

本講義資料のご利用にあたって

本講義資料内には、東京大学が第三者より許諾を得て利用している画像等や、各種ライセンスによって提供されている画像等が含まれています。個々の画像等の利用については、それぞれの権利者の定めるところに従ってください。

著作権が東京大学の教員等に帰属する著作物については、非営利かつ教育的な目的に限り複製および再配布することができます。

ご利用にあたっては、以下のクレジットを明記してください。

クレジット：

UTokyo Online Education 学術フロンティア講義 2025S 張 旭東



The Personal Voice in What It Is To Be
Classical— The Essay As Form And
Content in World Literature

Xudong Zhang
New York University

What is classical in the modern, and what is modern in the classical

- Some motifs in the modern as “world of prose”(modernity as it is defined by G.W.Hegel), centered on change, division and internal multiplicity, formlessness, and the fragmentary representation/expression of the private individual:
- The endless self-inquiry: Subjectivity, self-knowledge, and the contingency of truth
- Experimentation and discovery: Objectivity, negativity, and the autonomy of knowledge
- Self-reflection, introspection, and the instability of selfhood
- Outward expansiveness and open-ended inquiry into the other, the distant

What is classical in the modern, and what is modern in the classical

- Some motifs in the classical literature as convention and institution, centered on non-change and the stability of form:
- The centrality of self-cultivation, moral and artistic integrity as anchor for universal order
- The substantive as well as formal stability, clarity and consistency of the Subject as a social category
- Moral and stylistic conviction, eloquence and persuasiveness
- Continuity, identity, and broad, slow-moving representation of the collective /the Way

The Modern Essay On the Forefront of Modernity

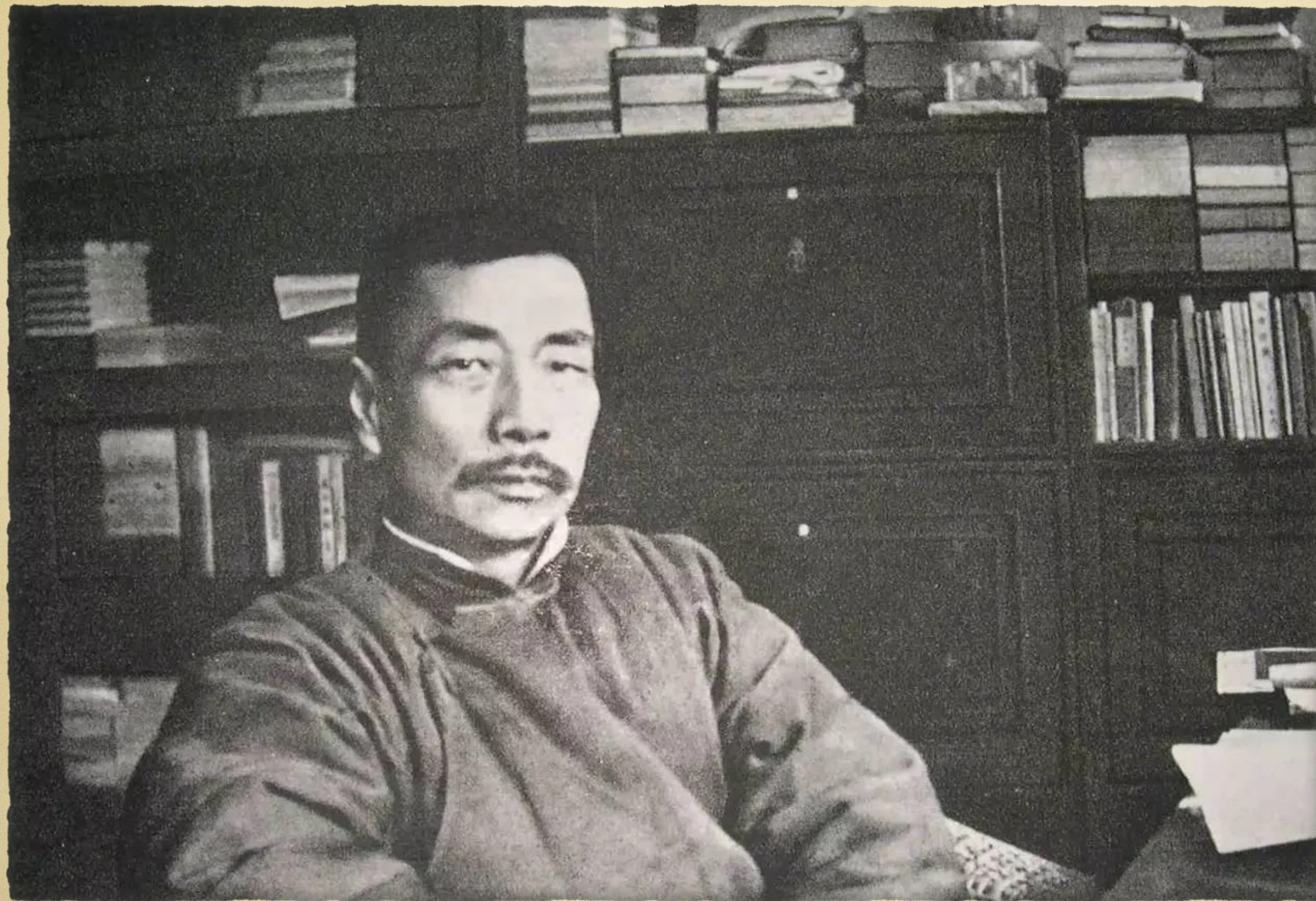
- The margin and the frontier: the Modern Chinese essay in the context of world literature: the internal division of tradition into orthodoxy and innovation; between the hardened shell and self-inventing and self-renewing substance
- The breaking of the classical form and the making of the vernacular literary primacy: the wooden truncate vs. the cloth bag (Zhou Zuoren)
- Lu Xun's and Zhou Zuoren's (self-)evaluation of the modern Chinese essay: the tip of the new wave and the culmination of the New Literature

The Modern Chinese Essay and Its Frame of Reference in World Literature or, the Blending of the Modern, the Early Modern and the Classical

- The discovery of the private individual of reason and self-determination through the form and style of the essay
- From the classical Greco-Roman essay to the modern English essay (Zhuo Zuoren)
- From Michelle de Montaigne to Charles Baudelaire (Lu Xun)
- The decisive influence of modern Japanese essay
- The “modern classic” and the “classical modern”: The co-existence of historically concrete styles, genres and moral-cultural conventions

The Case of Lu Xun (1881-1936)

- The spearhead of the making of the modern Chinese essay
 - Intensity, austerity, and sharpness
 - Inner depth and complexity
 - Nuance, sensual details and
 - Tragic affectivity and hope amidst hopelessness
 - Symbolisms and allegories pertaining to a wholistic view of the crisis of modern China



Lu Xun
(1881-1936)

“The Rose Without Blossoms, Part II”(无花的蔷薇·之二,1926)

- If such youth can be destroyed by mere killing, one must understand that the killers are by no means the victors. China will perish along with the death of its patriots. Though the murderers may, by virtue of their accumulated wealth, manage to sustain their offspring for a somewhat longer time, the inevitable end will still come. What joy is there in having “descendants without end”? Their extinction may come later, but they will be forced to live in the most barren and uninhabitable lands, to toil as miners in the deepest shafts, to engage in the vilest and most degrading of trades. (假如这样的青年一杀就完，要知道屠杀者也决不是胜利者。中国要和爱国者的灭亡一同灭亡。屠杀者虽然因为积有金资，可以比较长久地养育子孙，然而必至的结果是一定要到的。“子孙绳绳”又何足喜呢？灭亡自然较迟，但他們要住最不适于居住的不毛之地，要做最深的矿洞的矿工，要操最下贱的生业……)

- Moral rage and political defiance at the extreme, mixing classical propensities toward being instructive and prophetic with modern intensities of critique, subversiveness, and sharpness
- The curse on the future generations of descendants of the ruling class betrays a somewhat traditional value judgment *as well as* a modern understanding of conflict, antagonism, and social decay of the elite based on economics, technology and division of labor

《答有恒先生》 (1927)

- ❧ Speaking only of recent times, one of the main reasons is this: I was seized by terror. And this kind of terror is something I feel I have never experienced before. To this day, I have not carefully analyzed this “terror.” But let me tentatively name one or two aspects I have already diagnosed: First, a delusion of mine has been shattered. Until now, I often held an optimistic belief—that those who oppress and slaughter the youth are, by and large, the old. As these old people gradually die off, I thought, China would, relatively speaking, regain some vitality. Now I know that is not the case. It seems that those who slaughter the youth are, for the most part, the youth themselves. And they show no regard for the irreplaceable lives and youth of others. But facts are facts. The blood game has already begun—and the players are the youth, and they wear expressions of pride. I can no longer see how this drama will end. (单就近时而言，则大原因之一，是：我恐怖了。而且这种恐怖，我觉得从来没有经验过。我至今还没有将这“恐怖”仔细分析。姑且说一两种我自己已经诊察明白的，则：一，我的一种妄想破灭了。我至今为止，时时有一种乐观，以为压迫，杀戮青年的，大概是老人。这种老人渐渐死去，中国总可比较地有生气。现在我知道不然了，杀戮青年的，似乎倒大概是青年，而且对于别个的不能再造的生命和青春，更无顾惜。但事实是事实，血的游戏已经开头，而角色又是青年，并且有得意之色。我现在已经看不见这出戏的收场。)

《答有恒先生》 (1927)

❧ And furthermore, my earlier attacks on society were, in truth, futile. Society was not even aware that I was attacking it—had it known, I would long since have died without a burial place. The reason I've managed to survive by stealth is that most of them are illiterate, unaware, and because my words have no force—like an arrow vanishing into the sea. Otherwise, just a few miscellaneous reflections could have cost me my life. The common people's urge to punish what they see as evil is no less intense than that of scholars or warlords. Lately I've come to realize this: any proposal with even a trace of reform—so long as it has no bearing on society—can survive as mere “empty talk.” But if, by chance, it begins to have real effect, the person who advocates it will most likely suffer hardship, or even pay with their life. This holds true across time and space, ancient and modern, East and West alike. (还有，我先前的攻击社会，其实也是无聊的。社会没有知道我在攻击，倘一知道，我早已死无葬身之所了。……我之得以偷生者，因为他们大多数不识字，不知道，并且我的话也无效力，如一箭之入大海。否则，几条杂感，就可以送命的。民众的罚恶之心，并不下于学者和军阀。近来我悟到凡带一点改革性的主张，倘于社会无涉，才可以作为“废话”而存留，万一见效，提倡者即大概不免吃苦或杀身之祸。古今中外，其揆一也。

- The horror (“terror”) stands as a potent reminder of the classical, premodern being and time dominated by violence, lawlessness and total disregard for human life; and yet the way in which the horror is experienced and expressed is intensely modern, as it is conveyed through a moral despair resulting from the collapse of hope for progress. The cyclical nature of history, as elucidated by the observation that it’s now youth murdering youth, is elevated into an allegory of timelessness that only a modern man can see so sharply and with such agony.
- The universalization of censorship and the danger of the physical destruction of dissent and criticism is paired with an intense self-awareness of the modern individual who stands firm on his opposition and solitude vis-a-vis tyranny and the benighted masses (the mob) alike, the one individual who is “like an arrow vanishing into the sea.”

《为了忘却的纪念》 (1933)

- It is not the young commemorating the old—but over these thirty years, I have instead witnessed the blood of so many youth, layer upon layer, accumulating until it buries me, leaving me unable to breathe. All I can do is take up my pen to write a few words—like digging a small hole through the earth, so that I might gasp for a final breath. What kind of world is this? The night is long, and the road too is long. Perhaps it is better that I forget, that I remain silent. But I know: even if it is not I, one day there will be someone who remembers them, and speaks of them again.
- (不是年青的为年老的写纪念，而在这三十年中，却使我目睹许多青年的血，层层淤积起来，将我埋得不能呼吸，我只能用这样的笔墨，写几句文章，算是从泥土中挖一个小孔，自己延口残喘，这是怎样的世界呢。夜正长，路也正长，我不如忘却，不说的好罢。但我知道，即使不是我，将来总会有记起他们，再说他们的时候的。……)

The Becoming Modern of the Classical, and the Becoming Classical of the Modern: Ji Kang As A Point of Reference

- Ji Kang's (嵇康) "Letter to Shan Tao" (与山巨源绝交书, written around 253 CE)
- I later heard of your promotion and felt an uneasy disquiet, fearing that you, ashamed of the cook carving meat alone, might call in the shaman and priest to assist—offering your own hands with the fine-bladed knife, yet in doing so smearing it with rank and blood. Therefore, I write this fully to explain to you what I consider acceptable and what I do not. (间闻足下迁，惕然不喜，恐足下羞庖人之独割，引尸祝以自助，手荐鸾刀，漫之臙腥，故具为足下陈其可否。)
- In the past, when I read books and came across accounts of men who were upright and uncompromising, some said such people never truly existed. But now I believe they really did. A man has what he cannot endure—this is truly something that cannot be forced. (吾昔读书，得并介之人，或谓无之，今乃信其真有耳。性有所不堪，真不可强。)

Ji Kang, “Letter to Shan Tao”(嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- By nature, I am reclusive and indolent. My sinews are weak, my flesh sluggish. I often go fifteen days in a month without washing my face or head—unless I feel unbearably itchy, I cannot bring myself to bathe. Even when I need to urinate, I often endure it and won't rise until the pressure becomes truly uncomfortable. Having long indulged in a life of ease, my will and temperament have grown arrogant and unrestrained. My simplicity stands in opposition to decorum; my laziness breeds negligence. Yet among my peers I am treated leniently, and no one reproaches my faults. (性复疏懒，筋弩肉缓，头面常一月十五日不洗，不大闷痒，不能沐也。每常小便，而忍不起，令胞中略转乃起耳。又纵逸来久，情意傲散。简与礼相背，懒与慢相成，而为侪类见宽，不攻其过。)

Ji Kang, "Letter to Shan Tao" (嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- Reading Zhuangzi and Laozi has only deepened my tendency toward release and freedom. Thus my desire for honor and advancement declines by the day, while my inclination toward authenticity and naturalness grows ever stronger. This is like a deer or bird that was seldom raised in captivity: if tamed young, it may submit to training; but if it grows and is then suddenly bound, it will resist wildly, toss off the bridle, and rush headlong into fire and boiling water. Even if adorned with golden bits and fed the choicest delicacies, it yearns all the more for the deep forests, its heart set on lush grasses. (又读庄老, 重增其放。故使荣进之心日颓, 任实之情转笃。此由禽鹿少见驯育, 则服从教制, 长而见羁, 则狂顾顿缨, 赴蹈汤火, 虽饰以金镳, 飧以嘉肴, 逾思长林, 而志在丰草也。)

Ji Kang, “Letter to Shan Tao”(嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- I do not understand human feelings, and I am blind to tact and timing. I lack the caution of someone entrusted with high office, and I suffer from the tendency to speak my mind to the utmost. Having long been involved with worldly affairs, faults and resentments have steadily accumulated. Even if I wished to avoid calamity—how could I possibly succeed? (吾不如嗣宗之贤，而有慢弛之阙；又不识人情，暗于机宜；无万石之慎，而有好尽之累。久与事接，疵衅日兴，虽欲无患，其可得乎？)

Ji Kang's Own Account of His Seven Character Flaws

- “I enjoy sleeping in and waking late, but if made an official, I would be constantly summoned at the gates and not allowed to rest—this is the first.
- I like to carry my qin, chant poetry while walking, shoot birds and fish in the fields, but if placed under the watch of clerks and officers, I would no longer be free to move—this is the second.
- I cannot sit still upright for long—my body becomes numb and I must move. My skin is prone to lice, and I constantly need to scratch. Yet I would be wrapped in formal robes, required to bow and salute my superiors—this is the third.
- I have never been skilled at writing, and dislike doing it. But worldly affairs are numerous; papers would pile up on my desk. If I do not reply, I breach propriety and neglect duty. If I force myself to write, I cannot sustain it long—this is the fourth.
- I dislike attending funerals, though the world considers them of great importance. I’ve already been resented by those who don't excuse my absence, even slandered. Though I feel startled and remorseful, my nature cannot change. If I were to suppress my heart to conform to custom, it would be feigned and unnatural—and in the end I still would not escape blame or earn praise—this is the fifth.
- I do not like common people, yet I would be forced to work with them. Sometimes guests would fill the hall, their chatter grating on the ears. The clamor, dust, and stench, along with their thousand tricks and poses, would constantly unfold before me—this is the sixth.
- I have no patience, yet office work is exhausting. Bureaucratic duties would entangle my heart; worldly concerns would burden my mind—this is the seventh.

➤ “有必不堪者七，甚不可者二：卧喜晚起，而当关呼之不置，一不堪也。抱琴行吟，弋钓草野，而吏卒守之，不得妄动，二不堪也。危坐一时，痺不得摇，性复多虱把搔无已，而当裹以章服，揖拜上官，三不堪也。素不便书，又不喜作书，而人间多事，堆案盈机，不相酬答，则犯教伤义，欲自勉强，则不能久，四不堪也。不喜吊丧，而人道以此为重，己为未见恕者所怨，至欲见中伤者，虽瞿然自责，然性不可化，欲降心顺俗，则诡故不情，亦终不能获无咎无誉如此，五不堪也。不喜俗人，而当与之共事，或宾客盈坐，鸣声聒耳，嚣尘臭处，千变百伎，在人目前，六不堪也。心不耐烦，而官事鞅掌，机务缠其心，世故繁其虑，七不堪也。”

And Two “Intolerables,” Which Got Him Killed

- In addition, there are two matters that are especially intolerable: I have always criticized Tang and Wu (for using force) and held Zhou and Confucius in low regard. This view is well-known and widely circulated, yet it contradicts dominant teachings and cannot be tolerated in the public sphere—this is the first of the truly intolerable. I have a forthright temperament and hate wrongdoing, and I tend to speak out rashly and bluntly when confronted with injustice. Whenever I encounter something, I immediately express my views—this is the second. (又每非汤武而薄周孔，在人间不止，此事会显世教所不容，此甚不可一也。刚肠疾恶，轻肆直言，遇事便发，此甚不可二也。)

Confucius' "Intolerables"

- Ba Yi: Confucius said of the head of the Ji family, who had eight rows of pantomimes in his courtyard, "If he can bear to do this, what may he not bear to do?" (*The Analects*, Book III)
- (《论语·八佾一》“孔子谓季氏：‘八佾舞于庭，是可忍也，孰不可忍也？’”)

Ji Kang, “Letter to Shan Tao”(嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- With such a nature — narrow, impulsive, and overly candid — how can I bear these nine afflictions? If not harmed from without, I will surely fall ill within. How could I long remain in the human world? Moreover, I once heard from a Daoist that taking yellow essence (huangjing) could prolong life, and I truly believe this. I also find joy in wandering the mountains and lakes, watching birds and fish — this delights my heart greatly. If I were to take up office, all this would be lost. How could I abandon what I love, and pursue what I dread? (以促中小心之性，统此九患，不有外难，当有内病，宁可久处人间邪！又闻道士遗言，饵术黄精，令人久寿，意甚信之；游山泽，观鸟鱼，心甚乐之。一行作吏，此事便废，安能舍其所乐，而从其所惧哉！)

Ji Kang, "Letter to Shan Tao" (嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- As for me — sickly and worn out — I only wish to withdraw from affairs to preserve myself and live out my remaining years. That is precisely what I lack; how could one behold a palace eunuch and call him chaste? If your wish is for us to ascend together the royal road, to aid each other in achievement, and to share joy along the way — then know that once I am compelled, my afflictions will flare into madness. Were it not for a deep resentment, I would never have come to this point. (若吾多病困，欲离事自全，以保余年，此真所乏耳，岂可见黄门而称贞哉！若趣欲共登王涂，期于相致，时为懽益，一旦迫之，必发其狂疾，自非重怨，不至于此也。)

Ji Kang, “Letter to Shan Tao”(嵇康, 《与山巨源绝交书》)

- There was once a rustic who delighted in the sensation of having his back seared by roasted meat and found celery to be a delicacy. He wished to offer these to the Son of Heaven. Though his intentions were sincere, they were utterly inappropriate and misguided. I hope you will not be like that man. This is what I mean to express—let this serve both to explain myself to you, and to mark our farewell.(野人有快炙背而美芹子者，欲献之至尊，虽有区区之意，亦已疏矣，愿足下勿似之。其意如此，既以解足下，并以为别。)

The Personal Voice and the Essayistic Style of Lu Xun & Ji Kang

- The blending the personal (character, temperaments, habits and hobbies, etc.) and the impersonal (the Way, human nature, moral dignity)
- Heightened self-consciousness mixed a grave sense of duty: the true self as a moral example
- Moral and stylistic sharpness and intensity; quickness and bluntness
- The emotional tenacity and distress; death-defying pride resulting from the firmness of inner moral-emotional constitutions
- Love of freedom and the sense of purpose. No deviations or “twisty thoughts”

“How Should We Be Fathers Now”(我们现在怎样做父亲,1925)

- ❧ Why must life continue? Precisely because it must develop, must evolve. Since the individual is bound to die, and evolution knows no end, life can only persist, advancing along the path of evolution. To walk this path requires an inner striving—just as unicellular organisms possess an inner striving, which over time leads to complexity; just as invertebrates possess an inner striving, which over time gives rise to vertebrates. Thus, later forms of life always carry more meaning, draw closer to completeness, and are therefore more valuable, more worthy of being cherished. The earlier forms of life ought to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the later. (生命何以必需继续呢？就是因为要发展，要进化。个体既然免不了死亡，进化又毫无止境，所以只能延续着，在这进化的路上走。走这路须有一种内的努力，有如单细胞动物有内的努力，积久才会繁复，无脊椎动物有内的努力，积久才会发生脊椎。所以后起的生命，总比以前的更有意义，更近完全，因此也更有价值，更可宝贵；前者的生命，应该牺牲于他。)

“How Should We Be Fathers Now”(我们现在怎样做父亲,1925)

- Those in China who have awakened—if they wish to follow the elders in liberating the young—must, on the one hand, settle old accounts, and on the other, open new paths. This is precisely what was said at the beginning: Carrying the heavy burden of inherited tradition on one's back, bracing one's shoulder against the gate of darkness, and letting the young go out into the broad and radiant world; so that from then on they may live happy days and be reasonable human beings. This is a profoundly important and noble task—but also one of immense hardship and difficulty. (中国觉醒的人，为想随顺长者解放幼者，便须一面清结旧账，一面开辟新路。就是开首所说的“自己背着因袭的重担，肩住了黑暗的闸门，放他们到宽阔光明的地方去；此后幸福的度日，合理的做人。”这是一件极伟大的要紧的事，也是一件极困苦艰难的事。)

- The ambiguity of Lu Xun's approach to father and father figure
- "Father": Enfeebled, sick, and inherently unreliable;
- Father figure: moral responsibility, self-sacrifice, and future-oriented; the "vanishing mediation" on the chain of evolution
- The classical moral grandeur and solemnness blended with modern tragic consciousness; a mix of fatalism with individual initiative and decision
- (Teacher: culturally limited, intellectually obsolete/Teacher figure: Enduring inspiration; embodiment of moral and intellectual generosity, care and exceptions (such as in "Mr. Fujino")

“Hometown”(故乡, 1921)

- Hope is something that neither exists nor does not exist. It is like the path on the earth: originally there was no path, but when many people have walked it, it becomes a path. 希望本是无所谓有，无所谓无的。(这正如地上的路；其实地上本没有路，走的人多了，也便成了路)

- Skepticism and intellectual doubt (a fixture of modern men since Descartes) vs . Faith in collective action which forges a social path beyond the mere intellectual (let alone the individualistic)
- Dialectic between hope and hopelessness unfolding along with a radicalization and generalization of nihilism now turned on its head
- The human fate to be determined on humanity's marching on earth, on collective action perceived, stylized and intensified by the private individual and the essayistic form.

“Beijing Correspondance”(北京通信, 1925)

- ✧ If I had the strength, I would of course be most willing to offer something to the youth of Henan. But unfortunately, I find myself powerless — because I too am standing at a crossroads — or, to put it more hopefully, at a junction. To stand at a forked path is to feel almost unable to take a step; to stand at a crossroads, there are many roads one might take. I, myself, fear nothing. My life is my own, so I may stride forward boldly, along whatever path I believe I can take — even if ahead lies an abyss, thorns, a narrow gorge, or a pit of fire, I alone bear the consequences. But speaking to the youth — that is far more difficult. If I, like a blind man on a blind horse, were to lead them into peril, then I would be guilty of the crime of bringing many lives to ruin. (倘使我有这力量, 我自然极愿意有所贡献于河南的青年。但不幸我竟力不从心, 因为我自己也正站在歧路上, ——或者, 说得较有希望些: 站在十字路口。站在歧路上是几乎难于举足, 站在十字路口, 是可走的道路很多。我自己, 是什么也不怕的, 生命是我自己的东西, 所以我不妨大步走去, 向着我自以为可以走去的路; 即使前面是深渊, 荆棘, 狭谷, 火坑, 都由我自己负责。然而向青年说话可就难了, 如果盲人瞎马, 引入危途, 我就该得谋杀许多人命的罪孽。)

“Beijing Correspondance”(北京通信,1925)

➤ “Therefore, in the end, I still do not wish to urge the youth to follow the path I have taken. Our ages, our circumstances, are different, and the ultimate direction of our thinking is unlikely to be exactly the same. But if I must be asked what goal young people should strive toward, I can only offer the principles I have devised for others: First, to survive. Second, to have enough to eat and wear. Third, to develop. Whoever dares to obstruct these three aims — no matter who they are — we shall resist them, strike them down! Yet I must add a few words to avoid misunderstanding: By “survive,” I do not mean mere existence. By “enough to eat and wear,” I do not mean luxury. By “develop,” I do not mean indulgence. (所以，我终于还不想劝青年一同走我所走的路；我们的年龄，境遇，都不相同，思想的归宿大概总不能一致的罢。但倘若一定要问我青年应当向怎样的目标，那么，我只可以说出我为别人设计的话，就是：一要生存，二要温饱，三要发展。有敢来阻碍这三事者，无论是谁，我们都反抗他，扑灭他！可是还得附加几句话以免误解，就是：我之所谓生存，并不是苟活；所谓温饱，并不是奢侈；所谓发展，也不是放纵。)

“Beijing Correspondance”(北京通信,1925)

- ✧ “I believe that for the sake of human progress—for development—there must be action. And if action sometimes leads to mistakes, that is of no great consequence. What is truly and utterly mistaken is the half-dead, half-alive clinging to mere existence. For it bears the signboard of life, yet in truth leads people down the road to death! I think we must lead the youth out of the prison they are confined in. Of course, there are dangers on the road—but these are the incidental dangers of striving to live, and they cannot be avoided. To avoid them, one would have to submit to the ancient ideal of the "first prison" kind of life. Yet even the prisoners truly locked within such a first prison all hope to be released as soon as possible, even though the world outside is no safer than inside. It has grown warm in Beijing. I've planted a few lilac bushes in my courtyard—they've come to life. There are also two Chinese flowering plum trees; they have yet to bud. I don't know if they are still alive. (我以为人类为向上，即发展起见，应该活动，活动而有若干失错，也不要紧。惟独半死半生的苟活，是全盘失错的。因为他挂了生活的招牌，其实却引入到死路上去！我想，我们总得将青年从牢狱里引出来，路上的危险，当然是有的，但这是求生的偶然的危险，无从逃避。想逃避，就须度那古人所希求的第一监狱式生活了，可是真在第一监狱里的犯人，都想早些释放，虽然外面并不比狱里安全。北京暖和起来了；我的院子里种了几株丁香，活了；还有两株榆叶梅，至今还未发芽，不知道他是否活着。)

A Signature of Lu Xun's Essayistic Voice"

- Classical-oriented ethical considerations for the group/species mixed with modern ideological conviction stemming from an evolutionary, developmental trajectory and a propensity to will of power. Individual risk-taking and moral courage versus moral burden vis-a-vis advising youth.
- Striking blend of political metaphor and personal, seasonal observation. His critique of “mere survival”(苟活) targets passive conformity and moral cowardice, while the final image of lilacs budding—contrasted with the dormant plum—subtly echoes his uncertain hope for youth and future renewal.

- The path for life/path for death distinction captures a classical political ontology centered on nature, fate and the ultimate horizon of earthly life as well as modern sensibilities pertaining to choice, self-determination, and self-invention.
- The tone moves from combative to contemplative, merging the fate of society with the fate of life in his courtyard, a hallmark of his classically moral and stylistically modern prose.

Concluding Thoughts

- The modern personal voice/essay, when carried to the extreme and formed to moral and aesthetic perfection, bears striking similarities to the classical and impersonal voice/essay, even though important differences remain
- What makes modern Chinese essay (especially that of Lu Xun) strikingly relevant and appealing is its ability to bridge the classical traditions and modernity by working its way from within the rupture and void which separate the two side. In other words, what is modern (and individualistic) is to be defined in terms of the crisis of modern China as an extension of its past, and of the modern individual as embodiment (and remnants) of traditional Chinese ethical life and moral-emotional constitutions.
- The particular power of Lu Xun's essayistic style, in this light, lies in its tragic entanglement with the old while pursuing a radical concept of the new; in its moral determination and helplessness to be "stuck" in this stalemate; and eventually in his expressivity and stylistic sophistication, by which to make the silence from the bottom of the abyss audible and poignant.