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虛構拮抗文學史：郭松棻作品中的新面向

Fiction contra Historiography: New Dimensions in the Works of Guo Songfen

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本論文係陳鼎貳君（R04122017）在國立臺灣大學外國語文學系完成之碩士學位論文，於民國108年6月27日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明

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摘要

本文目的有三：其一為批判在臺灣文學史書寫歷程中所奠定的意識形態，及其對目前領域整體視域、方法、政治向度所設限制；其二是以有別以往的觀點與方法，發掘郭松棻小說中尚未受到重視與討論的新面向；其三乃以郭松棻為範例於台灣文學測度、開拓比較文學的可能。在方法論上本文以西方馬克思主義美學為重要理論資源與典範，在文本細讀的基礎之上，描述並發掘形式與修辭層次上的歷史與知識論意義。

本文緒論追溯臺灣文學史書寫如何以「抵抗意志」與「本真需求」為原則建立臺灣文學的意識形態與烏托邦範式。第一章發展緒論所述，說明臺灣文學史意識形態如何建立在寫實主義與現代主義的美學與知識論基礎上，並試圖證明兩者互相涵攝的關係。第二章重探日本近代思想史接受西方現代性時展現的內在辯證以何種方式反映在近代文論與小說敘事觀點問題，藉此分析郭松棻小說《驚婚》中關鍵的法庭場景與第一人稱敘事段落。第三章研究福樓拜小說美學對郭松棻短篇小說〈月印〉、〈月嗥〉、〈雪盲〉可能的影響，說明郭松棻如何運用錯置修辭客體、諷喻、敘事盲點、無用美學化語句等技巧否定地挑戰小說反映、救贖歷史的正向關係。第四章則從歷史虛構、時間政治與神話方法三個角度重探郭松棻在〈今夜星光燦爛〉發展出的晚期修辭風格與主要意象，批評前行研究流行的救贖說，並說明此一風格亦觸及臺灣本位文學史書寫中殘留的民國問題。本文結論則再以「傳統」與「世界文學」為軸線脈絡化本文的書寫過程並提出對臺灣文學未來的建議。

本文尚有兩篇附論：其一強調已成常識的「想像共同體」論中內建的形式限制，並從西方馬克思主義提出辯證性較強的國族想像；其二從〈草〉文中在場的黑格爾與不在場的馬克思、恩格斯著手，從哲學與敘事觀點探索郭松棻從政治轉向創作的淵源。

關鍵詞：郭松棻、臺灣文學史書寫、意識形態、西方馬克思主義、比較文學

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Abstract

This thesis expects to achieve three goals: first, I aim to critique the ideology consolidated by Taiwan literary historiography and the limits it has set on the vision, methodology and political dimension of the discipline; second, from new perspectives I try to locate dimensions that have not been considered or discussed in details in Guo Songfen's works; third, I view my reading of Guo's works as an experiment to measure the possibility of conducting comparative works with Western tradition in Taiwan literature. I refer to Western Marxist aesthetic as the methodological paradigm, and I wish to unearth the historical and epistemological significance in literary forms on the basis of close reading.

In the introduction I argue that Taiwan literary historiographies establish the utopian telos of Taiwan literature according to two principles: "will to resist" and "demand for authenticity." The first chapter follows the argument developed in the introduction and illustrates that the ideology is actually based on aesthetic and epistemological premises of realism and modernism, and I strive to find proof for the inherent interrelation within their ostensible antagonism. In chapter two I revisit modern Japanese intellectual history to tease out the immanent dialectic in its contact with Western modernity, and I observe how this dialectic is reflected in modern literary criticism and problematizes the narrative perspective in prose fiction. I use what I find to read a critical scene in Guo's novel *Jinghun*. In the third chapter I study the possible influence of Flaubertian aesthetic on Guo's stories "Moon Seal," "Wailing Moon," and "Snow Blind," demonstrating how Guo uses rhetorical techniques such as displaced object, irony, narrative uncertainty and useless aestheticization to negatively challenge the affirmative reflective relation between fiction and history. In chapter four I research the late style and imagery in Guo's "Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight" from three angles: historical fiction, politics of temporalities, and mythical method, so as to criticize the well-accepted "redemption hypothesis" in previous studies and to illustrate how Guo's late style touches upon the remnant of Republic of China in Taiwan-centered literary historiography. In the epilogue I contextualize my thesis in two axes: "tradition" and "the world," and propose my advice for the future of Taiwan literature.

There are two additional excursuses: one stresses the inherent formal limits in the common sense theorization and application of "imagined communities" and

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suggests a more dialectical version of nationalism from Western Marxism; the other reads Guo's story "Clover" from the presence of Hegel and the absence of Marx and Engels to explain Guo's definitive turn from political activity to literature from the story's philosophical aspect and narrative problem.

Keywords: Guo Songfen, Taiwan literary historiography, Ideology, Western Marxism, Comparative literature

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A Note on Texts and Format

Among Guo's modest oeuvre, six of the stories: *yueyin* 月印 [Moon Seal], *yuehao* 月嗥, *benpao de muqin* 奔跑的母親 [Running Mother], *cao* 草 [Clover], *xuemang* 雪盲 [Snow Blind], and *jinye xingguang canlan* 今夜星光燦爛 [Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight], have been translated by various translators and collected in *Running Mother and Other Stories*, published by Columbia University Press. In the following citation, I will specify the page numbers of the original text followed by the translated version, separating them by a slash. Modification of translation will be specified.

My primary texts include *guo songfen ji* 郭松棻集 [Selected Works by Guo Songfen], published by Qianwei, and *benpao de muqing* 奔跑的母親 [Running Mother] published by Maitian. Guo revised several of his stories in the eighties and the nineties. I choose the final version of the stories in the book form, and I will not include the differences between versions into the discussion. "Moon Seal" underwent very minor changes in terms of diction and deletion of unnecessary passages when included in the Maitian collection; "Snow Blind" also underwent minor changes when included in the *Writings*. The ending of "Wailing Moon" was completely rewritten when this piece was collected in *Writings*. Guo supplemented some passages to the last section of "Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight" and some sentences were modified in terms of wording when the story was included in the Maitian collection. It is notable that both "Clover" is an extended version of a shorter early work *hanxioucao* 含羞草 [Sensitive Plant].

Except for the first mention, the English translation of titles of Mandarin Chinese and Japanese texts I consult or tackle in their original will be given upon every

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mention for the sake of convenience, but I retain the French titles of Flaubert's works. The titles of German texts will be given in translation.

In this thesis I generally follow the rules set by MLA Handbook, seventh edition. Considering the primary and secondary texts in Chinese, for documentation and citation in this thesis I follow the format prescribed by *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies* and *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly*, which require authors to provide romanized titles of the original materials they cite. For Chinese materials I follow *pinyin*; for Japanese materials I follow the modified Hepburn system of romanization. Chinese and Japanese names mentioned in the thesis follow the East Asian tradition: surname first. I remove the hyphens in the names but retain the original spelling not in *pinyin* as long as I can trace the source; I use *pinyin* for names whose romanized version cannot be found. This general rule does not apply to names of authors who also writes in English.

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吾々の眼前を塞いでゐる暗黒な絶望的な時代がその儘、永久的なのか、それとも吾々にユートピアのやうに思われてゐる楽しき社会が必然性をもって現れ来るのか。感傷や空想を雑じへない厳正な科学的思索のみが鮮明してくれるだろう。真実なる智識は現象を解釈するにあって、吾々を深い苦痛に引きづつてゆくかも知れないが、併しあらゆる現象は歴史的法則の示顕せられた姿であって呪詛すべきものではないと思ふ。幸福は苦痛と努力なしには達成せられないであらう。只吾々はこのグルミーな社会に処するには正しき智識による歴史の動向を見究め、いたづらなる絶望や堕落に陥ることなく、正しく生きなければならぬと思ふ。

龍瑛宗、「パパイヤのある街」

You were silly like us; your gift survived it all:
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

W. H. Auden, “In Memory of W. B. Yeats”

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Introduction

Fiction contra Historiography?

On the Affirmative Character of Taiwan Literary Historiography

The title metonymically demonstrates the conversation, if not conflict, between the two interpretive poles that lie at the core of the thesis. The former stands for my concerns for, and my experiment in, the new approaches to the aesthetic dimension in fiction itself; the latter epitomizes the ideology and interpretive convention that in the first place contributed to the establishment of Taiwan literature as a discipline. This ideology is established and exemplified by various literary historiographies. Within the field of Taiwan literature, literary historiographies, by their unabashed self-reflexive methodology and political partisanship, not only provide the theoretical premises and necessary contextualization for any discussion, but also condition the production of literary criticism by their potent ideological presuppositions (Lin 4). I propose that a new critical reading of a specific author, a specific work, or a specific phenomenon necessarily ought to force any critic to review, to reassess, to challenge, to critique, and to adjust theoretical and ideological consensus, common sense, and presuppositions of the discipline instead of reproducing and reinforcing them.

Moreover, despite its overt political character, the institutional authority of historiography of Taiwan literature is particularly vulnerable in the face of mutability of contemporary society. It consolidates and canonizes; it give meanings to the past for the present, but it cannot renew itself fast enough to adapt to the ever changing present. It may be unfair to ask literary historiographers to react to contemporary phenomena in real time, but if literary historiographies to a great extent determine the critical perspective (or perspectives, if there are) for the discipline and establish the

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canon by selection and exclusion, the institutional authority will cast undeniable influence on future critics. Another danger of historiography is that even though literary works are conditioned by the surroundings of thier time, historiography, by renouncing its scientific and objective dimension, is an enterprise that absorbs the specificity of work and synthesizes them according to its ideology in good faith. The distinct historical backgrounds have to be synthesized into the ideology of historiography. A historiography with a teleological goal provides a semblance of reconciliation of particular works of art and the historical account: that every work of art appears for a reason and reflects the reality. This semblance of reconciliation obscures (despite the calamities in the past, the polyphonic nature of Taiwan literature will create a broadminded republic of letters in the future), or insidiously lays bare (how dare you not join this great enterprise), the irreconcilable aspects that comprise the historiography. Literary historiographers working in Taiwan may not shun political ideological claims, but the ideological premises of the historiography that allows these claims receive less attention. As an especially new academic discipline with a strong political character, Taiwan literature excels at analyses of power dynamic in the cultural field: ideological criticism and the sociological study of contexts have been the two most striking strengths of the research. Since the eighties, however, under the aegis of multiculturalism, historicism, political liberalism and humanism, not many scholars question the political drive that dictates their own discipline. The ethical rationale is impeccable, but the political claim and technical aspects of literary criticism deserve further discussion.

Even though critics of younger generations working in the field have become less politically forthright and tended to opt for other critical concepts (many from cultural studies) to delineate their politics after the early two thousands, the dominant

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political motif of the discipline, I would argue, remains Taiwanese nationalism, and the momentum that propels this motif is a corrective urge that strives to redeem the histories repressed and destroyed by the colonial administration and subsequent authoritarian regime of Kuomintang. This corrective impulse and the urgent political thrust forged the militantly affirmative character of the discipline. Its contribution in securing a institutional field to mine and preserve the archive, to justify and reevaluate repressed cultural productions, and to establish a critical convention for future literary works is undeniable and ought to be recognized. But one has to ask, does the impetus sustain, and does the political claim remain valid after two decades? Ultimately, the political legitimacy of Taiwan literary historiography essentially originates from emotional and moralistic claims ("Rupture in Literary History" 65). It seems to be an imperative that critics of Taiwanese fiction should identify historical and political references and should interpret literary texts in the direction of debates on jarring ideologies, colonial history, national identities, and the politics of memory.

Yet even the benevolent, morally valid political consciousness can become reified and simplified to the extent of mechanical knee-jerk reaction that leaves the whole discipline inert and stranded. My fundamental concern is that the discipline is in dire need of a self-reflexive dimension from the inside rather than from rivaling ideological camps. To do so, a review and criticism of the epistemological foundation of the discipline is necessary. My doubts regarding the theoretical premises and methodology lead to the problematic of this thesis. One of the major goals this thesis wishes to achieve is to critique the affirmative character that confines the possibility of advancement of the discipline.

The epistemological problems and ideological proclivity of the discipline more conspicuously surface in a particularly awkward case to locate in Taiwan literary

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historiography. Guo Songfen 郭松棻, a Taiwanese fiction writer known for his difficult style, is such a problematic figure. Receiving considerable attention in the late two thousands, Guo's fiction, which moves fluidly between realist narrative, modernist self-reflexive style, psychological mimesis, and enigmatic allegory, more than ever renovates landscape of Taiwan prose fiction. By dabbling in the history of White Terror his fiction accommodates an unprecedented dangerous political dimension that modernist writers in the previous two decades could not have imagined.[1] On the other hand, in terms of subject matter, Guo's affinity with the nativist realist writers is undeniable, but his aesthetic sensibility and the difficulty of prose far exceeds most of the nativist writers. This is exactly why Guo is a case worthy of research, because I find the label of the late-coming modernist writer that most critics agrees upon inadequate. Guo's subject matter, Taiwanese intellectuals of different generations; the temporal frame of his fiction, the late forties to the early eighties; the setting of his fiction, Taiwan and the US; and finally his writing career through early eighties to the nineties, all of the above position this writer at the center of ruptures in Taiwan literary history ("Rupture in Literary History" 67). Guo's fiction epitomizes and reflects the profound influence of cataclysmic events in modern Taiwan.

The ideology of Taiwan literary historiography can be explained by the dialectic of ideology and utopia proposed by Fredric Jameson. In order to prevent instrumentalization of cultural critique and to allow the space in critique to think the politics of collectivity and revolution, critics must grasp that "the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily Utopian" (*Political Unconscious*

[1] Of course it seems unfair for most postwar modernist writers writing before him, because Guo wrote in the US and some twenty years later. The temporal (laxer political constraint) and spatial distance allows Guo a wider margin to approach historical taboo.

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286). How do they interact? In his quite surprising analysis of mass culture (or "Culture Industry"), even the "the production of false consciousness and the symbolic reaffirmation . . . cannot be grasped as one of sheer violence" because it "must necessarily involve a complex strategy of rhetorical persuasion in which substantial incentives are offered for ideological adherence. We will say that such incentives, as well as the impulses to be managed by the mass cultural text, are necessarily Utopian in nature," no matter what one discusses here is performed by nationalism, revolutionary politics or fascism (287). Jameson observes that the "Marxian 'negative hermeneutic'" when "practiced in isolation . . . justifies the 'mechanical' or purely instrumental nature" (291), while "the Utopian or 'positive hermeneutic,'" when "practiced in similar isolation," would relax "into . . . the edifying and the moralistic" (292). The two poles must interact in a "reflexive play across these categories" (286), so Jameson then argues that "a Marxist negative hermeneutic, a Marxist practice of ideological analysis proper, must in the practical work of reading and interpretation be exercised simultaneously with a Marxist positive hermeneutic, or a decipherment of the Utopian impulse of these same still ideological cultural texts" (296). Even the most negative ideological function must operate according to a postive integral core, and to tease out the positive core, the "*functional* method for describing cultural texts" that serves to reveal and to demythologize must be "articulated with an *anticipatory* one" at the same time (*Political Unconscious* 296).

The ideology of literary historiography obviously fits what Jameson describes theoretically in dialectical terms here, as my analysis of the whole discipline's perseverance to craft a national identity/subjectivity clearly shows. In this introduction I would like to invert Jameson's dialectic: any positive hermeneutic must accompany a negative dialectic, as I aim to illustrate how the concentration on tracing

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a trajectory from the past to the future, Taiwan literature misses its ideological function in the utopian project confines, conditions and finally reifies the utopian telos and misses the present.

In the following part of this introduction I attempt to map out what I mean by ideology of literary historiography through a brief review of crucial historiographical works. I will begin from the foundational text of the discipline, *taiwan wenxue shigang* 台灣文學史綱 [A History of Taiwan Literature] by Ye Shitao 葉石濤. Ye's historiography is based on several premises, or to some extent, imperatives: literature must reflect human life, humanity and its temporal-spatial environment (Ye 212). The inheritance of Taiwan new literature since the Japanese colonial period is the critical spirit of the time and society (187). The goal of Taiwan literature is to establish *minzu fengge* 民族風格, or a national style (217). Taiwan literature is committed literature, endowed with the mission to move and illuminate the common people (249-50). What exemplifies these creeds is obviously nativist realist literature. Westernized modernist literature, in contrast, is deracinated and detached (217), and therefore contradicts and misses the reality in Taiwan (185).[2] The epistemological foundation of Taiwan Literature established by Ye's *A History of Taiwan Literature* has almost become the critical imperative of the discipline, at least for the majority of the nativist scholars. The subsequent scholarly works on Taiwan literary historiography, including the current canonical literary historiography, *A History of Modern Taiwanese Literature* by Chen Fangming 陳芳明, basically inherit most of the political judgment in Ye's work (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 26-29).

[2] These aesthetic creed had been formulated as early as the nativist debates from 1977-79. I will discuss in more details in the first chapter.

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From Ye's work, two crucial critical motifs can be distilled, and I shall illustrate how they have become the dominant strand of among political consciousness in Taiwan literature. Just before I proceed, I should stress that the political claim is not invented solely by Ye himself; rather, it is the consequence of negotiations and competition between cultural discourses for decades. The two motifs may have constructed the two crucial axes of literary criticism, but they do not necessarily directly influence literary production per se. The following discussion, however, is useful to renew and explain the pervading critical common sense.

The first critical motif I want to discuss is the "will to resist." The basic claim is that Taiwan literature, on the whole, is the cultural testimony to, and resistance against (whether inadvertent or self-conscious resistance), the two oppressive authoritarian political regimes: the Japanese colonial administration (1895-1945) and Kuomintang authoritarian rule (1949-1987). After the democratization in the late eighties, this model is extended to any critical response to all kinds of oppressive social institutions according to the teaching of cultural studies (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 26-29; 37-39). I emphasize the subjective, positive, humanist connotation by the word "will." It is a potent and justifiable ideology, because it is ethically just, corresponding to "the corrective urge" as "postcolonial unconscious" (Lazarus 116-17). It upgrades the passive principle that "literature must reflect human life, humanity and its temporal-spatial environment" and supports the claim of committed literature, that literary production can and ought to react to social injustice and intervene (Shie 15). Lin Yunhung 林運鴻 indicates that this "will to resist" and "historical memory" have become the prerequisite for the name "Taiwan literature" (4).

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I would like to stress that this "will to resist" not only presupposes the existence of an object that needs to be criticized if not toppled, but also implies that literary production is endowed with an agency to intervene, and the latter presupposition quite effectively transforms the negative connotation of and passivity within "resistance" into an affirmative, constructive empowerment and political action. This may explain the affinity between Taiwan literature between Anderson's theory of nationalism, identity politics and new historicism, all of which emphasize the formative power of texts the power dynamic they evoke, and promote challenging the authoritative oppression in any social sector.

Franco Moretti criticizes "the sweeping generalization" in literary historiography of any literary form and theme into what can be called "the 'Zeitgeist fallacy'": "once one had defined a rhetorical form one felt authorized to link it directly to the idea . . . in which a whole epoch is supposedly summed up" (Moretti 25). "All rhetorical forms," Moretti continues, "aspire to become the 'Spirit of the Age,' but their very plurality," and simultaneous existence, I would add, "shows us that this term indicates an *aspiration* rather than a reality, and should therefore be employed as a highly useful conceptual tool . . . but not as a fact" (Moretti, 25-26, my emphasis). The fallacy exposes the fact that ideological preference can be a decisive factor to the extent that it arranges a hierarchy between different genres and forms.

Chiu Kueifen 邱貴芬, arguing for women's presence and deserved position in literary historiographies, criticizes that privileging the "will to resist" necessarily expunges apolitical literature, at least that which are not directly involved with or manifestly representing political matters, from historiographies (Chiu 52; 118). Moreover, this interpretive perspective based on a resistance model is much less convincing when tackling contemporary and future works produced without an

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authoritarian regime as a dominant factor (Chiu 118). Yet she overall supports the claim that Taiwan literature as a discipline is an effect and a result produced by oppositional cultural discourses (137), and helps to consolidate a cultural subjectivity from old ideology of "cultural China" or "resisting Japanese imperialism" (140). By substituting discourses for individuals, Chiu's argument is strategic application of an anti-essentialist politics of difference (134). It is in its own way problematic, as I will show below.

The "will to resist" may partially explain why Taiwan literature appears much more militant than other disciplines. It has its historical background, as the commencement of an established national literature paralleled the rise of opposition movement in the political field. As a criterion of literary criticism, this critical motif may risk solely judging the value of a literary work by exterior factors rather than aesthetic merits. One serious problem deriving from this is that the emphasis of ideological analysis falls on determining whether the writer is actually resisting. Depending on the critic's own ideological stance, the analysis of the same set of texts will yield different results. The case I will deal with in chapter two, "the imperial subject literature," can be strictly regarded as collaborationist texts or compassionately understood as the result of an extorted compromise (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 206-07). Postwar modernist lyrics in the sixties can be read as reflecting the poet's "spiritual resistance" or "inner exile" (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 347-78) or simply political quietism and conformism (You 245).

I argue that the "will to resist" ultimately determines the affirmative character of the discipline. The negative criticism that challenges authoritarian monolith always implies a predetermined positive and preferred ways of things. What lies ahead in any criticism according to the logic of resistance, dialectically, is a utopia not yet reached,

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whatever its content. Ideological analysis along the trajectory toward a utopia is useful in cultural analysis, but its affirmative character, I believe, is overstretched. On the one hand, it confines political imagination by simplifying the ways and directions of political resistance. Politics does not always according to oppression and resistance. That Taiwan literary historiography thrives upon the resistance model for at least thirty years suggests this perpetual power dynamic in which the resistance model operates cannot yet be solved. The affirmative character and a moralist euphoria radicalizes the ideological efficacy, preventing critical reflections from within. On the other hand, arguing the other way around that everything is political, as cultural studies may maintain, renders resistance too easily available. The utopian impulse dialectically allows an acknowledgement of the lack of it and a need for it in reality, and discursive analysis, especially in academe, is actually unlikely to shake society. If critics cannot more cautiously approach the "will to resistance," it soon reifies and become a less effective dogma. The affirmative character of Taiwan literature, in the end, dialectically reveals the formidable presence and endurance of a reality that it seeks to intervene and change.

The first critical motif is supported and enhanced by the second motif, the "demand for authenticity." The claim to be authentic is more fundamental than the previous one in that while "resistance" only involves the intention and effect of literary production, "authenticity" concerns the *raison d'être* and value of literature itself, at least for specific genres. In the context of Taiwan literature, the demand for authenticity, I would argue, is *moralized* evaluation of historicity. To determine the authenticity of a certain entity also generates a strong ideological effect, as it directly involves how to perceive, to judge, to include, to exclude, to praise, or to criticize, a social phenomena, a text, a person. I argue that it is this criterion that demarcates

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friend and foe (Lin 12). In this sense the demand for authenticity legitimate this "will to resist," because deciding whether something is authentic at least partially involves moral judgment: the authentic has to be supported, but the inauthentic must be criticized (Lin 59). Lin observes that nativist literary historiographies tend to construct conceptual dichotomies to legitimate their claim: the first one is the opposition and conflict between native tradition and Western modernity (Lin 11-13), and the other is the opposition of the popular and the official (Lin 25).[3] Both dichotomies work according to the same logic: the former, tradition and the popular, is native, natural, spontaneous, popular, victimized, authentic, while the latter, Western modernity and the official, is imported, alienating, elitist, abstract, oppressive, inauthentic.

Western modern culture is inauthentic and oppressive because it is imposed via Japanese colonial regime before the war and via Cold-War structure, global capitalism and cultural imperialism after the war. Literary production sponsored and endorsed by official policies or remaining silent to them is inherently unjust and inauthentic. The demand for authenticity also appears when nativist critics argue that both modernism and postmodernism were unnatural, imported without a historical or social basis ("Postmodern or Postcolonial" 54-56),[4] while nativist realism and postcolonial society is more fit to describe Taiwan society that underwent from authoritarian rule to democratization ("Postmodern or Postcolonial" 42; 54-58). Chen Fangming's criticism of the importation of postmodernism is interesting and telling here: its advent in Taiwan was against the community's wish ("Postmodern or Postcolonial" 57). This claim, though not necessarily wrong, is itself ahistorical. Chiu's study shows

[3] Lin Yunhong's research persuasively argues how the state apparatus appropriates these dichotomies (11-13). Although Lin criticizes these conceptual dichotomies, I still find them persuasive critical coordinates in many ways.

[4] Or, to use a more academic expression, the importation is "decontextualized" and "misappropriated" (Liou 327-28).

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how postwar modernism, imported by the academy and supported by Cold-War politics, triggered a defense mechanism: nativists accuse postwar Taiwanese modernism as a plagiarized version of modernity, while the modernist writers are submissive to the West, and fail to engaging in resistance against Western imperialism (Chiu 209-10; 213). The task of nativist literature would be to "redeem" and vindicate the homeland (Chiu 237). This is the fallacy whereby the demand for authenticity is moralized evaluation of historicity: one cannot not want what is in fact historical, because nothing is purely unhistorical. Any criterion to determine whether something is authentic or inauthentic involves ideological judgment, and ideology is itself a historical product. None of the aforementioned critical terms: modernism, postmodernism, realism, the postcolonial, are native and indigenous in Taiwan, and human will, collective or individual, has very little to do with the travel of these terms via global capitalism, academe, and Cold-War political structure. Insistence on the claim that Taiwan was not socially and economically mature enough to accommodate modernism and postmodernism is a dogmatic Marxist judgment, which ironically fetishizes and essentializes the Western historical experience.

David Der-Wei Wang 王德威, in contrast, disparagingly criticizes how nativist ideology emphasizing the naturalized affinity between land, lineage and political legitimacy emulates the rhetoric of the authoritarian regime ("Nationalist Discourse" 69). These responses in historiographies indicate the dialectical consequence induced by this ethical demand: the anxiety over and aspiration for authenticity only suggests the unquestionable and indispensable presence of Western culture in modernizing Taiwan. The political and ethical demand of authenticity quite effectively explains why nativist writers prefer literary realism, because it promises plausible verisimilitude and can serve to initiate political identification through imagination

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(Lin 59). In contrast, the self-referentiality and introverted inclination of modernist form are relatively more prone to evoke doubts and suspicion.

The demand for authenticity explains why "memory" occupies a crucial position in Taiwan literary historiographies, because personal, subjective experience is believed to be "truer," or at least "no less false" than official history as a state apparatus. Taiwan literature, especially fiction, is burdened with a mnemonic function by writers and critics alike. Borrowed from psychoanalysis and trauma studies, the politics of memory often works according to a repression/trauma-belated compulsive repetition/uncanny model, which, through an intuitive connection without theorization, follows the oppression-resistance model that sanctions the value of literature and justifies its presence after the calamitous events during colonial and authoritarian regimes. Now, does the demand for authenticity authorize critics to transcend the boundary between fiction and reality? When the premises of new historicism are introduced, history has lost its authority of the truth claim. By the same token, the boundaries between memory, fiction, and historiography are blurred and effaced. The ostensible democratization of writings and texts becomes a political lever to challenge the official master narrative and contributes to a redistribution of cultural capital. However, this democratization of "writing" does not overhaul the definitional premises of each register, and it covers up many serious problems it provokes. When one makes the claim that fiction is memory, and by definition, what happens in fiction is not true, does the fact render memory unreliable? If it is so, can one insist the authenticity of memory? Or, does the actuality of memory as fiction efface the boundary between fiction and reality and entitle critics to immediately correspond fiction and historical referents? If memory is aestheticized and mediated by form, does the authority of authenticity still hold? I have to reiterate that I do not oppose to

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any studies on memory. What I am against is blurring the boundary between art and memory without proper theorization. Even though politics of memory provides a more humane and intimate frame to articulate identity, just because memory and fiction share a narrative structure does not justify the predication, not to mention that memory is the privileged term among the two authorized by its connotation of authenticity and experience. Effects of memory may be perceived through the play of logical claim of fiction, but it can at best retain a mimetic, ironic, allegorical, or dialectical relation with fiction. Hitherto literary historiographies still lack a satisfying theorization of memory.

The demand for authenticity also helps to explain the curious contradiction of the formation of national identity in the age of late capitalism: the debates around the politics of subjectivity. I would like to assert even though the value of authenticity has ostensibly been questioned and weakened under the sign of the postmodern, it dialectically returns as a privileged signifier in Taiwan culture under the sign of the postcolonial ("Postmodern or Postcolonial" 56-58). The subjectivity that literary historiographies wish to formulate should be substantial, historical, and authentic. Liou Liangya 劉亮雅 recognizes that the postmodern corresponds to the urge to decentralize the social monolith established by authoritarian regime (Liou 329), but it contradicts the postcolonial to create a national identity (Liou 328; 329; 340). In her study, although diversified identity politics must be recognized (Liou 350-51) the post-colonial national identity is always privileged (Liou 330; 334). Hsiau Achin also argues that the anti-foundationalist, oxymoronic coinage of "strategic essentialism" only proves the obstinacy of essentialism, or at least its essentializing effect of narrative construction ("Indigenization Paradigms" 369; 373; 377; 382). Liou's claim that the postmodern and the postcolonial co-exist and contest with each other does not

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effectively explain the particularity of the aspiration for a Taiwan subjectivity in Taiwan literary historiographies.

Reasonably, it would seem less progressive, humane and liberal if the postcolonial as the ultimate political consciousness do not include the multiculturalism and liberation of social identities proclaimed by the postmodern, and it is what nativist critics happily do (Shie 376; *Modern Taiwanese Literature* 28-29), but this does not mean the postmodern and the postcolonial are reconciled. From hindsight, I interpret the effort to consolidate a Taiwan subjectivity and the postmodern-postcolonial debate as a crucial juncture that symptomizes the maturation of the ideology of literary historiography. It synthesizes the "will to resist," which has been converted from passive reaction of criticism to affirmative identity construction, and the "demand for authenticity," which claims that a repressed popular tradition will triumph over the imported Western modernity and postmodernity and authoritarian regime. Curiously this juncture is the last attempt to theoretically explain literary production, after which nobody knows what to do with literary historiography, testified by the fact that discussion on the nineties and the thousands appear vague and disorganized in most historiographies.

The debates around the postmodern and the postcolonial endure and do not expire because they describe a dialectical relation of Identity and identities.[5] The national Identity that Taiwan literature craves for is utopian, not yet fulfilled. The constant aspiration for an integrated subjectivity in politics and in culture proves the unavoidable presence of the fragmentary and complex nature of contemporary

[5] Compare Jameson's criticism: "One cannot acknowledge the justice of the general poststructuralist assault on the so-called 'centered subject,' the old unified ego of bourgeois individualism, and then resuscitate this same ideological mirage of psychic unification on the collective level in the form of a doctrine of collective identity. Appeals to collective identity need to be evaluated from a historical perspective, rather than from the standpoint of some dogmatic and placeless 'ideological analysis'" ("Third-World "78).

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capitalist society. The precarious sovereignty and the unstable situation in multilateral international politics for Taiwan force the people of all identities to seek a legitimate, master Identity, but the demand that the Identity is supposed to tolerate the warring variety of identities makes the so-called Taiwan subjectivity empirically inapproachable. The postcolonial seeks to redeem a repressed subjectivity. However, it is the multiple contesting interpretations of a post-colonial history that obstructs the formation of this aspired integrated subjectivity. The more the nativist critics wish to appropriate the postcolonial to consolidate the presence of a repressed tradition, the more it shows how precarious this tradition is (Lin 7). The emphasis on the substantial historicity of Taiwan literature in culture dialectically reveals its dubious foundation constantly challenged by contesting histories; the imaginary Identity that integrates all identities promised by the multicultural claim ironically shows a desire to control and the inability to do so. The more eagerly Taiwan literature tries to politicize the discipline and underscores that Taiwan literature is committed literature in history, the more it proves how harmless and far less critical literature is in the face of party politics and global capitalism now. Even though the postcolonial is a utopian desire springing from the demand of justice in the wake of the fall of an authoritarian regime, the authoritarian spirit lurks in the call for a new integrated Identity. On the way to a currently incomplete national identity lies the danger of populism, an extreme identitarian politics provoked by an multicultural claim on retaining the radical difference and the factual irreconcilability in culture and politics. A nationalist ideology stays valid and persuasive only when the complete nation-state lies beyond reach. Most critics working in the discipline will be reluctant to acknowledge that it is precisely because a national Identity is utopian, and by definition absent in the present, that allows them to continue to project a totality while obstinately conducting

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ideological criticism according to the “will to resist” and the “demand for authenticity.”

This is an extremely simplified description of social upheavals that Taiwan, and I may be unfair and risk cynicism by exaggerating the status quo in a paranoid way. What has to be reiterated is that the political consciousness is legitimate: economic and cultural imperialism are empirically true, and the oppression of authoritarian rule cannot be denied. In this sense I endorse transitional justice is every sense. There are many archaeological and descriptive studies that cannot be said to move according to the ideology of literary historiography. But overall I still think my criticism of the ideology of literary historiography stands. In the end, before it wades into the debates on power and on politics, a critique of literary historiography necessarily reopens the ancient inquiry first: what literature is, what does the reader perceive through literature, and how does literature allow the reader to perceive. Yvonne Sung-sheng Chang 張頌聖 criticizes that cultural products, especially middle-brow ones, provide the reader and the audience with vicarious satisfaction substituting for historical knowledge (“Rupture of Literary History” 65). The vicariousness, of course, is the core of the ethic of representational art: it prevents direct contact with the materials, and it offers fictional alternatives to reinterpret and reengage in historical experience. Despite the fact that Taiwan literature as a discipline always asks the critics “to historicize,” the affirmative character conditioned by the ideology of “the will to resist” and “the demand for authenticity” burden the epistemological quest with an ethical imperative. However, the “will to resist” and “the demand for authenticity” are themselves ahistorical judgments. What actually renders these concepts historical is contemporary political needs.

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I want to borrow Leo Bersani's critique of a new critical register he terms the "Culture of Redemption," which has come to be "the enabling morality of a humanistic criticism" (*Culture of Redemption* 7), so as to clarify what I mean by an ideology of Taiwan literary historiography. The general claim of Culture of Redemption, writes Bersani, is that "the work of art has the authority to master the presumed raw material of experience," no matter how "overwhelming, practically impossible to absorb" experience may be, "in a manner that uniquely gives value to, perhaps even redeems, that material" (*Culture of Redemption* 1). However, "art's beneficently reconstructive function in culture," Bersani tries to show, depends "on a devaluation of historical experience and of art" (*Culture of Redemption* 1). According to Bersani, in this cultural regime, even though art is meant to rectify and to compensate by reenacting and interpreting historical experience, it assuages the force of devastating experience while enslaved by historical materials that it is supposed to reenact. The goal of the "[reparative] cultural symbolizations" is to "repeat those catastrophes in order to transcend them, which means that they scrupulously reenact the failures they are meant to make not happen" (108). Bersani's critique merits quotation at length:

> [Culture of redemption authorizes] an aesthetic of art as truth divorced from phenomena, a truth seen here as merely an evocative sameness, an exact yet alien repetition of phenomena. In the myth of art as both a translation of life and as more real or more essential than life, the imaginary adheres to the real not in order to impart an existential authority or legitimacy to art, but instead to reproduce the real without any such authority, to demonstrate the superiority of the image to the model. And yet, precisely because of this adherence, the 'substitute objects' of art continuously remind us of the objects they are meant

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> to annihilate or transcend; what purports to be an essentializing repetition turns out to be the symbolic reminder, the symbolic symptom, of phenomena at once erased and indelible (26).

Bersani's criticism is especially telling in the context of Taiwan literature. Having been forced to live in colonial and authoritarian regimes, literature is anticipated to compensate the oppressed history, interrogate the unjust historical paradigm, and to formulate a possibility for the future. Bersani, however, defies this way of thinking. He asserts that cultural criticism should become "an instructive reminder of *the power of appearances* to defeat what may be imagined to lie 'behind' them . . . to the possibility of pursuing not an art of truth divorced from experience, but of phenomena liberated from the obsession with truth" (26). Literary critics' mission is "far from investing objects with symbolic significance" but to "enhance their specificity and thereby fortify their resistance to the violence of symbolic intent" (28). Bersani's argument usefully characterizes the pervading belief about the possible relation between literary works and reality as well as between literary works and literary historiography. The "violence of symbolic intent" usurps history and enslaves the aesthetic. By insisting there is truth under the aesthetic appearance (of some literary products), literary historiographers justify their claim to resist authority, neglecting the fact that history has been inexorably transformed in representation, and it is the appearance that harbors history. Ironically, the effectiveness of the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography actually hinges on certain characters of literary form. I will move on to discuss how these two aspects of ideology of literary historiography derive from the critics' critical assessment and judgment of modernism and realism in chapter one, and how this critical judgment later profoundly influences the

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epistemological foundation and consequent debates of Taiwan literature in the first chapter.

Now my methodological claims derive from the problematics I have delineated above. In this thesis I do not intend to elicit the dialectic of the ideology of literary historiography by conducting a dialectical criticism immanently. I only want to retrieve some previously neglected and underestimated theoretical threads and illustrate how different approaches lie beyond the scope of literary historiography. The different focus of my methodology mainly concerns two dimensions: a renewed attention to literary form and aesthetic, and Western influences.

As a study of a Taiwanese writer's works, my thesis is characterized by its probably overwrought investment in Western literary and cultural criticism. My choice to study Guo through Western literature (in chapter three and four) and Japanese intellectual history (in chapter two) on the one hand corresponds to Guo's claim in an interview that he is "an out-an-out Westernized" writer (Interview with Liao 120). If his self-proclaimed influence comes from Western literature, I think comparative reading with foreign literature is at least worth a try. On the other hand, I do not wish to emphasize the tension between nativist tradition and Western modernity already described by Chiu. On the contrary, I want to follow the advice prescribed by Yvonne Chang: a critical study the postwar aesthetic paradigm formulated by Western sources transported to Taiwan via Cold-War political institutions provides literary historiography with a broader referential frame to observe how political ruptures—the end of colonization in 1945, the settlement of the KMT government in 1949, the *baodiao* 保釣 movement in the early seventies, the Formosa Incident and severance of diplomatic ties with the USA in 1979, and the democratization in 1987—influence literary production and literary history. A

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comparative reading is, according to the common sense, a decontextualized approach, and I do not deny it. However, I propose a comparative reading to stimulate test out the following possibilities: to tease out unnoticed dimensions in Guo by a change of perspective to experiment with the potential of Taiwan literature as a player in contemporary world literature, to construct a possible relation between Taiwan literature and Western literature in a writer strongly influenced by Western literature, and to see if engaging with Western literature can stimulate the now hypostatized reading strategy in Taiwan literature.

Aesthetic and formal analysis as a critical register has been attacked for a supposed neutral and apolitical appearance. Take an aforementioned example: postwar modernist lyrics. I disagree with Chen Fangming's humanist myth that modernist writers resist the White Terror by consciously detaching themselves from politics and proclaiming the autonomy of art *(Modern Taiwanese Literature* 348). You Shengkuan's 游勝冠 accusation of political quietism is theoretically and empirically correct, but still I do not agree with his conclusion elicited from a discursive analysis of manifesto rather than from literary form and works of art themselves. Both critics appeal to moral judgment and political efficacy to evaluate the phenomenon. I endorse the claim that literary fiction is necessarily social and historical. However, in this thesis I do not intend to conduct a sociological analysis that studies exterior factors of literary production, nor will I resort to a humanistic understanding based on the author's biographical background.[6] Lin criticizes Chen that the latter's humanist claim and praise for subjectivity and individual genius presuppose the immediate connection between writers and their times ("Two Types of

[6] My choice of methodology no doubt directly reflects my training in Western literature and the fact that I write outside Taiwan literature. The difference and boundary between two disciplines determine my weakness in gathering, selecting and analyzing historical materials other than primary literary texts themselves, and my strength in close reading and application of foreign materials.

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Leftists" 167-68) and to a great extent neglect how exterior factors such as political institutions, ideologies, structural attributes, power dynamic, interpersonal networking, and distribution of resources overdetermine literary production ("Two Types of Leftists"169). Lin doubts that any individual writer can directly influence literature as a social system ("Two Types of Leftists" 171). Lin is correct to argue that the individual mind cannot be attributed as the ultimate cause of literary production. The danger of "humanist" criticism are two-fold: it lures critics to resort to moral judgment and sentimentalism, and it shuns a theorization of the possibilities of an immediate correspondence of the individual and the historical. Conducting a literature review of past studies on Guo will illustrate this danger, especially in the earlier reviews.

Wu Dayun 吳達芸, writing in the belle-lettres lyrical tradition, emphasizes that Guo uses complicated narration, fragmented imagery to find the redemptive path for the geographical and mental exiles; he discovers an aesthetic restorative view to retrieve the liveliness of the world (542). She argues that Guo successfully finds a transcendent perpective that allows fusion of subject and object (531-32; 537), by which Guo can review and correspond the lives without any overt political engagement (542). Not totally insensible, but the essay is less an analytical criticism than the author's personal appreciation. Wu's discussion on narratological problem may be the only contribution, and I will return to it in the second excursus.

Chen Mingjou 陳明柔 interprets Guo's fiction as national allegory and fictitious memory that fill the gaps and ruptures in an official history undermined by violence (408-10). Despite the instinctively political interpretation, Chen Mingjou's study indicates several characteristics of Guo's fiction: he eschews realistic representation of historical violence, but obliquely and lyrically depicts individuals'

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fates. Guo's idiosyncratic characterization undertakes but refracts the weight of collective memory (411). She argues that Guo not only tries to reconstruct history and summons the historical atmosphere (432), but tries to grasp the human existential condition through the politics of memory and forgetting (425). Chen Mingjou's study, conflates, or at least does not differentiate, fiction and memory (408). I already argue that this is a dangerous inclination that neglects the fictionality of literary works. It is not problematic to argue that Guo's writings depict the interaction between personal experience and history as a human condition, but if an analysis of emplotment and narrative devices can achieve this, why does the critic still prefer memory to fiction? Do critics inadvertently equate characters as real life and deliberately confuse characterization and memory? I may be unfair, but I still contend that critics have to retain the boundary between reality and fiction even if artwork originate from society.

Wu and Chen's essays already suggest the danger of humanist appreciation: the presupposed correspondence between the individual and history prevents a more rigorous study of form. It also blurs the necessary intermediary between the author and the text, fiction and reality. Both critics resort to lyrical language to describe and praise Guo through many more rhetorical tropes but are unhelpful for qualifying the formal characteristic of Guo's fiction except vague description (Wu 540-41; Chen 422-23; 430-32). Another influential approach is to combine gender studies and nationalist concerns, exemplified by Xu Sulan 許素蘭 and Wei Weili 魏偉莉. Xu's essay notes that Guo prefers women to be his focal characters (279), and she argues that Guo's fiction presents the paradoxical aspect of national allegory by manipulating the irony deriving from gender differences (296): women's ignorance, indifferent attitude toward politics, or even benevolent thoughts ultimately betray men's ideals of political engineering (279; 291-92), and therefore Guo's fiction tragically portrays the

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tension between individuals and the larger historical picture. Xu's essay, with repetitive rhetorical questions (288-89; 291-94) and an accusatory tone, relies on a binary system to support her argument: men/politics/illusory/victimizer and women/family/authentic/victimized. This essay may have indicated how gender politics expose the blind spot of nationalism, but Xu's essay fails to differentiate and describe the homologous relations between different power dynamics, such as patriarchy in the domestic realm and the state apparatus (292; 295).

Wei Weili's monograph was among the first extensive studies on Guo's fiction that introduces literary theories into analysis. Her reading of Guo's fiction still revolves around the problem of subject formation, which decisively influences her choice of the two critical axes: *écriture féminine,* by which she tries to elucidate how Guo deconstructs patriarchal grand historical narrative and national identity by using female perspectives in fiction (194); and diasporic transnational politics, by which she adopts Stuart Hall's conception of cultural identity to demonstrate how Guo's fiction rejects fixed identification predetermined by ideology (247). Wei's problem is that her methodological approach is an arbitrary medley that combines cultural studies, postcolonial criticism, Heideggerian phenomenology, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and French feminism. Although she is certainly aware of the danger of essentializing gender roles (196) Wei's analysis still resort to a binary model: she divides masculine/imperial/Chinese/politics/educated patriarchs and feminine/colonial/Taiwanese/everyday life/domestic women (205-07). The nationalist politics apparently overrides gender politics, because women from China apparently do not belong to the latter category (Wei 206-07; Xu 294). By arguing that Guo restores the view of the most oppressed, both Xu and Guo exploit the oppressor-victim model without teasing out the nuances between the complicity between

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nationalist and gender politics. By occupying the moral high ground, they replicate the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography: the oppressed is also real, and they deserve acknowledgement, too.

The significant biographical study by Jian Yiming 簡義明 "Writing about Kuo Sung-Fen: A Writer without a Position and a Definition" is a thorough biographical project engaging in Guo's life by excavating several important political documents in his past and several not hitherto discussed pieces. Jian's methodology, however, is problematic and vague, and it is an deliberate act (17-24). Because he too faithfully abides by Guo's biographical facts and tries to make his writings correspond to his life, he to some extent mystifies rather than sheds light on Guo's literary career. He has completed indispensable work of excavating previously inaccessible political writings, but his interpretation of Guo's writings never surpasses the range of thematics (100-10) and does not do justice to Guo's literary influences from Western literature (95-98; 111-16) and philosophy, and his formal analysis is disproportionately inadequate in a supposedly comprehensive study (105-10). Jian's reluctance to fall into any theoretical interpretive framework does indicate some formulaic interpretive inclinations of Taiwanese literary studies (14-16). The conclusion argues that acknowledging Guo's refusal of a historical/ideological position is a fulfillment of a humanist belief, but by appealing to the humanist presuppositions by promoting the singularity of a writer and demanding a profound understanding of his mind is, again, gratuitous (so what?), and without a dialectical social analysis, the study loses its critical force (120-22).

A more recent monograph by Gu Zhengping 顧正萍 adopts a relatively traditional strategy: narratological analysis of (137), focus on imagery (124-25), sensuous impressions (168), and thematics (190-91; 246-51). Gu's formal analysis of

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Guo's fiction is more rigorous compared with Wei's and Jian's, but she only identifies the themes in Guo's fiction by a close exegetical, word-by-word reading. Because none of her thematic analysis: feminine/maternity (202); history/orphan (207); language/homeland (216); metamorphosis/rebirth (225), exceed the previous studies, I do not think Gu furthers the descriptive textual analysis and illuminates the relation between text and history beyond representation.

Among the research on Guo, "Poetry, Ill Body of History, Motherhood" by Ng Kimchew remains the most profound and persuasive. Ng contends that Guo's oeuvre traces "a left-wing intellectual's decisive conversion to literature after disillusionment with socialist revolution" (*Textuality* 250). Ng characterizes Guo's fictional writings as "a production of melancholy" (*Textuality* 250), or "allegory in the ruins of history" (*Textuality* 255), and his determination to turn away from politics can be seen as the turn from dogmatic "dialectic materialism toward textual alchemy" (*Textuality* 250). Ng argues that Guo chooses the "transcendental homelessness of the Chinese people in the catastrophe of modernization and Western imperialism" (*Textuality* 267) as his subject matter. This comment is particularly important because it not only demonstrates that Guo's stories, though not always obvious, are always deeply rooted in Taiwan history, from Japanese rule, to the February 28 Incident and consequent totalitarian rule, but also situates his political stance toward his fiction writing. Ng's essay most concretely delineates how Guo's texts apply allegory to relate images of "ill body" and "historical calamities" (258). That is to say, Ng never loses sight of the literary mediation by noticing its inner conflicts (266-68). Ng also contributes by including the critical negative consciousness in Guo's work by discussing of irony (259; 262; 268) and the political significance of the epistemological void created narrative (280-81).

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Ng's attention to intermediary relation between history and literary form leads to the following problem. Yet Lin's argument is no less problematic. If Chen Fangming is wrong to take for granted the direct causality in literary production: that time conditions the writers to conduct and finish their works, Lin's criticism cannot explain how other exterior social forces influence literary works, either. The intermediate factor, the style, is simplified and bracketed in literary historiographies and replaced by content analysis based on the plausible premise: the correspondence between fiction and history, and that the former always reflects the latter. In his treatise on literary historiography, Moretti argues that in a modern society which is "irreparably divided between hostile interests and values" (Moretti 34), literary forms, be it ostensibly transparent realist narrative or obscure modern lyric, are "the constraining and ineluctable attempt to make semantic 'compromises' between what have become totally heterogeneous and contradictory elements" (Moretti 35). Literary form is where "psychical and cultural forces" encounter and conflict, and their "relation to [one's] self-awareness" can be understood "only if its specific rhetorical formalizations are analyzed" (35). Literary form is the middle ground which will ultimately reveal human "desire to make the 'adjustment' to the existing order," an idea which "[coincides] with some idea of 'happiness'" (40). Moretti's proposition may sound like common sense, but at the beginning of his review on literary historiography, Moretti defines literary criticism "as a sociology of rhetorical forms" (6), which includes "rhetorical figures" (6) and "the internal laws and historical range of a specific genre" (9), not an analysis of referents and content in specific works. A study of style is much more complicated than an analysis of content or themes, let alone constructing a coherent theory to describe the interaction between a form and its time. This is where many critics err. Accusing the autonomy of art of circumventing

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and escaping from its ideological stance and asserting that "everything is political" does not provide the excuse of ignoring the function of the attention to literary form, nor does it efface the presence of style as an intermediate between language, meaning, and reference.

The *raison d'être* of literary studies, I contend, lies not only in what is conveyed and reflected in the content, but more significantly in how literary form *mediate* social, historical, and moral meanings. This is why I turn to Western Marxist aesthetics, which provides the most powerful explanation on the interaction between history and art.[7] Since the heyday of French Enlightenment and the rise of German idealism, philosophy turns its attention to history to either coalesce or resist the force of modernity. As Marxism draws energy from Hegel as well as scientific progress to renovate its politico-economic interpretation of human development to liberate human beings from inequality, Western Marxism, especially the Frankfurt School, more introspectively and philosophically reflects on how the dark side of capitalism destroys human existence and the possibility to redeem it. This thesis will touch upon thoughts and writings by Georg Lukács, Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno (plus his collaboration with Max Horkheimer), and Fredric Jameson. From Lukács's *The Theory of the Novel,* through Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory,* to Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, these critics strive to articulate how history necessarily produces corresponding literary forms, and that through form, the truth about history may be revealed. However, these critics never lose sight of how form reflects time,

[7] Whether Taiwan literature, its methodology and its political inclination should be characterized as Marxist, or at least leftist, is debatable. Lin Yunhung's study shows that the major leftist claims are nationalist rather than Marxist; the former merely utilizes the latter as token to reinforce the ethical claim. See Lin, *Wangque jieji de liangzhong zuopai: bijiao taiwan wenxueshi lunshu zhong de houzhimin zuoyi yu zuqun daoxiang de jieji xushi* 忘卻「階級」的兩種左派：比較台灣文學史論述中的「後殖民左翼」與「族群導向的階級敘事」[Two Types of Leftists Who Forget about 'Class:' A Comparison between Postcolonial Left and Ethnically-oriented Class Narrative in Discourses on the History of Taiwan Literature]. *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly* 46.2 (2017): 161-96.

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knowledge, and politics in the most indirect and subtle way. Form is the necessary intermediate between art and history, the subjective will and the objective reality. The effort to define and discuss what "style" and "form" mean is beyond my ability and the scope of this thesis. However, in the thesis I propose to renew Taiwan literature's attention to literary form and its politics, not only to suggest a possible way to elicit social and political significance from form rather than from thematic and representation, but also to challenge the simplistic, insinuated equation of disengagement and conformism. Aesthetics can be a critical register that dialectically unveils the ideological blindness of committed literature.

Adorno, the most pessimistic and insistent dialectician among the Western Marxists, invests his minimal utopian impulse in art. His relentless dialectical method wrests critical insights against commonsense from prevailing bourgeois and leftist ideology, decisively altering the way to interpret the necessary relation between art, history, and society. He condemns the fetishistic and commodified nature of autonomous art, but also argues against committed art for its simplification and danger of conformism. Adorno's aesthetic shows that autonomous art and socially committed art are actually dialectical two dialectical sides of the same coin: "hermetic and committed art converge in *the refusal of the status quo*" (*Aesthetic Theory* 248, my emphasis). From this, I would like to propose a rereading of Adorno's aesthetic, which on the one hand helps to reformulate the relationship between art and society and on the other hand negotiates the ostensible contradiction between "critical realism" and "decadent modernism." This thesis does not approach Adorno's aesthetic as an object of inquiry, nor does it engage Adorno's difficult thoughts directly as a method of reading. I extract three significant aspects of his aesthetic here,

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with which I hope can at least incite critical debates and readjust the ideological proclivity of the discipline.

Art as semblance: Semblance may be understood as the illusory character and the core of art as a whole. Adorno uses a descriptive passage to delineate: "As soon as one imagines having a firm grasp on the details of an artwork, it dissolves into the indeterminate and undifferentiated, so mediated is it. This is the manifestation of aesthetic semblance in the structure of artworks" (*Aesthetic Theory* 101). Semblance is the necessary relation between art and society: "the immanent semblance character of artworks cannot be freed from some degree of external imitation of reality," in the process of which "everything that artworks contain with regard to form and materials, spirit and subject matter, has emigrated from reality into the artworks" (*Aesthetic Theory* 103), but as long as materiality is absorbed into art, its material foundation is inexorably transformed: "the artwork also becomes its afterimage" (*Aesthetic Theory* 103). Semblance of art is the necessary mediation of form and content: "no artwork has content other than through semblance, through the form of that semblance" (*Aesthetic Theory* 107). Jameson helps to explain what semblance means: "expressions which *tendentially imply* the existence of something else behind that appearance or illusion" (*Late Marxism* 165, my emphasis). That is to say, art refracts its social and historical material through its form, and critics can no longer extract the content directly without mediation. Semblance derives from fetishes in cult, the entities endowed with additional meaning through social process. Modernization and disenchantment since the Enlightenment gradually erode semblance, transforming fetishes into commodities, and for modern art, writes Jameson, it is crucial to ask "whether an art utterly divorced from aesthetic appearance is conceivable; whether

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the suspicion that attaches to *Schein* [semblance] will not finally result in the abolition of art altogether" (*Late Marxism* 166).

J. M. Bernstein interprets Adorno's apology for semblance from the development of German idealism. "Concepts depend on the objects they are about," Bernstein explains, "while disavowing that dependency," and "identifying thought lives off what it cannot not acknowledge and what it must disavow" ("Why Rescue Semblance" 188). The rational side of thought must formulate a universal law so as to grasp the contingency of the world in reality, or else the identification would be attributed to coincidence and "moral luck" (192), but by making the law universal, the object it is supposed to grasp is negated and eludes its grasp. The world of intelligence and the world of the sensible lose connection. This is why "the space between the real and the imaginary that it projects must be materialistically reconfigured" ("Why Rescue Semblance" 193), and "the corrective of the understanding must truly inhabit a space between the real (empirical possibility) and the imaginary (logical possibility). This is the space of necessary semblance" ("Why Rescue the Semblance" 194). Aesthetic semblance, residing in the sensible and the material world and yet also belonging to the intelligible realm and lacking actual presence, "is the question of the possibility of possibility, of a conception of possible experience" **(**"Why Rescue Semblance" 195). In Adorno's words, the "nonexisting [the transformed reality] in artworks is a constellation of the existing. By their negativity, even as total negation, artworks make a promise" (*Aesthetic Theory* 135). That the object is mediated in art forms and does not have actual presence determines the semblance character and negativity of artworks, so "redemption through semblance is itself illusory, and the artwork accepts this powerlessness in the form of its own illusoriness" (*Aesthetic Theory* 107). What art promises is non-existent, but without the non-existent promise

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the utopia is utterly impossible. “Although it is compelled toward absolute negativity,” Adorno asserts, “it is precisely by virtue of this negativity that it is not absolutely negative” (*Aesthetic Theory* 233). Utopia cannot be promised without a critical dialectic process through negativity.

Art as enigma: “All artworks,” Adorno gravely asserts, “are enigmas” (*Aesthetic Theory* 120). It sounds catchy and mysterious at the same time, but the purpose is not to restore the aura of works of art, as the affirmative vulgar belief in the beauty would suggest, but to force the critics to understand that “in the contemporary situation, it is their incomprehensibility that needs to be comprehended” (*Aesthetic Theory* 118). The basic premise, according to Shierry Weber Nicholsen’s reading, presupposes that art is “nonconceptual,” and therefore “cannot be unenigmatic, because it cannot have a discursive meaning” (Nicholsen 64). Concepts subsume objects by negating their objectivity. In a completely reified, administered modern society, it is this logic that supports the market and exchange value of things. Only by being nonconceptual can art provide a possibility to reestablish human relations with nature in the form of semblance. Art’s enigmatical facet “achieves meaning by forming its emphatic absence of meaning” (*Aesthetic Theory* 127), and it is a part of the historical process of disenchantment. Even though art is separated from fetish in cult and moves toward becoming commodities, this enigmaticalness renders it incomprehensible on the surface and useless in society, which places art at the danger of lapsing back into myth.

If art is enigmatic, it demands interpretation, which “can only be achieved by philosophical reflection,” and this need is “their constitutive insufficiency” (*Aesthetic Theory* 128). How can one achieve this task of interpretation? The theory of art, Adorno argues, must “entrust itself to its laws of movement while recognizing that

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artworks hermetically seal themselves off against the consciousness of these laws of movement" (*Aesthetic Theory* 128). One has to interpret art according to its immanent formal law and to acknowledge the fact that art itself resists and defies any interpretive task as such. Artworks are enigmatic "in that they are the physiognomy of an objective spirit that is never transparent to itself in the moment in which it appears" (*Aesthetic Theory* 128). This physiognomy of the objective spirit, the truth content, "transcends the factual in the artwork, cannot be pinned down to what is individually, sensually given but is, rather, constituted by way of this empirical givenness. This defines the mediatedness of the truth content" (*Aesthetic Theory* 129). The truth content is "like picture puzzles in that what they hide . . . is visible and is, by being visible, hidden" (*Aesthetic Theory* 121). The truth content dwells in the factual, the puzzle pieces, but is beyond direct comprehension and requires reconstruction. When the truth is rediscovered via completing the full image, the pieces and the illusory character lose their substantiality and cease to be. This character indicates the aporia of art: "one cannot extract a 'truth' from literature without at the same time destroying the literary covering (Nicholsen 67).

The guilt of art: In *Minima Moralia* Adorno dramatically delivers his verdict on art: "Every work of art is an uncommitted crime" (*Minima Moralia*, 111). Peter Hohendahl characterizes this aspect clearly. If works of art have to be "unique objects of aesthetic attention" to defy the logic of social exchange prescribed by capitalism, they must also be "in and through lacking any imposed social purpose" (Hohendahl 147). This is the essence that defines the autonomy of art. However, art derives from social and historical reality, and if it cannot become a fetish of the cult, the closest counterpart among social entities is, ironically, the commodity (*Aesthetic Theory* 21). The monadological character, the semblance of its independence, becomes its

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"infinite vulnerability to the play of the market; on sale in the marketplace for whatever value the market decides" (Hohendahl 149). "The monadological character of artworks," Adorno contends "would not have formed without the guilt of the monstrous monadological character of society" (*Aesthetic Theory* 307). The autonomy of art is the homologous product that echos the reification of modern society, and this is "the guilt" that art has to bear: as "luxury and class privilege" (*Late Marxism* 130), and as an autonomous entity that is powerlessness to engage in society.

Moreover, by transforming the reality into its immanent structure, a work of art "is not only the echo of suffering, it diminishes it; form, the organon of its seriousness, is at the same time the organon of the neutralization of suffering" (*Aesthetic Theory* 239). Because as aesthetic semblance, art transforms material reality and produces only semblance, without which it ceases to be art. Even engagé literature cannot be exempted from this necessary guilt: "The demand for complete responsibility on the part of artworks increases the burden of their guilt" (*Aesthetic Theory* 39). Adorno grimly concludes that the guilt of art "is their guiltlessness" (*Aesthetic Theory* 160). Even an Aristotelian claim insisting that literature is truer than history and redeems the fault and terror in the past loses its credibility in the face of unprecedented catastrophe brought about by modernity: that "art becomes an unfolding of truth is at the same time its cardinal sin, from which it cannot absolve itself. Art drags this sin along with it because it acts as if absolution had been bestowed on it" (*Aesthetic Theory* 104). Art produced in modern capitalist society is therefore "a priori, socially culpable, and each one that deserves its name seeks to expiate this guilt" (*Aesthetic Theory* 234). Modernist works of art, by the self-awareness of form, their *raison d'être*, and uselessness, must carry their "vulnerability, blemishes, and fallibility" so

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as to become the "critique of traditional works, which in so many ways are stronger and more successful" (*Aesthetic Theory* 160).

Jameson supplements that "the guilt with which all works of art are suffused will be one of the mediations by which the otherwise monadic work is profoundly an internally related to the otherwise external social order" (*Late Marxism* 130). Those engagé writers who promote a just social cause and the modernist writers who abide by the autonomy of art therefore must correct their allegations against each other. Whether it be "to change the course of the world" or "to induce pleasure and harmonize social conflicts," the semblance of art, its material illusoriness, and its autonomy necessarily prevent art from directly engaging in the world; writers and critics must acknowledge the powerlessness, which is "a social perspective in which the inconsequentiality of the aesthetic is an inescapable fact of life" (*Late Marxism* 132).

Jameson encapsulates Adorno's aesthetic pretty accurately: "Genuine art, which cannot abolish *Schein* [semblance] altogether without destroying itself and turning to silence, must none the less live its illusory appearance and its unreal luxury status as play in a vivid guilt that permeates its very forms" (*Late Marxism* 166). Adorno's aesthetic appears abstract, counterintuitive, conservative, and dangerously reactionary. Sadly it is; it appeared so even during the years in which it was produced, during the students' movement, protests for civil rights, painful decolonization. Yet Adorno has good reasons to propose it despite everything, and I believe it can aid literary critics even in the twenty-first century, almost fifty years after its publication, in Taiwan. This does not suggest every artist or critic must obey Adorno's theory. I only want to remind the critics working in Taiwan literature to heed his warning. Also, an attention to aesthetic allows art continues to be art and still be socially meaningful. To begin

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with, proposing that art as semblance prevents direct contact with art without a proper mediation. What resides in art, no matter how straightforwardly its existence is, must not be crudely extracted without a fuller consideration of the intermediary function of literary form. The introduction of New Historicism, which proposes the logic that if society is a complex networks of discursive and textual practices, it follows that literature as textual practice *par excellence* directly contributes to the social process and therefore the referent is readily available. It no doubt involves a fundamental epistemological difference, but my take is that this mode of thinking as an imperative of criticism detrimentally influences the conception literature as art, as if form, the contact zone between the author's consciousness and its social, cultural, historical determinants, were altogether abolished. By proposing the enigmaticalness of art and the necessity to reconstruct meaning immanently, Adorno's aesthetic usefully obliges critics not only to tackle obscure and difficult texts without resorting to moral judgment, but also to constantly rethink what can count as art and what cannot. Finally, highlighting the social culpability of art as guilt usefully balances the affirmative character of art in Taiwan literature. The uselessness of art should not be an ethical judgment, but should be accepted as an absolute premise in modern society. What is in art, as semblance, is necessarily non-existent, and art itself dangerously dwells on the definitional borderline between cultural entities that contain utopia in negative form and inexorable reified commodities. I may not directly contact these principles proposed by Adorno in my analysis of Guo's work, but I strive to pay full attention to the intermediary function of literary form, from which I try to locate Guo's works in historical context.

As I have proposed, this thesis does not develop a central critical concept to approach Guo's works, nor do I intend to conduct a historicist, biographical, even

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theoretical reading. Therefore, the following chapters will not be closely hinged, but approach the form of Guo's works from different perspectives previously neglected and dismissed by the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography. Chapter one extends the critique I have conducted in the introduction. I locate the origin of the epistemology of Taiwan literary historiography in the debates between modernism and realism. It is a somewhat dated but recurrent topic in literary criticism. This chapter also contextualizes Guo's works by the question: to what extent are critics entitled to call him a modernist writer? Borrowing debates in Western Marxist aesthetics, especially critical works by Lukács and Adorno, I would like to defuse the widely believed natural affinity between realism, its truth claims, and a concomitant political efficacy. Also, I would like to refute the claims that dismiss literary modernism on ideological grounds. Modernist art derives from uneven and multiple development of different social and cultural aspects, and postwar modernism perfectly fills the bill. Finally, I borrow Jameson's analysis of realism and modernism to suggest their inevitable dialectical relation by illustrating the immanent contradiction in two famous polemics that propose nativist realism and disparage modernism through formal analysis.

In order not to resort to a postcolonial perspective that indefatigably stresses the "will to resist" or a humanist perspective that demands empathy with writers under political oppression, in chapter two I seek to reconstruct the intellectual context that testifies to the sweeping and profound influence of Western modernity in modern East Asian society. However, I do not start my inquiry from the colony, but from the empire. This chapter extends an enigmatic scene in Guo's posthumously published novel *Jinghun* 驚婚 to discuss how formal choices, especially in terms of narrative perspective and the problem around I-narrative, reflect the struggle of subjectivity in

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modern Japanese writers in the process of rapid Westernization, and how this struggle was in turn refracted by colonialism and influenced the Taiwanese writers with different significance. I regard Guo's use of first-person narrative in the novel as homologous echo of this encounter between the West and East Asia in the form of imperialism across decades. In order to develop the argument, in addition to my reading of the novel, with the aid of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* I review the formation of the so-called *shōwa ideorogī* 昭和イデオロギー [Shōwa Ideologie] from Japanese intellectual history, Taiwanese literary criticism and postcolonial studies to review two important concepts: "Overcoming Modernity," which has been generally simplified and underestimated in Taiwan literature, and "Formosan Melancholia," a concept deem too dated and pessimistic to be taken seriously. A brief review of Japanese intellectuals' pessimistic assessment of and fierce attack on Western modernity as well as of the Taiwanese colonial writers' melancholic irresolution toward subject formation can unfold the cultural context within Guo's characterization.

Chapter three challenges the demand of historicism and nativist tradition by comparing Guo with his literary hero Gustave Flaubert. Judged by the criterion of Taiwan literature, any unwarranted comparative reading will be considered unhistorical and decontextualized, especially when Guo and Flaubert are merely connected in the former's casual remarks in interviews. Guo never specifies in what way Flaubert influences him, and the purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how Guo appropriates Flaubert's self-professed aesthetic and his crucial innovation of realist prose to recreate Taiwan from the late forties to the contemporary through fiction. After reviewing key concepts in Flaubertian aesthetic: *la bovarysme*, *la bêtise*, and irony, I would like to combine them with a close reading of Guo's major stories:

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"Moon Seal," "Wailing Moon," and "Snow Blind," so as to tease out and build the significant relation between fictional form and ideological analysis, which is brilliantly adumbrated by Yvonne Chang: that the protagonists' idealism fails to correspond to subjective imagination and referents in reality ("Rupture of Literary History" 69), and the author cunningly adopts realist emplotment to delineate the illusory effect of perspective ("Rupture of Literary History" 70).

Chapter four tackles a crucial question that no critic has granted a satisfying discussion: the obvious rupture concerning style and subject matter between Guo's major works written in the eighties and his later works in the nineties. This chapter contextualizes Guo's late story, "Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight," in three different strands: historical fiction as a genre, Bloch and Adorno's theorization of the politics of temporality, and T. S. Eliot's (and Flaubert's) aesthetic. By focusing on imagery and rhetorical trope in this story, I would like to elicit the dialectic between reality and dream/utopia as well as the dialectic of the historical fiction itself so as to dispute the most common interpretation: the author's personal redemption. In the last part of this chapter I would like to discuss how this story can converse with the famous (or infamous, according to ideological differences) concept of post-loyalism and the residual time of Republic of China in Taiwan.

I also include two excursuses in the thesis: the first discusses the most prominent ideological premises that currently dominate the discipline in more detail: nationalism. Benedict Anderson's theorization of the modern nation-state as an imaginary construct provides powerful allure for critics on national literature. However, I wish to show that Anderson's theory may prove much less potent than commonsense would allow, and I propose to look at it from an alternative point of view. The second excursus concerns "Clover," Guo's esoteric story about the mind of

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Taiwanese intellectuals in exile. I pick up an underdeveloped thread in preceding study and approach the story via Hegel as well as Marx and Engels, the leftist route that the author no doubt had familiarized himself with during his years in social movement (Interview with Jian 190; 213). I would like to show how the strong presence of Hegelian philosophy and curious absence of Marxian may contain a possible answer to explain Guo's decisive turn from political activity to literature.

The concluding epilogue is a coda. In order to devise possible new directions for literary history, I revisit one of the conceptual dichotomies discussed above: native tradition versus Western modernity, and attempt to construct a dialectical relation between them by reconsidering the postwar history of Taiwan. If the urge to construct a nation and to rescue native tradition dialectically reflect the enduring presence and decisive influence of Western modernity and oppressive imperialism, the strong nationalist impetus also dialectically reflects the unattainability of its utopian goal in the grim reality of international politics, but at the same time calls for a renewed attention of the negative side of nationalism: the Western and the global. The complex attached to "tradition" and "the West" marks the threshold toward new possibilities that may stimulate the critical impasse of the discipline. Ultimately I would like to discuss if there are new ways to devise Taiwan literature as a critical contributor in comparative literature.

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Excursus One

Is Nationalism Still Possible?

If nativists critics engage in cultural production to fulfill political goals, a theory of cultural identification is important to mediate the cultural and the political register. Benedict Anderson's now canonical thesis on the formation of nationalism, the "imagine communities" conditioned and constructed by modern "print capitalism," is a very good example. *Imagined Communities* is very much welcome in Taiwan literature because in the second chapter of the monograph Anderson foregrounds the novel as a part of the social infrastructure of nationalist engineering. Moreover, it also provides critical leverage to challenge any plausibly consistent cultural monolith. Anderson's claim, however, is based on a premise regarding the narrative form of the novel.

Anderson brilliantly argues it is the temporal aspect of modernity conditions the possibility to imagine the nation: "simultaneity," "temporal coincidence," and calendrical, measurable time (24). How do these aspects have to do with narrative form? "Consider first the structure of *the old-fashioned novel*," Anderson writes, in which "actors who may be largely unaware of one another" move simultaneously in "this imagined world conjured up by the author in his [or her] readers' minds" (25-26, my emphasis). The imagined reality is "embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers," who have "complete confidence in [the characters'] steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity because they can closely follow their actions "all *at once"* (26, original emphasis). Hence, "a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author and readers, moving onward through calendrical time" is imaginable (27). The representation and imagination of

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simultaneous social activities become "a precise *analogue* of the idea of the nation" (26, my emphasis).

Now, if according to Anderson the relation between idea of a nation and an old-fashioned novel is analogous, several conditional terms must be fulfilled, and this is exactly the topic of Jonathan Culler's critical reading of *Imagined Communities*. Culler indicates that one condition involves narrative voice: the narrative must "provide a point of view exterior to and superior to that of any particular character," and "the narrative is not filtered through the consciousness or position of a single observer" (*Literary in Theory* 48). If this is the case, can a non-realistic novel, or a realistic novel narrated through limited point of view, contribute to the imagination of a community?

Culler also discovers "ambiguity in Anderson's discussions about whether it is important that the space or community evoked by the novel be that of a nation"; if the novel only "offers a particular formal structure", that sense of community does not require a representation of a social space as nation (*Literary in Theory* 49-50). "Critics," Culler criticizes, "who are interested in the plots, themes, and imaginative worlds of particular novels, have tended to transform that thesis into a claim about the way some novels, *by their contents*, help to encourage, shape, justify, or legitimate the nation," but the fact is novel cannot be other than "a structural condition of possibility" (*Literary in Theory* 70, my emphasis). Anderson's own choice of examples, like the novel by José Rizal, "with their national *content,* has encouraged critics to assume that the decisive factor is the novel's representation of the nation" (*Literary in Theory* 69). Culler correctly insists that the "distinction between the novel as a condition of possibility of imagining the nation and the novel as a force in shaping or legitimating the nation needs to be maintained," or else Anderson's

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rigorous theorization of "imagining anonymous simultaneities" through specific form will be diminished (*Literary in Theory* 70).

The reader also plays a crucial part. Anderson's theory does not qualify what the readers are like, and this is the problem: different readers may not share the same imagination. Culler rightly asks, "why should I feel more affinity with people who happen to inhabit the country I live in than with others, more like-minded, who happen to have been born in other nations?" (*Literary in Theory* 44). In fact, one's imagined content may contradict with another. A reader's imagination is constrained by cultural capital, historical background, geographic specificity, political inclination, age and generational cohort, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality. To what extent can the critic claim that the process from imagination to identification creates comrades instead of enemies? The possibilities are too unpredictable to yield political efficacy, especially in a multicultural, multiethnic society like Taiwan. "The community of readers that arises from a novel," Culler contends, "is one in which readers may be both friend and enemy, at once insider and outsider" (*Literary in Theory* 71-72). If all of the previous listed factors come into play, the multiplicity of the audience, though rightfully reflect the diversity of a society, also compromises the potentials of formulating a stable imagined community, not to mention the power dynamic involved is far less likely to contribute. Multiculturalism, the ethical demand of contemporary society, may ultimately contradict the possibility of a imagined community. Even if one concedes that multiple imagined communities can coexist, the potency of nationalism ultimately dissolves by this recognition.

This is where the "demand for authenticity" and the "will to resist" must come into play. The weak link between cultural production and a sustainable political identity must be reinforced by ideology. Prasenjit Duara's study of authenticity as

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ideology in nationalist politics shows that "the core of the nation has to be perceived as unaffected by the passage of time" (Duara 28). It "derives this authority from 'being good for all times,' which is tantamount to being beyond the reach of time" (29). The narrative that depicts the "nation's evolution" usually goes like this:

> a people may be driven out of its territory or enslaved, or become separated and lose consciousness of their original unity. But the historical destiny of the nation lies in the fulfillment or restoration of this unity and sovereignty of a people. National history is fully teleological in that its ends are to be found in its beginnings (28).

That is to say, the change and contingency in linear time has to be replaced by "a representation of timelessness that serves as a anchor of identity in modern histories and a foundation of the symbolic regime of nation-states" (27). Ultimately the timelessness that the ideology manifests aims to "[reconcile] the demand for an unchanging unity of nationhood with a changing modern future" (Duara 31), the dialectic of identity and change as well as timelessness and historicity, which in fact, only dialectically exposes the aporia and anxiety in linear history (27). Oppress-resist narrative and its moral appraisal, the basis of the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography, are pretty much informed by Duara's analysis. But this still cannot tackle the problem of the unpredictable readership.

Is there any other way to think about nationalism? Perhaps Terry Eagleton's stimulating essay "Nationalism: Irony and Commitment" can offer some help. Eagleton's formulation states that any emancipatory politics, including nationalism, must "move under the sign of irony, knowing themselves *ineluctably parasitic* on their antagonists" (26, my emphasis). Optimistic utopianism "grabs instantly for a future, projecting itself by an act of will or imagination beyond the compromised

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political structures of the present" (25), but Eagleton asserts that in order to render this politics feasible, emancipatory politics must at first "within the present" acknowledge its own "secret lack of identity with itself" (25). Nationalism should not project an identity in the future (from the past) but try to understand why the identity is impeded in the present. The utopian cause, therefore, must exist negatively, because once the cause is fulfilled it dissolves and loses meaning. When one obtains the object of his or her desire is satisfied, that entity ceases to be desirable. Any social identity on which emancipatory politics is based, according to Eagleton, "is a *relation,"* and it "cannot live on as some corporate self-identical entity once those political relations have been dismantled" (28). The persecuted subjects "do indeed experience needs that are repressed but demand realization; it is just that one ironic effect of such repression is to render us radically uncertain of what our needs really are" (29). In order to actually know what the needs are and what must be realized, the is to lift this repressive antagonist or conditions. "All radical politics are thus in a profound sense formalistic [without actual content]" (29).

For Eagleton, then, nationalist politic should not pursue an actual, tangible content for a national community as if it were natural and self-evident. In order to fulfill its cause, the actual content of nationalism "can be figured only in silence, exile and cunning" (27), that is to say, temporarily impossible, and unnecessary, to flesh out in the present; only by insisting its own negativity can this politics be pursued. In this way his approach is similar to that of Anderson's. Nationalist politics should be foremost formalistic: under what circumstances, according to what conditions can the content be possible. Irony is a suitable trope to characterize this state: nationalism should be itself by not being itself. It must become a projected vision of totality. Even if one contends that nationalism and the future is the necessary semblance to sustain

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its continuous development, without a clear sense of irony that reminds the oppressed people of its impossibility in the present, this semblance necessarily falls back into myth.

The second part of Eagleton's formulation describes how nationalism dwells in the dilemma of particularity and generality. He criticizes the "attempt to bypass the specificity of one's identity . . . will always be perilously abstract, even once one has recognized that such an identity is as much a construct of the oppressor as one's 'authentic' sense of oneself" (30). Specificity and generality are dialectically related each other: "a politics of difference or specificity is in the first place in the cause of sameness and universal identity": the meaning of self-autonomy is that every political entity can share equal universal rights; while "the only point of enjoying such universal abstract equality is to discover and live one's own particular difference": the universal must be realized in particularity (30). In political reality, " [particularity] is either suppressed in the totality of universal Reason," or "celebrated as a unique, irreducible state of being impenetrable to all alien Enlightenment rationality" (32). This, I think, explains the innermost dilemma of postcolonial society: to participate in the world according to reason, or to manifest the singularity to the fullest? Eagleton continues that "it seeks to evolve its own discourse of place, body, inheritance, sensuous need, it will find itself miming the cultural forms of its opponents; if it does not do so it will appear bereft of a body, marooned with a purely rationalist politics that has cut loose from the intimate affective depths of the poetic" (34).[8] No matter how Taiwanese nationalism stresses its liberalism, to form a single, sustainable political identity still involves necessary inclusion and exclusion that contradicts what liberalism promises. Moreover, if it pushes the logic liberalism and multiculturalism

[8] In the context "it" refers to the "political left," but I think placing "postcolonial society" within the frame is no less effective.

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to its extreme, nationalism loses its substantiality and singularity: democracy and human rights are not nativist but the fruits from the foundation of Western modernity, and these political forms and values do not necessarily entails national specificities.

Eagleton argues that modernist literature embodies this dilemma. "Modernism is at once, contradictorily, an exhilarating estrangement of such clapped-out national lineages from the powerfully distancing perspectives of exiles, and an expression of the rootless conditions of an international monopoly capitalism" (35). *Ulysses*, the modernist novel *par excellence*, "celebrates and undermines the Irish national formation at a stroke, deploying the full battery of cosmopolitan modernist techniques to re-create it while suggesting with its every breath just how easily it could have done the same for Bradford or the Bronx" (36). It is precisely the colony or post-colony, as "a kind of nonplace and nonidentity" (35), that can demonstrate the tension between particularity and generality in modern global situation. No matter which end is concentrated and exemplified, the opposite cannot but interfere and compromise at the same time. The first chapter will discuss this problem in more detail. Not only modernism, even realism, or any other literature produced in the midst or in the wake of imperialism and within the global hierarchy of the world suffer the same dilemma.

"The identity [of the oppressed groups/peoples]," Eagleton concludes, "is in this sense importantly negative, defined less by shared positive characteristics than by a common antagonism to some political order" (37). It does not mean people should be liberated from any kind of political identity. The identity should be apprehended as *negative*, so that a perpetuating effort to fulfill itself is possible. It is easy to imagine "a 'centered,' resolute, self-confident agent," which, according to the context, refers to a member of "a people" but it is necessary to remember that this imagined subject "would not be necessary in the first place if such self-confidence were genuinely

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possible" (37). "Without such self-consciousness, one would not even know what one lacked; and a subject that thinks itself complete feels no need to revolt" (37). Yet, this negative identity that an emancipatory, transformative politics requires "is thus rendered highly vulnerable by what makes it necessary in the first place" (37), and therefore devoting oneself to political activity is probably more at stake than imagining a legitimate, indignant national identity. The possibility of a negative nationalism, Eagleton writes, "is a matter of trying to live that dialectic passionately, ironically, in all of its elusive impossibility" (38).

In comparison with the affirmative character and restorative/constructive consciousness pervading Taiwan literature, I think Guo may qualify as a exemplary writer of this negative nationalism. In his interview Guo mentions that he lives with an ardent *weiji yishi* 危機意識, or "crisis consciousness." He states that if one lives his or her life comfortably, it means he or she has submit to the status quo, and therefore anyone who is aware of the imposing crisis cannot but sink into depression (Interview with Jian 219). Although it can be explained away by the writer's own temperament or attributed to his earlier studies on existentialism, I do believe that Guo consciously takes a critical and negative stance because he knows the lure and danger in nationalism. In another interview, Guo asserts that writing for him always involves the quest for an impossibility, always threatened by uncertainty, because a disastrous essence haunts writing itself in modern times (Interview with Wuhe 51). I contend that this negativity is this writer's best effort to grasp the present. In the following chapters, I hope to illustrate how Guo through his writing embodies the irony of his time and reveals the negativity of the present, and how the present must be entangled with the calamities in the past and the impossible hope in the future.

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Chapter One

Realism or Modernism?

Aesthetic and Epistemological Claims of Style and Their Ideology[9]

As I have shown in the introduction, Ye Shitao's historiography of Taiwan literature has laid the foundation for the discipline: that critical realism is the legacy of an unbroken lineage as well as the bedrock of "a national style" of Taiwan literature (Ye 187; 212; 217-19). If it is so, why does Chang Lihsuan 張俐璇 protests against the prevalent stigmatization of "realism" in the conclusion of her monograph on the development of realism as a concept in the history of Taiwan literature? She laments the fact that realist literature cannot spark enough interest in scholars, and offers the following conjectures to explain the phenomenon: realist works do not cater to bourgeois sensibility; they fall out of the vision of belles-lettres tradition in Chinese and Western literary tradition that academia prefers; realism seems too political and too readily compliant to ideology; its "simplicity" does not speak to literary theory; and finally its parochial subject matter makes it difficult to commensurate with other works on an international scale (*Becoming Realism* 406-09). From her analysis, one can hardly believe that, along with the budding of popular nationalism evoked by a series of political setbacks,[10] literary realism once possessed the center of cultural scene in the seventies and established the bedrock of the mainstream ideology of the

[9] A part of this chapter was delivered at the conference entitled "Young Scholar's Conference in Brno: Approaches to Language, Culture and Society" in Brno, Czech Republic, on March 26, 2018.

[10] This includes a series of traumatic events and frustration in international politics brought about by a crucial change in the Cold War, which includes Baodiao movement (1970-71), expulsion of Republic of China from the United Nations in 1971, and Shanghai Communiqué signed by People's Republic of China and the USA in 1972, which led to normalization of political ties between PROC and the USA and showed that Kuomintang 國民黨 government was losing international rapport. See Hsiau Achin 蕭阿勤. *Huigui xienshi: Yijiouqiling niendai de zhanhoushidai yu wenhua zhengzhi bienqian* 回歸現實: 一九七〇年代的戰後世代與文化政治變遷 [*Return to Reality: Political and Cultrula Change in 1970s Taiwan and the Postwar Generation*]. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2010.

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Taiwan literature as an academic discipline. A major part of the canonical works by *bentu* 本土, or native Taiwanese writers, belong to the literary realist camp, and it bears witness to the decisive moment of a series of international political crises of Taiwan. However, the resurgence of scholarly interest in Taiwanese postwar modernism which had flourished in the sixties and the early seventies eclipsed the scholars' attention to literary realism as a crucial aesthetic concept in addition to its political implication.[11]

The antagonistic opposition of literary realism and modernism has been a thorny issue in the history of Taiwan literature. Studies on Taiwan literature have demonstrated that the differences between the aesthetic and political aspects of these two camps loomed large during *xiangtu wenxue lunzhan* 鄉土文學論戰, or nativist debate (1977-1978), and incubated the popular nationalisms that dictate the trajectory of Taiwan culture in the following decades until today. Literary realism no doubt played an important role, and soon it came to undertake the cultural and political task to establish a literature of our own. During the debate in the late seventies, literary realism stood at the opposite to literary modernism, which was, as nativist critics claimed, elitist, asocial, obscure, pathological, tainted by Western imperialism and capitalism, and indulgent in superfluous stylistic experimentation, while literary realism was expected to depict the true life of common people and to reflect the geographical landscape and class disparity in society so as to criticize capitalism as well as cultural invasion. Literary realism, as critics claimed, inherited the defiant Chinese (and, manifested later in the eighties and nineties, Taiwanese) spirit against imperialism and feudalism. This opposition of realism and modernism decades later

[11] Taiwan postwar modernism (especially in terms of fiction) is usually placed within the sociological context in Cold War politics, especially the influence from the US. For a concise explanation, see Chen Fangming's *A History of Taiwan New Literature*, 347.

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becomes the epistemological premise of Taiwan literature as a discipline. Literary realism gradually finds itself concomitant with the foundation of national literature and the crucial aspect of cultural subjectivity.

From the nineties to the new century, major scholars of modern Taiwan literature continue to dwell on this issue and several explanations were attempted. Ng Kimchew more straightforwardly indicates the violent and exclusive nationalist ideological implication of literary realism since the seventies ("Chinese without Nation" 126). He criticizes that literary historiographies deliberately emphasize the importance of realism, claiming that only literary realism can convey the reality and can create the pathos generated from the history of an oppressed people and their suffering ("Chinese without Nation" 126). Chang on the other hand broadens the definition of realism and emphasizes the political aspect of the mimetic consciousness in the history of Taiwan literature (*Becoming Realism* 65-66). She displaces the binary opposition of realism and modernism and argues that different aesthetic schools are merely different versions of realism, and they reflect the competition and power dynamic between different social forces contemporary needs (*Becoming Realism* 71; 75). Ng's observation is basically correct, but he confuses the effect with the cause: the ideological implication of literary realism is the result of the conversation and collaborative effort between political and cultural registers. Chang enlarges the concept of realism to the extent that she collapses the definitional boundary between representation and realism, and the term "realism" therefore loses its specificity.

Yvonne Chang in her founding text on Taiwan postwar modernism indicates that the realist camp did not define itself nor develop an adequate theory during the nativist debate (*Modernism* 169), and realism's political function derived purely from

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the fact that it "was seen to be the opposite of 'modernism'" (*Modernism* 169). Since "anti-modernism was equated with anti-West and anti-imperialism," it acquired its cultural legitimacy (*Modernism* 169). In his comprehensive literary historiography of vernacular Chinese-language Taiwan literature published in 2011, Chen Fangming, one of the most ardent advocates of Taiwanese nationalism, surprisingly formulates an indignant apology for postwar modernism, contending that Taiwanese postwar modernism actually aimed at liberating personal mind in the times of martial law and authoritarian regime and official ideology (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 348), and certainly is an essential, inevitable process and valuable asset of Taiwanese literature (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 535-36). He also rectifies the ideological tendency of literary realism since the seventies by stating that realism is significant not because it reflects reality, but because it is no less artistic (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 534). Chen tries to incorporate the unpleasant aspect of modernist into a synthetic instead of a dialectical point of view (*Modern Taiwanese Literature* 364).

These studies from different points of view unveil the social and political contexts leading to the discussion of postwar modernism as well as nativist critical realism. But in spite of the studies of ideological analysis, one question has not yet been satisfactorily addressed: literary realism does not necessarily entail ideologies including nativist politics, and nativist politics does not necessarily have to choose realism to be its vehicle. Can one trace an internal connection between the two, that is, via aesthetic investigation? By the same token, one can also ask why the nativists did not consider the possibility of utilizing literary modernism to accommodate their concerns before castigating modernism as the metonym and proxy of Western cultural invasion. The closely-knit relation between aesthetic and ideology has to be disentangled.

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This chapter serves as a reappraisal of the historical and theoretical foundation of Taiwan literature as a discipline. By revisiting literary and critical discourses in postwar Taiwan beginning from the seventies, I aim to argue that the connection between realism and the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography is not established according to natural rapport nor according to relevant political sentiment, as several important treatises have claimed. Rather, it is the philosophical presupposition of literary realism that allows nativists' claim to develop through literature. Moreover, I would like to further explore the social implication and historical meaning of postwar modernism, the once nemesis of the establishment of Taiwan cultural subjectivity. Besides its contribution to enriching the formal repertoire of Taiwan literature, is there any other political dimension of modernist aesthetic? I will limit my discussion within the scope of prose fiction, because critics participating in the nativists debate almost unequivocally and exclusively focused on fiction.[12]

The theoretical source I resort to in this study is the aesthetic discourses by Lukács and Adorno. Though it requires more meticulous archival work to trace how Lukács was first introduced into Taiwan, his theory was not completely foreign to Taiwanese intellectuals.[13] By revisiting Lukács' theory produced in the thirties and the fifties, one can clearly observe his rigorous theoreticizationof politicized literary realism. By tracing Lukács' formulation of his aesthetic criteria, how ideology and realism proceed to cooperate and take on a political function can be better expounded. In comparison with Lukács' more limpid style, Adorno's theoretical defense of modernist art is rather unfamiliar in Taiwan literature because of his far more dialectical and difficult writings. However, Adorno attempts to dislocate the ideology

[12] Of course one cannot ignore the poetry debate during the first years in the seventies, which is no less significant in terms of nationalist politics and aesthetic.
[13] See Lu Zhenghui 呂正惠. *Xiaoshuo yu shehui* 小說與社會 [Fiction and Society]. Taipei: Lianjing, 1988.

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of beauty, sensibility, and judgment that pervades the conception of art into a dialectical position in modern civilization without losing sight of the latent power of modernist art to redeem itself from the catastrophe of modern history. Even though Lukács and Adorno's aesthetic writings were respectively produced in very different social contexts, through their philosophical thinking I aim to move beyond sociological and ideological analysis, which has become the habitus of Taiwan literature studies, and facilitate more ground for discussion on aesthetic and ideology immanently.

Revisiting the Philosophical Presupposition of Realism

Critics and literary historians agree that literary realism in Western literature thrived during the nineteenth century. Technological innovation and philosophical advancement in the late eighteenth allowed capitalism and imperialism to sweep the world. The bourgeoisie became the major social motor force behind the production of high culture. Astradur Eysteinsson defines literary realism as a "mimetic, verisimilar mode of representation modeled primarily on nineteenth-century realism" (Eysteinsson 186). The comparatively simple language "can readily be reformulated in sociopragmatic terms" (Eysteinsson 187), and its subject matter is "firmly in a physical and social setting" (Eysteinsson 193). Mimesis, or an aesthetic and philosophical modus operandi based on imitation and representation, "portrays social reality as a 'whole' and ultimately as a 'common ground'" (194). Literary subjects, such as characters of realist fiction, "'[come] to terms with' the object," the represented real world, "where the individual 'makes sense' of a society in which there is a basis of common understanding" (195). In other words, literary realism that develops along with capitalism and modern science inclines to grasp the world as a

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meaningful whole by faithfully imitating tangible aspects of the world. The represented world, therefore, falls "under unified 'control'" (194). One can see that there is a philosophical basis behind the supposedly transparent "communicative language acknowledged by 'the public sphere'" (192): to control the reality through faithful holistic representation. However, in order to imitate the reality more efficiently, the role of the medium cannot hinder the process of communication, so realist narratives can be relied on to "reproduce the narrative structures and the symbolic order that form the basis of this society and its ideology" (208). Should there be any drastic crisis in reality, be it detrimental or benevolent, literary realism, if its logic is carried out to its fullest, is less likely to resist the power of it. The transparent language can therefore serve to cover the influence of social forces and become engrossed by inducing "perceptual and ideological anesthesia" (Eysteinsson 203).

Christopher Prendergast also analyzes the realist desire toward "totalizing ambitions of Hegel and Marx" (Prendergast 120). He emphasizes the epistemological dimension of literary realism: the will to know. Literary realism can "reveal the world, or a part of the world, in its inner principle of intelligibility" (120). The inner principle guarantees the distance of art from other social sectors or scientific discourses. The immanent world created by authors of works presupposes "the possibility of a transcendent order of knowledge and the primacy of a transcendent knowing subject" (Prendergast 121). One can see this in the development of narration and the role of readers. The unfolding of plots can be interpreted "as an economy of the knowable and the unknowable, each reinforcing the other" (129). The literary form gives and reveals meanings of the world through characterization, setting and dramatic action, performing the task of "naturalizing socially and historically

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produced systems of meaning" (121). Literary realism summons readers to identify with the literary subjects in fiction and by hiding this tacit, unseen identification, and the illusion of the total identification of subject and object can be condoned. This process, however, renders literary texts as "ideological operator" (121).

J. M. Bernstein argues that literary realism "involves a sustained employment of experiential discourse, a subservience to the protocols of that discourse's practical ideology, together with a masking of its own formal dimensions" (*Philosophy of the Novel* 241). Realistic representation, argues Bernstein, can "only [repeat] the received forms in which a society presents the world to itself and itself to the world" (*Philosophy of the Novel* 232). Now Bernstein brings the issue of form into discussion, and it is worth noticing because the function of form is one of the core issues of the ideological difference between modernism and realism. Masking of form and claims to renounce form altogether are completely different issues, and the latter move reveals the ideological dimension of the plausible realistic representation (239). Literary realism rejects a distinguishable formal dimension because it serves to "resist or subvert the immediate contact with reality that the codes of realism appear to supply" (Eysteinsson 208) and it discloses that the "gap between language and reality to be unbridgeable" (Bernstein 233). From a more pragmatic point of view, the formal aspect of a text hinders the communication of meaning and plausibility of artistic illusion, and therefore disrupts the process ideological interpellation. The illusory identification of literary subject and world as the object is nullified, or at least compromised.

Lukács' Theory of Literary Realism

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Literary realism, based on the discussion above, contains several philosophical implications. First, its modus operandi shows an inclination to perceive and grasp the society as a whole, which is indirectly motivated by the Enlightenment. Second, literary realism reveals an epistemological desire to make sense of the world, which is reflected in the reader's acceptance of represented world and the desire to proceed to engage as the plotting and characterization unfold. Third, the design of the interaction between the literary form and the represented creates an illusion of their full identification. Fourth, in order to maintain the faithful mimetic rapport of representation, literary realism may fall victim to the social forces by uncritically imitating them. Finally, from an ideological point of view, realism tends to dispel and reject the formal dimension of texts in order to retain the dramatic illusion of the identification of subject and object. Lukács contributes to the development of literary theory by legitimating the ideological dimension of literary realism, which becomes both his strength and his drawback. His creative manipulation of these ideas transforms literary realism into a persuasive philosophical and aesthetic imperative to engage in the world. Moreover, ideological though his theory seems, he nevertheless insists on the autonomy of artistic register in the face of science (*Writer and Critic* 34).

Already in the second part of his earlier pre-Marxist work, *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács perceptively notices not only how capitalist modernity unsettles modern human beings, but also how this fact dialectically transforms literary forms. The section titled "Romanticism of Disillusionment," Lukács' severe analysis and critique of Romanticism and the concomitant development of a concentrated self, prefigures his later theoretical development. Lukács argues that the concentration on the self "is not only a psychological fact but also a decisive value judgment on reality; this self-sufficiency of the subjective self is its most desperate self-defence; it is the

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abandonment of any struggle to realise the soul in the outside world" (*The Theory of the Novel* 114), and the corresponding literary genre of Romanticism, the lyric, has become "so intensely lyrical that it is no longer capable of purely lyrical expression" in the previous eras (114). The Romantics turn to create an inner reality, and Lukács legitimately calls its constant contest with the outer reality "the ethical problem of utopia" (115). "The utopian longing of the soul," Lukács proclaims, "is a legitimate desire . . . only if it is absolutely incapable of being satisfied in the present intellectual state of man" as well as "in any world that can be imagined and given form, whether past, present or mythical" (115). And therefore the novel form is significant, as its "formal significance is determined precisely by the fact that the regulative on which the whole reality is based can manifest itself in them and is given form through their mediation" (114). Since the utopian impulse must be fictional to be legitimate, the novelists' effort to create "by purely artistic means, a reality which corresponds to this dream world, or at least is more adequate to it than the existing one, is only an illusory solution" (115). This utopian impulse in art and the definition of art as semblance become the most significant recurrent critical motif in Western Marxist aesthetic.

An "affirmation of the outside world would justify the mindless philistines who accomodate themselves to reality, and the resulting work would be no more than cheap, slick satire; straightforward affirmation of romantic interiority would give rise to formless wallowing in vain, self-worshipping lyrical psychologism" (*The Theory of the Novel* 119). It is literary form, especially the novel, that mediates these two poles. The encounter of self and reality, Lukács continues, determines the mood of "disillusioned romanticism," which is "an over-intensified, over-determined desire for an ideal life as opposed to the real one, a desperate recognition of the fact that this desire is doomed to remain unsatisfied" (116). Artists in the face of a rapidly

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modernizing capitalist society suffer "an uneasy conscience," while art, "the vehicle of the utopian challenge to reality," is doomed to be "crushed by the brute force of reality" (117), and the defeat entails the fact that "failure is a necessary consequence of its own inner structure" (116). This clash between utopia and reality is homologous with the dialectic between totality and fragmentation. The totality created by fiction makes the fragmentary reality felt; subjectivity demands continuity, and yet reality cannot but "[disintegrate] into a series of mutually absolutely heterogeneous fragments which have no independent valency of existence even in isolation" (118), and the fragments "live only by the grace of the mood in which they are experienced, but the totality reveals the nothingness of this mood in terms of reflexion" (119). The awareness of the impossibility of creating a utopia through fiction is exemplified by the self-referentiality of literary language in novel, which leads to the collapse of substantiality of the literary realism. The pivotal figure in literary history, for Lukács, is Gustave Flaubert. Thematically speaking Guo's fiction also aptly fits in Lukács' characterization of the development of novel during the nineteenth century. I shall try to build the connection between Guo and Flaubert in chapter three.

If modern human beings' "immoderate elevation of the subject" is actually "the abandonment of any claim to participation in the shaping of the outside world" (117), during his middle period Lukács seeks to correct this by revising his theorization of the novel form, which becomes less dialectical but more constructive. The goal of any realistic art, he argues, is "to provide a picture of reality in which the contradiction between appearance and reality, the particular and the general, the immediate and the conceptual, etc., is so *resolved that the two converge into a spontaneous integrity* in the direct impression of the work of art and provide a sense of an inseparable integrity" (*Writer and Critic* 34, my emphasis). The effect emanating from this "offers

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a truer, more complete, more vivid and more dynamic reflection of reality" (*Writer and Critic* 36). This assertion infringes the mimetic imperative of faithfully representing the outside world and actually amplifies the ideological dimension of literary realism. "Characterization that does not encompass ideology," he boldly argues, "cannot be complete" (*Writer and Critic*" 151). The dialectic of the particular and the general as well as that of the appearance and reality should "emerge out of the particular actions and passions of specific individuals" (*Writer and Critic* 154). This goal of the understanding is accomplished through the "peculiar character of the artistic reflection of reality (*Writer and Critic* 36), by which "[the] reader does not consciously compare an individual experience with an isolated event of the work but surrenders himself [sic] to the general effect of the work of art on the basis of his [sic] own assembled general experience" (*Writer and Critic* 36-37). The conception of "reflection" demonstrates Lukács' theoretical presupposition that there must be a society outside that is truer than art, and there is an imperative for art to correctly reflect the society in accordance with a correct theory so that the reader's "experiences regarding reality are broadened and deepened by the fiction of the work of art" (*Writer and Critic* 37).

The didactic dimension of Lukács can therefore become intelligible: he argues that "the work of art must therefore reflect correctly and in proper proportion all important factors objectively determining the area of life it represents. It must so reflect these that this area of life becomes comprehensible from within and from without, re-experienceable, that it appears as a totality of life" (*Writer and Critic* 38), which demonstrates his reformulation of the desire originated from the Enlightenment and scientific reason to grasp and control the whole by a more constructive and active method. Lukács' insistence on the independence of aesthetic register can be seen from

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his adherence to fictional plot design and characterization: "through the extreme intensification of typical situations can an author evoke form his characters the expression of the major contradictions of the time and exact the ultimate capacity for such expression latent in them" (*Writer and Critic* 159). Simply recording the world as it is is not enough; the typical character should be generalizable, and the events should transcend quotidian banality in order to import the social contradiction, and the didacticism should indoctrinate in the reader "a specific hierarchy among [the] characters which serves not only to expose the social content of the work and the author's ideology but also to provide the means for defining the place of each character within the entire compositional scheme" (*Writer and Critic* 155). Now Lukács' theory of realism posits its ideological stance that can help one understand how the rapport between realism and the nativist ideology can be understood. Lukács' insistence on "intensification" suggests that the present here and now is somewhat undesirable, and therefore the faithful representation of it is false and become "pseudo-objective fatalism" (*Writer and Critic* 169). Therefore the distance between art and reality is not aesthetic, but political. The distance between the world as it is and the dramatic world is vectored according to political trajectory. The "hierarchy" and "proper proportion" of the world "structured and ordered more richly and strictly that ordinary life experience" (*Writer and Critic* 40) suggest that the objectivity of the world is ideologically prescribed. So the irony of a didactic realism lies in the fact that the supposedly faithful mimetic relation is far from faithful at all; the social reality "reflected" in literary realism is always already ideological.

Even though Lukács' theory in literary realism seems and actually is dogmatic, his aesthetic demystifies the ideology of the beauty and aims to liberate art from exchange value in a more constructive fashion. Moreover, Lukács unwittingly raises

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the stakes in the concept of totality: fiction writers can not only reflect the society through literary realism, but also potentially flesh out a textual reality charged with a political vision. For a postcolonial society lain on the table of Cold War superpowers and global capitalism, Lukács' theory is no doubt attractive, as it theorizes and offers a methodology for writers to engage in politics in the cultural field.

Contending Realism and Modernism during and after the Nativist Debate

If Lukács' aesthetic prescribes how literary realism incorporate ideological message in artistic form, one can also demythologize the rapport according to this aesthetic. From this one can clearly see that Lukács' aesthetic demand for creating a richer, more dramatic fictional world that can correctly reflect reality through plot and characterization can accommodate the nationalist desire to narrate, to formulate a past, a present and a future. Hsiau Achin 蕭阿勤 argues that any nationalist ideology requires a historical teleology in their cultural narrative production in order to make sense of and make use of the past set the political goal in the future (*Return to Reality* 255). By examining some of the more important texts during the nativist debates, one can see how Lukács can sharpen the understanding of the rapport between literature and nativist ideology.

In his rudimentary work "Introduction to the History of Taiwanese Nativist Literature," Ye argues that literature not only should closely [depict] the real life of the people (Yu et al. 73, my emphasis) but also should represent the contradiction inside the society (Yu et al. 77) so as to resist imperialism and feudalism (Yu et al. 73). One can immediately sense the imperative tone that dictates the task of art. Literary realism here undertakes the task to represent a reality implicitly according to an ideology, because the "reality" reflected in art "is" the national history fighting

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against imperialism and feudalism (Yu et al. 77). On the side of pro-unification Chinese nationalism, Chen Yingzhen 陳映真 earnestly urges to create a national literature by using the national language and national style to depict Chinese people, culture, landscape, and society (Yu et al. 336). He also projects the priority of ideology instead of style. Also, it is a Lukácsian theoretical perspective that allows Chen Yingzhen to insist on the artistic autonomy and to pronouncethat it is content that determines form at the same time (Yu et al. 346-47). The illusory artistic autonomy is already decided by the content it undertakes. "Realist Literature, Not Nativist Literature" by Wang Tuo 王拓 though correctly indicates that the popular social force in the seventies is actaully a nationalist one (Yu et al. 105), he does not distinguish national history and realistic life, incorporating them into the same category in opposition to Western modern literature (Yu et al. 113).[14] Lukács' aesthetic can be a way to realize the assertion Wang Tuo makes that the value of the nativist literature lies in the depiction of the characters' humanity, struggle and psychology as well as the social reality, human life, and their wishes and desires (Yu et al. 118-19). Wang's suggestion at realistic characterization has already been intensified according to a nativist ideology.

The rapport of nationalism and realism then becomes the basis of Taiwan literature. According to Hsiau, what should be noted is that the nineties saw "a bold initiative to 'nationalize' Taiwanese literature" (*Cultural Nationalism* 111). According to Taiwanese nationalists "the history of modern Taiwanese literature was reinterpreted as a history of searching for a distinct Taiwanese national identity, and national identity was regarded as the leitmotif of the whole of modern Taiwanese literature developed since the 1920s" (*Cultural Nationalism* 111). Behind the

[14] Ye, Chen and Wang are all important realist writers themselves.

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ostensibly innocent aesthetic preference for literary realism is a nationalist ideology that trims out unwanted ideological factors to form a self-sufficient, evolutionary, pre-determined narrative (*Return to Reality* 255), and therefore the constructed teleology of Taiwanese nationalist narrative becomes the foundation of institution of Taiwan literature (*Return to Reality* 255-56). The reality is always already enriched, intensified and ordained by a nationalist ideology. Even though Taiwan literature professes multiculturalism, Taiwanese nationalism still possesses the upper position hierarchy that it assigns for itself. If by a return to Lukács can help discern the ideological burden on aesthetic style, a new perspective beyond ideological analysis and nationalist presupposition on literary realism may be possible.

The most rigidly theoretical Lukácsian critic in Taiwan is Lu Zhenghui 呂正惠. His essay collection *Fiction and Society* launched a systematic assault on almost all the major writers now considered important modernists. In addition to his direct quotations, Lu's Lukácsian tendency includes his uncritical acceptance of Lukács' literary heroes: nineteenth century realist writers like Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, etc., as the criterion to weigh in Taiwan writers; the insistence on the "correct" consciousness and aesthetic of prose fiction; his aversion to subjective modernism and his preference for realism that applies identifiable characters and dramatic plots; the reflective correspondence between the individual and the society. No doubt his essays bear certain merits: he insightfully analyzes the sentimentalism of Huang Chunming 黃春明 (Lu 12), the naturalist tendency of Wang Zhenhe 王禎和 (76-77), the conflict between romanticism and scientific criticism in Chen Yingzhen (68-69), the subtle political bias in Bai Xienyung 白先勇 (Lu 44), and the overstretched individualism in Wang Wenxing 王文興 (31-32). However, Lu severely, even willfully, reprimands these writers not only because of their artistic achievement but

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also because of the false consciousness (that Lu as a critic cannot accept) determined by these writers' life and experience.

In the nineties, the most contentious response to Taiwanese cultural nationalism based on nativist realism probably comes from David Wang. In the face of radical politicization of Taiwan literature propelled by Taiwanese nationalism, his "Nationalist Discourse and Nativist Rhetoric"[15] scathingly argues that by literary representation, the rhetoric of nativist literature projects a vision of Taiwanese nationalist utopia ("Nationalist Discourse" 67), and how in political discourses nativist literature becomes fetishized and loses its agency as a symbolic act ("Nationalist Discourse" 68). Wang sensitively indicates that Taiwan nationalists, under the banner of indigenousness and authenticity, reiterate how Kuomintang and mainland immigrants "usurped" Taiwan ("Nationalist Discourse" 69). Despite his harshness, Wang is correct to criticize that if nativist critics, borrowing Anderson's famous theory, tear down Chinese nationalism by revealing its fictionality, the construction of a Taiwanese nation should be leveled according to the same criterion ("Nationalist Discourse" 69). What differentiates Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism for nativist critics is the ideological effect created by the authenticity claim I discuss in the introduction. Wang critically argues that connection between "the past" and "the homeland" is actually an imaginary concept: it requires a series of narrative displacement and anachronism,[16] which implies that the homeland is not a perceivable reality that requires representation but rather a political myth created for redeeming the lost past to serve particular political needs ("Nationalist Discourse" 73),

[15] Despite the fact that he elaborately discussed at length the literary, philosophical and political aspects of the concept of literary realism in China, Wang didn't bother to pay attention to the development of realism in Taiwan. See his *Fictional Realism in Twentieth Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen*. New York: Columbia UP, 1992. Print.

[16] In fact this is what nativist writers tend to disagree. For example, Wang Tuo more or less accept that modernization is a objective process despite its relation to capitalism (Yu et al. 117).

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but the result is that the idealized homeland cannot refer to reality (72); what is revealed is merely the defense mechanism that derives from the infiltration and threat of Western modernity.

Postwar Modernism in Taiwan: Debates

Since the end of the Korean War, United States Information Agency intervened and encouraged the introduction of Western literature in the academy. New Criticism and programmatic courses of Western literature (especially prose and poetry) was systematically introduced in the academy. The writers trained by the formalist approach in the academy published a series of short fiction and developed a whole new aesthetic that radically differed from the anti-communist literary dogmatism sponsored by the government. Cold War, therefore, conditions the advent of postwar modernism, and the accusation of cultural invasion from the nativist writers is not unsensible. Revisiting some of the most important academic discussions on postwar modernism, however, is useful for a start to reconsider the social meaning of this literary movement.

Despite his untenable social and economical analysis and biased opinion of Taiwanese nationalism, the rejoinder from one of the most important modernist writers, Wang Wenxing, allows the reader to assess the relation between modernist aesthetic and its pragmatic use and its relation to politics. His speech during the nativist debates rebukes literature's social service by arguing that the only aim of literature is to delight the reader (Yu et al. 520). Also, he opposes effacing the hierarchy of high-brow and proletariat literature (Yu et al. 524), and not insensibly argues that the prescribed ideology of realism somewhat contradicts the presupposition of representing reality in literary realism (Yu et al. 525). In the end he

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iterates the disinterestedness of aesthetic experience that cannot be influenced or encroached by any ethical or practical demands (Yu et al. 528). From Wang's apology, one can see that modernists' major claim is the insistence on artistic autonomy, which takes root through the New Criticism imported through academic training.

Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan by Yvonne Chang conducted an elaborate investigation on the stylistic and ideological character of postwar Taiwan modernism. Chang's observation basically conforms to nativists' diagnosis: it is true that "concerns with national destiny have played a much less significant role in writings of Taiwan's Modernists" (*Modernism* 12), and these writers ignore "their social responsibilities as members of the intelligentsia" (*Modernism* 151). However, following Wang Wenxing's crude apology for the autonomy of art, "[the] Modernist writers," Chang contends, "have inherited from the Western liberal humanist tradition the concept that literature's ultimate goal is to represent the timeless qualities of the human condition" (*Modernism* 19). Living in an authoritarian modern society after the World Wars and the great divide in the wake of Chinese Civil War (1945-49), these writers "are more fundamentally pessimistic. Their concession to the inefficacy of literature under the totalizing social system of modern times leads to a rational resignation, a withdrawal from the public sphere and a devotion to writing" (*Modernism* 21). Instead of political participation or social and economical detailed representation, modernist works "are undoubtedly at their best when grappling with such morally compelling issues as the ethical responsibility of the individual, fate, and the meaning of human suffering" via "expressing the 'truth' through symbolic methods" (12).

Postwar modernist writers, defying the traditional Chinese cultural tradition, emphasize "the importance of freeing modern Chinese literature from political

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interference" (*Modernism* 90), a pragmatic view of the role of literature that had burdened Chinese intellectuals for more than two millennia and continued to influence Chinese people even in these writers' own time. Also, they decisively break away from the politicized writers in China during the thirties, "away from the traditional expressive view toward the mimetic view of literature" (*Modernism* 44). "With [the modernist writers'] denunciation of sentimentalism," Chang continues, "and their express interest in the hidden complexities of the human psyche, personal emotions are no longer treated as the source or origin of literature, but rather as objects for detached observation" (44). Chang accurately associates this development with "the early phase of Western modernism, the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century" (*Modernism* 16), the proto-modernism that defies anti-Romantic spontaneity and questions the stable but rigid representational system of literary realism that gradually leads to "a burgeoning skepticism about language and meaning" (16). The intellectual, apolitical and amoral artistic principles become "promise to help them redress their own cultural deficiencies" (13).

Shi Shu 施淑 seems to be one of the earliest to notice the dialectical position of postwar Taiwan modernism in the sixties and to defend the indelible influence it left on the postwar Taiwan fiction. Her seminal short essay, "Modern Nativism: Taiwan Literature in the Sixties and Seventies," characterizes the sixties as "a time of hysteria" that created a stifling, polarized political atmosphere (Shi 140). It suffocated and muted the young intellectuals; the anti-communist policy, the repression of the freedom of expression and the conservative environment induced what Shi terms "cultural voyeurism" : the distorted, fragmentary, camouflaged information of contemporary global unrest, leftist politics and anti-culture seeped in regardless of censorship and were smuggled along with the import of American culture (Shi 140-

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41). Therefore, the knowledge of Western modern culture was partial, incomplete, even misrepresented. The collective angst pervaded among the educated younger generation made it easier for them to unconditionally accept modernism and concomitant intellectual thoughts, such as existentialism and psychoanalysis (141). Modernist writers' exhausted, pale style and their silence unto major political events, Shi maintains, though not constructively defiant, is in itself hostile to official dogmatic "healthy" realism (141). Having lost the May-Fourth tradition and cultural heritage from the Japanese colonial period, the writers had to rely on the imported Western tradition, and their self-conscious stylistic difficulties and aesthetic experimentation actually derived from self-suspicion in cultural field and contradictions in social reality (Shi 140; 142). It was the series of political events in the beginning of the seventies that finally vented the accumulated negative emotions and led to the burst of nationalist sentiments (142). Shi pessimistically but perceptively argues that nativist debate does not so much entailed a collective attempt to resolve the predicament as reveal the complicated contemporary political and social reality (Shi 143).

At the end Shi posed a question still valid for scholars now not only in terms of literary study but also in terms of humanities as a whole. *Is the actuality of Taiwan buried in the past so that one has to rescue it from oblivion, or is it merely the projection from an imaginary future in the present* (Shi 144, my emphasis)? Her question, I believe, succinctly encapsulates the philosophical dimension of historiography, which comprises the core of both Taiwanese and Chinese nationalist ideologies. As David Wang contends, critics give the meaning of the past according to an imagined future so as to create a genealogical totality ("Nationalist Discourse" 68; 73), but neither the past nor the future can ontologically correspond to the present.

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Moreover, if multiple social forces wish to compete for the cultural legitimacy via different means: be it state apparatus, academic research, social institutions or popular culture, the power dynamic and hierarchy involved transform the actuality of the present into the negative, indeterminate foil of the past tradition or the future through dialectic. I shall discuss how historical fiction as a genre dramatizes the politics of temporalities works in chapter four.

The significance of Shi's essay, I think, also lies in the proposition of "cultural voyeurism," because it effectively explains why postwar modernism is misshaped: a blocked view of the world. Written in 1994, Shi's argument still accurately informs the dilemma of Taiwan literature as a discipline today after the twentieth anniversary of its institutionalization: Taiwan literature contains a global dimension. Westernized postwar modernism has been accused of submission to cultural imperialism and passive quietism, and since the discipline prioritizes the call to "restoration of tradition" and "return to reality," this global dimension has been repressed in literary historiography. However, I would like to assert that postcolonial nationalism and capitalist global scenario are dialectically connected, which is a dimension that have been covered by the resistance discourse. I shall return to this problem at the end of this thesis.

Ng Kimchew's "Chinese Modernism: An Unfinished Project" performs and develops Shi's argument of homology between society and art, arguing that modern Chinese as a language is always already interpolated by modernity ("Chinese Modernism" 35), and modern Chinese literature, particularly *baihua wenxue* 白話文學, or vernacular modern Chinese literature, burst out of existence from trauma of modernity ("Chinese Modernism" 49). Because Chinese as a language and Chinese-ness as a concept of nationalist symbol were invented to tackle the ubiquitous

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influence of Western modernity, vernacular modern Chinese literature from the beginning served as a vehicle, a language degree-zero, for accommodating modernity and modernization drained of Chinese traditional culture ("Chinese Modernism" 24). From the beginning vernacular modern Chinese literature had to adapt to the synchronic existence of the past and the now, modernism and classicism, romanticism and realism: a highly alienated state that Ernst Bloch describes as "non-contemporaneous contemporaneity," in which the language was forced into exile from itself, which corresponds to the catastrophe, exile and subsequent reign of terror after the great divide of the two Chinas in 1949 ("Chinese Modernism" 24-26).

Against this background Ng distinguishes two types of modernist literature: Chinese-modernism, a nationalist drive hoping to rescue Chineseness, which was already lost when it was invented, from Western modernity by resorting to the old high-brow literati tradition, the bottom line of modernization ("Chinese Modernism" 26-30). The other is Translate-modernism, which radically challenges and negates Chineseness to the extent of conscious de-sinicization, demarcating a space to accomodate otherness, newness and strangeness, and here and now ("Chinese Modernism" 30-33). Chinese modernism as a whole becomes a cultural project that rewrites modernity itself ("Chinese Modernism" 35). Ng criticizes a Habermasian critical philosophy based on communicative ethic, because it refuses the space where art, as the negative force, criticizes the society ("Chinese Modernism" 36). Since the "authentic" China is already dead ("Chinese Modernism" 28), Chinese modernism can only exist as "the return of the repressed": it can only approach the unrepresentable catastrophe of modernity through art (40), and the historical the unconscious historical forces are so horrible that they destroy the language, the experimentation of style at the cost of communication and signification (42). In the

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end, following Baudelaire's famous claim that modernity is only the half of art, Chinese modernism cannot escape from the dialectic of the tradition and the modern (46), and the dialectic precisely takes place in literary language. The urge to rescue and revive the lost tradition by Chinese-modernism and the urge of Translate-modernism to embrace the modern and the Western are the two sides of the same coin: the revival of tradition in language only proves its actuality, while the rejection of Chineseness only endorses its constant influence in reality even after its destruction. This essay disputes with the telos of nationalist ideology: even though Ng agrees that Chinese modern literature always exists in the proximity around historical catastrophe and therefore contextualizes the social meaning of modernist form, he never falls into the lure of nationalist discourse: literature neither serves to resist political forces as nativists assert, nor wholeheartedly mourns or salvages the lost culture in order to reject the present, despite the fact that he somewhat sympathizes with the latter.

Adorno's Apology for Modernist Art

Most of Adorno's essays on literary works written after the World War Two extend his aesthetic in conversation with that of Lukács. In comparison with modern music, the paradigmatic art form in his aesthetic, discussing literary works with Adorno's theory is a far more difficult task. Among these essays, Adorno explains this is because "language cannot completely dispense with its significative moment," which music (except opera) lacks, "with concepts and meanings" (*Notes to Literature* II 98). Therefore, literary critics always have to tackle "the double nature of language:" the communicative function through lucid discursive means on the one hand, and the expressive elements that comprise the aesthetic dimension of the work of art (*Notes to Literature II* 98). For literary realism, it is the former function that

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allows its verisimilitude and, with Lukács, its didactic values, while for works that more heavily rely on stylistic design, such as lyric poetry, it is the latter that dominates the language.

In some way, Adorno's aesthetic retains and enhances the aesthetic criticism by Lukács in his pre-Marxist era. Even though Adorno defends the social and political value of works of art no less than Lukács, he does it counterintuitively: in order to defy, even challenge the administered world governed by unprecedented terror in the twentieth century, works of art must first turn away from political engagement. Following Lukács, Adorno agrees that "no word that enters into a work of literature divests itself fully of the meanings it possesses in communicative speech" (*Notes to Literature II* 77). Then Adorno rejects Lukács by stating "still, in no work, not even the traditional novel, does this meaning remain untransformed; it is not the same meaning the word had outside the work" (*Notes to Literature II* 77). Adorno's aesthetic diverges from Lukács here in his philosophical presupposition of this absolute transformation of reality into art, which ultimately concretized in his faith in modern art.

Adorno's contention for Lukács' theory of realism also gives his aesthetic a contour. In "The Ideology of Modernism," collected in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* Lukács launches a supercilious attack on Western modernism. He castigates modernism from a more dogmatic point of view and accuses modernists writers "by exalting man's subjectivity, at the expense of the objective reality of his environment, man's subjectivity itself is impoverished" (*Contemporary Realism* 24). In Lukács' understanding, the perverted bourgeois ideology (*Contemporary Realism* 27) distorts modern art so that "psychopathology became the goal" and eventually modernist fiction "[escapes] into nothingness" (*Contemporary Realism* 29). The

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abstract and allegorical tendency of modernist art "rejects that assumption of an immanent meaning to human existence" (*Contemporary Realism* 40), while the subjectivism that permeates modernist art "replaces concrete typicality with abstract particularity" and "[destroys] the coherence of the world" (*Contemporary Realism* 43).

In a harsh rejoinder against Lukács, Adorno more rigorously and radically defends the modernist aesthetic by moving Lukács' insistence on artistic autonomy even further: that "art as knowledge is distinguished from scientific knowledge, that works of art which were indifferent to their mode of presentation would negate their own concept" (*Notes to Literature I* 218). Against Lukács' slighting of form by claiming that "style ceases to be a formalistic category. Rather, it is rooted in content" (*Contemporary Realism* 19), Adorno asserts "stylistic indifference is almost always a symptom of dogmatic rigidification of the content" (*Notes to Literature I* 219). Adorno chastises Lukács for prioritizing content over style, by which "the objectivity has been removed from the dialectical process along with the subject" (*Notes to Literature I* 219) and falls victim to dogmatism. Adorno suggests that Lukács' severe criticism of subjectivism is false accusation because "in an individualistic society that solitude is socially mediated and essentially historical in substance" (*Notes to Literature I* 223). Adorno perceptively exposes the blindness of the ideology of Lukács' literary realism that seeks to represent the world "through the extreme intensification of typical situations" which allows "an author [to] evoke from his characters the expression of the major contradictions of the time" (*Writer and Critic* 159): Lukács' realism tends to fashion a reality in accordance with his ideology instead of acknowledging the reality. Adorno also rejects the Lukács' didacticism and argues that "as art, by its very concept it stands in an antithetical relationship to the status quo" (*Notes to Literature I* 224). "Art . . . come to know reality," Adorno

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continues, "by expressing, through its autonomous constitution, what is concealed by the empirical form reality takes" (*Notes to Literature I* 227). Unlike Lukács, who imposes "a subsumptive modus operandi which operates from above" (*Notes to Literature I* 218), Adorno argues that the artists' "[individual] intentions cannot be abstracted from [the object], nor can it be judged by them" (*Notes to Literature I* 232). According to Lukács' ideology, "a reality that must be represented without a breach between subject and object and which must be 'reflected'. . . implies that that reconciliation has been achieved, that society has been set right, that the subject has come into its own and is at home in its world" (*Notes to Literature I* 240), which is an ideological view that Adorno denounces. In another essay, Adorno more clearly explicates that if "the novel wants to remain true to its realistic heritage and tell how things really are, it must abandon a realism that only aids the facade in its work of camouflage by reproducing it" (*Notes to Literature I* 32), because modern society is "a society in which human beings have been torn from one another and from themselves" (*Notes to Literature I* 32). Against the ostensibly realistic narrative strategy that pledges its loyalty to objective reality,

> [the] narrator's subjectivity proves itself in the power to produce this illusion . . . which, by spiritualizing language, removes it from the empirical realm to which it is committed. There is a heavy taboo on reflection: it becomes the cardinal sin against objective purity. Today this taboo, along with the illusionary character of what is represented, is losing its strength (*Notes to Literature I* 33-34).

It is worth noting that Adorno's stance seems to call for an "ethic of form-giving against the reification of the represented world enacts an increasing distancing of form from representation" (*Philosophy of the Novel* 229). His aesthetic relies on a critical

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understanding of the autonomy of art, which lies in the heart of his paradoxical yet dialectical view which he himself succinctly asserts as follows:

> The autonomous structuring of literary products set forth something social, in monadological form and without looking directly at society; there are many indications that the contemporary work of art represents society all the more accurately the less it takes society as its subject and the less it hopes for immediate social effect, whether that effect be success or practical intervention (*Notes to Literature I* 116).

For Adorno, literary realism and committed works depend on the communicative function of language in order to convey concepts, which "have something hostile to art about them; they represent the unity as sign of what they subsume" (*Notes to Literature II* 99).

The truth of society, according to Adorno, can only be negatively refracted by the mere existence of the work of art itself. His aesthetic is far from intuitive, but the ethical demand is to show the bleakness of the postwar world in the wake of the catastrophic development of the Enlightenment. Without doubt the social context and the zeitgeist from which Adorno's aesthetic was born is radically different from those of postwar Taiwan, and it is far from positivistic nor historically meticulous, but it discovers far more space for critics to contemplate the art as serious social product and its insistence on being nothing it is not, and its ability to "reflect" reality without a presupposed ideology of what literature should be and do, and the telos of any prescribed ideology.

Adorno's most ardent and lucid apology for the socially mediated autonomous art comes from his famous essay "Commitment," in which he criticizes the politically charged aesthetic of two political intellectuals: Sartre and Brecht. Adorno

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acknowledges "[the] residues in literary works of meanings from outside those works are the indispensable non-artistic element in art" (*Notes to Literature II* 77-78), without which art is impossible: "there is no content, no formal category of the literary work that does not, however transformed and however unawarely, derive from the empirical reality from which it has escaped (*Notes to Literature II* 89). However, even if political commitment chooses art as a vehicle to accomodate an ethical vision, the aesthetic transformation leads art astray from the assigned correspondence between itself and reality, and therefore not only art but also represented reality loses its validity. "For Sartre," Adorno observes, "the work of art becomes an appeal to the subject because the work is nothing but the subject's decision or non-decision" (*Notes to Literature II* 80). The emphasis on the subjectivity becomes an ideology that prevents readers from looking at the horror of modern society by reducing the world's catastrophe into personal will. Brecht conducts political criticism by writing black comedies that parodies fascism, but by doing so "true horror of fascism is conjured away" (*Notes to Literature II* 83). Politicizing art, unlike these engaged writers so desperately tries to argue, does not lead to a moral high ground or any political action, but rather assuages the horror of the world. Adorno argues that art is not "a matter of pointing up alternatives" which necessarily becomes ideology, "but rather of resisting, solely through artistic form, the course of the world, which continues to hold a pistol to the heads of human beings" (*Notes to Literature II* 80). The alternatives directed by political ideologies only prove their impossibility to exist and their complicity with reality by displacing reality into null. A "representation of essence that fails to take into account its relationship to appearance," or the failure to engage in the dialectic of reality and fiction, "is inherently as false as the substitution of the lumpenproletariat for those behind fascism" (*Notes to Literature II* 85). In the end Adorno concludes

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that the postwar period "is not the time for political works of art; rather, politics has migrated into the autonomous work of art, and it has penetrated most deeply into works that present themselves as politically dead" (*Notes to Literature II* 93-94).

Following Lukács and Adorno, Jameson, from whom the title of this chapter borrows, more persuasively examines the actually dialectic relation between realism and modernism. Against common sense, Jameson perceptively identifies and distinguishes the instability between the two poles within literary realism: aesthetic and epistemological claim. If, as nativist critics will agree, "where the epistemological claim succeeds, [realism] fails" because "if realism validates its claim to being a correct or true representation of the world, it thereby ceases to be an *aesthetic* mode of representation and falls out of art altogether" (*Signatures of the Visible* 217). However, if, as both Adorno and Lukács would agree, literature belongs to art, and "the artistic devices and technological equipment whereby it captures that truth of the world are explored and stressed and foregrounded, 'realism' will stand unmasked . . . and the reality it purported to deconceal falling at once into the sheerest representation and illusion" (217). That is to say, what critics regard as the essence of modernist art already haunts "literary" realism by definition. Jameson's proposition to rethink realism so as to avoid the impression of "passive reflection and copying subordinate to some external reality" (223) is to contextualize it to its advent in the nineteenth century as being "component in a vaster historical process that can be identified as none other than the *capitalist* (or the *bourgeois*) cultural revolution itself" (*Signatures of the Visible* 226). Jameson argues that "realism and its specific narrative forms" were once relied on to "construct [the new capitalist world] by *programming* their readers, training them in new habits and practices, which amount to whole new subject positions in a new kind of space" (*Signatures of the Visible* 228). Realism

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produces "new categories of the event and of experience, of temporality and of causality," but also "[deprograms] the illusory narratives and stereotypes of the older mode of production" (*Signatures of the Visible* 228-29). Realism is also a way of "naming and speaking of *new* forms of experience," which "have not yet been named or spoken by the dominant discourse," and to this extent, the epistemological end of realism corresponds to that of modernism: to make art new, because experience is new (*Signatures of the Visible* 229; 232, my emphasis).

Jameson's analysis of modernism is no less important. The formalist claim of modernist art must contain "a realist core . . . without which their alleged 'obscurity' and 'incomprehensibility' would not be possible" (*A Singular Modernity* 120). Moreover, high capitalism is not the only material prerequisite for modernism; it is not based on a but "essentially a by-product of *incomplete* modernization" (103-04, my emphasis). Uneven development: this explanation of the origin of modernism encapsulate the core of the movement, that is, the conflict of temporalities. The tradition and the avant-garde, the conservative suppression and revolutionary impulse, simultaneous existence of agrarian local economy and global capitalism: it is this contemporaneous temporalities that incubate modernist art. The "keen sense of the New in the modern period was only possible because of the mixed, uneven, transitional nature of that period, in which the old coexisted with what was then coming into being" (*Postmodernism* 311). Shi's aforementioned essay brings in the historical context of imperialism: the time lag is not only within the society, but also determines the difference among societies, especially among empires and colonies.

Jameson's significant contribution to theorization of modernism supplements the realism's epistemological claim. Through naming, identification, and representation of unprecedented experience, literary realism shares a similar function

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with modernism. If *incomplete* modernization determines the historical condition of modernist art, it is perfectly normal for Taiwan in the sixties to have modernist art and realist art at the same time; modernist art receives its historical meaning from its contrast and simultaneous existence with older art forms. In other words, they define each other. Critics tend to resort to moral judgments to classify realism and modernism; the criteria they adopt are origin (native or foreign), intention (why writers choose realism or modernism), function (to teach and challenge or to escape and indulge), and effect (to induce debates or to submit to the regime) (Shi 139). If critics can interpret the relation between realism and modernism not as a contradictory but a dialectical one in an unevenly developing society like Taiwan, new possibilities may arise. To illustrate this in the following section of the chapter I would like to compare two interesting essays: *xiandai zhuyi di zaikaifa: yanchu dengdaiguotuo di suixiang* 現代主義底再開發：演出《等待果陀》底隨想 ["Toward a New Departure in Modernism: Thoughts on the Recent Production of *Waiting for Godot*"] by Chen Yingzhen and *tantan taiwan de wenxue* 談談台灣的文學 ["To Talk about Literature in Taiwan"] by Guo Songfen.[17] The former was written in 1965 while the latter was written in 1974, both of which preceded the debates in the late seventies. Both of them are seminal documents in the postwar literary criticism. They share the same ideology: the contemporary Western-inflected modernist literature are inauthentic and pathological, and "Chinese" culture needs a more place-based, realistic literature according to a more healthful and correct consciousness for the

[17] In turns of translation I consult the abridged version of Chen's essay translated and collected in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Literary Taiwan*. Guo's essay was written under the *nom de plume* Luo Longmai 羅隆邁 when first published in Hong Kong. Part of the content was included in Wang Tuo's "Realist Literature, Not Nativist Literature" three years later in 1977. This essay is Guo's only full-length work on literary criticism.

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people.[18] What I want to argue here is that the most memorable characteristic of these two essays actually lies in the conflict of form and content. Both essays endeavor to criticize and repress an "unwholesome" attention to literary form and Western influence, but these their actual form contradicts this ideological critique. A closer reading will show that both writers invested too much attention to what they attack. Furthermore, they need to embrace exactly what they criticize to fulfill the goal. The self-contradiction epitomizes, I argue, not only the critical juncture of the transition from one art paradigm to another, but also their dialectical relation.

If both writers want to criticize modernist literature, the effect is unexpectedly less convincing because Chen and Guo seem to indulge in their characterization of modernist aesthetic. In "Toward a New Departure in Modernism" Chen compiles an astonishingly rich lexicon to describe modernist art: on the first page he lists fourteen traits of this morbid movement: "degeneracy, immorality, angst, licentiousness, perversity, nihilism, anemia, absurdity, defeatism, murder, isolation, despair, rage, and ennui" (Chen 412/220, translation modified). The list goes on through the text: one see "affectation, hyperbole, self-deprecation, ulcer, dementia, poverty, indulgence, frailty, imbecility, self-pity, masochism" (413), "uncanny, obscure, melancholia, feebleness, misery, loneliness, desperation" (414), "wretchedness, impotence, terror, unhappiness, jarring contradiction, market-oriented, baseless, abnormal " (415), "terminal, corrupt, distorting, mystification, yellowed, decayed" (417-18/220-21, translation modified), "impoverished, deception, flimsiness, immaturity, castrated, unhealthy, bad blood, deficient" (418-19/221). These several dozen words rarely repeat. In comparison with what he describe as a healthier style, the words I record and list above command disproportionately influence on the reader. Imagine the effect

[18] I put "Chinese" in scare quotes to suggest the actual prevalent nationalist ideology during the sixties and seventies.

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these words create: the fragmentary units break sentences into pieces and interrupt the need to communicate, and the decadent, histrionic dramatic effect generated by strings of negative expression apparently exceeds what is needed to argue and to criticize. If as Chen argues, what moved him from the production of *Waiting for Godot* is "the perfect fusion of form and content," and since form dissolves in the process (415), artist should no longer indulge in hollow formalism (414) but looks for a better, healthier form to accommodate modern content (416). In addition to Beckett, He appreciates Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Sartre, Fellini, and Camus (though he does not like Eliot and Pound, 419/222) in their original context (418-19/221-22), but despises their transplant in Taiwan. He does not necessarily dispute Western formalism in the West, but castigates Taiwan's formalism. What he asks is actually an *authentic, indigenous* Taiwanese modern art to *resist Western culture in Taiwan*. And yet if this is so, this essay is a piece of evidence of the decisive influence of the West in Taiwan. Formal concerns obviously override his argument. Chen criticizes modernist writers played with pallid tastes of language, color, and sound (417/221), and yet this is exactly what this essay wants to evoke: the rhetorical effect relies on rhythmic compilation of words and the mosaic pastiche of selected words with a sickly beauty. Even if the reader takes a less direct route to believe that Chen intend to disgust readers so as to criticize by mimicking the unhealthy effect of his target, this rhetorical strategy clashes against the strong, affirmative ideological message. That is to say, this essay fails to be a satire against Taiwan modernism based on the distorted Western culture, or a polemic that promotes a native, humanist modern art precisely because of its aesthetic strategy.

Guo Songfen's "To Talk about Literature in Taiwan" is another polemic that criticizes the Westernized tastes in Taiwan modernism. Though much less dramatic

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than Chen's essay, Guo's essay also invests an oblique interest in Western literature. Though the theme is similar, by appearance the scale of Guo's essay is much larger than that of Chen's, and the rhetorical dimension reinforces the persuasiveness much more subtly. Although Guo acknowledges the nativist's of allegation that modernist writers merely plagiarize the west and deny tradition (1095), his knowledge of Western modern literature is perspicacious: he can grasp that the negative side of a capitalist democratic society is the collapse of value system: "loss of individuality, horror of freedom, reification of society, and the death of god" (1095-96), and his attitude toward modernism is, not unlike that of Chen's, a love-hate relationship. Guo objects to conflate the pains of the modern Westerners and the oppressed people in Asia (1097-98), but his description exposes his fascination with Western modernism: "unrest, anxiety, fear, solitude, haziness, loneliness, decadent *Weltanschauung*, numbness, absurdity, loss, nihilism" (1906; 1099). Guo more profoundly understands the synecdochical correlation between history and personal experience, between the rapid social change and introverted obsession with subjectivity, between momentary epiphany and philosophy of history (1101). Although Guo professes a plausible critical realism that he calls *lishi de toushifa* 歷史的透視法, or a "perspective of history" (1100-01), which requires writers to contour the social background (in this specific historical context, he means colonial history) and then narrates the story of a person or a family in details, he does not reveal, or chooses not to discuss, that the inner synecdochical logic is basically the same as modernist aesthetic. He also inadvertently indicates that when Taiwanese writers transplant Western aesthetic into their own writings, they inexorably fuse Taiwan and the West together into a dialectic relation: the entanglement of Taiwan with colonialism is "nuanced and intertwined," and the complex flashes in literary works, either in a meandering and indirect fashion

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or blunt and obtrusive way (1093). Both sides see themselves on the opposite side. Guo does not tread the path toward a dialectical criticism, but his opinion is apparently already more radical than most anti-colonial and postcolonial criticism (1093). Though he firmly posits himself on the nativist camp, his well-informed criticism, rhetorical eloquence, and attention to language renders his politics more ambiguous than critics tend to believe.

What I am particularly interested in this essay is the contradiction in methodology. This essay specifically identifies the origin of the abuse of formalism: New Criticism (1099; 1103). Guo criticizes that the ahistorical proclivity and indulgence in form turn critics into "hunter of images" searching for stylistic elements such as metaphor, irony, paradox, tension. He protests that adhering to critical principles of New criticism is nothing unlike "using a rusted scalpel from the West on Taiwan's freshly grown flesh," and encourages a conformism in politics because their disregard for historical content leads to apathy toward progress (1099; 1103). The reader can hardly miss the irony here, because Guo applies two images to criticize the abuse of rhetorical device. Moreover, if Guo warns against the ideological premise of New Criticism because it prevents critics from engaging in social reality, he nevertheless adopts formalism to judge the achievement of realist works: though nativist realist fiction "features local and country coloration," its language "seems roughly unpolished," narrative structure "lacks configuration," characterization "is not rounded enough," and emplotment "is not convincing" (1092); the quality of language "is formulaic," imagery "trite," overall design "not skillful" (1100); the aesthetic of nativist realist fiction cannot reach a higher level with a "legitimate selection of theme and subject matter" (1101). In contrast, even though Guo gives Taiwan's postwar modernist writers scathing criticism: "presumptuous, derivative, decadent,

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grotesque . . .” (1104), he describes their style not without compliments: language “has grown sophisticated,” structure “intricate,” characterization “socially inward, sorrowful, dreamy,” obsessed with “metaphors,” “intentional alignment of a series of images,” the content “focusing on individual feelings,” and themes “reactionary against the historical progress” (1093). Should critics see this as a unconscious slip? Not likely so, as Guo’s essay is overall well-structured and clear-headed. His critical approach no doubt reflects his academic training, but if appealing to aesthetic criteria compromises his main argument, why does Guo choose to do so? Furthermore, his own literary fiction in the eighties obviously reacts against the aesthetic he professes in the seventies. Does Guo’s aesthetic inclination hidden in this essay already prefigure his later achievement?

How to interpret this strange phenomenon? One plausible explanation would be that these two essays respectively mark the transitional phase of critical attention from dominant modernism that was about to decay in the seventies to a budding realism that takes flight roughly during the same period. Or, the contradiction reflects the postcolonial character originated from the synchronic uneven development in contemporary society. Anyway, a close reading refutes the accusation that Taiwan postwar modernism is fake because the efforts to reveal the negativity of modernism ultimately forces the authors to acknowledge the indelible impact in the whole generation of writers. They testify to the fact that the more a nativist critic wishes to deny the influence from the West according to a correct ideology, the more Western influence takes root in the culture. I do not think this can be explained away by postcolonial criticism by drawing concepts like “hybridity,” because this concept necessarily presupposes nativist authenticity, and the latter apparently continues to vie for legitimacy even in the most progressive postcolonial criticism that calls for

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building a cultural subjectivity. In as early as the late seventies one can already detect the urge of Taiwan culture to form a cultural identity, which forces Taiwan literature to resort to an epistemology of resistance to topple the cultural paradigm supported by state apparatus. The desire or the telos of the epistemology of resistance is to overcome the "anxiety of influence": the orthodoxy of Chinese culture, Japanese and its fifty-year long colonial regime, and the cultural import from the West, especially the US, via postwar international politics. The nationalist impulse behind the political agenda cannot be clearer. When literary theories, postcolonial studies and identity politics were introduced into Taiwan, nationalist ideologies crossbred with these political agendas and finally showed a totalizing impulse that excludes and includes particular works, and this totalizing impulse obtains its fullest expression in literary historiography of Taiwan literature. The study of literature, especially the study of Taiwan fiction, anticipates to utilize the mimetic function of fiction and burdens Taiwan fiction, even those most introspective, grotesque, and abstract ones, with the mission to reflect reality. The clash between ideologies becomes the fight for "the more real" and the most authentic representation. A political reading of the plausible correspondence between fiction and reality allows critics to engage in and intervene the cultural production, and tacitly cooperate with certain ideologies.

Even though Taiwan literature ostensibly justifies its anti-hegemonic character by emphasizing interaction, travel, assimilation, resistance, negotiations, appropriation and transformation of so many kinds of cultural influences in history and across geographical boundaries through a strategic use of postcolonial theories and cultural studies, the unyielding concept of Taiwan subjectivity nevertheless absorbs, synthesizes and utilizes these phenomena Taiwan literature so enthusiastically tries to grasp. It is through the emphasis on multiplicity and tolerance

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in Taiwan literature that ideologies infiltrate into literary works and erodes the singularity of literary works. I do not deny the significance of politicizing literature in the face of ceaseless military threats, political crises, and cultural philistinism in the age of globalization. However, the lesson of Adorno-Lukács debate has demonstrated that without a dialectic relation with the society and self-reflection, literature becomes susceptible to political partisanship. Of course political partisanship itself is not problematic, but the politicized literary study inclines to engross particular works into certain concepts merely as the evidence of social problems. Aesthetic value, which differentiates literature from other verbal discourses, gradually dissolves in political agenda.

Yet, as this chapter tries to argue, the debate and divide between the philosophical presupposition of literary realism and modernism in the late seventies establishe the fundamental epistemology of the study of Taiwan literature. From the beginning it is actually aesthetic style that Western Marxism can intervene, because one of the contributions of Western Marxism to literary theory is to demythologize the ideology of aesthetics through philosophical historicization. The fundamental mediation in the dialectic of form and reality, of which Lukács gradually loses his grasp in his later careers and on which Adorno probably too obstinately insists, not only allows space for interpretation of formal and aesthetic aspect of fiction, but also unveils the working of ideologies and identifies it in the least possible place. Following the discussion above, if what literature is can be reassessed, the aesthetic values, the ethical dimension, and the social role of literary works can obtain a more nuanced interpretation in Taiwan society, especially in the case of postwar literary modernist works which has often been hailed incomprehensible.

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Ng in "Chinese Modernism: An Unfinished Project" consciously and actively scrutinizes the indelible traces of modern catastrophe in the stylistic aspect in modern Chinese-language/Taiwanese literature. Writers with a strong inclination for Taiwanese nationalism such as Ye Shitao, who rejects and disparages aestheticism, and Chen Fangming, who tries to appropriate and synthesize the negative dimension in literary modernism, tend to identify the political utopia in the future guided by a nationalist ideology. Literary realism, the ostensibly objective style that demythologizes literature from the cult of beauty and belles-lettres, actually exposes the nativist writers' desire to control the "real history." Critics like Ng and Wang, especially the former, show their more pessimistic (or passive-aggressive) understanding of this teleological temporality. They assert that major historical events have carved themselves into the style of modern literature and have never really been exorcised at the turn of the century. Taiwan literature reiterates its defiant character, ceaselessly fighting against oppressive political regime with as well as negotiating with external influences in order to give birth to a independent subjectivity that governs nothing but itself. The epistemology of resistance endows a critical agency to vie for the necessary cultural political legitimacy, but it also tames the singularity of art. The autonomy of art, as Yvonne Chang correctly diagnoses in her monograph, is a resistant ideology that defies the crude official ideology, but as Adorno criticizes, "anything that made itself absolute in response, existing only for its own sake," which accurately captures an aspect of autonomy of art, "would degenerate into ideology" (*Notes to Literature II* 93). Adorno argues that the philosophy of history, the necessary dialectical mediation between fiction and reality, "is not something in between commitment and autonomy, not some mixture of advanced formal elements and a spiritual content that aims at a real or ostensible progressive politics. The

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substance of works is not the spirit that was pumped into them; if anything, it is the opposite" (*Notes to Literature II* 93, my emphasis). The word "opposite" characterizes both the strength and weakness of Adorno's aesthetic. If the commitment upheld by the so-called critical literary realism displaces the horror in modern society with an utopian political ideology, the autonomy of art that literary modernism embraces aesthetically portrays the invisible force of modern catastrophe in society by rejecting clear communicative function. However, it is the utopian ideology that may brought about actual political development while the autonomy of art always stands on the brink of cynicism and inertia.

What does the analysis in this chapter can contribute to reading Guo's work? On the one hand I aim to defuse the affinities between literary realism and ideology of literary historiography I discuss in the introduction and to question the synthetic impulse to include modernist works into it. On the other hand, I attempt to reopen the question about whether Guo should be seen as a modernist, like John Balcolm, the editor of Guo's translated works, obviously does in his introduction and generally agreed upon by most scholars (*Running Mother* 1). Exactly to what extent can he be called thus? Guo is often praised for including historical depth of Taiwanese materials into modernist fiction. However, I would like to suggest that his works can also be interpreted as self-conscious aestheticized transformation of nativist realist fiction. A reappraisal of Guo's literary criticism already suggests the ambiguity and ruse of periodization: simply emphasizing that modernist and realist works coexisted is not enough; critics have to recognize the fact that literary realism and the nativist politics it exemplifies, as well as literary modernism and influences from Western modern capitalist it signifies, already form a dialectical pair in Taiwan literary history and cannot be clearly classified as different concepts. If I have to offer my definitive

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opinion on Guo's essay, I would conclude that Guo is more inclined to appreciate aesthetic dimension of art, but his ideology demands a regulated use of aesthetic. It is more telling for literary critics, I think, than for literary historians. A socially and historically oriented attention to form has not been theorized.

Finally, I would like to indicate that a reading of Guo literary criticism written in the seventies fills in the blank between the fifties, the origin of his subject matter in fiction, and the eighties, when he wrote on the threshold of democratization of Taiwan. All are crucial transitional periods in Taiwan: a rapid succession of two political regimes and new social institutions (including the martial law) from the forties to the fifties; the diplomatic failures and the rise of nationalist politics in the seventies, and the collapsing of the *ancien regime* with the arrival of globalized capitalism in the eighties. The irreconcilable modernist and realist impulses, the aesthetic and epistemological claims, cannot remain stable and balanced in the postwar history of Taiwan, resulting in the ambiguity and uncertainty of his works, which I will examine in more details in chapter three and four. It is wholly imaginable, as the society opens up and becomes the arena of multiple ideologies, the decidable, transparent meaning is forever lost. Guo's fiction seems to be able to represent the burden of violence in history in an indirect fashion: his consciousness of literary form, as his fiction never fails to welcome and defy political interpretation at the same time because of its obscurity and undecidability derived from aesthetic manipulation.

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Chapter Two

Formosan Melancholia Revisited:

Western Modernity, East Asia Society, and the Problem of Narrative Perspective

To understand Guo's major works, contextualizing them in the history and literature of colonial Taiwan is necessary.[19] In this chapter I would like to examine the intellectual heritage which has been obscured by postwar policy and simplified, if not neglected, in studies on Taiwan literature: the complexity of ideology of the Japanese Empire. Among Guo's works, only his posthumously published novel *Jinghun* 驚婚 extensively deals with entangled relation between the colonizer and the colonized. Though the text was already organized and polished by Guo's wife Li Yu 李渝, an important novelist herself, *Jinghun* remains in a curiously unfinished state, especially in terms of narrative perspective, shifting between the third-person and the first-person.[20] This shift is devoid of coherence, but this is not the only baffling aspect that draws critics' attention. The most enigmatic episode in the novel takes place at court way earlier than the actual dramatic action: the plaintiff, Akaoka

[19] Early critics like Chen Mingjou 陳明柔 also tries to argue that Guo inherits and reenacts the damaged life portrayed in the works of Taiwanese writers in the thirties: Lon Yingzong 龍瑛宗, Wen Nao 翁鬧, Zhang Wenhuan 張文環, Wu Yongfu 巫永福, and Chen Yingzgen 陳映真 (416-7).

[20] The novel was published in 2010, and received little critical attention. The title is very difficult to translate, because the combination of *jing* 驚, or shock, surprise, wonder; and *hun* 婚, marriage, wedding, matrimony, does not conform to standard usage of Mandarin Chinese. The novel is framed by the bride Yihong's entrance down the aisle at her wedding in an American church, and the body of the novel is composed of her reminiscence, which can be roughly separated into three intertwining portions. One major portion involves her relationship with the bridegroom Yashu; another concerns her father's injured mind and the watershed in his life during the last years of the colonial regime; and the last part concerns her own experience in the US. The third-person narrative irregularly shifts from her perspective to omniscient perspective and other characters' perspective, and occasionally dives into first-person narrative: Yihong, Yihong's father, the Japanese superintendent, and the priest that hosts Yihong's wedding. The draft of this novel can be dated as early as in the eighties, around the same period when Guo started to publish his major works. One of the minor characters can be found in the short story "Snow Blind," the tone and the theme of which are very similar to those of the novel.

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Yōnosuke 赤崗陽之助,[21] a Japanese high school superintendent, perjured himself and denied his own charges against the defendants, a group of young students who have severely beaten him, among whom is the father of the main focal character, Yihong (*Jinghun* 86-87).[22] The moment of the court drama then starts a strange rapport between the colonizer and the colonized. Read on the surface, this curious episode can be interpreted as a precious moment of mutual understanding, the grace of the colonizer and the appreciation of the colonized.[23] However, this reading can be easily absorbed by the ideology of Taiwan literary historiography, especially the most right-wing aspect.[24] To understand Japan in *Jinghun* means to reassess the way Taiwan literature understands and deals with its colonial legacy. I attempt to look from the other end, from the plaintiff's perspective. What can one learn when stepping into the shoes of this Japanese superintendent? Through this question I would like to offer a different explanation of this episode, and I argue that it has very much to do with the ostensibly incoherent narrative perspective one finds in this text. Narrative perspective is a very much debated issue in the development of modern Japanese literature, and I contend that it is by discussing the narrative voice that one can offer a fuller explanation of the consciousness in Guo's fiction, which, several critics have perceptively named Formosan Melancholia.

Taiwan de youyu 臺灣的憂鬱, or "Formosan Melancholia," describes the affective and intellectual paralysis of the intelligentsia against the calamitous

[21] A fairly strange choice of naming, because Akaoka 赤崗 is not a common surname in Japan.
[22] Court drama may derive from Guo's reading experience, particularly of Russian literature, especially Dostoevsky, in his youth (Interview with Jian 185-86). In "Moon Seal" one can also find a scene of trial from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (46/36).
[23] Regarding this court drama and its aftermath, Zhu Youxun 朱宥勳 interprets the lassitude of Yihong's father as a symptom of the colonized who were stuck between two regimes: this character can never escape from the influence of this crucial scene in his life (81-82).
[24] Colonial history has been systematically summoned, excavated, organized, even reproduced in cultural fields by the native intellectuals as a political gesture to resist the authoritarian legacy of KMT regime, which has spent decades to obliterate the local experience.

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historical background of Taiwan, beginning from the imposed colonial modernity during the Japanese imperial regime from 1895 to 1945, through the martial law and authoritarian rule of Kuomintang from 1949 to 1987. The term "Formosan Melancholia" was first introduced in 1990 by Shi Shu, one of the most prominent leftist literary critics in Taiwan. In her seminal studies of the Mandarin Chinese and Japanese fiction as well as the archive of the colonial era during the nineties, Shi traces the trajectory of the intellectual history of Taiwanese intellectuals from the rise of various political and cultural movements in the twenties and their frustration in the early thirties, to the all-out material and cultural mobilization from the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 till Japan's surrender in 1945. Shi's Marxist approach powerfully demonstrates that the flourishing of these Japanophone writers' works were the consequence of Taiwanese intellectuals' melancholia in the face of expanding capitalism and its complicity with overwhelming control of Japanese administration. One of Shi's most significant contributions, however, is her insightful observation of how this, borrowing from Hegel, "unhappy consciousness" outlives the colonial regime and continues to haunt post-war writers, especially those who were born during the very last years of the Second World War. Ng Kimchew, one of Shi's most famous students, later extends the concept of Formosan Melancholia to the foundation of Taiwan native modernist fiction writers' historical consciousness, the most important examples of whom are Chen Yingzhen and Guo himself (*On Essay* 218).[25]

In the late seventies, the rediscovery and translation of Japanophone Taiwanese writers' works coincided with the budding of the Taiwan nationalist movement. Since then, research around Japanophone colonial literature, especially that written after the

[25] Ng's idea apparently comes from Shi's essay (*On Essay* 325-43).

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thirties, became the cultural battleground for critics. On the one hand, there is no denying that stories and novels in this period did convey the melancholic consciousness of colonial writers, but on the other hand, how can critics deal with the overt collaborationist consciousness they find in some of these writers' works? Whether the collaborationist consciousness of these Taiwanese colonial writers is sincere is highly debatable, but it cannot be denied or explained away. Despite researchers' claim that their studies on the colonial period have moved away from overt nationalist politics, the issue around identity formation still implies a certain moral imperative to rescue the oppressed Taiwanese subjectivity, and therefore virtually all studies about these Japanophone Taiwanese writers and works resort to moral judgments: to empathize or to castigate, and therefore the debates around the controversial legacy become endless.[26] Unlike previous studies, I do not intend to offer my political judgment, because the issues at hand are so complicated that any political judgment, I argue, would seem arbitrary and offer no help to understand them. Instead, I will try to reconsider Formosan Melancholia and extricate it from the expedient apologetic that treats it as the symptom of the oppressed. I am more inclined to see it as an immanent flaw of imperialism and modernization that cannot but constitutes the subjectivity of the colonized intellectuals. That is, Formosan Melancholia can be seen as the ineluctable negative side inherent in premature modernization propelled by colonial capitalistic expansion and plunder.

Among the studies of twentieth century empires, one of the distinct features of the Japanese empire is its insistence on economic, demographic, and educational

[26] Yvonne Chang provided a useful short overview in 1997. See "Beyond Cultural and National Identities: Current Re-evaluation of the Kominka Literature from Taiwan's Japanese Period" in *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field* (2000). Ching also indicates the blind spot of the debates around identity politics: "there is no necessary relationship between ethnic identity and anticolonialism. The call for a 'Taiwanese' identity does not necessitate a rejection of a colonial 'Japanese' identity" (123). If the controversy around political allegiance can be defused, the moral ground that demands critics' sympathy can also be shaken.

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assimilation of colonial subjects in terms of language and culture, which later extended to religious belief and even ethnicity in the name of civilization and enlightenment (in the tens and twenties) and quasi-familial imperial authority (in the late thirties and the forties).[27] However, studies have indicated that the rationale behind the ostensible assimilation policy is to insidiously maintain the difference of colonial subject and imperial colonizers, as I shall discuss below following Leo Ching. I argue that it is the subtle, immanent "difference" that gave birth to the melancholic consciousness. This argument sounds intuitively valid, and it is so, but I would like to indicate this fact from the perspective of intellectual history.

Though the power asymmetry between the empire and the colony cannot be clearer, if one examines the process of modernization in Japan, interesting similarities between the two emerge. The development of modern Japan, the first successfully modernized country and the only empire in Asia, can be regarded as an interaction and negotiation with Western modernity. The end of the more liberal, optimistic Taishō period (1912-1926) and the tense, anxious beginning of the Shōwa period (1926-1989) is a decisive watershed for modern Japan. In the first ten years of this period Japan saw the destruction of left-wing politics and political conversion, economic downturn brought about by the Great Depression, aggressive military expansions, the rise of nationalist myth, and a pervading angst. Against this background Japan started to criticize and break away from Western influence based on Enlightenment and attempted to consolidate its own political and cultural subjectivity. However, why does self-reflective criticism of Western modernity lead to fascism and militarism? A brief review of discussions by intellectual historians

[27] Ching argues that on the one hand by adopting assimilation Japan could more easily transform Taiwan into a capitalist society. On the other hand Japan could reiterate its ostensible "humanism" after Wilsonism international politics after 1918 (102-103).

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later in this chapter will show how the dualistic social and cultural character that incorporates the conflict between the native and the Western obsesses the Japanese thinkers in the first twenty years of the Shōwa period. Meanwhile, Japanese literature since the late twenties saw the development of subjectivity to an unprecedented complexity. I-narrative, a unique genre that questions the boundary between the narrative voice and the actual presence of the writer, is often recognized as a consequent reflection of Japan's modernizing progress. I-narrative absorbs literary influence from the West and later morphs into a self-reflective form used by conscious writers to contemplate and to criticize "*watakushi* 私 [I] as a phenomenon" (Andō 16).

I would like to relocate some of the Japanophone fiction produced by Taiwanese writers during this period in the context of literary and intellectual history of contemporary Japan.[28] That is, I would like to recontextualize the colonial character of Taiwan literature in the Shōwa period. For scholars of Taiwan literature, this is not a usual move, because it does not seem probable to judge Taiwan literature by the empire's criteria without resorting to an imperial aesthetic, but I would like to demonstrate that in order to elicit the unique character of colonial literature without falling into overt political or moral debates, this is a necessary move. By delving into the heart of the empire and its intellectual drive, I would like to broaden the scope and look at how modern imperial Japan and Taiwan, its first colony, struggle against the demands of Western capitalist modernity.

[28] I consciously exclude the following: Japanese fiction by Japanese writers based in Taiwan, the so-called *naichijin* 内地人 writers; popular fiction written in vernacular Mandarin Chinese; and literary fiction written in Mandarin Chinese. Focusing on serious literary fiction written in Japanese allows me to approach the predicament of the colonized intelligentsia. Ching also argues that for Taiwanese intellectuals, "with the materialization of assimilatory practices, cultural assimilation became the only avenue for the colonized seeking deliverance from political and economic inequality" (104). This is especially true for the writers educated in Japanese and who wrote during the war, and it partially implies the hidden cultural and political complex beneath the practical choice of language.

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This chapter then tries to relocate Japanophone Taiwan literary fiction written in the first and second decades of the Shōwa period (1926-1945) and explore how Japan and Taiwan's troubled and premature modern subjectivity sedimented into different representations of narrative voice. Using the empire's language, and constantly engaging Japan's literary circles, why did Taiwanese born writers not produce I-narrative? Recent studies have touched upon this issue by examining the historical contexts in which various social institutions, such as literary prizes, literary magazines, and writers' communities, contributed to the interactions and power relations between the empire and the colony. *Pace* these helpful sociological and historical studies, I consciously limit my focus on reviewing several seminal critical discourses, by way of which I hope to critically visualize the weak connection between Japanese literature and Taiwan literature, and to apply a more philosophical language to describe the formation of wounded subjectivity of the colonial writers. In the following two sections I investigate two lines of intellectual currents of modern Japan. One is the aesthetic and ideological discourses that reflect the rise of all-out fascist nationalism, which gradually started to gain momentum after several significant political events and military advance: the Mukden Incident and the establishment of Manchukuo from 1931 to 1932; the collapse of proletariat literary movement around 1932 and 1933, the February 26 Incident in 1936 that led to all-out nationalist mobilization; and the outbreak of Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The other is contemporary writers' reflections on the development of the form of Japanese modern fiction since the Meiji Restoration from the late nineteenth century till 1930s. These two lines are actually two sides of the same coin: they are Japanese intellectuals' conscious reflections on the positive and negative aspects of Westernization and

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capitalization of social institutions, and their intellectual efforts to establish national subjectivity that ultimately can "overcome" the western influence.

My aim in this chapter is twofold: one is to rethink Adorno and Horkheimer's famous thesis in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* through the modern history of East Asia. The other is to see how Taiwan, as the Japanese Empire's colonial outer reach, received and reflected on this critical awareness. If Japanese intellectuals desperately tried to formulate their cultural subjectivity within and defied the capitalist geopolitics dominated by Western modernity, following Leo Ching, I argue that there is a crucial necessity to use a new vocabulary in order to find non-identity in the Empire instead of consolidating an identity so as to characterize the negativity of colonial literature of the empire. Moreover, I would like to illustrate what intellectuals' discourses in Imperial Japan and critical reflections about these discourses can offer as inspiration for rereading Taiwan as a colony and Taiwan literary works reconstructing this period. The political and cultural problematic of colonial Taiwan literature can be usefully re-articulated through the antinomic formulation of Japan's modern self and modern cultural subjectivity.

Japanese Modernity and I-narrative: Yokomitsu Riichi and Kobayashi Hideo

Andō Hiroshi 安藤宏 argues that Japanese literature in the Shōwa period is obsessed with "*watakushi* [I] as phenomenon" (17). Andō continues that self-consciousness in literary texts, epitomized by I-narrative, represents "the point of suture of society and ego" (53), which can be illustrated by the following reasons: intellectuals' experience of high modernity that unsettles stable subjectivity,[29] which

[29] Some intellectuals, like Karatani Kōjin, argue that the symbolic event that separated Taishō from Shōwa literature is the suicide of one of the most important writers in Taishō period: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 in 1927 (Karatani et al. 15). In his final writing Akutagawa used the term

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forced the uncertain 'I' to float between fiction and modern everyday life (20); the political oppression of the frustrated left-wing political activists who were forced to submit to official authoritative ideology, which created the necessity to re-evaluate, even re-create the self to question, confess, ironize, or even compensate the melancholic state (28); finally, radicalized self-consciousness to respond to the oneiric quality of everyday life in the shadows of ongoing war (29). I-narrative, or the concerns for subjectivity in literary texts in broader terms, testifies to the social influence on aesthetics in an age of anxiety.

In 1935, at the threshold of the first and the second decade of the Shōwa period, Japanese literary circles saw the publication of two *tours de force* of literary criticism: *Junsui shōsetsu ron* 純粋小説論 ["A Treatise on Pure Novel"] by renowned fiction writer Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一, and *Watakushi shōsetsu ron* 私小説論 ["A Treatise on I-novel"] by established critic Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄. Following Andō, I interpret these two essays as important historical documents that philosophically testified to the birth and development of modern Japanese *jiishiki* 自意識, or "self-consciousness" through literary terms during the thirties. The problematics of this "self-consciousness" arguably revolved around the term *watakushi shōsetsu* 私小説, the most general definition of which can be characterized thus: "a genre of fiction, in which the author narrates his or her own life experience and along with this narrative reveals his or her thoughts, emotions and feelings. It reached its apex during the Taishō period . . . and the genre features

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bonyarishita fuan ぼんやりした不安 to describe his existential angst. *Bonyarishita* ぼんやりした can express vagueness, ennui, absentmindedness, being shocked or distracted. *Fuan* 不安, theoretically introduced into Japan from the translation of Lev Shestov's philosophical work, was the determinant word that characterized the zeitgeist during the first decade of Shōwa period. In Shi's discussion one can also see how Taiwan intellectuals experienced their own existential angst in the thirties, especially for those writers who had spent years in Japan as students abroad.

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various Japanese elements" (Katsumata et al. 3).[30] Regarded as a cross-bred genre of Japanese traditional literature and Western literature and thereby epitomizing the Western influence during Japan's modernization, I-narrative is arguably the most significant prose genre that Japanese modern literature ever produced. It can appear as metafiction, or a "novelists' novel" (Andō 15), in which the writers' presence intrudes the narrated sphere. Also it can be seen as the manipulation of the first-person narration and various layers of narrative devices that relativize the narrating self and the narrated self to create an unstable psychological world (14). In other words, I-narrative is a strong form of literary self-reflexivity that broaches the boundary of fictionality.

Yokomitsu's treatise protests against the introspective inclination in modern Japan *junbungaku* 純文学, or high-brow fiction, which was based on the author's real life from his or her own single limited perspective (610). Though he never applies the term, the target of criticism is clearly I-narrative. In order to portray *gūzen* 偶然, or coincidence and contingency, that has become the new *nichijōsē* 日常性, the modern everyday life, modern writers must capture the relations among the interior activities of various characters and balanced them the author's thoughts (611). The self-consciousness of the so-called "pure novel"must mimic the activity of *furatsuku me* ふらつく眼, the unstable, stumbling, wandering perspective (611). For Yokomitsu, the conscious use of perspective serves as *kaizaibutsu* 介在物, the mediation, "the

[30] Suzuki Tomi's definition may be clearer: "*Shi-shōsetsu* [*watakushi shōsetsu*] generally designates an autobiographical narrative in which the author is thought to recount faithfully the details of his or her personal life in a thin guise of fiction" (1). Suzuki is more concerned with how criticism formulates the I-narrative in a "discursive field in which the corpus of the I-novel was retroactively created and defined and from which the standard literary histories emerged" (10). His approach "consider[s] the I-novel issue ultimately as a historically constructed dominant reading and interpretive paradigm," which "soon became a generative cultural discourse" (10). I cannot conduct an archaeological work that traces the development of I-narrative to its strictest sense as it evolves like Suzuki does. Like Yokomitsu, Kobayashi and Andō, I can only grasp I-narrative as a literary genre in its broadest sense.

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uncertain middle between acts and thoughts" that underlies the perspective as a character (exterior), the perspective as an individual (interior), and the consciousness that looks at the individual (612). A fine writer must be able to command this mediation so as to capture multifaceted perspectives (612). In order to deal with the excess of self-consciousness (609), writers have to know *jibun wo miru jibun* 自分を見る自分, "the self that looks at itself" (611) to develop the powerful self-consciousness that dominates the interiority of others (611). Notwithstanding the obscure discussion on narrative perspective, Yokomitsu obviously objects to the quasi-identification of the writer self and the narrator self, the main characteristic of I-narrative. He perceptively captures the main problem of contemporary literature: writers' inability to deal with the growing self-consciousness in modern society. What he prescribes, therefore, is a change of method, in order to rescue Japanese literature.

It was Kobayashi's treatise on I-narrative that more lucidly saw the contradiction between epistemology and aesthetics. Before he published his treatise on I-narrative, Kobayashi already poetically characterized the predicament of Japan's modernizing process in his earlier essays. In *gendai bungaku no fuan* 現代文学の不安 ["The Angst of Contemporary Literature"], Kobayashi complains that there is nothing permanent and definite any more (214).[31] People are surrounded by the deception of science (213) and dominated by the artificial law of the machine (215), which created a profound numbness (213) and intoxication induced by physical pleasure (212), which led to the loss of the ability to distinguish beauty and ugliness (212-213). Kobayashi names this phenomenon as "angst," which is "the arch-drama of the modern *zeitgeist*" (216), deriving from the antagonism between positivist

[31] Compare Harry Harootunian's comment: "Just as social relationships no longer cohered to a fixed order of the world, so representations of the social totality were always in danger of being undermined by a system of development driven by ceaseless change" (40).

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determinism and human's actual life, and the latter's submission to the former (215-16). Kobayashi further explains that impoverished experience is the fault of the excess of intellectual developmet that fails to reflect and ignores self and others. What prevents one from seeing through the essence of things is not feelings per se, but feelings that were dominated by concepts (217). In another poignant essay, *kokyō wo ushinatta bungaku* 故郷を失った文学 ["Literature that Lost Its Homeland"], Kobayashi argues that the cultural deracination stemmed from rapid changes and the experience of uncertainty, and therefore overhauled people's sense of temporality. The past and the present could no longer correspond (369), which gave rise to the discontinuity of one's memory and the present (370). The sense of homelessness separated human beings from nature, which confused the wholesome appreciation of natural beauty and intoxication induced by conceptual, abstract Beauty (370). The urban experience caused the lack of concreteness and the abstract faces in the city (370). The consequence of Westernization is the impossibility to distinguish Western influence and the reality in Japan (375).

Kobayashi impressively starts his treatise on I-narrative from la modernité in French literature.[32] He links the birth of literary modernity to the irritation to recuperate the formalized humanity under the pressure of nineteenth century naturalism (381). For Flaubert and Maupassant, the "I" as subject was killed by scientific modern society and could only be revived in fiction by new literary techniques these writers were forced to invent. They no longer trusted both social life and personal life (383). For modernist writers such as Gide and Proust, the antagonism between writing and everyday life led to despair, which was more than

[32] In the beginning of the treatise is a long quote from Rousseau's *Les Confessions*; the third segment of this long essay was wholly dedicated to Gide and his Les Faux-monnayeurs. Kobayashi himself was a scholar specializing in French literature and a translator of Valéry and Rimbaud.

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clearly prescribed by Marxism (390). For modernist writers, "I" as the sacrificed of modernity can be rediscovered and reinvented in art (394), which propels their introspective exploration of the human psyche and consciousness. The studied "I" in modern fiction is *shakaikashita watakushi* 社会化した「私」, or "the socialized 'I'" (381). This is the core of the essay and the beginning of Kobayashi's discussion. Andō lucidly summarizes Kobayashi's dialectical concept, which is already suggested by its naming.[33] He indicates that "the socialized 'I'," or modern individual subject, is never independent from social process; instead, the latter is always inside the former (Andō 194). With Gide and Proust as the literary paradigm of high modernity,[34] for Kobayashi, the birth of I-narrative in Japan was actually the inability to approach "the socialized 'I'" in literary representation, and he attributes this failure in aesthetic to the premature modernization in Japan. Japanese naturalist literature, the literary movement at the turn of the century exemplified by its confessional character and from which I-narrative was incubated, was not so much bourgeois as feudalistic (393). Kobayashi stresses the social factor that gave rise to I-narrative: the genre matured when residues of feudalism in "I" and residues of feudalism in society subtly correspond (395).[35] Japanese writers at the turn of the century only imitated the techniques, but they could not take the social and philosophical background along with it (384), and the advent of I-narrative was nothing but negative, indefinite

[33] Though in English translation this term implies the passivity of the subject, the grammatical modifier in Japanese only describes a continuing state after a certain action is accomplished and does not clarify the agent and receiver of the action, which means that whether this "I," the modified subject, passively underwent or autonomously conducted the action cannot be clearly determined. The grammatical form of passive voice will be *shakaikasareta watakushi* 社会化された私. Karatani Kōjin has indicated this common mistake even in Japanese contexts. See Karatani et al, 111.

[34] The complex manipulation of perspective and self-reflexivity of novel form exemplified by Gide's *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is Kobayashi's ideal of exploration of "the socialized 'I'", for he argues that Gide provided through literary form "the equation that regulates the relative quantity of individuality and sociality" (400).

[35] From a postwar perspective after the collapse of the Empire, Hashikawa argues more concretely that this homological correspondence originated from "the imbalanced interaction between the prematurely full-fledged modern capitalist governmental institution and modern individuality not yet grown out of premodern state" (105-06).

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resistance against the angst described in his previous essays (387). Japanese writers did not feel the conflict between their own lives and social life, nor did they feel the essential rift between sentimentality and the form of expression (401). In the face of modern chaos, it was more difficult for writers to record objective experience, and they could not but rely on a subjective, introspective mode such as questioning "how to perceive"(403).

Compared with Yokomitsu, Kobayashi emphasizes the antagonism and between the individual and the society (Andō 193) and the a priori status of the latter in the face of former (194). Moreover, modern fiction uses language to touch upon the society not from the outside but within the individual (Andō 194). Hashikawa Bunzō 橋川文三 comments that "A Treatise on I-novel" can be regarded as the negative prophecy looking backward (119) and the impossibility for the ideal "the socialized 'I' " to be fully realized (124), and it was no wonder that Kobayashi suspects his own claim at the end: when I-narrative dies, it will reappear in different forms ("I-Novel" 408). Hashikawa states that Marxism, by providing the seduction of order and teleology ("I-Novel" 407), was an failed attempt of forced socialization of the individual, which only led to angst in individuals (Hashikawa 103) and eradicated the individuality that the best I-narrative can create ("I-Novel" 393). The fall of Marxist movements and the thriving of I-narrative, therefore, symptomizes the influence of radical changes in society on individuals in different registers.

What I am trying to argue here is that I-narrative as a literary genre serves as the interface where the social and the individual meet. It is a social consequence, the passive receptacle and reflector of the insecure subjectivity of enlightenment in modern Japan. Three interesting mutual features of these two essays can be located: first, they are curiously, if not unnecessarily, *obscure*. These two essays are not so

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much aesthetic treatises or writers' manuals commenting on the usage of narrative perpective as philosophical reflections on the intermediary relationship between the author, the narrative self in the text, the text per se, and modern society. The entangled sentence structure in Yokomitsu's writing and paradoxes in Kobayashi's essay reflect the difficulty of formulating the relation between literary form and society, what Andō describes as the contradiction between *jyōkyō ninshikiron* 状況認識論, or epistemology of the situation, and *sōsaku hōhōron* 創作方法論, or the aesthetic of fiction writing (Andō 53; 193). Another noteworthy feature is that both writers discuss Japanese modern literature in a surprisingly critical manner. For them the paradigmatic writers of modern literature concerning their topic are, ironically, Fyodor Dostoevsky and André Gide. Their preference for Western literature implicates their lament of the immaturity of Japanese modern literature, which arguably corresponds to the political unconscious in modern Japan. Despite the fact that Japan had imported and tried to absorb Western literature for decades, the social condition of modern Japan was too different and not mature enough to allow Japanese writers to meet their ideal criteria. The third feature is that though both writers only vaguely evoked the social background that incubated I-narrative in their discussion, they shared a clear awareness that I-narrative is a modern social phenomenon and perceptively observed that as a literary form I-narrative contained the cultural complex of Japanese modernity. The second and the third feature partially explain why both Yokomitsu and Kobayashi disapproved of the development of I-narrative. Yokomitsu tried to invent a new form in the hope of replacing the stifling, limited I-narrative for the future, while Kobayashi by criticizing I-narrative tried to describe the impoverishment of modern experience and cultural amnesia at the present. I-narrative

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ultimately is the passive, negative critique of the inner conflict of Western modernity and traditional Japan.

"Overcoming Modernity," the Ruse of Enlightenment and Duality of Modern Japan

If by criticizing the feebly subjective I-narrative Kobayashi and Yokomitsu delineated how difficult it was for Japan to accept Western modernity, cultural discourses in the forties responded to Western modernity with violent sanguineness. *Kindai not chōkoku* 近代の超克, or "Overcoming Modernity," was the title of a symposium held in 1942. The evangelical message of this event is that Japan should "overcome" the Western influence and vie for its legitimate power in Asia.[36] Though technically the official administration was not involved, this symposium, along with previous symposiums now collectively entitled "World Historical Position and Japan," were commonly seen as the symbol of intellectual collaboration with official fascist ideology supporting the invasive wars in China, in Southeast Asia, and in the Pacific Islands (Takeuchi, 275; 279). Though the message and the rationale of the symposium are not unjust, "Overcoming Modernity" became the consensus among the intellectuals who were keen (and forced) to support the Japanese Empire's war mobilization and fascist regime. The symposium was also the culmination of intellectual reflections on Japan's modernization since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. I am not able to investigate all the details of this significant event, but I would like to demonstrate the complex antinomy of Japanese modernity behind fascism, which is often neglected or highly simplified in studies of Taiwan literature in the thirties and the forties.

[36] Ironically, according to Harry Harootunian, "the concept of overcoming obviously derived from European philosophic antecedents that went back to Hegel" and was "reworked by Nietzsche" (37).

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One of the fiercest critics against Western Enlightenment is Yasuda Yojūrō 保田與重郎, the most significant figure of *nihon romanha* 日本浪曼派, or the Japanese Romantic School, a literary group that appeared in the thirties. Though he did not attended the controversial symposium, Yasuda's unique, insightful yet slightly repellent analysis of Japan's modernization was clearly shared by many participants of the symposium. His critique can be summed up by a title of one of his essays, "*Bunmeikaika no ronri no shūen nitsuite*" 文明開化の論理の終焉について ["About the Death of the Logic of Civilization and Enlightenment"]. Yasuda bluntly asserts that the coherence of Enlightenment discourse, with rationalism as its philosophical foundation and bureaucracy as its instrument, was based on the geopolitical reality controlled and dominated by Europeans ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 20-21). For Yasuda, what Meiji Restoration and consequent modernization brought for Japan was merely a translated and adapted version of Western modernity, which lacked originality and the momentum of creation ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 16). Eventually the Westernized Japan could not be a first-rate empire like other Western countries but remained a submissive colony under the Western Eyes ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 15), the consequence of which is the lukewarm Taishō culture ("Current State" 211) and the introversion of modern literature ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 19). Moreover, for Japan modernization means the repression of its own tradition in the shadows of Western modernity ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 15). Yasuda claims that Japan should fight against abstraction of cultural and social institution ("Current State" 199); that is, the pure abstraction of the exchange system (203).

More radical than Yokomitsu and Kobayashi could imagine, Yasuda declared that Japan was in dire need to extricate itself from Western modernity and disturb the

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order by creating "contradictions" ("Civilization and Enlightenment" 20-21), which he famously called イロニーとしての日本, or "Japan as Ironie" ("Japan Romantic School" 246).[37] "Japan as Ironie" is in essence aesthetic in extremis (244); it is based on paradox and an indeterminate state (246). As an aesthetic it decries realism for the sake of the sacredness of the absolute (245), and in order to defy abstraction, the Japanese Romantic School promotes art and literature based on a total, national, local view ("Overview" 301). By glorifying "passion toward decline" and triumphant "great defeat" (245), Yasuda praises war, for it is death that exhibits the value of life (247) and only from destruction is reestablishment possible ("Overview" 302). Though far more fervent and aestheticized than the academics who attended the "Overcoming Modernity" symposium, his thoughts is obviously in line with the symposium.

What is "Japan as Ironie"? According to Kevin Michael Doak's study, Yasuda attempted to formulate "a forceful conception of 'Japan' as an aesthetic concept with which to mediate the contesting claims of nature and artifice" (26). Yasuda detested "nature," the unpleasant and passive state of affairs of the present depicted by literary naturalism and Taishō liberalism; instead he called for "artifice," an aestheticized, heroic, romantic sensibility which reminds him of the "superiority of [Japanese] ancient culture" (17). Yasuda's dissatisfaction with contemporary history and Western modernity led to his criticism of French literary modernity and preference for German Romanticism and Classical Japan ("Overview" 303). "Japan as Ironie," a concept inspired by German romantic irony, characterizes Japan's political and cultural emergency state and testifies to "the impossibility of a return to the past and an attack

[37] The spelling イロニー implies its German origin. Yasuda was clearly inspired by German Romanticism and its revival by German intellectuals in the thirties. The dangerous political implication of rereading German romantic poets could also be observed among Japanese intellectuals heavily influenced by contemporary German philosophy. See Karatani et al, 219-23.

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on the modern historical consciousness that prevents such a return" (Doak 8). Aiming to revive a total, national, local view, Yasuda expected "the new subject of historical action was best found in the collectivity of Japanese ethnicity" (18). Despite Yasuda's claim that "Japan as Ironie" served the role as a perpetual critic and obstinate antagonist to Japanese society ("Japan Romantic School" 244), Doak criticizes that what Yasuda's "fetishism of [Japan's] past" (Doak 26) ultimately evoked "was a form of intellectual stagnation that greatly resembled more familiar Western motions of nationalism" (20). Harootunian more lucidly indicates what Yasuda "shared with the prevailing discourse on cultural authenticity" which induced "the fantasy that neither history nor techno-economic development had managed to change what was essentially and eternally Japanese" (Harootunian 40). Harootunian argues that the political partisanship of "Overcoming Modernity," associated with Yasuda's aestheticized vision of Japan, "strove to distance itself from the event of war in order to better understand the very eventfulness that had transformed Japanese society so completely in the interwar period" (44), and it was precisely this lofty intellectual gesture that consolidated its "dangerous kinship with fascism in its desire to bracket history and hence the development that had propelled the country to its present in order to represent Japan as fixed and eternal" (40).

One of the most influential serious reassessments of "Overcoming Modernity" comes form Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹内好. Takeuchi also tried to grasp the antinomy of "Overcoming Modernity," but from a very different angle from Yasuda's. In his famous 1959 eponymous long essay,[38] he acknowledges Japan's war responsibility, but vehemently criticizes hatred and nostalgia haunting this unjustly symbolized

[38] Takeuchi's thoughts and studies on modern China have been revived in recent years as one of the intellectual resources to revolutionize the political order in Asia, which was regarded as the legacy of Cold War geopolitics and US imperialism.

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target of criticism (276). The greatest legacy of "Overcoming Modernity," Takeuchi famously claims, is the irony that though the symposium willed the birth of new thoughts, it actually witnessed the destruction of thoughts, and even failed to formulate an ideology that served war and fascism (288). Takeuchi attributes the failure of "Overcoming Modernity" to the unresolved antagonism between European intellect and Japanese lineage (290), and it is important to acknowledge Japanese intellectuals' effort to understand "the culmination of the aporia of modern Japanese history" (338).[39] The aporia between Japan and the West was implicated in the dual character of the Japan's "Great East Asia War": it was not only imperialistic but paradoxically anti-imperialistic at the same time (306).[40] It was imperialistic because Japan vied for the leading role in East Asia. On the other hand, the war took on the anti-imperialistic mission of chasing out the influence of the West (307), which also manifested Japan's subjectivity in world order (Takeuchi 319-20).

Takeuchi's reevaluation of "Overcoming Modernity" is further examined in a recent work by intellectual historian Koyasu Nobukuni 子安宣邦, who extends Takeuchi's argument and emphasizes the contradiction between Japanese nationalist consciousness and Western modernity. Koyasu critically notes that the political ideology implied in Takeuchi's ostensible aporia is that under the surface of derivative, imitative modern Japan that adopted and absorbed Western modernity lies the native essence of a true Japan (14, my emphasis), but Koyasu also sensitively sensed the ruse of a monolithic impulse beneath the cultural complex. Koyasu

[39] Koyasu more concretely rephrases Takeuchi's aporetic statement: "Modern Japan in Asia is not Asian," and insightfully terms it the "Shōwa Ideology" (19) that responded to the changing world-order from prewar imperialist project to postwar geo-politics (21-22).

[40] *Dai tōa sensō* 大東亜戦争, or "Great East Asia War," is the term adopted by the Japanese government after Japan went to war against the UK and the US in 1942. Historians have located the beginning of Japan's warfare abroad way before this. Tsurumi Shunsuke 鶴見俊輔 argues that the beginning should fall on the Mukden Incident in 1931, the first invasive military advancement in China. See Tsurumi, *gendai nihon shisoushi* 現代日本思想史 [Contemporary Japanese intellectual History] .Tokyo: Chikuma, 1991.

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criticizes Takeuchi's explanation of the duality of the Great East-Asian War: to command East Asia on the one hand and to manifest Japan's subjectivity in the world order dominated by the West) is actually two sides of the same coin of imperialism (200-01). The aporia stands, but at the same time it is actually not aporetic, the putatively legitimate anti-imperialist project against Western modernity and establishing Japanese subjectivity is nothing but the request of Westernized imperial Japan made to the West to join the world order at the cost of military advancement in China (36-38), Southeast Asia and islands of Oceania, plus colonization of Taiwan and Korea during the beginning of the twentieth century. In the face of imperial invasion, *ajiashugi* アジア主義, or "Asianism," Takeuchi's political project to conquer Western modernity by creating an Asian counterpart, can only be the non-existent, abstract, negativity of European modernity (Koyasu 202).

Hashikawa critically analyzed the aestheticized inclination in politics from the late thirties to 1945, especially focusing on works by Yasuda and Kobayashi during the war. Hashikawa established the ostensibly reversed relation between the first and second decade of the Shōwa period: Yasuda's political faith in the putatively negative "ironie" actually derived from the radicalization of the revolutionary imagination of Marxism from the previous decade (43); the reason why "Japan as Ironie" was obsessed with the greatness of decadence and massive death was the transformation of frustrated political critique into aestheticism (33). The negativity was ultimately transformed into zealous fascism. The past was evoked to serve the future. Hashikawa criticized that Yasuda and Kobayashi's conversion to toward Japanese tradition dissolved the politics in the identification of "tradition," "history," and "Beauty" (99). If Enlightenment and Marxism, as Harootunian observes, brought "a culture driven by 'progress' and the ceaseless differentiation and specialization within the spheres of

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knowledge" (Harootunian 36), then Yasuda and his fellows resort "to the classics, the gods, and religious subjectivity establishing real difference promised . . . the prospect of leading to a new kind of human (actually Japanese) that was whole, complete, undivided," which is able to make up for the lack and incompleteness attributed to, if not lived and suffered by Japanese and Asians" (93). Yet as Harootunian's careful choice of word showes, this "prospect" actually "disclosed the figure of a future yet to come that would exceed both past and present in its will to modernity" and therefore "it reaffirms the historicity it promised to eliminate" (94).

Takeuchi is right that "Overcoming Modernity" cannot be simplified as fascist ideology and escaped by condemning it. By contextualizing the background of the "Overcoming Modernity" movement, the aforementioned intellectual historians all sense the paradox inherent in this strong ideology and come to similar conclusions that modernity has never been overcome after all; rather it was the constant dialectic presupposition that initiated the fascist cultural project. What justifies fascist militarism is the denial to see the complicity between Japanese nativist claims and the Western modernity. By opposing Western modernity, Japan fell back into the vortex of modernity. Yasuda and his fellow intellectuals' pursuit for an ahistorical cultural subjectivity and the complicity of cultural discourses with all-out militarism illustrates the dialectic of Enlightenment in East Asia: if Enlightenment's disenchantment project cannot but reproduce the logic of mythology as a system of knowledge, the revival of a beatified, antimodern national cultural contains the ruse of Enlightenment: under the ideology is the colossal, modernized imperial administration. It is no wonder that the imperial administration exploited this paradox within the paradox of "Overcoming Modernity": Yasuda's distaste for Enlightenment and modernization as well as his fascist desire for the rebirth of Japanese nationality through massive

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destruction only worked on the ideological level; the modern state apparatus as well as the massive mobilization of resources and labor for the war can only be the fruition of modernization. Instead of resorting to the simple formula "myth equals ideology," *Dialectic of Enlightenment* helps to historicize how this formula not only involves the paradox of modernity but also involves geopolitics conditioned by new imperialism, a thesis that is particularly important for understanding the modern history of East Asia, Japanese imperialism and the complex of the colonized. Adorno and Horkheimer's discussion on the concept of Enlightenment and its dialectical relation with myth explains this imperial logic pretty well:

> Because faith is unavoidably tied to knowledge as its friend or its foe, faith perpetuates the split in the struggle to overcome knowledge: its fanaticism is the mark of its untruth, the objective admission that anyone who only believes for that reason no longer believes. Bad conscience is second nature to it. The secret awareness of this necessary, inherent flaw, the immanent contradiction that lies in making a profession of reconciliation, is the reason why honesty in believers has always been a sensitive and dangerous affair (*Dialectic of Enlightenment* 14).

One only has to replace faith with fascist ideology and knowledge with modernization to understand the ruse of Japanese wartime propaganda. Modern revival of mythology cannot extricate itself from the logic of disenchantment. That is to say, the desire for a meaningful past always implies a contemporary predicament. In a later passage, the authors put this logic even more bluntly:

> The alleged authenticity of the archaic . . . is already tainted by the devious bad conscience of power characteristic of the "national regeneration" today, which uses primeval times for self-advertising. The original myth itself contains the

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> moment of mendacity which triumphs in the fraudulent myth of fascism and which the latter imputes to enlightenment (*Dialectic of Enlightenment* 37).

It is significant to heed that Japan's modernization and its turn to fascism no doubt concerns the dissemination of Western modernity. The complexity of prewar Japan functions as a crucial complement to Critical Theory and sheds light on the dimension that have gone unnoticed: geopolitics and colonialism deriving from the encounter between the East and the West. Having been absorbed into the imperial infrastructure, Enlightenment irrevocably transforms the past. Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis indicates that any attempt to fetishize and aestheticize the past, epitomized here by Yasuda's thoughts, "degenerates finally into fraud, the myth of the twentieth century and faith's irrationality into rational organization in the hands of the utterly enlightened as they steer society toward barbarism" (15).

In their first excursus on Odysseus' journey, Adorno and Horkheimer shrewdly allegorizes the fascist ideology based on an aestheticized nationalist myth through an episode in *The Odyssey*:

> If the Sirens know everything that has happened, they demand the future as its price, and their promise of a happy homecoming is the deception by which the past entraps a humanity filled with longing (26).

Lapsing into the Siren's trap means to forgoing one's ego and diving into nature and atemporality. This scenario parallels Yasuda's audacious lure of his insistence of Japan's negativity: the ethnic collectivity against modernized individualism and his praise of mass destruction in the hope of rebirth, which all suggest a "complete loss of the self" (Hashikawa 187). Odysseus, however, submit to and resists this urge at the same time and therefore cheats nature. "Odysseus acknowledges the archaic supremacy of the song by having himself bound," Adorno and Horkheimer write, the

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"bound listener is drawn to the Sirens like any other. But he has taken the precaution not to succumb to them even while he succumbs" (46). The moment Odysseus cheats nature, the modern subject under the sign of Enlightenment is born. Sacrifice of the self is supposed to rebuild "connection with nature" and achieve "a restoration of the past" (41), but when the subject realizes the sacrifice is "representative," the sacred ritual becomes "a form of exchange" (42). Adorno and Horkheimer continue that "the temptation to be rid of the ego" actually "has always gone hand-in-hand with the blind determination to preserve it" (26). This is why the sacrificial urge in the fascist regime that upholds the value of collectivity is always "given the lie by the historical reality in which it is performed" (41).

By promoting its negativity in the face of modernity, Yasuda founded the cultural subjectivity on this loss of the self. The putative critical potency of negativity and the drive toward destruction evoked by it is replaced by a blindly affirmative ideological thrust. However, by sacrificing the particular ego to create an abstract, universal subjectivity necessarily destroys the subject because "the substance which is mastered, suppressed, and disintegrated by self-preservation is nothing other than the living entity self-preservation destroys the very thing which is to be preserved" (42-43), and therefore the subject produced by sacrifice becomes "an act of violence done equally to human beings and to nature" (41). Wartime Japanese fascism almost faithfully reenacted the scenario of dialectic of enlightenment. If Adorno and Horkheimer assert that the logic of enlightenment already surfaces in mythology and epic, the dangerous notion of the revival of a mythologized past also reflects the dialectic of myth and Enlightenment. An awareness of the dialectic on the one hand is the Japanese intellectuals' serious reflection on the consequence of modernization beginning several decades earlier; on the other hand, it can be easily exploited by the

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political power and justifies the imperial enterprise in the name of nationalism. One of the most surprising features of Yasuda's dangerous thought lies in the fact that he correctly diagnoses the traits of Western modernity, such as abstraction, the law of exchange and concomitant social consequence like alienation and introversion. Yet by supplicating the past of Japan and ethnic collectivity, he inadvertently resorts to the complicity between this ideology of decadence and the logic of enlightenment that sustains the Empire, which the wartime Japan administration and the intelligentsia realize and exploit.

The complexity of "Overcoming Modernity" has not received its due attention in Taiwan literature, partly because the colonial subjects experienced modernity and capitalism in the form of direct exploitation. Choi Malsoon 崔末順 attempts to interrogate the impact of the ideology of "Overcoming Modernity" in colonial Taiwan and Korea. However, the problem of her study is that she reductively, though not unreasonably, equates "Overcoming Modernity" with kōminka discourses, propaganda for war mobilization, and authoritative Japanese classicism. However, she does indicate the the critical difference between actual literary production and the ideology that cultural discourses were supposed to popularize (403-04), which demonstrates the fact that colonial writers were not unaware of the hazard of war propaganda (404-05).[41] The colonies underwent the consequence of modernization economically and sociologically before they saw how intellectuals of the colonies gradually came to acknowledge and negotiate with the influence of modernity. This temporal lag profoundly determines the way Taiwanese intellectuals adapted to and portray the formation of colonial subjectivity in terms of literary forms.

[41] Curiously, even Japanese literary critics noticed the hazard of official ideology in literature. See Kudō Yoshimi, (*Japanese Magazines* 114-15).

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Leo Ching persuasively demonstrates this innate contradiction in *dōka* 同化, or assimilation policy, as an imperialist logic used "to conceal the gap between the reality of political and economic inequality" (104) and to "obfuscate the structure of domination" (106). Ching acutely unveils that what "makes assimilation thinkable in the first place is the assertion of 'difference' and 'superiority' by the colonizing nation/people with regard to the colonized subject" (106). *Kōminka* 皇民化, or all-out mobilization and imperialization, however, "constituted a colonial objectification by forcefully turning a project into practice" (96). To some extent, the *kōminka* movement reversed the logic of assimilation. *Dōka* aimed at retaining the difference under the cover of the sameness, but *kōminka* "entailed for the colonized . . . the 'interiorization' of an objective colonial antagonism into a subjective struggle over, not between, colonial identities" (96, my emphasis). The irony lies in the fact that when identification of the colonizer and the colonized became a political and cultural imperative, the suppressed difference could no longer be surpassed. By emphasizing the dynamic that included both the "creative and destructive tension around notions of identity" (124) Ching manages to dissolve the political loyalty demanded by nationalisms. Moreover, the indissoluble tension within the "problematic of the colonized viewed as an incomplete 'imperial subject'" ultimately led to "an overwhelming existential anxiety" (132, my emphasis). The preposition over and the modifier incomplete mark the teleological goal of the movement and the impossibility to achieve it. The failure (or at least incomplete success) of the *kōminka* movement results because "the self's interior is invaded by a sense of 'otherness' at the moment of 'becoming Japanese'" (124). The incommensurable difference in colonial politics created multiple aporias for Taiwanese intellectuals who used Japanese to write and think. If Japanese writers could not deal with aporetic conflict of Western modernity

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and Japanese society, the Taiwanese writers' dilemma was even more complicated: the "otherness" that Ching emphasizes included Western modernity translated by Japanese Empire.[42]

What is Formosan Melancholia?

In her studies of the Japanese colonial period, Shi Shu's analysis of the social relation between societal changes and colonial "new literature" are based on three intersected premises: the externally imposed, premature modern capitalist institutions that emphatically broke with the premodern society (30-31); the modern intelligentsia who were detached from older generations and the working class, conforming with capitalist abstract exchange logic (33); and the complexity of intersecting ideologies in the twenties: liberal democracy, anarchism, Japanese Marxism, left-wing internationalism, nationalist consciousness, conditioned self-determinism, and so on (46-47). During this period, proletarian literature, the dominant genre that occupied Taiwanese writers, became the intersection of these social forces. Despite the fact that the left-wing political groups and the Taiwan Communist Party collapsed in 1931 under the pressure of Japanese police force (64), proletarian literature still thrived till the beginning of *kōminka* movement, or imperialization movement in 1937.[43]

The formally experimental works in the thirties, in contrast, sprang from the negative consciousness and perverse psychology of the disillusioned intellectuals, the root of which had been already embedded in the first two premises (32) and the failure of the political movements in the third. Notwithstanding the language in praise

[42] Already in the thirties, the aporetic nature of colonial identity was incarnated by Wu Yungfu 巫永福 in his enigmatic story kubi to karada 首と体 ["Head and Body"] by the memorable image of sphinx and chimera: the monster with a lion's head and sheep's body in Greek mythology. However, the context is slightly different from the context of assimilation policy. The head in the text means the character's wish to stay in Japan and his inclination toward progress and imperial civilization; the body means the inseparable colonial aspect: familial responsibilities and tradition (Weng, Wu and Wang 184).

[43] Publication written in Mandarin Chinese was also banned in the same year.

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of modernity and enlightenment one finds in newspapers and journals during the twenties (34), Shi stresses that it was the complicity of the authoritarian colonial administration and capitalists (77) and the consequent disproportionate discrepancy between classes and generations (32) that crippled and enervated the individual consciousness of Taiwanese intellectuals (85). The coexistence of different temporalities, those of standardized progressive, metropolitan life prescribed by colonial modernity and capitalism (96-98), and of local, pre-modern social life that suffered from capitalist exploitation and political frustration, led to the formation of disillusioned, nihilistic, skeptical individuals (80-82). In another essay Shi straightforwardly names this historical phenomenon as Taiwanese intellectuals' "consciousness of decadence" (89), and she maps out, though crudely, the possible genealogy of literary influences: Japanese I-narrative, *shin kankaku ha* 新感覚派,[44] fin-de-siècle aestheticism and twentieth century modernist works (102).

However, her strongest claim and the most intense writing appeared in the earliest essay of this series of work: "Formosan Melancholia: On Chen Yingzhen's Early Works and Aesthetic." She adopts a more Marxist language to argue that the previously mentioned "consciousness of decadence" belonged to the partisan "petit-bourgeois" elite writers (185), and this questionable consciousness derived from their contradictory roles as enlighteners of the people and imperialist regime's reluctant accomplices (185). In terms of political identity, these elites stand with the oppressed Taiwanese people as a whole and desperately fought the Japanese colonial administration, but in terms of class, they stood in line with the imperialists and turned away from the working class (185). Ultimately these elite writers could not but invest their hope in utopia through fantasy and introspection (185-86). Shi discovers

[44] The most important and famous writer that belongs to this school is aforementioned Yokomitsu Riichi.

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that what lies behind "the world-weary, abyssal beauty" in Chen's early works after the colonial regime is the revival of the utopian vision within the consciousness of decadence of these elite writers (187), and the formula of characterization in his works usually comprises a problematic character and a high-strung observer, an actor and an witness (187, my emphasis). Shi argues that the rhapsodic tone and characters as fallen martyrs in Chen's early works exposes the impossibility of the utopian vision, and the correspondent historical fact is that the messianic event for the colonial elites, "the Restoration" in 1945, did not fulfill its promises in the Cold War but led to the no less oppressive White Terror. Shi criticizes that Chen describes instead of sanctions in his writings, and the negative gesture: pain, skepticism, confession, angst, self-destruction, in Chen's works, consumes the critical force of political ideology and historical consciousness, which, turns political criticism into powerless fiction (190-91). The melancholic, helpless inability to face social reality can only be conveyed by a decadent aesthetic (192). To conclude, the Formosan Melancholia can be interpreted as the negative affective state evoked by Taiwanese elites' powerlessness in the face of historical violence imposed by capitalist reason, imperialism, authoritarian terror and the clashing of conflicting racial and class identities; the form of expression for these wounded, prematurely weak subjects can only be introspective, skeptical, nihilistic, escapist, and aestheticized.

Taiwan Literature in the Forties

What exactly was the difference between Japanese literature and Taiwan literature during the Shōwa period? Even after some literary works from Taiwan had been recognized and awarded by Japan literary circles, why was there not any notable I-narrative by Taiwanese writers? This issue was more than once taken up by several

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writers during the forties. From the four-volume collection of literary and art criticism, it is not uncommon to see Japanese critics severely railing against the poor quality of Taiwan literature. One of the most representative text is the minute of a seminar three notable writers: Nishikawa Mitsuru 西川滿, Hamada Hayao 濱田隼雄, and Long Yingzong 龍瑛宗. While Taiwanese writer Long attempted to argue that the critical difference between Taiwan and Japan that prevented Taiwanese writers from producing I-narrative was that between traditions and societies (*Criticism, III* 306), Nishikawa, who was famous for including exotic elements in his literary and art works from the Empire's perspective, attributed to the difference of climate and environment (307): it was the tropics that prevented him from writing I-narrative. Hamada claims that not being able to write I-narrative for Japanese writers in Taiwan was a crucial problem, and argues that "if one cannot negate the self, I-narrative cannot be born" (*Criticism III* 307-08).[45] In another essay Hamada once criticizes that colonial Taiwan literature could not but portray the negative side of reality (*Criticism IV* 131), and realist fiction depicting reality was finally overwhelmed by reality (132).

Apparently Japanese critics did not think highly of the quality of literary works from its first colony. Takemura Takeshi 竹村猛 argues that literature in colonial Taiwan was trapped in the naiveté that hindered writers from understanding the distance between the author and the work (*Criticism III* 385). The excessive self-consciousness caused the unsound relation between the self and the work, which finally led to sentimentality and caused the failure of literature in colonial Taiwan

[45] Chen Yunyuan in his interesting study of Hamada argues that for Japanese writers, this negation of the self can only be activated through the contact with the colonized people (104). Chen indicates that the reason why Japanese writers in Taiwan may not be able to produce I-narrative lies in the immature, arrogant literary criticism and the reliance on authority instead of reflection (111-12).

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(*Criticism III* 407). Takemura reminded that Taiwan literature should concern the communitarian self (*Criticism IV* 289) and a correct social consciousness (*Criticism IV* 291-92). Hōsenbō Takaichi 寶泉坊隆一 states that if I-narrative begins by the awakening of the self and being able to destroy the animal self toward a socialized self (*Criticism IV* 121-22), colonial writers' incomplete subjectivity lacks profundity and therefore could not transcend the self toward universality (122). Compared with these Japanese critics, reflections from Taiwanese writers are more noteworthy. In another essay Long admitted the feebleness of Taiwan literature and the lack of élan (*Criticism III* 333); Zhang Wenhuan 張文環, probably the best realist Taiwanese writer then, also acknowledged the passivity and inferiority of literature in colonial Taiwan (*Criticism IV* 164).[46] It is somewhat too far-stretched to argue that it was the colonial policy that prevented Taiwanese writers to write as well as Japanese writers. However, it is precisely the discrepancy between literary works from the empire and the colony that attested to the inequality and injustice of colonialism.

Technically speaking Taiwan literature did produce I-narratives: *aruotoko no shyuki* 或る男の手記 ["Note of a Man"] by Guo Shuitan 郭水潭 in 1935 and the famous short story *yoakemae no koimonogatari* 夜明け前の恋物語 ["A Love Story before Dawn"] by Weng Nao 翁鬧 in 1937 both qualify as I-narratives. These two texts both resemble I-narrative, featuring a decadent male character's confession in the first person. The erotic desire of the unhealthy, licentious, self-indulgent subjectivity testified to the tension between capitalist and workers as well as modern consciousness and premodern cultural tradition. But I try to illustrate here that there is a strange, less conspicuous kind of first-person narrative which managed to cleverly

[46] Curiously Zhang in the same essay expressed his disapproval of the demand to learn classical Japanese literature (*Japanese Magazines IV* 164-65) and instead showed admiration for Japanese modern literature and the humanist idea of literature (165).

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eschew the blatant political ideology of "critical realism" and to ironize militant, aestheticized imperial sensibility. I think it is naive to accept the idea that fiction written during the war was not so much a "literature of imperial subject" as a "literature of protest," as some nativist critics tend to believe (*Taiwan New Literature* 206-07). Yet, a more careful reading of fiction stigmatized as "literature of the imperial subject" does eventually show that the ostensible pervading imperialist ideology cannot be portrayed without self-doubt, inner tension and irony. Shi's criticism on Formosan Melancholia provides the formula: a problematic character and a high-strung observer, an actor and an witness (Shi 187). In the following texts, the hesitant, insecure witness is always portrayed in first-person, and the problematic character(s) are always twisted and entangled in ideological dilemma of modern Taiwan. The writers effectively employ the finite, limited vision of first-person narrative to demarcate an inviolable epistemological middle ground in order to simulate the self-consciousness' contact with other self-consciousness. What does this middle ground created by first-person narrative mean? Unlike I-narrative, which emphasizes the supremacy of self-hood and immediacy of experience, these problematic first-person narratives put the process of subject formation into focus, delaying, if not evading, the indulgence of the first-person narrator. These stories lack a decisive denouement; though the observed characters have been interpolated into their respective niches within the imperialist, capitalist, modern social grid, the first-person narrator is always stuck in a limbo. The vicariousness of imperial experience allowed by this manipulation of perspective prevents the colonial first-person narrators from the entrapment of political ideologies, which detaches, but never prevents, these observers from the absolute of dialectic of enlightenment. My take on this narrative trait is that it generates a unique colonial perspective to witness the

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operation of the dialectic of enlightenment of modern Japan. The narrative middle ground and the observer's perspective embodied the subtle but absolute difference between the empire and the colony: if imperial Japan had to go through intense self-interrogation and subjectivity in I-narrative, colonial Taiwan had to deal with identity politics from a remove: the subjectivity is alienated, mediated, and observed. One still finds the passive, weak, distorted characters victimized by colonial modernity, who resemble the subjects of I-narrative, but the observer's perspective retains the space for reflection. If colonial identity is innate with a chasm between the colonizer and the colonized that cannot be bridged, the progress from colonial subjectivity to imperial subjectivity remains ambivalent and incomplete, and therefore the intellectuals of the colonies experience the dialectic of enlightenment that operates upon the imperial subjectivity deriving from the encounter between the west and the east in a more reflective way: the Formosan Melancholia. It does not mean that colonial intellectuals successfully resist the dialectic of enlightenment, but unlike the intense self-reflexivity that encroaches the boundary between fiction and reality that one finds in Japanese I-narrative tradition, the reflective middle ground safeguards an absolute, indelible difference.

A quick survey of several representative works may be of help. Long Yingzong, the self-proclaimed "pathetic Romantic," may be the most important writer who deploys this narrative strategy. Compared with Yang Kui 楊逵, Lu Heruo 呂赫若 and Zhang Wenhuan, the great realist writers during the last years of the colonial period, Long's sensitive, world-weary works in the forties not only thematically but also stylistically tackle the precarious mind of the colonized and more subtly problematize the imperial ideology in the face of wartime censorship. Long's fiction is particularly marvelous because he includes wartime propaganda into the content to

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meet the demand of censorship, but, probably inadvertently, dismantles the ideology at the same time. His painful work *yoitzuki* 宵月 ["Evening Moon"] from 1940 sketches the fall of Hō Eikun 彭英坤, a promising student who aspired to personal achievement and social progress (*Collected Works of Long I* 151), but later died as a disillusioned country teacher in debt and shame (148). The reason of his transformation from a brilliant young lad to a bony, quiet, cold, and cynical teacher (154) who uses a page of Shelley's poetry to wipe his son's buttocks (156) is beyond the limited vision and reminiscence of the first-person narrator (157). The only clue to this transformation is Hō's wretched complaints of his "melancholia," "indolence," "fatigue," and "dissatisfaction" (159-60).The abject presence of Hō and his symptoms without a cause (to be seen) correspond to the vague, inexplicable connection the narrator feels for this mentally destroyed figure (154). The narrator records a series of affective reactions to the death of Hō: he is at once sympathetic to and disgusted by Hō (150); he feels pity, contempt, affinity (154), shame (160), rage and loneliness (168) in the course of events. The psychological transformation of Hō is undoubtedly social, which becomes a complex, even an enigma in the text, but Long blocks the process from sight of the subjective vision of the first-person narrator. The emotional reactions and reflections become the vicarious interface between the observed object and the observing subject in the form of a first-person narrator. The emotional reactions and reflections only prove the existence of an unapproachable experience of others via subjective consciousness, which quite accurately apprehends the role of literary fiction in society as necessary frustration of the yearning for immediacy.

The dialectic of fascist ideology is dramatized in gozen no gake 午前の崖 ["Cliff in the Morning"] from 1941. Unlike the pathos conveyed in "Evening Moon," the first-person narrator is more limpid and passive. The meaning of this story evolves

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around a complex irony: Chō Sekito 張石濤, the observed character who intended to kill himself to protest against the tradition of arranged marriage and to defend his commitment to love and enlightened spirit, is finally saved by a will to life inspired by the soldiers on their journey to the battlefield (*Collected Works of Long I* 235). On the surface, the irony is a fortunate one and caters to the authorities, praising the war mobilization and criticizing the decadent. The most interesting aspect, however, lies in the fact that for any reader who is familiar with the contemporary history in the forties, the irony intended is so unconvincing and mockingly contrived that it ironizes itself and detaches the reader from their identification with the character. The weak denouement with the determination to live bravely for the country only reversely reinforces the old motif of colonial literature: the contradiction between modern love and arranged marriage, between the tradition and enlightenment. Chō's pessimism over the possibility of the resolution to this conflict (217), and his observation of the decadence in French culture as a symptom of modern society (220) is obviously incongruous to his later embrace of fascist ideology (235). However, this incongruity epitomizes the intellectual climate of the first two decades of the Shōwa period. By exposing the awkwardness of this transformation, this story structurally ironizes the transcendent national project that the empire prepares to overcome the reception of Western modernity, and the perspective of the colonized is embodied by the passive first-person narrator.

The last story of Long's I want to discuss here is minami ni shisu 南に死す ["To Die in the South"] from 1942, a strange work camouflaged as epistolary fiction and particularly important because it shares many of Guo's literary motifs: sick body, the opposition of mind and body, and the presence of a mad/neurotic brother. "To Die in the South" is composed of five letters addressed to "you," who has passed a

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hedonist phase and becomes an active translator who serves in the South,[47] by a nameless "I" in Taiwan, who stayed behind after his recuperation from illness. The letters recount how the older brother of "yours," who pursued spiritual values of the Enlightenment, went mad in the premodern social conventions and capitalist society (*Collected Works of Long II* 15-17), and how "you" successfully extricated from the mire of decadence and choose to serve the imperial enterprise (21-22). This is not a successful piece by any standard, because the long exposition of the two characters written by "I" overrides the demand of realism: if the information and memories are shared, such long and detailed exposition seem redundant; yet it is also hard to argue that this story is an I-narrative camouflaged by its epistolary form because it also involves too many realistic concrete details. However, the unstable, undecidable formal aspect interestingly captures the social changes on the island in the past several decades. Despite the loquacity of the narrator, from the latter part of the second letter the reader gradually loses the psychological depth of this "I" after he mentions his stomach ulcer and recuperation (20). It is obvious that in the first letter, the "I" who praises power of mind, culture and science (14) identifies himself with the cause of enlightenment, which is personified by the mad brother who recited Shelley during the night (17). What comprises the second half of the story, however, is praises for the liveliness in society during the kōminka movement, as if war propaganda usurps the existence of "I," journalistic impulse usurps lyrical writings and subjective voice. No reader can miss the ventriloquial message: behind the war propaganda is the failure of the enlightenment. The narrating "I" trades a fuller characterization for being the receptacle of the ambiguity of dialectic of enlightenment. The key to decipher the ventriloquist's gesture is condensed the narrator's quotation of Nietzsche's *Ecce*

[47] The "South" refers to regions in Southeast Asia and Oceania colonized by the Japanese empire.

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Homo (*Collected Works of Long II* 20): "To be able to look out from the optic of sickness towards healthier concepts and values, and again the other way around, to look down from the fullness and self-assurance of the rich life into the secret work of the instinct of decadence" (Nietzsche 76). The narrator tries to argue (quasi-allegorically) that he sees in his illness the healthy will to endeavor. However, the text probably intentionally suppresses the other half of the dialectic: to see the decadent consequence in society. This quote not only apprehends the dialectic of the enlightenment and myth, but also the colonizer and the colonized. The dead brother symbolizes the premise of this dialectic. As "you" the character and the aforementioned Yasuda have demonstrated, the decadent aestheticization and nationalist ideology is the ruse of enlightenment; the ventriloquism, the repressed, unsaid message of the first-person narrator, however, shows how in the healthy atmosphere of the wartime society lurks the decadent and frustrated enlightenment.

From Long's "To Die in the South," the observer-observed dyadic narrative structure expands into a triangular one. The hesitant, skeptical first-person narrator has to choose, or rather not to choose, between two options, each personified by typological characters. The structure is comparably less lyric than essayistic, problematizing and radicalizing the politics of identity. Two controversial cases of "imperial subject literature" (of course this term is debatable) can illustrate how sensitive, and surprisingly reserved, the writers in the forties were in their reaction to the kōminka movement. The accusation of betrayal and servitude brought against *shiganhē* 志願兵 ["Military Volunteer"] by Zhou Jinpo 周金波 in 1941 long eclipses the subtlety and hesitation around the difficulty of assimilation. The first-person narrator encounters two routes towards "becoming Japanese": the narrator's cousin Chō Meiki 張明貴 represents rationalism, enlightenment and bildung (Zhou

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29-30), while Chō's friend Ko Shinroku 高進六 endorses the creed that only through an aestheticized ritual in daily life can one experience the solemnity of Japanese spirit (Zhou 27-28). Chō accuses Ko of credulity (33) while the latter accuses the former of being overwhelmed by *seiyō kabure* 西洋かぶれ, or the tendency to only favor what is from the west. This drama apparently reprises the thesis of Shōwa ideology and "Overcoming Modernity": the struggle of Japan in the face of Western modernity. As Chō asserts, their argument is a matter of methodology (30). To become Japanese through acculturation or performativity suggests the incompleteness of the process and the irresolvable contradiction between the colonizer and the colonized, as Ching emphasizes. The issue of performance and authenticity of imperial identity also appears in *honryū* 奔流 ["Torrent"] by Wang Changxiong 王昶雄, published in 1943 in a censored version. "Military Volunteer" seems relatively dry compared with the vivid portraits of Taiwanese intellectuals in "Torrent." The first-person narrator's friend Itō Haruo 伊東春生 exemplifies the successful case of kōminka movement: an imperial subject who embraces Japanese classics (*Weng, Wu, and Wang* 330) and marries a Japanese wife (*Weng, Wu, and Wang* 339) while rejecting Taiwanese language (*Weng, Wu, and Wang* 330), native culture (344), and even his own mother (337). Though the first-person narrator befriends Itō, he cannot but observe that Itō looks more like an exceptional performer (336) and an oversensitive neurotic (345). His cousin Lin Hakunen 林柏年, in comparison, represents the good value of a sensitive, distorted but indignant native Taiwanese (345; 354), who severely criticizes Itō for being a traitor who denounces his family and cultural roots (350; 352). I do not intend to analyze the overt political dimension of these stories; rather, I want to emphasize the inertia of the first-person narrator: both narrators in "Military

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Volunteer" and "Torrent" cannot completely identify with either party in their life. If the conflicting characters in both stories incarnate the affirmative force of ideologies, the first-person narrators cannot abide by them. In the middle of the conflicting ideologies lie shades in emotions (Zhou 32) and undecidable factors (34). Wang's first-person narrator experiences more explicit negative affects: ennui (Weng, Wu and Wang326), indolence (331), forlornness (345), self-disgust (362). Interestingly the content and cause of Wang's narrator is "out of focus" (337), unnamable (340-41) and hazy (341). The conflict that Zhou and Wang's narrators indirectly and vicariously feel and experience through their observation cannot be fully understood and analyzed, and this is precisely why these stories lack satisfying denouement and end only in the middle of affairs. Under the pressure of wartime ideology and censorship, the stories retained the ground of reflection between consciousnesses by the innate confinement of knowledge of the first-person perspective, clinging to the negative reception of ideology in the most subdued way, through the perspective of the colonized. I do not endorse the opinion that these writers, as critics have been so eager to defend, willingly adopt a clever strategy to tacitly criticize the authorities in order to survive. The consciousness of first-person narrators loses the ability to act, and this passivity cannot resist anything but only testifies. I can only opine that the form distills the colony's reception of the what Koyasu aptly terms the "Shōwa Ideology," the imperial internal conflict of itself and the West, and unintentionally allows the dialectic of enlightenment looms.

Revisiting *Jinghun*

"The melancholia of Asia is total," declared Akaoka's cousin (*Jinghun* 114). Only through this passage of intellectual history can one approach the complex

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historical legacy condensed in this sentence and the centre that holds the plot and characterization in Guo's novel *Jinghun*: the trial and its peripeteic outcome. Shoshana Felman's interdisciplinary comparison between O. J. Simpson trial and Leo Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* provides a useful model to interpret trauma imposed by the political and social unconscious, and the homologous relationship between trials and literary texts is particularly helpful to understand the court drama rebuilt in the recount of the plaintiff and one of the defendants in *Jinghun*. Felman argues that the resolution the trial is supposed to provide by its verdict and the meaning of a literary text that criticism should be able to ensure necessarily fail in the face of trauma. Rather, a trial and a literary text can only passively and compulsively reenact the trauma, "the shock of an unbearable reality of death and pain," "a forgotten chain of cultural wounds" and "unconscious legal repetition of traumatic, wounding legal cases" (Felman 57). The legal process symptomatically exposes the failure through its useless repetition and impotence, and literary texts its indeterminacy. The trauma's "recalcitrant invisibility" and its "power to defeat sight" in a trial (Felman 85) consequently leave in a text an epistemological void, "a resistance from inside the story to what can be seen" (Felman 89), that Felman dramatically evokes by the image of abyss, or "a failure of accountability" (95). The abyss "between contradictory experiences" (90), "two traumas" (91), and "incommensurable realities" (92) of the plaintiff and the defendant is "an acting out of society's unconscious and of culture's open or collective secrets" (58).

The abyss in Felman's model aptly describes of the profound and incommensurable difference between the colonizer plaintiff and the colonized defendants, as Ching's study has sufficiently explained. The trial is merely the foreground of two traumas that obviously go much deeper than the trial can see. I

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argue that the dialectic of enlightenment in Japan's modernization is the vanishing point of the reenactment of the "chain of cultural wound," which corresponds to the genealogy of intellectuals that can be traced in the novel: the cousin of the superintendent Akaoka (*Jinghun* 114), Akaoka himself, Yihong's father and his peers, and finally Yashu, Yihong's tempestuous bridegroom. The trial lies in the center of the genealogy in the novel and is particularly crucial because the legacy is passed on to the colonized. One noteworthy aspect is that these figures are linked by correspondence and storytelling rather than propelled by actual dramatic action, which forms a sort of relay of ideas. But Guo's choice of narrative perspective never allows direct presentation of these exchanges. The shift of perspective either extends or cuts short the conveyance of information: the letter from the cousin is indirectly and partially quoted in Akaoka's recollection (*Jinghun* 113-14); the letters between Akaoka and Yihong's father are only partially transcribed into narration before the first-person narrative interrupts (*Jinghun* 69; 113); the episode when Yihong's father tells his story to Yashu only resides in the memory of Yihong, the focal character (*Jinghun* 71-72; 85). The complex presentation of these accounts also suggests that this is a genealogy of absence: the intellectual figures have only secondary narrative presence; they do not appear in the actual dramatic action but only, at best, in the memory of the post-war generation. That these exchanges between the intellectuals are always mediated through first-person narration suggests the loss of immediate experience, despite the intimacy and supposedly immediacy that the first-person narrative allows. Following the paradigm that Taiwanese Japanophone writers have established in the forties, *Jinghun* once again activates the observer-observed dyad in a series of events.

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Why did Akaoka perjure himself at court? From this novel the reader gets two first-person narratives that may shed light on this cause and the consequence: that of the plaintiff, Akaoka (113-16), and of the defendant, Yihong's father (*Jinghun* 69-74; 78-90).[48] But strangely, these supposedly intimate subjective recounts are ultimately not about the narrating self, but about their important other. Akaoka sees his cousin, who traveled to Europe, fathomed the fate of modern Japan and died young, in the students who almost beat him to death; Yihong's father, on the other hand, gradually realizes that the superintendent in a way becomes the role model that has most profoundly altered the course of his life. In the account of Yihong's father,[49] although he explains the motive of the beating, what is worth more attention is not the vivid reconstruction of the beating event itself (*Jinghun* 121-22),[50] but the long passages he contributes to describe their reconnaissance before they take action (*Jinghun*, 71-73; 86-90). The ideal beauty of the Japanese nuclear family makes his own failure in properly maintaining his own a pale, broken copy of this ideal (72-73). Moreover, the sacrifice of the self-disciplined superintendant leaves indelible influence on these Taiwanese students (82). The music of Japanese flute played by Akaoka in the

[48] The representation of Yihong's father's oral account often sounds unconvincing without an invisible narrator's intervention: expressions such as 豁朗地騎著腳踏車經過茵蓊的田間的姿影而展開想像的, "initiate the imagination by the manner with which he blithely travelled the lush countryside by bicycle" (72), or *zaowu de ganying* 造物的感應 "resonance in creation" (73), *beibi de linran* 卑鄙的凜然 "ignoble indignation" (79), are so artfully crafted that they apparently transgress daily usage of language. And yet this is only an minor issue in comparison with other narrative problem.

[49] When Yihong's father tells this story to Yashu and his daughter Yihong, the second-person pronoun "you" appears several times (*Jinghun*, 71; 74; 81; 88; 89). Is this a general "you" that appears in daily conversation to refer to an indefinite being? Does the father detach his present self from his past self "you" in order to review his life more objectively? Or this is another narrative slip that the author could not help? The curious usage of second-person pronoun "you" is characteristic of Guo. See my discussion of "Clover" below.

[50] The narration quietly changes the subject from "they" to "we" (121). This "we" is most possibly Yihong's father. But changing the gear in turn problematizes the identity of the narrating subject from page 117 to120. Who speaks? If it is Yihong's father who reorganizes the information from the Akaoka's letters and narrates his life as a young man, the representation of Akaoka's lament of the fate of the Japanese people (117) or the visual details of a painting he appreciates before they meet (119) makes this hypothesis very unlikely. The more reasonable explanation is the third-person narrator replaces Akaoka and resumes the narration.

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students' memory (80; 82; 88-89) already implies the enigmatic doubleness of the superintendant's life (90): as the nemesis and as the role model for Yihong's father. In his account, the rapport between the Japanese and the Taiwanese derives from the consequence of misinterpretation, their failure to roundly understand Akaoka both as a loving husband and as the disciplinarian of the imperialist enterprise. His impression of the superintendant's perjury is "obscure, sinuous, incomprehensible" (80). As Felman's argument suggests, behind the tangible trauma lies a chain of cultural wounds beyond immediate understanding. Can the father's reflection years later allow him to empathize with the superintendant? Does it correspond to Akaoka's understanding of the beating?

According to Akaoka's own account (*Jinghun* 113-16),[51] the memory of his cousin is the epiphany that motivates the perjury (116). The cousin's "enthusiasm for Asia" (116) is sparked by his experience in Europe. After experiencing the cultural advancement ushered in by modernity, he asserts that modern Japan needs "twice more zeal," like that inspired by "a bleeding Christ," to catch up with the west to overcome the weakness of the Japanese people (114). Here the cousin prophesies the dialectic of enlightenment, the barbaric dimension under the surface of civilization, and probably the sanguinity and sternness of Akaoka in the future at the colonial Taiwan. But even this the sanguinity and sternness could not compensate the "the total melancholia of Asia" epitomized by the untimely early death of the cousin. That Akaoka sees the ghost of his cousin on the young Taiwanese students on trial, however, suggests that "Formosan Melancholia" and the aporia inherent in

[51] Though an indirect reference can be found that in the letter Akaoka mentions his cousin (*Jinghun* 119), Akaoka's first-person narrative (113-16) drops the quotation marks, which Guo uses in the previous paragraph to specify the beginning and the end of the actual text of the letter (*Jinghun* 112-13). The consequence is that it is not certain whether the following passage continues the text of the letter, or the narration is interfered and shifted to Akaoka's consciousness. Considering the incompleteness of the novel, one cannot deny the possibility that this is a technical flaw, but if one only has the present text, the only certifiable response is that the narrative voice is interfered by the author.

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"Overcoming Modernity" actually share a parallel, even homologous structure. That the students appeal to hatred and consequent violence resist imposed imperialism to some extent corresponds to the negative aspect of "Overcoming Modernity," which critiques the irrevocable change brought about by capitalism and rapid social restructuring, to which intellectuals like Kobayashi and Yasuda testified. The impossibility to completely identify with the West is paralleled by the impossibility for the colonized Taiwanese people to become Japanese. From the discussion here, I attempt to show that the subtle subject-object relation between the colonizer and the colonized allows one to see the absolute incommensurable difference and negativity in dialectic between fascism and enlightenment. For Akaoka, Yihong's father and his peers allows him to see, in the violent event, the radical negativity inherent in the dialectic of enlightenment. Yihong's father, on the other hand, cannot reject the progress and happiness he finds in Akaoka the imperial disciplinarian.

Is reconciliation, then, possible? Even though the colonized deems the colonizer as a role model, while the colonizer senses the presence of itself in the colonized, the possibility of recognition is, I argue, merely speculative and never actualizes in the text. I have already indicated some narrative tricks Guo applies in the beginning of this section and the footnotes, and the claim hinges at the decisive disturbance from the manipulation of the narration. From the presentation of these first-person accounts, it is significant to acknowledge that for both the plaintiff and the defendant in *Jinghun*, the recognition of the other self-consciousness is always temporally delayed, formally mediated, and epistemologically subjective. One cannot miss the political significance of this temporal lag: it refers to a self-reflexive dimension of literary fiction, that it is always late in the face of history. It is the author who associates these correlated accounts: the noticeable traces of incoherence Guo leaves when the narrative

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deliberately effaces the textual markers that separate correspondence, oral account and short story narration transcends as well as exposes the doomed limit of each character's subjective consciousnesses. The radical difference between the two traumas, what Felman terms "the abyss," is not relatable without the complex deployment of narrative techniques one recognizes in the process of reading. Eventually the reconciliation cannot only appear in the artifice of literary fiction. However, it is this narrative manipulation of literary works that leaves the necessary reflective middle ground. Guo, following the paradigm unintentionally established by his forerunners in the forties, successfully discovered a form that preserves the negativity of the dialectic of enlightenment without plunging into the vortex of ideological debates around political allegiance. Formosan Melancholia and the fascist ideology supported by the affirmative, violent aspect of "Overcoming Modernity" dialectically meet at the core of *Jinghun*. Through reading this novel, I would like to show how they are the two sides of the same coin: the innate conflict of subjectivity in the face of Western modernity in Asia. No doubt it is a more thematic way to understand Guo's fiction. In the next chapter, I would like to attempt to investigate how Guo absorbs and appropriates Western influence in terms of style to deal with the historical burden touched upon in this chapter.

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Chapter Three

Flaubert and Irony: Reading Guo's Major Works

Tichu baini de zhifang rang wenzhang de jingu xunli qilai 剔除白膩的脂肪，讓文章的筋骨峋立起來 [Scrape off the white fat and erect the skeleton of prose] (*Guo Songfen Ji* 397). This is the categorical imperative of writing for the protagonist writer, Lin Zhixiong, in Guo's novella "On Writing," and possibly the most quoted phrase in studies on Guo, for critics tend to view it as Guo's own maxim, and therefore it is often used to describe Guo's own prose. However, this may not be entirely Guo's own invention. Compare this maxim with the following passages:

> c'est à force de patience et d'études que je me suis débarrassé de toute la graisse blanchâtre qui noyait mes muscles (*Correspondance II* 140).
>
> [It is through patience and constant practice that I ridded myself of all the white fat that has been burying my muscles.]
>
> La prose doit se tenir droite d'un bout à l'autre, comme un mur portant son ornementation jusque dans ses fondements et que, dans la perspective, ça fasse une grande ligne unie (*Correspondance II* 373).
>
> [The prose ought to stand upright on its end, like a wall with its ornamentation all the way down its base, that in perspective it would form one unified line.]

These passages are extracted from the letters by the writer for whom Guo repeatedly expressed his admiration in the interviews, Gustave Flaubert. Most studies nod to Flaubert's possible influence, especially that of *Madame Bovary*, on Guo's writing ("Rupture of Literary History" 76; Jian 111-16),[52] but the academy has yet to see a

[52] Guo praised highly a particular Chinese translation by 李健吾 Li Jianwu, which seemed to influence Guo's own Chinese prose (Interview with Jian 233). The current study has to forgo this

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detailed investigation on this topic. This chapter aims to fill the lacuna by locating Guo's most important works in a comparative frame with Flaubert's major works: *Madame Bovary* (1856), *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869), and "Un Coeur Simple" (1877). One cannot appreciate Guo's prowess and significance as a modernist writer unless one compares him with writers of critical realism in the seventies. In this sense, I find the unique case of Flaubert, self-proclaimed by the author himself, particularly enlightening and apt for interpreting Guo's presence in the eighties as "a late modernist," in terms of Flaubert's role not only as the transitional hinge of French realist tradition, but also as the precursor of twentieth century modernist fiction.

I argue that having Flaubert as a role model, Guo successfully found a style that can on the one hand accommodate his concerns for the most subtle political, psychological and historical predicament of intellectuals in post-war Taiwan, and that can on the other hand refuse the regime of critical realism and committed literature. With Flaubert, I would like to gauge and articulate the critical distance between the historical and the aesthetic in Guo's major works.[53] Like Flaubert, Guo never radically subverted the representational regime of realist fiction, but he critically approached realism by an undaunted aestheticizing of his prose. I interpret this gesture as his rebellion against realism, and I take it as a self-reflective gesture toward a reinterpretation of the politics of literary historiography, as it was gaining momentum during the eighties. Yet to what extent is this gesture socially significant

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dimension of translation, because it would involve entangled history of the travelling of the translator and the text, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Jian Yiming's dissertation may be the only attempt to date to read *Madame Bovary* translated by Li as a possible influence. Unfortunately, the discussion is too vague to help establish any possible connection.

[53] One of the merits of this approach may be that it helps to articulate how "modernist" Guo is. Several traits of Guo's literary prose: *style indirect libre*, complicated symbolic gestures, rupture of time, tendency of introversion, have been identified by scholars to support the claim "that Guo is a modernist writer." The most thorough work in this vein is done by Gu Zhengping, who adopts narratology to analyze "Moon Seal" (137-68). But she does not bother to locate the social factors that decidedly contributed to Guo's style.

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in addition to a personal choice, as Guo himself asserted during the interviews? The study will embark from Flaubert's aesthetic.

Flaubert is widely know for his obsession with style over content. Thus his famous creed: "ce que je voudrais faire, c'est un livre sur rien, un livre sans attaché extérieure, qui se tiendrait de lui-même par la force interne de son style" [what I would like to do is a book about nothing, a book without exterior attachment, which would support itself by the internal force of its style] (*Correspondance II* 31). For him style is the core of fiction, "une manière absolue de voir les choses" [an absolute way to see things] (31). No one will deny this claim, but Flaubert is probably the first important writer who consciously engages himself in meeting this criterion. Though his aspiration for writing "a book about nothing" seems a little exaggerated his claim suggests that he already noticed the paradox of literary realism: the truth claim, the referential details and the transparency of language require the most sustained aesthetic consciousness. If one places *Madame Bovary* in the history of novel, compared with Stendhal's relatively lofty subject matter of Revolution and Balzac's fascination with social dynamic of the urban scene, Flaubert's heavy-handed prose describing the boredom of a country doctor's wife seems pretty close to his ideal. Readers can appreciate his prose, but who cares about Emma?

Henry James' complaint of Flaubert's choice of subject matter is not unsensible.[54] "[In] spite of the nature of her consciousness and in spite of her reflecting so much that of her creator," James laments, Emma Bovary "is really too small an affair" (384). Likewise, why did Flaubert choose "such inferior and in the case of Frédéric such abject human specimens" (384) for his novel that aims to

[54] The choice contains a biographical factor. After listening to Flaubert's first version of *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, his friends advised him to give up on this project and to take up a smaller and secular subject matter instead to sharpen his skill in novel writing. See Francis Steegmulller, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830-1857*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979. 100-01. Print.

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investigate the profound impact of history on human mind and society? James asserts that the disproportionate imbalance of Flaubert's aesthetic concern for style and his remarkably insignificant subject matter is a "defect" of his mind (385), because "the way thing is done not only triumphs over the question of value but in respect to it fairly misleads and confounds us" (391). James criticizes Flaubert for his letting aesthetic override his object of the novel and the ethical concerns. James' question is legitimate and very useful for discussing Guo's stories. Take "Moon Seal" for example. In a story set in the era in which political suppression tears up families, why does Guo spend so many passages depicting so many trivial materials such as feeding fish ("Moon Seal" 57/41) ? Ng has already noticed that one of the anomalies that differentiates Guo from other writers is that most of Guo's works eschew direct contact with historical events (*On Essay* 244-45). When the paradigm of realism has been erected in Taiwan literature, why did Guo insist on Flaubertian aestheticism when he tackled politically sensitive subject matter? Guo is as familiar with the legacy of realism as Flaubert does, and I argue that it is precisely through Flaubertian aestheticism that Guo demythologizes the claim of "critical realism" and the illusion of ideologies in postwar Taiwan.

Flaubert's style evolved with his times, and from hindsight his style and subject matter are tightly intertwined. Critics have been trying to discern the historical condition of Flaubert's aesthetic, and among them Erich Auerbach provides the most persuasive explanation. Auerbach's basic premise is that "a change in the imitative practice of art and its objects is connected with a change in human self-perception and . . . with a correlative change in the human itself and in its societal order" (*Madame Bovary* 435). Style is not only a matter of aesthetic taste and personal choice; it is conditioned by history. He argues that the two decisive event of modern

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France: the French Revolution in 1789, and the failed revolution of 1848, abolished the strict hierarchy and categorization of art forms. The disruption of the political order, the economic system and social hierarchy stimulated by revolutions and capitalism profoundly influenced literature not only in terms of form but also in terms of subject matter. After the fiasco of the 1848 revolution and the rise of the Second Empire, what characterizes Flaubert's time is its "lack of tragic dignity" (*Madame Bovary* 448). In order to seek the meaningful "correlative change in the human itself and in its societal order," Auerbach argues that the corresponding form to this change is "serious imitation of everyday" (433), and the consequential correspondence in the literature is the rise of literary realism.[55]

Flaubert's concentration ont the aesthetic pushes the presupposition of literary realism to its extreme. The social dynamic that supports characters and plots in Balzac's fiction no longer persist; rather, "the solidification of duration appears, a time which is filled, charged with its own mute inescapability" (*Madame Bovary* 448). Critics agree that it is Flaubert who manages to discover the "insight into the historicity of the human and society" (440) by inventing a unique style,[56] by which he successfully presents "many moments of meaningless triviality" so as to "let the

[55] Flaubert's correspondences show that he is no less keenly aware of the crisis of literary form and his contemporary times. In some of his letters to Louise Colet, Flaubert describes that writing in his time is like being "dans un corridor plein d'ombres" [in a corridor full of shadows] , and "la terre nous glisse sous les pieds" [the gound makes us slip under our feet] (*Correspondance II* 76). For him his times is not unlike anarchy, which is "le résultat de la tendance historique de notre époque" [the result of the historical tendency of our era] (*Correspondance II* 518). Therefore, the "forme antique est insuffisante à nos besoins et notre voix n'est pas faites pour chanter ces air simples" [the old form is insufficient for our need, and our voice us not cut out for singing these simple tunes] (*Correspondance II* 384).

[56] Marcel Proust more concretely discusses how exactly Flaubert "volontairement laisse la réalité s'épanouir" [voluntarily leave the reality develops by itself] (592-93). Proust argues that Flaubert developed "un emploi nouveau des temps de verbes, de prépositions, des adverbes" [a new use of verb tenses, of prepositions, of adverbs](589). The tense in French that Flaubert masters, *l'imparfait*, or the past imperfect tense, allows "the weight of dull time be felt" accurately through a linguistic means (*Madame Bovary* 435) to the extent that it "change entièrement l'aspect des chose et des êtres" [entirely changes the appearance of things and their being] (590). The new style provides "une vision nouvelle" [a new vision](592); in his works "action devient impression" [action become impression](588), particularly "l'impression du Temps" [the impression of Time] (595).

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weight of dull time be felt" (435). Auerbach concludes that "the more earnest and objective an imitative form became, the less any liberation and catharsis of the human seemed possible" (449). The meaningful values that traditional literary genres had preached collapsed in the face of modern society, and therefore the moral of literature becomes undecidable "in the mixture of tragic pity and disdainfully objective critique" (432). Those who attempt to seek meaning in literature can only find the meaninglessness of the world. Literature becomes amoral, apathetic, and disorderly simply because the world itself is amoral, apathetic, and disorderly. Auerbach argues that Flaubert's feat in writing *Madame Bovary* is as "dialectical" as it is "existential." The former "would well express the interplay of tragic and comic within reality," while the latter expresses "the treatment of a human life in its total contents and the depths of its being" (433). And this partly explains why *Madame Bovary* and *L'Éducation* are composed of "a mosaic of many, very carefully observed, mostly completely insignificant circumstances and events" (*Madame Bovary* 433, my emphasis), or in Flaubert's own words, "le tableau continu d'une vie bourgeoise et d'un amour inactif" [the painting of a bourgeois life and of an inactive love] (*Correspondance II* 238). It is not Flaubert's inability to write; rather, Flaubert's ability was dictated to by his time no matter how "variously unintentional and unconscious" the influence is (*Madame Bovary* 435).

As James and other critics analyze, there are two poles of his Flaubert's sentiment: "a sense of the real and a sense of the romantic" (James 379). On the one hand Flaubert was more attracted to dream, vision, the lyrical, history of ancient civilizations, the exotic, the religious, which expose his desire to escape from his bourgeois daily life. On the other hand, from his correspondences one also finds his interest in science, pursuit of accurate objective prose, concerns for the society, and

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aversion to romantic subjectivity. If one can trust his somewhat histrionic letters, the polarization of his aesthetic sentiment stems from self-hatred and misanthropy. His writing takes off from "un désir cuisant de transformer par l'art tout ce qui est de moi" [a painful desire of transforming all of me by art] because "[ma] personnalité, même, me répugne tant j'en suis gorgé" [my personality, likewise, disgusts me so that I am fed up with it] (*Correspondance II* 411-12). Also, addressing his correspondent Louise Colet, "quand le monde extérieur vous dégoûte" [when the world outside disgusts you], Flaubert advises, it is necessary to "chercher en eux-même quelque part un lieu plus propre pour y vivre" [find somewhere in them a place more fit for living] (*Correspondance II* 151), and that is art. Flaubert longs to flee the reality through art to non-reality; it seems ironic that he is one of the most important realist writers in literary history. The two poles, the imaginary and the real, of his aesthetic are dialectically inter-connected. James succinctly characterizes the dialectic:

> the comparatively meagre human consciousness . . . [struggles] with the absolutely large artistic; and the large artistic half [wreaks] itself on the meagre human and half seeking a refuge from it, as well as a revenge against it (394)

In another letter Flaubert asserts: "La première qualité de l'art et son but est l'illusion" [The primary quality of art and its goal is the illusion](*Correspondance II* 433). Literary realism correlates the human and the real world by fabrication and illusion, and Flaubert's awareness of the illusory nature of art reveals how illusory reality is. The paradox of illusion suggests that while the characters suffer from the fiction they create for themselves, for the writer the reality that finally decides characters' fate is pure fiction. This may be the reason why Flaubert's novels are dominated by complex irony which not only sets the tone of the novel but also refers to the blindness of the supposed transparency of literary realism. The misrecognition and disillusionment

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spawned by the failed attempt to identify reality with imagination becomes the haunting motif, what the critics call "*la bovarysme*." His novels mock "a stupidity which mistakes reality in such a way that the latter might not even actually be there at all" through the most callous irony (*Madame Bovary* 431). Despite the fact that he did not radically transgress the presuppositions of literary realism, Flaubert's conscious attention to what art is and his artificial style delicately challenges the putatively transparency of language and verisimilitude of realism. Numerous critics have attempted to interpret what "*la bovarysme*" means and how Flaubert presents it through his style. A quick survey of major aspects of Flaubertian aesthetic through these critics' works will be helpful.

La Bovarysme and *La Bêtise*

Chapter six of the first part of *Madame Bovary* detailedly delineates Emma's formation through her voracious but misguided reading of popular novels, for which Harry Levin not unjustly describes her as a "female Quixote" (246). Emma invests too much of herself into the fantasy and imagination constructed by her indulgence in romantic novels. Emma is intoxicated by "vicarious lives, fictive euphoria . . . [and] the imaginary flourishes that supplement and garnish daily existence" (250). In contrast with her colorful imagination, the banal, boring quotidian life suffocates and irritates her. The perpetual yearning for a more stimulating life prompts Emma to embark on two aventures and gradually leads her to the financial trap that becomes the motive to kill herself. Emma is not alone; in *L'Éducation* Frédéric's insubstantial ambitions failed him in almost every aspect of his life: he never consummates his love with his ideal Madame Arnoux, but rather keeps Rosanette the courtesan as his mistress and approaches Madame Dambreuse for fame and wealth; he never secures a

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career in law, he cannot profit from his investment in coal mines, he cannot continue his short-lived ambition in politics in embarrassment, and he never becomes an artist nor the writer he aspires to be. Frédéric is constantly manipulated by his own hesitation and weakness. Victor Brombert defines "*la bovarysme*" as "yearning for the unattainable, that confrontation of dream and reality" (*The Hidden Reader* 162). One of the characteristics of *la bovarysme* is the lacking of content. Neither Emma nor Frédéric knew what to do about their desire. Auerbach discerns that their despair "is not occasioned by something concrete," but by "a shapeless and purely negative despair, which only directs itself against . . . one's own condition in its entirety" (*Madame Bovary* 428). This partly explains why *Madame Bovary* and *L'Éducation* are devoid of a dramatic plot but composed of sequences of somewhat irrelevant episodes: the will of the protagonists is not enough to propel the narration.

La bovarysme is shown in "the realization that [one's] capacity to dream is powerless to change the world" (*Novels of Flaubert* 85). This may be why compared with Balzac's novels,[57] Flaubert's novels are comparably passive and pessimistic.[58] Brombert comments that "Emma's shortcoming is . . . that she was unable to make her dream-vision victorious over the 'reality' represented by the Homais of this world" (*Novels of Flaubert* 86).[59] Irony, more than anything, dominates Flaubaert's novels, and he does not offer catharsis through portraying his character's predicament. *La bovarysme* is the opposite of the tragic; the disillusionment in Flaubert's novel

[57] "The Balzacian novel is constructed precisely on a dramatic, even a theatrical, model, by which will and action are plotted toward major 'showdowns,' scenes of confrontation in which characters act out, give full expression to the issues in conflict, and where the dramatic moment produces changed relations, a significant outcome to the problems posed" (*Reading for the Plots* 176).

[58] This is why Guo is not satisfied with *L'Éducation* (Interview with Wuhe, 49), but in the following I attempt to identify the possible influence of L'Éducation on Guo, especially "Clover" and "Snow Blind."

[59] In order to let the dream vision extend, Flaubert has to abandon realism and take recourse to ancient history and fantasy. *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, the work that preoccupied Flaubert since his youth and was finally completed in 1874, seems to be the result of a full-fledged dream. However, dream and illusion consume and diminish the existence of the subject. I shall return to discuss on this in the next chapter.

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cannot be equated with the tragic peripeteia. Auerbach indicates that the great historical tumults toppled the hierarchy of literature established since the age of Neo Classicism. Tragedy, a world governed by a supreme ethical order, has been replaced by modern progressive temporality and a logic of the commodity, in which "pure contingency seems more atrocious than the cruelest of fates" (*Madame Bovary* 90).

Betrayal narratively concretizes the abstract theme of *la bovarysme* in the plot. *Madame Bovary* is a story of a woman's adulteries: Emma betrays her husband, and she herself is betrayed by Rodolphe. Flaubert also plots *L'Éducation* with a series of "betrayal[s] of loves and friendships . . . in a crushing accumulation, and which extends to the ideological-political sphere" (*Reading for the Plot* 191). Frédéric betrays his friend Deslaurier by breaking the promise to invest the latter's publishing business; Madame Arnoux betrays Frédéric because her child is taken ill and cannot show up for their rendezvous; Frédéric betrays his mistress Rosanette and begins to court Madame Dambreuse; Sénécal betrays his friend Dussardier out of political opportunism and killed him. From this motif one can see the clear parallel between Flaubert and Guo, since betrayal (in the broader sense of the word) is also a very important theme and plot device in Guo's fiction. In "Moon Seal" Wenhui unknowingly betrays her husband out of a minor emotional reaction, which leads to his death; in "Wailing Moon" the wife painfully realizes in the end that her husband cheated on her in Japan; Yihong's father in *Jinghun* and the principal in "Snow Blind" both leave their family to support another woman; the superintendent's perjury at court in *Jinghun* and "his" participation in sedition at the end of "Clover" can be seen as acts of infidelity to the state and the law; in "Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight" the nameless general is betrayed by an old subordinate of his and executed.

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On the thematic level, Brombert argues that the fulfillment of Emma's imagination cannot be other form than betrayal and adultery because "the promise of beauty," in the face of social convention and *la bêtise* of bourgeois culture is "the forbidden happiness, the inaccessible dream, that which always eludes" (*Novels of Flaubert* 83). Although adultery can be regarded as "a sign of unconventionality, rebellion and authenticity" (*Novels of Flaubert* 83), it is also a sign of banality and failure: the more Emma plunges into the mire of her relationships the more dire the social conventions concerning marriage and society appear. In recent decades critics tend to read betrayal allegorically to excavate a self-referential and reflective dimension of language, narrative and literary genre. On the narratological level, Peter Brooks perceptively states that the principle of contingency determines the constant interference of narrative in the form of "missed rendezvous, interrupted meetings, wrong addresses, mistaken objects" (*Reading for the Plot* 190) and "betrayal of loves and friendships" (191). Brooks continues that betrayal epitomizes "a jamming of voices, a near semiotic incoherence" (191). In other words, Frédéric's "sentimental education" gradually sours finally prevents Frédéric from establishing a harmonious relation between the self and the society. Michal Peled Ginsburg interprets Emma's infidelity as her attempt to meaningfully realize her fantasy of love and prove that "the relationship between the signified 'love' and its signifiers is not arbitrary" (Bloom et al.143), but the fact that Emma is betrayed by Rodolphe reveals that Emma fails to have meaningful and reciprocal connection with him, and their "love" affair is nothing but "a relation of contiguity and substitution" (Bloom et al. 143). Hayden White in his analysis similarly emphasizes the metaphorical relation that connects Frédéric and his "heroic effort at the implementation of values," but "a fundamental contradiction between ideals consciously held at the outset and the conditions of

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existence in a dehumanizing society" finally leads to "an ironic acceptance of the necessity of abandoning ideals to the accommodation to realities in the end" (Bloom et al. 282-83). Leo Bersani's reading discovers a self-referential dimension of *Madame Bovary*: the difference inherent in the analogical nature of la bovarysme between the imaginary and the real that "no similarity can abolish" (Bloom et al. 41) predestines the disillusionment. Emma's failure to identify the "mediating process" she reads "[encourages] Emma to search in life for the abstractions invented in books, and they also invite her to expect that real time . . . can be an uninterrupted succession of intense passages" (Bloom et al. 39). Read in this sense, *la bovarysme* actually demythologizes the presuppositions of literary realism.

If *la bovarysme* is the symptom that almost every character in Flaubert's works suffer, *la bêtise*, or "stupidity," is the origin of this symptom.[60] *La bêtise* is probably the most famous concept in Flaubert studies. Already in 1850 Flaubert himself in a letter asserts that "[la] bêtise consiste à vouloir conclure" [*la bêtise* consists of a will to conclude] (*Correspondance I* 680). What does this "wish to conclude" mean? Auerbach contends that "the stupidity . . . consists in every individual's replacement of his or her given reality with a world of appearances, made up of illusions, habits, drives and slogans" (*Madame Bovary* 430). Auerbach's annotation suggests that *la bêtise* operates on a individual level, which later ultimately "leads to isolation" (*Madame Bovary* 430) of individuals, which hinders the formation of a "common world of men [sic]" because *la bêtise* hinders people from a "harmonious" relation to "the reality of their situations" (429) and the isolation prevents common understanding. Compared with Auerbach's philosophical explanation, Jonathan Culler more concretely identifies *la bêtise* as "bourgeois ideology" (*Use of Uncertainty* 159),

[60] I retain the original term in French so as not to let the connotation confuses the discussion.

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that is "intellectual laxness," "facile generalization" (158), and "the inevitable coefficient of the whole attempt to master nature through knowledge" (168). Culler's bold assertion supplements Flaubert's own abstract conception of "the wish to conclude." The origin of *la bêtise*, according to Culler's characterization, is the legacy of the ideology of Enlightenment: to give meaning in order to dominate. *La bêtise*, however, is the banal sediment of this ideology. Enlightenment becomes "the contemporary myths of bourgeois culture," and Flaubert himself incessantly renounces these myths in his times (160). Emma cannot forego the clichés of romantic novels; Homais the pharmacist presumptuously showcases his self-professed science under the aegis of enlightenment; Sénécal in *L'Éducation* absorbs and clasps any political slogans and uses them to gain advantage in any social occasion. Almost every character confines their vision and cognition according to imaginations conditioned by their social formation. That eventually nobody can communicate with one another without resorting to their illusory understanding of the world to some extent describes the hypostasis of bourgeois ideology ubiquitous in society.

Culler's significant contribution to the discussion is that *la bêtise* is paradoxically mimetic: Flaubert criticizes *la bêtise* of the contemporary by transforming it into his own perception in art. To render something stupid is to isolate it and reify it (*Use of Uncertainty* 178-79), and Culler argues that by aesthetic elaboration Flaubert closes off the production of meaning of the literary text by reification. Flaubert preaches an aesthetic of impersonality: "je veux qu'il n'y ait pas dans mon livre un seul mouvement, ni une seule réflexion de l'autre" [I want no excitement in my book, nor author's reflection] (*Correspondances II* 43). Out of his distaste for sentimentalism, he avows that "l'Art doit s'élever au-dessus des affections personelles et des susceptibilités nerveuses" [Art ought to elevate itself from personal

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affects and from being susceptible to frets] (*Correspondances II* 691) ! The principle of impersonality entails two aspects: the first one effaces the narrator's storytelling gesture, and the other creates the objectivity of language at the price of communication. Flaubert achieves the former by his use of *style indirect libre*, presenting the character's thoughts through a narrative pseudo-immediacy, and he manages the latter through lavishing useless elaborative passages that hinder the progress of plot. Gérard Genette rightly entitles his essay "Silences de Flaubert" for discussing elaborate passages that become dead ends in Flaubert's writing, which gives his works an petrified beauty.[61] Genette identifies "the excess of material presence" (187) and "description is elaborated for its own sake . . . at the expense of the action" serves to "suspend or distance" (193) the narrative to create the "effect of immobilization" (193).

"Serious imitation of everyday" is achieved by various distilled tableaux in *Madame Bovary* which make Flaubert's world so detailedly realistic that it negatively unveils the "absurdity of representational art" (*Use of Uncertainty* 172): "the world created will seem real but there will be nothing to be done with it" (*Use of Uncertainty* 108). The reification of prose entails passivity, apathy and detachment, or, using Flaubert's own words, "au point de vue d'une blague superieure" [from the point of view of a superior joke] (*Correspondance II* 168). The narration becomes more plastic than sequential, more like a portrait than a story.[62] Flaubert's detached narration "from the point of view of a superior joke" suspends the communicative and interpretive aspects of his novel and deprives his characterization and plotting of

[61] Obviously Flaubert paid a lot of attention to chisel out the state of things via language. Proust notices that the "activité des choses, des bêtes, puisqu'elle sont le sujet des phrases (au lieu que ce sujet soit des hommes), oblige à une grande variété de verbes" [activity of things of beast, when it is the subject of sentences (while the subject should have been human), elicitsa great variety of verbs] (589).
[62] Again, one is reminded of Flaubert's mastery in l*'imparfait*, the tense which describes a state or a habit over a period of time in the past.

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dynamics,[63] and what one finds is "frustrated transcendence" in "the indefinite trembling of things" (Genette 199). If *la bovarysme* prevents characters from consciousness of reality and induces endless dreams, the reality cannot be reached beyond language. Flaubert's conscious aesthetic extends literary realism to the extent of "a useless perfection" (Genette 200), and the referent of Flaubert's language can be "only an emptiness" (*Use of Uncertainty* 128). Culler concludes that by reifying the prose and obstructing meaning, Flaubert dialectically defies *la bêtise*, the pointless compulsion to understand and control dictated by ideology.

Although the historical context that conditioned and formed Flaubert as a writer is incommensurably distant from the colonial origin of modern Taiwan literature, many major issues that remained unsatisfactorily unresolved in Guo criticism can be tackled if one can include Flaubert's aesthetic into the account. My main argument here is that Guo borrows and recontextualizes a Flaubertian aesthetic for his subject matter: the intellectuals wounded by the violence of the twentieth century. In the new context, the historical condition of *la bovarysme* is no longer the banality of bourgeois ideology but violence of modern history inflicted upon people. As the following analysis of Guo's major works is going to show, Flaubert's aesthetic also provides vocabulary to describe and articulate Guo's language idiosyncrasy, especially those neglected or dissolved in criticism directed by identity politics. Also, Flaubert's position in the history of novel as the apex of realist writers and as the pivot who anticipates what is later called modernism also helps to locate Guo in the middle ground between post-war Westernized modernism and nativist critical realism. Flaubertian aesthetic can also contribute to locating a more nuanced dimension of ideology beyond the epistemology of resistance in Guo's work. On the one hand, *la*

[63] A noteworthy aspect in Flaubert's novels is that in contrast with Balzac's works, the conversation in Madame Bovary appears extremely spare. The same can be applied to Guo's major works.

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bovarysme can be used to discern characters' consciousness within the text. On the other hand, the concept of *la bêtise* helps to interpret the dynamic between Guo's style with contemporary ideologies in the eighties. In the place of sentimental tone or vague humanism that pervades critical works on his fiction, Guo's critique toward the history of Taiwan and Taiwan literature itself can be more clearly identified.

Guo's first major work, "Moon Seal," is his most accessible work. His later writings appear far more impressionistic, fragmented, and disorganized, but he writes this love story in the age of terror in a relatively realistic fashion: major characters with names, a comparably identifiable plot, vivid sensual details, and the spontaneous tone. Also, the temporal contour is clearer than other stories to the extent that the time at which some episodes take place can be actually determined.[64] "Moon Seal" is narrated by a third-person narrator. Most of the time Wenhui is the focal character, but sometimes the story is narrated from Tiemin's perspective.[65] After Tiemin starts to participate in leftist political activities, the story is restricted to Wenhui's perspective. Ng claims that the reason why this story was not included in Guo's first collection was because Wenhui, a putatively victimized character, unknowingly cooperates with the authoritarian regime and irrevocably damages the possible political message of resistance that nationalist ideology favors. Though I think Ng is a little too unsympathetic, that later critics intently strive to defend Wenhui and assuage

[64] Like Flaubert, Guo is more meticulous in his spatial settings. Most stories contain actual names of places, but the time is either hard to determine or irrelevant. This move displaces the significance of history to some extent. Ng Kimchew parallels Tiemin's illness and actual historical events (*Textuality* 258). Though Ng's interpretation is persuasive, I would like to suggest, in the following, that any simple symbolic reading is questionable.

[65] Six occasions to be exact. See pages 47-50//35-37, 51-52/37-38, 55-57/40-41, 61-63/44-45, 65-66/47-48, 67/47-48. All of them take place during his recuperation from tuberculosis. Guo's occasional incoherence (that is, the aesthetic intention in shifting the perspective is not readily identifiable) in narrative perspective is a problem in itself. In "Snow Blind" one finds on the first page one single mysterious pronoun I that never appears again.

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the bitterness that "Moon Seal" leaves to the reader proves the effectiveness of Ng's reading. I do not disagree with the conclusion that Guo attempts to portray the terror through an innocent victim, and it is true that nobody can blame Wenhui for not knowing the consequence of cooperating with the unjust and ideologically biased authorities, but reading this story by resorting to the antagonism between the people and the regime or attributing the moral of the story to the absurdities of the times simplifies the story and, I would venture, unveils a problem of interpretation and the ideology of the discipline to some extent.

Both Wenhui and Tiemin, the two major characters are victims of *la bovarysme* but in different senses. Although neither of them is as blind as Emma Bovary, Tiemin is probably closer to Emma than Wenhui. Like *Madame Bovary*, in "Moon Seal" diegetic literary allusions initiate *la bovarysme* and directly influence characterization and plotting.[66] The narration allows a glimpse into Tiemin's *bovarysme* through an episode of his exchange over a very small passage from Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* with his friend Doctor Cai (49/35-36).[67] A mention of the writer's name immediately carries Tiemin away into his imagination of Tolstoy's last moment at a small station in Russia, and Guo visualizes the scene for the reader (47/35). Then Doctor Cai[68] mentions the scene from Tolstoy. The actual passage he mentions is as follows:

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[66] In contrast, diegetic literary allusions in "Snow Blind" only serve as parallel and do not directly involve the plots. Literary allusions in "On Writing" and "Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight" are extra-diegetic and operate in a more subtle way.

[67] Tiemin's understanding of Tolstoy may be mediated by *Mushanokōji Saneatsu* 武者小路實篤, a famous idealist, aristocratic Japanese writer who models himself after Tolstoy (44/32). He is the distant parallel to Tiemin and Doctor Cai. This Japanese writer appears twice in the story: the first time describes how his ideal is incongruent with Japanese fascism (44/32); the second time mentions how he collaborates with Japanese fascist administration during the war and is later deprived of his entitlement as an aritsocrat (78/56).

[68] Doctor Cai is an interesting character. He claims that he is an heir of the Meiji Restoration. He studied medicine in Japan and Germany, and he could have participated nationalist movements in the twenties under the sign of Wilson's call for self-determination (45/33). He is the embodiment of the irony of the dialectic of Enlightenment in Japan as I have discussed in chapter two. His learning and belief in Enlightenment is endowed in the modernizing process of Japan, but the imperial Éducation leads to an anti-colonial nationalist passion. However, it is precisely the fruition of nationalist politics

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> Davout raised his eyes and looked fixedly at Pierre. For a few seconds they looked at each other, and that gaze saved Pierre. In that gaze, beyond all the conventions of wars and courts, human relations were established between these two men. In that one moment, they both vaguely felt a countless number of things and realized that they were both children of the human race, that they were brothers (Tolstoy 964).

One is immediately reminded of Emma's vivid fantasy aroused by her reading of romance novels (*Madame Bovary* 33). Doctor Cai goes on to lament that what bothers him is he cannot find the Tolstoyan gaze from his patients (50/36), and he sullenly wonders whether this gaze is only possible in fiction (50/36). This is an important passage in the story to understand the political cause of the activists. The consciousness of the fictitious nature of reciprocal understanding with the enemy brings them to the threshold of *la bovarysme*. They have arrived at the intersection that leads either to Flaubertian misanthropy or to Tolstoyan idealism. However, these two idealist intellectuals cannot remember that this passage is ironic because what Pierre thought as a universal humane look does not actually save him from going on a death march to the execution ground (Tolstoy 965); what saves him is pure contingency (Tolstoy 967).

Guo manages to formulate *la bovarysme* in "Moon Seal" other than this apparent reference to *Madame Bovary* through Tolstoy in two aspects: the politics of time, and incoherent detailing. Politics of time is doubly dialectical. Wenhui's quotidian life becomes utopia precisely because they manage to escape the violence of history outside their life. The atemporal realm cannot exist without the moving of

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that eventually kills him. His death dialectically reflects the damaged life of intellectuals in other stories, like the intern in "Clover," the husband in "Wailing Moon," the principal in "Snow Blind," and Yihong's father in *Jinghun*.

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progressive time. The other dialectic is that Wenhui bases the future in the past. What she anticipates is only what she has already experienced. This forms a certain closed circle, and yet this circle is ultimately subdued by progressive time. One of the major ironies of "Moon Seal" lies in the fact that for Wenhui, taking care of her bedridden husband may be her happiest times. The recuperation of Tiemin is the most beautiful sequence in Guo's entire oeuvre, which begins roughly after the February 28 Incident and consequent massacre, accounting for one-third of the story (39-69/25-50). The rural Taipei is depicted as an ahistorical, idyllic utopia and fairly distant from the political violence. The plot slows down to a halt as nothing important actually happens; only occasional memories unfold. The silent lyrical descriptive scenes parallel Wenhui's memory of the countryside of Wuqi to which she has been relocated because of war (58-59/42), the place she wishes to visit with Tiemin (69/50). Though one still can see the markers of calendrical time (55/40; 60/43), it is insignificant compared with these memories and quotidian life.[69] Space replaces time; description displaces narration; memory replaces linear temporal progress and dominates their thoughts (54/39).[70] The temporality of this sequence is dialectical: the hope of Tiemin's future recovery is through the past. Paradoxically, the memory becomes the *promesse du bonheur* of their life after the torment of tuberculosis and the war (57/41; 69/49). The future cannot be arrived at without the past. Only through extra-diegetic knowledge of history can the reader know how ironic this sequence is: that the most peaceful ordinary everyday life corresponds to the most tumultuous

[69] Compare with Félicité's world, which is "marked only by annual recurrence of church festivals" (*Three Tales* 26). The calendrical year is insignificant and can only be thought through variant domestic affairs. Of course Félicité's blissful cyclical perception of time and ignorance of actual date is an irony.

[70] I firmly oppose the view or any implication that this sequence "proves" that "colonial era is better than the Kuomintang regime." That they have beautiful and memorable adolescent life during the colonial period is simply a contingent historical fact.

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times is dialectical.[71] It creates *la bovarysme* and adds a temporal dimension to it. On the one hand Wenhui is deceived by the peace she has shared with her husband and bases her idea of spousal life on her experience of this idyllic phase of life, which becomes the origin of her unhappiness and her motive to inform against her own husband. On the other it suggests that irony and disillusionment is closely knit together with history, because history changes and destroys the situation beyond Wenhui's subjective perception. In Wenhui's recollection, one fairly small detail quietly suggests the return of histroy: after he regains his health, Tiemin "stood on a chair to wind the clock on the wall that hadn't run for days" (102/74). This symbolizes the fall of Wenhui's ahistorical utopia as the time starts to move forward. Ms. Yang[72] embodies this perceived time, as extra-diegetic knowledge inform the reader that Chinese immigrants flow in around 1948-49.

The second aspect of Wenhui's, and to some extent, also Tiemin's *bovarysme*, is the incoherence of details. Again I have to approach the discussion via a detour to *Madame Bovary*. This incoherence of details functions in two aspects. On the one hand, as Genette observes, it reifies the depicted object and detaches it from dramatic action. On the other hand, Culler contends that Flaubert masters "the techniques of displacement and fragmentation which [one] finds disturbing" (*Use of Uncertainty* 122). This second aspect entails a problem of interpretation: whether objects can be read as metaphors or metonymies. Many critics have noticed that in the case of Emma, *la bovarysme* is presented in a warring state of metaphor and metonymy (Bloom et al. 142). The former gives meanings to phenomena through analogy, while the latter

[71] One can find a parallel to Flaubert in the first chapter of part three in Flaubert's *L'Éducation*. I shall return to discuss this passage later.

[72] "Sister Yang," like "brother Min" in the translation, is an awkward choice as in English, unlike in East Asian languages, expressions that appropriate terms of kinship to distinguish the social relationship in terms of seniority outside one's family is not common.

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eludes one's subjective control. Ginsburg argues that the ball at Vaubyessard near the end of part one of *Madame Bavoary* exemplifies this warring state: in the ball "there are not distinct, complete, unified figures," but "Emma . . . tries to encompass the multiplicity in one gaze" and render "her own reflection as a unified, idealized figure" (Bloom et al. 144). *La bovarysme* is precisely the analogous effort that resists the principle of metonymy in quotidian life.

Flaubert diagnoses the symptoms and disability of *la bovarysme* through a particular technique: detailing. Tony Tanner discovers that the text of *Madame Bovary* dismembers the world through excessively abundant details, or what he terms the process of "morselization" (Bloom et al. 46). Famous examples includes that famous cap of Charles (*Madame Bovary* 7), the Bovarys' overly delicate wedding cake (25-26), a too detailed geographic description of Yonville-l'Abbaye (58-62), Emma and Léon's cab ride (193-94) and finally, Emma herself on her death bed (256; 260). Excessive use of details is consequent when the descriptive logic of literary realism is pushed to the extreme. As Genette argues, these details hinder the plot and cause the textual space of silence. Culler argues that the extreme transparency defies communication and interpretation by "throwing down a challenge it calls into play interpretive operations that are inadequate to the task it appears to set" (*Use of Uncertainty* 92). Brooks also agrees that detailing is "a problem of vision or perspective" (*Realist Vision* 55). He more specifically indicates that "the accumulation of details" (*Realist Vision* 58) in Flaubert's novel "never quite [coheres] into a whole" (*Realist Vision* 55). Concrete details are "more like apparent synecdoches," and "the whole is never given" (*Realist Vision* 58). That the whole can only be imagined through *la bovarysme*, which is predestined to fail, suggests Emma's "failure to be a full, coherent, autonomous person," despite her constant

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trying (*Realist Vision* 58). Flaubert's choice is not without reason, Brooks argues, because *la bovarysme* epitomizes the "radical failure of the world to cohere" (*Realist Vision* 58) and "the inadequate expressivity of language" (*Realist Vision* 61). It is the reasonable product of the serious imitation of the everyday: the dismembered, inorganic description of things captures the contingency of real quotidian life. Unlike Balzac, Flaubert's doctrine of impersonality translates actions into impressions which do not add up (Proust 588).

In "Moon Seal," Guo adopts this incoherent detailing to simulate Wenhui and Tiemin's finite vision and concomitant misrecognition. Three examples loom: vision of China, Ms. Yang, and Tiemin's body. Tiemin is the more obvious victim of *bovarysme*. It parallels the utopian impulse in any political activities according to an ideal, despite the fact that the totality can only be imagined. After Tiemin recovers, his starts to build contacts with recent Chinese immigrants via Doctor Cai. When he returns, he talks about "the Golden Sand River, the Northwest, the Tarim River . . . Qaidam Basin, Taklimakan Desert, Qinghai, Lhasa, Turfan . . . " (72/52). The exoticism of these isolated, decontextualized geographic names invite the young Taiwanese couple's imagination of China. The places Tiemin mentions are located in the far ends of the mainland, and they synecdochically imply the putative existence of a unified China. Tiemin's fantasy gradually corresponds to the nationalist ideology. Also, when Ms. Yang recounts her hardships in China, the narration presents Wenhui's impressions in fragments: "Bandits, locusts, Japanese soldiers . . . Famine, drought, civil war" (79/57). Behind the synecdoche there is only an imagined whole of China, which is merely a semblance based on hearsay. The Taiwanese couple's impression of the geography and modern history of China is incomplete, but the partial and subjective information is enough to prompt Tiemin to engage in the

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political activity that finally leads to his death. The discrepancy between the everyday experience and the (imagined) totality ultimately leads to misrecognition of the already suppressive political climate. These idealistic activists are not to blame, but the passage characterizes the operation of ideology, whether imposed by power or or self-induced.

Wenhui's vision is a more complicated affair. Her vision is more practical and material. Ms. Yang, in Wenhui's vision, appears via elaborate sartorial details.[73] Even before Ms. Yang is formally introduced in the text, Wenhui is first "captivated by the beautiful Cheongsam. Against the charcoal fire, the dark velvet shimmered . . . When she [Ms. Yang] moved, her Cheongsam shines in the color of a dove's neck" (72/52, translation modified). The metonymical connection between fabrics and China is not contingent, as Wenhui "sometimes saw boas of purple wool or silver fox, numerous types of trim as well as sequined collars of Cheongsams," which "reminded her even more of a warm, ancient land" (74/53, translation modified). Before she runs to inform against her husband and the comrades, the final blow is a vision of "the trim for the Cheongsam, collars, hems, boas of purple wool, silver fox, [which] gleamed before her eyes, making her giddy" (98/71). I argue that in Wenhui's vision a problem of interpretation looms: the opposition of the symbolic and the realistic. The two are not necessarily incompatible, but they decisively influence the process of interpretation. On at least three occasions Guo invokes sartorial details connected to Ms. Yang from Wenhui's perspective, and it is not unsensible to assume that Guo invites a symbolic reading. To some extent, it is not invalid to say that this character can be read as Guo's symbolic design and as his covert political judgment. As soon as

[73] Flaubert's novel lavishes material details of fabrics, accessories, and luxuriant goods in Emma's life and draws the reader's attention to them (*Madame Bovary* 24; 44-45; 226; 231). Fabrics is also what entices Emma into inexorable debts (201).

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Ms. Yang appears, the details presented by the narration soon displace this woman from China in flesh and blood, into a abstract symbol of China. The actual visual details of the woman ultimately alienate her from her actual existence and transforms her into a signifier that refers to a vague signified way beyond Taiwanese people's experience. However, the symbol is compromised because it is cleverly achieved in an impressionistic manner. Guo restricts the narration to Wenhui's perspective, and the symbolic dimension of this vision overlaps with the realistic dimension, as Ms. Yang is conveyed through the protagonist's collection of her limited experience with this woman. If one studies the passages of Wenhui's hallucinatory vision, it is obvious that she mixes Ms. Yang with her memories of the clothing in the magazine. From a realistic perspective, the sartorial details are impressions, not symbols; they are simple metonymies based on realistic details, not synecdoches that symbolically connect fabrics and China. The third-person narration detaches itself from the connection; it only faithfully presents Wenhui's consciousness. If she does not, or cannot make the synecdochical connection, then one can only say that Guo invites a symbolic reading, but the intention is extremely ambiguous. The critic's interpretation cannot but be compromised by the author's textual design.

Moreover, Wenhui's detailed impressions are obviously apolitical. Even though the sartorial details are indeed associated with Ms. Yang, realistically speaking, for Wenhui the imagined unified China does not exist even in the form of semblance. The symbolic interpretation that entitles a political reading cannot overcome the arbitrary fact that Wenhui tells on her husband simply out of personal grudge based on subjective impressions. Now one arrives at the most important part of the story: how does one interpret Wenhui's betrayal? Like Emma's choice of committing suicide, it is strange that Wenhui chooses to report on her husband. If she does not know

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anything, as critics tend to believe, how does it occur to her to report her husband to the police? Of course I do not believe that Wenhui knows anything about her husband's political activity. Rather, I argue that Guo's problematic choice to kill Tiemin via Wenhui's report evinces the dialectic of contingency and necessity, innocence and authoritarian control, literary realism and tragedy. It is precisely through contingency instead of the knowledge of political persecution that Guo can manifest the truth of White Terror: the power of administered society lies in the arbitrariness and randomness of any political consequence, and ironically in order to induce this grave consequence of a contingent decision, a heavy-handed intervention is needed to impose necessity. In this sense, "Moon Seal" pretty much embodies Auerbach's distinction between tragedy and literary realism: the former is a world predestined by fate and securse order, moral lessons as well as predicability in social hierarchy; while the latter is a world in which the necessary correlation and correspondence between men and society dissolve in contingency and triviality of everyday life in duration.

Finally by focusing on the detailed presentation of Tiemin's body I would like to elicit a dimension of desire in the story, which has escaped critics' attention in the past. Guo apparently postpones the couple's consummation deliberately. The consummation is delayed twice : the first time is involuntary, because of the husband falls sick immediately after the wedding (30/22); the second time is delayed by Wenhui herself, as she thinks that Tiemin is still not healthy enough for sex (67-68/49). One may notice how often Tiemin is described through his body parts from Wenhui's perspective: the X-ray (35/26), feet (63/46), "two rows of ribs" (66/48), hands (70/50), rash, bones, skin, the "two vermilion birthmarks" on his groin, (88/65), stubble, chest (95/69) and "wild, long, full hair" (104/75). Though Guo has already

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sculpted a vivid figure of Tiemin in the first half of the story, this figure blurs in the second half of the story, and Wenhui can only recall his body parts in fragmented memories. However, impressions of these body parts, even the most private part, are desexualized, and this suggests that Wenhui cannot perceive her husband as an adequate object of desire as a whole. When she refuses Tiemin's physical proposal for sex, she willingly delays the consummation by regarding it as "the promise" in their future (69/49, translation modified).[74] This is the last scene before the aforementioned idyllic utopia is destroyed, and the reality prevents her from consummation. Even when her mind is filled with her passion for having her own baby, her impressions of her husband as a patient instead of a man delays their sex. It is noteworthy that Guo eludes and delays bodily contact and instead opts for floral imagery to obliquely convey sexual fantasy. "She imagined her body producing a child, like the formation of a flower" (95/70, translation modified).[75] Tiemin's fantasy is more explicit but far from realistic: "[the water lily] buds in the pond reached straight up toward the sky, shakily supporting a fullness on the brink of bursting" (66/47, translation modified). Imagery is symptomatic of *la bovarysme*; it distances the characters from reality and ultimately destroys "the promise" between the husband and the wife. The realistic details of Tiemin's body parts and the promise of sex and procreation as an intangible promise are radically incongruous.

The reason I take up the problem of desire in the text is related to the ending. Why is Wenhui ashamed of the child that is never coceived? Again, one sees the conflict between the imagination and reality. One of the major ironies of the story is that although Wenhui has done everything a wife can do to attend to her husband, she

[74] The "unspoken understanding" in the translation misses the denotation of "promise and offering" in the artificially combined word *qixu* 契許, "promised by contract." I will return to this motif at the end of this chapter.

[75] The Mandarin Chinese here is more artificial and defamiliarized in comparison with common usage.

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retains her virginity at the end of the story. In "Moon Seal" and, as I am going to show in a moment, "Wailing Moon," the displacement of the object of maternity ultimately leads to symbolic infertility, which is a very significant motif in Guo's oeuvre. The problem is not whether these women in Guo's works are physically fit to actually have children; the meaning lies in their failure to procreate and pass on the historical legacy and imagine a future on a symbolic level. Infertility refuses a possible future. If one can say that rhetorical devices function by displacing an object to refer to another object (one may also be reminded of Flaubertian motif of betrayal), I would like to suggest that the displaced, interrupted figure of speech symbolizes the so-called Early Postwar period (1945-49), the transitional stage of two political regimes. I shall return to this at the end of this chapter.

"Wailing Moon" can be regarded as the melancholic sequel to "Moon Seal." To some extent, this work about a widow in mourning is much simpler than "Moon Seal" in terms of theme, and more skeletal and artificial in terms of plot and setting. Also, this story accommodates fewer characters and sparer human emotions. "Wailing Moon" revolves around the relationship between an unnamed widow, the narrative focal character, and her recently deceased husband. Most events are recounted by the third-person narrator from the widow's perspective, and only in the end of part one and part three does the narrative extricate from the wife. Though material details still suffuse the story, the serious imitation of the everyday is no more realistic than symbolic. The simplicity of design allows the critic to study how Guo deploys images to portray *la bovarysme*, how disillusionment and fantasy dialectically intertwine and cannot be clearly distinguished, and how the protagonist is at the same time defeated

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and saved by ironic epiphany. If one can find a counterpart in Flaubert's writings to "Wailing Moon," it would be his short story "Un Coeur Simple."[76]

Flaubert cleverly uses the most ironic and self-reflexive narrative to dialectically show the blindness of the logic of pure realism in this story: the kindness, endurance, and salvation of Félicité, the illiterate housemaid living in the country, are based on her inability to tell irony. Brombert's concise analysis shows that Félicité's mind works according to the logic of sheer metonymy: she is "incapable of distinguishing . . . between symbol and sheer literality" (*Antiheroes* 46) in the form of "contiguity, parataxis, resemblance, confusion" (*Antiheroes* 53). For example, Félicité finds "it difficult to imagine what the Holy Spirit actually look like because he was not only a bird but sometimes a fire and sometimes a breath" (*Three Tales* 15). Unlike Emma, whose pining and desire presume the knowledge of her boredom in life and her ability to tell the difference betwee dream and reality, Félicité is unable to realize the analogical nature in iconography and is therefore protected from textual irony and bitter disillusion by her "subjective confusion" (*Novels of Flaubert* 245) and a "lack of self-awareness" (*Novels of Flaubert* 238). The blissful ignorance, or the misreading of objects and meanings, structures the text in two aspects: the fetish (*Novels of Flaubert* 233) and vicarious experience (*Novels of Flaubert* 238), and apparently the key that hinges these two aspects is analogical imagination, the metaphoric impulse of the narrative. Félicité is blessed because she cannot sense the mediation and the gap of absolute difference between the analogical relationship of object and meaning; for her every experience is immediate.[77] Vicariousness manifests in crucial aspects during her life: she pours her parental love toward children who are not hers, and the

[76] Guo mentioned his admiration of this story once during his last interview (Interview with Jian 232).
[77] At the communion of her mistress' daughter Virginie, Félicité "felt she was herself Virginie, assuming her expression, wearing her dress and with her heart beating inside her breast. As Virginie opened her mouth, Félicité closed her eyes and almost fainted" (*Three Tales* 16).

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"mystical fervour" (*Three Tales* 40), the putatively immediate religious experience she undergoes is always ironically mediated and distanced. Her vicarious love for Virginie is condensed and displaced to a solid object: the little girl's hat (*Three Tales* 27), which brings about the problem of fetish, or the tension between object and meaning.

The famous pet parrot Loulou epitomizes the problem of fetish. A fetish always contains dual features: its status as a material object, and the symbolic meaning it is endowed with.[78] Loulou is at once very much alive in a realistic sense as it has "the tiresome habit of chewing his perch" and keeps "plucking out his feathers, scattering his droppings everywhere and splashing the water from his bath" (*Three Tales* 29). Even as a stuffed item Loulou retains its thingness: it is "eaten away by maggots" with "[one] of his wings . . . broken and the stuffing . . . coming out of his stomach" (38). However, Félicité famously mistakes the image of her parrot for the Holy Spirit in a picture, in which "the parrot [became] sanctified by connection with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit in turn [acquired] added life and meaning. Surely it could not have been a dove that God has chosen to speak through . . . It must have been one of Loulou's ancestors" (*Three Tales* 35). Flaubert's ironic image plays with contrast between the silence of things and the analogical speaking image to demystify the fetish: the most mystical and transcendental is transmitted by the thickest thingness of things;[79] the Holy Spirit speaks through the dead, silent parrot which would be able to speak has it been alive. Flaubert doubles the irony of the fetish by transforming Félicité into an object as she gradually loses her hearing (*Three Tales* 31) and eyesight

[78] Flaubert's analogy of her chamber to "a chapel and a bazaar" also suggests this duality: the former accommodates the symbolic value metonymically, while the later its realistic state (*Three Tales* 34).
[79] Sometimes Flaubert inverts the process. Through the fetishized, sanctified Loulou Félicité can "recall the days gone by, trivial incidents, right down to the tiniest detail, remembered not in sadness but in perfect tranquillity" (*Three Tales* 34). The most mundane must be recollected through the most transcendental.

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(*Three Tales* 37), hardly able to sense the outside world and embodying *la bêtise* in a positive sense, when at her last moment "she imagined she saw a huge parrot hovering above her head as the heavens parted to receive her" (*Three Tales* 40). The meaning on the fetish is obviously misplaced; but by not revealing the illusionary mediation between the meaning and the object, Flaubert exposes the fact that irony is actually a process of interpretation.

Approaching "Wailing Moon" through "Un Coeur Simple" is useful because both stories thematize and perform their writers' aesthetic strategy in different contexts. The saddened widow of the story is a disillusioned Félicité. The narrative of this story nevertheless still confines her in her subjective consciousness from which she cannot escape her inevitable blindness to truth (*On Essay* 248). Whether the irony is valid cannot be verified: the widow only believes what she perceives, and Guo very carefully obstructs any textual evidence that lies on the outside of the widow's perspective, so what the reader can receive from the text is a narrative void.[80] The epistemological blindspot is unveiled through the most urgent epistemological quest. The more she quests after her husband's three years in Japan, the more the "happiness they had built together became shards that could not be mended" (80/97). Vicarious experience derives from the impoverishment of experience of the self. The more one perceives, dwells on, and absorbs others' experience, the more one plunges into interiority and subjectivity and fails to grasp the objects, and it is not surprising that Guo uses *style indirect libre* to present the widow's thoughts at the end of the story, when she believes that she has discovered her husband's betrayal ("Wailing Moon"

[80] In the first version of the story, the widow pries open her dead husband's mouth in the end. Possibly because this ending appears too forceful and contrived, Guo revised the ending when the work was first collected in the book form.

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80; 118-19/97; 117-118). She does not know that her inference is actually obfuscated by the deceptive network of recurring signs.

Betrayal and infertility lie at the center of the "Wailing Moon," and it is suggested at the beginning by an image. The "broad-leafed epiphyte" is "easily deceived" (57/82) by the moon because it blooms at night. The image of the night-blooming flower implies that moonlight is nothing but refracted light of the sun, a symbol of illusion and treachery. The moon is also associated with infertility in this story. "She stood on the leaden watergate. She was scared stiff by the full moon. Suddenly a gust of cold wind blew into her uniform. She could not help but shiver, all the way down to her womb"(71/91, translation modified).[81] The moon reminds her that "the mother cat had eaten her litter of kittens" (72/92, translation modified), and that night when she goes to the courtyard for water, she "was scared all the way down to her womb" again when "she saw in the depth of water quietly lay that gong-like moon" (72/92, translation modified). Although one cannot decide whether this imaginative association belongs to the narrator or the widow (another sign of impersonality), the moon becomes the master symbol that aligns logically unrelated events. As the narrative progresses, the reader finds that the cause of widow's infertility is not her womb (101/108). Then what is the cause? The text invites an interpretation beyond realistic causation, and I shall discuss its symbolic significance along with the same issue critics encounters in "Moon Seal." Despite her wish to have a child, she is never granted one. Children of her neighbor and her friends have been born (73/92; 75/94), an infant is found (74-75/93), even pigeons are making nests near her house (75/94), all of which cause her resentment (75/94). Parenting and raising children, for the widow, can only be substitutive and vicarious. The actual object of

[81] The short paragraph that contains the first two sentences in the quotation is missing in the translation.

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parental love is absent; it is then displaced onto other people and other things. The husband's love is transfered onto the white-hearted orchids (76/94, translation modified),[82] and the widow's maternal love is transfered onto her husband (76-77/95). The oblique maternity becomes clear when she recalls desperately trying to save her husband's life by holding his feet tightly to her breasts, "life, like a river, gushed into his body from her naked breasts" (112/115, translation modified). The image of breast feeding once again desexualizes and brackets the possibility of desire between the husband and wife.

The irony of this story reveals itself when the protagonist realizes how she has misplaced the meaning on the wrong object. The husband, like Loulou for Félicité, is the most important fetishized "object" for the mourning widow. The whole dramatic action is arguably her attempt to interpret her dead husband: "he was so difficult to fathom after he died" (65/87, translation modified); "she recalled that the letters rarely touched upon his actual life abroad" (78/96, translation modified). The narrative is initiated by her will to secure meanings from a static object. Like Félicité's misrecognition, the meaning can only be constructed subjectively and the uncertainty always renders the given meaning displaced. In the indirect speech she repeatedly prompts her husband to speak in imagination (118-19/118). But the widow sometimes mistakes the figure of a young man who has died of lung disease in her past for her husband (106-08). In her the object of love is confused and mediated. Her love for her husband is constantly distanced by the narrative and displaced by figures and objects. The most striking examples of misrecognition in the story are *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 and

[82] Although "cymbidium orchid" in the translation is the correct counterpart to *suxinlan* 素心蘭, this scientific genus name misses the connotation of "purity, simplicity, plainness" inspired by the literal meaning of *su* 素. Taking its symbolic value in the text into consideration, I deliberately translate the word according to the literal meaning of respective characters.

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the aforementioned white-hearted orchid.[83] In her husband's collection of *ukiyo-e* "the Japanese women lightly painted by subdued colors appear expressionless. Every page looked the same; emotions like delight, anger, sadness and joy can be read. Yet one day something suddenly dawned on her; she suddenly began to see on those insipid faces an aura with multitudinous nuances" (60/84-85, translated modified). These figures are appropriated to depict and to characterize the enigmatic expression of the husband. Later in the text, the visitor whom the widow later believes to be her husband's lover in Japan is also "expressionless like the faces on the *ukiyo-e*" (88/101). It is a reasonable metonymical choice of simile, but by connecting the husband and Japanese woman with the same simile, does she unconsciously know the truth before she actually "realizes" it? The white-hearted orchid, the plant the widow takes as her husband's substitute for children, is also used to describe the Japanese woman (85/99). The substituted object is not children, but the woman. However, whose verbal analogy is this? If the narrator merely presents the widow's consciousness, then it lets out the unconscious knowledge of the repressed by the widow that foreshadows the final revelation. Yet I am more inclined to see this repetition of image as the narrator's impersonal intervention. The repetition within a limited length of a short story seems too contrived, obvious, and too easy to be simply read as a Freudian slip. The heavy-handed intervention dangerously compromises the dramatic illusion and elicits a self-reflexive dimension of symbolism. By deliberately releasing a thread, the narrator behind the text entices the critic to build the connection between the husband and the Japanese woman.

However, like the irony in "Un Coeur Simple," the irony in "Wailing Moon" is doubled. In "Un Coeur Simple" Flaubert ironizes the irony by not revealing the irony

[83] The traditional genre of Japanese art is once misspelled (*Running Mother* 84) and once incorrectly translated (101) in the translation.

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via a literal and genuine stupidity (*la bêtise*) and thereby saves Félicité from disillusionment; Guo ironizes the revelation of the widow's late husband's betrayal as the situational irony by the uncertainty deriving from the limited narratological perspective. Neither Félicité nor the poor widow can reach the truth, and the irony is exposed as the uncertainty of interpretation. The irony contains a self-reflexive dimension: the vicariousness implies the impossibility of the semblance of the fiction in reality. Though the text still unfolds in the register of literary realism, Guo's choice of form obstructs truth and meaning: the uncertainty (narrative from a single perspective), displacement of object and meaning (fetish) and the multilayered mediation (vicarious experience) challenges the immediacy and transparency of the text. Symbolism and its ironic displacement thematically decide the meaning of "Wailing Moon." Later, Guo's writing gradually discards contrived symbolism and concentrated plots through employing elaborate pastiche of realistic details, exemplified in "Snow Blind."

"Snow Blind" may be Guo's bleakest story: death and decay pervade the story in the most quotidian, sensuous details. The mundane life featured in this work looks far filthier and uglier than that in "Moon Seal," and it lacks the lively serenity emanating from the lofty theme of "Clover." Yet I would also like to indicate that "Snow Blind" is the most accomplished and richest work in Guo's oeuvre. The dramatic action is static and impoverished, but in digressive details one finds historical movements of different ages have sedimented in different forms of language. In other words, the meaning of "Snow Blind" cannot be detached from the ostensibly decorative, descriptive details. Guo does not delineate the story; instead, he collects and juxtaposes fragments. Although "Snow Blind" is rendered into a fluid prose, the translation misses the jagged structure of sentences within paragraphs and artificially

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polished phrases. To some extent the narrative of "Snow Blind" does mimic the discontinuity of traumatic memory, like the critics maintain: grammar collapses in incomplete sentences, while the sequence of paragraphs does not abide by a narrative logic. I do not propose to interpret the meaning by identifying political oppression, exile, or scattered historical referents in Guo's skillful circumspect presentation of the past, because precedent criticism has already achieved it; nor do I want to discuss the intertextual relation between this story and the texts mentioned in it. Rather, I turn my attention to material details which, I would like to show, are not that concrete and tangible after all.

My engagement with "Snow Blind" begins by reviewing a particularly interesting section in *L'Éducation sentimentale*: the first chapter of Part three, the longest chapter in the novel. Many things happen in this chapter: the 1848 revolution finally initiates the series of social tumults and political reformation that will gradually lead to the rise of Louis Napoleon; Frédéric formally starts his liaison with Rosanette, dazzled but later disenchanted by his prospect of holding a place in the National Assembly; almost every acquaintance of Frédéric's participates in politics: the pure-hearted like Dussardier devote themselves in the revolutionary cause while opportunists like Sénécal and La Vatnaz manipulate and meddle in political affairs; Regimbart stays aloof, and Monsieur Dambreuse the financier evades loss and gains political advantage by resorting to fraudulent sympathy with the Republic. Platitudes of contemporary politics brim the characters' mouth *ad nauseam*, rendering the fictional presentation of the gravest and the most influential event of nineteenth-century Europe in the most exasperating fashion. *La bêtise* (of its original ideological sense) is triumphant in the *L'Éducation*, the novel that its author once describes as

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"l'histoire morale des hommes de ma génération" [the moral history of people of my generation] (*Correspondance III* 409).

What is particularly informing is that Flaubert juxtaposes two antipodal events (*Sentimental Education* 265-72): the satirical portrayal of the revolutionaries in the Palais-Royal and an outing to the Fontainebleau (*Sentimental Education* 297-307). At the Palais-Royal, "the People," the subject of the revolution, is portrayed as "a dizzying flood of bare heads, caps, red bonnets, bayonets and shoulders," who appear "so violently that people disappeared in this swarming mass" (268). The irony that exposes the unbearable disorder of the orgiastic scene is embodied by Flaubert's portrayal of "a proletarian . . . grinning stupidly like an ape" (268) on the throne and "a prostitute posing as the Statue of Liberty-motionless, with her eyes open wide in a terrifying fashion" (269). Yet as Frédéric exclaims: "the people are sublime" (270), the scene seduces him into a moment of *la bovarysme*: he feels "his Gallic blood leap" and "the throes of a vast love, a love that was supreme and universal like the heart of the whole humanity beating in his breast," which inspires him "to compose an account of the events in lyrical style . . . a good piece of work, which he signed" (272).

Frédéric's outing with Rosanette at Fontainebleau inverts the sanguinity of revolution and presents an exact negative image: Frédéric meditates on "all the people [historical figures]" and he "felt surrounded, jostled by this throng of the dead. He was dazed, but at the same time fascinated by such a plethora of images" (299). The pair cannot care less about the "terrible bloodshed in Paris" (300) as "they thought they were faraway from the world" (301). During a walk in the forest again Flaubert halts the dramatic action by showcasing to the reader his meticulous description of different plants and animals: beeches, ashes, holly, birches, oaks, hawthorns, lichen,

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wolves, frogs, crows, et cetera (301-02). What inspires Frédéric, however, is rocks, which are

> propping each other up, overhanging one another, merging like the unrecognizable and monstrous ruins of some vanished city. But the turbulence of their chaos put you in mind of volcanoes, of floods, of great unknown cataclysms (302).

The narrator's silent intervention that collects the minutiae of every scene gradually usurps Frédéric's passive observation. The narrative perspective becomes ambiguous as an impersonal moment looms. The following comment cannot be known to any of the characters present:

> a frenzy of joy erupted, as if, in place of the throne, a future of unlimited happiness had appeared. And the people, less for vengeance than through wanting to assert control, smashed and ripped out curtains, lamps, sconces, tables, chairs, stools, all the furniture . . Since they were victorious, why should they not enjoy themselves!" (269).

The following passage at the Fontainebleau more obviously exemplifies the impersonality of prose:

> Royal residences possess a special melancholy . . . silence which comes as a surprise after so many fanfares . . . unchanging luxury which proves by its antiquity the fleeting nature of dynasties, the misery at the heart of all things. And the exhalation of the centuries, deadening and funereal like the scent of a mummy, is felt even by the simplest among us (299).

Why does Flaubert place a languishing interlude in a chapter in which intensive political events dominate the plot? Brombert contends that the Fontainebleau episode unites the episodes in the book and "replaces" contemporary social unrest "in the

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larger context of a metaphysical meditation" (*Novels of Flaubert* 177). Nature and history "point up the insignificance of all human endeavor in the face of eternal change and death" (177-78), and the scene almost takes on an "apocalyptic grandeur" (178). Brombert's interpretation is valid, but I do not think that the nature and history nullifies contemporary revolution. Contrasting the two scenes, I opine that the violent orgy and the tranquil excursion in the forest respectively represent the microscopic and the telescopic end of history, and these two scenes, I argue, refer to each other. From these two passage one is reminded of the role that nature (and in a similar fashion, history) plays in the development political philosophy under the sign of Enlightenment. If Frédéric's (or the narrator's) meditative imagination dominates nature by hitsoricizing and mythologizing it, the disorder at the Palais-Royal illustrates the untamed nature in the cause of civilization. The two scenes become each other's ironic reflection. The more Frédéric indulges himself in the tranquil, atemporal nature, the more the profound chaos incited by contemporary revolution emerges; the more Frédéric admires the sublime of republicanism, the more he loses sight of Enlightenment and is captured by nature. Taking a different route, Culler challenges the passage's invitation to a symbolic reading by indicating that inane clichés suffuse the passage, making this scene "a matter of producing meaning according to those banal cultural models which facilitates symbolic interpretations" (*Use of Uncertainty* 102-03). I think Culler also indicates an important aspect of the dynamic between the two scenes. Frédéric cannot interpret nature (and Flaubert shrewdly presents this by manipulating the narrative) without *la bêtise* that initiates the political platitude one finds in the portrayal of "the People."

Following the discussion above, I particularly want to discuss how Guo depicts nature in "Snow Blind," an aspect to which most critics have not paid enough

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attention. In the following analysis I would like to illustrate that the natural actually resides in the most artificial aspect of the story, while what putatively appears natural actually contains the political message. To illustrate this, the discussion has to once again address the clash of the realistic and the symbolic.

In "Snow Blind" Guo taints and complicates the already feeble symbolism in the story with realistic details. An item in the text exemplifies the connection and conflict of the symbolic and the realistic. The first has caught attention of the critics: *Selected Works* by Lu Xun, approved by the Government-General of Taiwan, the book that the principal passes on to "you," the protagonist (171/167, 189/184, 211/203). It is an obvious symbol of modern Taiwan and Chinese history, or, in Ng's distinct expression, "ominous spiritual legacy" (*Textuality* 264-65). I agree with him, but I mention this book only because it features the dynamic between the symbolic and the realistic. One feature of this particular book is that it is partially eaten by bookworms. The symbolic meaning of the book relies on the reader's extra-diegetic knowledge of Taiwan's colonial history and biographical information that Guo is an avid reader of Lu Xun and, like the Chinese writer, participated in leftist political campaign. The ownership of the book, from the sensitive principal's brother who committed suicide, the principal himself, to the protagonist Xingluan, contains a page of Taiwan's intellectual history across different political regimes. However, as the diegetic information suggests, the book was eaten, and this intellectual legacy is metaphorically scarred, just like the principal and the protagonist, who can no longer choose death like the book's first sensitive owner and eventually get stuck in an intellectual and affective impasse. Interestingly the realistic details influence how the symbolic meaning can be produced in reading. This example suggests that Guo manages to intervene and trouble symbolism through his combination of textual

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details. This insight is particularly significant to a textual strategy that (at least partially) embodies and corresponds to the intellectual legacy that the precedent critics insist on.

Material details in “Snow Blind” are both realistic and allegorical. On the one hand they are tangible and substantial enough as they can be perceived in real space. However, they cannot be treated as simple textual fillers because they do not provide temporal or spatial details that necessarily influence dramatic action; nor do they enhance the pathos to manipulate the tone and the ambience. Too often these material details elicit a reading for deeper meanings beyond the literal message, and it is not impossible to collect these details and work out a meaning. For example, one finds the following details scattered in the text: sticks of incense in a crack on the wall by the doorway (170/166), the abandoned house (174/170), the dismembered body of a dragonfly carried by column of ants (175/171), white foams after the boat (179/176), large footprints on the desert (193/188), remains of winged insects (199/192), and snail slime left on its trail (208/201). Precisely because most details listed above lack narrative functions to make meanings, they appear to be nothing but themselves, and this supposedly realistic aspect entices critics to find a symbolic meaning. As these are traces and remains of something else, it is not unreasonable to claim that these details incarnate a passing of Time. Yet this feature of “Snow Blind” cannot be simply explained away by such an ostensible symbolism, because the symbolic value is too flimsy, vague, and insubstantial compared with the minute yet various material details that are too many to ignore. If one treats them as realistic fillers, they look too static and awkward. If it corresponds to the theme of a genealogy of spiritually paralyzed intellectuals, then these details seem too insignificant for so grand a theme.

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Things can be different when Guo portrays nature. In the middle part the protagonist and his colorful geological strata and the remains of plants in Petrified Forest, Arizona (190/185), the Colorado River (191/186), the copper mine (194/188), the dried river bed (200/194), the tadpole-like shelled-worms "with countless hairlike legs" that coexist with the remains of dinosaurs (201/194, translation modified),[84] the petrified wood with "broken limbs" and "annual rings [which had] condensed into iridescent halos" (208/201, translation modified) and floods in Nevada (208/201) and finally clouds of bats in Taiwan (198/192) and in the US (206/208, translation modified). Again these realistic details do not appear out of nowhere, but their connection to the dramatic action is as weak as the details that "symbolize" the passing of Time. The spatial information does not help, either. Indeed these ruins of nature can only be found in the US in the text, but apparently they are far too ancient beyond the scale of human history to symbolically imply any historical connections between the US and Taiwan during the Second World War and the Cold War. The temporal and spatial distance between these natural historical curiosities and modern Taiwan history is even greater than that one finds in Flaubert's *L'Éducation*; it compromises a direct historical-symbolic reading of "Snow Blind." What about the events in the world history mentioned in the text? In the text are the bombardment of Taipei by US fighters during the Second World War (173/169), the first Taiwanese pilot in the colonial period (178/174), Chinese immigrants who built the railway in the US (188/184), the life of the Hopi people in the US (191/186), the death of the old Polish lady who survived the Holocaust (201/195), the samurai grandfather and the merchant father of the Japanese professor (202/195), and Lu Xun's writing career

[84] It is reasonable that an organism with countless legs cannot be a *jiachong* 甲蟲, or beetle, but "organism" does not fit the original very well, so I translate the characters separately combination of *jia* 甲, "armor, shell," and *chong* 蟲, "insect, worm, pest, parasite, caterpillar, larva."

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(207/200). Except for the bombardment and the first pilot, none of the rest have anything particular to do with modern Taiwan. What should the critic do about this?

World history and nature must be interpreted together. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* insists on the dialectic of history and nature, mediated and reconciled in the *semblance* of art. Adorno writes that although the artifice of art maintains an antithetical relation to nature's appearance of immediacy, they actually refer to each other: "nature [refers] to the experience of a mediated and objectified world," while "the artwork to nature as the mediated plenipotentiary of immediacy" (AT 62). Human beings cannot resort to nature for the lost immediacy and spontaneity, as Romantic artists tend to believe; Adorno argues that "in every particular aesthetic experience of nature the social whole is lodged" (68). The oldest and the timeless, the attributes human beings assign to the natural, can be understood and identified only in the most advanced and the most transient modernity. Because human beings are subsumed by modern society, it "not only provides the schemata of perception but peremptorily determines what nature means through contrast and similarity" (68). If the natural cannot be approached without the mediation of total modern social relations, it "is transformed into a caricature of itself" (67). The immediate correspondence of subjects and nature is forever lost, so in natural beauty, "natural and historical elements interact in a musical and kaleidoscopically changing fashion" (71). This mediated nature in subjective consciousness is necessarily "suspended history, a moment of becoming at a standstill" (71).

Nature might have been safely subsumed by modern society, but "[the] substantiality of the experience of natural beauty," Adorno maintains, actually "reaches deep into modern art" (63). In the administered society controlled by the regime of Enlightenment, art tries to distill the beauty from nature's contingency, "to

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gain control of its semblance, to determine it as semblance as well as to negate it as unreal" (78) by mimicking the correspondence of subjective consciousness and nature so as to "[recollect] a world without domination, one that probably never existed" in reality (66). Art's control of nature for meaning in the form of semblance is homologous to society's dominance of nature, but art's imitation of natural beauty "develops in tandem with the allegorical intention that manifests it *without deciphering it*" (71, my emphasis). If the "weakness of thought in the face of natural beauty, a weakness of the subject, together with the objective intensity of natural beauty" can be preserved in art, than art must contain and reflect "the enigmatic character of natural beauty" (73). Adorno contends that "the more that art is thoroughly organized as an object by the subject and divested of the subject's intentions, the more articulately does it speak according to the model of a nonconceptual, nonrigidified significative language" (67), which is "a script without meaning or, more precisely, a script with broken or veiled meaning" (78). Adorno's theorization of art's imitation of natural beauty and Flaubert's ironic aesthetic appropriation of *la bêtise* parallel and supplement each other: Flaubert pushes the epistemological, descriptive logic of literary realism and consciously conducts beautification of prose via rhetorical devices so as to compromise emplotment, manifestation of themes and the communicative function of prose, creating an impersonal, static beauty, and Adorno's theory may be used to theorize Flaubert's pre-modernist aesthetic practice, which captures the evanescence of natural beauty by rendering art (literary texts in this context) enigmatic.

Previous studies of "Snow Blind" have discussed how the transition from Japanese colonial regime to Kuomintang's authoritarian regime causes the aphasia of Taiwanese intellectuals. I do not intend to relate any one of the historical events

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invoked in the text to modern Taiwan history. They are concrete but too eclectic, and making parallels or connections seems too exclusive and arbitrary. If Flaubert and Adorno's dialectic of contemporary history and nature can be of help as a critical model, I would like to explore a subtler working of historical violence on literary text through an analysis of Guo's depiction and linguistic mimesis of the silent and indecipherable nature.

I argue that by assembling so many scattered, not necessarily related details from quotidian life, world history and natural history in "Snow Blind," Guo manages to refract and portray the scar of modern Taiwan in an impersonal manner without overt references to concrete, specific historical events as well as poignant moral sentiments. These ostensibly randomly compiled entities from nature can become meaningful only when they are relocated in high modernity; they testify to the no less fragmented but interconnected modern world history. This is how the aforementioned imagery of traces becomes important. I have illustrated that narrative of "Snow Blind" prevents them from being read purely as symbols or as realistic fillers; rather, the obvious natural state of things themselves mimics the natural. Guo manages to convey the force of modern history by constructing a constellation of the most trivial, fragmentary facts. Nostalgia for Taiwan in a foreign land parallels the fantasy around an untamed, pristine nature which is dominated by and alienated from modern society, while the flimsy, awkward traces and remains in the protagonist's mundane, quotidian life (sticks of incense, the abandoned house, the dismembered dragonfly . . .) support the weakest connection between Taiwan and world history (Holocaust, Chinese immigrant workers, persecuted Native American peoples . . .). The Taiwanese intellectuals' aphasia corresponds to the silence of nature refracted by modernity, and this parallel remains in artistic semblance, which preserves the natural beauty by

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rendering the meaning highly undecidable.

On the diegetic level, through a newsreport on TV (in the case of the tadpole-like worms) and the tour guide's introduction (in the case of Indian culture and the history of Colorado River) the narrative mediates the nature and ancient history from the modern point of view, while on the extra-diegetic level the critic tries to interpret and generate meaning by conceptually understanding nature. Guo's text renders these details uninterpretable. The more subject tries to control nature through literary realism, the more the subject fails to grasp it and nature as object escapes. In the previous chapter I try to illustrate how the dialectic of enlightenment was embodied in Japan's encounter with and resistance against the West, and how the colonial Taiwan negotiates with the Japanese Empire. Colonial modernity and political structure during the Cold War catapults Taiwan onto the world. The failure to synthesize these events in a coherent interpretation derives from the temporal and spatial distance, and it parallels the fact that contemporary Taiwan fails to grasp the totality of modern Taiwan in the world. The impersonal consciousness of the narrator, like Emma at the ball of Vaubyessard, tries to control perceived fragmentary, eclectic details in experience, but the objectivity and contingency of nature and mediated world history substitute unorganized informational fragments for a well-rounded understanding. Only through this failure to understand the world does the profound detriment that decades of political oppression have imposed on Taiwanese intellectuals surface. The reason why these material details do not add up to a historical totality is because nature is repressed and experience is impoverished in modern society. The geographical and historical scale that these details exist in apparently shows how narrow the precedent interpretation has been; when critics try to rescue a "true modern Taiwan history" (which are valid and justified efforts, though), they miss the

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fact that the failure of a coherent reading and the loss of symbolic value corresponds to the impoverishment of experience.

Finally, I would like to follow Culler's insightful observation of how Flaubert mimics *la bêtise* by enacting it, and show how Guo mimics the failure of modernity's domination of nature by resorting to the most artificial language to mimic the silence of nature. In the opening sequence of "Snow Blind" one finds a pattern of literary language that sometimes the violates the quotidian use of vernacular Mandarin Chinese: *yongrong de pingheng* 雍容的平衡, "elegant balance" (167/164, translation modified), *shenji de jiaozhuo* 升級的焦灼, "augmenting anxiety" (167/164, translation modified), *liouzhi de dunzhuo* 流質的鈍拙, "liquid obtuseness" (167/164, translation modified), *jingzhi de anpai* 靜止的安排, "static design" (168/164, translation modified).[85] Why describe the balance of scenery in human terms? Why unnaturally combine two incongruous terms? The language pattern uses the character *de* 的 to connect two nouns or an adjective and a noun. Also, the marker grammatical de creates ambiguity. For example, *huihen de yingzi* 悔恨的影子 can be understood as "remorseful shadow" or the shadow of remorse (179/176); *kusang de meiying* 哭喪的魅影 can be understood as "mournful spectres" the "spectre of lament" (214/207); *jimo de shamo* 寂寞的沙漠 can be understood as "lonely desert" and "desert of loneliness" (203/196). The rhetorical effect complicates the

[85] Respectively translated as "grand equilibrium," "a quickening sense of alarm," "swelled, broad and uneven" and "static order of things" (164). The symmetrical appearance cannot but collapse in English, and the distinct effect is neutralized. The linguistic ambiguity makes mistranslation inevitable and understandable. For example, when translating *jieyi de liangshuang* 解意的涼爽, the translator misses the anthropomorphic word 解意的, "considerate, sensitive," and mistranslates it as "agreeably" (189/184). Another example is *chaojue de nengli* 超絕的能力, 超絕的 means "virtuosic," not "supernatural" (206/200). There are other cases of mistranslation (I will not list them here) in which the translator simply stumbles over the meaning,

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signification and troubles reading.[86] The phrases are not meaningless, but unnecessarily protruding and contrived. Sometimes they are as natural as common usage, but sometimes they appear exceptionally striking. They may occasionally enrich and decorate the text by defamiliarizing the language, but these artificial patterns seem unnatural in the story when they appear in several dozens. This pattern sometimes abstracts a tangible entity on the one hand and concretize an abstract concept on the other hand. The most distinguishable way of concretization is anthropomorphism, like *fanxin de xiaoxiang* 煩心的小巷 "annoying alley" (198).[87] Sometimes the pattern is rich in connotation: *yinya de renge* 瘖啞的人格, or "a mute character" (182/179) connotes the official language policy forbidding Taiwanese languages and Japanese, which deprives some people of their ability to express; sometimes it looks particularly awkward and unnatural for no obvious reason: *zhayen de suiguang* 扎眼的碎光 "dazzling points of light" (196/190); *dandiao de fuxian* 單調的浮線 "monotonous blurred outline" (196/191, translation modified);[88] *jiaozhi de jijie* 膠質的季節 "glutinous season" (jiaozhi is usually used to describe the material attribute of a substance) (194/189, translation modified); *ganzao de heian* 乾燥的黑暗 "parched darkness" (why is darkness dried) (208/201); sometimes the oxymoronic effect surprises: *canfei de xiongzi* 殘廢的雄姿 "crippled majesty" (212/205, translation modified); sometimes it parodies cliched expressions and ironically empties meaning: *huali de weilai* 華麗的未來 "glorious future" (198/192,

[86] The grammatical structure can be even more complicated: *zouying de bianxing* 走影的變形 "shapeshifting of running shadows" involves transformation of verbs into adjective (*zou* 走) and noun (*bianxing* 變形) (193/199, translation modified).

[87] This is missing in translation, also an ambiguous expression: is it an "annoying alley," or an "alley annoyed"?

[88] Like aforementioned *dunzhuo* 鈍拙, *fuxian* 浮線 cannot be found in dictionary.

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translation modified)[89]; *pengzhang de xiongyi* 膨脹的胸臆 "swelling chest" (200/194); some are simply indecipherable: *xiachen de xinyuan* 下沉的心願 "wishes to descend" (206/200, translation modified), what does it mean to descend? Or, *shiwu de hexin* 事物的核心 "core of things" (189/184)? It is too abstract to know what this "core of things" is.

This particular repetitive pattern serves various purposes, but most important of all, I argue, is that it thematizes literary form as control, and in this form of control lies the traces of untamable nature that requires aesthetic to convey by audaciously obstrcuting communication. On the one hand it concretizes the abstract, presenting the abstract concept and subjective consciousness in concrete details or tangible images; but on the other hand, it abstracts the concrete, using artifice to transform reality into literary language. The organized pattern obviously transgresses the convention of realism and symbolism not necessarily in a positive way. Sometimes they fit into the context well, even enhance the text; sometimes they obtrude the narration and disturb the meaning. The ambiguity derives from grammar compromising the signification, and rhetorical effect overrides the reception of meaning. By being extremely artificial and exquisite, Guo petrifies, even fetishizes language. The incantatory well-crafted pattern mimics the incomprehensibility of nature that inspires awe. They miniaturize and hinder representation of what they are supposed to represent. They resemble the rocks Frédéric finds in Fontainebleau, and they are not unlike the material details scattered in the text. They evoke imagination but the reader cannot help stumbling over polysemy.

But I haven't mentioned the most enigmatic aspect of the story: *yunno* 允諾, the promise. They also appear in the form of the aforementioned pattern: *yunno de*

[89] The original inserts a word "unknown" before "future" (192). Reasonable, but unnecessary.

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xunxi 允諾的訊息 "tidings of promise" (168/164, translation modified); *yunno de xinxi* 允諾的信息 "words of promise" (189/184); *yunno de guang* 允諾的光 light of promise (186/182, translation modified); *tixing de yunno* T 形的允諾 "T-shaped promise" (190/186; 212/204);[90] *huizhibuqu de yunno* 揮之不去的允諾 "promise that cannot be chased away" (216/208, translation modified). To conclude this chapter, I would like to discuss promise, and I argue that this is the residue of Guo's aesthetic (modeled after Flaubert) and his leftist political belief in the past.

La Promesse du Bonheur, Irony, and Dialectic of Utopia

Ng has identified the most important image in terms of characterization: "the disillusioned dreamers" (*Textuality* 263; 274). What do they dream about? I interpret this "dream" motif as the negative image of Guo's Marxian stance. Promise of utopia in art is one of the significant themes in the whole of Western Marxism, which is exemplified most seriously and extensively by Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. Art is the only reserve of redemption in modern society. utopia in art is a paradoxical negation of the status quo. As the negation of the existent, utopia does not exist yet, and therefore, conceptually, unrealizable in every moment of the present. Adorno writes:

> At the center of contemporary antinomies is that art must be and wants to be Utopia, and the more Utopia is blocked by the real functional order, the more this is true; yet at the same time art may not be Utopia in order not to betray it by providing semblance and consolation. If the Utopia of art were fulfilled, it would be art's temporal end (*Aesthetic Theory* 32).

[90] Again Guo distills the shape from the contact of entities in reality and attaches it to an intangible concept, and not unlike other phrases in this pattern, it baffles.

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Utopia always opposes reality in dialectic. The more urgent the utopia drive in art becomes, the bleaker the reality appears. Art exists precisely because utopia has not arrived, and if art realizes Utopia in the form of artistic semblance, it betrays the promise of utopia. Paradoxically "it is possibility promised by its impossibility. Art is the ever broken promise of happiness" (*Aesthetic Theory* 136). Art preserves the possibility of utopia precisely by negating it. To summarize, utopia always exist in negativity, and the promise of Utopia is its impossibility. If utopia heralds the reconciliation of contradictions and conflicts in reality, Adorno continues,

> Through the irreconcilable renunciation of the semblance of reconciliation, art holds fast to the promise of reconciliation in the midst of the unreconciled: This is the true consciousness of an age in which the real possibility of Utopia . . . converges with the possibility of total catastrophe (*Aesthetic Theory* 33, my emphasis).

If only in catastrophe of modern society can utopia be imagined, the promise of utopia only proves that catastrophe persists. *La bovarysme* and its disillusionment allegorize this dialectic: the urge to pursue the non-existent consolidates the fact that the subject-object relation is not yet harmonized. Auerbach indicates the "first consequence," of *la bovarysme* "is that it leads to isolation" (430). *La bovarysme* replaces reality with "with a world of appearances," which is "made up of illusions, habits, drives and slogans" (430). When this imaginary world prevents people from "their way to their own genuine reality" and any sign of common understanding besides "misunderstandings, lies and stupid hatred, "and "the order of the community" that the traditional art genre has sustained "is lacking" in this serious imitation of everyday life (430). By deftly controlling narrative voice and limited perspective, Guo's stories show a similar introvert inclination. Corresponding to Auerbach's diagnosis, Adorno

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argues that this introversion does not evade the society but reveals its truth, because "individuation, along with the suffering that it involves, is a social law, society can only be experienced individually" (*Aesthetic Theory* 259). To some extent *la bovarysme* is itself a Utopian drive on a personal scale. Lukács puts it succinctly that to "create, by purely artistic means, a reality which corresponds to this dream world, or at least is more adequate to it than the existing one, is only an illusory solution" (*Theory of the Novel* 115). But this Utopian drive never wrests itself from the society, as Adorno sharply indicates that "mere consciousness of society does not in any real sense lead beyond the socially imposed objective structure, any more than the artwork does" (*Aesthetic Theory* 259). The promise in the text, therefore, must be interpreted in terms of a critique of society in the form of negativity instead of personal redemption.[91]

Flaubertian irony contains a self-reflexive dimension: it exposes the fact that realist fiction can no longer contain the weight of reality. In "Moon Seal," synecdoche is supposed to mediate the particular and the universal. That characters fail to grasp this mediation in any form other than misrecognition suggests that the necessary imaginary relation between the individual and social totality is lost in a tumultuous age. The displacement of meaning and object and vicariousness of experience in "Wailing Moon" also allegorizes the relation between history and fiction. Fiction may be able to relive historical experiences, but the it is always one step removed from reality. The difference deriving from the narrative subjectivism leaves an inevitable epistemological void in the text. Also the vicariousness of modern fiction embodies the loss of authenticity and experience. In "Snow Blind," Guo through his masterful

[91] Lukács' emphasizes the ethical dimension of "ethical problem of utopia" (*Theory of the Novel* 115) and its relation to the "moral conscience" (116), from which one can see that the second part of *The Theory of the Novel* bridges the Lukács' earlier hisotorico-philosophical period and the politicized middle period that crowns a wholesome literary realism.

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command of Mandarin Chinese plays with the dialectic of artifice and nature, and exposest how the motive to control behind the representational strategy of literary realism actually fails to control nature and reality in the wake of modernity. By pushing the logic of realism to its extreme, Guo challenges the presupposition of historicism that literary texts necessarily represent certain aspects of history.

A dialectical reading brings into focus not only the so-called Early Postwar period, in which social unrest and transition of political authorities instigated and shattered the promise of Utopia, but also in terms of the early eighties, during which the authoritarian regime was on the verge of collapse and political ideologies vied for power in the intellectual field. The parallel between the Early Postwar period, the setting the three aforementioned stories cover, and the early eighties, when the stories were written, is telling: the age of instability and crisis leads to the crisis of form. The totality established by literary realism, as debates in the seventies supported, can no longer sustain, and the critique from literature multiplied and become cynical. Guo's literary strategy of *la bêtise* thematically recasts *la bovarysme* in Taiwan context and ironizes literary realism, the most dominant paradigm in the previous decade. Guo (à la Flaubert) has to resort to the unreliable, subjective characterization to grasp the immanence of history, because transcendence of history is no longer graspable in any form other than propaganda and ideology. Literature has to become unreliable because in an age when tradition and authority encounter vehement attack and interrogation. The meaning cannot remain stable as long as tradition wavers.

Not only literary form reflects the instability of its contemporary environment. Thematically, I treat the unexplained promise in "Snow Blind" and infertility in "Moon Seal" and "Wailing Moon" as important tropes of politics of temporality. In his major works, Guo subtly and sensitively buries the paradox of temporality in

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dramatic action. Like Wenhui in “Moon Seal” and Xingluan in “Snow Blind,” Guo dialectically apprehends a Utopian future through memory; the future necessarily is inherent in the past. If maternity symbolizes the Utopian impulse via memory, infertility, the ironic narrative consequence, negatively symbolizes the refusal of the impulse. Maternity is always displaced, and the possibility of the symbolic continuation of subjects is always denied. The end of Early Postwar period saw the collapse and forced exile of China. At the same time, the Taiwanese (the indigenous peoples on the island included) were disillusioned and persecuted by another authoritrian regime, and the colonial experience was forcefully repressed and could not be redeemed. A meaningful totality was “stillborn,” or failed to be “conceived,” so the future subjects cannot be born. In Guo’s fiction the future cannot be envisioned without a critical review of the calamity of modernity as well as the collapse of tradition, and it parallels the difficulty generating meanings that the critics encounter in his difficult style. I really do not agree with the claims rooted in identity politics that Guo aims to redeem the oppressed marginal voices such as those of women. Rather, Guo’s major stories convey a deep skepticism that counters yet corresponds to the political tendencies of his contemporaries. He does not engage in representing a socio-economic totality and reconstructing of history in the fashion of *roman fleuve*, nor does he experiment with the ludic style that compromises the dramatic illusion, like metafiction that gradually dominates the mainstream in literary field. Rather, his literary fiction becomes all the more radical by retaining the pessimistic subjective urge of postwar modernist fiction. Compared with his contemporary writers, his writings seem especially conservative and subdued. If memory can be seen as the dialectical image of historical catastrophe, Guo’s fiction assembles and manifests the Utopian of all the political ideologies (Marxist, Taiwanese nationalist, and later that of

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the precarious Republic of China) by obstructing them through literary irony. His writings become all the more political when he retreats from the political scene. In the face of the collapsing authoritarian regime, the political dimension cannot be redemptive and affirmative like that of the rivaling Chinese and Taiwanese nationalisms; rather, it remains negative and critical. This subtle paradox symptomatically characterizes the ideology of Taiwan literature. It is no news. Reviving a repressed past has always been a major task of Taiwan literature, but Guo's use of irony and fragile subjectivism crystallize the paradox of this dialectic of Utopia, the possibility premised on its *impossibility*. In the next chapter, I would like to show how this politics of temporalities is manifest in Guo's late works.

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Excursus Two

On "Clover"[92]

As the last of the major works to appear in the eighties, "Clover" is the most introverted and obscure. It displays an aspiration for transcendence through the immanence of lived experience, and how this aspiration, via irony, fails—or at least the result is left indeterminable. I single out this story from the previous chapter because this story, like "On Writing," most clearly preserves Guo's concerns of Marxism and philosophy of history, as he leaves in the text conspicuous allusions to Phenomenology of Spirit by Hegel and The German Ideology by Marx and Engels. I find that the major irony of this story can hardly be discussed without discussing these two important texts. Of course one has biographical information to support this reading, as Guo started to approach Hegel and Marx during his military service (Interview with Jian 190). Chang Lihsuan's study of Guo's first published work, the triptych *sange xiao duanpian* 三個小短篇 "Three Very Short Stories," has correctly indicated that a possible understanding of Guo's move from politics to literature hinges on the allusion to Hegel as well as Marx and Engels, but did not probe into it ("1983" 240-41). I attempt to pick up this thread by reading "Clover" as Guo's literary reconfiguration of the intellectual heritage from Hegel's philosophy to Marx and Engels' social theory, so as to examine how the antinomy inherent in this intellectual lineage may reside in literary irony. I would also like to suggest how the form of this story accommodates the paradox of the Marxian utopian drive in Taiwan, and how historical conditions displace and delay this drive. Critics tend to believe that

[92] Although "Clover" was published a year later than "Snow Blind," this story is an expanded version of "The Sensitive Plant," a segment in a triptych story entitled "Three Very Short Stories," published in 1983.

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this story embodies Guo's keen nostalgia for Taiwan during his exile in the US, and therefore this nostalgia ostensibly justifies Guo's Taiwan consciousness. I do not consider this kind of reading invalid, but the political reading reduces the text and veils a more philosophical dimension, which is probably more akin to the writer's intellectual development and may connect the curious rupture between Guo's political praxis and literary career.

Except reader's knowledge of the authorship of the two aforementioned books, the text of "Clover" never directly refers to Hegel as well as Marx and Engels, but these German thinkers are actually mentioned obliquely in the term *deyizhifeng de lixiangzhuyi* 德意志風的理想主義 (144). Guo plays with the dual meanings of this loose expression. In the translation it is translated as "German idealism" (*Running Mother* 142), which is itself correct and suggests the latent presence of Hegel; but this expression can also be translated as "Germanic utopianism," which certainly includes Marxian social theory. Hegelian philosophy and Marxian theory respectively propose different but related philosophies of history. Marcuse explains that Hegelian dialectic is "a universal ontological one in which history was patterned on the metaphysical process of being," while for Marx and Engels "the negativity of reality becomes a historical condition which cannot be hypostatized as a metaphysical state of affairs" (314). Hegelian philosophy and Marxian theory move towards opposite directions: "all the philosophical concepts of Marxian theory are social and economic categories, whereas Hegel's social and economic categories are all philosophical concepts" (258). The German Ideology, according to Louis Althusser's famous assertion, marks this crucial epistemological break of German philosophy (Althusser 33). Guo hints at this juncture of the history of philosophy in the mysterious subjunctive sentence: "if spirit

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could move matter" (143/141; 163/161).[93] The subjunctive mood is significant in that it reveals the perpetual yearning of the consciousness toward a higher reality in the world.

One cannot find any clue of a potential secular revolution brewing in the plot except in some vaguest minor details: "He could not squander his life. He could not idle. He had to achieve something during his life" (161/159, translation modified). In contrast, the images of transcendence appear more often in the text: "the voice that calls unto 'him'"(151/149, translation modified), "intercourse with the mysterious resonance" (151-52/149, translation modified); "deities descend in the cat's empty eyes" (154/152, translation modified); "a joy falling form heaven," "ephemeral trance," "blessing of the millennium" (163/161, translation modified). In this sense Ng's comment that Guo in this story tries to overcome the experience via transcendence is correct (282).

The most striking aspect of this story is its unique use of narrative perspective: a nameless second-person narrator "you" traces his/her friendship with another nameless "he." Wu Dayun argues that the second-person perspective is a camouflaged first-person narrative: behind the "you" is an invisible "I" (527). "I" creates a "you" as its persona in order to meditatively recount and reflect on its past (529). The narrative can arguably be regarded as the detached analysis of the personal history of this invisible "I" (529). Through "you," "I" can freely enter the inner world of "he" through a mimetic correlation (530-31) The narrative strategy can eschew self-pity (531) and approach objectivity (541). Wu's assessment is problematic because she confuses the recounting, invisible "I" and an omnipotent third-person narrator. If an invisible "I" exists behind the narrative, the objectivity is impossible because of the

[93] The translation mistranslates the sentence the second time it appears by removing the subjunctive marker "if" (161).

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finitude of the limitation of perspective despite the reflective distance. The observation of "him" can only be subjective interpretation, and certainly only through this perspective limitation can the surprising irony at the end hold. Even if one accepts Wu's inference, one cannot tell an identifiable difference between the invisible "I" in the present and the "you" in the past, and the self-reflective detachment does not seem persuasive. The presence of this meditative, putative invisible "I" is too strong to ignore: even the inner thoughts of "you" are usurped by this "I." In this sense, deliberately adopting a persona becomes meaningless. Moreover, there is no obvious reason to insist that the real narrator be not a third-person narrator. Adopting a second-person merely creates a quasi-storytelling gesture. Though by addressing "you" the narration shortens the distance between narration and character, the tone is too serene, solemn, abstract and detached to assume that a real teller, an invisible "I" behind the narrative, exists. There is indeed a distinguishable narrative voice, but its ambiguity and detachment prevent it to be identifiable as an independent entity. Lukacs' criticism of modern subjectivism characterizes this narrative consciousness quite well: "man becomes the author of his own life and at the same time the observer of that life as a created work of art" (Theory of the Novel 118). It participates and observes at the same time. This consciousness tries to apprehend the fragments in reality "only by the grace of the mood in which they are experienced," but, as the end of "Clover" will show, "the totality reveals the nothingness of this mood in terms of reflexion" (119). I argue that the narratological perspective directly involves the problem of the irreconcilability of transcendent and the immanent, and a brief review of Hegel's reexamination of self-consciousness may contribute to the discussion.

How to relate Hegel to "Clover"? The text, according to "your" recollection, tells that "his" long wait for the transcendent "gently divides him" (152/149). I would

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like to connect this division and the contact with the transcendent of the consciousness to Hegel's discussion on the "Unhappy Consciousness" near the end of Self-Consciousness chapter in Phenomenology of Spirit.[94] The Unhappy Consciousness, according to Hegel, is the skeptical consciousness which acknowledges the self-contradiction of absolute negation: through negation it receives freedom, but negation also prevents it from acquiring determinateness, or actual content (#205, 124). In other words, the consciousness "pronounces an absolute vanishing, but the pronouncement is, and this consciousness is the vanishing that it pronounced" (#205, 125). This "passes back and forth from the one extreme of self-identical self-consciousness to the other extreme of the contingent consciousness that is both bewildered and bewildering," and it cannot "bring these two thoughts of itself together" (#205, 125).

Now Hegel approaches the problem of the contact with transcendent, "the Unchangeable." The Unhappy Consciousness is aware of the trascendent and identifies its own individuality, particularity, and variability with the Unchangeable. However, the Unchangeable and the Unhappy Consciousness is dialectically related. The consciousness cannot approach the general, universal Unchangeable "in and for itself," which lies in "the beyond," but the unchangeableness of itself (#211, 128). Consciousness cannot contact the Unchangeable without "a definite form": "if the beyond seems to have been brought closer to the individual consciousness through the form of an actuality that is individual, it henceforth on the other hand confronts him [sic] as an opaque sensuous unit with all the obstinacy of what is actual" (#212, 129). If the identification is complete, the definition and existence of the consciousness and the Unchangeable collapse. "The hope of becoming one with it must remain a hope,"

[94] The Unhappy Consciousness is directly alluded once in the second part of "On Writing" (*Guo Songfen Ji* 451).

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Hegel argues, “for between the hope and its fulfilment there stands precisely the absolute contingency or inflexible indifference which lies in the very assumption of definite form” (#212, 129). Therefore, the Unhappy consciousness is this “intermediate position where abstract thinking is in contact the individuality of consciousness qua individuality” (#216, 130). The consciousness, “as the antithesis” of the Unchangeable, “only feels it and has fallen back into itself.”(#217, 131).

To identify with the Unchangeable the consciousness has to negate its own particularity, but even if the consciousness renounces itself for the identification, “the truth of the matter is that it has not renounced itself . . . and the result is the renewed division into the opposed consciousness of the Unchangeable, and the consciousness of willing, performing, and enjoying, and self-renunciation itself which confronts it” (#222, 134-35). Therefore, the contact of the Unhappy Consciousness with the Unchangeable cannot be sustained but in the form of a mediated relation, which “constitues the essence of the negative movement in which consciousness turns against its particular individuality [which is] in itself positive [through the relation to the Unchangeable] (#226, 136). In Hegel’s formulation, the Unhappy Consciousness has to rely on a middle term, in the persona of a priest, that mediates the Unchangeable. In the end, the consciousness will find that “the Unchangeable, which it knows essentially in the form of individuality, is its own self, is itself the individuality of consciousness” (#216, 131). The lesson of the Unhappy Consciousness is that the general and the transcendent always reside in the particular and the individual.

Following Hegel, I attempt to interpret the distinct characterization as inter-mediation of consciousness. The identifiable narrator’s self-conscious narration effectively abstracts the characters. The observation is either too abstract or too trivial

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to maintain a convincing physiognomy or psychological depth. This narrative consciousness seeps into the depiction of scenery to the extent that realistic semblance almost dissolves in narration. There are four such consciousnesses in the story: "you," "he," Professor Solomon, and the young intern who appears in "your" recollection. A brief description of the will shows how the characters are interconnected through the relation among the Unhappy Consciousness, the middle term, and the transcendent. The focal character "you" lies at the center, but without the mediation of "him," the narrative around "you" cannot be activated: "Looking at him, as if stirred by memory, feeling uncannily familiar" (141/139, translation modified).[95] "His" quest in a mid-western seminary for a "metaphysics," a repetitive metonymy of the transcendent apparently proves his obsession with it (147, 161, 163). However, "you" never really know what he is actually pursuing. Silence is his epithet (143-44/141; 143),[96] and "his youthful body is used only for guarding his own world" (151/149, translation modified). Solomon, the professor of philosophy, is "his" teacher and mediator, who would "point out the wounds of life" for "him" (155/153). Likewise, through "him," "you" recall the young intern used to be the middle term between "you" and the indescribable mystery of life and death that the intern was facing (142/140-41). Whenever someone dies, "the life within him was diminished" (158/156), but the exact cause or his thoughts can only be perceived by his speechless stare at the piece of space by the wall (150/148; 159/157). The focal persona "you" can only see that they are pursuing the transcendent, but neither the reason nor the goal can be ascertained. One important common feature of these subjects is that they are all on the

[95] The subject is deliberately dropped here in the original, which may illustrate that the narrator's presence and the persona "you" are entangled. Also, the first sentence is mistranslated: the subject of this sentence is stirred by memory, not the memory stirred by "him" (*Running Mother* 139).

[96] *Chenmo* 沉默, or "silence," appears nine times in this short story. The repetition is even more curious as Guo in "Clover" showcases an virtuosity of Mandarin Chinese.

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brink of self-destruction. Solomon is on the brink of madness, mistaking the sound of a car horn as a call from beyond (156/153); the intern's life "was being consumed; his silence had already reached a point where he could do nothing but destroy himself" (150/148; 158/156); he, who suffers from asthma (147/145), is "secretly devouring himself" (156/154, translation modified) as his quest for the transcendent is "diminishing his life" (163/160). They are negating themselves to identify with a higher reality, but as Hegel has argued, the Unhappy Consciousness, as the antithesis of the Unchangeable can "only feel it and has fallen back into itself."(#217, 131). What they are questing, however, is blocked not only according to philosophical premises, but also from the ambiguous narrative voice.

The climax of "Clover" is "your" contact with the transcendent. The penultimate sequence of "Clover" quite fascinatingly captures the subject's contact with the transcendent.[97] If "spirit could move matter," than the scenery "imitate the subdued, somber human thoughts" (142/140, translation modified). "Without him beside you, you finally realized that letting the eyes dwelling on scenery without a purpose was more important than life itself" (163/160, translation modified). "You" gradually tries to approach what "he" has been trying to reach for years. Following the spirit of Romanticism, nature becomes the place where the transcendent resides. When "you" climbs up the hill for scenery, "he" becomes the mediating guidance of "your" thoughts: "Only after he left did it occur to you that you should learn to use his eyes to gaze at the end of the world"; "You waited patiently for the scenery, like his memories, to gently unfold before you" (162/160, translation modified). The mimetic correlation that Wu emphasizes is actually the process of mediation that takes place inside "you." "Learn" and "like" imply that "you" is attempting to identify with "he"

[97] The translation splits the long paragraph in the original into two (*Running Mother* 160-61).

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but does not succeed. The subjective gaze gradually infiltrates nature before "you," conveyed through rhetorical devices like anthropomorphism and simile: the field becomes "the seasonal decay that smiles," (163/161, translation modified); "[the] bare branches from which autumn leaves have fallen reveals the vastness of friendship for you" (162/160); "snow would carry north wind and wail like a mad woman" (163/161, translation modified). In other words, it is not human beings absorbing scenery, but the "scenery was torturing human beings" (163/161, translation modified). The more the subject tries to extend its reach, the more precarious the subject becomes. When the Unhappy Consciousness embodied by "you" negates itself to identify with the transcendent, it indulges in its own subjectivism. "in your rapt stare, in the sparseness of the winter scene was elegant abundance and magnificence, like a dynasty that reaches its zenith" (163/161, translation modified), the object is never reached, and the abstract nouns "abundance and magnificence" and the simile all suggests that "you" cannot contact but only approach the transcendent through mediation. If as Hegel asserts, the Unhappy Consciousness can only "feel" the presence of the Unchangeable, it explains the bodily sensation that the consciousness ephemerally "feels": "at this very moment, you only want to, by a surge of spasmodic inebriation, plunge into the sway of swinging bare branches and be clothed by the warmth of wilderness" (163/161, translation modified). The previous sentence suggests that "you," like the previous examples, have arrived at the edge of losing the self.

"Exhilarated, you thought you have fully understood his life-long commitment" (164/161, translation modified). But do "you" really reconcile with the transcendent and empathize with the enigmatic quest that his predecessors have experienced? What exactly is the transcendent in "Clover?" It is easy to resort to memory and nostalgia to explain this, and it is not incorrect: "cloudy sky would become superflous; everything

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rises and falls like memories" (163/161), but I think there is more to it. Why do they seek the transcendent? The ending paragraph is peculiarly short and uneventful, in comparison with the long passage on the hills. That "he" committed sedition away from the land where "he" has been searching for the transcendent obstructs the sublation of self-consciousness, and almost embarrasses the previous nature sequence. Although in Hegel's formulation this is exactly the end of the Unhappy Consciousness: the Unchangeable cannot be reached without negating the self-consciousness. Apparently "you" fail, "he" in the prison also fails, and more importantly, the narrative fails. If the identifiable narrator's presence can be regarded as a consciousness, and the adoption of the persona "you" and the middle term "he" does not reconcile with the unnamable transcendent but stumbles over the textual irony, then the narrative itself embodies the Unhappy Consciousness, creating a mise-en-abîme structure: the narrative mimics the characters' inner state. The transcendent cannot be reached and reconciled with the subject in the text and through interpretation. As Guo himself states in an interview, writing is only a process of approaching truth, if there is one, but contacting the truth is impossible (Interview with Wuhe 51). Moreover, Guo clearly asserts that writing inevitably involves disaster (51). Guo is extremely sensitive to the historicity of his writing: his writing is always initiated by the historical violence of modern Taiwan and Republic of China, as I attempt to show in the next chapter. This is why I do not agree with those critics who argue that Guo seeks for redemption of his frustrated political activity through writing; neither do I really accept the idea that his writing expresses his consciousness for a Taiwanese subjectivity. My understanding of the transcendent is the beyond that cannot be reached outside the dialectic of redemption and disaster, and literary fiction only preserves the traces and sediments of this dialectic. Nostalgia for his homeland in

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the US is the dialectical image of exile and disaster of modern Taiwan. To explicate the dialectic, one has to bring in the putatively effaced The German Ideology.

The sudden and puzzling ending compromises the quasi self-negation that the focal character "you" experiences. "He," the character who shares a spiritual friendship with "you," the main focal character, is "sentenced to prison for sedition" (164/162). The abrupt ending prevents the reader from finding out how "you" react to the news. Although it obstructs the sublation and the promise of the transcendent, it corresponds to the beginning of the The German Ideology and parallels "his" decision to devote himself to political praxis out of the sight of narrative. Though the Hegelian "Unchangeable" cannot be reached, a Marxian utopian drive is at the same time evoked by this ending. Marx and Engels criticize that the Young Hegelians' "demand to change consciousness" merely "amounts to a demand to interpret the existing world in a different way . . . to recognize it by means of a different interpretation" (30). The famous optical image condenses the dialectic of ideology: both the illusory image in the camera obscura and the physical vision of the retina mediates the reality, but in different directions (36). "In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth," the historical materialism that Marx and Engels promote "is a matter of ascending from earth to heaven" (36). Unlike the "Unhappy" consciousness, Marx and Engels insist that the actuality of reality is the "contradiction of productive forces" (74) and its subsidiary forms: "collisions of various classes, contradictions of consciousness, battle of ideas, [and] political struggles" (74). Irony epitomizes and embodies this dialectical inversion of thought. Only through the absence of Marxian utopian drive does the hope appear.

However, irony doubles because the text itself self-reflexively refers to the impossibility of a remaining possibility of praxis. It can only sustain itself as artistic

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semblance. If this predicament is contextualized, the irony of "Clover" is the antinomy of Taiwan postwar modernism. Precisely in this movement does Taiwan literature show the yearning for the unchangeable in negativity. Accompanied by the historical calamity of the White Terror is the absolute rupture of loss of Modern Chinese and Japanese colonial traditions. The atrophy of experience and the atrophy of realism, and modern fiction only accommodates the failure of the quest for the transcendence and the failure to change the world. As the inverted image of in optical devices, the Marxian utopian drive regresses into the Unhappy Consciousness. In the next chapter I attempt to discuss this dialectic of utopian drive and disaster in the concept of historical fiction and Guo's late work.

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Chapter Four

Historical Fiction and the Politics of Temporalities: On Guo's Late Style

Guo seems to be quite fascinated by saints and martyrs. Suffering and redemption became his ideal of artist as a vocation. In the more realistic works, figures like Tiemin and his comrades, the anonymous "he" in "Clover," the nameless cousin of the superintendent Akaoka in *Jinghun*, can be seen as to some extent the secular versions of martyrs of history. Guo shared his admiration for sainthood with his role model Flaubert. Flaubert's later works: *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, published in 1874, and *Trois Contes*,[98] published in 1877, concretize the romantic, unrealistic, lyrical side of his talents. Harry Levin connects Flaubert's painstaking writing process to his fascination with saints: "[Flaubert] was more concerned with vocation and sacrifice than with either titanic rivalries or messianic pretensions" (235). For him, the artist as vocation "requires the rigors of sainthood" (235).

No other works embody this fascination with sainthood more conspicuously in *jinye xingguang canlan* 今夜星光燦爛 [Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight] (1997, hereafter "Brightly") which curiously remains awkward in the oeuvre of Guo and in Taiwan literary historiography. The style, tone, and subject matter of this story form a decisive break from previous stories in Guo's oeuvre. He gives up on "serious imitation of the everyday" (à la Auerbach) and the ironized, aestheticized realist prose in the eighties. Already in earlier works like "Moon Seal," Guo uses very short paragraphs to compose his story. In the nineties, Guo more consciously and markedly breaks his last stories down into sections: "Brightly" contains four parts, twenty-three sections. In this story, the protagonist precariously stands on the verge of

[98] These literary works feature Saint Anthony the Great, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Julian the Hospitaller.

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disappearance in the text; the artificially spectacular style, violent images, and the more conspicuous intrusion of the narrative voice exposes the writer/narrator's urge to control. As the image of chess game in "Brightly" demonstrates, Guo's concern has turned to portraying a much greater force, be it political, historical, philosophical, which ominously dominates Guo's last fictional biography.

In his interviews Guo never formally answered why in his later works he turned to deal with figures that belonged to the pre-1949 Republic of China instead of Taiwan, except a vague response claiming that this swerve of change had something to do with his personal concerns and interest (Interview with Jian 231). In another earlier interview, Guo even stated that "Brightly," though the details regarding the protagonist, the events, and the setting in this story clearly refer to Chen Yi 陳儀,[99] had nothing to do with Chen Yi per se (Interview with Liao 115), and therefore he refused to acknowledge the label "historical fiction" for his work (Interview with Liao 116-17). Guo never seemed interested in commenting on his own work, making it difficult for scholars to speculate or discuss what the relation between fiction and history meant to him. Guo's insistence on the absolute fictionality of his stories and novel commits every criticism based on the referentiality of his fiction to trial, and it may be the reason why scholars usually divert from analyzing the stories themselves and discuss these works' meaning in Guo's career, especially in the case of "Brightly." I take Guo's apology of his fiction's fictionality with a grain of salt: if Chen Yi does not mean too much, why did the author put so many details into the story to make sure that no reader will mistake this figure for others in the first place? The specificity contradicts his own claim, and this ambiguity is a challenge for the

[99] Guo effaces the name of the protagonist in "Brightly." Chen Yi has not been the archnemesis in narratives of Taiwan history, as he contacted the Kuomintang army after the conflicts On February 28, 1947 and was directly involved in the consequent massacre in Marh.

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critics: one cannot take the characters too closely or seriously as if they were real, nor can one read them too allegorically and abstractly as if they were substitutable.

Studies focusing on "Brightly" seems disproportionately scant. Nanfangshuo 南方朔 in his companion criticism of "Brightly" argues that Guo attempts to reassess Chen Yi's life by reconfiguring him as a wronged tragic hero in order to redeem him from demonization perpetrated by partisan ideologies (81-83). Nanfangshuo compares Chen Yi's life as ruins, and argues that only through death can Chen Yi transcend the historical violence and unfair judgment. From this Nanfangshuo observes that Guo has a wider and more universal historical vision in "Brightly": with a more generous attitude Guo's fiction allows a more balanced, just view on forgotten or distorted historical figures, which helps transcend the ressentiment derived from historical violence. Ng Kimchew basically acknowledges the redemptive criticism proposed by Nanfangshuo, but Ng's conclusion differs from his predecessor's. He posits that the philosophy of history in Guo's fiction is an aesthetic gesture to compensate the melancholia (*Textuality* 281-82). In order to discuss Guo's intention, Ng not only asserts that "Brightly" retains the utopian impulse that contains the potential for the nation's self-redemption in the face of modernity, but also locates "Brightly" in Guo's failed revolutionary idealism (281). Ng argues that Guo did not portray Chen Yi to redeem him through fiction, but to redeem the writer himself through Chen Yi (*Textuality* 275). Ng aims to bridge the wide chasm in Guo's life in the late seventies when Guo turned his back on political activism and resume fiction writing. In a more recent study, Liu Shujhen 劉淑貞 more philosophically approaches the historical dimension in Guo's modernist fiction and argues that Guo's career culminates in the mirror image in "Brightly": Guo, in his endless writing and rewriting that stretch the limit of literary language struggles to arrive at the aporia of history (Liu 49-50). The

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history is the lack, the unrepresentable, the impossibility itself, Liu argues, and writing can never reach but strives to approach the core of history, demarcated by the martial law regime and Guo's own exile (Liu 49; 51). The impossibility therefore empties Chen Yi's self, which transforms into the remnant of history.

From the studies above, it can be observed that "Brightly" invites speculations on an epistemology of historical fiction (or rather the limit and impossibility of it), and a philosophy of history. However, "Brightly" forces critics to resort to biographical information or a discussion on the theories of fiction writing itself to decipher them. The biographical approach is certainly valid but leaves several questions unresolved. To begin with, the transformation of style cannot be satisfactorily explained. From the serious, elegant prose colored by nostalgia in the eighties to the more heavy-handed arabesque flourishes in the nineties, what caused this obvious change of style? In the studies above, only Ng notices the drastic change in style. Second, if every scholar would acknowledge the historical dimension of Guo's fiction, what exactly is Guo's philosophy of history? Both Nanfangshuo and Ng resort to Walter Benjamin's concept of redemption to describe the relation between Guo's aesthetic and history (Nanfangshuo 80; *Textuality* 282). Liu borrows Michel Foucault's earlier concepts of self-referentiality of literature so as to indicate Guo's effort to perform the overwhelming influence of historical violence in subjectivity (47-49). The third question is, why the history of pre-1949 Republic of China? Guo never gave an definite answer, and scholars seem more reserved to discuss this topic regarding his writing. Guo in his last interview expressed his doubt: if a story produced in Taiwan is all about foreign countries and cultures, does it still count as a part of Taiwan literature? (Interview with Jian 241). If Guo can be included in the literary history of Taiwan, how should one interpret the presence of "Brightly"

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in Taiwan literature? Moreover, can one elicit a new historical dimension meaningful to Taiwan literary history? If his fiction is not historical, nor about a particular, even identifiable historical figure, what is it about? Guo's denial forces critics to reassess the meaning of historical fiction in Taiwan literature.

Historical fiction always assumes a political character that performs various functions: be it documentary, critical, constructive, testimonial, ludic, judgmental, or redemptive, different functions and meanings depend on one's ideological position. Perry Anderson in his long essay "From Progress to Catastrophe" traces the development of historical fiction of the West.[100] "The classic historical novel," in the beginning of the nineteenth century as a side "product of romantic nationalism" in the aftermath of French Revolution and Napoleonic invasion of Europe, "is an affirmation of human progress, in and through the conflicts that divide societies and the individuals within them." However, the effort to depict the totalizing social forces gradually dissipated in the end of the nineteenth century, and the genre became either "a dead antiquarian genre" or "entertainment literature" about "everything that was not prosaic daily life in the 19th century." In the face of "the massacres of the First World War, which stripped the glamour from battles and high politics," as well as the "primacy of perception" that characterizes high modernism, historical fiction moved to the margin, saturated by "a deep historical pessimism." The interaction between the social and the individual "found supreme expression in the counterpointing of the futile survival of a class and the cosmic extinction of an individual embodying it."

During the age of "the postmodern," according to Anderson's account, "the historical novel reinvented for postmoderns may freely mix times, combining or

[100] Anderson, Perry. "From Progress to Catastrophe." *London Review of Books* 33:15 (2011). Web. June 11 2019.

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interweaving past and present; parade the author within the narrative; take leading historical figures as central rather than marginal characters; propose counterfactuals; strew anachronisms; multiply alternative endings; traffic with apocalyptics." Anderson, with Jameson, suggests that this revival "ought rather to be seen as a desperate attempt to waken us to history, in a time when any real sense of it has gone dead." Andersons's genealogy of how historical fiction interacts with its contemporary environment throughout history touches precisely upon the painful spot of Taiwan literature: the precarious political sovereignty, plural collective experiences in conflicts and bigoted identity politics among ethnic groups and generations, contributed to the political character of the historical fiction in Taiwan literature and the lure of this "new explosion of invented pasts." Apparently Guo's late works should be contextualized in Anderson's discussion on the postmodern.

Considering its overt political character, historical fiction is a much debated genre in Taiwan literature.[101] Chen Chienchung 陳建忠 exemplifies the scholars from the nativist camp, proposing that historical fiction plays a critical-constructive role. His theoretical treatise "A Rudimentary Inquiry on Taiwan Historical Fiction: Reflections on Previous Studies, Epistemology and Methodology" is especially sensitive to the power dynamics in the cultural field (*Flowing through Memories* 27). Chen argues that critics should not decide which work is historically more convincing than others (*Flowing through Memories* 42); rather, the stress of the study should fall on the narrative strategies, motives and intentions of the writers (43). As many nativist critics are inclined to do, Chen emphasizes how historical novel writers actually perform a postcolonial narrative act that aims to "redeem the history [repressed by the authoritarian regime]" (44) by representing the totality of the society

[101] I consciously exclude discussions on other crucial social/cultural determinant: gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, etc. in Taiwan literature from the present study.

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of an oppressed people (in the Lukácisan sense) through long novels; after the democratization in 1987, Chen perceptively indicates that contemporary fiction writers more actively intervenes in historiographical writing and imbue contemporary consciousness into historical materials (44). In other words, current Taiwanese historical fiction on the one hand strives to redeem and restore the history and memory suppressed by decades of authoritarian regime; on the other hand, the fall of the authoritarian regime gave rise to a pervading skepticism that radically criticizes and interrogates history's authority (*Flowing through Memories* 66-67).

David Wang more perceptively grasps the dialectical character of historical fiction in his study of anticommunist novels, a genre that thrived during the fifties with the official support and condemned by nativist writers as collaborationist writings.[102] Wang stresses that historical crisis is the necessary background of anticommunist novels (*The Making of the Modern* 143). In the face of historical catastrophe, writing itself can only indicate the deficiency of language (*The Making of the Modern* 145). The often criticized formulaic emplotment based on the absolute moral boundary between friend and foe only suggests that the motive of writing is nothing but a Sisyphean wish (143-44): the wish the future would redeem the past regardless of its failure (145). Wang's analysis also asserts the redemptive dimension of anticommunist novels, but he stresses the dialectic: the anti-communist novel would not have surfaced if the communist regime hadn't taken China; the utopian impulse towards restoration would have meant nothing if the territory had no been lost (*The Making of the Modern* 146). Anticommunist novels at the same time claim

[102] The content usually depicts how the "evil communists" clandestinely upended the sovereignty of China and invests a profound faith of the restoration of China in the future into the theme. Apparently the colonized Taiwanese people and their experience were not in, or at best on the margin of, the vision of these immigrants' collective experience. Recent studies have paid more sympathy to this genre for it records to the traumatic exilic exprience of mainland immigrants.

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historical legitimacy and aim for the "manifest destiny" of restoration, which determines its Janus-faced temporality: the future of restoration is already inherent in the narrative recollection of the past; the genre is both nostalgic and prophetic (146). In this sense historical fiction contains two aspects: it is linear, as the story is based on the acknowledgment of the collective historical experience of a actual past; and it is also cyclical, as the morality and faith will lead to a destined triumph (147). The cyclical and the linear interact dialectically, and the fated triumph in fiction only proves its impossibility: the actuality of "the present" is lost (147). The anticommunist novel overall is a negative gesture that marks the lack and the failure in reality: were what it predicts were to be fulfilled, it would be dead (147).

Culture-wise, historical fiction exemplifies the most tangible embodiment of the invisible clashing temporalities in a society. Already in Chen's and in Wang's study the complexity of the politics of temporalities in Taiwan literature can be observed: the dialectic of the temporalities is not only immanent, as Wang's study fully demonstrates, but multiple and deeply entangled in power dynamics between social groups, as Chen's study shows. Until now, even the most encompassing literary historiography cannot assuage the tension on the inside of the history of a particular social group and that between histories of different social groups. But the telos of historical fiction is mutual: to redeem the past. This motif means differently for either camp, and this is where Guo's late works can come into play, as a redemptive urge has become the most accepted explanation of their possible meaning. Guo apparently does not belong to the nativist writers' camp: depicting a historical figure from the Republic of China[103] can hardly be incorporated into the archaeological effort of

[103] Zhu excludes "Brightly" from his discussion of Guo; Ng rather cynically points out that Guo deliberately chooses a figure who will not be welcomed by the nativist camp, as Chen Yi is more or less involved in the massacre after the February 28 Incident (*Textuality* 261).

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restoring the history of the oppressed. Moreover, Guo's own insistence on the fictionality of his fiction partially contradicts Nanfangshuo's surmise that it was Chen Yi who is redeemed, since Guo denies the authenticity of his characters. Ng's argument that Guo attempts to redeem himself is more convincing, but I do not think Guo retreats from social intervention once and for all. In the following analysis I attempt to dispute the "redemption" hypothesis and argue that Guo is aiming at something more abstract: his late works derive from a modernist move that not only critiques contemporary Taiwan/ROC (in the nineties) but also self-reflexively interrogates the significance of historical fiction itself. I do not think Guo aims to criticize the authority of the "grand narrative" instituted by the authoritarian regime, like Chen and the nativist critics are more inclined to find. I do not agree with Ng and Liu's pessimistic explanation, that Guo's writing is an compensation of his disillusionment and the detriment of the authoritarian regime, as this explanation effaces the particularity of Guo's choice of his materials. Borrowing Wang's insight of the dialectic of literary fiction and history, I particularly want to argue that an investigation of Guo's late works not only helps to complicate the intuitive ostensible connection between literature and history, but also helps to extend the problematic to a crucial dimension of literary historiography: the politics of temporalities. His later works dramatize the clashes of temporalities in Taiwan, which is, I argue, the inconspicuous foundation on which the ideology of literary historiography thrives.

Guo's literary hero Flaubert succinctly teases out the temporal aspect of historical fiction inherent in language by manipulating the verb tenses. In the penultimate episode of the *L'Éducation*, Frédéric and Madame Arnoux exchange their recollection of their shared past. Madame Arnoux states: "N'importe, nous nous serons bien aimés" (*Oeuvres II* 451). ["No matter, we shall have truly loved one

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another" (*Sentimental Education* 388)]. But Frédéric laments: "Quel bonheur nous aurions eu!" (*Oeuvres II* 451). ["What happiness we should have had!"] (*Sentimental Education* 388). In the studies on *L'Éducation*, the strange shift of verb tense in this passage always attracts critical attention. "To Mme Arnoux's future perfect," Brooks writes, "which already sees their (unconsummated) love as capped and made definitive by an impending end, the final separation that will conclude this last meeting, Frédéric replies by a past conditional, evoking the missed possibilities of the past" (*Reading for the Plot* 208). Both tenses eschew the certainty of fact and "render the impossibility of the present moment" (208). Brombert argues that the "future perfect . . . is like an epitaph projected toward a hypothetical future situated . . . at the line of demarcation between the temporal and the atemporal" (*The Hidden Reader* 145). From their hindsight, "the past becomes a privileged vision, even though life continues to unfold in its imperfection" (145). This shift of tenses allegorically defines the core of historical fiction: how the missed opportunity, irretrievable past is grammatically summoned in imagination and the realm of possibility, and how this hypothetical dimension in language dialectically indicates that fiction ultimately collapses and clashes against the grim reality. Future perfect is akin to the logic of historical fiction, because the materials of historical fiction derive from what actually and already happened, the end has been determined even before the beginning of historical fiction. Past conditional, on the other hand, reflects the individual, if not collective, wish to correct, to justify, to enrich, to judge, to redeem, but its eventual failure of the wish is already inherent in it.

The politics of temporalities, especially the dialectical character, is also a critical dimension in the social philosophy of modern German intellectuals. From studies of Ernst Bloch, Adorno, the dialectic of different temporalities is the crucial

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factor that contributed to the rise of fascism. Borrowing this tradition will anchor the intellectual source of my understanding of Guo's philosophy of history. I will begin with Bloch's concept of "non-contemporaneity," which will in turn contribute to a metacommentary on the politics of temporalities in literary historiography. I also want to look at Adorno's speech in the early thirties, "The Idea of Natural History," which established his conception of the dialectic between myth and history as the crucial process of the social mediation between the subject and the object, which he later developed in major works, especially in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. I find the intertwining relation between myth and history especially apt to characterize Guo's later style and his concern for history in "Brightly." This reciprocal interpenetration of history and myth not only locates the social and historical aspects in philosophy but also provides literary criticism with a more nuanced and useful vocabulary to engage in the historical aspect in aesthetic.

In the second part of this chapter I opt to take a detour to Western modernist literature to find the possible source that may help to explain the formal attribute of Guo's late works. In the interview Guo once mentioned that his literary taste is Westernized through and through (Interview with Liao 120). Taking the cue, in this chapter I wish to demonstrate how paralleling "Brightly" with several texts—not necessarily themselves, but their thematic and aesthetic significance— n Western literature help to extract hitherto unnoticed aesthetic and philosophical dimensions, such as the complicated extra-diegetic intertextuality that determines the structure of "Brightly." I select the following texts by several significant writers who testified to the complex dynamics between progress and art in Western modernity: Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and his essay

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"Ulysses, Myth and Order."[104] Even though "Brightly" does not directly engage these texts, I contend that despite the great temporal and spatial differences, the texts provide an allegorical fulcrum to reassess how Guo absorbs the influence from Western literature to refract and mediate the historical violence that befell Chinese and Taiwanese people through Guo's fiction. Finally I attempt to broaden the scope to question the validity of the concept of redemption in the light of the dialectic as a possibility of the philosophy of literary history, and the problem of the community in the face of the historical significance of the pre-1949 Republican era in Taiwan history.

Politics of Temporalit(ies) according to Bloch and Adorno

Bloch devises his theory of non-contemporaneity in the thirties for two main purposes: to explain why Nazis and fascism thrive in a high capitalist society, and to rescue the potential of revolution from a dialectical understanding of the status quo. Non-contemporaneity refers to the conflictual state between the precarious present and remnant of the past, a state in which "the spectre of history," or "[needs] and resources of olden times," continuously affects "the nihilism of bourgeois life": alienation and commodification of the world (Bloch 107). The "non-contemporneous elements" causes "temporal alienation" of the present, and the consequent contradiction "facilitates both the deception and the pathos of 'revolution' and reaction at the same time," which Bloch quite succinctly puts it as "bad anachronism" (108). The non-contemporaneous contradiction therefore can be seen as a dialectical side unleashed by the contemporaneous one: the crisis of high capitalism (109). The

[104] In "Brightly," a line from The Waste Land, "unreal city"; one of the section titles, "Waking from the Nightmare of History," comes from James Joyce's Ulysses. These allusions are sufficient evidence to infer that at the very least Guo has these high modernist texts in mind when composing the story.

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non-contemporaneous contradiction seeks a "habitually, and ultimately 'spiritually' missed element" of the modern life in the past, which is concretized in the form of "accumulated rage" on the subjective level to contradict the present (108). Subjectively speaking, the non-contemporaneity, deriving from a sense of insecurity, "[promises] precisely new life" (97), but instead "produces merely nostalgia for what has been as a revolutionary impetus" (101) which ultimately "intensifies into an orgiastic hatred of reason" (102). On the other hand, "a continuing influence of older circumstances and forms of production" on the objective level is summoned (108). "Home, soil and nation," the motif of fascist propaganda, "are such objectively raised contradictions of the traditional to the capitalist Now, in which they have been increasingly destroyed and not replaced" (109). The non-contemporaneous contradiction appeals to "the desperate peasant and bankrupt petit bourgeois" (107). However, according to Bloch, a dialectic is inherent in the non-contemporaneous contradictions. The factors of non-contemporaneous contradictions which "are . . . powerless for sudden change thus nevertheless . . . already recalled that wholeness and liveliness," "a past which is not yet wholly discharged in material terms" (112). What is missed, once occupied by the spectral past that contains "the relatively more lively aspect and wholeness of earlier relations between human beings," can be dialectically seen now as a prevented utopian future: the promise of "the whole person," "unalienated work" and "paradise on earth" (112). The revolutionary potential, the "genuine nebulae" which is impregnated with the "uncorrected element of the past" (115) is found only in contemporaneous contradicion, personified in the proletarian and their free revolutionary action (111; 113). Bloch concludes that the "task [of dialectic] is to release those elements even of the non-contemporaneous contradictions which are capable of aversion and transformation . . . and to remount

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them in a different connection" (113), which allows the society to "[gain] additional revolutionary force precisely from the uncomplete wealth of the past" so as to imagine "a critical totality" and to induce a non-contemplative revolution (116).

Adorno's analysis on temporalities also takes the route of dialectic. In "The Idea of Natural-History" Adorno develops a philosophy of history through a dialectic inherent in modern society and cultural phenomena themselves in order to restore the historical dimension in philosophy. The "Nature" is certainly not the nature referred to in natural science, but the "given," the static, the foundational, ostensibly uncontrollable conditions perceived in the human sphere, while the "History" refers to the new, the transitory, the intelligent, and the temporal dimension in life. As Susan Buck-Morss explicates, unlike contemporary philosophers in the twenties and the thirties, Adorno did not aim to develop a "concept of history in the sense of an ontological, positive definition of history's philosophical meaning" (Buck-Morss 49). On the contrary, Adorno insisted that "history received its meaning from the present" (51), and the task of the dialectic between Nature and History, in his own words, is "to comprehend historical being in its most extreme historical determinacy, where it is most historical, as natural being, or if it were possible to comprehend nature as a historical being where it seems to rest most deeply in itself as nature" ("Natural-History" 260), so as to "destroy the mythical power which both concepts wielded over the present, a power which was the source of a fatalistic and passive acceptance of the status quo" (Buck-Morss 49).

In Adorno's speech, he explicates how the Natural-History, the essential dialectic relation between them can be grasped. Lukács' concept of the "second nature," the historical regime inaugurated by modernity and transforming the organic world into a "reified, alienated, dead world" ("Natural-History" 261), shows the

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consequence of the "retransformation of the historical . . . into nature" (262). The impact of time, the ceaseless development that modernity and the ideology of Enlightenment praised highly eventually appears to be the rigidified, inescapable, inexorable force not unlike fate. On the other hand, Benjamin's philosophy of history allows critics to see in the stable social regime "the other side of the phenomenon: nature itself is seen as transitory nature, as history" (262). By seeing the transience beneath the permanence and the archaic force in the most contemporary, philosophy is allowed to tear down the ideological veil, and profoundly understand that "the discontinuity [of history] which . . . cannot be legitimately transformed into a structural whole, presents itself in the first place as one between the mythical archaic, natural material of history, of what has been, and that which surfaces as dialectically and emphatically new ("Natural-History" 266), and "the deepest point where history and nature converge lies precisely in this element of transience" (262). Adorno's philosophy pierces through the essence of modernity: the progress of history cannot fully exorcise the fear for the mythic elements nor dominate them, while the stable foundation of the civilization has contained the seed of disenchantment and the transience that characterizes the force of progressive time.

Adorno's early development of the dialectical Natural-history was further developed and became the backbone in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in which Adorno and Horkheimer more elaborately tackle various aspects of the entanglement, including a particularly one helpful for the discussion of the historical fiction: the dialectic between cyclical time and linear time, which is also a prominent theme in Guo's late works, especially "Brightly." Adorno and Horkheimer still base their analysis on the dialectic between myth and Enlightenment, the eternal and the transient, the archaic and the modern, and the crux in their discussion here is

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repetition, the basis of abstraction and identity. "Abstraction, the instrument of enlightenment, stands in the same relationship to its objects as fate . . . The leveling rule of abstraction is to [make] everything in nature repeatable" (*Dialectic of Enlightenment* 9). No matter in terms of mythical inevitability or scientific verifiability, repetition and progress are already interacting dialectically. Already the logic of enlightenment is inherent in archaic practice of magic, which seeks to control Nature's contingency: "by repetition, [humankind] could identify itself with repeated existence and so escape its power" (8).[105] However, enlightenment never truly escapes magic, as "the more the illusion of magic vanishes, the more implacably repetition, in the guise of regularity, imprisons human beings in the cycle now objectified in the laws of nature, to which they believe they owe their security as free subjects" (8). The principle of repetition therefore assembles individual instances under an umbrella term in the form of patterns, concepts, order, to control them:

> the explanation of every event as repetition, which enlightenment upholds against mythical imagination, is that of myth itself. The arid wisdom which acknowledges nothing new under the sun, because all the pieces in the meaningless game have been played out, all the great thoughts have been thought, all possible discoveries can be construed in advance . . . this barren wisdom merely reproduces the fantastic doctrine it rejects: the sanction of fate which, through retribution, incessantly reinstates what always was. Whatever might be different is made the same (8).

For Adorno and Horkheimer, magic and mythology are merely primary instruments of subjective consciousness to dominate nature: "mythology had reflected in its forms

[105] "Nature as self-repetition is the core of the symbolic: an entity or a process which is conceived as eternal because it is reenacted again and again in the guise of the symbol" (*Dialectic of Enlightentment* 12).

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the essence of the existing order—cyclical motion, fate, domination of the world as truth—and had renounced hope" (20). Contingency is transformed into necessity. Enlightenment is supposed to break the pattern of fatalism and predestination, but the promise of science and the principle of abstraction of the phenomenal world never really advance from the mythical age: "[the] subsumption of the actual, whether under mythical prehistory or under mathematical formalism, the symbolic relating of the present to the mythical event in the rite or to the abstract category in science, makes the new appear as something predetermined which therefore is really the old (21).

Bloch's and Adorno's (and Horkheimer's) analyses are important to rethink and to explicate the relation between history and historical fiction. From Bloch's study of "non-contemporaneity," what is missing in the present that forces writers to revisit the past? What does the revival of the past in fiction suggest about the psychological reaction to the crisis of the contemporary? Can reenacting history in fiction, from Adorno and Horkheimer's perspective, become a form of domination? What can be dominated by form, the past, the present, or the future? Since the advent of literary modernism, the problem of time has preoccupied writers. Charles Baudelaire's famous definition of *la modernité* epitomizes the dialectic of the past and the present: "La modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contigent, la moitié de l'art, dont l'autre moitié est l'eternel et l'imuable" [Modernity is the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art, of which the other half is the eternal and the immutable] (Baudelaire 695). Why is the present, the new, is only "the half of art" while "the eternal and the immutable" is retained as the other half? Conscious writers have provided their attempts in their works, most notable of which will be reviewed in the following.

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Myth, Tradition and Modernism: Flaubert and Eliot

Already in chapter three I have demonstrated how Guo in the interview more than once expressed his admiration for Gustave Flaubert, and his admiration curiously encompassed *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, Flaubert's grotesque, obsessively aestheticized quasi-novel (Interview with Jian 233-34). It is hard to believe anyone without a extremely erudite or refined taste would appreciate *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, since most of the historical references are archaic, obscure, and can hardly mean anything substantial or significant to any common reader even according to the criteria of the nineteenth century France. Flaubert created a fantastic world with lavish details in terms of delicate materials, oriental exoticism, excessive violent and orgiastic scenes, an atmosphere blending asceticism and irrationality, cunning sophistry, and encyclopedic knowledge of fantastic entities. The content cannot be farther away from Guo's concerns and themes in his fiction. However, the design of a man alone with his imagination with a "dual view of claustration as a feared reality and as a happy state" (*Novels of Flaubert* 193), "the irreconcilable exigencies of dream and of reality" (204), and a "profound need for an underlying but invisible unity" (192) all to some extent apply to the nameless protagonist of "Brightly," too. It is apparently not in the specific details but in the design of structure and the work that a parallel between "Brightly" and *La Tentation* can be observed and is worth critical attention.

In the penultimate part of *La Tentation*, the devil's sophist cadenza can serve as a start to discuss the key to the dialectical process:

> Yet the knowledge of things comes to thee only through the medium of thy mind. Even as a concave mirror, it deforms the objects it reflects; and thou hast no means whatever of verifying their exactitude.

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> Never canst thou know the universe in all its vastness; consequently it will never be possible for thee to obtain an idea of its cause, to have a just notion of God, nor even to say that the universe is infinite,—for thou must first be able to know what the Infinite is!
>
> Unless, indeed, that the world being a perpetual flux of things, appearance, on the contrary, be wholly true; illusion the only reality.
>
> But art thou sure thou dost see?—art thou even sure thou dost live? Perhaps nothing exists! (*The Temptation* 169)

Only the unusual structure of *La Tentation* allows such a blatantly philosophical manifesto, but it touches upon the core of Western aesthetic since the early nineteenth century: the impossibility of the identity and immediacy between subject and object. The Romantic writers all pursue the immediacy between the real world and human mind, and none of them succeeded. The rapid innovation of all aspects of material life and the drastic shift of human *Weltanschauung* since the Enlightenment pushed human beings away from the immediacy and harmony that Homeric heroes once enjoyed. The "deformation" (*The Temptation* 169) of the object and subject, therefore, plays the decisive role of the dialectic: mediation. Mediation is the only way that rearranges the relations between the subject and object. This is the origin of Lukács' second nature: human beings can no longer approach reality without a rigid intermediary social and cultural regime. Thus "illusion" is "the only reality." Yet as Adorno always insists, the answer to resolve the predicament always lies in the predicament itself. Mediation can be an inexorable force, like social regime and ideology, or it can be within human grasp, like artistic technique. This passage can be interpreted as Saint Anthony's inability to see through the reality of things, but it is also a self-referential passage that describes the how novelists like Flaubert perceive

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and represent the world. It is through this mediation that the dialectic of Natural-History. However, Natural-History in art is a completely different matter.

In the previous chapter I quote Culler's discussion on *la bêtise* to show how Flaubert criticizes a fallen version of "the attempts of intelligence to master the world, to seek out causes and offer explanations" (*Use of Uncertainty* 167), the ideology of the Enlightenment. His aesthetic resolution, though he himself was not completely conscious of it, is to push the logic of *la bêtise* to its limit and create an ironic distance in order to dialectically manifest the stupidity itself. Culler argues that the most blatant attempt is exactly *La Tentation*. *La bêtise*, Culler explains, is "what escapes the ordering intellect, whatever makes itself felt as a particularity which falls outside the concept and is simply there" (*Use of Uncertainty* 170). The aim of this aesthetic strategy is to "give some realization to one's sense of the incompleteness and partiality of society as constituted by its modes of discourse" (178), and the end of *la bêtise* is uselessness and nothingness, the exact backbone of Flaubert's contemporary culture that allowed art to exist. In Adorno's language, by submerging itself into the more powerful object, the subject learns about and exposes the essence of the object and aims to overcome and dominate it. In *La Tentation* the temptations themselves: monsters, heresiarchs and deities, are "represented by pasteboard figures who are easily summoned and quickly dismissed" (180), and the ultimate effect is that "the text juxtaposes its citations in paradigms of non-functional contradictions which make all views seem stupid" (*Use of Uncertainty* 181). The ironic juxtapositions of considerable obscure figures that Flaubert excavated from the depth of the ossified history sparks the transitory face of naturalized history, and it is this process of dialectic that allows the more than a millennium old saint to reveal the truth of Flaubert's modern world.

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Brombert more gravely argues that from the beginning *La Tentation* concerns "the Decadence" (*Novels of Flaubert* 190). The Devil's concave image implies that the "reconciliation" between the real and the fictional "remains unattainable" (203), and he apparently notices that behind the subject's enjoyment in the aesthetic *of la bêtise* is "a dialectical tension between nihilistic impulses and intuitions of the absurd" as well as the "compelling expectation that behind these forms lies hidden a metaphysical secret" (192). Adorno's dialectic of Natural-History is helpful here: Saint Anthony' desire for knowledge and secret, the motive that allows him to see the devil, is an ironic reflection actually the ideology of the Enlightenment; while the nihilistic impulse, the fatalistic sense of failure, is the mythical angst revived in the overwhelming progress, or the bourgeois stupidity on the surface. Compared with literary realism, which is influenced by the Enlightenment ideology and bravely strives to seek the reality, decadence is its ironic counterpart. It shows its doubt that that literary realism can attain immediacy, and the skepticism is propelled by an impulse for the artificiality and the image of decay. However, it is at the same time a very serious reevaluation of the progressive history from the negative side. It is a useful start to reevaluate the late style of Guo.

Almost half a century later, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* caused a seismic change in English poetry in 1922. It is the poet's artistic effort to deal with the distortion and alienation of subject and object in a world far more fragmented and chaotic then that of Flaubert's. The compilation of literary references in *The Waste Land*, I argue, provides a critical paradigm to understand the meaning of the heavily fragmented structure, especially the rich diegetic and extradiegetic literary references in "Brightly." Franco Moretti argues that "the mythical method," a concept that Eliot used to characterize the importance of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, is also the rationale of

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The Waste Land. The mythical method, by "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity," is "simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy that is contemporary history" (Eliot 177). "It is," Eliot continues, "a step toward making the modern world possible for art" (Eliot 178).

What may be the similarity and difference between Eliot's and Adorno and Horkheimer's understanding of order and control? According to Moretti, the mythical method "extracts certain elements from organized wholes of various nature, and chooses precisely those elements which are capable of performing a new function, more or less distanced from the original" (Moretti 221). The supposedly synthetic poetic, or what Moretti calls "literary scaffolding" (221), establishes a "value-system which pervades and ascribes 'significance'" in the now alienated world (Moretti 220). Slightly different from Flaubertian irony that mocks and celebrates objects' meaninglessness, Eliot aims to craft a new order, a new second nature to replace the already fragmented world to bridge "the split between factual judgments and value-judgments, to establish in its place a form of communication and perception in which the two instances are indistinguishable" (220). The historical aspect of the second nature is consciously exposed and restored, and the fragmented history is supposed to form a new second nature that allows a less fragmented order of world. In other words, Eliot artificially stages the dialectic of Nature and History. Or, in Moretti's words, "the more senseless and directionless the past seems, the more will the eternal present of the myth be able to absorb every signifying capacity within itself" (222). The restoration of a more preferred second nature is "the necessary means towards the realization of a much more ambitious project: to reinstate a single, unified, and, so to speak, definitive culture" (Moretti 223).

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Yet, a dialectical tension inheres in such a system, because by mimicking the fragmented world, the particularity of the collected quotations cannot be tamed, and therefore they form and deform the poetic intention at the same time, and the poem is aware of this dialectic between the whole and the parts. Michael Levenson argues that *The Waste Land* not only amasses "fragments of consciousness"; the poem itself is "consciousness of fragmentation" (Levenson 192). It attempts to form "an encompassing, integrating pattern" (189) in which "a mass of finite perceptions, individual points of view, aspects, distinct but not wholly so" interpenetrate (198; 190), and each individual consciousness can be "corrected by a tradition of consciousnesses" (186). According to Levenson, *The Waste Land* in principle comprises parallel, contextual, analogical entities, creating "a challenge to consecutive temporal development" (201), mimicking what Eliot disparages as "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy." The dialectic of Nature and History proves that Eliot's synthetic poetic can be dissolved by the negative potential of disintegration, and the temporal discrepancy between high modernism (the whole of the poem *The Waste Land*) and fragments from literary tradition (allusions spanning from the classical to the contemporary) interpenetrate. The cost of building the second nature is the sacrifice of the subject, the lyrical speaker that once symbolizes the immediacy (or the metaphysical desire for immediacy) of subject and object.

There are other aspects in *The Waste Land* correspond to traits of historical fiction as a genre. For example, the motif of death and resurrection parallels the fictional portrait of actual figures, as if the fiction writer "revived" a person from his or her death temporarily during the process of writing and reading. The synecdochical relation between fragments and the whole allows one to think a period of history through recreating a real, particular historical figure. But the mythical method,

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according to Levenson, is a poetic of impersonality, which concatenate the "dissolution of boundaries around the self" (Levenson 175): though it does not mean "denying individual ego but severely restricting its claim" (186), a claim which rebels against the Romantic's claim of self. To command the collection of various personas, or "constituents," Eliot "[resolves them] into Tiresias" (Levenson 191). To discuss this I have to actually delve into the analysis of the text.

"Brightly Shine the Stars Tonight"

Already in the first section, at the very beginning of the story, Guo demonstrates how he is going to transfer the style from realist prose to quasi-fantastic allegory. The first two paragraphs are sketches of visual impressions of a mundane street scene, separated by periods (219/209). The tone is realistic, and the narrator is not identifiably visible. In the beginning of the third paragraph, however, two sentences juxtapose: one realist, the other metaphorical: "The motorcade made its way slowly through the streets. Chess pieces moved quietly on the chessboard" (219/210, translation modified).[106] The sudden insertion of an obvious literary image signals the narrator's crude intervention. The image continues:

> This is what chess pieces manipulated by a confident player would look like. Skills account for thirty percent; poise and equanimity accounts for seventy, and what is appreciated is the wordlessness during the game. On the streets in broad daylight shows an concentrated aura of the contemplating player. However, this game did not attract any curious spectators. A great master plan or ruthless

[106] The translator replaces the period in the original with a colon (210), which compromises the effect of the montage/superimposition of the real and the metaphorical. Also Guo did not qualify which strategic board game the term *qizi* 棋子 exactly refers to: go, chess or Chinese chess. I accept John Balcolm's translation here and take the broadest sense of the term "chess."

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> calculation would have been achieved in an imperceivable flash (220/210, translation modified).[107]

Who is the player here? The narrator does not directly mark and qualify the connection between the scene and the metaphor. The image is simply superimposed on the realist prose.[108] Only in the next paragraph does the reader find that this is an image in the general's, the nameless protagonist's mind. This is the master image that frames the story (it is reprised in section twenty-one and twenty-three). The chess player may refer to multiple meanings: the invisible administration of the authoritarian regime that commands the death penalty of the general; it connects to the power of history in the form of a divine game, whether the higher force be socio-economical, theological, or metaphysical; or it can be interpreted as a self-referential image of the writer, as characters resemble chess pieces, the game itself is emplotment, and the poise and skills of the player metaphorically refer to writing style. No matter which, the prominent existence of the narrator already pronounces the fact that the protagonist does not possess the center of the story; on the contrary, the general is manipulated by a force beyond his control. This framing strategy also influences how one can approach this story, as the story develops, despite the narrator ostensibly depicting the general's introspective dimension, his subjectivity is obviously weaker than the textual effect itself: the spectacular rhetorical devices (I will soon discuss this aspect) almost drown the plot and characterization, and it hinders the perceptive as well as psychological verisimilitude promised by realist prose.

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[107] The translator puts "as though" to smooth out the awkward, undetermined relation between sentences; likewise, "seemed filled with" distorts impersonal appearance of the aura which Guo retains in an awkward structure (210).

[108] It may remind the reader that the second section of *The Waste Land* is titled "A Game of Chess."

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The chess game image is extended in many crucial aspects in the story: its diachronic result, the endgame, is used at the beginning and the end of the story (220/211; 273/257). What is more interesting is the image's visual impression of spatial patterning. It corresponds to the parallelism and contextualism of the mythical method. One feature deriving from this is the four extra-diegetic epigraphs, extracts from works by classical Chinese poet Li Po, Montaigne, Conrad,[109] and Goethe, before each sections. The epigraph is an interesting choice. Conspicuous allusions herald the meaning and theme of the text. In other words, they foretell crucial meanings in the story, but only indirectly. Now a temporal dimension can be located in the parallelism. In the story, the strategy corresponds to the cosmic images and fortune-telling. Again one can find this common trope in Eliot's and Flaubert's works: Tiresias the hermaphrodite prophet in *The Waste Land* commands the center of the poem, and Madame Sosostris that parodies the prophet; two of the stories collected in *Trois Contes*: "Saint Julien L'Hospitalier" and "Hérodias," are both activated and propelled by prophecies.[110] In the story, when the nameless general had a narrow escape from death and contemplates the constellations that accomodate the "traces of immersion and morphing of fate" (229/219, translation modified): he was looking for signs from the lines in his palms (228; 246/218; 233), from a picture, or from an augury in the stars (229/247). Having experienced numerous battles, the general tries to find the key to his fate. In "Brightly" the counterpart to the prophet image is arguably the mysterious Taoist, who gives the protagonist a riddle in couplet (226/16)

[109] The translator did not look up the source of the epigraph and therefore misrepresents it in its original language. The epigraph comes from chapter twenty of *Lord Jim*, "A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea." It appears when Marlowe and Stein discuss Jim, whom Stein diagnoses as "a Romantic" (*Lord Jim* 163).

[110] In "Saint Julien," Julien's parents receive different prophecies from two personae: the mother meets a hermit in the boudoir, who announces that her son shall be a saint; the father meets a beggar outside the castle, who claims that his son shall be an emperor (*Three Tales* 43). In "Hérodias," Flaubert follows Matthew 14 and Mark 6 of the New Testament and envisions the death of Iokanaan, or John the Baptist, who announces messiah's coming and the ensuing apocalypse (*Three Tales* 87-90).

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and during the solar eclipse performs magic, during the process of which "refracted lights, sounds and vitality" converge, "resonant in correspondence rhythmically"[111] into "an immortal cycle" (250/237). *Jiaogan* 交感, or "correspondence," no doubt confirms the relation among entities and parallels, and *xunhuan* 循環, or the cycle, is a form of control in magic. The cycle transforms the contingencies of reality into a predictable pattern. Like Tiresias, the Taoist serves as the junction that connects the different temporalities in the story.

Fortune-telling as a theme epitomizes the temporalities of the historical fiction. The answers are foretold; when the reader reads historical fiction about a major historical figure, his or her future in the text is determined because it already happened. If the text trespasses what is known, either the fiction does not belong to this genre, or the definition of historical fiction does not hold. As it moves toward an already known path according to historical materials and known facts, historical fiction can arguably be seen as a reenacted, parallel, ironized, enriched version of prophecies. They share the same verb tense: future perfect, that something "will have happened" to someone. Future perfect also characterizes the cyclical time: if everything happens according to a cyclical pattern, what happened and what is bound to happen are predetermined. The future and the past are all inherent in the present, and history is transformed into an eternal now. Read along this path, "Brightly" is a particularly nihilistic story. But cyclical time in the story is merely a subjective projection, as the narrator cleverly manipulates the language to show that cyclical time manifests only when the nameless general's state deteriorates and he gradually fails to distinguish dream from reality, which corresponds to what Bloch defines as the non-contemporaneity. The image of solar eclipse symbolizes this state, in which

[111] Missed in the simplified translation.

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the sense of time is disturbed, indeterminate, : "fifteen minutes felt like a thousand years," and it is "difficult to distinguish day and night, victory and defeat, and life and death" (220/210). The story is inflicted by "the hypnosis performed by deranging memories and the imminent ruthless reality" (259/244, translation modified).

The motif of dream extends the indeterminate temporal state. Dream dominates the second part of the story, which is entitled "Waking from the Nightmare of History." It is the motif that Ng's study has mentioned but has not elaborated on (*Texutality* 275; 277). The text deftly plays with different temporalities of *meng* 夢, a general term refers to an subjective mental state during sleep, and *mengxiang* 夢想, a more positive term that refers to hope and ideal (236/225), which suggest the two-facedness of "dream" in "Brightly": the former derives from the experience during the wars, what actually happened, while the latter reveals an unrealized utopian urge: peace. In the general's mind, the cyclical time is a subjective, temporary, intermediate concept to apprehend and understand his experience and abstract it into history: "He suddenly saw himself and others in a different time and place chewing and tasting the same bitter fruit. It was the same for generations and generations: imprisoned in the circle of history, leave the labyrinth of recurrence" (242/231, translation modified). The utopia is timeless, a promise of deliverance that remits the nightmare of history, as an ambiguous statement between free indirect speech and narratorial commentary: "How can the rise and fall, flourish and decline of an era and a generation outside the dream be leveled against millennial conviviality in the dream?" (237/226, translation modified). The conflict between real experience and his utopian impulse ultimately elicits the worst of cyclical concept of time: nihilism. In his memory, his subjective mental recollection, "the floating bodies filling the river . . . vanished into emptiness like a dream flowing away. He plunged into another dream on his horse" (227/217,

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translation modified). “All worldly affairs were illusory” (226/216); there was no solid evidence he could rely on to know his own destination and the nation’s fate (234/224, translation modified). Before his death, “his dream is almost insanely gigantic” (271/255, translation modified). As the story progresses, dream gradually erodes reality. The nameless general falls into the myth he creates for himself at the cost of his sedimented experience in actual historical events. He willingly absorbs the re-enchantment of the world in order to escape the real world pervaded by terror of war, the bureaucracy of military life and the fragmented country. This scene is the epitome of the oneiric logic that pervades the whole story. The dream seems to be the subjective refusal of the “second nature.” Hence, the elaborate oneiric logic unfolds in sections five, seven, eight, nine, ten, and twenty-three. This logic and the consequent resignation and meditation are delicately built on the naturalization of history. The dialectic of Natural-History is reengaged: the modern history is ossified into a language of fate. Ironically, hoping to deliver himself from the reality by mythifying the history, the protagonist alienates himself, ossifying the history. The utopian drive finally deteriorates into escapism, and the cyclical time collapses into blind timelessness, losing its secularity. Yet the narrator prevents the text from delirious subjective narrative. The duality of the “dream” does not simply stand back to back, facing opposite directions in time. The dream of a utopia has never been realized, only buried in the protagonist’s reminiscence and infiltrating into the present; what actually lies at the opposite end of the general’s retrospection is his imminent execution: “the reality beyond the dreams has caught up with him” (230/220, translation modified); “Outside his dream, he was undergoing severe penal punishment for advocating defection on the front line” (272/256). The text stays self-conscious enough by retaining the ultimate irony.

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I want to observe the self-referential dimension of the story from another aspect of "Brightly," the image of mirror. As an optical apparatus, a mirror, the center of the third section of the story, is a clever choice of imagery. A mirror image is a virtual image that cannot be projected onto any actual surface, which makes the mirror a particular apt symbol of the relation between fiction and reality, as Liu indicates in her article (49). I already in the previous section mention that this choice of image may have a connection with the concave mirror as a metaphor of human mind used by the Devil in Flaubert's *La Tentation*. A mirror does not reflect; it distorts. The thing and its image, the actual and the virtual, cannot be identified, which symbolically suggests that actual history and historical fiction cannot simply match. The narrator would have agreed with the Devil's pronouncement:

> In the mirror, the superimposition of images and interconnections of lines were not meant to repeat you, who is outside the mirror. It did not serve to reflect; it did not duplicate the floating light and gliding shadows outside. (245/233, translation modified).[112]

Through the mirror, the nameless general strives to realize the dream, even after his downfall from power: he "decided to be reincarnated in the mirror" and he "impregnated [the mirror] with his self in the dream" (246/233, translation modified). He devotes himself to creating a whole new image, detached from anything in the past (247/234), but later he finds his intention fails him, as "[he] never expected that the mirror would start to quarrel with him" (247/235). It is because his memory and past cannot be obliterated from his existence (248/235). The temporalities converge in the mirror: he anticipates his future in the mirror when his fate is not yet determined, and meanwhile he cannot escape from his past. This mirror, as the one handled by the

[112] As this passage is particularly important, I opt for a more direct, literal translation to emphasize the literary defamiliarizing effect of the original.

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Taoist, gives form to the dream with dual temporalities: a wished future and memory. Yet here lies the decisive difference: the general starts to devote to creating the image in the mirror after the utopian dream fails. Allegorically speaking, fiction comes after utopia. The image is virtual; the fiction is the semblance of utopia. Neither can defeat the power of dialectic: the timeless dream cannot defeat the contingency of history, and the semblance in the mirror cannot affect the real.

The optical character of mirror image also synchronically determines two major homologous figures of speech in "Brightly": simile and parallelism. They do not directly intervene in the content, but complicate the form. There are many examples of simile in the text: "the deafening roar of the traffic was like the continuous beat of war drums" (221/211); "[he] communicated with the high beams and responded to the passages stretching under his feet as if he himself were the ancient building" (224/214 translation modified); "his incessantly proliferating dreams were like swarms of butterflies" (238/227, translation modified); "[sounds in the environment during the eclipse] sounded like a musical instrument *se* 瑟, also like insects chirping on a summer night, and more like hails falling from the sky" (249/236, translation modified); "ecstasy like tides" (246/234, translation modified); "the wind seemed to be like . . . a thousand geckos" (251/238); "[his consciousness was exhausting itself] as if a small silkworm had spun its last thread of life" (252/239). Simile, by definition, contains the connecting words, which function like the mirror as the interface between the actual entity and its virtual image. This figure of speech in "Brightly" not only decorates the text and colors the prose, but also concretizes the abstract. The clumsiness of the structure "A is like B" resonates with the mirror as the trope of poiesis, and it elicits one of the prominent characteristic of Guo's late works: the corporeality in language. Again, the narrator's comment represents the bodily

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revelation in the general's mind: "'*yuxian yusi*' [欲仙欲死][113] was no longer an rhetorical analogy as commonly understood or spoken but embodied and enacted by real body in flesh and blood" (252/239, translation modified). One important feature of simile, however, is that although this figure of speech concretizes the abstract, it cannot offer identity. On the contrary, it emphasizes similarity and difference at the same time. "A is like B" obviously contradicts the claim "A is B." It therefore exemplifies the dialectic of "historical fiction": fiction is not history, despite it is history that initiates fiction.

When an entity is placed before the mirror, its appearance duplicates, and this feature is homologous to parallelism. Parallelism doubles, even triples the similar structure. It is a synchronic structure that does not necessarily enrich semantic meaning but decorates with symmetrical pattern by juxtaposing related elements.[114] They compile and breed but to no avail and for no obvious reason except for aesthetic concerns. Another Flaubertian gesture. I have discussed the five-character structure in my analysis of "Snow Blind": *weida de moulue* 偉大的謀略 [a great master plan], *hendu de suanji* 狠毒的算計 [ruthless calculation](220/210, translation modified); *jiyi de yumei* 記憶的愚昧 [the foolishness of memory] and *sixu de qingwang* 思緒的輕妄 [frivolity of thoughts] (227/216, translation modified). The four-character structure originates from a canonical tradition that can dated back to the age of shijing 詩經, the oldest verse collection of Chinese literature: *zhengsha chengfan* 蒸沙成飯

[113] Literally speaking, 欲仙欲死 describes a liminal spiritual state on the verge of apotheosis and disposition of the body, but it also refers to strong sensual pleasure that the term "la petite mort" describes accurately in French, and therefore "divine apotheosis" misses the corporeal dimension in language here.

[114] This aspect of rhetorical parallelism half explains why the translator does not always faithfully translate every sentence in the text, because it makes the translated text clumsy and unnecessarily redundant, especially when English cannot retain the neat, succinct, consistent combination of characters.

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[to cook sand into rice] plus *sadou chengbing* 撒豆成兵 [to scatter beans to sprout into soldiers]; *zhufeng weijian* 鑄風為劍 [to beat the wind into a sword] plus *wentian chenglong* 紋天成龍 [to tattoo the heaven to create *long* 龍 the mythical beast] (240/230, translation slightly modified); *zhujiu lunbing* 煮酒論兵 [brew alcohol and discuss strategy] plus *yinbei kanjian* 引杯看劍 [draw the cup and watch swordplay] (242/231, translation modified); *biyin cixian* 彼隱此顯 [one disappears when another appears] (250/237, translation modified); *hufeng huanyu* 呼風喚雨 [call the wind and hail the rain] plus *xingfeng zuolang* 興風作浪 [raise the wind and make the wave] (252/239, translation modified). There are more examples in the text. A noteworthy character of the examples I list here is that it is these expressions manifest the mythical character of "Brightly." They are rich in rhetorical effects: hyperbolic (or even histrionic, to describe power by "calling the wind and hailing the rain"), analogous (to achieve the impossible, as one forge air into arms), anthropomorphic ("foolish" memory), synecdochical (sword and soldier substitute war), and so on. That Guo forgoes dramatic irony in his realist prose and opts for a more classical language is crucial, as it reflects a change of direction from literary text to meaning. On the one hand, rhetoric is a stricter command of language, but it obstructs immediate meaning. The vector of the narration is no longer linear and straightforward, but analogous and horizontal. The meaning can no longer be intuitively comprehended; the text becomes an labyrinth, or as Nanfangshuo calls, a ruin (83). The design illustrates the fact that history is actually historiography, but instead of showing its constructive and positive function as political ideologies would dictate, the meaning and history cannot be approached.

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Simile and rhetorical parallelism exemplify the most noticeable stylistic turn in Guo's late works. What is even more striking than the simile is that rhetorical parallelism also contains a diachronic dimension: it reflects Guo's command of blending classical Chinese into vernacular Mandarin Chinese prose. The diachronic dimension that the classical Chinese rhetorical parallelism evokes corresponds to the parallelism as a principle in the mythical method: the tradition and history not only appear in content, but also influence the form. The politics of temporalities here is extra-diegetic. Unlike the theme, content, context, this aspect of language cannot be argued as "specifically Taiwanese"; rather, it involves training in classical Chinese texts. The formal aspect of the story complements the theme of non-contemporaneity. Behind the language is the spectral presence of the classical Chinese language, which was exalted to the shrine during the decades before democratization in Taiwan but fell from grace in the late nineties. It points to a cultural whole before Western modernity arrived in China. However, what Guo tries to do is not to revive the remains of the premodern tradition in Taiwan literature to rebuild a lost cultural orthodoxy. This involves the ideology of literary historiography, and I shall come back to it in the coda.

How can the ending of "Brightly" be interpreted? In the end the general is executed, while the "shadow in the mirror" that the general has been so eager to preserve in the third part of the story "[steps] out of the mirror" (276/259). If one accept the mirror episode as a self-reflexive allegory, does historical fiction triumph and survive history? The message of "Brightly," in the end, consists of two levels of dialectic: the dialectic between dream and reality, and that between fiction and reality. As Wang's diagnosis of anti-communist novels has shown, the present is missed, and the future only appears in the form of semblance. Historical fiction is ultimately a form to control non-contemporaneity immanently: it pushes the logic of limit to its

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extreme in order to expose it. Moreover, it qualifies the role of art as semblance: the verb tense of the utopia is past conditional, and that of art is subjunctive. Is historical fiction actually a form of control? However, as art, poetry and fiction can only be a semblance of control. The mythical method functions to project a gestalt from the cultural fragments so that the gestalt can be recovered in art, but the transience and enormity of modern society prevents writers from retrieving its real history. If art merely allows a semblance, it means dialectically the order that thinkers and writers aspire is impossible in reality at the present. It is the negativity of art that points to the inherent negativity of Enlightenment and reason. The tragedy of modernity lies in the fact that cyclical history, the static dream the protagonist devotes himself to, is always the negativity of the progressing history. The history penetrates the nature after all, and the hope is only retained in the possibility of art, which is also the failure of art. The following statement, added to the "Brightly" when collected into *benpao de muqing* 奔跑的母親 [*Running Mother*], Guo's second collection, quite beautifully sums up the theme of the story: "Let the wind flip the pages of the thick tome of history; all matters inhabit the profound darkness" (274/257, translation modified).

Coda: The Spectre of Republic of China

How to interpret Guo's "Brightly" in Taiwan literary history? Taiwan only appears in the distant background, and no trace of relevance of Taiwan can be found in the text. From he beginning of De-Sinocization in the eighties (Hsiau 95), the end of martial law in 1989, to the inauguration of the first Taiwanese president in 1996 and the first party alternation in 2000, in the cultural field the referent of the signifier Republic of China seems to be drained and replaced by Taiwan. "Brightly" was first published in 1997, in the middle of this rapid change and the rise of Taiwanese

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nationalism. A Taiwanese writer publishing a short story about the mastermind of the February 28 Incident and massacre in March, 1949? I think this is one of the events that can be read allegorically as a problem of Taiwan literary historiography. Bloch's useful characterization of non-contemporaneous contemporaneity can be of help here. The spectral time of Republic of China inside a Taiwanese nativist writer itself is an interesting phenomenon.

In his controversial essay "Post-Loyalism" David Wang arguably provokes the sore spot in Taiwan literature in the beginning of the twenty-first century. The concept of post-loyalism can be interpreted as passive-aggressive criticism of Taiwanese nationalism, for which Wang forges an alternative history of Taiwan. *Yi min* 遺民, or the so-called loyalists, are people who pledge their faith to and invests their sorrow in the fallen political entity and culture in the recent past, and they refuse to acknowledge the new era. Though he never clearly identifies what "fallen political entity and culture" is in the context, any reader familiar with Taiwan politics can understand that Wang refers to the precarious existence of Republic of China. Wang acutely observes that "the irony of modernity is both its emphasis on a temporal rupture that creates a distinct 'experience of the past' and its exposure of a sense of nostalgia" ("Post-Loyalism" 97), and "the loyalist consciousness was a unique angle to expose the ideological and temporal paradoxes of modernity" ("Post-Loyalism" 98), which, obviously, can only be the entangled conflicts of nationalisms and rapid modernization since 1949. Witnessing the rise of Taiwanese nationalism to the orthodox ideology in the conjecture of the waning of the KMT government and the first party alternation, Wang resorts to politics of memory and corresponding complicated formalism to reject nationalist ideology in literary realism. Post-loyalism, a term Wang consciously invents in the gist of the prefix post- in postmodernism and

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the postcolonial in an ironic sense, "perpetually hints at a vanished space in time, fixating on a political orthodoxy that may have never been orthodox" ("Post-Loyalism" 101, my emphasis) and "dislodges the loyalist memory from the neat order of time, while on the other hand it extends and exaggerates the post-loyalist ego's a priori attachments to the loyalist consciousness" ("Post-Loyalism" 102, my emphasis). Wang plays with the performative and indeterminate dimension of the "imagined community," a concept which is celebrated and dogmatized in Taiwanese nationalist literary historiography. Wang reverses the logic and launches an counter attack by arguing that if "a previous dynasty or polity did not exist, the logic of the post-loyalist is still able to fabricate one, creating an affinity to a historical, desired object that he [sic] seeks to recover or restore" ("Post-Loyalism" 102), which implies that if Taiwanese nationalists deploy and maneuver every theoretical, political and historical resources to construct an ideology, they cannot inhibit those non-conformists to do the same.

Wang's article is a provocative gesture responding to the zeitgeist in the nineties and early two thousands, a period in which the brewing conflicts among different nationalist ideologies since the eighties became radicalized. Whether Wang's overtone against Taiwanese nationalism can be seen as a Chinese nationalist gesture itself or be validated is debatable. Yet, I would like to suggest that Wang's response exemplifies a position of negativity in the face of rising Taiwanese nationalism. Moreover, Wang's understanding of the complex relationship of style and ideology is far more shrewd and profound than most of the writers in the nativist camp. His analysis disregards sociological and economical factors of social reality except ideology, and his ostensibly liberal political faith is firmly rooted in fiction and art, which is not unlike the nationalists. However, despite Wang's allusive apology for

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Chinese nationalism, he is totally aware that this nationalism is problematic precisely because the political consciousness is mediated by literary form. Unlike Lukácsian literary realism, the form premised on "representing the real" which help accommodate ideology in the form of dramatic illusion, Wang's preference for a complicated literary style suspects and downplays the effectiveness of ideology in literature, which renders his faith in spectral Chineseness (with a Derridean connotation) not only because it falls out of favor politics-wise, but because the stylistic aspect in literature weakens the content of the ideology. Even though one cannot neglect the political urge in Wang's gesture, it negatively reflects the contradictory character of imaginary, constructed Taiwanese nationalism and unstable, impossible Chinese nationalism.

Post-loyalist writing is useful because it is one of the strongest forms of non-contemporaneity in Taiwan literature now, and it provides an example to review the historical condition and the hidden premises in the establishment of Taiwanese nationalism. For example, the post-loyal blatantly pronounces its performativity and its lack of historical referent, and the post-loyal writers thrive upon this dialectical presence-absence. This dialectical paradox, in Taiwan literary historiography, is exemplified by both Republic of China and Taiwan: the former is declining while the latter is on the rise. And yet the indispensable presence of the former in political field and the suppression of the latter is telling in international politics. This is but the appearance of the dialectic between the two political-cultural entities. Postwar Taiwanese nationalism is the dialectical negativity during the martial law in the form of prosecution in White Terror, and the rise of nationalist politics is based on a continuous critique of this history, but can the once absolute control of the society be exorcised? Not exactly, because its legacy still thrives in contemporary society.

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Denying the existence of Republic of China cannot actually chase it away, because the absence of a powerful signifier dialectically summons its presence, and the Taiwanese nationalist ideology relies on a perpetual denial of the injustice inflicted on the island by Republic of China. Moreover, the post-loyalists described by Wang hold on to the absence despite their awareness of the absence. In this sense, Wang grants fiction its absolute ontological superiority over history. It is the dialectical opposite of "demand for authenticity," one of the foundational impulses in Taiwan literature. Taiwanese literature seeks to excavate and elevate the suppressed truth from literature, while the post-loyalists create a truth via literature for themselves to prove that there is no more historical truth in reality. The post-loyalist writings remind Taiwanese nationalism that any truth claim is impossible without construction, while the truth claim of Taiwanese nationalism unveils the desire for Truth in its absolute sense. Taiwanese nationalists return to history so as to create a non-existent future, while post-loyalists deny a future so as to recognize the fallen glory of the past. In this sense historical-fiction, the truth claim and the aesthetic claim, embodies this dialectic. No matter which end of this dialectic wins, an ontological middle ground, the present, is forever lost in the power dynamics, and "Brightly" self-consciously shows how art fills in the void of presence in the form of semblance.

In reality, however, they cannot exist anywhere but the present. This is the content of cultural politics as non-contemporary contemporaneity. The not-quite-dead Republic of China and not-yet-fulfilled Taiwan must co-exist, and this dialectic complicates the reified genealogical temporality in Taiwan literary historiography.

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Epilogue

Taiwan Literature, Tradition, and The World

I would like to return to Ye Shitao's foundational text of Taiwan literary historiography I have discussed in the introduction. "Inevitably Taiwan literature," Ye optimistically posits, "has to be examined from a global viewpoint. It is part of world literature. To contemplate Taiwan's future by Taiwan itself, or to analyze the development of Taiwanese society from a broader, global standpoint; weighing these partisan perspectives constructs the conundrum" (187-88, my translation). Moreover, Ye warns against the danger of archaism and proposes a progressive attitude (217), and he insists that the horizontal transplant of foreign cultures cannot be stopped: in order to strengthen itself, Taiwan literature must keep absorbing Western literature on the basis of its own historical legacy (217). Written in the early eighties, Ye's contention and his (relatively) liberal view appear much more bracing than many critics working in Taiwan literature today, and still ring true. From a general survey by a senior scholar on recent academic publications in the discipline published this year, an anxiety over the following contesting approaches still seem acute: the construction of a nativist knowledge, participating in East Asian studies, discussion regarding including the Republic of China in the discipline, and the challenge proposed by Sinophone studies (Huang 6-8). Ultimately the complex still derives from the conflict between the native and the foreign (8), and the general attitude is more suspicious than generous. I am still all for continuing and strengthening of studies concentrating on native history, language, and culture. However, the ideological effects generated and produced also may confine the scope and the prospect of the discipline. In the epilogue I would like to pick up Ye's proposal in the

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eighties once again and to relocate this thesis according by two critical axes: the tradition and the world.

The World

In chapter two, three, and four, I reach out for foreign sources so as to invigorate, complicate, and enrich the impasse of studies on Guo's fiction. In chapter two, I attempt to unfold a hidden trajectory of intellectual history starting from the West through Japan as a former empire to Taiwan as a former colony. Both the colonizer and the colonized had to tackle the question regarding subject formation and negotiate with the West as the decisive, ubiquitous influence in the world order in the twentieth century. I contend that this process can be traced in the development of narrative voice in modern Japanese and Taiwanese fiction, from which I attempt to trace the second trajectory in Taiwan literature that connects writers in the late thirties and the forties and Guo, who wrote in the eighties. In chapter three I try to expound on Flaubert's influence on or parallel with Guo by a close reading of Guo's major work and a survey of Flaubert studies. I argue that Flaubert's aesthetic intention and practice, la bovarysme and la bêtise, effectively interrupt the supposed communication between transparent representation between realist fiction and acquisition of information by creating irony, epistemological uncertainty, limited, subjective point of view, and useless aestheticized passages drained of meaning. I wish to illustrate how Guo, applying a similar strategy, reacts to the difficult time he underwent and was living in. In chapter four I delve into Bloch and Adorno's theorization on politics of multiple temporalities and philosophical dimension in history studies as well as Western modernist aesthetics that touches upon the dialectic between the contemporary and the archaic to decipher the critical dimension in

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historical fiction as a genre. By doing so I aim to refute the common sense understanding that Guo redeems himself vicariously by allegorizing a historical figure who continues to survive as a fictional entity. I attempt to demonstrate that Guo actually tries to criticize the failure of utopia and its missed encounter with the actual past through a complex ironic narrative.

I consult German social philosophy, Japanese intellectual history, literature on Flaubert studies, and modernist aesthetics to discover new dimensions in Guo's works. By by doing so, does this make Guo's writings a part of world literature? I doubt it, but this deserves a discussion by way of several important treatises on the encounter of the West and the East. In humanities, some scholars (though not many) have strived to raise Taiwan's visibility in academe and emphasize the necessity to participate. In the recent decade Shih Shu-mei may be one of the most earnest scholars to push Taiwan into academe on a global scale. Trained in area studies, postcolonial studies, and critical racial studies, Shih proposes a comparative study that remains vigilant about the hazards of unconsciously reprising cultural imperialism. In comparison to the classic critical move of "the empire writes back" which inadvertently consolidates the empire, Shih favors exploring historical and geographical transnational relations among minor political entities. In an essay published in 2015 entitled "World Studies and Relational Comparison" she fleshes out a more feasible methodology. In order to avoid and criticize the long presiding Eurocentrism in comparative literature, Shih advocates a "relational comparison" among texts. Critics should be informed of new discoveries in world history and construct a "network of texts as a study of world literature along what I call a literary arc," which can be understood as "an extendable and contractable trajectory that connects texts along an arc, elucidating certain problematics that are crucial for our

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understanding of world literature," and in the network a text can "enter into relation with other texts anywhere along it, illuminating specific issues within a time period or across time periods" (434). Shih asserts that "we have always lived in an interconnected world punctuated and defined by relations of all kinds, especially power relations, so that world literature must be understood as a field of relations that extend horizontally across space and are transmitted vertically across time" (431). Shih recommends thinking of "relation" as functioning like "a transitive verb: relation acts upon objects, terms, languages, texts, peoples, and societies and dispenses with any notion of insularity" (436), and aruges that "marginalized texts from so-called peripheries or semiperipheries can, as much as canonical texts, be brought into Relation" (436).

I do not disagree with Shih's methodological proposition and have nothing to add. This may be one of the most benevolent and appropriate methodologies to engage in comparative literature. Cultural imperialism has always been posing a threat to comparative works, and this verdict remains valid today. However, compared with forming multinational networks, I still feel cultural imperialism, deserves further discussion, because it has become the absolute enemy in postcolonial studies. Critics should be watchful for every contact between the West and the rest and constantly criticize its negative effect and influence. I agree, but is it possible that this taboo, to some extent, limits the possibility of developing comparative works in a postcolonial society? I want to read two essays here to justify my support of looking beyond a national literature: the view of the first is, no doubt, Eurocentric, but worthy of a review; the other is no less criticized as Eurocentric, but I would like to read it backward, from the point of view of a person from a postcolonial society.

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Erich Auerbach's "Philology and *Weltliteratur*" is a much appreciated essay in humanities, but also criticized for its blindness regarding Orientalism as the indispensable condition of his conception of world literature. Most critics agree that Auerbach's exile in Turkey during the thirties and the forties shaped his reformulation of Goethe's optimistic world view. Already in the beginning Auerbach conceives world literature as a product of modern paradox: "The presupposition of *Weltliteratur* is a felix culpa: mankind's division into many cultures. Today, however, human life is becoming standardized. The process of imposed uniformity, which originally derived from Europe, continues its work, and hence serves to undermine all individual traditions" (2). Modern capitalist civilization (and, considering Auerbach's background, fascism) was wiping out the difference among cultures, despite the fact that "national wills are stronger and louder than ever" (2). Auerbach laments that "in every case they promote the same standards and forms for modern life; and it is clear to the impartial observer that the inner bases of national existence are decaying" (2). Under the sign of Enlightenment, "the notion of *Weltliteratur* would be at once realized and destroyed" (3). National cultures may gradually participate in and contribute to the new world order by their respective political and cultural singularity, but the disproportionate power structure that every nation has to face, the process of modernism, and the pervading power of capitalism is also a terrible homogenizing force. There may be more and more national literatures available, but their difference is rapidly vanishing.

What Auerbach cherishes, "man's [sic] mighty, adventurous advance to a consciousness of his human condition and to the realization of his given potential," which is "thoroughly dependent on presentation and interpretation" through certain forms, is Enlightenment (5), and its benevolence is being threatened. For Auerbach,

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world literature today is burdened with "the duty of collecting material and forming it into a whole that will continue to have effect" (5), but disastrous world history in the first half of the twentieth century forced him to concede that "a spiritual exchange between peoples," "the refinement of customs," and "a reconciliation of races" is far less plausible today (6). For "those cultures not bound together [via political or cultural means] . . . there has been a disturbing (to a humanist with Goethean ideals) general rapport in which the antitheses that persist nonetheless . . . are not being resolved except, paradoxically, through ordeals of sheer strength" (7). Auerbach may not have noticed the irony, but the civilized rapport between cultural entities and the violence that supports imperial *mission civilisatrice* and forces political and cultural entities into antagonistic relations actually derive from the same source: Enlightenment. Anyway, Auerbach discloses his humanist belief as following:

> the present conception [of world literature] accepts as an in evitable fact that world-culture is being standardized. Yet this conception wishes to render precisely and, so that it may be retained, consciously to articulate the fateful coalescence of cultures for those people who are in the midst of the terminal phase of fruitful multiplicity . . . In this manner, the full range of the spiritual movements of the last thousand years will not atrophy within them. One cannot speculate with much result about the future effects of such an effort. It is our task to create the possibility for such an effect; this effect might also help to make us accept our fate with more equanimity so that we will not hate whoever opposes us—even when we are forced into a posture of antagonism (7).

Anyhow, Auerbach's diagnosis of modern international society may be still valid, even exacerbated, in the new century. There are two points I feel worthy of discussion in Auerbach's conception of world literature which, I maintain, is actually multifold

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dialectical instead of purely imperialist. National cultures rise in the wake of Enlightenment, a general and universal social force (after Napoleonic Wars and the consolidation of capitalism in Europe; after imperialism and the Second World War for the postcolonies) in the world when it threatens to eradicate difference, but new national cultures cannot withstand modernization and Westernization even when they strive to manifest singularity and distinction. Auerbach advocates a historical/philological reconstruction of each national culture so as to recreate and project new possibilities for a corrected conception of the world. In comparison, Taiwan literature as a budding national literature with complex inner contradictions seems to have missed the dialectic between the national and the global; the latter no doubt plays a crucial role in the contradictions.

In the introduction, I attempt to show that the Utopian impulse supported by an ideology in praise of resistance and authenticity only proves the absence of the Utopia in reality, which to some extent corresponds to Auerbach's description. Following Auerbach, it is no doubt important to establish Taiwan literature as a national literature and salvage it from the standardizing power of universalism and capitalism before critics can refashion a new, non-dominant picture of world literature as a necessary totality. However, produced in a postcolonial society Taiwan literature is no doubt sensitive, and right to stay vigilant, about the power dynamics between the West and the East. Jameson once wrote that "a dialectic does not yet exist that is capable of coordinating the incommensurable conceptualities of the national-literary and the international" (*A Singular Modernity* 101). Following his own claim, I feel it necessary to read Jameson's much attacked essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" *backward* and as a self-reflective gesture not only to

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think about Guo as a Westernized writer, but also the position of the author of this thesis.

Writing in the mid-eighties in the heat of the moment of the canon wars, Jameson emphasizes that third-world literatures' attention to nationalism remains necessary for their survival, and the West cannot underestimate its significance ("Third-World" 65).[115] He criticizes the condescending gesture of the West "to prove that these texts [produced in the third-world] are as 'great' as those of the canon," because of the indelibly "radical difference of non-canonical texts" ("Third-World" 65). "Indeed our want of sympathy for these often unmodern third-world texts," Jameson reflects, "is itself frequently but a disguise for some deeper fear of the affluent about the way people actually live in other parts of the world—a way of life that still has little in common with daily life in the American suburb" ("Third-World" 66). Jameson's self-reflexive thinking is valid and powerful: "none of these cultures [of the third-world] can be conceived as anthropologically independent or autonomous [even in the wake of decolonization] . . . they are all in various distinct ways locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism . . . a cultural struggle as reflexion of [capitalization and modernization]" ("Third-World" 67), so "a study of third-world culture necessarily entails a new view of ourselves, *from the outside*, insofar as we ourselves are (perhaps without fully knowing it) constitutive forces powerfully at work on the remains of older cultures in our general world capitalist system" (68, my emphasis). "We would have to give up," states Jameson, "a great deal that is individually precious to us and acknowledge an existence and a situation unfamiliar and therefore frightening-one that we do not know and prefer not to know" (66). Regarding the problem of the canon, Jameson

[115] I do not contest the diction "third world" here and accept Jameson's use of it to refer to formal colonies temporarily.

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questions, "*should* we only read certain kinds of book? No one is suggesting we should *not* read those, but why should we not also read other ones" ("Third-World" 66)? Jameson reminds his readers that "we are even more fundamentally fragmented than that; rather than clinging to this particular mirage of the 'centered subject' and the unified personal identity, we would do better to confront honestly the *fact of fragmentation on a global scale*" ("Third-World" 67).

Only three pages into the essay numerous questions regarding the power dynamic between the the first-world and the third-world appear. If Jameson's argument is read backward by a reader living in a postcolonial society like Taiwan, can one claim that "a study of first-world culture necessarily entails a new view of ourselves, *from the outside*?" As a third-world reader, does one also have "to give up a great deal that is individually precious and acknowledge an existence and a situation unfamiliar and therefore frightening—one that the third-world reader [does] not know and [prefers] *not* to know?" Is the anxiety of a third-world reader induced by the "otherness" of the first-world the same when the direction is reversed?

When Taiwan literature and Western literatures meet, especially in academe, different defense mechanisms can be activated. When Jameson analyzes Lu Xun's *kuangren riji* 狂人日記, he tries *very hard* to defend the cultural specificity of Chinese culture by laboriously referring to the philosophy (can one say philosophy, as this term is foreign to Chinese language?) of correlation (of sex and politics, for example) and connecting Chinese idiomatic phrases and Freudian language (by showing how many expressions related to the verb *chi* 喫 can be associated with the oral stage) to justify his analogical association of paranoia, social norm and cannibalism, the mediation between the private and the public (72). The elephant in the room is apparently cultural imperialism. Jameson's reading is self-conscious and

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prudent so as not to compromise the cultural specificity of modern China by conspicuous Western influence. What makes Jameson's effort look slightly clumsy is the fact that in Taiwan literature few scholars would read like this. Several decades have passed, and the way we read is completely Westernized, just as the development of modern vernacular Chinese is part of the reactive response to Western modernity. From this a major problem arises: the language for writing in Taiwan literature comes from Chinese culture, while the methodology of literary criticism comes from the West. When we cast our gaze first at the first-world and then return the gaze at ourselves, at Taiwan literature, we see an ambiguous entity, a non-identity neither Chinese nor Western, and this cannot be celebrated or explained away by theoretical terms like cultural hybridity or creolization. This complex continues to sustain the ideology of the "demand of authenticity" and the "will to resist." When Taiwan literature consciously tries to defy and criticize cultural imperialism, this gesture continues to feed the imperialist logic that Taiwan introjects onto itself. The liberal-multicultural-postcolonial politics that Taiwan literature now professes fails to bring about its fulfillment but rather sees the revival of monolithic political claims. The extreme difficulty to locate Taiwan literature in the world triggers curious defense mechanisms when the possibility of comparative literature is considered. This explains the eager call for creating a Taiwanese subjectivity and the hurt reactions of nativist writers and critics only expose the profound negativity of Taiwan literature: that critics cannot consolidate Taiwan literature positively.

Jameson's appropriation of Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic to describe the fluctuating power dynamics between the first-world (the West) and the third-wrold (postcolonial societies) supplements and complicates Auerbach's theory of the dialectical relation between the individual, the specific and the national as well as the

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homogenizing forces of capitalist modernity with a twist ("Third-World" 85). I think Jameson's essay published thirty-three years ago still valuable, because it helps to characterize and describe the difficulties, anxiety, and awkwardness I encountered when I decided to write a thesis on Taiwan literature in a department of foreign literatures.

I started this project from my dissatisfaction for the limits that a Taiwan-centered ideology has set for literary studies, and from my specific academic position I thought I could approach Taiwan literature from its supposed opposite, so in this thesis I chose to fix my gaze at Western literature before I returned to the island, with a clear consciousness that I may repeat the error by introjecting cultural imperialism in my reading. I did not (and could not) fulfill this goal; none of the chapters manage to illustrate the dialectic that Auerbach suggests in his treatise on *Weltliteratur*. I thought my counter-nationalist stance may serve as a relatively radical critical move that can stimulate Taiwan literature, but only when I began rewriting the conclusion after submitting the first draft did it occur to me how symptomatic this thesis is, because it is written with mixed feelings that all nativist scholars must have felt before me in their contact with the West. I find it difficult to welcome comparative studies without feeling suspicious of myself, because I give up the vigilance that nativist scholars have insisted since the seventies and at the same time let the self-imposed doubts deriving from my awareness of cultural imperialism prevent me from actually leveling Taiwan literautre according to criteria developed in Western literature. Have I not unexpectedly resorted to a national consicousness even when I attempt to refute a nationalist stance by way of looking into Western literature? Moreover, I think it is problematic that I did not feel uncomfortable when I approach Western literature as Jameson was when he strived to approach Chinese literature, and from this I realize

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that my approach is paradoxical: I feel uncomfortable with my too comfortable appropriation of Western literature in Taiwan literature, and this symptomizes my "out-and-out Westernized" academic attempt to approach Taiwan literature in a postcolony, as Guo described himself (Interview with Liao 120). My choice to analyze a writer who shares part of my background as a reader of Western literature may only prove to be expedient for my purpose. I am not even sure what this thesis can contribute: did I manage to excavate the latent influence of Western literature in Guo's texts, or simply inappropriately impose Western thoughts on Taiwanese texts regardless of the incommensurable difference? Before I can evaluate what I have done, I can only describe how a meaningful and conscious comparative reading consists of conflicts and dialectical twists, indicating the non-identity of Taiwan literature: it cannot be itself yet, nor can it be assessed according to Chinese or Western standards.

The symptomatic reaction triggered by this thesis resonates with Jameson's penultimate paragraph of this essay:

> I must admit that old habits die hard, and that for us such unaccustomed exposure to reality, or to the collective totality, is often intolerable, leaving us in Quentin's position at the end of *Absalom, Absalom!*, murmuring the great denial, "I don't hate the Third World! I don't! I don't! I don't!" ("Third-World" 86).

I am sure that I look as clumsy as Jameson when he tried to do Chinese literature justice. Ultimately he may be correct to claim that "a dialectic does not yet exist that is capable of coordinating the incommensurable conceptualities of the national-literary and the international" (*A Singular Modernity* 101). I do not think I manage to handle or grasp the subtle dialectic between the national and the world, Taiwan and the West, and the postcolonial and the imprial, but I still believe that by acknowledging the negative outcome of this thesis I can invigorate the postcolonial

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consciousness of Taiwan literature and encourage more valuable comparative works in the future, as Ye would have hoped for the progress of this discipline.

Tradition

In the introduction and chapter one I review the development of Taiwan literary historiography since the advent of post-war modernism in the sixties, the rise of nativist critical realism, the major debates in the seventies, and the beginning of development of Taiwan literature as a discipline. In the introduction I analyze the impetus of Taiwan literary historiography which can be divided into two categories: the "will to resist" and the "demand for authenticity." Taiwan literature sustains by placing itself in the position of the resistant oppressed, and interpret history according to moral judgement. In chapter one I extend this finding to argue that the ideology actually relies on conditions of literary forms. The epistemological claim of literary realism is emphasized while the aesthetic claim of modernism is challenged and criticized. Taiwan literary historiography has constructed a series interrelated binary concepts: Taiwan/China; popular/official; colonizer/colonized; native/West; history/memory; tradition/modern. The former is always privileged, while the latter is always criticized. In the last part of the chapter one, I try to show that realism and modernism cannot be thought as exclusive, but are interrelated, and this interrelation is significant in reading Guo's works.

Taiwan literature as a discipline has marched into its third decade. Can we not adjust the pervading ideology and epistemological premise so as to adjust methodology and the scope of the reading? One must acknowledge that Taiwan literature is much broader than it was twenty years ago; and yet one cannot but feel the impasse of the whole discipline. The imperative to "historicize" becomes more

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and more confining. It is time to rethink what this tradition means, even if it is still young. In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno asserts that "[one] must have tradition in oneself, to hate it properly" (52).[116] What does it mean to hate tradition? Threatened by the acceleration of unification process from People's Republic of China and the rise of populism on the island can scholars and critics afford hating the tradition constructed by Taiwan literature? Later in his life Adorno composes the essay "On Tradition" to discuss it.

Adorno defines tradition by the image of "handing down," its original meaning, which "expresses physical proximity, immediacy"; and yet tradition has become the "remnant within the social machinery of universal mediation" (75). Adorno's relentless dialectic shows that "the less the bourgeois principle tolerates otherness, the more urgently it appeals to tradition" (76). Since the latter half of 2018 till now, the rise of populism has been mobilizing tradition, be it Chinese nationalism, Taiwanese nationalism, or Christian-Confucian family values. All of which have been radicalizing the contradictions in the society: the generational gap, bias against gender and sexuality, different political inclinations (independence or the status quo or unification), and still Taiwan literature has not proposed anything that surpasses the ideas proposed two decades ago. "Society applies tradition systematically like an adhesive; in art, it is held out as a pacifier to soothe people's qualms about their atomization, including temporal atomization" (76). Adorno warns that once established and consolidated tradition would "degenerate into elements of an ideology which relishes the past so that the present will remain unaffected by it, at the cost of increasing narrowness and rigidity" (77).

[116] I am not the first to notice the significance of this quote. For reference, see Neil Lazarus' monograph *Nataionalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.

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Tradition is always on the verge of reification, apathy, and inertia. Adorno criticizes that "even the concept of world literature, though certainly liberated from the confines of national literatures, was tempted by [false tradition] from the beginning . . . as if artist had access to whatever aesthetic materials and forms historicism authenticated as precious and refined, as if each and every tradition would surrender itself to the artist precisely because they are no longer substantial or binding" (77). In recent years, institutions have tried to apply Taiwan literature and commodify it; popular fiction starts to draw inspiration from Taiwan history, and museums are transforming manuscripts into sellable products: notebooks, fountain pens, board games, etc., and they are encouraged by the discipline themselves. These are survival tactics, I admit, in a consumer society, but at what cost? Adorno criticizes the amnesia that pervades postwar West Germany, and warns that "it is inhuman to forget because accumulated suffering will be forgotten" and tradition must be responsible for conserving the memory, but when "tradition is subjectively ruined or ideologically corrupted, history objectively maintains its hegemony over everything and over everything into which it has seeped" (78). Today, tradition is aproretic, it preserves the suffering of the past, but it also contributes to instigating new social contradictions. Taiwan literature and its task to forge a Taiwanese subjectivity is not as liberal as it proclaims.

What Adorno prescribes is a consciousness I would call "to think like a modernist": one must embrace tradition by critically holding it at a distance. "Not to forget tradition and yet not to affirm it means to confront it with the most advanced stage of consciousness and to pose the question of what passes and what does not. There is no eternal canon" (78-79). Even a consecrated writer like Guo Songfen in recent years cannot be exempted from the fatal embrace of tradition, and the

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homogeneous critical literature testifies to this. Even the canonized works "refused to be restored to what they once were. Objectively . . . these works shed various layers according to their own dynamics . . . Its criterion is *correspondance which, as something new, throws light on the present and receives its illumination from the past*. Such correspondance is not synonymous with empathy and immediate affinity but requires distance" (79). From this I have to concede that I fail to conduct a dialectical reading in its truest sense, because I do not apply the old method and expose its failure. I escape to find new ways to look at Guo's work; I only manage to keep the distance with tradition. Guo himself succeeded; he forces the modernist writers to look at the indigenous tradition, while he forces nativist writers to see the truth by reforming the realist form. Taiwan literature used to be the negative force that exposes the limit of Chinese literature; now it fails to reform itself by replicating the mode of consolidating the tradition as an immovable monument.

"Only an attitude which raises tradition to consciousness without succumbing to it is able to deal with this. Just as tradition must be shielded from the fury of disappearance, so it must be wrested from its no less mystical authority," writes Adorno (80). This is a deeply dialectic view: the renovation must not be exterior, but from within. The most rebellious gesture to criticize is not to deny it once and for all; it is to the consciousness that forces tradition to renew itself. We do not have many anti-traditional works in Taiwan literature in academe. This old ideology may receive new tools and arms, but it never doubts its own premises. The discipline imagines and only reacts to attacks from the enemy's camp: those who stick to the hope of unification; those who dismiss Taiwan literature from other disciplines and other countries; or those who resolutely embrace the dying Republic of China. "The critical relation to tradition as the medium of its preservation is not only concerned with the

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past but also the quality of aesthetic production in the present" (80). As Eliot has eloquently articulated in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered ; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted. (38)

Critics may not be qualified to direct what writers should do, but can the academic tradition be challenged when "the really new" works of criticism appear?

Since November 2018, Taiwan has been facing unprecedented crises: different forms of populism are being amplified by algorithms of social media and an explosion of disinformation, and the horizon of unification is approaching at an unprecedented speed. The more dangerous the situation becomes, the more conservative people become. The non-contemporaneity is unleashed onto Taiwan society in the form of "accumulated rage" and the "continuing influence of older circumstances and forms of production" (Bloch 108). The fiasco of progressive politics in the referendum last year proves the remnant influence of martial law in previous generations, the most influential social strata now. Even Taiwanese nationalism, as its negative product, is its derivative. "The affirmative character of tradition is collapsing," Adorno writes, and "the new literature," "the really new" in Eliot's sense, "radically unsettles the ideology of meaning which was so thoroughly unmasked in the catastrophe that it even cast doubt on the meaningfulness of the past as well. It renounces tradition and

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follows it nevertheless" (81). To defuse the non-contemporaneity one must identify it in tradition, by looking at "[the] fact that [artists] neither can locate themselves in tradition nor function in a vacuum destroys the concept of artistic naivete so intimately related to tradition" (81). What should be criticized is not the ideological message or what is represented, but literary form and methodology. "Historical consciousness is concentrated in the indispensable reflection on what is and what is no longer possible, *on the clear insight into techniques and materials and how they fit together"* (81, my emphasis). Ye's contention against the danger of archaism and advocacy of a progressive attitude in 1984 must be more seriously and urgently considered in 2019.

Finally, judging from the hostility I encountered during the proposal examination and thesis defense, this weight of a newly rediscovered and established tradition prompts me to defend my thesis and clarify my intention again in the conclusion. I do not question the ethical significance of the works by writers and critics and struggles they were forced to undergo in the past, and I agree that it would be unethical, pompous and shallow to criticize the effort to restore the memory and achievement of the oppressed people in the age of authoritartian rule. I only wish to reiterate that I consciously choose my approach so as to distance myself from the tradition to observe how even the most indignant and creed has its ideological counter-effects when they appear and generate disciplinary limits in a newly established subject. The ideology can in no way confine the continuous production of literary works, but it decisively confines the vision of critics. It is the same with my application and appropriation of Western Marxist aesthetics in this thesis. I do not intend to distinguish ethically or aesthetically correct or invalid works of art, nor do I want to prescribe normative principles for critics. Moreover, I still cannot properly

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and critically deal with the incommensurability of cultural and historical conditions between the West and Taiwan and justify the my methodological claim. And yet, the negative aesthetics of Western Marxism (especially Adorno's) does offer new perspectives to readjust the ideological effects of the affirmative character of the discipline. The time for a fuller criticism have not arrived yet, but I still deem finding new ways to help a discipline move forward by criticizing as this thesis' possible contribution to Taiwan literature.

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