

## 卢新华 1978 小说《伤痕》笔记

- No sooner than the publication of this short story, the title of this novella had become a literary genre for a voluminous body of works dedicated to the memories of atrocities and indignities that people had witnessed and suffered from during the Cultural Revolution. The popularity of the story comes from the fact that it is a form of catharsis to get rid of negative feelings such as self-disgust or grievances that people until that moment had not been able to talk about.
- The poignancy of the story—the daughter’s total callousness to her mother’s suffering and pain at a moment when she, a parent, needs her the most—was deeply repressed during the tumultuous years when people had become indifferent to the honors and inhumanity that they experienced. To survive in this age of intolerance, people need to be loyalty to the state above filial piety. In this sense, Ba Jin’s novel *Family* is a literary precedent to this later episode of war on traditions.
- This fictional account of rekindled kinship coming too late between family members marks China’s entrance into the “post-Mao Era”. The story woke people up to and revived what is referred to as the [concealment law](#) to sanctify kinship and familial ties. When anarchists proselytized the destruction of the family in the May Fourth period, they paved the way for mass movements in which the only mode of being social was to break free from family ties like Xiao Hua denouncing her mother.
- When people were uprooted from a clan-culture (宗法社会), the structure of China as a feudal empire was in fact not destroyed as people had been led to believe. In the name of equality, the Red Guards were told that “revolution is no crime and rebellion is reasonable” (革命无罪，造反有理) When Xiao Hua denounces her mother, she takes the side of the revolutionaries chanting “Long Live Chairman Mao” to express loyalty to the new red emperor of China. The “classless society” existed on paper only when Mao ruled with the absolute power.
- Xiao Hua’s action is a muscle reflex or survival instinct in a political climate in which one can be persecuted when guilty by association. As the popular adage at the time goes like: “A dragon begets a dragon, a phoenix begets a phoenix, and a rat’s son can make holes, this is his nature.” (龙生龙凤生凤，老鼠的儿子会打洞) It is this bloodline theory (血统论) that dictates Xiao Hua’s behavior. To either show your true allegiance to the communist party as a proletariat or remain connected to your family because blood is thicker than watch. Her knee-jerk reaction speaks volumes for deeds much worse than denouncing one’s mother.
- In this historical context, the story intersects with the issues that Theodore De Bary and Tu Weiming address in their [Confucianism and Human Rights](#). During the May

Fourth New Culture Movement 五四新文化运动(1919), Confucian tradition was viewed as the tumbling block to human rights. The psychological trauma by which Wang Xiaohua is scarred exposes the evil and diabolical side of the Chinese modernity. It is ironic that Ba Jin who loaded rebellions against the traditional family lived to see his wife tortured to death by the red guards with no respect for elders and men of letters (like Feng Leshan). His proposal to build a museum of Cultural Revolution to remember to memorialize this dark episode was rejected.

- It is Xiaohua's heartless and irrevocable decision that calls in to question Maoism. For progressives like Fang Zhimin, Lei Feng, and Ba Jin, communism is synonymous with social progress, while old China is antithetical to the human. It never occurs to Xiao Hua, as it didn't to millions during the Cultural Revolution, that progress didn't have to be made at the expense or to the exclusion of cultural traditions. In the words of Adorno and Horkheimer, in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet, the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant." Xiao Hua's is a tragic story about the loss or eclipse of reason and humanity during the Cultural Revolution when family and friends are pitted against one another to bring about the worst in man.