

“FIN DE SIÈCLE” IN RURAL CHINA:
A STUDY OF SHEN CONGWEN’S DECADENT STORY
“THE INN”

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The aim of this essay is to analyse some most important features in the short story “The Inn” by the well-known modern Chinese writer Shen Congwen and its place in the *fin de siècle* literary stream after the May Fourth Movement of the 1920s.

Key words: fin de siècle, decadence, Chinese literature (1920s), Shen Congwen

I The May Fourth Literary Mind with a *fin de siècle* Flavour

Fin de siècle refers to the last 20 years of the 19th century. The *fin de siècle* literary mind is connected with a school of thought widely prevalent in Europe around the end of the 19th century. At that point, the result of capitalism, prosperity and development was a society divided by caste. It created unemployment and saboteurs. As the modern and advanced society progressed, there was an emergence of poverty, hunger, shame, prostitution and fraud. People were agitated, disappointed, in despair and society was disorderly. People began losing confidence in ideas and beliefs. They steered towards decadence, the senses and the wild, in search of new meaning and value to life. At the same time, there was an inclination towards opposing the mainstreams of rationalization and perfectionism. This resulted in an abundant supply of literature advocating decadence and deterioration of the human race. When the *fin de siècle* literary thought from the West, in opposition to progress and idealism of civilization, was imported into China, it was fuelled by local conditions, and a giant wave of *fin de siècle* China-style was created.¹

In recent years, Sun Longji's 孫隆基 study on how European *fin de siècle* influenced Chinese literature during the May Fourth period attracted my attention and interest. His study convincingly points out a historical fact: the May Fourth Enlightenment movement was different from the European Enlightenment of the 18th century. The May Fourth period had a substantial *fin de siècle* flavour. Although, science, democracy and progress did occupy a steering position in China then, decadence, idealism, deterioration and annihilations that came with *fin de siècle*, had considerable influence. In order to fully understand May Fourth thought and literature, I think one could not do without Sun Longji's study. In an article entitled "*Fin de siècle* Literary Mind: An Idealism that Cannot Be Realized" 世紀末思潮—前無去路的理想主義, he looks for clues on Europe's *fin de siècle* literary thought in China. He has convincingly pointed out their traces in 20th century China.² Sun Longji in his earlier study has pointed out that Lu Xun's literary thought and works are of the same kind.³ In recent years, confirming the *fin de siècle* impact on China's writers and their works is a favourite topic. Not long ago, Iwasa Masaaki 岩佐昌暲, a Japanese scholar has analysed the decadent aesthetics and imagery of a poem entitled "Snake" 蛇 by Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905-1993). The author himself has admitted the poem was inspired by the image of a snake biting a flower by artist Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898). Iwasa Masaaki comes to this conclusion:

"The important elements which are used by Feng Zhi to write the poem are full of characteristics of the literature of the end of the century."⁴

This article attempts to use evidence of the *fin de siècle* 世紀末 thoughts found in Sun Longji's article "*Fin de siècle* – An Idealism That Cannot Be Realized" to interpret Shen Congwen's (1902-1988) 沈從文 short story "The Inn" (旅店, 1929).⁵ Shen Congwen and *fin de siècle* pessimism theory, including contacts with psychology, sexuality, customs, folklore studies and his relationship with other writers who are staunch believers in this literary current, have been discussed in many studies in the past. These studies also confirm Shen Congwen's unusually close relationships with decadence theorists (like Zhou Zuoren (1885-1967) 周作人, Zhang Dongsun (1886-1962) 張東蓀 and Lu Zhiwei (1894-1970) 陸志葦 and other writers like Fei Ming 廢名 (1901-1967) and Shi Zhecun 施蛰存 (1905-2004) who were influenced by *fin de siècle* moods.⁶ Hence, in this study, I will not look for evidence of influence, but only concentrate on an analysis of "The Inn," especially images, language, subtle similarities and the narrative structure.

II The Inn: Feeling of Closure

After its introduction to China and mixed with other local factors, the *fin de siècle Weltanschauung* produced a current of despair and pessimism. Many intellectuals used it to judge China on its failure to fulfil individual dreams. Lu Xun (1881-1936) 鲁迅 used the iron house in the prologue of the collection of short stories *A Call to Arms* 呐喊 to symbolize Western's *fin de siècle* feeling of closure in relation to the society:

“If an iron house has absolutely no windows and is indestructible, the suffocating sleeping people would meet their deaths from their slumber. They would not feel the fear of their impending death. However, if you scream, waking up the more conscious few, causing the unfortunate minority to suffer the fear and the helplessness of the impending deaths. Do you think you would have done them a good turn?”⁷

In Shen Congwen's short story “The Inn”, the title itself suggests a romantic setting. But at the start of the short story, *fin de siècle* images and emotions were dominant: the inn is located at the foot of a range of mountains near the town borders. Everyday, fatigued passers-by, who had walked for eighty to a hundred miles, would enter the house and look for a bed. Then they would sleep like logs on a straw bed, with their mouths opened, snoring away. The next day, they would be on their way again even before the day breaks. They have lost their identities and live a life of uncertainties and delusion.

“They dream about fights, thirst, raging mountains, gambling and so on. In the day, they go by a simple routine of eat, drink, work and curse. After they have enough of that, it is time to sleep. They would stretch their legs and be sound asleep in a minute.” (*SCWWJ*, 8:302)

People staying in the inn feel the despair of a life controlled by fate. They possess sick thoughts or have a sadistic life, like the four paper traders. They are portrayed as people who are “fast asleep on an enormous long wooden bed, dreaming all the time.”

“In the inn whose owner is named Black Cat 黑貓, four long distance travellers are still fast asleep on a big enormous wooden bed, dreaming. They come from a faraway city, a place that produced paper. Each has carried on his shoulder a bale of paper. They are on their way to Chen Yang 辰陽, a place where Qu Yuan (ca. 340-ca. 278) 屈原 moored his boat. They have covered half the distance. Another eleven days, they would be making their way back after selling their paper. The traders are like monks. But it is to make a livelihood

that they have to make long journeys throughout the year. They would rest for ten days after each journey. They spent up to three quarters of each year in different inns. This has made them even more hardworking than any other trades. The inns are not any different from their homes. (SCWWJ, 8:303).

The lady owner of the Inn is Black Cat, aged 27. Her young husband has already died four years ago, leaving her beautiful name to be called and hollered by the guests. The inn's only helper, Hunchback, is a born handicap in his forties.

Black Cat is seductive and voluptuous, like the women of the Wu Po 巫婆 tribe, and blessed with the vivacity of the Huajiao 花脚 tribe women. But ever since her husband's death, she alone manages the inn to make a living, selling wine and rice, smothering her feminine desires and urges. Without a choice, she "has led a widow's life" (SCWWJ, 8:304). In the end, amongst the four tradesmen, Big Nose dies of an illness. Black Cat has born a child out of wedlock after an adulterous fling with Big Nose 大鼻子 in the wilderness. To cover up the scandal, Hunchback has become Black Cat's husband. No one understands how Black Cat can love Hunchback 駝子 and has even born him a child.

The inn is an embodiment of romantic life experiences and wholesome family values. It represents miracles, peace and warmth. But as you step into the inn, witnessing the occupants within, sleeping with their mouths wide open, whiling their time away, being tormented by dreams and illusions, you would understand the emphasis on the use of decadent language by the author. The use of common traits in the inn would not suffice. The sadistic way of living mentioned above and other signs in the story explain that "The Inn" is purposely written as a decadent story. As we analyse the text further, we will begin to understand that the symbols in the story are linked to the signs outside the story. Such contrasts highlight the values.

That is the reason why the inn is similar to the iron house by Lu Xun. As I read this short story together with Sun Longji's study of the influence of *fin de siècle* in China, the story gives us a picture of the decadent Chinese rural society.

III A Decadent and Deteriorating Race

Through Shen Congwen's calculated intent, readers witness the guests' emotions and thoughts: their endless sorrows created daily while sowing their gains. In the day and in their dreams, they always fight, gamble, drink and curse. The story continues with a zoom-in to focus on the four paper traders. Their lives are also in the realms of illusions and dreams. Shen Congwen concentrates his attention on a single individual. The inn owner dies young. The author only recounts: "It was unexpected that he died so young", without giving any indication of the cause. After the husband's death, widow Black Cat is

bequeathed the duties of the innkeeper. She busies herself daily with the chores of selling rice and wine and hosting accommodation for guests. For three years, she “has no sexual relationship nor any destiny with love”. Hunchback says: “The world has changed. Young woman is not enjoying the singing or drinking at her tender age. Instead, she has become the inn’s master.” Those who stay at the inn, including the rich egotists flaunting their wealth and the gaudy smokers, are all whom Black Cat refers to as “impotent men 不濟的人。”

All the people in the inn represent the decadence and deterioration of the *fin de siècle*. Generally, decadence and deterioration are said to be the results of commercialization, urbanization, alcoholism, mental weakness and infectious diseases. The characters mentioned above are driven by modernization to slog daily from dawn to dusk to earn wealth, wounding their health in the process. Big Nose dies from an illness. Probably, so did Black Cat’s husband. Modernization is usually represented by various diseases, and most modern people, especially traders from the city would usually succumb to such illnesses. In the “Husband and Wife” 夫婦, by Shen Congwen, Huang 璜 has left the city for the countryside to seek out a cure in nature for his mental illness. The pale-faced man 白臉男子 in “Sansan” 三三, another Shen’s story, has headed for the villages hoping the fresh air and sun would rid him of tuberculosis. But none has succeeded as they are too critically ill to be saved even by the natural forces.⁸

Even as Black Cat seduces Big Nose who later follows her to the riverside and makes love with her in the forest, he and other traders continue to ramble on about earning a quick buck by killing wild animals to trade-in their furs. Eventually it is a vexed Black Cat who intentionally terminates the conversation abruptly to discontinue such common talk. This hints at the tip of Black Cat’s rebellion against rationalization as the *fin de siècle* mood set itself against emphasis on rationalization, opposing industrialization, actual profits and common sense. On the other hand, it accentuates the illogical and the subversive darkness. From Black Cat’s censure of them for only seeing gold yet remaining blind to the seductive body awaiting their appreciation and enjoyment, we can draw the following understanding:

What do you see before your very eyes? You can’t see many things. If you have eyes, if only... These are words spoken by Black Cat. She smiles as she has finished. (*SCWWJ*, 8:309).

IV The Inn’s Inside and Outside: Civilization and Nature

As *fin de siècle* thought pitted itself against modernization and civilization, it can still be built upon “nature” 自然 which is the only force beyond civilization that could confront it.

“*Fin de siècle* literary thought is a rebellion against modern civilization. But it is different as compared to similar dissenting voices today. It is built upon ‘nature’, another force beyond civilization that can confront it. Accompanying the trails to modernization and post modernization, widespread proliferation of a ‘sick’ civilization floated significantly in the 20th century literary thoughts thoroughly negating ‘nature’.”⁹

Hence from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century, several Western writers penned works surrounding the confrontation of civilization and nature. Thomas Hardy’s (1840-1928) works illustrated the despair of modern man in the face of nature¹⁰. Jack London (1876-1916) however urges the civilized man to return to the bosom of primitive nature. In *The Call of the Wild* (1903), a family dog is transformed into a wild wolf after returning to nature.¹¹

The inn is located at the foot of the mountains at Chen Zhou 辰州 just before the bounders of Hunan 湖南. Travellers stay at the inn overnight to recover their strength to cross the mountain range. In the face of the primitive nature, they fell despondent and helpless, feeling the fatigue that accompanied travel. In the short story, Shen Congwen allows the wild nature outside the inn to beckon to Black Cat. Everyday, as she opens the window, the wild primitive urges beyond the inn reminded her of her choice to surrender her right for men to enjoy her alluring body.

Today, Black Cat woke up particularly early. After hanging up the mosquito net, she pushed open the tiny window by the side of the bed. The star-filled sky, the chirping of the insects in the yard and the cool breeze boosted one’s confidence that today would be bright and sunny. The insect calls seemed to be even more alluring tinged with the dew. So was the starlight. The weather was just delightful. Such moments heralded the numerous young women bidding their lovers good bye as they left the bamboo forest! It augured the many young men sending their passionate lovers of the night from the caves to their homes at the crow of the cockerel! And the tears and curses as they leave each other! As Black Cat’s mind lingered on such thoughts, she felt weird about herself. She had no part in what others were doing. Some other female inn-keeper could have the right to listen to a few heartless guys spouting false promises. But she could not. Other women have the right to leave a cave at such an hour, sent off by a man on her way home with his coat for warmth. But she could not. (SCWWJ, 8:305)

The Hunchback she has hired denoted the conservatives and logic, watching and keeping an eye on her, prohibiting her from answering the call of the wild to step out of the bonds of “civilization”. Hence, since the death of her husband four years ago, she “had not had any sexual relationship nor destiny with love”. She

numbed herself by keeping busy making a living.

But the primitive happenings in the caves under the starlit sky today have generated “an unusual flow of thoughts on the male and female business”. The cockerel crowing and the lovers stepping out of their caves induced her to “a sudden gnawing desire towards the immoral”. Even though “none of the four tradesmen measured up to her expectations of a crying shoulder and none of them was what she wanted in a man”, but in the face of the constant beckoning of the wild beyond the window:

But surprisingly, Black Cat’s mood today had suddenly veered. A sudden immoral arousal swelled in her heart. Black Cat began to ponder over which of the four traders she could mate with. What she wanted was strength, wholesome yet tinged with stubbornness and aggression, an ignorant change and idleness after a storm. The chap sleeping soundly six feet underground had given her pleasurable experiences. This made her remembered her loss giving way as defiance against her usual restraint grew. She felt that she should gamble on one, not bothered by who it was, to fulfill her desire to perform some wildly erotic actions with her. As her thoughts flowed, she seemed to hear someone making his way up the hills. (*SCWWJ*, 8:306)

As the dogs barked outside her window, she was transported to the amorous tempestuous night of a mating couple:

Listening to the chirping of the birds, the distant trickle of water, one could also hear the dogs. The dogs barks indicated that some had made an early start on their journey taking advantage of the cool air. At other times, she would have got up. But now, contemplating the dogs barking furiously after heartless souls, she idly closed the window. (*SCWWJ*, 8:306)

In Shen Congwen’s short story, the natural weather often induces human primitive desires. Coincidentally, the fabulous weather that morning lures young widows to sleep in the mountains:

A guest asked Hunchback what the weather was like.

“Gorgeous weather! It’s the weather that lures women up the mountain to sleep, even more so than long journeys.” (*SCWWJ*, 8:307)

Hunchback also feels the effects of the weather: “I guess it must be the weather. Today, he could even sense the impropriety of his mistress remaining the faithful widow.” (*SCWWJ*, 8:308) Among the guests who hear Hunchback’s provocative words and see Black Cat’s “seductive body”, including “a pair of swelling breasts” cannot help resist the temptation to hint at their intentions. They start testing Black Cat. Amazingly, Black Cat’s response is:

“Innkeeper, did you sleep well?”

She said, “Well? Every single night is well.”

“If you have the owner with you, wouldn’t it be better?”

Usually Black Cat, on hearing such talk, would become very serious and formal. But today, she looked seductively at the joking guest. She appraised the guest’s sturdy shoulders.” (*SCWWJ*, 8:308)

Black Cat seeing the near empty tank, prepares to collect water. She asks Hunchback “why there are so many wild dogs.” Filling up the water tank and wild dogs are connotations. Hence, not long after Black Cat sets off to collect water, Big Nose also leaves with a cigar in his mouth. It is quite a while before they return to the inn. Everyone is not quite sure what has happened. Eight months later, the Inn has a little Black Cat. The outsiders say that it is Hunchback’s child. They do not comprehend why Black Cat would fall for Hunchback. Shen Congwen allows Black Cat and Big Nose to leave the Inn together and make love by the riverside well before the sky breaks is an indication of man returning to nature. It is an effort to return to the primitive nature. Jack London’s pet dog returns to the wild to answer the call of the wild. Black Cat also takes the path to return to nature after seeing the wild dogs.

In other works by Shen Congwen, the act of returning to the caves denotes people re-embracing sexual desires and emotions, re-entering the realm of the primitive human. “Three Men and a Woman” 三個男人與一個女人 (1930), and “The Doctor” 醫生 (1931) describe a young man carrying his beloved to the cave after she has committed suicide to protest against her parents’ efforts to arrange a marriage. According to legend, a girl who has committed suicide by swallowing gold can be revived from death if a man hugged her in her death. The doctor’s simple act to revive his beloved is an act of pure primitive love. Shen Congwen sets the scene in the caves. In “The Scene Under the Moon” 月下小景 (1932), the man and woman, in retaliation against the old adage of falling in love with the first man but marrying the second man, arrange a suicide pact at an old castle. Separately, in both “The Life of Ah Hei” 阿黑小史 (1928) and “Mei Jin, Panther and the Sheep” 眉金、豹子與那羊 (1929), the cave is a couple’s meeting place for a tryst. Outside the caves, pure and innocent love is shattered by civil customs and rites, driving young lovers to seek the primitive within the caves.¹²

Shen Congwen wrote other stories on how nature arouses the desires of mankind. In “Husband and Wife” the amiable weather in the valley and the blooming flowers incite the newly weds to make love among the hay. In “After the Rain” 雨後 (1928), as the spring showers come, the wild flowers bloomed, the crops nurture, A Jie 阿姐 with her cultural background cannot shift her thoughts away from her “natural” self. Eventually, she succumbs to the seduction

of the strong and robust Si Gou 四狗, a country bumpkin who symbolizes the primitive culture.¹³

V Restoring Sexual Desires to deliver Mankind from Deterioration

The themes of morbid civilization and sadistic culture were prevalent in Western literary works from the end of the century to the first half of the 20th Century. D. H. Lawrence's (1885-1930) portrayal of Chatterley's impotency in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is a mockery of England's high-class society. The gardener is a personification of life. In end of the century literary thoughts, stretching from Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psychology to other modern Western writers who were contemporaries of the May Fourth period and visited China like Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), all shared the same school of thought to glorify the innate so as to salvage civilization from decadence. That 'innate' is often the emblem of sexual desires.¹⁴

The author uses Hunchback's intentional remark about the deterioration of sexual desires of men and women to alarm the four guests and Black Cat:

"Now, everything's changed, not as good as before. Nowadays, people only slog from dawn. Twenty years ago, the youths had very little to do. They woke up even earlier but the only thing they did was to crawl out of their lover's bed sheet to drag themselves home or to send their woman home. After they ate, they would still stand on the mountain side. Hidden by the thick fog, they could still whistle or sing to each other. Now, it's finished. There are even fewer passionate virgins around." (*SCWWJ*, 8:307)

Black Cat and Big Nose's dormant sexual desires finally awakened from its deep slumber. At the beginning of the story, it is described as "slumber". In the second half, before dawn, Black Cat and Hunchback awakened first. "Today Black Cat woke up exceptionally early." After she had awakened, she pushed open the windows, followed by Hunchback, who lighted candles before proceeding to the guests' rooms. Afterward, the guests awakened. In the story, although Hunchback was not able to do it, nevertheless, sexual decadence tormented him.

However, Black Cat dared to return to nature only once to release her pent up primitive sexual desires. Eventually, she succumbed to conform to social expectations. When little Black Cat was born nine months later, she had asked Hunchback to be the child's father.

Hunchback was an "uneconomical" person. But Big Nose, who was city-bred, died from an illness. They both exemplified the decadent civilization. The inn was a miniature decadent China.

VI Decadent Narrative – A Product of the *fin de siècle*

In 1928, the Chatterley family was Lawrence's emblem for decadence. Such decadent narratives, products of the end of the century literary thoughts were already a fad for a while.¹⁵ Shen Congwen's "The Inn" is an apparent decadent narrative. In the 1930s, there was a trend for such works, including Ba Jin's 巴金 *The Family* 家 (1933), Lao She's *The Camel Xiang Zi* 駱駝祥子 (1937). They were completed later than "The Inn".¹⁶

Decadence, as advocated in the time of *fin de siècle*, opposed objectivity and cosmetic simulation of nature. It steered literature from objective simulation to a model of personal idealism to the degree of mutation and bizarreness. Hence, the school of decadent perfectionism was a forerunner of the 20th century's modern thinking.¹⁷ Shen Congwen's framework for his works often accentuated the need to write on dreamlike images, capturing the sensations of the supernatural, exploring the depths of the sub-conscious.¹⁸ In linguistics, he dared to experiment courageously. For example, he deemed creativity as 'emotional gymnastics', requiring 'twisting words as a test of flexibility and repeated throws to test its durability'.

Writers subscribing to the decadence movement, like Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) of the 19th century, liked to use peculiar and queer symbols to represent sickness, despair and pessimism.¹⁹ In "The Inn", when Black Cat's sexual desires were aroused, she was portrayed in a revolting manner. Shen Congwen employed unnatural bizarreness to portray her:²⁰

A sudden immoral arousal swelled within her. Black Cat began to scrutinize the four guests for one whom she could be naked with. What she wanted was strength, wholesome healthiness yet tinged with stubborn aggression, an ignorant change and idleness after the storm. (*SCWWJ*, 8:74-75)

As Black Cat's sexual desires were aroused, she was even more passionate than any other ordinary woman, as portrayed in the following paragraph:

Black Cat studied the guest named Big Nose. She was so tempted to bite off his big nose. She used her hands to rub her breasts, her body swayed. She wanted to have a word with the guest. (*SCWWJ*, 8:308)

As the guest proceeded out of his room, Black Cat exhibited a cat's instincts: "She hugged the bed to sniff, like what a feigned drunk would do." She sniffed at the bed Big Nose slept in for his manly scent. In the story, the 'long and big nose' was mentioned several times. In Black Cat's eyes, it was something that inspired wild thoughts:

She estimated the guest's strong arms. She judged his shoulders, waist and

thighs. Finally, she set her eyes on the guest's nose. A nose that was big and long. (SCWWJ, 8:308)

To proceed in the decadent style of writing after the beginning of the 1930s and later, was rather an exception in modern Chinese literature. Such was Shen Congwen's story "Gazing at a Rainbow" 看虹錄 (1941), analysed and translated by Jeffrey Kinkley.²¹ This new evolution was caused by the overall situation in modern Chinese literature after its tendencies towards the so-called proletarian literature and later in its anti-Japanese orientation during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945). However, the achievement of Shen Congwen was almost forgotten after 1949 because the revolutionaries who came to power lacked both modernism's "tragic sense of the pervasiveness of human evil" and artistic craftsmanship.²²

Notes

1. About *fin de siècle* literary trends, see Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteen Nineties*, Harvester Press 1976; William Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure*, London, Penguin 1957; Sun Longji's definition is closer to the Chinese *fin de siècle* 世紀末思潮, see Sun Longji, "Lu Xun and *fin de siècle* 世紀末的魯迅, *21st Century* 二十一世紀, 12, August 1992, pp. 92-106.
2. Sun Longji, "*Fin de siècle* Literary Mind: An Idealism that Cannot be Realized 世紀末思潮—前無去路的理想主義, *21st Century* 二十一世紀, 27, February 1995, pp. 31-42.
3. Sun Longji, "Lu Xun and *fin de siècle*", pp. 92-106.
4. Iwasa Masaaki 岩佐昌暲, "A Reading of Feng Zhi's Poem 'Snake'" 對馮至蛇的一種看法, *Chinese Culture* 中國文化研究, 3, Spring 1994, pp. 141-145.
5. *The Collected Works of Shen Congwen* 沈從文文集, Hong Kong, Joint Publishing Co. 1984, Vol. 8, pp. 302-310. It is abbreviated as SCWWJ in later part of this paper. William MacDonald has translated "The Inn" into English, see *Imperfect Paradise*, edited by Jeffrey Kinkley, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995, pp. 106-118.
6. See Jeffrey Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, Stanford, Stanford University Press 1987, see also Wu Lichang 吳立昌, *Shen Congwen: Construction of a Temple for Human Nature* 沈從文—建築人性神廟,

- Shanghai, Fudan University Press 1991, pp.184-229.
7. Lu Xun, "Prologue to *A Call to Arms*" 吶喊序, *The Complete Works of Lu Xun* 魯迅全集, Beijing, People Publishing House 1981, Vol. 1, pp. 419.
 8. For more detailed discussion, see Wang Runhua 王潤華 (Wong Yoon Wah), *Essays on Shen Congwen's Fiction: A New Approach* 沈從文小說新論 Shanghai, Academia Press, 1998, pp. 90-106 and 124-143.
 9. Sun Longji, "*Fin de siècle* Literary Mind", p. 32.
 10. See Wang Zhenling 王珍玲, "Shen Congwen and Thomas Hardy". 沈從文與哈代. In: Qian Linsen 錢林森 (ed.): *Chinese and Foreign Literary Relationships* 中外文學因緣, Nanjing, Nanjing University Press, 1989, pp. 310-330.
 11. There are several different Chinese translations of this novel, including Jiang Tianzuo 蔣天佐 (trans.), *Huangye de huhuan* 荒野的呼喚, Peking, Joint Publishing Co., 1950; Liu Dajie 劉大杰 (trans.) *Yexing de huhuan* 野性的呼喚 Peking, Guoji wenhua, 1953.
 12. See Wang Runhua, *Shen Congwen's Fiction: A New Approach*, p. 95.
 13. Ibid.
 14. See Sun Longji, "*Fin de siècle* Literary Mind", p. 35, and "Lu Xun and *fin de siècle*", p. 95.
 15. See Sun Longji's articles cited above.
 16. Liu Qinwei 劉欽偉, *Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature of Aestheticism* 中國現代唯美主義文學作品選, 2Vols. Guangzhou, Huacheng chubanshe, 1996.
 17. See Sun Longji, "*Fin de siècle* Literary Mind", pp. 32-33.
 18. I have discussed this in detail in an article on Shen Congwen's theory of fiction, see *Essays on Shen Congwen's Fiction: A New Approach*, pp. 31-52.
 19. Among the writings of the May Fourth period, Lu Xun's poems in prose collected in *The Wild Grass* 野草 are most heavily influenced by the decadent tendencies, see Sun Yushi 孫玉石, *A Study of the Wild Grass* 野草研究, Peking, China Social Sciences Press, 1982, pp. 198-231.
 20. Many parts of the text of Shen Congwen's story "The Inn" were changed after 1949 for censorship purposes. This quotation which is taken from Zhao Yuan 趙園 (ed.), *Shen Congwen mingzuo xinshang* 沈從文名作欣賞 (Peking, Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1993), pp. 71-82. It is the original uncensored text.
 21. Jeffrey Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, pp. 254-56.
 22. Ibid., pp. 115-116.