

Conflict and Integration of Chinese and Western Medicine in Chinese Literature, 1906-1946

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Abstract

Western medicine was introduced into China since the first half of the 19th century. In the first thirty years of the 20th century, the confrontation between Western and Traditional Chinese medicines went to its peak, resulting in a social debate over not only the efficacy of medical practices but also the justification of new, Western ideology. Western medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and their clash were recurring motifs in literature from 1906 to 1946, and these literary works reveal the cultural and ideological impact of the introduction of Western medical science to China. This paper examines continuity and change in the representation of Western and traditional Chinese medicine in Chinese literature of 1906 to 1946, dividing this time period into three chronological stages and yielding an argument that the impact of Western medicine on Chinese society went through multiple stages, and was influenced by contemporary societal changes.

Keywords

History of Medicine, Chinese Modern Literature, Ideology, West Learn, Traditional Chinese Medicine

1. Introduction

In modern Chinese history, the introduction of Western science into China had long lasting effects. This wave of learning from Western countries was aimed at “self-strengthening” by using Western science to “revive China”. The introduction of Western science to China started in the first half of the 19th century (Hao, 2005) and reached its peak during the May fourth movement, in which students and pioneers protested for democracy and science in China and denounced tra-

ditional culture.

Among various scientific subjects that were introduced into China by scholars in the early modern era, Western medical science and public health measures were of vital significance, since it was directly related to the death rate and effective organization of cities, especially port cities. Without a professional organization of ports by Western standards, it was impossible for the Nanjing National government to ask for independence in these crucial trading centers. (Rogaski, 2014) However, the introduction and governmental support of Western medicine put traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and TCM practitioners in crisis. In 1929, a policy from the commission of health of the Nanjing national government almost totally banished TCM to support the popularization of Western public health measures, pushing the conflict between Western and Chinese medicine practitioners to its peak (Hao, 2005).

The conflict between Western and Chinese medicine became an ideological debate between revolutionaries that supported the “new culture” and old-school scholars that considered the introduction of Western science as the colonization in the field of sciences.

Interestingly, in literature during this period, the debate of science, especially medical science, was laid much emphasized and discussed intensively. Unlike scientists and historians of sciences that focused on the actual effectiveness of medicines and health care policies, litterateurs considered this scientific conflict as a manifestation of societal and cultural problems. Lu Xun, for instance, famously attacked TCM in many of his works and called for the replacement of “harmful traditions” with Western sciences. He clearly saw the existence of TCM as a demonstration that the public needed to change its ideology. It is in the cultural sphere that the medical debate about science and effectiveness became an ideological rival, which eventually led to the exploration of Chinese modernity.

Although several scholars had researched the arrival of Western medicine from the history of science perspective (Croizier, 1968; Needham, 2000; Andrews, 2014; Liu, 2017; Zheng, 2018; Gross, 2018; Zhao, 2019), the impact of this event on literature and other cultural activities in the first half of the twentieth century is yet to be studied. It is necessary to closely examine the impact of Chinese and Western medicine on literature and art because they reveal not only the ideological shift of pioneers and scholars but also the impact of Western medicine on public life and the working-class population.

In this paper, the history of medical science and literature between 1906 and 1946 will be separated into three chronological parts during which they had distinctive features:

- 1) Late Qing period (1906-1912);
- 2) Nanjing national government period (1919-1937);
- 3) Anti-Japanese War period (1937-1946).

By analyzing historical, primary sources and comparing key literary works, I will prove that the scientific conflict went beyond academic debate and resulted in a series of shifts in mass culture and societal attitude toward “the West”,

which finally led to a call for integrating Western and Chinese medicine at the end of the 1940s.

The methodology of this research involves primary sources gathering & analysis, comparative studies of historical situations and events, and textual analysis of key literature (mostly fiction) in each historical period listed above. I will analyze the continuity and change in the representation of Western and Chinese medicine in Chinese literature from 1906 to 1946. In the analysis of all three time periods, a brief history of medical science will be followed by their representation in representative Chinese literature. I will focus on works from four representative litterateurs: Liu E (1857-1909), Lu Xun (1881-1936), and Ba Jin (1904-2005). This structure of research is expected to show writers' changing attitudes towards Western science and TCM in this era and the cultural implication of the "West learning" wave.

2. Traditional Chinese Medicine as a Symbol of Salvaging China from Colonization and Imperialism: 1906-1919

2.1. Missionary Medicine and the Introduction of Western Medical Science in China

In the first half of the 19th century, western medicine entered China in the form of "missionary science". In the early stage, the Qing government was able to control and judge Western medicine, but the introduction of Western technology was still a "subtle shock" to the traditional Qing societal organization. (Hao, 2005) The general attitude of the Qing society and court to Western medicine gradually changed from "doubt and misbelief" to "shock and acceptance" and then to "anxiety and worry". The success of Western medicine practitioners in suppressing cowpox in 1805 earned recognition on a small scale. Towards the 1830s, the establishment of Western hospitals was for the first time not hindered and discouraged by the Qing central court. (Bridgman & Williams, 1835)

In 1881, Li Hongzhang established the "North Ocean Academy of Medicine" [*Bei Yang Yi Xue Tang*], which was the first official school of medicine in China. (Gao, 1991) With the help of missionary physician J.K. Mackonzi, Li was able to incorporate Western medical science into the naval force (Hao, 2005). Missionary medicine was gradually able to drift away from religious purposes and expand its professional medical institutions at the end of the 19th century. (Liu, 2017) Some scholars believe that the effectiveness of Western medicine "convinced Qing people [to believe in Western medicine]". (Dong, 2008) However, the acceptance of Western medicine largely remained among a small percentage of officials and didn't reach most of the public. In 1883, the public was "ignorant to the newly established first missionary hospital in Suzhou" and a lot of people objected to the introduction of 'western medicine'. (Hao 2005)

2.2. Conflict between Western and Chinese Medicine

Despite the success of Western medicine approaching the end of the 19th cen-

tury, during the early stages of the introduction of Western medicine, “even the practitioners that learned both [Western and Chinese medicine] had a tendency of being biased towards Chinese medicine”. (Hao, 2005: p. 24) Overall, the attitude of the Qing emperors and the public was that “other cultures around the world are unable to develop a culture or science that is as valuable and advanced as that from China.” (Wu, 1915) Because of the general disapproval of Western medicine, TCM was dominant until the opening of the 20th century when Western and Chinese physicians started to “confront” each other.

The conflict between Western and Chinese medical science was deepened by the wave of “West learning”, since it cultivated a generation of Chinese scholars who received a Western education and tended to examine TCM in a western way. After the Qing government was forced to open up the “national gate” in 1900, some Chinese medicine practitioners started to argue for “West learning” in the medical sphere and improving Chinese medicine with the advanced Western body of knowledge. Ding Fubao, for instance, was a famous medical scientist that learned in Japan until 1909. After coming back, he criticized TCM harshly and argued for a revolution in medical science. (Ma et al., 1993) This wave of learning “divided the medical sphere in China into two” (Hao, 2005) and caused conflict between Chinese and Western medical practitioners.

Western medicine practitioners attacked TCM practitioners mainly for two reasons. First, their medical practices didn’t have a nationwide standard. TCM practitioners mainly gained authority from their teacher-student relationship and from classical half-science-half-religion works. (Andrews, 2014) Western science in China, in comparison, took action to establish schools and professional institutions that mimic the West in establishing rigorous standards of cultivating medical practitioners and curing people. Second, their inseparable relationship with religious practices. The fact that TCM practitioners worked individually resulted in them having to use religious appeal to attract people and gain credibility.

Despite Western critics of Chinese medicine, the large number of Chinese medical practitioners enabled TCM to be dominant in most of the country and to serve almost the whole population. Also, the high expense of using Western medicine made TCM the ideal choice for normal citizens in China. The public largely remained unaware of the Western attacks on TCM. Also, as I will later show, the pioneering scholars who did know the backwardness of TCM still saw TCM as a symbol of rebelling against “the West”.

2.3. The Pressing of the Colonization World Order and Call for “Saving Country”: *The Travels of Lao Can*

One of the major themes of late Qing literary works was “the corruptness of the Qing government and ways to save the ill China”. This continued into the literature of the Republic of China era. In the four major novels of denunciation in this period—*the travels of Lao Can*, *Bizarre Happenings Eyewitnessed over Two Decades*, *A Flower in a Sinful Sea*, and *Exposure of the Official World* – TCM was generally depicted as a positive culture and even used as a symbolic redemp-

tion of corrupted China in *the travels of Lao Can*. (Liu, 2015, Republished in 2015 by Dong Xi Publishing Center). When Western sciences were discussed or evaluated, which occurred far less than the description of TCM, the writers tended to see it as “the other” and a symbol of the colonizing forces. (Yu, 2020; republished in 2020)

In *The Travels of Lao Can*, E narrated Lao Can’s journey around China and described the Boxer rebellion in the countryside. He criticized the Qing government for its corrupt officials and inability to protect the general public. Lao Can, the protagonist of the novel, is an idealistic traveler who learned TCM and various other traditional Chinese “craftmanship” [*shouyi*]. Like other “hand-bell healers”, he travels through the country with a bell and saved people without asking for huge amounts of money. (Figure 1 & Figure 2) Lao Can attempts to



Figure 1. Handbell healer waiting for business.



Figure 2. A handbell healer using handbell to attract customer (an illustrator in *The Travels of Lao Can*).

“correct injustice, change attitudes towards women, and engage in philosophical discussions about China’s future”. (Mair, 2010)

Guan observed that *the Travels of Lao Can* “contained almost all major subjects in late Qing literature”, which made it plausible for *The travels of Lao Can* to fall into all major categories of late Qing literature. (Guan, 2014) These subjects include:

- 1) Depiction of upright and/or harsh officials, a feature of denunciation novels.
- 2) Conveying writers’ aspirations directly through conversations between characters, a feature of political novels.
- 3) A detective talent of the main character (Lao Can), a feature of detective novels.
- 4) Classical Account of traveling stories (Guan, 2014).

That it is a combination of various late Qing literary styles makes it a representation of Qing litterateurs’ attitude towards TCM, which was strikingly positive. Lao Can’s identity as a TCM practitioner is a metaphor for his “responsibility to save the nation from Qing and Western imperialism”. (Wang & Yi, 2022) This symbolism can be seen throughout the passage. For instance, at the beginning of the book, Lao Can dreams of a sinking boat, symbolizing the collapsing old China. Lao Can has the aspiration of saving China, which is shown not only through direct depiction of conversations but also through Lao Can’s symbolic medical activities. (Wang, 2017) The fact that Lao Can is a “hand-bell healer” and needs to travel throughout the country allows new stories and incidents to happen and gives E space to show the sufferings that were taking place in China. (Chen, 2022) This gave Lao Can plenty of opportunities to not only see but also change the unjust reality of late Qing China.

E addressed argued for a revival of TCM in the context of Western colonization and collapse of Qing dynasty. Lin observed that “the chivalrous and romantic Lao Can was the last try of Qing literati to argue for the collapsing Chinese “old culture”. (Lin, 1984) Unlike later works (for instance, *Mirror of the medical world* and *Father’s illness*), *the Travels of Lao Can* depicted TCM in a positive way and was largely ignorant of the arrival of Western medical science. This absence of Western impact can substantiate the argument that TCM was still dominant in most parts of China, though literati’s attitude towards it was starting to diverge.

2.4. *Mirror of the Medical World: A Prelude for Writers’ Long-Lasting Hatred of TCM*

While E’s depiction of medicine in China was limited to TCM, *Mirror of the medical world* contains description of TCM, Western medicine, and the conflict between. *Mirror of the medical world* is a 1908 novel recently proven to be the later edition of *Revelation in the Medical World (Yijie Xianxing Ji)* because of similarities in content and style. (Yang, Zhu, & Pan, 2012) These two works were written by Yu Wenxiao, a medical practitioner in the Shanghai Red Cross Society. The *Revelation in the Medical World* was about the story of Cheng Ruzhou

and his son Cheng Rongfan, two TCM practitioners. Cheng Ruzhou gained fame “by chance” without much knowledge about medical practices. Later on, his inability to cure diseases was “revealed” and caused a huge scandal. His son, Cheng Rongfan, gained fame in medicine by making friends with officials and wealthy people, and later married Pinpin, the child of a high official.

The stances that Yu take is different from that of *the Travels of Lao Can*: it criticized the incapability and corruptness of late Qing TCM doctors harshly. He attacked TCM for three reasons: 1) TCM is not institutionalized or standardized, and everybody can practice it without professional knowledge; 2) TCM practitioners gained fame and recognition by affiliating themselves to wealthy or powerful families; 3) the morality of TCM practitioners in the past was fading away. (Zhang, 2022) Interestingly, his harsh comments on TCM echoed that of Western medicine practitioners in this era, but he didn’t align himself with the “exotic physicians”. Though considering Western medicine as something that Chinese doctors should learn from, he attacked Western physicians as well for them not sharing their works with Chinese doctors. In the introduction of *Mirror of the medical world*, he said that “Western physicians criticized we Chinese for not understanding hygiene” and that “Western people discovered ... that when people die, they become dust and dirt. There’s no such thing as afterlife or Yinguo [the Buddhism idea that actions in the present life determine the after-life]. But they are unwilling to share that with us because of 1) their missionary goals... and 2) their fear of revolutions.” (Yu, 2020) It is important to note that he said “we Chinese physicians” and believed that changes needed to be made to TCM and Chinese medical sphere in general rather than that TCM needed to be banished, a stance that later litterateurs tended to take.

In this sense, this novel is a prelude because in the following decades (until wartime), criticizing TCM became a convention for most scholars and litterateurs. (Deng, 2004) Yu’s ideology was advanced among late Qing literati. He resembles later writers in that he searched for ways of improving Chinese medical care in Western works, but examined Western medicine in a critical and cautious manner. Also, he is showing signs of losing confidence in Chinese culture and society, as he agreed with Western critics that Chinese people didn’t “know hygiene”. (Yu, 2020) This is a continual drive for Chinese pioneers to, as Rogaski observed, establish the “Chinese modernity” on Western ideas of hygiene (Rogaski, 2014).

3. Rivalry between Western and Chinese Medicine and the Denunciation of TCM in Literature: 1919-1937

3.1. The Dilemma of TCM and Governmental Support of Western Medicine

In this period, historical records suggest that governmental support of Western medical science peaked and caused a direct confrontation between decades-long Western institutions and new TCM organizations that were established in a re-

sponse to the rising Western medical forces. The first person to argue for “the denunciation of TCM” was Yu Yue, who said that “we should cancel all Chinese doctors and keep some of Chinese medicine and herbs”. (Yu, 1969) Afterwards, the TCM community had a tendency of dividing into advocates of traditional medicine and reformers that supported the introduction of Western methodology. For instance, Yu Wenxiao, the writer of *Mirror of the medical world*, was a typical advocate of “West learn”. This movement of “canceling TCM” had a huge social impact. For concerned writers and social activists, the cancellation of TCM was a symbol of denouncing the old China and protecting China from the West by learning from it. These advocates eventually led the government to ban TCM officially from practicing without governmental, which was essentially Western, evaluation and approval.

This governmental attack on TCM resulted from the fact that, by the time of the May Fourth movement, the TCM practitioners had a dilemma of too many people without organization. Similar to the scenario depicted in *Mirror of the medical world*, Chinese medical practitioners lacked a standardized way to prove efficacy and gain fame, resulting in their reliance on Confucian texts and affiliation with merchants (Zheng, 2018). Learner of Western medical sciences viewed TCM as “inferior” and “lack official regulation”. However, unlike previous critics on TCM, these attacks in 1910s and 1920s gained official support and wanted to totally eradicate TCM rather than reforming it.

Deng observed that towards 1910s and 1920s, the conflict between Western and Chinese medical practitioners became a political competition for power. In 1929, the government decreed four laws, known as the *laws regarding the registration of old physicians*, which was essentially a ban to all unregulated TCM activities. (Liu, 2017) The arguments that Yu Yuxiu, a supporter of these laws, gave were similar to that by European physicians in the 19th century. Because of that discourse he was criticized as “the slave of the West” by an influential Chinese physician, Lu Yuanlei. (Lu, 1928) He was adding a political assumption to his argument: as a Chinese, supporting Western sciences was the same as supporting Western imperialism and betraying his nation.

3.2. Increasing Representation of TCM in Literary Works: *Father's Illness and Tomorrow*

As this scientific rivalry grew political, it also entailed ideological and cultural conflict. Lu Xun exemplified the short-term impact of “West learn” on Chinese society and societal ideology—enlightening a small percentage of pioneers and thus creating tension between two “unintegrated” parties. This situation lasted until the Japanese war and the rise of PRC, during which political leaders supported the unification of Western and Chinese medicine rather than supporting one of them, which would essentially be “advocating for separation”. (Andrews, 2014)

As medical sciences were increasingly considered a symbol of organizational methods, culture, and even ideology, the depiction of “medicine” “physicians”

and “hospitals” was done by various scholars in different styles. Lu Xun, the most famous writer of this period, harshly criticized TCM and quested a “Chinese modernity” based on advanced sciences. Unlike previous writers, including E and Wenxiao, Lu Xun saw the development of science as an unbiased “tool”, rather than a cultural activity. At a young age, he advocated the introduction of Western sciences, or to say the “West learn” wave, but after studying in Japan and observing “Indifferent Chinese students making fun of human experimentation of other Chinese”, he realized that sciences couldn’t determine culture and ideology. Though still advocating for West learn, he dedicated himself to writing in an attempt to “awake the public”. (Chen, 2022) Some scholars argued that his background as a learner of Western sciences made him see the gap between the ideology of him and the general public as a representation of “a societal illness”, and “try to depict and cure [the mental trauma and illness of the public] in a Western scientific way”. (Li, 2006)

In several of Lu’s works, he dramatized the absurdity of certain TCM practitioners, and showed the need to reform Chinese medicine by detailed depiction of families being hurt by immoral TCM doctors. In *Father’s Illness*, he described the real story of his father, who paid TCM practitioner when sick and died due to ineffective medical practices. Lu described in detail the eccentric and hard-to-find medical materials that the TCM practitioner asked his father to find. For instance, that famous TCM practitioner asked his father to find a pair of cricket that are “original couples [*yuan pei*]” from the same hole. Lu Xun ironically commented that “it seems that virginity is also important for insects. Changing a husband or wife disqualifies a cricket from being a medical material”.

Unlike Yu, who criticized the harmful and corrupted TCM practitioners in an academic and argumentative way, Lu depicted the specific scenarios in which ineffective but expensive TCM cures killed hopeless patients. This is even more evident in *Tomorrow*, in which a hopeless mother with her ill child saw a TCM doctor, but died in less than a day after taking the TCM pill called “the pill that saves children’s lives”. Even towards the ending Lu didn’t tell the exact disease that the child had, but focused on depicting the behavior of the ignorant public and leaving moral judgments to the public.

This is a clear sign that Lu was trying to “cure the cultural and ideological disease” of his readers rather than making an argument that TCM was harmful. Lu Xun’s works revealed the short term impact of the introduction of Western medicine: a group of litterateurs examined TCM from a Western perspective and criticized it ideologically rather than academically. On one hand, this led to wider acceptance of Western medical science and enabled it to contribute to the national infrastructure. On the other, Lu’s critics impeded the integration of Western and Chinese medical sciences and ignored the possible problems that Western medical sciences and public health measures might have. For instance, Ba Jin (1904-2005) was concerned about the scarcity and unequal distribution of medical resources in new, Western-styled hospitals in China.

4. Anxiety of Modernity and the Call for a Chinese Modern Medical Science: 1937-1946

4.1. Integration of Western and Chinese Medical Science: Institutionalization

While in the short run Western medical sciences created a conflict within Chinese medical sphere, in the long run, intensifying communication and mutual learning tended to integrate Western and Chinese bodies of knowledge and create a unified Chinese modern medical care system. Scholars had argued that the integration of Western and Chinese medical practiced started from as early as 1920s, when TCM practitioners responded to Western attacks by institutionalizing and modernizing TCM. (Zhang, 2022; Andrews, 2014; Rogaski, 2014) However, by analyzing key literary works, I will argue in this part of the paper that the integration of Western and Chinese medicine in official records was limited to the governmental and academic spheres, and that the wider public still saw Western and Chinese medical care as two different systems and felt the tension between the two ideologies represented by TCM and Western medicine. This problem wasn't resolved until the emergence of barefoot doctors during the Maoist period, during which the integration of these three medical forces (Western, Chinese, barefoot Maoist) was described in several literary works. (Gross, 2018)

From a political perspective, the institutionalization of TCM initiated after 1929, when the introduction of Western medicine increasingly competed with TCM and required it to modernize and qualify itself. Zheng has had a detailed analysis of the establishment of organized TCM societies in China and the shift from family and teacher-student based rural TCM structures to modern TCM institutions that could act as a coherent force against Western sciences. (Zheng, 2018) One of the initial efforts to institutionalize TCM was the establishment of Central Chinese Medical Center, which was described by scholars as “an malformed half-official and half-private institute”. (Liu, 2017) Western organizational methods had a strong impact on TCM community and led to a combination of Western methodology and Chinese knowledge system in several TCM institutes and organizations, including the Central Chinese Medical Center and the National Physician Bulletin. However, these institutes did not revive TCM as expected since they were still “half-private” and didn't have enough political influence. Their impact remained academical and somehow political, but never managed to resolve the ideological and cultural conflict that Lu described.

The Westernization and Institutionalization of TCM as well as the incorporation of TCM into the power system was the central theme of the history of medical science in 1929-1949. Signs of competition for discourse and power lasted into wartime hygienic and medical policies. In 1937, Chinese medicine association (Zhongyi Weiyuan Hui) was established by the government to regulate and guide TCM practitioners during wartime to better control medical resources. (Zhu, 2016) Several influential politicians supported governmental laws that

recognize and regulate TCM practitioners for several reasons, including that “there [were] only 3000 Western physicians in China, which were far less than TCM practitioners”. (Liu, 2017)

In as late as 1936, TCM “was legally allowed” as the *Regulations on Chinese Medicine* was promulgated, but TCM practitioners weren’t represented in the department of health. (Zhang, 2022) It was until the 1943 *physicians’ law* that TCM and Western medicine were treated equal. (Liu, 2017) This delayed recognition of TCM resulted in cities dominated by Western-styled hospitals, whose faculty and resources were too scarce to support the whole public. Also, the profit driven hospitals caused wide societal disparity, as described by Ba Jin, and caused a re-evaluation of the ideological debate that Lu brought about decades ago.

4.2. *Ward No.4* and Ba Jin: The Uncertain and Worried Public

Analyzing representative wartime literary works reveals public attitude towards officially recognized Western public health system and the modern ideological trends. Ba Jin described the uncertainty of the public towards the emerging new Western-styled medicine and health care in several of his books. Unlike previous decades when most of the public still adopted TCM, the 1940s saw a growing acceptance and spread of Western sciences and ideology resulting from governmental support and increasing radical reformers like Lu. In this context, a large percentage of people were struggling to adapt to this new societal trend and its negative impacts on society. In *Spring [Chun]*, Ba depicted a family whose members hold different opinions on whether to see a Western or TCM doctor. He was concerned with the tension between old and new culture, and the trauma it left on some people unable to adapt.

Ward No.4 is a novel about Ba’s experience in a Western hospital. In the fourth Ward of this hospital, he acquainted several patients who were unable to pay the high price of Western-styled Medical care and died painfully. Zhu, the patient on bed six, was burnt when working for a large warehouse, but his boss refused to compensate him and pay for his medical expenses. He eventually died in hospital without medical treatment. Most faculties at the hospital were depicted as indifferent, greedy, and snobbish, only serving rich patients.

Ba Jin depicted the structural problem of the organizing China in a Western-style. A lack of governmental welfare system and scarcity of qualified medical care resource created a large amount of lower-class people who couldn’t afford Western medicine or find a reliable TCM practitioner. He symbolized this transitional period of Chinese society with the tension between TCM and Western medicine in this new era. Unlike Lu Xun and Liu E, he presented TCM alongside Western medicine in his work and therefore dramatized it. In *Chun*, for instance, Western- and Chinese-styled doctors appeared in pair and became a visible conflict.

He approached the ideological conflict, which was triggered by the introduction of Western sciences and discussed by Lu, in a less biased perspective. He

presented Western medical sciences as dominant, but depicted the pain that patients suffered in Western hospitals. In *Ward No.4*, more than two thirds of patients in the fourth ward recovered, but Ba himself suffered from a failed surgery. Unlike Lu and Liu, he didn't take a stance in this societal conflict, but depicted the actual material and mental dilemma that normal people were facing.

Like Lu and Liu, Ba Jin used disease to symbolize the problems that China was facing and searched for "cures". Wang Yu has observed that the lung diseases in Ba's novels symbolized the "failure of societal movements and, in some cases, the problematic society". (Wang, 2022) In *Ward No.4*, nurse Yang, the only faculty that cared poor patients and cheered up the narrator, is a symbol of hope and the new generation that quested a Chinese modernity without relying on Western ideology or technology. Compared to Lu and Liu, he was aware of the harmful effects of both TCM traditions and Western organizational methods. The impact of Western sciences on him was less striking and noticeable—unlike Liu, who considered Western sciences the opposite of Qing, and Lu, who tried to change civic ideology with Western methods, Ba did not address Western sciences intentionally. By using symbolic depiction and narration, he presented the problem that a generation of people couldn't find their place in the China-West binary. The tension between Western and Chinese ideology created by the "West Learn" wave caused a wide civic anxiety and needed a "Chinese modernity". (Gao, 2014) This problem wasn't solved until the Maoist period, when the bare foot doctors combined Western and Chinese medical resource and created a medical force that served the wider public with modern technology and institution. (Fang, 2019)

5. Conclusion

The conflict between Chinese and Western physicians manifested an ideological debate over the efficacy of existing, Chinese sciences and organizational methods, which left a huge impact on literature and other cultural activities at the time. Though writers in the 1900s and 1910s showed strong hatred toward Western medicine and considered TCM a symbol of salvaging China, writers after the May Fourth movement increasingly considered TCM as outdated and harmful, thus valuing Western medical science as a means to "save our people". During wartime, writers started to realize the negative side of Western sciences, which was mainly the geographically and demographically uneven distribution of resources and quested ways to combine both bodies and knowledge while examining both critically.

Despite the big shifts in attitude towards TCM and Western medicine summarized above, there's a big striking similarity through the forty years: the themes of "medicine" and "public health care" were continually important to and intensively discussed by pioneering writers. Though taking different stances, they all considered the improvement of Chinese medical practices a key step towards establishing the "Chinese modernity".

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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