, who may be seen as a pioneering leader of the modern Chinese literary renaissance, has long been recognised as a

\(^{345}\) Proposals for the reform of the Chinese language were presented by Huang Zunxian and Liang Qichao in the late Qing period. They initially recognised the flaws of *wen-yen* writing style as a tool of monopoly between rulers and many literati. Most of the common people, however, were unable to read and write in this classical style. Until the May Fourth Movement of 1919, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu resorted to advocating the literary revolution in order to challenge the dominant status of the *wen-yen* writing style. See 張豔華 (Zhang Yanhua): 〈語言現代轉型的前期準備〉，《新文學發生期的語言選擇與文體流變》 (濟南: 山東大學出版社, 2009) 第 37 頁。

prestigious advocate of the literary revolution in China whose perspectives and arguments inspired many of his contemporary writers. Hu Shih was determined to launch an anti-classical revolution in the Chinese language by proffering eight proposals for the reform of literature, which were published in an article entitled, “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature” (1917). Each of these proposals was highly relevant to Hu Shih’s aim of using evolutionary thought to ideologically transform traditional Confucian society; key to this project was his belief that writing must have substance comprised of feeling and thought. In this regard, he seemed to have been offering a severe critique of people who used language without substance as he defined it. Given the content of his proposals, it is not surprising that Hu Shih intended to establish a formal national literature as part of the process of literary reconstruction in China. As will be seen below, both his actions and his eight proposals reveal a conscious and guided application of evolutionary thought to modern Chinese vernacular literature.

Chen Duxiu was a social reformer who supported the revitalization of Chinese vernacular literature. He tried to promote social change throughout China in his writings (especially a number of critical articles published in New Youth) by challenging the established classical literature and Confucian belief system. In an essay entitled “On Literary Revolution” (1917), Chen Duxiu presented literary, political and scientific evolutionary thinking influenced by European culture, as inevitable drivers of the evolution of civilisation. Like two shining stars in the night sky, Chen Duxiu and Hu Shih reached a clear consensus by shedding light on the cultural evolution of modern Chinese literature.

5.2 Evolutionary Thought in Ancient China

In his essay “The Pre-Qin Masters on Evolutionism” [〈先秦諸子之進化論〉] (1917), Hu Shih described evolutionary thought in ancient China, discussing many famous Masters of the Pre-Qin era who, he argued,
contributed to China’s traditional forms of evolutionary thought: for example, Laozi, Confucius, Liezi, Zhuangzi and Xunzi. In this way, he argued that each of these Chinese Masters developed their own evolutionary ideas in their writings, which they related to their descriptions of natural phenomena. Hu Shih reminded us that evolutionism has three fundamental foci: the origin of all creatures, the history of change in all creatures, and the condition and causation of change. Nevertheless, he did not consider ancient mythology and the stories of *The Bible* as embodying the idea of evolutionism. This shows that Hu Shih thought of evolutionism as a theory of nature concerned with explaining the problem of transformation in all creatures.

Hu Shih paid especial attention to Laozi’s evolutionism in the aforementioned essay, focusing on Chapter 40 of the latter’s *Daodejing* where he offered a significant definition of the *Dao* as ‘being and nothingness’ (beinglessness). In this regard, being describes the origin of all creatures which the *Dao* produces in numeric sequence (*i.e.* one, two, three and so forth). Meanwhile, the notion of nothingness in relation to the *Dao* represents Nature or the objective, absoluteness of things. Furthermore, nothingness does not mean no-thing in the sense of the absence of things, since nothingness is in this regard the original creator of all things. Therefore, Laozi believed that being originated from nothingness, as he himself stated:

天下萬物生於有，有生於無。（《老子》第四十章）

The world’s myriad [of] things are generated from being; Being is generated from beingless[ness].

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347 胡適 (Hu Shih): 〈先秦諸子之進化論〉，《胡適論哲學》 [Hushi Lun Zhexu], Ed. 歐陽哲生 (Ouyang Zhesheng) (合肥：安徽教育出版社, 2006) 第 153-78 頁。
348 Ibid., p.154.
349 Ibid., p.154.
350 董京泉 (Dong Jingquan): 〈一、道論篇: 第十二章〉，《老子道德經新編》(北京：中國社會科學出版社, 2008) 第 90-95 頁。
It is essential that the concept of the Dao is linked to Laozi's central thought in *Daodejing*. The specific perspective on the origin of life offered by the Dao may be explained through its latent meaning and connotations; namely, the origin of life that gives birth to the myriad of things. The Dao of the universe involves a *yin* and *yang* relationship, which correlates with the unity of *yin* and *yang* in *I Ching*. In this way, the unity of *yin* and *yang* generate the myriad of things in the cosmos. As Laozi wisely explained:

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。
萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。 《老子》第四十二章

The Way generates the Unique;
The Unique generates the Double;
The Double generates the Triplet;
The Triplet generates the myriad things.
The myriad things recline on *yin* and embrace *yang*
While vacuous *qi* holds them in harmony.  

Hu Shih once argued that *I Ching* is Confucius’ evolutionism [一部《易經》，便是孔子的進化論].  

*I Ching*, which gives a cosmological perspective on change, was written by three different writers in different ages: Fu Xi, King Wen of Zhou and Confucius. It consists of two parts: the *jing* and the *zhuan* respectively. The *jing* contains the original text of *I Ching*, while the *zhuan*, authored by Confucius and sometimes called *The Ten Wings*, is made up of constructive commentaries and concise interpretations of the *jing*.  

Confucius began to study *I Ching* when he reached his fiftieth year. Included

352 Laozi, p. 89.
353 Hu Shih, p.158.
354 Chung-ying Cheng, “Philosophy of Change”, *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, Ed. Antonio S. Cua (New York: Routledge, 2003) 517. With regard to the problem of authorship, another claim in both China and Taiwan is that *The Ten Wings* was cooperatively written by Confucius and his disciples.
among the parts of *The Ten Wings* are: the *Duan* Commentaries (two parts), the *Xiang* Commentaries (two parts), *Xici zhuan* (two parts), the *Wenyan* Commentary, the *Shuogua* Commentary, the *Xugua* Commentary and the *Zagua* Commentary.

The supposed original author of *I Ching*, Fu Xi, spent much time observing heaven, earth and many changes in natural phenomena. In addition to making intelligent observations about the world around him, he developed a philosophical system involving eight trigrams [*bagua*] which are basic symbols, each depicting numerous changes in the world. It has been suggested that these trigrams could represent the origins of Chinese characters. In *Xici zhuan* Part Two, 2, Confucius explained the practical inference that Fu Xi might have been from the hexagram, *Li*:

2. When in ancient times Lord Bao Xi ruled the world as sovereign, he looked upward and observed the images in heaven and looked downward and observed the models that the earth provided. He observed the patterns on birds and beasts and what things were suitable for the land. Nearby, adopting them from his own person, and afar, adopting them from other things, he thereupon made the eight trigrams in order to become thoroughly conversant with the virtues inherent in the numinous and the bright and to classify the myriad things in terms of their true, innate natures.

   He tied cords together and made various kinds of snare nets for catching animals and fish. He probably got the idea for this from the hexagram *Li* [*Cohesion*].

In light of biological evolution, Hu Shih drew a link between the Darwinian notion of variation and Zhuangzi’s evolutionism in his essay “Free and Easy

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355 Fu Xi, King Wen of Zhou and Confucius. *I Ching*. Trans. Richard John Lynn (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 77, 97. Lord Bao Xi (or Fu Xi) invented the eight trigrams (gua) by way of symbols in remote antiquity.
Wandering”. He further argued that all creatures produce different variations [萬物皆種也，以不同形相禪], as explained by Darwin in *On the Origin of Species*. The focus of evolutionary change is that Zhuangzi used allegory to pinpoint various kinds of transcendent viewpoints. For example, in the following passage Zhuangzi describes an enormous fish named *Kun* which transforms itself into a bird named *Peng*:

In the northern darkness there is a fish and his name is Kun. The Kun is so large I don’t know how many thousand li he measures. He changes and becomes a bird whose name is Peng. The back of the Peng measures I don’t know how many thousand li across and, when he rises up and flies off, his wings are like clouds all over the sky. When the sea begins to move, this bird sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven.  

By focusing on the size of *Kun*, Zhuangzi suggests that this allegory might broaden our perspective on our world. Transcendental as it was, the transformation of *Kun* into *Peng* was made possible, in Zhuangzi’s view, by the *Dao*, which is to say the Way of Nature. This then invites us to ask the question: if we were *Kun* or *Peng* in this story, what would this make the role of man in the Universe?

The evolutionary idea that creatures need to adapt to changes in the environment was not unknown in ancient China. According to Hu Shih, Zhuangzi’s evolutionism is similar to that of Darwin in the respect that both saw animals as adapting to meet conditions in their habitats or environments. In his philosophical musings and empirical observations, Zhuangzi used analogies involving different species, such as humanity, monkeys, loaches, centipedes, hawks and owls, to explain how animals adapt to environmental

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356 Hu Shih, p.164.  
357 Hu Shih, p.165.  
changes. Animals are innately predisposed to survive in the surroundings in which they live; in the long run only the best may well survive. If animal species can meet the various changes taking place in their environments with suitably adaptive behaviour or biological traits, then they should have better chances of survival as understood in terms of the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest. As Hu Shih said:

Zhuangzi's evolutionism is sometimes like modern man's theory of 'survival of the fittest'. He said:

(researcher's translation)

If a man sleeps in a damp place, his back aches and he ends up half paralyzed, but is this true of a loach? If he lives in a tree, he is terrified and shakes with fright, but is this true of a monkey? Of

359 Hu Shih, pp.166-67.
these three creatures, then, which one knows the proper place to live? Men eat the flesh of grass-fed and grain-fed animals, deer eat grass, centipedes find snakes tasty, and hawks and falcons relish mice. Of these four, which knows how food ought to taste?\textsuperscript{360}

And:

A beam or pillar can be used to batter down a city wall, but it is no good for stopping up a little hole—this refers to a difference in function. Thoroughbreds like Qiji and Huali could gallop a thousand \textit{li} in one day, but when it came to catching rats they were no match for the wildcat or the weasel—this refers to a difference in skill. The horned owl catches fleas at night and can spot the tip of a hair, but when daylight comes, no matter how wide it opens its eyes, it cannot see a mound or a hill—this refers to a difference in nature.\textsuperscript{361}

These two passages argue that the ways in which creatures survive depend on environmental changes. It is vital that they should adapt themselves to the environment.

(Researcher's translation)

As analysed above, Laozi, Confucius, Zhuangzi and Xunzi all presented their own versions of evolutionary thought in ancient China. Likewise, in “The Pre-Qin Masters on Evolutionism”, Hu Shih proclaimed that the Masters in


\textsuperscript{361} Ibid., p. 103.
ancient Chinese literature and philosophy had developed their own evolutionary concepts which showed vivid evidence of a long tradition of evolutionary thought in China. That is to say, each of the Masters tried to provide original insights into the evolution of nature in their writings.

5.3 Hu Shih on the Literary Revolution

Jerome B. Grieder points out that ‘Hu began to think in terms of a literary revolution during his years as a student in the United States’.\(^\text{362}\) During occasional gatherings in Ithaca during the summer of 1915, Hu Shih discussed some vital issues relating to Chinese literature with his friends. It was at this critical juncture that he specifically took the vernacular as a quintessentially living language while deeming the wen-yen style to be a dead language. One of his friends seriously rebutted Hu Shih’s view on the wen-yen writing style. Hu Shih had taken much care in this heated debate since he was concerned about the right path for the modern Chinese language. On 17 September 1915, he wrote a poem satirizing his friend’s conservative attitude towards the problem of traditional Chinese literature. It was in this poem that he first used the phrase, ‘the Literary Revolution’\(^\text{363}\) [新潮之來不可止；文學革命其時矣!], which he attributed to the conversations he had had with his friends during their gatherings in the summer of 1915:

我那時常提到中國文學必須經過一場革命：「文學革命」的口號，就是那個夏天亂談出來的。\(^\text{364}\)


\(^{363}\) 胡適 (Hu Shih): 〈附錄 逼上梁山—文學革命的開始〉，《四十自述》[Autobiography at Forty] (台北: 遠流出版事業股份有限公司, 2005) 第 166-67 頁。

\(^{364}\) Ibid., p. 166.
I frequently mentioned that Chinese literature must pass through a
revolution; the slogan of the Literary Revolution was randomly spoken
and [coined] by us during that summertime [1915].

(researcher’s translation)

A little over a year later in January 1917, he published his literary proposals in
New Youth magazine, arguing in particular that vernacular or bai-hua was
China’s true national literature rather than that of the wen-yen style. These
proposals received great support from young students who viewed them as a
kind of spiritual liberation because successive generations of young people
had suffered the limitations imposed on them by the ancient writing style.
Meanwhile, elsewhere in Chinese society people were waving the flags of
democracy and science in order to bring about true political change. Hu Shih
eventually gained his historical status through his advocacy of the Literary
Revolution.

The Literary Revolution that took place in the early Chinese Republic might
be described as an ‘accidental social process’. This process, which was
driven by the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement and
involved a titanic anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, could be conceived
as an expression of the historical progress of China.365 The wen-yen writing
style had dominated the lives and thoughts of the Chinese people for more
than two thousand years. However, by the twentieth century the vernacular
style of writing was better suited to the demands of both Chinese intellectuals
and the ordinary people than the wen-yen style. Nevertheless, it could be a
considerable misunderstanding to view the Literary Revolution merely as a
vernacular language movement. The civil disobedience that it represented
was caused by a number of long-standing problems in traditional Chinese
society. Above all, there was the issue of the dictatorship of the ruling class in

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China’s long-established feudal society. The ruling class through various dynasties had frequently despised and suppressed the ordinary people.

Hu Shih had been chosen to apply Darwin’s theory of evolution to the development of modern Chinese literature, arguing that each age had its own literature and that the vernacular literature of his own times must replace the traditional classical literature. Moreover, he drew on evolutionary thought in his advocating of literary reform since he saw corollaries between biological change and the transformation of modern Chinese literature. Hu Shih’s rethinking of evolutionary theory showed that Darwin’s theory of evolution involves the application of four major ideas: natural selection, gradualism, progress and adaptation. In *A History of Vernacular Literature* (1928), he claimed that evolution is ‘a trend to a natural way’ without any purpose, noting that ‘evolution is slow, unconscious and unprofitable’. This evolutionary idea becomes synonymous with Darwin’s gradualism. In other words, he saw the evolution of Chinese literature as a long process of gradual change that had reached a turning point in the early Chinese Republic. In addition, he believed that the process of adaptation was based on environmental change as well as the tide of modern world literature. For those reasons, he believed that Chinese literature would be led down different cul-de-sacs unless the *wen-yen* writing style was superseded by the vernacular as the primary medium of Chinese literature. Therefore, while Hu Shih’s advocacy of the Literary Revolution could be described as ‘accidental social process’ within the long history of Chinese literature, the historical event it precipitated was a dramatic transformation in the history of modern Chinese literature.

In clarifying his understanding of the evolutionary process, Hu Shih stated, ‘revolution is an intentional assertion with the addition of the impetus of mankind’. Specifically, Hu Shih maintained two kinds of historical progress as follows:

歷史進化有兩種: 一種是完全自然的進化; 一種是順著自然的趨勢，加上

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366 Ibid., p. 7.
There are two sorts of the progress of history: for one thing, it is completely natural evolution; for another, it should be based on a natural tendency and the supervision of mankind. The former can be called evolution and the latter revolution.

(researcher’s translation)

Hence considered in this light, *New Youth* magazine provided an impetus to the slow process of the evolution of literature. Or in other words, *New Youth* magazine created a sudden and great momentum for change in favour of the goals of the Literary Revolution; particularly the promotion of the viability of the vernacular language as a literary language in China. In his famous essay, “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature”, published in *New Youth* 2.5 (January 1917), Hu Shih asserted the following eight proposals for literary reform as follows:

一曰，須言之有物。
二曰，不摹仿古人。
三曰，須講求文法。
四曰，不作無病之呻吟。
五曰，務去濫調套語。
六曰，不用典。
七曰，不講對仗。
八曰，不避俗字俗語。\(^{368}\)

\(^{367}\) 胡適 (Hu Shih): 《引子》，《白話文學史》[A History of Vernacular Literature] (北京: 團結出版社，2006) 第 5 頁。
As can be seen from these proposals, in addition to advocating the elimination of hackneyed language, proponents of the Literary Revolution such as Hu Shih also sought to improve writing techniques. Hu Shih's proposals were directed at supplying a new style of literature to the reading public, because, as he put it, ‘Chinese literature had long been withered and feeble’. Thus, through the intention of Hu Shih and others to replace the wen-yen style with the vernacular, the emergence of modern Chinese literature was at hand. As Martin Seymour-Smith observes, modern Chinese literature started with the Literary Revolution.

The first proposal to be aware of is that Hu Shih believed the greatest malady of letters or literature to be a lack of substance or meaningfulness. As can be seen in the following passage, he perceived this illness in the works of many of his contemporary writers who, he argued, used pointless language devoid of far-reaching thoughts or sincere feelings:

The greatest reason for the deterioration of literature is that the literati

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368 胡適 (Hu Shih)：〈文學改良芻議〉，《胡適論文學》 [Hushi Lun Wenxue] · Ed. 夏曉虹 (Xia Xiaohong) (合肥: 安徽教育出版社, 2006) 第 1 頁。
371 See footnote 200.
have become mired in poetics and are without any kind of far-reaching thought or sincere feeling. The harm of an overly formalist literature lies in this so-called language without substance. And should we wish to save it from this fault, we must save it with substance, by which I mean only feeling and thought.\textsuperscript{372}

On the basis of Hu Shih’s analysis, language is propelled by the speaker’s feelings or the author’s thoughts, which can be linked with their ideas and perspectives on the world. Thus the substance of language, in Hu Shih’s view, is an amalgam of the feelings and thoughts of the speaker or writer. With this in mind, he urged people to express their true feelings and thoughts in their writings, and, moreover, encouraged them to write with substantial content. Above all, he characterised vernacular literature as a definite evolution in modern Chinese literature.

Hu Shih based his arguments on the progression of modern Chinese language and literature which indicate that each dynasty in Chinese history developed its own unique literature with a view to expressing the concerns and interests peculiar to itself. He positively applied the concept of biological evolution to the revolution of Chinese literature. The evolution of literature, as he saw it, was triggered by the question of natural selection, specifically because the \textit{wen}-\textit{yen} style had became unfit for the reading public; indeed, very few people by his time could understand the \textit{wen}-\textit{yen} style, which was often used by intellectuals merely as a means of communicating with each other. Therefore, Hu Shih wished to make it clear that the best way to aid progress and change through the process of natural selection was to allow \textit{wen}-\textit{yen} literature to be replaced by a new literary form. He explained this point in the following excerpt from “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature”:

\begin{quote}
文學者，隨時代而變遷者也。一時代有一時代之文學：周、秦有周、秦
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{372} Kirk A. Denton, p. 125.
Literature has changed from dynasty to dynasty, each dynasty having its own literature. The Zhou and Qin dynasties had their literatures, the Wei and Jin [the Han and Wei] had theirs, as did the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming. This is not just a personal opinion held by me alone, but a truth of the progression of civilization. As for prose, there are the styles of the *Book of History*, the philosophers of the pre-Qin period, the Han historians Sima Qian and Ban Gu, the essayists Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, Quyang Xiu, and Su Shi, the dialogues of Zhu Xi, and the fictional narratives of Shi Nai’an and Cao Xueqin. This is the progression of literature.\(^{374}\)

In Hu Shih’s view, the shifts in Chinese literature that followed each dynastic change were evidence of a natural, evolutionary process. Therefore, from an evolutionary perspective, he had demonstrated in the transition and reform programme that since literature changed with the passing of each dynastic order, he and his contemporaries should not imitate the ornate style of ancient literature but rather create a style to represent their own times.

In his opinion, Hu Shih strongly encouraged young people to adopt a positive outlook on life, not least by cautioning them against adopting a tragic view in their poems and prose. He argued that if a young man only laid emphasis on the literature of despair, then his writings would lead him to a lamentable view of his own life. Thus, when creating a literary work based on

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373 胡適 (Hu Shih)：〈文學改良芻議〉・《胡適論文學》 [Hushi Lun Wenxue]・Ed. 夏曉虹 (Xia Xiaohong) (合肥: 安徽教育出版社，2006) 第2-3頁。
374 Kirk A. Denton, p. 125.
one's own feelings and thoughts, one must not fall into the trap of assuming an indulgent sense of despondency, as Hu Shih explained:

The old should not act thus—how much more so the young! The long-term effect of this is to foster a sense of despondency, which leads to a lack of regard for action or service to one's country, and which only knows the voice of lamentation or the literature of despair. This kind of literature will hasten writers to their grave and sap the will of its readers. This is what I mean by moaning without an illness.

Nevertheless, as Hu Shih found, it was not easy to persuade the commoners to take on the role of creating new phrases. His advice to people was to avoid using hackneyed and formulaic language, for it prevented them from creating new phrases to express their points of view on the world around them. Writing on this point, he stated:

吾所謂務去爛調套語者，別無他法，惟在人人以其耳目所親見親聞所親身閱歷之事物，一一自己鑄詞以形容描寫之；但求其不失真，但求能達其狀物寫意之目的，即是工夫。其用爛調套語者，皆懶惰不肯自己鑄詞狀物者也。
What I mean by the necessity of eliminating hackneyed and formulaic language can only be achieved through the creation of new phrases to describe and portray what people see and hear with their own eyes and ears or personally live through. It is indeed a great talent in writing to be able to mesh with reality and arrive at the goal of describing your object or conveying meaning. Those who employ hackneyed and formulaic language are indolent and unwilling to create new phrases to describe their objects.378

Furthermore, Hu Shih drew attention to precedents for using vernacular language in literary composition set by scholars during the Song and Ming Dynasties:

及宋人講學以白話為語錄，此體遂成講學正體(明人因之)。當是時，白話已久人韻文，觀唐、宋人白話之詩詞可見也。及至元時，中國北部已在異族之下三百餘年矣(遼、金、元)。此三百年中，中國乃發生一種通俗行遠之文學。文則有“水滸”、“西遊”、“三國”…之類，戲曲則尤不可勝計。379

When the Song neo-Confucians used the vernacular in the scholarly lectures of their dialogues, this form became the standard in scholarship. (Ming scholars later followed this style.) By this time, the vernacular had already long since entered rhymed prose, as can be seen in the vernacular poetry and lyrics of the Tang and Song. By the end of the Yuan dynasty, northern

378 Kirk A. Denton, p. 129.
379 胡適 (Hu Shih): 《文學改良芻議》，《胡適論文學》[Hushi Lun Wenzhe], Ed. 夏曉虹 (Xia Xiaohong) (合肥: 安徽教育出版社, 2006) 第 10 頁。
China had already been under the occupation of a foreign race for more than three hundred years (Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties). In these three hundred years, China developed an incipient popular literature, out of which emerged the novels *The Water Margin*, *The Journey to the West*, and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and innumerable dramas.\(^{380}\)

It was obvious Hu Shih that the vernacular language should be applied to writing poetry and lyrics; hence he advised his contemporaries not to avoid using the vernacular language when they needed to create prose or poetry. Hu Shih stated:

然以今世歷史進化的眼光觀之，則白話文學之為中國文學之正宗，又為將來文學必用之利器，可斷言也。\(^{381}\)

Yet, from today’s perspective of historical evolution, we can say with complete certainty that vernacular literature is really the canonical and will be a useful tool for developing future literature.\(^{382}\)

In “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature” [〈文學改良芻議〉], Hu Shih attempted to outline the key purposes of a literary revolution. He offered his eight proposals in the spirit of reforming modern Chinese literature, and with a view to setting it on a more progressive course in the future. As explained above, he expressed the opinion that writing must have substance comprised of feeling and thought, and offered a severe critique of common people who used language lacking in the said substance. In this way, Hu Shih intended to establish a Chinese national literature as part of the

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\(^{380}\) Kirk A. Denton, p. 137.

\(^{381}\) 胡適 (Hu Shih)：〈文學改良芻議〉，《胡適論文學》 [Hushi Lun Wenzue]，Ed. 夏曉虹 (Xia Xiaohong) (合肥: 安徽教育出版社，2006) 第11頁。

\(^{382}\) Kirk A. Denton, pp. 137-38.
process of literary reconstruction. His analysis of the wen-yen style was damning, concluding that ‘a dead language cannot create a living literature’. In the spring of 1918, Hu Shih offered another four points in his bid to promote the common spoken language in Chinese literature:

Speak only if you have something to say.
Say what you have to say, and say it as it is said.
Speak your own language, not the language of others.
Speak the language of your own time.\textsuperscript{383}

According to his perspective on the evolution of literature, Hu Shih uncompromisingly argued, ‘literature also had its own transformation based upon the change of the eras; each age had its own literature’ [文學也隨時代變遷；一代有一代的文學].\textsuperscript{384} This statement clearly implies that modern China should develop its own unique forms of literature, as had the Ming and Qing Dynasties before it. Later in “The Literary Revolution in China”, published in February 1922, Hu Shih, who by that time had been given a professorship at Peking University, explicitly described the development of literature in modern China as being an evolutionary process:

The literary revolution of the last 5 years is no more than a culmination of twenty centuries of historical evolution. All unconscious processes of natural evolution are of necessity very slow and wasteful. Once these processes are made conscious and articulate, intelligent control and experimentation become possible, the work of many centuries may be telescoped into a few years, and an easy success befalls those who are


\textsuperscript{384} 胡適 (Hu Shih)：〈文學進化觀念與戲劇改良〉，《進化論的影響力—達爾文在中國》，陳思和 主編 (南昌：江西高校出版社，2009) 第 93 頁。
in reality to use a classical phrase, “getting the credit which properly belongs to Nature” (邀天之功). 385

Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu promoted the literary revolution through evolutionary concepts. However, even without Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu’s reforming spirit, the modern literary evolution was still being advocated by other members of the Chinese literati in the late Qing period and the early Chinese Republic. By that time it was widely recognised among officials and the literati that the wen-yen writing style had become a barrier separating the elite from the common people, and that as such it was a stumbling block to reform. Moreover, cross-cultural communication with modern Western culture was extremely tricky and laborious, and particularly problematic when it came to English-Chinese translation. Accordingly, it became necessary for the Chinese writing style to adopt modern colloquial forms of expression so that it could keep up with the tendencies of the times.

5.4 Chen Duxiu on the Literary Revolution

Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu became academic friends through their association with New Youth magazine, where they both published articles promoting revolutionary change in Chinese literature. Working together, they were able to transform academic discussions into a literary revolution; nevertheless, they also had dissimilar modes of thinking and held political positions distinct from each other.

Following his doctoral research into John Dewey’s pragmatism at Columbia University, Hu Shih insisted that gradualism or meliorism should be applied to literary, social and political reform during the authoritarian period of Kuomintang rule. In contrast, Chen Duxiu was a follower of Marxism and the

Chinese Communist Party, and thus, a more radical reformer. He published many essays in *New Youth* fiercely denouncing what he saw as the social maladies and redundant literary conventions prevalent in China at the time. Nevertheless, in spite of their differences, both men reached a clear consensus on rejecting out-moded classical literary conventions in favour of the common spoken language which they used in their writings.

Responding to problems posed for the Literary Revolution, Chen Duxiu declared his support for Hu Shih’s eight proposals with the addition of his own three principles; each embodying a severe critique of aristocratic, classical and eremitic literature. Chen Duxiu was an innate and radical reactionary. During the early Chinese Republic, in a style that was both self-aware and rebellious against the strict rules and policies of the time, he spoke out against the tyranny of the Chinese Beiyang government and raised objections to acts of political suppression from the Kuomintang dictatorship as well. As a result, Chen Duxiu suffered political grievances and oppression whereas, in contrast, Hu Shih became an official scholar of the Kuomintang. Chen Duxiu wished to illustrate the progress of European culture and to champion the importance of Western learning by highlighting numerous philosophical and literary figures from France, Germany and Britain. During his lifetime, Chen Duxiu experienced feudal, capitalist and communist ideologies, all the while maintaining his own unique viewpoints on politics, philosophy and literature.

In “On Literary Revolution”, Chen Duxiu used Darwin’s evolutionary thought to define literary revolution as a form of natural selection. In other words, the concept of natural selection can be applied to languages whose survival and development hinge on competition. Through such competition, ‘unfit’ elements of languages or indeed whole languages are eliminated. Even among European languages, Chen Duxiu argued, revolution necessarily occurred through their gradually changing conditions. In this regard, the key insight provided by Chen Duxiu was that we can apprehend the evolution of languages in terms of constant transformation by means of revolution:

\[\text{歐語所謂革命者，為革故更新之義，與中土所謂朝代鼎革，絕不相類;}\]
In European languages, ‘revolution’ means the elimination of the old and the changeover to the new, not at all the same as the so-called dynastic cycles of our Middle Kingdom. Since the literary renaissance, therefore, there have been a revolution in politics, a revolution in religion, and a revolution in morality and ethics. Literary art as well has not been without revolution: there is no literary art that does not renew itself and advance itself with revolution.

Chen Duxiu was a truly radical critic, who was determined to lead his 'Army of Literary Revolution' to fight against the tradition of feudal literature. He passionately led the so-called ‘Army of Literary Revolution’ in battle against conservative proponents of the ku-wen of the T’ung-cheng School, which had maintained its prose writing style from the Qing Dynasty up to the early Chinese Republic. He was also keen to criticise classical Confucianism whose doctrines he considered obsolete. Above all, Chen Duxiu took the view that in spite of its having been circulated by many men of letters for numerous generations, the evolution and progress of Chinese literature had been hampered by aristocratic, classical and eremitic literature:

文学革命之氣運，醞釀已非一日，其首舉義旗之急先鋒，則為吾友胡適。余甘冒全國學究之敵，高張「文化革命軍」大旗，以為吾友之聲援。旗上大書特書吾革命軍三大主義：曰，推倒雕琢的阿諛的貴族文學，建設平易的抒情的國民文學；曰，推倒陳腐的鋪張的古典文

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386 陳獨秀 (Chen Duxiu): 《文學革命論》，《新青年·精選本》(上)，陳獨秀、李大釗、瞿秋白 主撰 (北京: 中國書店, 2012) 第 185 頁。
Literary revolution has been fermenting for quite some time. The immediate pioneer who first raised the flag is my friend Hu Shi. I am willing to be the enemy of the nation’s scholars and raise high the banner of the “Army of Literary Revolution,” in vocal support of my friend. On the banner will be written large the three great ideological tenets of our revolutionary army: (1) Down with the ornate, sycophantic literature of the aristocracy; up with plain, expressive literature of the people! (2) Down with stale, pompous classical literature; up with fresh, sincere realist literature! (3) Down with obscure, abstruse eremitic literature; up with comprehensible, popularized social literature!  

During his lifetime, the well-known essayist and poet of the Tang Dynasty, Han Yu, positively advocated the *ku-wen* prose movement, which came to fruition during the Mid-Tang period. This literary movement greatly affected many men of letters in the Song and subsequent dynasties. Han Yu taught a ‘return to antiquity’ by ‘making poetry out of prose’, arguing that prose and poetry were associated by similar forms of written expression, with the exceptions of rhyme and line length. In his famous essay, “The Original *Dao*”, he defended Confucian thought against Daoism and Buddhism, focusing especially on the Confucian *Dao*. In this way, he wished to highlight the concepts of *ren* and *yi* as proposed by Confucius and Mencius, while playing down Laozi’s *Dao* as conceived by the latter [Laozi] as a philosophy of effortless action [*wu-wei*] or the *Dao* following the way of natural phenomena [*dao fa zi ran*].

388 陳獨秀 (Chen Duxiu), 第 185 頁。
389 Kirk A. Denton, p. 141.
391 Ibid., p. 36.
Chen Duxiu, however, had different opinions and attitudes towards Han Yu’s advocacy of an ancient prose-style movement, as he deemed it inappropriate for the common people to imitate at that time:

吾人今日所不滿於昌黎者二事：
一曰，文猶師古。雖非典文，然不脫貴族氣派，尋其內容，遠不若唐代諸小說家之豐富，其結果乃造成一新貴族文學。
二曰，誤於「文以載道」之謬見。文學本非為載道而設，而自昌黎以訖曾國藩所謂載道之文，不過抄襲孔、孟以來極膚淺極空泛之門面語而已。余嘗謂唐、宋八家文之所謂「文以載道」，直與八股家之所謂「代聖賢立言」，同一鼻孔出氣。

That we today are less than totally satisfied with Han Yu, however, can be traced to two points. The first is his idea that literature should follow ancient authority. Even though it is no longer classicist, his literature does not depart from the aristocratic mold. In terms of content, it is far less rich than that found in the various fictional works of the Tang. In the end, he succeeded only in creating a new kind of aristocratic literature. Second, his view of “literature to convey the Way” is erroneous. Literature was originally not designed to carry such burdens; the concept of “literature conveys the Way,” which was established by Han Yu and ended with Zeng Guofan, is no more than an extremely shallow and unsubstantial subterfuge co-opted from the tradition of Confucius and Mencius. I have often said that “literature to convey the Way” practiced by the great writers of the Tang and the Song dynasties is a kind of “speaking through the sages” in the “eight-legged” essay.
Through his contrarian analysis, Chen Duxiu cogently expressed the three main objections to Chinese literature being classified as aristocratic, classical, or eremitic. Modern Chinese literature should be independent, realistic and popular, and that by developing in this way it could replace its classical, aristocratic and eremitic predecessors. He would adopt the spoken Chinese of his times to develop the kind of modern, uncomplicated writing style that he wished to promote.

Chen Duxiu had made it abundantly clear that aristocratic, classical, or eremitic literature all demanded severe criticism:

際茲文學革新之時代, 凡屬貴族文學, 古典文學, 山林文學, 均在排斥之列。以何理由而排斥此三種文學耶? 曰: 貴族文學, 藻飾依他, 失獨立自尊之氣象也; 古典文學, 麗張堆砌, 失抒情寫實之旨也; 山林文學, 深晦艱澀, 自以為名山著述, 於其群之大多數無所裨益也。^{394}

During this time of literary change and innovation, all literature classified as aristocratic, classical, and eremitic has been the subject of criticism. What is the reason for the criticism of these three? The answer is that aristocratic literature embellishes according to traditional practice and has lost its independence and self-confidence. Classical literature is pompous and pedantic and has lost the principles of expressiveness and realistic description. Eremitic literature is highly obscure and abstruse and is self-satisfied writing that provides no benefit to the majority of its readers.^{395}

Viewed in light of Chen Duxiu’s insistence on literary reform, in formulating any principles as well as styles, the key developmental factors of modern

^{394} 陳獨秀 (Chen Duxiu), 第 187 頁。
^{395} Kirk A. Denton, p. 144.
Chinese literature ought to be considered not only through the overall interests of the people but also the specific traits and needs of each era.

The *ku-wen* writing style still has some merits such as its conciseness, elegance and rhythmic quality when spoken which have been in circulation for thousands of years in China. It was made the official language of the Qing Dynasty when it was approved by many national institutions, and thus became the language of governance and literature. The three famous founders of the *ku-wen* of the *T'ung-Cheng* School during the mid-Qing period were Fang Bao, Liu Dakui, and Yao Nai. The school was named after *T'ung-cheng* County, Anhui Province, where all three were born; the county was reclassified as *T'ung-cheng City* in 1996. The *ku-wen* movement specialized in a prose writing style that it used to attract a number of followers. Yao Nai proffered three important tenets of the *ku-wen*: reasonable content [義理], true material [考據] and elegant words [詞章]. Nevertheless, Chen Duxiu took the view that the *T'ung-cheng* School belonged to an old-fashioned and unfit style of ancient Chinese literature that unjustifiably dominated the literary scene. Indeed, he flew in the face of this literary school, calling its major exponents as well as other prominent figures from classical Chinese literature 'the eighteen fiends' (*i.e.* the three aforementioned founders of the *T'ung-cheng* School, Gui Youguang and the fourteen Masters of the Ming Dynasty). As Chen Duxiu declared, some literary figures such as Shi Nai'an or Cao Xueqin could not achieve fame in the literary environment at that time:

以至今日中國之文學，委瑣陳腐，遠不能與歐洲比肩。此妖魔為何?即明之前後七子及八家文派之歸、方、劉、姚是也。此十八妖魔輩，尊古蔑今，咬文嚼字，稱霸文壇。反使蓋代文豪若馬東籬，若施耐庵，若曹雪芹諸人之姓名，幾不為國人所識。396

The result is that China's literature today is lifeless and stale, unable to
stand next to that of Europe. Now who were these fiends? They are none other than the Earlier and the Later Seven Masters of the Ming dynasty and those who followed Tang-Song literary thought, Gui Youguang, Fang Bao, Liu Dakui, and Yao Nai. These eighteen fiends worshipped the past and despised the contemporary. They dominated the literary scene with their plodding, unspontaneous style, so that even the names of the era’s real literary heroes—such as Ma Zhiyuan or Shi Nai’an or Cao Xueqin—remained almost unknown to their countrymen.397

Chen Duxiu argued that in order for one to properly understand the processes of cultural development that had taken place in modern Europe, it is essential to have knowledge of the innovations of modern European writers and philosophers, and the contributions they had made to European culture, politics, science and literature. With this in mind, he drew attention to certain prestigious figures in the national literatures of France, Germany and Britain: particularly, with regard to Britain, Bacon, Darwin, Dickens and Wilde. By taking this approach, he sought to challenge the so-called eighteen fiends and especially the rigid thought of the ku-wen of the T’ung-cheng School. He expressed great expectations, as well as setting out the challenges he saw, for the future development of Chinese literature in the following passage:

歐洲文化，受賜於政治科學者固多，受賜於文學者亦不少。予愛盧梭、巴士特之法蘭西，予尤愛虞哥、左喇之法蘭西；予愛康德、赫克爾之德意志，予尤愛桂特郝、卜特曼之德意志；予愛倍根、達爾文之英吉利，予尤愛狄鯽士、王爾德之英吉利。吾國文學豪傑之士，有自負為中國之虞哥、左喇、桂特郝、卜特曼、狄鯽士、王爾德者乎？有不顧迂儒之毀譽，明目張膽以與十八妖魔宣戰者乎？予願拖四十二生之大炮，為之前

397 Kirk A. Denton, p. 143.
Much of European culture benefited from politics and science; it also benefited considerably from literature. If I love the France of Rousseau and Pasteur, I especially love the France of Hugo and Zola. If I love the Germany of Kant and Hegel, I especially love the Germany of Goethe and Hauptmann. And If I love the England of Bacon and Darwin, I especially love the England of Dickens and Wilde. Among the outstanding literary figures of this nation, are there those who dare consider themselves China’s Hugo, Zola, Goethe, Hauptmann, Dickens, or Wilde? Are there those who, without concern for the praise or blame of pedantic scholars, would with bright eyes and stout hearts declare war on the eighteen fiends? I wish to tow out the largest cannon in the world and lead the way.  

In his article entitled “On Literary Revolution”, Chen Duxiu took a stand against Han Yu’s recommendation for a ‘return of antiquity’ in the literary movement of the *ku-wen*, primarily because Han Yu was insistent on two specific perspectives in prose writing: literature to follow ancient authority and ‘literature to convey the Way’[^400] 道以載文. In addition, Chen Duxiu also challenged the so-called eighteen demons in literature. Due to his dissatisfaction with literary stalemate in his time, he proclaimed that the Chinese must accept the decisive revolution that would sweep away the old writing style of the *ku-wen*. He was determined to drive forward his revolt against what he saw as a regressive feudal literature and its attendant ideology. The Literary Revolution thus seemed inexorable following the impetus it was given first by the New Culture Movement, and later by the May Fourth Movement.

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[^398]: 陳獨秀 (Chen Duxiu), p. 187
[^399]: Kirk A. Denton, p. 145
[^400]: Ibid., p. 142
5.5 Conclusion

One of the leitmotifs of the Literary Revolution was the emergence of a certain kind of revolutionary literature: *viz.* Chinese vernacular literature. Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu both saw the value of using Darwinian ideas to legitimize the revolution in literature. If researchers wish to explain the nature of the Literary Revolution in modern Chinese history, then one possible way of doing this is to view it as an expression of the evolutionary process. The term, literary revolution, came about unexpectedly during the summertime of 1915 through conversations between Hu Shih and his friends. Perhaps surprisingly, this off-the-cuff remark came to represent a struggle for dominance between new and old styles of Chinese literature. Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu, who had been colleagues for two years at Peking University from 1917 to 1919, were at the forefront of this movement sharing convictions about the necessity of driving through literary change. During the May Fourth Movement, the Literary Revolution involved people from all walks of life from both big cities and the countryside, and reflected in part a crisis in traditional Chinese faiths. A series of revolutions shook China during this critical period as the country reached a turning point between traditional ideologies and Social Darwinism. In regard to the Literary Revolution, Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu nurtured their intentions of accelerating the evolution of modern Chinese language and literature.

As explained above, this movement for vernacular or *bai-hua* literature changed the tide of modern Chinese literary history. Two influential essays by Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu, were especially important at this time in launching the literary reform movement: first, Hu Shih’s article, “Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature”, where, influenced by evolutionary thought, he outlined his eight proposals for the remodeling of the traditional Chinese writing style; and second, Chen Duxiu’s “On Literary Revolution”, in which he asserted the importance of European literature, politics and scientific evolutionary thinking as impetuses for the evolution of modern Chinese literature. In addition, Chen Duxiu proffered three principles for radically reforming Chinese literature in a way that complemented Hu Shih’s eight
proposals, and which construed reform as both a social and literary concern. Taken together, these eleven tenets proved effective counterclaims against arguments in favour of maintaining the *ku-wen* of the *T'ung-cheng* School.
6.1 Introduction

In the wake of the Sino-French War between August 1884 and April 1885, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) developed political ambitions for the deposition of the Manchu emperor, the modernisation of China and the creation of the Republic of China. He was stimulated in this regard by a surge in anti-Manchu sentiment among the common people between 1900 and 1910. As Peter Gue Zarrow points out, ‘anti-Manchuiism erupted in 1902-3 and perhaps peaked in the 1905-7 period, remaining strong through the 1911 Revolution. Its effects were profound’. This growth in anti-Manchuiism might be taken as a product of a transitional period when the Chinese people gradually abandoned the Manchu Way that had led to racial conflicts. Sun Yat-sen was also inspired by the Taiping Rebellion against the Qing Dynasty from 1850 to 1864, during which time the rebellion’s leader, Hong Xiuquan, fought against the Qing government in Southern China in a desperate bid to establish the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. These two historical events may thus be seen as the main inspirations behind Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary movements and armed uprisings.

Another major cause towards changing the old imperial system into a new epoch in the Chinese Republic emerged as the encroachment of European and Japanese imperialism that precipitated the downfall of Qing China.

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401 Peter Gue Zarrow, “Historical Trauma: Anti-Manchuiism and Memories of Atrocity in Late Qing China”, History & Memory 16.2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 94.
Responding to the national humiliation of Qing China in the Sino-French War, Sun Yat-sen revealed his objective of overthrowing the imposed authority of Manchu rule and establishing a democratic state in Asia. In his essay “Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary” published in 1918, Sun Yat-sen explained how he eventually achieved his life-goal of creating the Republic of China and how he was elected as Provisional President thereof as follows:

From 1885, i.e., from the time of our defeat in the war with France, I set before myself the object of the overthrow of the Tai-Tsing dynasty and the establishment of a Chinese Republic on its ruins.\(^\text{402}\)

And:

Soon after this the deputies from all the provinces of China, assembled in the city of Nanking, elected me Provisional President of China. In 1912 I assumed office, and ordered the Proclamation of the Chinese Republic, the alteration of the lunar calendar, and the declaration of that Year was the First Year of the Chinese Republic.

Thus thirty years passed as one day, and only after their completion did I achieve my principal aim, the aim of my life—the creation of the Chinese Republic.\(^\text{403}\)

In this chapter, the researcher argues that Sun Yat-sen was predominantly affected in his youth by three important figures: Darwin, Kropotkin and Confucius. Firstly, Sun Yat-sen was greatly influenced by Darwinian evolutionary thought during his time as a college student. As will be seen below, he began studying medical science as well as many works of philosophy while at college, showing particular interest in the history of the

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\(^{403}\) Ibid., p. 16.
French Revolution and evolutionism. Deeply influenced by evolutionism, he started speculating about his Christian beliefs during his college life. In this way, he gradually converted his religious belief into a scientific worldview with evolutionary ideas laying the foundations of his social thought. Secondly, Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid also impacted on Sun Yat-sen's evolutionary ideas. Martin A. Miller argues that "mutual aid was an evolutionary factor in history which could also be seen as the motive force directing society toward the future social revolution and the federation of anarchist communities." Cooperation in Kropotkin may also be seen as a stimulus for survival of the fittest in the animal kingdom. Some of Sun Yat-sen's writings remind us that evolution and mutual aid are quintessential concepts in our overall understanding of the evolution of humans and non-human animals. Finally, Sun Yat-sen's social ideal of Datong corresponded to the Confucian philosophy of harmony; indeed, his thoughts on Datong may be traced back to Confucian ideals of society. Hence, it will be argued in this chapter that Darwin, Kropotkin and Confucius each influenced Sun Yat-sen's evolutionary ideas in important ways.

The concept of competition, mutual aid and harmony, as conceived, respectively by Darwin, Kropotkin and Confucius, can be seen as linked by a progression; i.e. competition leading to mutual aid leading to harmony. Accordingly, it may be supposed that these three thinkers were ultimately concerned with the evolution of humanity. Like K'ang Yu-wei, Sun Yat-sen's ideal of Datong echoes the great harmony of classical Confucianism. Confucius, K'ang Yu-wei, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong have all entertained some degree of utopian thought regarding the development of human civilisation. All living species on Earth interacted with the various hostile environments where they well; natural selection and mutual aid may be seen to coexist in the world, and so fit in with Darwin's comprehension of competition and cooperation as developed from his long-term observations of the evolution of many species. In fact, the harmony of the natural order is

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404 沈渭濱 (Shen Weibin): 《立志與求索》, 《孫中山與辛亥革命》(上海: 上海人民出版社, 2011) 第23頁。
405 Ibid., p.23.
achieved through the capacity of creatures to adapt to changing conditions in the environment so as to improve their chances of survival. One possible understanding of evolution, therefore, is that the emergence of a harmonious order between species provides those same species with the best chances of survival in the world. Even accepting this view, however, the creation of a harmonious order remains a core problem within our grasp of evolutionary change, the solution to which depends on the wisdom of humans in the future.

6.2 Sun Yat-sen and Darwinism

Sun Yat-sen was an ambitious statesman who was so minded to draw up a political blueprint for China’s future development. On 1 April 1940, the Nationalist government formally issued a decree recognising Dr Sun Yat-sen as the Founding Father of the Republic of China. His famous writings such as General Plans of National Reconstruction (1917-19) and The Three Principles of the People (1924) outlined his ambitious projects for overthrowing the Manchu regime and establishing a Western-inspired democratic nation in the early years of the twentieth century. Sun Yat-sen was conscious of the crucial importance of nationalism and democracy as well as livelihood; his great concerns were accordingly stimulated by the weakness and corruption of the Qing government. In June 1894, he wrote a letter of petition [〈上李鴻章書〉] to Li Hongzhang in which he pointed out four vital elements to the governance of China: talents, land, natural resources and goods. If, he argued, the Qing government had maximized the possibilities for utilizing these four constituents of China, then it would still have had a chance to turn the tide of adversity set in sway by the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki by Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) with Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909) on 17 April 1895, to end the First Sino-Japanese War. Moreover, foreseeing further national crises facing the nation, Sun Yat-sen implored that China must learn from the West:
竊嘗深維歐洲富強之本，不盡在於船堅砲利，壘固兵強，而在於人能盡其才，地能盡其利，物能盡其用，貨能暢其流。此四事者，富國之大經，治國之大本也。407

I am keenly aware that the wealth and power of the European nations are the result not only of their having ships and powerful guns, strong fortresses and formidable troops but also because their people can fully employ their talents, their land can be fully utilized, their natural resources can be fully tapped, and their goods can freely flow. These four elements are the basis of a nation’s wealth and strength and the root of good government.408

Another point that should be mentioned concerning Sun Yat-sen is that he aspired to gain knowledge in a diverse range of academic fields when he was young. He was exceptionally knowledgeable of the Chinese classics and Western culture, and in seeking to reach a balanced standpoint between science and religion, he maintained his Christian beliefs while also acknowledging Darwinian evolutionary ideas. In politics, he admired and imitated the deeds of some ancient emperors, such as King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty and King Tang of the Shang Dynasty. Furthermore, he also paid much respect to one of the U.S.A.’s Founding Fathers, George Washington. Describing his ambitions and curiosity in his autobiography, Sun Yat-sen presented the following point of view:

文早歲志窺遠大，性慕新奇，故所學多博染不純。於中學則獨好三代兩漢之文，於西學則雅癖達文[達爾文]之道 (Darwinism)，而格致政事亦常

407 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen): 〈上李鴻章書〉，《孫中山選集》上卷 (北京：人民出版社，1956) 第7頁。
When I was young I had large intellectual aspirations and I admired novel things. As a result, instead of concentrating on one field, my studies were broad and diverse. While in middle school I liked above all the writings of the Three Dynasties and the two Han dynasties, while in Western learning I delighted especially in Darwinism. Also, I frequently browsed through works dealing with natural science and with political affairs. In matters of religion I revered Jesus, while in matters of men I admired China’s Emperor T’ang of the Shang dynasty and Emperor Wu of the Chou dynasty, as well as America’s George Washington.

In *General Plans of National Reconstruction*, Sun Yat-sen briefly illustrated what he claimed to be the progressive ideas involving evolutionary thought of several ancient Greek philosophers: Socrates, Plato, Empedocles and Democritus. Although these ancient thinkers, among others, continued to be influential well into the modern period, Sun Yat-sen believed that the ideas about evolution tied up in their philosophies were left in the shadows until the time of the European Reformation. Sun Yat-sen identified Spinoza and Leibniz, in particular, as the European philosophers who reignited interest in evolutionism. He understood that prior to Darwin’s theory of evolution in the 19th century, ancient Greek philosophers—Empedocles and Democritus—

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409 孫文 (Sun Wen): 〈自傳〉，《孫文選集》中冊 [Selected Writings of Sun Wen], Ed. 黃彥 (Huang Yan) (廣東: 廣東人民出版社, 2006) 第 26 頁。
410 In *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen*, the translator has grossly mistranslated ‘studying Chinese classics’ (中學, zhong xue) for ‘middle school’ in this sentence. In other words, the so-called ‘middle school’ in this passage would be an incorrect representation of Sun Yat-sen’s original writing.
411 Sun Yat-sen referred to the three ancient Chinese dynasties as the dynasties of Hsia, Shang and Chou. Thus, in learning Chinese classical literature, he was fond of reading Chinese classics during the various periods of ancient dynasties in China. Moreover, he also began studying Darwin’s theory of evolution and others, obtaining much scientific or political knowledge through comprehensive learning.
412 Julie Lee Wei, Ramon H. Myers and Donald G Gillin, eds., p. 21.
had manifested preconceived ideas of biological evolution for all living creatures on the planet. Sun Yat-sen explained his views as follows:

二千年前，希臘之哲學家畢達哥拉斯氏及德謨克利特氏，已有見及天地萬物當由進化而成者，無如繼述無人，至蘇格拉底、柏拉圖二氏之學興後，則進化之說反因之而晦。至歐洲維新以後，思想漸復自由，而德之哲學家斯賓諾莎氏及萊布尼茨氏二人，窮理格物，再開進化論之階梯達爾文之祖則宗述萊布尼茨者也。413

About two thousand years ago, Empedocles and Democritus, two Greek philosophers, had discovered that innumerable creatures should be accomplished through engagements with evolution in the world. It seems that no man could continue to assert evolutionary ideas without some knowledge of Socrates and Plato. After that, the understanding of the principle of evolution was gradually forgotten. In the wake of the European Reformation, freedom of thought gradually recommenced. Spinoza and Leibniz, two German philosophers, explored the role of reason and the nature of substance, and retrod the steps towards evolutionism. Darwin’s grandfather (Erasmus Darwin) intended to state emphatically Leibniz’s views on evolution.

(researcher’s translation)

What is more, Sun Yat-sen went on to mention three crucial figures in different branches of Western science whose theories or claims would make significant impacts upon modern understanding of evolutionism. These three theorists—Pierre-Simon Laplace, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Lyell—

413 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen):〈孫文學說〉，《孫中山選集》上卷（北京：人民出版社，1956）第140頁。孫中山所著之〈建國方略〉共分為三部分：〈孫文學說〉、〈實業計畫〉及〈民權初步〉。
were pioneers of pre-Darwinian views on evolution. Among these important figures, Darwin was enormously influenced by Charles Lyell’s uniformitarian geology as published in his *Principles of Geology*. Sun Yat-sen said:

嗣後科學日昌，學者多有發明，其最著者，於天文學則有拉巴刺氏，於地質學，則有利里氏，於動物學，則有拉麥氏，此皆各從其學，而推得進化之理者，洵可稱為進化論之先河也。414

Subsequently, science was more and more prosperous—many experts came up with copious inventions. Among the most remarkable scholars were Laplace in astronomy, Lyell in geology and Lamarck in zoology. All had developed academic expertise in their individual field in which they employed the reasoning that led to the process of evolution. They were termed the forerunners of evolutionism. (researcher’s translation)

In *General Plans of National Reconstruction*, Sun Yat-sen praised Darwin’s perseverance and his theory of natural selection, the latter of which, in his view, led to the enlightenment of numerous researchers in various fields across the world. Darwin embarked on the H. M. S. *Beagle* for the west coast of South America in 1831, returning in 1836. More than two decades later, he decided to publish *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. In his concise classical writing style, Sun Yat-sen highly commended Darwin’s book and theory of natural selection as follows:

至達爾文氏則從事於動物之實察，費二十年勤求探討之功，而始成其《物種來由》一書，以發明物競天擇之理。自達爾文之書出後，則進化之

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414 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen): 《孫文學說》，《孫中山選集》上卷，第 140-41 頁。
After Darwin’s engagement in observing animals’ behaviour, he had spent two decades doing research on the theory of natural selection so as to complete *On the Origin of Species*. The publication of Darwin’s book led to sudden enlightenment of the study of evolution, which magnificently changed the thought of our world. From then on, all sorts of scholarship appealed to evolution. Evolution is the *Dao* of nature. Natural selection, the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the unfit are the principles of the evolution of species.

(researcher’s translation)

A reaction to the social condition of China’s fragility was inevitable. Sun Yat-sen mainly concentrated on the nature of evolutionary change in his writings, such as *General Plans of National Reconstruction* and *The Three Principles of the People*, using a variety of crucial Darwinian concepts which he saw as providing impetus to revolution in China. For this reason, the arguments he put forward, which he drew from diverse sources ranging from Empedocles to Darwin himself, are relevant to our own understanding of evolutionary thought and its brief history. As explained above, among his chief motivations for doing this was his consciousness of China’s being in a period of national crisis.

415 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen): 《孫文學說》, 《孫中山選集》上卷，第 141 頁。
6.3 Nationalism and Natural Selection

In *The Three Principles of the People*, SunYat-sen warned the Chinese people that ‘considering the law of survival of ancient and modern races, if we want to save China and to preserve the Chinese race, we must certainly promote Nationalism’. Hence Sun Yat-sen aspired to revive Chinese nationalism in order to perpetuate China’s existence in the world. In ‘Lecture Three’ of *The Three Principles of the People*, Sun Yat-sen used Darwin’s theory of natural selection to provide understanding of the survival of the Chinese people at a time when their country was facing economic and political challenges, particularly as a result of the intervention of foreign powers in its domestic affairs.

A number of Chinese intellectuals and revolutionaries were awakened to this dangerous situation and resolved to depose the Qing Dynasty in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War. The Chinese population can be divided into five main ethnic groups in the era of Nationalist China: Hans, Manchus, Mongols, Huis and Tibetans. The Manchus established the Qing Dynasty and ruled China for 268 years from 1644-1912. However, in the later years of the Qing Dynasty, many Chinese people considered the Manchus as unfit leaders in the keen struggle for existence in the world. Seen in terms of Darwinian natural selection, the unfitness of the Manchus to rule made the demise of the Qing Dynasty inevitable and thus opened up the way for new ruling powers to form. Commenting on this situation, James Reeve Pusey states:

If a thirst for vengeance was a bad reason to wish to be rid of the Manchus, Darwin gave a “good” reason. The Manchus were “unfit,”

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417 孫文 (Sun Wen): 〈民族主義:第三講〉, 《三民主義》 [*The Three Principles of the People*] (台北:三民書局, 1965) 第 35-37 頁。
418 In the early period of Nationalist China, the population was divided into five main ethnic groups, and there was a lack of precise statistics for minority groups. However, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, state officials carried out the plan for a national census in 1950s, which resulted in 56 ethnic groups being officially recognised. Moreover, it is possible that more minority groups will receive official recognition in the future.
and, being unfit, they had no right to rule. Darwinists, of course, had no right to talk about rights, but the Revolutionaries, just like Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, immediately leapt to the conclusion that *Yu sheng lieh pai* (The superior win, the inferior lose), was a description not just of what did happen but of what should happen.\(^{419}\)

In his “Editorial Introducing the First Issue of *Min Pao*” published in November 1905 in Tokyo, Sun Yat-sen urged to take heed of the three most important principles of the people in modern history, upon which the progress of both Europe and America were based: namely nationalism, democracy and livelihood. By way of his advocating the three aforesaid principles of the people, he observed the evolution of Europe and America as follows:

余維歐美之進化，凡以三大主義：曰民族，曰民權，曰民生。羅馬之亡，民族主義興，而歐洲各國以獨立。洎自帝其國，威行專制，在下者不堪其苦，則民權主義起。十八世紀之末，十九世紀之初，專制仆而立憲政體殖焉。世界開化，人智益蒸，物質發舒，百年銳於千載，經濟問題，繼政治問題之後，則民生主義躍躍然動。二十世紀不得不為民生主義之壇場時代也。\(^{420}\)

I hold that the progress of Europe and America is based on three great Principles: namely, the Principle of Nationalism, the Principle of Democracy, and the Principle of the People’s Livelihood. Following the fall of the Roman empire, nationalism arose, and the nations of Europe became independent. When these nations erected their own kings, the kings became despots, inflicting intolerable suffering on the people.


\(^{420}\) 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen): 〈“民報”發刊詞〉，《孫中山選集》上卷（北京：人民出版社，1956）第71頁。
beneath them; thus arose the Principle of Democracy. Consequently, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the fall of despotism and the planting of constitutional government. World development, human knowledge, and material prosperity have advanced so rapidly that the achievements of one hundred years have passed those of the previous one thousand years. Economic questions have followed in the wake of political questions, leading to the emergence of the Principle of the People’s Livelihood. Inevitably, the twentieth century will be the age in which the Principle of the People’s Livelihood will prevail.  

The tendency for China’s disintegration and reintegration in the late Qing period, as identified by Sun Yat-sen, would become characteristic of national revolutionary transformation in modern China. Accordingly, Sun Yat-sen positively advocated China’s nationalism in order to dispel foreign dominance of the country as exercised through international imperialism and other means. Sun Yat-sen’s advocating of the three great principles of nationalism, democracy and livelihood after his re-organisation of the Kuomintang created a new political and social blueprint for national reconstruction in accordance with the condition of China at that time. The following quartet of postage stamps, issued by the United States Postage Office, commemorate the common political ideal shared by Sun Yat-sen in China and the former US president, Abraham Lincoln: that is the three great principles of the people, by the people and for the people.

6.4 Sun Yat-sen's Evolutionary Concept and Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid

Viewed from a contemporary perspective, Kropotkin might have justified his theory of mutual aid as a positive response to Huxley's view of the struggle for existence. Huxley based his defence of the law of the struggle for existence on Darwinism; whereas Kropotkin, on the other hand, provided an account of interaction between animals in the wild that cast doubt on Huxley's evolutionary perspective of remorseless competition. Through his long-term observations in the Eastern Siberian wilderness and Northern Manchuria, Kropotkin developed his own vision of natural selection in which

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he identified the importance of mutual aid or mutual cooperation in the animal kingdom over constant competition between animals. Using Kropotkin’s own words, Michael Glassman reminds us of Kropotkin’s one key principle; ‘Successful species are those that engage in cooperation to overcome a hostile ecology’.\textsuperscript{423} Kropotkin thus wanted to explore why mutual aid or cooperation might be decisive factors for understanding the successfulness of many species in the world.

On account of mutualistic relations between similar organisms, a variety of demanding tasks can be dealt with more easily; that is to say, many hands, sometimes, make light work. For instance, through close cooperation a colony of bees can ensure the successful breeding of its single queen.\textsuperscript{424} Alternatively, some birds’ alarm calls give altruistic warnings of threatening situations.\textsuperscript{425} In these ways and others, animals altruistically sacrifice their self-interests to boost the survival chances of other members of their species, simply by adjusting themselves to cope with conditions in the environments in which they live. Thus, reciprocity, empathy, sympathy, love and cooperation may all be seen as powerful drivers of altruistic behaviours that help living creatures to maximise the opportunities for the survival of their species in the natural environment. Cooperation and reciprocity between living creatures may therefore be identified as chief causes of the evolution of life on our planet.

Intellectuals in numerous fields, including literature, philosophy, sociology, theology, history and journalism, have grappled with the problem of how altruism can be defined or explained in terms relevant to their study areas. The efforts of Victorian intellectuals to get to grips with the concept and terminology of altruism led them to varied interpretations. For instance, in \textit{The Data of Ethics}, Spenser tried to redefine altruism in his own terms: namely, as a kind of action rather than a set of instincts or an ethical ideal.\textsuperscript{426} Thus,
Spenser believed that all altruistic actions tend to benefit others instead of oneself.

The depth of Sun Yat-sen’s interest in Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid is apparent in his book, *General Plans of National Reconstruction*. Pusey has identified ‘proto-Kropotkinism’ in the thought not only of Sun Yat-sen, but also Liang Qichao and Yen Fu. This ‘proto-Kropotkinism’ reflected a view emphasising the cooperative aspects of animal behaviour in the natural environment. Seen from the perspective of human evolution, Sun Yat-sen pointed out the great significance of Kropotkin’s theory for understanding of how mutual aid has precipitated the immense progress of human society. Sun Yat-sen, Liang Qichao and Yen Fu all tended to advocate Kropotkin’s cooperative philosophy with the aim of reshaping their social environments. As Pusey writes:

“Proto-Kropotkinism” we have already seen, in the thought of Yen Fu, Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, and Sun Yat-sen, working its way into Chinese Darwinian thinking from the very beginning, and working precisely in every case to make Darwinism less frightening and less threatening to China, working to make it encouraging, promising, saving.427

In *Mutual Aid* (1902), Kropotkin provided vivid evidence of cooperation replacing competition in terms of animal sociability. For instance, he described how the Brazilian kites tended to help each other by hunting for prey in groups. Where prey was too large to be taken away by a single kite, other kites would provide assistance. In this book, Kropotkin seemed at odds with the notion of the struggle for existence as developed from Darwin’s theory. Yet in fact, Darwin presented both views of cooperation and competition in *On the Origin of Species*. Kropotkin, however, considered

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competition to be injurious, and instead thought of mutual aid as the chief driving factor behind evolution. As Kropotkin himself observed:

Sociability is a common feature with very many other birds of prey. The Brazilian kite, one of the most “impudent” robbers, is nevertheless a most sociable bird. Its hunting associations have been described by Darwin and other naturalists, and it is a fact that when it has seized upon a prey which is too big, it calls together five or six friends to carry it away.\textsuperscript{428}

Kropotkin referred to many other examples of mutual aid, such as in the following passage where he described the benefits of social behaviour in order to avoid competition among groups of ants and many bird species:

\begin{quote}
The ants combine in nests and nations; they pile up their stores, they rear their cattle—and thus avoid competition; and natural selection picks out of the ants’ family the species which know best how to avoid competition, with its unavoidably deleterious consequences. Most of our birds slowly move southwards as the winter comes, or gather in numberless societies and undertake long journeys—and thus avoid competition.\textsuperscript{429}
\end{quote}

Sun Yat-sen declared that what human beings need to do is to strive for their survival in history. In this regard, he heavily criticised class war as an illness inhibiting social development, and identified humanity’s need to survive, as the main cause of social evolution. As Sun Yat-sen critically wrote:

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{428} Peter Kropotkin, “Mutual Aid among Animals”, \textit{Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution} (London: William Heinemann, 1902) 21.  
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{429} Ibid., p. 74.
\end{flushright}
From ancient times to this day, what humans are striving for is survival. Humans are incessantly seeking survival in order to maintain the uninterrupted evolution of society. Thus, the law of social evolution is that humans endeavour to survive. The human need for survival is the cause of social evolution. Class war is not the mainspring of social evolution; class war is an illness when society proceeds to evolution.

(researcher’s translation)

In *General Plans of National Reconstruction*, Sun Yat-sen adopted Kropotkin’s view of mutual aid as being the dominant force in evolution rather than competition between animals. His criticism of class war in human society was very much to the point. In seeking to replace competition and struggle, Sun Yat-sen contributed enormously to the viewpoint of mutual assistance among humans correlating with social evolution. Thus, for Sun Yat-sen, mutual aid was a key evolutionary factor in the evolution of human society.

### 6.5 Sun Yat-sen’s View on Cosmic Evolution

Sun Yat-sen discussed the theory of cosmic evolution in his book, *General Plans for National Reconstruction*. Inspired by Darwinian evolutionary theory,

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430 孫文( SUN WEN):《民生主義第一講》，《三民主義》[The Three Principles of the People] (台北：三民書局，1965) 第 190 頁。
he embraced the idea of the three supposed periods of cosmic evolution: those of substance, species and mankind. According to his worldview, the evolution of substance involved the formation of the celestial bodies. This was followed by the evolution of species and lastly the evolution of mankind, as Sun Yat-sen explained:

夫進化者，時間之作用也，故自達文氏發明物種進化之理，而學者多稱為時間之大發明，與牛頓氏之摯力為空間之大發明相媲美。而作者以為進化之時期有三：其一為物質進化時期，其二為物種進化時期，其三為人類進化之時期。431

When it comes to evolution, it is the action of time. Thus, many scholars have recognised a major new concept of time ever since Darwin formulated the theory of evolution. This theory can compare favourably with Newton’s theory of gravitation. And further, the author [Sun Yat-sen] thought of evolution as three periods of time: firstly, the period for the evolution of substance; secondly, the period for the evolution of species; thirdly, the period for the evolution of mankind.

(researcher’s translation)

It is a matter for conjecture how Sun Yat-sen reacted to differing views on the evolution of humans and animals. He considered the evolution of species to be based on the principle of competition, whereas he saw the evolution of humans as based on the principle of mutual aid. Hence through the process of evolutionary selection, humans evolved from a different principle to that which applied to other species as well as the celestial bodies. Sun Yat-sen

identified this difference in humanity’s searching for a common goal in world harmony.

Sun Yat-sen proposed his own theory of cosmic evolution in *General Plans of National Reconstruction*. The final purpose of the theory of cosmic evolution, as intended by Sun Yat-sen, was to shed light on humanity’s seeking of world harmony via mutual aid and the progressive principle. Darwin’s theory of evolution provided foundations for Sun Yat-sen’s theory of cosmic evolution, particularly in that it took account of processes of competition and mutual aid. Sun Yat-sen believed that mutual aid was the impetus for human progress as opposed to the law of competition applying to animals. Moreover, Sun Yat-sen’s views on cosmic evolution were much simpler than the theories of modern scientists. Nowadays scientists have developed deep, insightful and precise theories of cosmic evolution, such as the astrophysical theory of black holes. In contrast, Sun Yat-sen viewed cosmic evolution in terms of three simple evolutionary changes, which, although lacking in the foundations of modern scientific theories, progressed in concert with human harmony.

6.6 The Great Harmony in the Utopian World

By studying the links between Darwinism and Modern Chinese writings, the researcher has found that K’ang Yu-wei, Sun Yat-sen, Mao Zedong and Confucius shared a common utopian ideal of creating great harmony in the world. K’ang Yu-wei’s *Ta T’ung Shu* conveys the author’s utopian vision for the creation of an ideal world in which wars have ended and a great harmony has been established. Meanwhile, even faced with the challenges posed by modern revolutionary times, Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong managed to create new dynasties in China, both having been driven by their ultimate concerns for the creation of a harmonious social order.
In *General Plans of National Reconstruction*, Sun Yat-sen presented his utopian thought on *Datong* [大同思想], meaning ‘Great Harmony’ or ‘Grand Union’ in the world. His concept of *Datong* had its origin in Confucianism, stemming in particular from an important chapter “*Datong*” in *The Book of Rites* [禮運大同篇]. In *The Three Principles of the People*, Sun Yat-sen explained his ideal of *Datong* as being the principal goal of human evolution; namely the complete performance of mutual aid among humans so as to achieve great harmony in the world. In addition, he pinpointed the prevalence of the *Dao* in the world, this also having been explained by Confucius, as he said: ‘When the great *Dao* prevails, all kinds of peoples can impartially share the whole world’. To this he also added the words of Jesus: ‘God’s Blessings descend upon you, and you live in the world just like in Heaven’ [爾旨得成，在地若天]. With consummate understanding of his faith, Sun Yat-sen expressed his view on the ultimate goal of the evolution of mankind as the World of *Datong*:

![Image of Sun Yat-sen's handwriting]

**Fig. 12** A sample of Sun Yat-sen’s handwriting concerning human evolution and the World of *Datong*
What is the aim of human evolution? Namely, Confucius said: ‘When the great Dao prevails, all kinds of peoples can impartially share the whole world’. This is what Jesus Christ seems to mean when he said: ‘God’s Blessings descend upon you, and you live in the world just like in Heaven’. The hope for mankind should be able to transform the world of severe hardship into Elysium, a paradise of extreme happiness.

(researcher’s translation)

Another argument from Sun Yat-sen’s writing is that the evolution of human beings has surpassed that of many species of animals. Sun Yat-sen declared that animals rely heavily on the principle of competition, while humans are dependent on the principle of mutual assistance. Nonetheless, his understanding of Charles Darwin’s theory was too simplistic in this regard. In a strict sense, Sun Yat-sen may have misunderstood certain aspects of Darwinian evolutionary theory since he did not credit animal species with cooperation in the natural environment. In fact, some animals can also be seen to adapt to climatic conditions and environmental degradation through the natural processes of competition and cooperation. For instance, a honey bee colony is composed of worker bees (females), drones (males) and a single queen in the nest, in respect of which they can be described as...

432 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen): 〈孫文學說〉，《建國方略》 [General Plans of National Reconstruction] (北京：中國長安出版社，2011) 第 35 頁。
‘engaged in highly coordinated and cooperative behaviour’.\textsuperscript{434} Thus, any species of living creatures may be seen as acting both in terms of competition and cooperation; hence living creatures are not necessarily driven only by competition as supposed by Sun Yat-sen. He, perhaps, developed a too general understanding of the evolution of species through his initial contact with Darwin’s theory. In \textit{The Three Principles of the People}, however, Darwin’s theory is applicable to explain human evolution via the principle of mutual assistance, such that led, as he saw it, to a world of great harmony.

During national crises in both the late Qing Dynasty and the early period of Republican China, the circulation of Darwinian thought led numerous politically-motivated intellectuals to challenge traditional Confucian ethics. Having carefully observed old social phenomena in his contemporary Chinese society, Sun Yat-sen wanted to use the evolutionary thought sweeping through China at that time to bring about both political renewal and social innovation. Indeed, he yearned for the revitalization of traditional Chinese thought in response to Darwinian evolutionary thought. He made a statement for the advancement of human evolution:

\begin{quote}
乃至達文[達爾文]氏發明物種進化之物競天擇原則後，而學者多以為仁義道德皆屬虛無，而爭競生存乃為實際，幾欲以物種之原則而施之於人類之進化，而不知此為人類已過之階級，而人類今日之進化已超出物種原則之上矣。\textsuperscript{435}
\end{quote}

\textit{After Darwin proposed his theory of natural selection in the evolution of species, many scholars thought of benevolence, righteousness and morality as nothingness; still, competing for survival was genuineness. They nearly imposed the principle of animal species on human evolution—they did not understand humans who had far surpassed this

\textsuperscript{434} Ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{435} Ibid., p 35.
class. Nowadays human evolution has transcended the principle of animal species.

(researcher's translation)

Moreover, Sun Yat-sen gave an incisive critique of Marx's thought as it applied to human society, primarily because, as he argued, Marx merely saw the weaknesses in the process of social evolution, as opposed to the principle of social evolution in itself. Thus, Sun Yat-sen claimed that Marx could be seen, as he put it, as a social pathologist rather than a social physiologist:

這種病症的原因，是人類不能生存；因為人類不能生存，所以這種病症的結果，便起戰爭。馬克思研究社會問題所有的心得，只見得社會進化的毛病，沒有見到社會進化的原理；所以馬克思可說是一個社會病理家，不能說是一個社會生理家。436

The reason for this illness [i.e. class war] was that humans could not survive; therefore, the outcome of this illness led to war inasmuch as humans could not survive. Marx studied social problems, forming all his reading insights, in which he merely saw the infirmity of social evolution, but he did not observe the principle of social evolution. Thus, Marx could be seen as a social pathologist, rather than a social physiologist.

(researcher’s translation)

Sun Yat-sen believed in the importance of the ideal of Datong, as he saw it, in as far as it reflected both the competitive and cooperative aspects of human

436 孫文(Sun Wen): “民生主義第一講”, 《三民主義》[The Three Principles of the People] (台北：三民書局，1965) 第 190 頁。
social evolution. The view of Datong that he advocated echoed Confucius’s advice that humans have kind hearts and lofty ideals so as to establish a harmony within the family, society and the state. To this may be added Mencius’s teaching that a junzi or the gentleman is obliged to cultivate a mind of righteousness or yi so as to display altruistic behaviour towards society and his country. The ultimate concern that occupied these ancient philosophers’ minds is thus very clear; the great harmony of the cosmic order is the model upon which the ideal human society should be based. In explaining his utopian vision of human evolution, Sun Yat-sen likewise entertained his own ideal of a world of order and harmony in his writings.

6.7 Conclusion

Enlightened by Darwin’s theory of evolution, Confucianism and Hong Xiuquan’s Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Sun Yat-sen set about launching what he considered to be an essential revolutionary movement against the corrupt Manchu regime for over a decade. After half a century in 1940, the Nationalist government formally acknowledged his place as the Founding Father of the Republic of China. Sun Yat-sen was an independent pioneering revolutionary whose book, The Three Principles of the People, reflected not only upon democracy and nationalism but also the idea of social evolution. In other words, the three principles of the people were significant not only as major ideas in themselves, but also as reflections upon the three stages of social evolution. Apart from these three principles, Sun Yat-sen also proffered his own theory of cosmic evolution in his General Plans for National Reconstruction, which he divided into three evolutionary periods of the cosmos: substance, species and mankind. Synthesis of Chinese thought with Darwinism was an essential focus in Sun Yat-sen’s writings in which philosophy and science were used to mutually shed light on a variety of peoples in the world.
The discussions in this chapter have covered a range of research subtopics relevant to the thought of Sun Yat-sen: foremost, the Darwinian theory of evolution as well as Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid and the Confucian utopian ideal of Datong. During his college days, Sun Yat-sen believed that the new tide of Darwin’s theory of evolution would sweep away the story of God’s manifold creation in the Bible. Darwin, Kropotkin and Confucius equally influenced his thoughts on evolution, mutual aid and utopian idealism.
Chapter Seven
Mao Zedong’s Thoughts on Social Evolution
and Dialectics

7.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, a large number of studies have been conducted in both China and the Western countries for the purpose of understanding the crucial role of Mao Zedong (1893-1976) in the history of revolution in modern China. Yet, in spite of this trend, very little research has been offered on Mao Zedong’s thoughts on social evolution. Broadly speaking, whereas many writers have directed their attention on towards those aspects of Mao Zedong’s politics that most affected the perspectives of the common people, few have focussed on the specific connections between his dialectical materialism and Social Darwinism. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong established a new dynasty in modern China and thus led the Chinese people to stand up on the world stage. Indeed, evolutionary ideas played a pivotal role in the career of this revolutionary hero who became a political pioneer in modern Chinese history. Maurice Meisner claims that ‘Mao Zedong read many Chinese versions of Western books in the Hunan Provincial Library, as to those authors who enlightened the modern thought of China’s Westernized intelligentsia such as Adam Smith, Darwin, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau and Montesquieu.’ 437 In addition, he was also affected by the work of Friedrich Paulsen, a German professor at the University of Berlin, in his A System of Ethics (1899, English edition). 438

In regard to social evolution, John C. Greene has pointed out that many Darwinian scholars consider competitive struggle to be a necessary impetus for social progress between individuals, tribes, nations and races. 439 Furthermore, on 16 August 1888, C. Lloyd Morgan offered the following explanation of the struggle for existence in his paper, “Natural Selection and Elimination”:

The struggle for existence is the result of a threefold process of elimination. First, elimination by the direct action of surrounding conditions; secondly, elimination by enemies (including parasites); and, thirdly, elimination by competition. 440

Such considerations suggest that competitive struggle provides us with a dynamic force for understanding some features of biological evolution, primarily because the unfit or the weak are likely to be eliminated by the strong. The other two factors mentioned by Lloyd Morgan, environmental conditions and natural enemies, also add to the keen competition inherent in the struggle for existence and the complex process of biological evolution.

The main purpose of this chapter is to study the specific connections between Social Darwinism, Mao Zedong’s evolutionary ideas and his philosophy of struggle. During his political career, Mao Zedong launched a number of serious struggles and revolutionary movements, usually at times when his party and army were being fatally undermined, while his ultimate goal was to transform China into a new progressive society and substantial global power. Having implemented his philosophy of struggle while China was in the throws of revolution, he was able to bring about enormous transformation and progress which helped to improve China’s position and power in the world. It is undeniable that Mao Zedong changed the course of modern Chinese history.

7.2 Mao Zedong’s Poems: War and the Struggle for Existence

From the viewpoint of biological evolution, Mao Zedong has been eulogized as a pioneering revolutionary who led numerous revolutionary movements and faced many political cul-de-sacs. During the Long March, which passed through 11 provinces from October 1934 to October 1936, Mao Zedong led the Red Army in a struggle for existence, during which it faced the threats of encirclement and suppression from the troops of Chiang Kai-shek. During the Zunyi Conference in January 1935, Mao Zedong gained firm power and leadership over the Red Army and the Chinese Communist Party, thereby allowing him to continue his fight against imperialists and the Nationalist government. The Zunyi Conference marked a historic turning point for the Red Army and the CCP, since Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and their leading group commonly decided to change the course of their future development. From then onwards, Mao Zedong had to combat counter-revolutionary dictatorship during the Chinese revolution; particularly what he called the paper tigers of the Kuomintang. This military struggle for existence reflected the long history of Mao Zedong’s battles against his enemies.

The significance of revolution loomed large over biological evolution. Mao Zedong established a socialist China through struggle and revolution. His philosophy of struggle was influenced not only by the idea of biological evolution, but also by his philosophical understanding of class struggle. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin argued that ‘natural selection follows from the struggle for existence’. Paul Crook’s analysis shows that ‘in order to comprehend the Darwinian theory of war, we need to situate historically Darwin’s notion of struggle’. Crook also considers war as ‘a biological necessity’. Just as group-versus-group struggles come to pass between diverse species in the animal kingdom, so war can result from inevitable conflicts and competitions that occur between people, which may in turn be

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443 Ibid., p. 83.
taken as a biological expression of human evolution. The struggle for existence takes place not only in the natural world, but also in the development of human society. Thus, from an analogical viewpoint, Darwin’s theory of natural selection could be applied to military selection on the battlefield; Mao Zedong’s philosophy of struggle reveals its metaphorical sense in Social Darwinism. For example, the Japanese invasion of Chinese territory during the Second World War could be viewed as having been a decisive factor for future developments in the aftermath of the war between the Nationalists and the Communists. Exploring this metaphor further, it could be argued that had Japan not invaded Nationalist China during the Second World War, then Mao Zedong and the Red Army may have been driven to extinction by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Army. That is to say, the Nationalist government might have been able to maintain its regime on the Chinese mainland up to today. Nevertheless, through social and military change, history ultimately sided with Mao Zedong rather than Chiang Kai-shek because of the progress and effectiveness of military strategies developed by Mao and his generals during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45).

Mao Zedong’s philosophy of struggle differs somewhat from those of Marx and Engels. Such a philosophical recognition would make sense, given that Mao Zedong developed his own synthesis of Chinese and Western thought. Drawing a link between social evolution and revolution, Marx argued that ‘revolution was evolution’s way for man, by discovering in class struggle the social law that corresponded to the biological law of the struggle for existence’. However, as Richart Weikart points out, Engels’ theory of human evolution excluded ‘the applicability of the struggle’ to human society, primarily because he believed that ‘humans were essentially social animals, not inherently competitive’. Engels’ chief disagreement in this respect was over the idea that intensified struggles for existence were

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446 Ibid., p. 73.
disadvantageous to the development of human society. It is noteworthy that Mao Zedong had studied the Chinese version of *The Communist Manifesto* and Karl Kautsky’s *The Class Struggle* in 1920.\(^{447}\) In addition to reading books on Marxist philosophy, including Marx’s *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* and Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*, he also learnt much about ruling and statecraft from histories of the struggles of the Chinese Emperors. Prior to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, he developed his philosophy of struggle in the context of his struggle for existence with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Army. For this reason, Mao Zedong’s famous poems are enfused with his philosophy of struggle. Indeed, they added to the greatness of his achievements since he has been hailed both as a distinguished poet and leader of the Chinese Red Army on the road to victory. The reason that his poetry was so outstanding and popular was mainly because he wrote in a grand, majestic and revolutionary manner in order to win the sympathy, recognition and support of his readers. Furthermore, the poems also show how Mao Zedong and the Red Army struggled for existence on the battlefield. He described the pleasures he gained out of his struggles with, as he saw it, Heaven, Earth and people [與天鬥其樂無窮，與地鬥其樂無窮，與人鬥其樂無窮]. Like many Chinese revolutionary leaders of his day, he was especially fond of competitions and struggles with the various enemies he faced. Thus, researchers can gain a stronger understanding of the interaction between Mao Zedong and the wars he fought by reading between the lines in his poems. The following image shows a gold statue in Shenzhen, China, depicting Mao Zedong in a sitting posture and with his great poem of 1959, *Return to Shaoshan* [《七律·到韶山》], displayed on the wall in the background:

According to this poem in the background, *Return to Shaoshan*, it is widely believed that Mao Zedong excelled as a military strategist and proved a skillful survivor in the struggle for existence brought about by war, correctly estimating the military situations faced by his troops and his enemies on the relentless battlefield. In the first instance, he would make constructive criticisms or suggestions to his staff before giving more precise commands for military action to the Red Army. Through Mao’s effective leadership, his actions as a military strategist showed in competitive struggles with their chief enemy, Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang troops.

In July 1930, Mao Zedong wrote the poem, “Tingzhou to Changsha”, in which he used metaphor to describe the Red Army as the soldiers of Heaven executing his armed struggle against the Kuomintang military group. The broader point that Mao Zedong was trying to get across, however, was that the Red Army should employ the village as a base from which to surround the city, with the ultimate goal of liberating the whole of China. Mao’s serious military struggle with the Kuomintang troops specifically revealed Darwin’s
concept on war for the necessity of human development. Even in spite of war’s regressive effects on human evolution, Darwin tacitly maintained his view that the fatalities of human warfare are like animals that have died in the struggle for existence in the natural environment. In fact, the weaker Red Army of the 1930s competed for its survival through a series of long, titanic, military struggles against the better armed and funded Kuomintang troops. The Red Army was threatened with extinction throughout the 1930s. The transient opportunities for victory were dependent on the military leaders’ offensive and defensive strategies on the battlefield. Hence the scene presented by this poem is one of the Red Army marching from Tingzhou to Changsha:

六月天兵征腐惡，萬丈長繩要把鯤鵬缚。
赤水那邊紅一角，偏師借重黃公略。

百萬工農齊踊躍，席捲江西直搗湘和鄂。
國際悲歌歌一曲，狂飆為我從天落。

“Tingzhou to Changsha”

In June our soldiers of heaven fight against evil and rot. They have a huge rope to tie up the whale or fabulous cockatrice.

449 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong): 《蝶戀花·從汀州向長沙》，《毛澤東詩詞》[Poems of Mao Zedong: Rhymed Versions with Annotations] · 2nd ed., Translated and Annotated by 辜正坤 (Gu Zhengkun), (北京: 北京大學出版社, 2010) 第 58 頁。
On the far side of the Gan waters the ground turns red under the strategy of Huang Gonglüe.

A million workers and peasants leap up joyfully and roll up Jiangxi like a mat.

As we reach the rivers of Hunan and Hubei we sing the internationale. It pierces us like a whirlwind from the sky.\(^{450}\)

In ancient China, the troops of justice could be termed the soldiers of Heaven.\(^{451}\) Furthermore, the ‘June’ mentioned in the poem refers to the sixth month of the Chinese Lunar Calendar; the actual date started from 26 July 1930 (the first day of June 1930 in the Lunar Calendar).\(^{452}\) Thus, the Red Army, like the soldiers of Heaven, combated the ‘evil and corrupt’ Kuomintang troops from July to August 1930.

In the first stanza of “Tingzhou to Changsha”, Mao Zedong referred to the whale as the grand foe, Chiang Kai-shek, and his Kuomintang troops. This allusion comes from the essay “Free and Easy Wandering”, in Zhuanzi, in which Kun and Peng are respectively a large fish and a huge bird of Chinese legend.\(^{453}\) The large fish (Kun) was able to transform itself into a huge bird (Peng) according to Zhuanzi’s allegorical interpretation of the legend. Mao Zedong thus referred to the ‘powerful’ Kuomintang troops as Kun and Peng, whom the soldiers of Heaven intended to tie up using a huge rope. Through their marvellous durability and military power, the Red Army wanted to conquer the Kuomintang troops in the ultimate victory.

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\(^{451}\) 季世昌 (Ji Shichang): 《蝶戀花•從汀州向長沙》，《毛澤東詩詞書法詩意畫賞》，(北京：商務印書館國際有限公司, 2013) 第 107 頁。

\(^{452}\) Ibid., p. 107.

\(^{453}\) 毛澤東(Mao Zedong): 《蝶戀花•從汀州向長沙》，《毛澤東詩詞》[Poems of Mao Zedong: Rhymed Versions with Annotations], 2nd ed., Translated and Annotated by 辜正坤 (Gu Zhengkun), (北京：北京大學出版社, 2010) 第 60 頁。
Moreover, the poem alludes to the establishment of a station on the banks of the River Gan by the Red Army’s Third Army under the command of Huang Gonglüe. In the second stanza of the poem, Mao Zedong specifically depicted a large number of workers and peasants joining the revolutionary movement led by the CCP in order to compete with the Kuomintang. The revolutionary power of these workers and peasants seemed invincible during the revolutionary era in China.

In October 1935, Mao Zedong completed the poem “Liupan the Mountain of Six Circles”, which he wrote as a record of the Red Army’s twenty-five thousand li Long March. This march took place over two years between October 1934 to October 1936, during which time the Kuomintang Army chased and besieged the Red Army. In spite of this pressure, the Red Army survived the Kuomintang Army’s onslaught. In response, Mao Zedong made his famous comment, which has been circulated in both China and Taiwan, that ‘if you failed to come to the Great Wall of China, then you could not be counted as a true hero’ [不到長城非好漢]. In addition, this poem is full of the spirit of the Red Army’s struggle at a time when Mao Zedong and his soldiers were paying great attention to Chiang Kai-shek’s military offensive. Mao Zedong announced his intension to tie up the ‘gray dragon’, namely Chiang Kai-shek as follows:

《清平樂·六盤山》

天高雲淡，望斷南飛雁。
不到長城非好漢，居指行程二萬。

六盤山上高峰，紅旗漫捲西風。
今日長纓在手，何時缚住蒼龍?^{454}

^{454} 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong): 《清平樂·六盤山》，第 104 頁。
“Liupan the Mountain of Six Circles”

Dazzling sky to the far cirrus clouds.
I gaze at wild geese vanishing into the south.
If we cannot reach the Long Wall
we are not true men.
On my fingers I count the twenty thousand li
we have already marched.

On the summit of Liupan
the west wind lazily ripples our red banner.
Today we have the long rope in our hands.
When will we tie up the gray dragon
of the seven stars?\textsuperscript{455}

During the same period, Mao Zedong also kept a record of the Long March of the Red Army in his prestigious poem, “the Long March”. Even though the Kuomintang Army appeared to be in a strong position, Mao Zedong tried to use hyperbole to show the Red Army’s mobility, endurance and valour. The Red Army swiftly marched through the five sierras as though they were small waves and passed by the summits of Wumeng, which seemed like small balls of clay on the slopes; thus, the high mountains seemed to be reduced to small waves and little clay balls. These diminutive analogies also invite readers to marvel at the scale of the Red Army’s march by presenting a splendid image of the soldiers’ struggle for existence. The comrades pressed on with the command to walk through what Mao Zedong described as warm and clouded cliffs washed below by the River Gold Sand. They also passed through the cold iron chains of the bridge over the Dadu River. With ambivalent feelings, the firm-willed soldiers faced up to the serious challenges of natural and

artificial barriers. When the Red Army saw the snow of Minshan, its soldiers felt only happiness and laughed as they moved on. This poem is narrated over a dramatic backdrop of the predicaments and challenges of nature encountered by the Red Army during the Long March, even while they were high on morale and filled with an iron will. Mao Zedong wrote:

《七律•長征》

紅軍不怕遠征難，萬水千山只等閒。
五嶺逶迤騰細浪，烏蒙磅礴走泥丸。
金沙水拍雲崖暖，大渡橋橫鐵索寒。
更喜岷山千里雪，三軍過後盡開顏。456

“The Long March”

The Red Army is not afraid of hardship on the march, the long march.
Ten thousand waters and a thousand mountains are nothing.
The Five Sierras meander like small waves, the summits of Wumeng pour on the plain like balls of clay.
Cliffs under clouds are warm and washed below by the River Gold Sand.
Iron chains are cold, reaching over the Dadu River.
The far snows of Minshan only make us happy and when the army pushes through, we laugh.457

456 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):《七律·長征》，第 94 頁。
Mao Zedong’s great ambition and literary talent are deeply imbued in his next poem, “Snow”, written in February 1936. The opening lines of the poem describe the beautiful, magnificent landscape of the northern mother-land in winter, which is largely sealed by ice for thousands of li and is naturally covered by snowfall for nearly ten thousand li. Both sides of the Great Wall show the white, vast expanse of the territory and the surging waves of the Yellow River have gone under such a chilly climate. Many ice-clad mountains are like silver snakes in their dancing, serpentine ways; many ice-clad highlands seem to be a group of runaway wax elephants. Thus, mountains and highlands appear as high as Heaven. It is not until a sunny day that a beauty wearing a red dress and white cloak charms everyone facing such cold weather and icy conditions. The poem is fraught with the extended meaning of contrasting images in which splendid, majestic, natural phenomena reflect how China’s dynasties have evolved. This is to say that many emperors in Chinese history had competed fiercely with their political rivals in the vastness of China’s territory in order to pursue their individual goals, each with historic consequences. The poem shows that Mao Zedong saw himself as a successor to such men in China’s long history through his pursuit of a new historic mission. To achieve his political ambitions, he argued that the blazing fire he represented would continue to burn in the cold, against the severe political atmosphere of the times, so as to bring about the future transformation via the People’s Revolutionary War.

The hyperbole of “Snow” clearly exhibits the heroic mindset adopted by Mao Zedong. His words, ‘Only today are we men of feeling’, specifically reveal how he believed his will, sagacity, ambition and talent surpassed even those of the Emperors Qin Shi Huang, Han Wu Di, Tang Taizong, Song Taizu and Genghis Khan; Mao Zedong asks his readers to wait and bear witness as his heroic revolution changes the old feudal China into a modern society. In other words, what he was getting at was that social evolution would only

happen in China through radical change or social revolution. As Mao Zedong wrote:

《沁園春·雪》

北國風光，千里冰封，萬里雪飄。望長城内外，惟餘茫茫；
大河上下，頓失滔滔。山舞銀蛇，原馳蠟象，欲與天公試比高。
須晴日，看紅裝素裹，分外妖嬈。

江山如此多嬌，引無數英雄競折腰。惜秦皇漢武，略輸文采；
唐宗宋祖，稍遜風騷。一代天驕，成吉思汗，只識彎弓射大雕。
俱往矣，數風流人物，還看今朝。458

“Snow”

The scene is the north lands.
Thousands of li sealed in ice,
ten thousand li in blowing snow.
From the Long Wall I gaze inside and beyond
and see only vast tundra.
Up and down the Yellow River
the gurgling water is frozen.
Mountains dance like silver snakes,
hills gallop like wax bright elephants
trying to climb over the sky.
On days of sunlight

458 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):《沁園春·雪》，第 108-10 頁。
the planet teases us in her white dress and rouge.

Rivers and mountains are beautiful
and made heroes bow and compete to catch the girl—
lovely earth.

Yet the emperors Shihuang and Wu Di
were barely able to write.

The first emperors of the Tang and Song dynasties
were crude.

Genghis Khan, man of his epoch
and favored by heaven,
knew only how to hunt the great eagle.

They are all gone.

Only today are we men of feeling.⁴⁵⁹

Mao Zedong and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) liberated Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China, on April 23, 1949, and eventually defeated Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Army; this marked the culmination of the Chinese Civil War of 1946-49. During these decisive years, the Red Army was renamed the Chinese People’s Liberation Army and driven to victory by Mao Zedong, with the result that a new regime was established in Beijing, China. The poem, “Capture of Nanjing”, written by Mao Zedong after the overthrow of the Kuomintang government, merrily celebrated the victory of the PLA. However, he was also wary of an earlier example set by Xiang Yu which marked the extinction of the Qin Dynasty. Xiang Yu and Liu Bang simultaneously attacked Xianyang, the capital of the Qin Dynasty. Liu Bang was first able to occupy Xianyang after the downfall of the Qin Dynasty, but was subsequently defeated by Xiang Yu. Nevertheless, Xiang Yu was worried about being seen as unjust by his enemies and did not take

advantage of his troops to kill Liu Bang. Liu Bang was able to go on and defeated Xiang Yu, who committed suicide in the wake of the war. Mao Zedong saw this historical example as grounds for caution and thus urged his well-disciplined soldiers to continuously chase Chiang Kai-shek’s armies which were retreating chaotically. As Ji Shichang explains, the poetic line, ‘If heaven has feeling it will grow old’, refers to the two decades of Chiang Kai-shek’s dictatorship in mainland China. If heaven has feelings toward people’s hardship, it could not have endured such a torture and then become old. Mao Zedong wished to conquer Chiang Kai-shek and his troops with the ultimate goal of liberating the whole of China. Nanjing was eventually liberated by Mao Zedong and the PLA, showing that the law of social evolution is constantly changing or metamorphosing. In a dramatic reaction, Mao Zedong and the PLA conquered Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Army, thus prompting the latter to reluctantly move their capital from Nanjing to Guangzhou, then to Chongqing, then Chengdu and finally settling in Taipei. As far as the evolution of nature goes, Mao Zedong states in the last line of this poem, ‘our seas turn into mulberry fields’. As he wrote:

《七律·人民解放軍佔領南京》

鍾山風雨起蒼黃，百萬雄師過大江。
虎踞龍盤今勝昔，天翻地覆慨而慷。
宜將剩勇追窮寇，不可沽名學霸王。
天若有情天亦老，人間正道是滄桑。461

“Capture of Nanjing”

Rain and a windstorm rage blue and yellow over Zhong

460 季世昌（Ji Shichang）, 第 291 頁。
461 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong): 《七律·人民解放軍佔領南京》, 第 114 頁。
the bell mountain
as a million peerless troops cross the Great River.
The peak is a coiled dragon, the city a crouching tiger
more dazzling than before.
The sky is spinning and the earth upside down.
We are elated
yet we must use our courage to chase the hopeless enemy.
We must not stoop to fame like overlord Xiang Yu.
If heaven has feeling it will grow old
And watch
our seas turn into mulberry fields.\textsuperscript{462}

From these five poems, we can clearly understand that Mao Zedong wished to change China’s traditional society and old system through revolution. For Mao Zedong, revolution involving military struggle was a way of driving social change and progress, or evolution, in China. He reached his goals thanks to three famous military encounters which took place from September 1948 to January 1949 during the Chinese Civil War. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, Zhu De and the PLA thoroughly defeated Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang Army in three consecutive battles: Liaoshen, Huaihai and Pingjin. On these victories, Francis Y. K. Soo comments, ‘although Chiang’s armies had greatly superior equipment and outnumbered the Communists, their loose discipline, corruption, and low morale made them impotent. On the other hand, Mao’s armies, although poorly equipped and outnumbered, had high morale and were well organized’.\textsuperscript{463} In addition to Soo’s points, economic factors also played a decisive role in the civil war’s outcome.\textsuperscript{464} As a result of these different elements, seen in a certain light from

\textsuperscript{464} During the Chinese Civil War from 1946 to 1949, Mao Zedong and the PLA did not need a large amount of money to support their soldiers, nor to satisfy their expenditures. They were helped in as much as a great deal of their rations, including rice, noodles and other food stuffs,
military selection, Mao Zedong and the PLA were ‘selected’ through an evolutionary struggle while the unfit Kuomintang Army was eventually conquered. China has made enormous progress in its recent history thanks, at least in part, to Mao Zedong whose philosophy of struggle greatly influenced the country’s social evolution and metamorphosis into a modern state. In *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (2002), Gould stresses that ‘Darwin used his distinctive views on struggle to validate the concept of progress as a cardinal vector in the history of life’. Such a Darwinian view on struggle could give impetus to efforts to make society more progressive and changeable. Hence, considered in this way, Mao Zedong’s philosophy of struggle draws a parallel with Darwinian theories of the struggle for existence wherein social evolution is cast as one form of the survival of the fittest.

### 7.3 Mao Zedong and Social Darwinism

As a proletarian revolutionary and unexpected winner of the Chinese Civil War, Mao Zedong was resolved to establish a new dynasty in modern China; namely, the People’s Republic of China. The fact that Mao’s PLA eventually defeated Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang Army was due to his wise military strategies and artful leadership during the Civil War. Nonetheless, by this time China had experienced fourteen years of war starting in 1937 with the eight-year Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), followed by the three-year Civil War and the Korean War (1950-53) lasting a further three years. China had lost much in the way of money, food, people and military equipment during these wars. In response to the situation, although the leaders launched a series of policies collectively known as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and the

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were produced and prepared by their soldiers, farmers and the wider populace. In contrast, Chiang Kai-shek and his troops encountered a series of bleak economic and logistical conditions, brought about by monetary inflation, deficit spending and poor economic policies at home. Accordingly, from a logistical perspective, whereas Mao Zedong and the PLA had enough food supplies to last them throughout the three-year war, the Nationalists struggled to provide for their needs.

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), these political movements, in fact, did not improve poor economic condition in contemporary China. Yet even so, the country became relatively poor under Mao Zedong’s autocracy during the 1950s and the 1960s. The economy began to prosper again in the late 1970s thanks to globalization and the massive economic reforms undertaken by Deng Xiaoping, which were helped along by his open-door guidance on foreign trade and investment. Deng Xiaoping insisted on maintaining Mao Zedong’s political ideas, and in 1982 offered his own political blueprint on ‘constructing Socialism with Chinese characteristics’ [建設有中國特色的社會主義]. From the outset of the 1980s, China gradually moved onto the right track, making impressive progress in its national development by combining economic prosperity, military capability and an education system open to all from primary up to university level.

Marxism, Social Darwinism and the philosophies of certain Chinese emperors[^466] had significant impacts on Mao Zedong during his long political career. Social Darwinism was at the centre of his thought, and was necessarily related to his readings of the canonical Western texts from which he drew many inferences about the evolution of modern Chinese society. He channelled his projects and efforts into China’s revolutionary movements, and thereby entered a struggle for existence within the Chinese territory. He believed in Darwin’s theory of evolution because of the competition and struggle for survival that he himself had experienced. Thus, having incorporated Marxism and Social Darwinism into his revolutionary beliefs, Mao Zedong realised his political ambitions via these two important Western theories.

[^466]: Mao Zedong was familiar with the ruling methods, histories and political philosophies of many of the Chinese emperors in different dynasties. Mao was therefore inclined to establish a new, powerful China by means of the political wisdom provided by certain Chinese emperors, and was thus inspired to exert his leadership over the Communist regime. For instance, we can more or less understand Mao’s heroic ambition from some of the lines of his poem, “Snow”; however, when he had finished writing this poem, the People’s Republic of China had still not given birth to modern Chinese history. According to this poem, it should be noted that Mao wished to surpass the feats of the Mongol Emperor Genghis Khan. Therefore, in addition to Marxism and Social Darwinism, the philosophies of Chinese emperors also affected Mao’s political thought during his career.
On 27 February 1957, writing “on the correct handling of contradictions among the people”, Mao Zedong proposed a test for new and good things in terms of the dialectically thinking process. His main concern was over crises of identity faced by correct and good things in historical dialectics, since they are often initially neglected by a majority of people. Indeed, he believed that good and new things are continuously suppressed by traditional society. However, not all good and new things are favoured by time; hence they must be tested by that same measure. In this vein, he suggested that when we address urgent problems in science and art, while we can freely discuss them, we should not hastily jump to conclusions about them. He considered this attitude towards intractable problems in science and art as potentially favourable in as far as it may lead to new things that are actually good and progressive, such as Copernicus’ theory of the Solar System or Darwin’s theory of evolution. In *First Principles*, Spencer wrote that ‘evolution, then, under its primary aspect, is a change from a less coherent form to a more coherent form, consequent on the dissipation of motion and integration of matter’.

Spencer's view on the principle of evolution rested on the assumption that things will transform into better more coherent forms, in view of which he argued: ‘alike during the evolution of the Solar System, of a planet, of an organism, of a nation, there is progressive aggregation’. There must be ‘progressive aggregation’ in various forms of evolution, thus leading to progress or evolution in, among other things, human societies and nations. As Mao Zedong declared:

A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. Throughout history, at the outset new and correct things often failed to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns through struggle. Often, correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus’ theory of the solar system and Darwin’s theory of evolution...
Mao Zedong was an avid reader and collected a variety of books from both ancient Chinese and modern Western literature. He himself recalled that ‘as a boy he was a fascinated and omnivorous reader of the old Chinese novels, such as The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and The Story of the Marsh’.\footnote{Mao Tsetung, on “Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend” and “Long-Term Coexistence and Mutual Supervision” in “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People”, Selected Works of Mao Tsetung: Volume V (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977) 408.} In this respect, he was familiar with ancient Chinese literature and in this spirit wrote many excellent poems with military and political themes. His rebellious spirit against traditional Chinese feudal ideology can possibly be traced back to his learning from these ancient Chinese literary works. As regards his studies of modern theory from the West, he developed the view that China’s revolutionary movements were multi-layered relations because he believed in the concepts of class struggle and social evolution, as well as in Marxist theory. Yen Fu and Spencer, in particular, enormously influenced Mao Zedong’s thought in his early years before he turned thirty. The importance of Spencer in advocating and spreading the principles of Social Darwinism has already been discussed in Chapter Three. One reason for Mao Zedong’s becoming a defender of social Darwinism was his struggle for existence during the Long March. On the whole, Meisner’s opinion of the young Mao is mixed:

The young Mao was particularly influenced by the Social Darwinism of Spencer, with its enormous emphasis on the inevitability of struggle. In the hands of its influential Chinese translator and annotator, Yen Fu, the notion of “the survival of the fittest” took on a profoundly nationalist meaning—and an implicitly anti-traditionalist one. What Social
Darwinist texts conveyed to Mao was the message that the “wealth and power” of the nation was the main value to which all other values must be subordinated, not excluding traditional cultural values, if need be.\footnote{Maurice Meisner, “Youth, 1893-1921”, \textit{Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait} (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) 4.}

Concerning competition, Rana Mitter has drawn attention to the places of species, races and nations in Spencer’s version of Social Darwinism. According to Spencer, just as animal species frequently compete with each other, so groups of humans or nations launch wars against each other in order to win better positions for themselves in the struggle for survival. Spencer laid great emphasis on this sort of natural selection between races and nations which he saw as underpinning his views on Social Darwinism. Rana Mitter argues:

This was a time of scientific and pseudo-scientific triumphalism in the west, and perhaps the most powerful of all ideas was Social Darwinism, the perversion of Darwin’s idea of natural selection by sociologists such as the Briton Herbert Spencer. Spencer had argued that races and nations were in competition, just as species were, and those races that did not come out on top of the evolutionary battle were doomed to become slave races, or worse still, disappear completely.\footnote{Rana Mitter, "Flashpoint: 4 May 1919: The Making of a New China", \textit{A Bitter Revolution: China’s Struggle with the Modern World} (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004) 30.}

In their political manifestation, Social Darwinism and Marxism were more than just social phenomena or political propaganda in China. These two ‘-isms’ were the natural products of a global tide of Darwinism, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marx both accepted and rejected different aspects of Darwin’s theory. As Richard Weikart explains, ‘Darwin’s
rejection of teleology in nature provided Marx with a weapon against idealism and a buttress for his materialism.\(^{473}\)

7.4 Dialectics in Evolution and Beyond

In his role as a Marxist dialectician of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong strongly advocated dialectical materialism, both as his philosophical method and worldview.\(^{474}\) In November 1936, he began to study dialectical materialism through Chinese translations of two Soviet works.\(^{475}\) In December 1936, the Xi’an Incident marked a turning point in relations between the Kuomintang and the CCP by changing Chiang Kai-shek’s passive attitude towards Japanese military invasion and his original plan for military deployments towards the Red Army. Zhang Xueliang and other local soldiers imprisoned Chiang Kai-shek in Xi’an, Shaanxi, and formed a military united front between the Nationalists and the Communists to combat the Japanese military invasion. Less than a year later on 7 July 1937, Japan formally launched the Second Sino-Japanese War. Meanwhile, in July, August and September 1937, Mao Zedong delivered speeches on dialectical materialism at the Chinese People’s Anti-Japanese University of Military Affairs and Politics [中國人民抗日軍事政治大學] in Yanan. At the outset of the calamitous war, he published three especially famous essays concerning his theory of Marxist dialectics: *On Practice, On Contradiction* and *The Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*. Mao Zedong was opposed to empiricism in the CCP and Wang Ming’s dogmatism which, during the latter’s four-year rule, had almost led the CCP astray, and the Red Army to the brink of collapse. In


\(^{474}\) As a Marxist dialectician, Mao Zedong mainly contributed his dialectical views on three essays: *On Practice, On Contradiction* and *The Lecture Notes on Dialectical Materialism*. Thus, the fundamental creeds of dialectical materialism initially enlightened the development of his philosophical thought. See Stuart R. Schram, “A Review Article: Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician”, *The China Quarterly* 29 (January—March 1967): 157-58.

response, he tried to analyse Wang Ming’s erroneous policies and offered his own viewpoint on practice in order to save the CCP and the Red Army. Moreover, at the inception of the Second World War, Mao Zedong used Marxist philosophical methods to encourage his comrades and soldiers to resist Japan’s invasion.

Mao Zedong’s three important essays on the theory of dialectics presented the thinking mode of dialectical materialism. The principles of historical materialism are the extension of dialectical materialism to the study of society and its history; hence historical materialism could be called a special application of dialectical materialism as exemplified by Engels and Stalin. Thus, Mao Zedong offered his views on the dialectical method and philosophical thought in the aforesaid articles. In particular, the essay *On Practice* deals with the theory of knowledge, while the essay *On Contradiction* deals with the dialectical method. Tapan Kumar Mishra believes that Darwinism made a vital contribution to Marxist theories of class struggle and historical materialism. In the following passage, Mishra discusses how the conflict between science and religion arising from Darwinism has been perceived, as well as how Darwinism has influenced the problem of historical materialism:

[Darwin’s] ideas influenced many thinkers apart from the biological community, many of whom described his ideas as a biological counterpart of class war. Others argued that Darwinism gave an impetus to the nineteenth century bourgeoisie to overthrow the dominance of [the] feudal system of production where authority of the feudal lords was derived from religion and religious texts. At the same

476 In the following quotation, Joseph Stalin attempted to explain the relationship between historical materialism and dialectical materialism:

Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and its history.

time Darwinism, too, played an important role in the conceptualisation of the Marxist ideas of class struggle and historical materialism. For this reason Darwinism had passionate proponents and opponents.477

Making use of his understanding of certain rhetorical strategies in academic writing, Darwin employed a set of analogies to support his evolutionary theory, which consisted of numerous ideas focused on how all forms of life are necessary to account for different aspects of biological evolution across the globe. In *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin proposed five major features of evolution in the natural world which are, as summarised by Ernst Mayr, evolutionary change, common descent, speciation, gradualism and natural selection.478 Darwin drew support for his theory of descent by modification from his practical experiences, in which he saw analogies to his wider thesis.

From 1855 to 1858, prior to the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin set himself the task of domesticating certain species of animals in order to test his theories about natural and sexual selection. During this time, he kept precious records of his observations on a variety of plant and animal species. Even so, through empirical observations of inheritance and variation among pigeons, Darwin still dealt with difficulties in his theories such as the problem of the common ancestor.479 He recorded vivid evidence about the growth of pigeons in response to artificial selection. Furthermore, when he later published *On the Origin of Species*, he referred back to this work in Chapter One, entitled “Variation under Domestication”, where he discussed the principle of selection. According to Darwin in this chapter, he had discussed the probable origins of domestic pigeons:

I have discussed the probable origin of domestic pigeons at some, yet quite insufficient, length; because when I first kept pigeons and watched the several kinds, knowing well how true they bred, I felt fully as much difficulty in believing that they could ever have descended from a common parent, as any naturalist could in coming to a similar conclusion in regard to the many species of finches, or other groups of birds, in nature.\footnote{Charles Darwin, “Chapter I: Variation under Domestication”, \textit{On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection} (London: Penguin Books, 2009) 35.}

Another example of Darwin's analogical reasoning about the theory of natural selection can be seen in Chapter IV of \textit{On the Origin of Species}, entitled “Natural Selection”. In this chapter, Darwin declared that ‘this preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection’,\footnote{Ibid., p. 81.} adding that ‘natural selection will modify the structure of the young in relation to the parent, and of the parent in relation to the young’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 85.} Darwin saw support for the theory of natural selection in the relation of descent with modification, which he considered to be the main cause of evolution. He employed many analogies to bolster his interpretation of the theory of natural selection, as Elisabeth A. Lloyd points out: ‘Darwin's use of artificial selection in support of natural selection is usually brought forth as an example of analogical support’.\footnote{Elisabeth A. Lloyd, “The Nature of Darwin’s Support for the Theory of Natural Selection”, \textit{Philosophy of Science} 50.1 (March 1983): 120.}

Darwin explicitly drew an analogical relationship between the different groups of animals that he compared to each other. To assist readers in arriving at a better understanding of his proposal, he justified the analogy between domestication and artificial selection as follows:

As we see that those variations which under domestication appear at any particular period of life, tend to reappear in the offspring at the
same period; for instance, in the seeds of the many varieties of our
culinary and agricultural plants; in the caterpillar and cocoon stages of
the varieties of the silkworm; in the eggs of poultry, and in the colour of
the down of their chickens; in the horns of our sheep and cattle when
nearly adult; so in a state of nature, natural selection will be enabled to
act on and modify organic beings at any age, by the accumulation of
profitable variations at that age, and by their inheritance at a
corresponding age. 484

Karl Marx’s argument for the development of human history was based on
Darwinian evolutionary theory in the natural world. He thought of technology
in the Industrial Revolution as man’s mode of taming Nature. Similarly,
Friedrich Engels declared, ‘just as Darwin discovered the law of development
of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human
history’. 485 Hence as Darwin developed his theory of evolution in response to
organic nature, so Marx presented his views on aspects of human history.
Marx mentioned On the Origin of Species in a letter he wrote to Engels on 19
December 1860, stating: ‘during my time of trial, these last four weeks, I have
read all sorts of things. Among others Darwin’s book on Natural Selection.
Although it is developed in the crude English style, this is the book which
contains the basis in natural history for our view’. 486 From this letter, it is
evident that Marx considered natural history to run in parallel with Darwin’s
theory. Marx expressed this link in the following passage:

Darwin has interested us in the history of Nature’s Technology, i.e., in
the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which organs serve
as instruments of production for sustaining life. Does not the history of

484 Ibid., p. 85.
486 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence 1846-1895: With Commentary
and Notes (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1934) 126.
the productive organs of man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organisation, deserve equal attention? \end{quote}

Apart from discussing Marx’s historical perspective on technology, Angus M. Taylor has pointed out how Marx and Engels maintained their links with society by developing their dialectical method as a parallel to Darwinian evolutionary theory in nature. Meanwhile, Mishra claims that ‘without consulting the laws of Hegelian dialectics Darwin described the evolutionary processes of nature in the way Hegel has theorised the dialectical processes of society’. \footnote{Karl Marx, “Chapter XV: Machinery and Modern Industry”, \textit{Capital: a Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production. Volume I.} Ed. Frederick Engels (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974) 352.} Like Hegelian dialectics in society, Darwin regarded the evolution of nature as the dialectical process of human society, so that this interactive relationship could be taken as the application of evolutionary theory. Also, both Marx and Engels were able to apply Darwin’s ideas to human society by using analogies and parallels between nature and society. \footnote{Tapan Kumar Mishra, “Origin of Species and Darwinian Philosophy”, \textit{Social Scientist} 37.5/6 (May-June 2009): 58.} Jean Hyppolite commented on this Hegelian way of thinking through the pattern of Darwin’s biological theory, while Paul Heyer has claimed that ‘in \textit{Das Kapital} Marx thinks like a Hegelian but adopts a stance on nature that reflects Darwin, not Hegel’. \footnote{Gerald Runkle, “Marxism and Charles Darwin”, \textit{The Journal of Politics} 23.1(February 1961) 116.} Marx and Engels based their views on the supposition that society can be described in terms of an evolutionary process of human history. Taylor summarises the theoretical connections between Marx, Engels and Darwin as follows:

\begin{quote}
One of the reasons Marx and Engels attached great significance to Darwinian theory was that they saw in Darwin’s ecological approach to understanding biological development a parallel with their own \end{quote}

dialectical, holistic way of conceiving social relations.\(^{491}\)

Engels enthusiastically adopted Darwin’s evolutionary thought in his own dialectical laws concerning the natural world. He described dialectical materialism in two key books, *Anti-Dühring* (1878) and *Dialectics of Nature* (1925), in which he applied universal principles to human history, believing that ‘Nature is the proof of dialectics and Nature works dialectically’. In different words, the central point of Engels’ argument is that Nature incorporates a process of automatic evolutionary transformation over millions of years in a dialectical way. According to Engels’ perspective, dialectics signifies a dynamic metamorphosis of evolution through which social evolution or social change occurs. As he wrote:

Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years. But the naturalists who have learned to think dialectically are few and far between, and this conflict of the results of discovery with preconceived modes of thinking explains the endless confusion now reigning in theoretical natural science, the despair of teachers as well as learners, of authors and readers alike.\(^{492}\)

In *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels made an incisive critique of Darwin’s idea of the struggle for existence on the grounds that, according to Engels, Darwin comprehensively accepted Malthusian theory. In other words, Engels cast doubt on Darwin’s theory of the struggle for existence because of its links with the views of Thomas Malthus, as expressed in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), which applied to various species of animals and plants struggling for survival in the natural world. Accordingly, Engels took issue with what he saw as Darwin’s superficial interpretation of Malthus’s theory and, in response, proposed an anti-Malthusian theory while commenting satirically on what he considered to be Darwin’s blunder:

Now Darwin would not dream of saying that the *origin* of the idea of the struggle for existence is to be found in Malthus. He only says that his theory of the struggle for existence is the theory of Malthus applied to the animal and plant world as a whole. However great the blunder made by Darwin in accepting the Malthusian theory so naively and uncritically, nevertheless anyone can see at the first glance that no Malthusian spectacles are required to perceive the struggle for existence in nature—the contradiction between the countless host of germs which nature so lavishly produces and the small number of those which ever reach maturity, a contradiction which in fact for the most part finds its solution in a struggle for existence—often of extreme cruelty.\(^4\)

Darwin proposed speciation as an evolutionary process through which new species propagate and become more diverse. He defined two types of speciation: ‘anagenesis’ whereby a species changes over time and

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‘cladogenesis’ which involves the splitting of lineages.\textsuperscript{494} David N. Reznick has cast doubt on Darwin’s views about the relationship between speciation and the struggle for existence:

There is not strong evidence to support Darwin’s counterargument that speciation rates will instead be persistently higher on continents because of the more intense struggle for existence. Such evidence is lacking mostly because it has not been sought; the scientists of today have ideas of their own and are trying to address other questions.\textsuperscript{495}

Having been influenced by the interaction between Marxist dialectical thought and Darwin’s evolutionary ideas, Mao Zedong adopted the dialectical method of contradiction in his writings. Contradiction is a key philosophical concept in the theory of dialectics. In \textit{The Science of Logic}, Hegel believed that ‘everything is inherently contradictory, and in the sense that this law in contrast to the others expresses rather the truth and the essential nature of things’.\textsuperscript{496} For his part, Mao Zedong pointed out that ‘according to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things’.\textsuperscript{497} In the opening lines of \textit{On Contradiction}, Mao Zedong stated: ‘the law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics’.\textsuperscript{498} He identified a series of problems arising from the law of contradiction: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction.\textsuperscript{499} The principle of contradiction was one of the central points of Mao Zedong’s


\textsuperscript{495} Ibid., p. 187.


\textsuperscript{498} Ibid., p. 67.

\textsuperscript{499} Ibid., p. 67.
philosophical thought, which he applied to three dissimilar contexts: the natural context, the social context and the personal or cognitive context. His ambitious intention with regard to the social context was to solve the long-term problem of contradiction in society. As Francis Soo argues, ‘for although Mao uses contradiction in all three contexts, his primary concern is to discover contradictions in society and then to resolve them’. The same point was highlighted even more strongly by Mao Zedong himself, who helpfully offered a variety of perspectives on society and viable solutions to the supposed contradictions:

不同質的矛盾，只有用不同質的方法才能解決。例如，無產階級和資產階級的矛盾，用社會主義革命的方法去解決；人民大眾和封建制度的矛盾，用民主革命的方法去解決；殖民地與帝國主義的矛盾，用民族革命戰爭的方法去解決... 過程變化，舊過程與舊矛盾消滅，新過程與新矛盾發生，解決矛盾的方法也因之而不同。502

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war... Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly.503

501 Ibid., p. 48.  
502 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):〈矛盾論〉，《毛澤東的五篇哲學著作》(北京：人民出版社，2008)第35頁。  
503 Mao Tse-tung, p. 78.
Mao Zedong applied the idea of contradiction to the natural world or context, which is mainly concerned with nature or natural phenomena. He employed notions of contradiction to aid a variety of interpretations of natural phenomena: for example, the idea that contradiction is a sort of motion. In this regard, Engels said that ‘motion itself is a contradiction’; a point to which Mao added that ‘contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion’. See in this light, contradiction is thus a process of dialectical reasoning in continual motion. The emphasis laid on the concept of contradiction accounts for its own particular aspect of natural and social phenomena. Mao Zedong expressed this idea in a section of On Contradiction entitled “the particularity of contradiction”:

自然界存在著許多的運動形式，機械運動、發聲、發光、發熱、電流、化分、化合等等都是。所有這些物質的運動形式，都是互相依存的，又是本質上互相區別的。每一物質的運動形式所具有的特殊的本質，為它自己的特殊的矛盾所規定。這種情形，不但在自然界中存在著，在社會現象和思想現象中也是同樣存在著。每一種社會形式和思想形式，都有它的特殊的矛盾和特殊的本質。

There are many forms in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.
Mao Zedong used the idea of internal contradiction to interpret the evolution of numerous species of plants and animals. In biological evolution, speciation is a *de facto* evolutionary process through which species may continue to propagate. As Francis Soo points out, ‘in order to understand a thing or natural phenomenon, according to Mao, we have to consider it as a process or motion, since nature as a whole is not static but totally dynamic. Being dynamic, a thing or natural phenomenon has a twofold relationship: internal and external’. The changes that befall natural and social phenomena are results of the internal contradictoriness of those things rather than external causes. Therefore, following the dialectical method, Mao Zedong claimed that the internal contradictions found in both nature and society are the driving forces behind the evolution of plants and animals on the one hand, and society on the other. It is impossible to isolate a thing from other external elements because contradictions exist in the development of society. He argued that the internal contradiction is fundamental to a thing or social evolution, whereas the internal factor of anything else still needs to interact with the external cause:

As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes.

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507 Francis Y. K. Soo, p. 47.
508 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong): 〈矛盾論〉，第 24-25 頁。
509 Mao Tse-tung, pp. 69-70.
Mao Zedong’s view of the Universe differed from that of Sun Yat-sen. According to Mao Zedong’s argument, there are two views on the evolution of the Universe: the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception. In this way, Mao Zedong deviated from the traditional metaphysical worldview by instead turning to one based on dialectical materialism from a Chinese perspective. He quoted Lenin in support of the law of the unity of opposites in the dialectical world of Marxist philosophy as follows:

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

Mao Zedong criticised the metaphysical or ‘vulgar’ evolutionist worldviews as isolated, static and one-sided. As he argued, metaphysicans attributed

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510 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):〈矛盾論〉, 第 22 頁。
511 Mao Tse-tung, p. 68.
the causes of social development to external factors, such as geography and climate.\textsuperscript{512} Mao Zedong, by contrast, was opposed to dealing with social phenomena from the angle of external causes, and thus disputed the views of Chinese metaphysicians because they contradicted his own viewpoint on materialist dialectics. Mao Zedong was especially critical of the metaphysical thought of ancient China, arguing that ‘in China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying “Heaven changeth not, like the Tao changeth not”, and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time’.\textsuperscript{513} The ancient people of China believed in a cyclical view of history which repeats itself over a certain period of time. Accordingly, they viewed the $\text{Dao}$ as an unchangeable truth when they looked up to the seemingly fixed heavens. In Mao Zedong’s view, ‘vulgar’ evolutionist and ancient Chinese metaphysical thought foregrounded a dead, static view of the world. Accordingly, he held a radically different view of social development in China, as can be seen from the following passage:


doing形而上學的或庸俗進化論的宇宙觀，就是用孤立的、靜止的和片面的觀點去看世界。這種宇宙觀把世界一切事物，一切事物的形態和種類，都看成是永遠彼此孤立和永遠不變化的。如果說有變化，也只是數量的增減和場所的變更。而這種增減和變更的原因，不在事物的內部而在事物的外部，即是由於外力的推動。\textsuperscript{514}

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but

\textsuperscript{512} Ibid., p. 69.
\textsuperscript{513} Ibid., p. 69.
\textsuperscript{514} 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):〈矛盾論〉，第 23 頁。
outside them, that is, the motive force is external.515

As a Marxist dialectician, Mao Zedong deemed internal contradictions to be the main barriers to social change, and thus sought to change the world by resolving any such contradictions. The law of contradiction in dialectics can be applied to drastic changes in nature, so that internal contradictions may lead to conflicts and struggles for survival among animals in the natural world. In the human world, new societies rise up from their predecessors, thereby triggering new forms of contradiction which will in turn promote new dialectics in an endless process. Mao Zedong illustrated his philosophical points concerning how contradictions drive the evolution of society thus:

按照唯物辯證法的觀點，自然界的變化，主要地是由於自然界內部矛盾的發展。社會的變化，主要地是由於社會內部矛盾的發展，即生產力和生產關係的矛盾，階級之間的矛盾，新舊之間的矛盾，由於這些矛盾的發展，推動了社會的前進，推動了新舊社會的代謝。516

According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new.517

515 Mao Tse-tung, p. 68.
516 毛澤東 (Mao Zedong):〈矛盾論〉，第25頁。
517 Mao Tse-tung, p. 70.
In *On Contradiction*, as Mao Zedong clearly explained, whereas mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism advocate ‘the theory of external causes, or an external motive force’, materialist dialectics, on the other hand, is opposed to the theory of external causes. He also illustrated the growth of plants and animals as well as the development of society as being mainly caused by internal contradictions, stating that: ‘in battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated; both the victory and the defeat are dominated by internal causes...It is through internal causes that external causes become operative’. According to Mao Zedong, he himself dealt effectively with internal elements in the PLA, and was thus able to outcompete Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Army during the Chinese Civil War of 1946-49. The key to understanding this viewpoint may be found in the internal contradictions; if not understood properly, internal and external elements would become opposed to each other. In other words, he considered ‘correlativity or continuity in dialectical materialism’ with respect to the specific characteristics of China as a vision of social progress. He affiliated internal contradictions of things with the interdependence of external factors in dialectical materialism. Overall, Mao Zedong was intent on studying the interactions between external and internal contradictions within a thing or social phenomena as a means of social evolution.

7.5 Conclusion

From the host of dilemmas he faced up to the time of his final victory, Mao Zedong’s struggle against both colonial and feudal oppression was the engine that drove the transformation of Modern China and the creation of a new revolutionary dynasty; namely the People’s Republic of China. Crucially, his

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518 Ibid., p. 69.
519 Ibid., p. 69.
520 Ibid., pp. 69-70.
521 Ibid., p. 71.
522 See footnotes 463 & 464.
524 Ibid., pp. 160-61.
actions were driven to a large extent by his readings of Marx and Darwin, and the synthesis of the ideas of these two thinkers that he developed from a Chinese perspective. In order to understand the evolution of modern China, it is therefore essential that we focus on the impact of Marx and Darwin on Mao Zedong’s thought. In China, Darwinism was the first Western ‘ism’ quoted by contemporary elite intellectuals in the late Qing Dynasty. Since this time, Darwin’s ideas have been very clearly assimilated in a gradual way into Chinese modes of thinking. Mao Zedong’s China rested on radical struggles and revolutions that he viewed largely in terms of Darwin’s theory of struggle for existence. His philosophical thought reveals a mixture of the philosophies of Chinese emperors, utopian idealism, Marxism, dialectical materialism and his own philosophy of struggle, with which he intended to replace the traditional ideologies of old China. Therefore, Mao Zedong’s philosophy of struggle may be understood as an expression of Darwin’s notion of the survival of the fittest, but through survival, struggle and revolution in society rather than nature per se, thus reflecting another practical application of Darwinian views on social evolution.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions: the Wheel Diagram

The present chapter provides some concluding reflections on how the authors discussed throughout this study appropriated aspects of Darwinian thought to address problems felt by China during its years in the wilderness between 1895 and 1949. With the threat of humiliation by the Eastern and Western imperialist countries looming alongside the search for a way for China to survive in an aggressive international environment, Yen Fu, K’ang Yu-wei, Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen, Lu Xun, Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu and Mao Zedong were all guided in their own ways by principles originating in Darwinism or Social Darwinism. Through the Chinese elite’s advocacy of Darwin’s theory, the eight historic leaders examined here, among others, supplied the Chinese people with a series of hypothetical yet realistic solutions to the maladies afflicting their nation which in turn contributed to the great rise of China as a superpower in the twenty-first century. Above all else, this study has examined and provided a critique of the impact of evolutionary thought on numerous literary works by each of these Chinese intellectuals. Following that course, this study has shown how those works have shaped the development of Chinese culture and society from the late nineteenth century up to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.

In accordance with Yen Fu’s social and political thought, Darwinism might be seen as an impetus for survival, change and progress in which the inevitable struggle for existence existed in the natural environment and human society. Yen Fu’s translation of *Tien-yen Lun* in 1898 obviously marked the formal, initial interaction between Darwinism and the modern Chinese literati, and in turn had a preponderant influence over nationalism, evolutionism,
liberalism, realism, iconoclasm, anti-imperialism, science and democracy in the broadest sense. Hence, it can be seen that Western evolutionary thought, as well as Western astronomy and geology, initially came to modern China during the late Qing Dynasty via linguistic translation. In the public mind, the close cross-cultural dialogues taking place between Chinese intellectuals and modern Western science and philosophy shocked and changed the attitudes of the common people towards older Chinese doctrines and ideologies. From then on, more and more Chinese people began believing in the advance of science instead of insisting upon the old system of Confucian values. Accordingly, the Chinese literati principally reconciled themselves to throwing away Confucian moral thought and accepting the new Darwinian evolutionary thought at that critical period. Having accepted the Darwinian worldview, they started setting targets for evolutionary change in their own times across the country; or, considered from another angle, some Chinese intellectuals also attempted to integrate Darwinism into China’s traditional philosophy in their writings with the ultimate goal of not only sustaining the continued development of Chinese thought, but facilitating evolution and progress in China.

The eight authors considered herer were all able to turn their completely unique writing skills to the task of addressing China’s desperate need for social evolution and cultural transformation in light of Darwinian thought. The common thread running through their works is the link they all drew between the three key ideas of evolution, reform and revolution. As a consequence, the interactivity between these three ideas will be summarised in this conclusion. The ideas of evolution, reform [bian-fa] and revolution have all contributed to the huge metamorphoses that have taken place in modern China. These lines of thought mutually form an interactive relationship in the writings of the historical figures examined in this study. The benefits and flaws of a Darwinian approach can be seen through the historical transition undergone by China as she struggled against prejudicial treaties, poverty and colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Darwinism triggered much change and progress through social reforms and political revolutions; but it also caused much slaughter and political struggle in the
tentative transformation of modern China. Figure 14 presents a wheel diagram showing how the writers discussed above interacted with the ideas of evolution, reform and revolution:

As the diagram shows, each author would look at distinct concerns relevant to Darwinism or Social Darwinism as significant steps forward for competition and mutual aid after exploring a variety of themes of political, social and cultural transformation, metamorphosis and dialectics in modern China. These great reformers of their times all appropriated the ideas of evolution, reform and revolution to meet their own goals and ideals. Thus, Yen Fu's Social Darwinism as expressed in *Tien-yen Lun* highlights competition and progress among peoples, cultures and nations. K’ang Yu-wei presented his utopian ideals in *Ta T’ung Shu* through a filter of social evolution and political reform. Liang Qichao introduced Darwinian philosophy in his essay “Initial Ancestor in the Study on Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his Biographical Sketch”. Lu Xun proffered a number of evolutionary
ideas in his essay “The History of Mankind”, which he adapted directly from Chapter Five of Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe*. Meanwhile, having learnt from the West, Lu Xun advocated the reform of Chinese national characteristics through cultural selection. In his essay, “The Masters of the Pre-Qin Period on Evolutionism”, Hu Shih examined China’s ancient traditions of evolutionary thought in classic works by authors such as Laozi, Confucius, Liezi, Zhuangzi and Xunzi. Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu commonly used Darwinian evolutionary ideas to advocate substantial reforms to the modern Chinese language and literature. Sun Yat-sen provided a different perspective on Darwin’s theory by viewing it in light of Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid, as can be seen in Sun Yat-sen’s works, *General Plans of National Reconstruction* and *The Three Principles of the People*. Seen from the perspective of human evolution, Sun Yat-sen showed the great impact that Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid could trigger in the progress of human society. Finally, as regards his tenets on survival and struggle, Mao Zedong’s poems reflect upon his philosophy of struggle and his attempts to publish his theory of dialectics in *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*. Overall, the diagram presents a summary of the characteristic viewpoints of each of the aforesaid authors in relation to Darwinism and Social Darwinism.

From the time of the late Qing Empire to that of the People’s Republic, Darwinism has had a hugely positive impact on the Chinese nation. Indeed, China’s rise in the twenty-first century represents her substantial pursuit of

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526 There is more theoretical argument to Darwinism than simple competition. Regenia Gagnier points out that Kropotkin’s cooperative philosophy could be used to provide a viewpoint on social evolution. In *Socialist Darwinism*, Richard Weikart concludes that ‘Darwinism was indeed social’, primarily because many socialist theorists, such as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Zedong, were inclined to employ evolutionary theory in their social thought. Moreover, in an essay entitled “Darwinism Is Social”, Robert M. Young clearly argues over the interconnectedness of Darwinism and human society as follows:

> When I say Darwinism is social, I mean it in two senses. First, in Darwin’s own work there was never a clear separation of his biological research and thinking on the one hand, and its origins in and extrapolation to social evolution or Social Darwinism on the other.

change and progress through a process of Darwinian struggle. Influenced both by China’s traditional values and modern Western thought, the ideas and revolutionary actions of the eight pioneering leaders considered here provide a balanced historical view of the relationship between China’s traditions and intellectual Westernization [Xihua], and how that has facilitated China’s path to modernity. For instance, Hu Shih used his pragmatist philosophy to criticise certain aspect of China’s traditional mode of thought linked to feudal culture, even while he was familiar with Daoism, Confucianism, Mohism and Legalism.\textsuperscript{527} He and Chen Duxiu’s advocacy of Darwin’s theory of natural selection as a means of reforming modern Chinese language and literature revealed that they needed to promote an alternative knowledge system in order to change the balance of power in China’s relations with the West. In this way, they reached a new historical perspective between bai-hua and wen-yan in the making of modern Chinese language and literature. In accordance with certain historical views of evolutionary theory, each of the authors considered here learnt from modern, progressive Western thought while also adopting synthetic positions on how the latter could be reconciled with China’s intellectual heritage. Following this course, they were thereby able to apply Darwinism positively as a tool for affecting social evolution and cultural diversity. Indeed, in addition to the eight writers considered in this dissertation, there were many other Chinese intellectuals who advocated Darwinian evolutionary thought in their writings.

In exploring numerous research questions concerning the evolution of three historical Chinese regimes or dynasties, the researcher has found that evolution, reform and revolution are cardinal to the arguments presented in nearly every single chapter of the various works examined above. These research questions have focused on cultural and social reforms, and political revolutions, all of which have been worthy of discussion via the interdisciplinary viewpoints adopted in this study. Nonetheless, this dissertation is intended to present a varied and balanced perspective on an array of Chinese and English language texts in order to make connections

between Darwinism and Social Darwinism on the one hand and modern Chinese writings on the other. Darwinism or Social Darwinism has become a widely recognised subject of exploration in the complex cross-cultural interactions between modern China and Western thought during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
A

The Analects of Confucius  《論語》
Asajirō Oka  丘淺次郎
Autobiography at Forty  《四十自述》

B

bagua (eight trigrams)  八卦
bai-hua (baihua)  白話
Ban Gu  班固
bian-fa (reform)  變法
The Book of Han  《漢書》
The Book of Rites  《禮記》

C

Cai Yuanpei  蔡元培
Cao Kun  曹锟
Cao Xueqin  曹雪芹
the Central Plains  中原
Chen Duxiu (Ch’en Tu-hsiu)  陳獨秀
Cheng Yi  程頤
Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)  蔣介石

The Chinese Academic History in the Past Three Hundred Years [Zhongkuo jinsanbainien xueshushi]  《中國近三百年學術史》
Chung-hua  中華
A Colony of Bees 〈蜂群〉
Confucius 孔子
Confucius as a Reformer 《孔子改制考》
On Contradiction 〈矛盾論〉

D
Dao (Tao) 道
dao fa zi ran 道法自然
Daodejing 《道德經》
Datong 大同
The Doctrine of the Mean 《中庸》
The Dream of Red Mansions 《紅樓夢》
Duan Qirui 段祺瑞

E
Editorial Introducing the First Issue of Min Pao 《民報》發刊詞
the Emperor Daoguang 道光帝
the Emperor Guangxu 光緒帝
the Emperor Qianlong 乾隆帝
the Emperor Shi Huang (Qin Shi Huang) 秦始皇
the Emperor Song Taizu 宋太祖
the Emperor Tang Taizong 唐太宗
the Emperor Wu Di (Han Wu Di) 漢武帝
the Emperor Xianfeng 咸豐帝
the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后
Evolutionary Profundity 〈進微〉

F
Fang Bao 方苞
_lanyi (translation) 翻譯
Feng Guozhang 馮國璋
Forged Classics of the Hsin Period 《新學偽經考》
The Four Books 《四書》
Free and Easy Wandering 〈逍遙遊〉
Fu Sinian 傅斯年
Fu Xi 伏羲氏

G
Gao E (Kao Hgo) 高鶚
Gaozi 告子
The General Introduction to Western Learning 《西學考略》
General Plans of National Reconstruction 《建國方略》
Genghis Khan 成吉思汗
The Gongche Shangshu 《公車上書》
gongminyishi (civic consciousness) 公民意識
Gongyang Zhuan 《公羊傳》
Grabbism 〈拿來主義〉
The Great Learning 《大學》
Gui Youguang 歸有光
H

Han Fei (Han Feizi) 韓非 (韓非子)
Han Feizi 《韓非子》
Han Yu 韓愈
Henan magazine 《河南》月刊
The History of Mankind 〈人之歷史〉
A History of Politics 《社會通詮》
Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全
Hua Heng-fang 華蘅芳
Huaihai Battle 淮海戰役
Huang Gonglüe 黃公略
Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲
Huaxia 華夏
Hu Shih (Hu Shi) 胡適
Hu Shih wencun 《胡適文存》
the Hundred Days’ Reform 百日維新 (戊戌變法)

I

i 夷

I Ching [Yi Jing, The Book of Changes] 《易經》
Ibsenism 易卜生主義
“Initial Ancestor in the Study on Evolution: Darwin’s Philosophy and his
Biographical Sketch” 〈天演學初祖達爾文之學說及其略傳〉
An Inquiry into the Nature and the Cause of the Wealth of Nations 《原富》
i-ti 夷狄
Ito Hirobumi 伊藤博文

J
jen 仁
jing 經
junzi 君子

K
K’ang Yu-wei (Kang Youwei) 康有為
King Cheng of Zhou 周成王
King Wen of Zhou 周文王
Kun 鯤
the ku-wen Movement 古文運動
the ku-wen of the T’ung-cheng School 桐城派古文

L
Laozi 老子
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wen-yen 文言
the Western Learning School 台灣西學堂
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The World News 《萬國公報》
Wu Chih-hui 吳稚暉
wuwei 無為

X
the Xi’an Incident 西安事變
Xiang Yu 順羽
Xihua (Westernization) 西化
Xu Shichang 徐世昌

Xunzi 荀子

Xunzi 《荀子》

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Yanan 延安

Yao Nai 姚鼐

Yen Fu (Yan Fu) 嚴復

yin-yang 陰陽

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Yu sheng lieh pai (survival of the fittest) 優勝劣敗

Yun Shikai 袁世凱

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Zhang Xueliang 張學良

Zhang Xun 張勳

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Zhongguo (the Middle Kingdom, China) 中國

Zhongguo shenhua 中國神話

Zhou Dynasty 周朝

Zhou Enlai 周恩來

Zhou Gong (the Duke of Zhou) 周公

Zhou Shuren 周樹人

Zhu De 朱德
Zhu Xi  朱熹
zhuan  傳 (《易傳》)
Zhuangzi  莊子
Zhuangzi  《莊子》
Zigong  子貢

*The Zongli Geguo Shiwu Yamen (The Tsung-li Ko-kuo Shih-wu Yamen)*

總理各國事務衙門

*The Zongli Yamen (The Tsungli Yamen)*  總理衙門

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