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Space, Politics, and Cultural Representation in Modern China
Cartographies of revolution
Enhua Zhang
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Space, Politics, and Cultural Representation in Modern China

Regarding revolution as a spatial practice, this book explores modes of spatial construction in modern China through a panoramic overview of major Chinese revolutionary events and nuanced analysis of cultural representations.

Examining the relationship between revolution, space, and culture in modern China, the author takes five spatially significant revolutionary events as case studies—the territorial dispute between Russia and the Qing dynasty in 1892, the Land Reform in the 1920s, the Long March (1934–36), the mainland–Taiwan split in 1949, and the Cultural Revolution (1966–76)—and analyzes how revolution constructs, conceives, and transforms space. Using materials associated with these events, including primary literature, as well as maps, political treatises, historiography, plays, film, and art, the book argues that in addition to redirecting the flow of Chinese history, revolutionary movements operate in and on space in three main ways: maintaining territorial sovereignty, redefining social relations, and governing an imaginary realm.

Arguing for reconsideration of revolution as a reorganization of space as much as time, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Chinese culture, society, history, and literature.

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To my mother

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Introduction

> In our era, the relationship between mapping and governance is both pervasive and powerful.
>
> James R. Akerman, *The Imperial Map*[1]

This book inquires into the important interactions between space and revolution in modern China as expressed through various cultural representations. Specifically, it analyzes how revolution constructs, conceives of, and transforms space. Revolution is usually understood as an event that is historical and historiographical: it changes not only the course of history but also the writing and even the rewriting of history. Such a notion holds particularly strong in the Marxist-materialistic outlook. Although this outlook gives revolution well-deserved credit for its impact on history, it overlooks the action of revolution over space. Moreover, history and historiography must begin with a spatial definition, be it local, regional, national, or global. In this book I argue for a reconsideration of revolution as a reorganization of space, no less than time. Regarding revolution as a spatial practice, I demonstrate how it works in modern China through literature and culture.

I approach revolution from three spatial dimensions: physical, social and symbolic. First, physical space is material, referring both to the space in which people live and to that which can be physically perceived. In a way, physical space can be equated with geographic space, with land as its primary form. Due to the material nature of land, physical space is related to ownership, which means that it is regarded as either private or public property. Second, social space is relational as the distribution of physical space forms the social relations among human beings. The amount of land, or its equivalent value in other forms of property, determines one's class in the social hierarchy and thus one's social status. Social relations involve human interactions with one another as well as with their environment, regulated by norms that assign individuals a social role. Thus morality, ethics, and justice are all part of the norms that maintain the social structure. Changes in social relations very often result in a reconstruction of social space. Third, symbolic space is representational, encompassing the domain in which people undertake cultural production and in which cultural capital is circulated. It represents how physical space is perceived and how social

space is constructed through cultural apparatuses. By virtue of psychological interventions in the process of cultural productions, symbolic space may project the content of psychological space, either exactly or in a distorted way. Thus symbolic space opens a secret door to the inner individual or to the collective psyche. In this sense, it can be understood as a container of individual imaginations, the collective unconscious, public memory, and mass fantasy. Because of its closeness to consciousness, symbolic space becomes a battlefield of ideologies, where different parties fight for recognition and influence. It is necessary to note these three dimensions of space are not absolutely exclusive of each other, since cultural production oftentimes concerns more than one dimensions in praxis. The articulation of different modalities of space serves as both foundational framework and pragmatic entry point in approaching the issues concerning space and revolution.

Scholars in political science, history, and literary studies have recognized the historical significance of revolution, but its spatial significance has yet to be adequately studied. In light of these distinctions of space, I choose six spatially significant revolutionary events as my case studies: Jing Ke's assassination of the King of Qin (227 BC); the territorial dispute between Russia and the Qing dynasty in 1892; the Land Reform in the 1920s; the Long March (1934–36); the mainland–Taiwan split in 1949; and the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). I use materials associated with these events, including primarily literature, as well as maps, political treatises, historiography, plays, films, and art. I argue that in addition to redirecting the flow of Chinese history, revolutionary movements operate in and on space in three main ways: maintaining territorial sovereignty, redefining social relations, and governing an imaginary realm. The central theme is how revolutionary discourses and practices—battles over land in physical space, struggles over power in social space, efforts to dominate consciousness in symbolic space—construct, subvert, and even smash national space.

My focus is not so much on cartography per se, but on taking cartography as a point of departure for spatial configurations and the ways spatiality has been perceived and imagined, as well as the resulting implications for the process of spatial construction. I attempt to sketch a trajectory in which revolution and space proceed in tension and in unison, as both mutually contradictory and complementary in a cultural endeavor to build and consolidate China as a modern nation-state. First, this study departs from the traditional view of revolution along a historical-temporal dimension and calls attention to the neglected connection between revolution and space. Second, with respect to space and culture, by introducing space and spatiality as a critical category, methodologically this study challenges the historical dominance of the study of modern Chinese literature. Third, I demonstrate how revolution and culture both work to construct national space, determine social relations, and form a spatial consciousness in modern China.

To accommodate the depth and historical span of my study and the diversity of materials incorporated, I have developed a versatile and flexible interdisciplinary approach informed by relevant theories. Some nuanced analysis is not

directly concerned with the central issue of space. I aim to find a balance between the larger conceptual framework and detailed analyses of the case studies. Trained as a literary critic, I respect the significance of the primary materials and try not to treat them only as supportive examples of the issues I address. An integrative approach is more productive than a deductive approach in order to unfold the complexities of the revolutionary event per se, the subjects participating in the revolution, and the cultural representations of the revolution.

Premised on the map as a symbol of space, this introductory chapter brings upfront the issue of revolution and space by highlighting mapping politics and the politics of maps in China based on two episodes, one at the transition from state to empire and the other in the move from empire to nation-state: Jing Ke's assassination of the King of Qin in 227 BC and the territorial dispute between tsarist Russia and the Qing government over the Pamir Mountain region in 1892. By revisiting this ancient assassination story, I aim to highlight the triad of sovereignty, human, and violence as embodied by the three objects (the map, the human head, and the dagger) Jing Ke carried with him on his mission. The relationship among these three objects in a failed assassination attempt foretells a structure of human, land, and violence in Chinese revolution for centuries to come. In the 1892 territorial dispute, Russia used a map that had been issued by the Qing government to support its territorial claims. This map was a reprint based on a copy that Hong Jun 洪钧 had purchased in Russia while he was serving as Qing ambassador to Russia. This map incident crystallizes some of the politics of cartography: authorship, ownership, circulation of the map, and how these factors change individual fates and the power relations between different sovereign entities.

Map unrolled, dagger revealed: geography, humans, and violence

The story "The Dagger Shows Up at the End of the Map Scroll (*tuqiongbixian* 图穷匕见)" originates from the famous assassination story about how Jing Ke 荆轲 (?–227 BC) attempted to kill the king of the state of Qin in 227 BC. This was in the late years of the Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC), when Qin was gradually emerging as an empire through conquest of other states. Qin was already in possession of significant lands wrested from the states of Qi, Chu, Han, Wei, and Zhao. The small state of Yan would be next. Because Yan was too weak to stand against Qin in war, its ruler, Prince Dan, brought forth an alternative plan: To find a brave man to go to the Qin court as the prince's envoy, make a tempting offer, and then arrest or assassinate the Qin king. Dan's adviser recommended the warrior Jing Ke for this mission. In order to gain the trust of the Qin king and get close to him, Jing Ke brought with him two objects: the head of a Qin general, Fan Wuji 樊於期, and a map of Dukang 督亢, a vital part of the Yan state. These two objects were special to the Qin king. For fear of losing his life after defeat by the state of Zhao, the Qin general Fan Wuji had fled to Yan to live under the protection of Crown Prince Dan. The Qin king had

ordered the killing of the entire Fan clan and offered 1,000 catties of gold and a city of 10,000 households in exchange for the life of General Fan. Further, Dukang, the most fertile farmland in Yan, had long been a primary target for Qin. Thus, Fan Wuji and Dukang were two objects the Qin king coveted from Yan.

To ensure success, Jing Ke also took with him Qin Wuyang 秦舞阳, a 12-year-old boy famous for killing and bravery. Jing Ke held General Fan's head and Qin Wuyang carried the box with the map in it. They had hidden a sharp dagger coated with lethal poison inside the rolled-up map. At the sight of General Fan's head, the king of Qin allowed them to enter his palace. Intimidated by the grandeur of the king and the ceremony, Qin Wuyang shivered with fear. Worrying that their assassination plan would be revealed if the boy dropped the box, Jing Ke handed Fan's head to Qin Wuyang and took the map box himself. Jing Ke laid the map before the king and unrolled it slowly while expounding upon the geography of Yan. When the scroll reached its end, the dagger was revealed. Jing Ke seized it and lunged toward the king while grasping his sleeve. Jing Ke missed, the sleeve tore off, and the king escaped. As Jing Ke chased the king through the hall, a court doctor threw his medicine box at Jing Ke, causing him to pause for a second. Taking advantage of the moment, the Qin king pulled out his sword and stabbed Jing Ke in the left leg. Realizing that his chance was slipping away, Jing Ke threw the dagger at the king but missed again. The court guards arrived and killed him on the spot.

Arguably one of the earliest assassins recorded in China's long past, Jing Ke has become a popular hero.[2] What interests me about this story, however, is not heroism or justification of killing as a means of either revenge or governance, but the less prominent details, such as the map, the lives of characters other than Jing Ke, and their associations with sovereignty and violence in the politics of 2,000 years ago. The map, the head, and the dagger embody sovereignty, humanness (including humanity and human capital), and violence respectively. The intricate connection among these three elements would continue in the triangular relationship among humans, land, and revolution in China over the following centuries.

To begin with, the map of Dukang serves as a talisman enabling Jing Ke to approach the Qin king. The magic power of this map lies precisely in the land, territory, and sovereignty it represents. Jing Ke bringing the map to the Qin king symbolizes a willingness to cede Yan land and thus to subject Yan to Qin. This detail tells us that as early as in the Warring States period, Chinese people understood maps in the same way modern society does, in relation to land, power, and sovereignty. Even though there is no systemic record of the origin and transformation of maps in early China, from this assassination story we can see that knowledge about maps was not exclusive to the rulers. Intellectuals and talented people of different states had all developed savvy geographic minds. When Prince Dan consulted Ju Wu 鞠武 about state affairs, especially how to deal with the imminent threat from Qin, the latter showed his mastery of the geographies of the competing states:

> Qin's lands fill the world and its might overawes the rulers of Han, Wei, and Zhao. To the north it occupies the strongholds at Ganquan and Gukou, and to the south the fertile fields of Jing and Wei; it commands the riches of Ba and Han and the mountain ranges of Long and Shu to the west, and the vital Hangu and Yao to the east. Its people are numerous and its soldiers well trained, and it has more weapons and armor than it can use. If it should ever decide to march against us, we could find no safety south of the Great Wall or north of the Yi River.[3]

Thus Ju Wu apprehended the correlation between geography and statecraft and provided a de facto map of the competing states that highlighted the strategic advantage in the expanding territory of Qin.[4] When he cautioned the prince against harboring Fan, he mapped out the dangers and opportunities:

> Ju Wu admonished the prince, saying, "…What will he [the Qin King] be like when he hears where General Fan is staying? This is like throwing meat in the path of a starving tiger—there will be no help for the misfortune that follows!… I beg you to send General Fan at once to the territory of the Xiongnu barbarians to get him out of the way. Then after you have negotiated with Han, Wei, and Zhao to the west, entered into alliance with Qi and Chu on the south, and established friendly relations with the leader of Xiongnu to the north, we may be able to plan what move to make next."[5]

Ju Wu's geographical knowledge about Qin and other states bespeaks a rather advanced spatial consciousness. His advice to Prince Dan relates geography and the political complexities of interstate struggles. Such geographically informed strategic thinking is certainly familiar today. It also indicates that Ju Wu's geographical understanding is built on scientific knowledge, so it could provide a foundation for a possible strategy to confront Qin aggression.

Examining maps and governance in the imperial world many centuries after the period discussed here, James R. Akerman asserts: "The connection between cartography and the exercise of imperial power is an ancient one."[6] The conversation between Ju Wu and Prince Dan pushes "ancient" back by over 1,000 years, showing the sophisticated integration of geography and governance. Even though the starting point of "the consistent pattern of map use by polities to assert and consolidate mastery over populations or landscapes at a distance"[7] has yet to be discovered, the connection of geography and governance in the assassination attempt can modify our understanding of when the practice of combining geography and politics originated. Maps as facilitators of politics clearly predate the imperial cultures of the seventeenth century and later. However, Akerman holds that direct use of maps to further the ends of empire is a modern phenomenon, dependent on the emergence of the modern state.[8] In China, geography and politics had already merged during a much earlier transition from state to empire. Ju Wu considered geography in attempting to obstruct Qin's expansion and proposed to Prince Dan the use of geographical knowledge in his

governance of Yan. Geography was already a foundation of governance even before empire came into being in China.

Jing Ke's use of the map to intrigue and distract the Qin king and create the opportunity for assassination shows that the map had already gone beyond the realistic mode of a "truthful" representation of the land. That realistic relationship between the signifier (map) and the signified (land) was broken for the sake of deception—a map intended to be a symbol of the land, without the land as its referent. Jing Ke and Prince Dan substituted the mapped symbol of Dukang for the real Dukang existing in Yan territory in order to gain the Qin king's trust.

The illustration of the complexities inherent in the map above is meant to show two points. First, the conventional notion of a map had fully developed in China 2,000 years ago. The minister, intelligentsia, and rulers all understood maps the way we do today. Second, the map as a signifier goes back 2,000 years; its relationship to the signified was not always fixed but rather slippery, and could be broken down for specific purposes. Prince Dan's map, only a picture, a symbol, had nothing to do with the actual land. The second understanding of maps works on and disturbs the symbolic order, the universal structure encompassing human action and existence, the law by which humans behave themselves and interact with each other. This understanding is more related to the original sense of symbolic order expounded by Lévi-Strauss than to the ideas of Jacques Lacan.[9] In the case of Jing Ke and the Qin king, the map establishes an exchange relationship, with Yan the giver and Qin the receiver of a gift. Clearly, there was an implicit, shared notion about the significance of maps in relation to power and sovereignty. Both parties understood the action and intended meaning of this exchange. Both parties also understood the map of Dukang, the gift, as a pact between Yan and Qin. The map was presented to propose a treaty of land for peace. It thus existed as a geo-body, in Thongchai Winichakul's terminology.[10] I borrow this term in its sense of "meanings concerning the territoriality of a nation." The geo-body of the map of Dukang signifies the territory, the sovereignty, and the nationhood of Yan as a state. Conversely, the concept of Yan's nationhood is constructed through the image on the map scroll. Because the map in its realistic mode seems to transcribe and abstract an objective reality, the geo-body is easily taken as a fact out there. But the map is also—and more so—an outcome of integration of sets of knowledge about subjects including land, people, ownership, and politics. So the geo-body map does not simply represent a reality, but instead is more of a discourse constructing the state.[11] By giving the Qin king the map that symbolized the desired land, Prince Dan hoped Qin would decide not to attack Yan. By receiving the symbol of the land, Qin would signal acceptance of this pact.

Within these understandings, however, there was a gap between what the map was given as and what the map was taken as. Prince Dan of Yan offered the map as a symbol, a surface, purely a scroll, without ever intending to give the land it supposedly symbolized. Qin, however, took the gift as what the map symbolized: what lay beneath the surface, the land. Yan took advantage of the symbolism but did not intend to realize that symbol in its meaningful referent, the

territory of Dukang, which Qin fully embraced. Prince Dan's map worked partly on the symbolic level, opening the way for Jing Ke to approach the Qin king. Yet the map also disturbed the symbolic order insofar as Yan did not mean to realize its symbolic meaning. The dagger hidden in the map scroll was the real intention. The violence of the assassination attempt prematurely suspended the full playing out of the meanings of the map.

With the same importance as the map of Dukang in this assassination, General Fan's head epitomizes the human sacrifice inherent in politics. To fully explain the meaning of sacrifice, I need to elaborate on a series of deaths in this assassination. The assassin, Jing Ke, was prepared to die before he left on his mission. The ceremony sending off Jing Ke and Qin Wuyang by the Yi River was more a funeral for a never-to-return hero. Considering the circumstances, Jing Ke would have known better than anybody else that the chance he would return was slim. In this sense, his action was more a suicide attempt, and not the only one in this assassination scheme. The first person in the chain of suicides, Tian Guang 田光, was almost neglected in later history. Confronting the threat from Qin, Prince Dan consulted his mentor and adviser, Ju Wu, who, despite being disappointed at Prince Dan's decision to protect General Fan and thus heighten the imminent danger to Yan, recommended consulting a retired strategist, Master Tian Guang. After his consultation, Prince Dan told Tian Guang: "What we have been discussing is a matter of vital concern to the nation. Please do not let word of it leak out!" Tian Guang felt the admonition implied that Prince Dan had little trust in him and had thus diminished his standing as a gentleman of honor. After recommending Jing Ke as the envoy to Qin, Tian decided to commit suicide in order to spur him to action. Immediately after he requested that Jing Ke visit Prince Dan, Tian Guang cut his own throat.[12] He thus maintained his loyalty to Prince Dan with his death.

Prince Dan would rather not have betrayed or sacrificed General Fan for the sake of his cause. In preparing to lure the king of Qin for the assassination, Jing Ke later met in private with General Fan. He explained to the general how giving his life could both dissipate the dangers to Yan and avenge the wrong the Qin king had done to his family, and how he would execute the assassination vividly:

> Give me your head, so that I can present it to the King of Qin. Then he will surely be delighted to receive me. With my left hand I will seize hold of his sleeve, with my right I will stab him in the breast, and all your wrongs will be avenged and all the shameful insults which Yan has suffered will be wiped out.[13]

General Fan was convinced and so cut his own throat. The suicidal acts by Tian Guang, Fan Wuji, and Jing Ke are marked by a common "death drive." This concept was proposed by Sigmund Freud as a way to understand the force that overrides the pleasure principle and leads living creatures to an inorganic state and death. He describes it as "an urge in organic life to restore an earlier state of things."[14] This helps to explain why humans are drawn to painful and

traumatic events. The tendency apparently contradicts the human instinct to seek pleasure. In a dualistic framework, Freud presents the death drive as a force opposing Eros, the tendency toward survival, propagation, and other productive drives powered by the pleasure principle. The death drive manifests itself in dissolution, unbinding, disassociation, and disintegration of life. The most extreme case is suicide. Suicide is always associated with meaning, either producing it or negating it. The three suicidal men involved in the assassination attempt point to a shared meaning of death: honor or heroism. Tian Guang maintained his loyalty to Prince Dan with his death. Fan Wuji hoped for revenge for his family. Jing Ke's choice of "suicide" is rather problematic. He was originally from the state of Wei. He traveled to and settled in Yan because his talent was not recognized by the ruler at home. He was neither dedicated to his own state or to Yan. His life was dominated by the pleasure principle before meeting Tian Guang: he spent much of his time drinking, singing, and playing at the market with his musician friend Gao Jianli 高漸离. After he agreed to take on the mission, Jing Ke indulged himself in a big mansion, gourmet food, rider attendants, pretty women, and other luxuries that Prince Dan provided. Tian Guang's suicide indeed put Jing Ke in a morally awkward position. He was entrusted with a task that had already been invested with human capital. He was obliged to make meaning of Tian Guang's death. In order to redeem Tian Guang's life, Jing Ke needed to pass the death on to somebody else. Thus he joined a relay of suicide when he met with General Fan to suggest the latter give up his life for a grander cause. This ended with Jing Ke finally going on the road to kill the Qin king.

The series of suicides in the assassination story presents a compulsion to repeat. Sima Qian is as succinct as possible in narrating the deaths of Tian Guang and Fan Wuji—he simply writes that they each cut their own throat. We do not need to fill in too much detail to imagine the bloody scene. The suicides are performative because of the presence of spectators. Jing Ke begins his own performance as he bids farewell to Prince Dan and his friends by the Yi River. He sings impromptu: "Piercing wind, freezing river of Yi. The hero fords, and he never returns!" He knows he will not survive. This ceremony functions as a funeral, at which he honors himself before his death. The orchestration of their own deaths by Tian Guang, Fan Wuji, and Jing Ke is powered by a drive to use death productively. Their suicides make their lives meaningful. Their deaths honor and redeem them. In a sense, the suicides cause a negative productivity—they produce meaning of life by destroying it. This does not stop after one life. Jing Ke directs and schemes the three deaths. As each life is sacrificed, the capital invested in the assassination mission doubles and then triples. It reaches the summit as Jing Ke throws the dagger at the king, but hits a post in the Qin palace.

Freud used the death drive concept to explain the destructive tendency of an organic entity not only toward itself but also toward others. Thus he relates the death drive to violence and war. In his letters to Albert Einstein on the question "Why war?" he writes:

> This [death drive] would serve as a biological justification for all the ugly and dangerous impulses against which we are struggling. It must be admitted that they stand nearer to Nature than does our resistance to them for which an explanation also needs to be found … there is no use in trying to get rid of men's aggressive inclinations.[15]

Here, Freud equates the death drive with bio-power (the biological power of a human being, in Foucauldian terminology) and extends it to the destruction of others. "The organism preserves its own life, so to say, by destroying an extraneous one."[16] At this point, the theory corresponds to Darwin's "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest." Though it is rather deterministic, it helps us to understand the mechanism of death and killing. As Havi Carel puts it: "As the source of negativity and destructiveness it performs its dark task in two ways. It can be turned outwards, externalized as sadistic aggression, or it can be masochistically internalized, as aggression directed towards the ego."[17] In terms of aggression toward others, we can find another layer of meaning behind the trio of suicides. All three are conducted in anticipation of the death of the Qin king. Therefore, the self-inflicted pain would eventually call for the ending of the king. The course of history at the time was not directed along the path Prince Dan and Jing Ke had hoped for, due to circumstances (the strength gap between Qin and Yan plus Prince Dan's vulnerability and shortsightedness) and accidents (the nervousness of the original assassin, Qin Wuyang, and the court doctor throwing the medicine box). But the killings of self and the other in the assassination attempt bespeak the violence in the transition from state to empire.

By revisiting this assassination episode, I aim to highlight the triad of sovereignty, humans, and violence as embodied by the three objects (the map, the human head, and the dagger) Jing Ke carried with him on his mission. The map exists as a geographical entity of the state, or geo-body. Moreover, the personification in the term is particularly relevant in the analysis of Jing Ke assassinating the Qin king, when the map of Dukang is juxtaposed with General Fan's head. The head as the inorganic part of a formerly organic body keeps a trace of humanness. It marks the value of human capital and retains some biological power. Foucault's critique of bio-power points to the regulation of subjects by the modern state, subjugation of bodies including their birth, mass population, and even their sexuality.[18] Here I return to the term's original etymological sense: literally the biological power of the human body. General Fan's body continues to be effective after his death. His head is deployed by Jing Ke as a supplementary tool for killing. From the moment of death, the meaning of the body cannot be controlled by its subject anymore, but falls into the hands of others. Intriguingly, General Fan is not able to achieve either on the national level (he is defeated militarily) or on the individual level (his act causes death to his whole clan) while he is alive. His life begins to have meaning upon his death: He is able to avenge his family and help Prince Dan to protect his country.

The way these three objects are positioned is significant. The map and the head are presented in public as gifts. They convey a willingness for both territorial

and human subjection of Yan to Qin, and they are part of an exchange relationship. Yan wishes to exchange the map and the head for peace and security. The dagger, which exemplifies violence, has to be hidden as a secret weapon. The three objects thus combine the geo-body (map), bio-power (head), and violence (dagger). The map of Dukang shows part of Yan territory; the head marks part of the body. The shattered images of both the geo-body and the human body seem to prognosticate the fate of Yan as a state and of its people; the dagger seems to have severed the life of both its own state and its people.

"The Dagger Shows Up at the End of the Map Scroll" points to an established early indigenous cartographic understanding in China. Well before Jesuit missionaries arrived, Chinese scholars had already extensively studied geography and the natural world.[19] The Jesuit introduction of Western cartographic techniques further promoted map-making in China from the late fifteenth century. In 1602, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), an Italian Jesuit priest who lived in China from 1582 until the end of his life, published *The Map of the World* (*Kunyu wanguo quantu* 坤舆万国全图), which had a long-lasting influence on subsequent Chinese map production. Given frequent territorial disputes with neighboring powers, the need for a complete map of the Qing Empire became ever more urgent. Three emperors of the High Qing—Kangxi 康熙, Yongzheng 雍正, and Qianlong 乾隆—produced their own territorial maps of China. After signing the Sino-Russia Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 to resolve a territorial conflict with Russia over the northern Asian region near the Amur River, Emperor Kangxi, appreciating the significance of national geography, commissioned a collaborative team of foreign Jesuits and Chinese scholars to undertake a complete survey of the empire in 1707.[20] After ten years of comprehensive field survey and measurement on the ground, this team presented to Emperor Kangxi in 1718 "The Complete Atlas of the Qing Empire" (*Huangyu quanlan tu* 皇舆全览图 or, literally, the map of the complete view of the imperial territory), usually referred to as the Kangxi Atlas. As Peter Purdue points out, the name of the atlas reveals Kangxi's desire to put the whole territory of the Qing Empire under his direct gaze.[21] This was the first Chinese national geography to adopt the longitude and latitude coordinate system based on field surveys.[22] According to Joseph Needham, the Kangxi Atlas "was not only the best map which had ever been made in Asia but better and more accurate than any European map of its time."[23] As a product of the collaboration of Western Jesuits and the domestic cartographers of Qing, this atlas is a hybrid. The hybridity was duplicated on the maps themselves, as characters that had been inscribed in Manchu on the original maps were changed to Chinese in later versions, mapping the transition of Qing self-perception from ethnic Manchu to Chinese. Laura Hostetler notes that the maps of the Kangxi Atlas record an early point in the Qing transition from empire to nation-state.[24] She argues that Qing shared "outlooks produced by the common experience of modernity, including the primacy of the nation-state as a political unit and science as an arbiter of truth."[25] The Kangxi maps not only depicted Qing territorial claims to competing neighboring powers in the world but also contributed to

shaping the consciousness within China of Qing as a unified political entity, a nation, especially among the elite classes.

Based on the Kangxi maps, over the next few decades Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (1678–1735) and Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1711–99) amended, compiled, and published "The Qing Map of the Yongzheng Era in Ten Rows" (*Yongzheng shipai huangyu quantu* 雍正十排皇與全图) and "The Qing Map of the Qianlong Era" (*Qianlong neifu ditu* 乾隆內府地图) respectively. These maps were mostly kept secret, with only certain court officials granted access for strategic purposes, as was common practice in Asia and Europe. The Kangxi maps were published in two editions: the restricted, precise edition for court use with longitude and latitude markings, and the public edition, more approximate and without longitude and latitude. During the same period, world maps were introduced, translated, and published in China, including *World Geography Records* (*Haiguo tuzhi* 海国图志, 1843)[26] and *Sketch Atlas of the World* (*Yinghuan zhilue* 瀛环志略, 1850). As China kept pace with the world in geographical development, its rulers remained keen to build up the imperial national identity through territorial demarcation.

As we have seen in "The Dagger Shows Up at the End of the Map Scroll," as early as China's transition from state to empire, canny politicians already learned to manipulate geographical knowledge and maps. However, solid Chinese cartographic technique developed in the next 1,000 years, and China underwent another crisis caused by maps during the passage from empire to nation-state around the turn of the twentieth century. This time, the politicized cartography exceeded the literalist representation of space and flowed into figurative, metaphorical, and conceptual dimensions, even as maps lent themselves to multiple and conflicting uses, interpretations, and manipulations within and beyond the nation-state into the modern era, as the following cartographic adventure demonstrates.

Politics of cartography: the purloined map

In 1892, in a territorial dispute between tsarist Russia and the Qing government of China over the Pamir Mountain region,[27] the Russian ambassador, Arthur Cassini, supported his country's claims with a copy of a map that had been published by the Qing government, which turned out to be a copy of a replica map his Chinese counterpart, Hong Jun 洪钧 (1839–93), had purchased in 1890 from a military attaché at the German embassy in St. Petersburg. Hong, a renowned "Number One Scholar" (*jinshi* 进士) known as an able official and valued for his political foresight,[28] was ultimately brought down by the map, which demarcated as Russian territory some areas along the northwestern border zone that Qing was claiming as its own. Weakened by impeachment and repentance over the problematic map, Hong Jun died at the age of 54 in 1893.

The long history of territorial issues between Russia and Qing in the nineteenth century had resulted in a series of treaties concerning the borders and some disputes left unresolved. After signing the Protocol of Kashgar in 1882,

settling issues over the northeastern section of the Pamir region, Russia and Qing conducted a joint survey of borders from Bedel Daban to Uz-bel, and in 1884 their representatives signed the Protocol of Novyi Margelan to define the border of the northwestern section.[29] Russia produced the accompanying map that identified the borders. The treaty was written in both Manchu and Russian, with map notations of border place names also in both languages.[30] According to the protocol, Russia held the original map, titled "The Map of Sino-Russian Border Demarcation" (*Kashigaer zhongguo dingjie tu* 喀什噶尔中国定界图), and the Qing government held a copy (Figure I.1). Three years after the Protocol of Novyi Margelan, Hong Jun was appointed Chinese ambassador to Germany, Austria, and Russia. In that capacity, he would have been informed of major protocols between Qing and the countries where he was sent on diplomatic missions. Especially considering the sensitivity of Sino-Russia borders, it might be surmised that he knew of the recent protocol of Novyi Margelan and the Kashgar map. Yet the map from the German attaché must have seemed to him a piece of serendipitous intelligence, since he paid 250,000 silver dollars for it.[31] While Hong Jun specified no original source, he did note that the German military attaché had used bribery to acquire the map, thus indicating that it was classified intelligence and not easily accessible.[32] It is surprising that Hong Jun did not seek to trace the origin of the map, somewhat contrary to both diplomatic intuition and his training as a historian.[33] There is no evidence that he doubted the authenticity or accuracy of the map as the representation of a physical domain, so he took for granted its reliability with regard to the territorial boundaries.

In a further interesting twist, however, Hong Jun presented the map as his own work. In his 1891 report to Emperor Guangxu 光绪, summarizing his meeting with the Russian tsar at the end of his term as ambassador, Hong Jun stated that he had *made* (*zhuyou* 著有, my emphasis) "The China–Russia Border Map" (*Zhong e jiaojie ditu* 中俄交界地图) (Figure I.2) and noted that he had sent it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 总理衙门 for their reference on affairs related to the northwestern region.[34] It is hard to believe that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proofread, endorsed, and published the map without observing that it duplicated the recent, important Kashgar Map already in the possession of the Qing government. Further, Hong Jun did not speak or write Russian or Manchu and could not have produced the map himself. And finally, although the map affair predates concepts of intellectual property, declaring authorship of a map was rare and daring at this time due to the collective nature of map composition. In any event, aside from what it may suggest about bureaucratic deficiency and dysfunction in the Qing government in the late nineteenth century, this incident suggests that although the Qing regime may have kept pace with Europe in cartography, Chinese elites, including Hong Jun and his cohorts, did not have a fully developed awareness of manipulations and machinations in geographic discourse.[35] In the end, a Qing-published copy of Hong Jun's map came into the hands of Ambassador Cassini and was advanced as proof of Chinese approval of the represented demarcation of the Qing–Russia border.

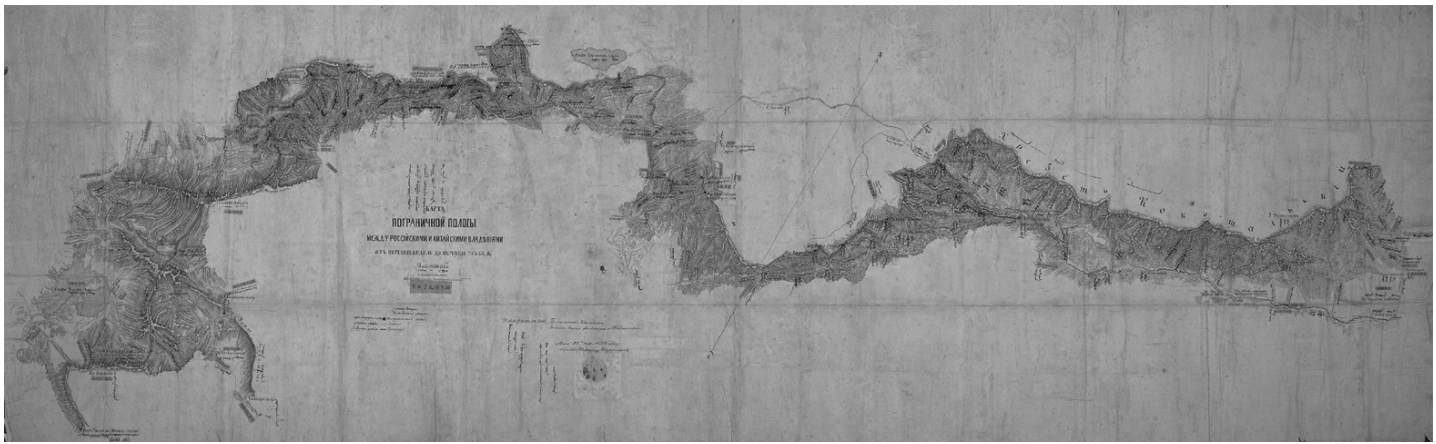

Figure I.1 The Kashgar Map of Sino-Russian Border Demarcation, 1884 (original copy stored at National Palace Museum, Taipei).

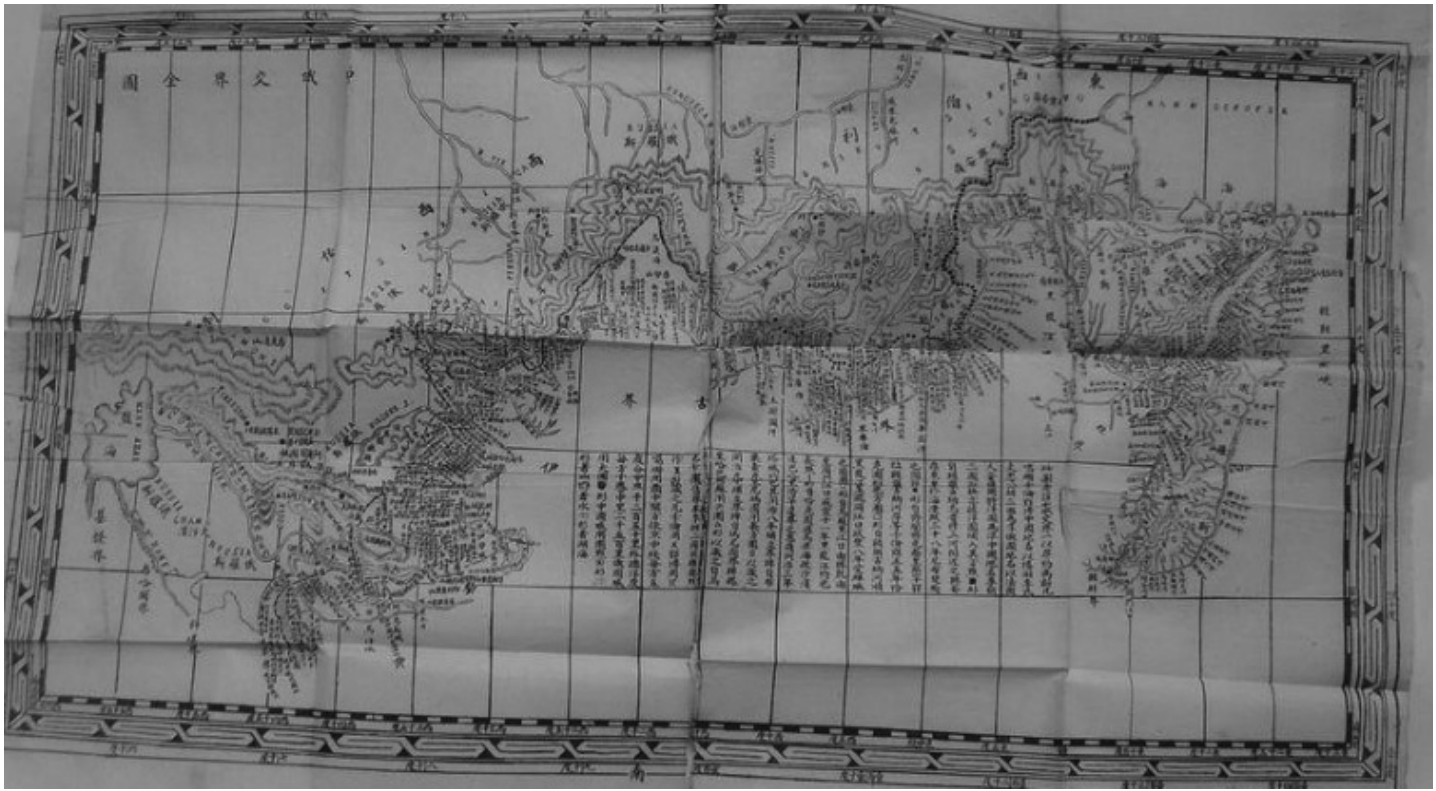

Figure I.2 The China–Russia Border Map, 1892 (Columbia University's Starr East Asian Library has one copy).

Whatever the vagaries that allowed Hong Jun to pass off his purchased map as an original, this is but one leg of the itinerary of a purloined map, taking "purloined" in its original sense of deviated or detoured. The Russian diplomat acquired and later used as evidence in the territorial dispute a third-generation copy of some version of the Kashgar map, repeating what Hong Jun had done in purchasing the second-generation copy, at significantly greater expense. All the while, Ambassador Cassini could have used the original Kashgar Map to test the Russian claim, as that version was endorsed by Qing as a result of the Protocol of Novyi Margelan. Instead, the replicas of the Kashgar map detoured from the Russian court, to the German military attaché, to the Qing government via Hong Jun, and then back to the Russian ambassador. Along the way, the map (dis) empowered its holders at different points. For Hong Jun, for instance, it was a double-edged sword. When it appeared as valuable intelligence he had discovered, it brought him honor. When it threatened to cost Qing thousands of miles of land in the territorial dispute, it ruined Hong's career as other officials took action against him for his blunder. Hong Jun could have absolved himself of wrongdoing had he known the map he purchased through the German attaché was indeed a copy of the Kashgar Map. However, he could have been accused of ignorance of the northwestern region since he did not know of the existence of the Kashgar Map. At the same time, for Ambassador Cassini, the purloined map was a boon, upholding the Russian claim as apparently endorsed by the Qing government. As in Lacan's exegesis of the purloined letter, in which the location of the letter changes intersubjective relationships,[36] possession of the map by different parties altered power relations between them.

Along the route the Kashgar Map traveled, each movement from one holder to another was accompanied by a monetary exchange. Similar to the purloined letter in Edgar Allan Poe's story, the map came to matter as much for its location as for its content once it was removed from its designated places in Russia and China. As Russia used the map to document Chinese approval of its preferred territorial demarcation, the key feature of the map shifted from the content to who had approved the content. In a particular context, then, its association with a subject was more important than its relation to the signified land. Map ownership did not necessarily support the owner's interest: Hong Jun's move to gain Chinese possession of a copy of the Kashgar Map, later officially approved by the government, put Qing in a treacherous position; it turned out that the Chinese side was very much possessed by the map rather than being the possessor of the map.[37] In the end, Russia had both the original and a replica of the map, but it was the replica that gave Russia the advantage in the land dispute. For Russia, the map was powerful as both original and double. However, owning both the Kashgar Map and its replica only brought problems to the Chinese counterpart.

The incident of the replica of the Kashgar Map—aka "China–Russia Border Map" as Hong Jun named it—in the late Qing infected a narrative that raises more intriguing issues. In the 1905 novel *A Flower in the Sea of Sins* (*Nie hai hua* 孽海花), which closely follows the historical record, Zeng Pu 曾朴 (1871–1935) relates the origin of the "China–Russia Border Map" and how it

resulted in the downfall of Jin Wenqing, the fictional incarnation of Hong Jun. This aspect of the novel retells the real story of a real map. The novel also depicts Germany, Russia, and Japan as all actively encroaching on China in the last years of the nineteenth century. The events involving Germany and Russia are based on actual people and events, and focus on Jin Wenqing as China's ambassador to those two countries. The story regarding Japan, however, is historiographically ungrounded and appears to be sheer invention. Zeng fabricates a sinuous plot around fictional maps to explain the Japanese takeover of the two ports Lüshun and Vladivostok in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). A young Japanese man, Koyama Seinosuke, infected with venereal disease by a prostitute, decides to throw himself into the patriotic cause in order to achieve a worthy death. He succeeds in stealing strategic maps on an undercover espionage mission to Tianjin, but is discovered at a checkpoint by Chinese guards and summarily executed. His accomplice, the prostitute, manages to send replicas of the maps back to Japan. With the help of these maps, the Japanese are able to seize the two vital strategic ports, defeat Russia, and win control over more territory in China.[38]

Interestingly, Zeng Pu relies on fictional maps to explain China's loss in its confrontation with a foreign state.[39] It is likely that Zeng was influenced by the "China–Russia Border Map" in the 1892 territorial dispute in choosing the same sort of contrivance to explain another battle over Chinese land. The Japanese first grab the symbol of the land—the maps—and then use them to secure possession of the desired land itself through war. Zeng does not seem to have been aware of the pitfall in his plotting. Whether factual or fictional, the dangerous, purloined maps go against Chinese interests. Had Great Britain not intervened, the "China–Russia Border Map"—a copy of the Kashgar Map—would have caused the loss of even more miles of Chinese land to Russia. The imaginary maps in *A Flower in the Sea of Sins* cause the loss of two Chinese ports to Japan. In these actual and fictional cases, maps push China into a menacing situation: the real map in history turns out to be a replica, produced by the Russians and copied by the Chinese, while the imaginary map in fiction is a true one, created by the Chinese but copied by the Japanese and used against the Chinese.

In a narrative that moves fluently between documented history and fiction, the entanglements of truth and falsity, fictionality and factuality, original and replica, *A Flower in the Sea of Sins* further complicates the literal and metaphorical meanings of maps. Zeng's fictional narrative can be taken as an allegory in which the gaining and losing of maps, symbols of geographic space, directly determine the fortunes of a nation through its territorial discourse. As China experiences its most severe national crisis, on the verge of being partitioned by imperialist powers in the late nineteenth century, possessing and defending maps becomes a practical symbolic act in the effort to maintain and protect national sovereignty. The fluidity of maps, however, is made clear: Just as the replica map Hong Jun obtained in reality put China in a dangerous position in 1892, the Chinese maps stolen by the Japanese soldier in fiction worked against Chinese interests in 1904. Both the fact that China failed in territorial defense and the

fictional inability of the Chinese people to protect the symbols of their national space from foreign pillage symbolize China's weakness in efforts to establish itself as a sovereign nation-state during the late Qing era.

These narratives of problematic maps highlight various issues in the politics of cartography: who is mapping and what is mapped; who owns the map and how the map travels; how a map is used and in whose interests; the original and its replicas; human relations and geographical ones; and power relations between states and within nations on the territorial level. Although maps remain a dominant mode for the description of geographic space, the relationships between cartographical expression and natural space are no less complex than those between realistic works (under the rubric of realism) and reality. Beyond cartographical realism is the interrelation between space and politics. In the process of developing into symbols of space, maps integrate multivalent political elements on both national and international levels, including such aspects as ownership of land, administrative regionalism, and territorial demarcation.[40]

The emergence of space in twentieth-century epistemology

Time and space, both defined via measurement, are fundamental elements in modern epistemology. Albeit an interest of philosophers and scientists for centuries, space has been living in the shadow of time, especially in the Hegelian–Marxist tradition of the social development of history. The analytical framework of this book is influenced by the spatial consciousness that began to be a focus of interest in the mid-twentieth century. Gaston Bachelard substantiated a connection between space and psychology with a phenomenological orientation.[41] Although his discussion centers on concrete spatial images in literature—such as nests, drawers, shells, corners, miniatures, forests, attics, and houses—Bachelard initiated an approach to both material and abstract universes from the perspective of space. Philosophical investigations furthered our understanding of the nature of space.[42] Spatiality also became a critical approach to and focus of social sciences.[43] In the latter part of the twentieth century, space gradually became an integral part of the way we investigate the world and society, present and past.

When Foucault delved into alternative history, he followed Bachelard in his awareness of the significance of space. "Of Other Spaces" reveals that he started thinking about space as he began to grapple with history, both belonging to the category of alterity.[44] Foucault was fully aware that space had been long repressed:

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis and cycle, themes of the ever accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world.[45]

As sketchy as it is, Foucault's assertion has provided a foundational point of departure and theoretical endorsement for scholars to explore different disciplines

in light of space. One of the most productive fields is geography, as Edward Soja's representative work, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, exemplifies.[46] Besides the discovery of space, Foucault also perceived a fundamental difference between his time and the previous century: "The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed."[47] He made clear that space was to be understood as a unitary category as opposed to history, a primary dimension presiding over the heterogeneous world of the twentieth century. Such space not only is about physical distance (the near and far), location (juxtaposition, the side-by-side), and decomposition (the dispersed, indicating reconstruction) but also contains two or more temporal axes (simultaneity) that merge into one set of tempo-spatial coordinates. This is significant in that it establishes the integration of time into space, rather than subsuming space under time. What matters to Foucault in the postmodern epoch is that space preponderates over time.

Although it seems assertive to place a high value on heterogeneous space, especially considering its sparse recognition in philosophy, in the ever close interdependence between time and space, with the accelerated interchange among regions and nations in this epoch, unitary temporal trajectories become harder to sustain and are compressed into one in the form of simultaneity. Thus, history gives place to space. In late modernity, there is a sense that a human being should be defined more by his present than his past. If we understand consciousness as a product of accumulated past and present existence, we must agree with Marx that "it is not men's consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness."[48] Among various associations of an individual with his past, including personal and collective history, and with his surroundings consisting of his physical position literally and social position figuratively, the latter contributes as much, perhaps more, to the human being as he is. Human beings are every bit as much spatial beings as historical beings.

The much celebrated emergence of space need not be viewed as a succession to or a replacement of history. Time and space are not mutually exclusive but mutually inclusive. The formation of history per se entails spatial demarcation, e.g., regional history versus universal history, and territorial definition within the writing of regional history. Foucault noted that there is a historical process of space:

> Space which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experience and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space.[49]

Space is not a passive outsider of long history.[50] Its power of mobilization is potent enough to direct and redirect the course of history. For instance, the

expansion or shrinking of a territorial space determines a nation's fortunes, and thus the continuation, diversion, or cessation of its national history.

What is troubling about the tempo-spatial paradigm, in its drive for singular distinctive norms and authority, is that it seems one dimension tries to push the other away. This false impression about the dialectics of space and time/history should be attributed to humans' favoring one over the other or unbalanced knowledge about them in different periods. Indeed, the negotiation between space and history started as history, or its alternative form, epic, was born. The earliest history entails a spatial definition, i.e., a regional demarcation. The adventurous voyage of Odysseus across space establishes the cornerstone of a grand epic. In the steady accumulation of records about the past over the long span of time, history triumphs among all narrative forms. It tells the stories of those in power by suppressing alternative strata in vastly different historical trajectories. Unavoidably, history undergoes refurbishing and rewriting with the alternation of powers and regimes. Under labels such as the Dark Ages, the Enlightenment,[51] and modernization, historical narrative has successfully shaped human consciousness within a linear, progressive temporality of human evolution. Despite dispersed states and diasporic ethnic groups constantly changing the world pattern,[52] history has become the hegemonic paradigm for people's conceptualization of their pasts and of contemporary society.

Space and revolution

It has been a commonplace to describe revolution as a drastic change in socio-political institutions over a short period of time. What differentiates modern revolutions from previous ones lies in the novelty that results, as Hannah Arendt cogently points out:

> Antiquity was well acquainted with political change and the violence that went with change, but neither of them appeared to it to bring about something altogether new. Changes did not interrupt the course of what the modern age has called history, which far from starting with a new beginning, was seen as falling back into a different stage of its cycle.[53]

In this statement, Arendt suggests that only those changes that influence the flow of the historical course—actions that "bring about something altogether new"—can be called revolution in the modern sense. Revolution becomes unintelligible when it does not refer to history. She further elaborates: "The modern concept of revolution is inextricably bound up with the notion that the course of *history suddenly begins anew*, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold."[54] Whether intentionally or not, revolution, almost without exception, brings about a break in history. This results partly from the privileging of time over space within modern philosophical thought. Revolution works in and on time; it rewrites history in a performative gesture that depends on marking a difference with the past. Hence a common revolutionary act is starting a new calendar.

The classical approach of placing revolution in the context of linear temporality has sufficiently explained the ruptures in historical continuity, and is also in accordance with the evolutionary imagining of human history since the Enlightenment. Revolution, however, operates in both temporal and spatial dimensions. We may then ask: How does revolution work in and on space in modern China? What role do Chinese literature and other modes of cultural representation play in mediating between revolution and space?[55] In this book, I argue for a reconsideration of revolution as a reorganization of space. This conceptualization is especially useful and even urgent now. Many people would agree that revolution, at least in any way that makes sense in the Chinese context, ceased to be a real historical possibility by June 4, 1989, at the very latest. It has been replaced by capitalism and entry into the sphere of the World Trade Organization—in a word, globalization. One of the more interesting ways of conceiving of globalization as the current stage of capitalism is precisely as a reorganization of space. An easily perceived aspect of globalization, and one of its most *revolutionary* effects, is the increasing transgression and gradual disappearance of boundaries between ethnicities, countries, and continents in both physical and virtual space.[56] If we remember that a goal of socialist and communist revolutions is to smash territorial boundaries and realize the equality of all humankind *worldwide*, we understand that the advocates of socialism and communism harbored a global vision long before capitalist globalization appeared on the horizon.

Although through the effort of philosophers Bachelard, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Harvey, space has gained the recognition it deserves as a fundamental quantity of the universe, it is not as ingrained as time/history in epistemological systems. Space, as a critical category, is still quite alien to both critics and general audiences. In order to answer the questions I have posed about revolution, I need to first elucidate my orientation to the concept of space. Its active affiliation with different fields increases the difficulty of defining it, and its relational meanings across different disciplines easily create confusion and sometimes lead to contradictions. In sciences like mathematics, physics, and astronomy, space is three-dimensional (point, line, and plane), finite or infinite. The measurement of space was established by the ancient Greeks with a branch of mathematics—geometry. In philosophy and social sciences, space becomes a more evasive category and sometimes needs a definitive word or concrete spatial image for its illustration. Some features of scientific space remain in the social sciences, but not necessarily in all of them. For example, distance is a common category to describe physical space and social space. In scientific space it is measurable, but not in social space. In view of the cross-disciplinary nature of this project within the humanities and social sciences, I propose three operational dimensions for understanding space.

First, physical space means the space in which people live, space that can be physically perceived. In significant part, physical space equates with the geographic space of land, air, and water. Due to its material nature, physical space has a relationship with ownership, which means that it is easily seen as property, either private or public. A macro expression of the communal ownership of a piece

of land is the notion of national territory, including the airspace above the land. Revolution aims at redefining human relations with physical space, i.e., the material world. It points to establishing the rules for distributing common property, private or communal or both, as well as the right to determine how to use that property. Marxist discourse on the capitalist workers' right to own factories and the peasant struggle for land under feudalism illustrates the connection of revolution and physical space par excellence.

Second, the distribution and use of physical space forms social space, directly involved in social relations among human beings. The amount of land or other equivalent form of property determines class in the social hierarchy and thus social status. The primary form of owning communal space decides the nature of society, say, capitalist, socialist, or communist. Social relations provide a set of protocols as to how human beings are related to one another, as well as to how groups are related to one another, in ways that are equal in democratic society or oppressive in authoritarian society. Social relations also involve human interactions with their environment, regulated by norms that assign individuals a social role to perform, regulated by norms such as morality, ethics, and justice. As Lefebvre points out, "(Social) space is a (social) product which has basically two implications: first, (physical) natural space is disappearing; second, a (social) space embodies social relationships, and every society produces a space, its own space."[57] Revolution therefore aims at reconstructing social space through the rebuilding of social relations. Individuals form groups based on their interests, such as political parties, and fight for power to determine the social hierarchy.

Third, symbolic space is the domain in which people undertake cultural production and in which cultural capital is circulated. It is a field on which to examine how physical space is perceived and how social space is constructed, most particularly in the production of cultural artifacts that engage with individual imagination, public memory, and mass fantasy. Symbolic space, like social space, is a real battlefield of ideologies, of contention for recognition, influence, and control over discourse and thus, to a great degree, perception and experience. Revolution intends to dominate symbolic space, but also is implemented through such dominance. In a Marxian sense, symbolic space may be considered the superstructure in which various forms of cultural capital circulate. But the production of cultural capital is not merely an effect of what is going on in the economic base but a process at work in the production of physical space. It is no wonder that, concomitant with struggles in physical space, propaganda and ideological indoctrination practices produce no less fierce conflicts in the domain of symbolic space, as means of consolidating gains in the process of revolution or its aftermath. Thus a central project of this study is to examine the interactions between space and revolution in modern China as expressed through various cultural representations. Centering on four spatially significant revolutionary events, this study calls upon a variety of cultural representations, including political documents, literary works, historiographic writings, and visual materials, in order to investigate how national space in China was constructed and configured from the 1920s to the late 1960s.

Space, revolution, and cultural representation in modern China

Zeng Pu's *A Flower in the Sea of Sins* has been studied as a late Qing negotiation with history.[58] Scholars have barely attended to the unconscious mapping of China in this acclaimed novel of accusation. Zeng was not the only writer engaged in configuring China's space in the literary imagination during this period. The opening chapter of *Travels of Lao Can* (*Lao Can youji* 老残游记) by Liu E 刘鄂 (1857–1909), published in 1903, portrays a big ship on the ocean as a symbol of China in crisis. A floating, inclusive space far from land, the ship comprises a typical heterotopia in the Foucauldian sense, a space "without geographical markers."[59] In *The New Story of the Stone* of 1908 (*Xin shitou ji*新石头记), Wu Jianren 吴趼人 (1866–1910) invents a civilized world, an idealized future China or a utopia as opposed to the barbaric world that is the China of his day.[60] Advanced technology and egalitarian democracy dominate in this utopian realm. Both the heterotopian and utopian visions of China express the "obsession with China"[61] shared by conscientious intellectuals in the late Qing. These fictions are all concerned with imagining China spatially in contrast with the rest of the world, at a time when the country's international position was at stake.

Modern Chinese writing continues to configure and construct China's space in various dimensions. Land, the concrete form of physical space, first becomes a contested area in both actual efforts by reformers to establish land ownership through revolutionary action and imaginative endeavors to envision the relationship of land to humans through writing. In the first half of the twentieth century, after a series of failed revolutionary experiments following the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, revolutionary pioneers from all sides began to envision land ownership as the crux of Chinese revolution. Sun Yat-sen 孙中山 (1866–1925) and Li Dazhao 李大钊 (1888–1927) wrote political treatises emphasizing the importance of land and peasants in a Chinese revolution, but were not well prepared to propose a feasible solution to the land problem.[62] Following their lead, Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893–1976) focused on mobilizing peasants to participate in the revolution. Ironically, Mao's political writings appear to be without a vision of land. His influential *Report of an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement* does not touch upon the land issue at all, but rather provides Land Reform and later Communist struggles with a meticulous guide to mob rule.[63] Meanwhile, writers like Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896–1981), Hong Shen 洪深 (1894–1955), Bai Wei 白微 (1894–1987), and Jiang Guangci 蒋光慈 (1901–31) engaged in land reform with their pens. Leftist writers including Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904–86) and Zhou Libo 周立波 (1908–79) threw themselves into land reform with the production of voluminous novels in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[64] However, Eileen Chang 张爱玲 (1920–95) provides a bitter portrayal of the tragic consequences of land reform in her *Rice-sprout Song* (*Yange*), published in 1954.

Besides the obvious significance of land as the political center of physical space, spatiality is indispensable in the foundational myth of the People's Republic

of China (PRC)—the Long March. In order to escape pursuit by the Nationalists, the Red Army, led by the Chinese Communist Party, crossed half of China in the mid-1930s, eventually finding asylum in Yan'an. Like Odysseus's voyage and Hannibal's expedition through the Alps, the spatial grandeur of the Long March overshadowed the formidable losses involved to become the core of the PRC's historical discourse. Numerous later writings about the Long March almost without exception give prominence to this spatial grandeur, shaping the journey into a national myth.

The dominant fictional genre of the early years of the People's Republic, the revolutionary-historical novel (*Geming lishi xiaoshuo* 革命历史小说), was committed to defending the revolutionary bases so as to consolidate the Communist possession of the mainland through fiction. Meanwhile, Nationalists commissioned anti-Communist fiction (*Fangong xiaoshuo* 反共小说) that sought to regain the mainland through imaginary acts. The antagonism between the revolutionary-historical novel and anti-Communist fiction speaks of the struggle between the Communists and the Nationalists for the national space of China. Beyond a scholarly consensus on the importance of an ongoing interlocution with history, modern Chinese literature expresses no less concern with China's space.

Chinese literature since the late Qing has also witnessed the modernization of China.[65] Laden with endless frustration at foreign invasion and overwhelming suffering from internecine struggles in the early part of the twentieth century, Chinese literature, as C. T. Hsia incisively argues, "with blood and tears,"[66] bears a formidable burden: To represent the painful experience of the shackles of "tradition" breaking under the carnivalesque display of modernization. In view of this close connection to current events, modern Chinese literature has been understood by many scholars over recent decades within a historical context. Within China, the lack of literary autonomy meant that both literary practice and discourse easily became prey to politics and appendages of history, such that modern Chinese literature has been taken as a tool of political struggle or a mimicking of history for some time. More recent Chinese scholarship, rooted in an innovative and well-informed notion of revolution, has rectified this tendency and led to a revised understanding of revolution, history, and literature.[67] In the English-speaking world, scholars distinguishing realism from the real have tackled the entangled relationship between modern Chinese literature and history, with realism as a point of departure.[68]

Despite changing paradigms, revolution–history–fiction remains an idiomatic trinity indispensable in the modern Chinese literary canon. The well-articulated genre of the revolutionary-historical novel, prevalent from the founding of the People's Republic until the end of the Cultural Revolution, further legitimizes the methodology of juxtaposing revolution, history, and literary writing. In the past few years, however, a new research formula centered on memory has risen to challenge, supplement, or replace what is recorded in historiography. These works show how literature and films contribute to configuring and constructing a Chinese past through mnemonic mechanisms.[69] This past not only means what

has taken place previously in terms of linear temporality, but is also associated with specific physical sites—specific spatial locales.

The spatial consciousness I bring to my academic research is bounded by my memories of the past shaped through both public forces and personal transmission. As one of the generation brought up in postrevolutionary China, I spent my formative years amid a mix of the scattered revolutionary attitudes left over from the Cultural Revolution and innovative ideas that poured in with the "Opening Up Policy." On the one hand, school education was targeted at shaping socialist consciousness, with textbooks promoting numerous revolutionary models and denouncing class enemies. On the other hand, my surroundings did not support this kind of consciousness. I enjoyed watching Huo Yuanjia beating up foreign rivals more than the Eighth Route Army defeating Japanese soldiers.[70]

Such dissonance was all the more puzzling at the level of my immediate experience. My grandparents were the most hardworking, accommodating, and sincere people I have known, in every way opposite to the vicious landlords described in Communist discourse. As a child, I barely understood their obsession with land, and certainly not their melancholy over the loss of it. Their fate was bound to the land. My grandmother often started her stories at my bedtime with "In the year of Land Reform, your mom was born…." Land Reform became the point of departure for her to recount the past. Although they survived the tumultuous campaigns unscathed except for material dispossession, they lived the rest of their lives in the shadow of this upheaval. They longed for land but feared to lose it again. In their limited knowledge of the Communists, revolution meant taking land from their hands. They realized later that this was only part of the disaster they had suffered. In the aftermath of revolution, their children were deprived of equal rights to education, work, and even love. They could not rationalize the injustice done to them. Why does one have to suffer for having come to own land through inheritance and hard work?

This perplexity continues to haunt me in my intellectual pursuits. I see a possibility of disentangling my grandparents' confusion during the earliest Communist experiment in land revolution in the late 1920s. No matter how grand the Communists' long-term goal was, their short-term objective was to master the land so that they could keep their feet on the ground. From a materialist viewpoint, early Chinese Communist history is one sustained striving for a piece of land. Only on this economic base is building a superstructure possible. After their failure in the revolutionary bases, the Communists went on the Long March. On reaching the promised Yan'an, they established the embryonic form of the People's Republic. As the Japanese were defeated, they started another battle over the mainland. Meanwhile, they began to implement the suspended Land Reform program in areas they already occupied. Communist struggles prior to the People's Republic were intricately connected to land and comprised a collective effort to possess it at the micro level of land ownership and at the macro level of territorial sovereignty.

Each chapter addresses one aspect of the relationship between revolution and space. Land reform in the 1920s embodies the Communist strife over land on the

materialist level. This movement was suspended due to the loss of the revolutionary bases as the result of Nationalist attacks. Communists restarted the reform later in the 1940s in the Communist areas and continued it after the founding of the PRC. Because the land reform in the 1940s and 1950s by and large was carried out in the same mode as the land reform in the 1920s, I focus on the 1920s. The Long March in the 1930s marks a collective effort in search of a promised land as the Soviet Republic of China started on the road to an unknown destination. In sharp contrast to the male-dominated collective Long March expedition, which is integrated into the glorious founding of the PRC through discursive construction, the individual voyages of thousands of females to Yan'an in search of the revolutionary truth are far less appreciated than they deserve. With Xiao Hong and Ding Ling's life routes and writings as comparative and contrasting examples, I portray the individual female journeys of and during revolution across space as an alternative and complement to the collective male expedition as discussed in the previous chapter. When the whole nation was in crisis, thousands of individuals traveled extensively in a conscious and unconscious search for a homeland. The founding of the PRC in 1949 split China's national space into the mainland and Taiwan, with both sides waging war in imaginary, figurative ways over ownership of the mainland. The Cultural Revolution, in both its institutional cultural apparatus and individual acts, demonstrated a continuous effort to defend the national territory by venturing to and battling at the frontier. Because the Chinese Communist revolution mainly took place in the countryside and the radical changes in urban space were on the whole a result of reform rather than revolution, I do not address the issue of urban space.[71]

While land has been politically central as the material form of space, the Chinese Communists have also made changes within social space and symbolic space. Looking at space in three dimensions, as discussed above, I argue that twentieth-century revolutionary movements promoted three main aspects of Chinese spatial construction: maintaining territorial sovereignty, redefining social relations, and governing an imaginary realm. Therefore, this study explores the interconnected relations and fluid interactions among revolution, space, and culture. It focuses on the neglected connection between revolution and space, then introduces space and spatiality as a critical dimension, challenging the paradigm of historical dominance in the study of modern Chinese literature. The case studies show how revolution and culture both work to construct national space, determine social relations, and form a spatial consciousness. The central theme is how revolutionary discourses and practices—battles over land in physical space, struggles over power in social space, efforts to dominate consciousness in symbolic space—construct, subvert, and even smash national space.

Corresponding to the discussion of problematic maps in the introduction, the conclusion of this book discusses another case of maps and politics. During the heyday of the Cultural Revolution, the State Post Bureau released a postage stamp inscribed with a map of China and entitled "The Entire Nation is Red" to

commemorate the grand founding of the Revolutionary Committees all over mainland China. This postage stamp was recalled immediately because of its political incorrectness: inaccurate boundaries in the south and the exclusion of Taiwan from "Red China." Focusing on the interrelatedness of the significance of maps in (inter)national politics and their cultural representation, this coda addresses the following critical issues: How Chinese conceptualize maps and their representational power in politics; the ways cartography as a modern visual medium can convey or conceal the truth; and how visual images and their textual representations become contested sites of knowledge practices.

Notes

1 James R. Akerman *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2.
2 In recent years, this story has been featured by famous Chinese directors like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou (*The Emperor and the Assassin* 荆轲刺秦王, dir. Chen Kaige, 1999; *Hero* 英雄, dir. Zhang Yimou, 2002). In these films, the focus is on swordsmanship and heroism around the assassination. The most recent blockbuster movie, Zhang Yimou's *Hero*, raised the issues of the true meaning of heroism, the necessity of killing in empire building, and even the legitimacy of today's China.
3 Sima Qian, "The Biographies of the Assassin-Retainers," in *The Records of the Grand Historian*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 167–178. Translations slightly modified.
4 Maps do not have to be in graphic form. As James R. Akerman puts it: "They can be verbal, textonic, gestureal, or performative." "Introduction," in *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–10.
5 Sima Qian, "The Biographies of the Assassin-Retainers."
6 Akerman, "Introduction."
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969), especially the last chapter, "The Principles of Kinship."
10 Thongchai understands "geo-body" in the modern context: "the geo-body of a nation is merely an effect of modern geographical discourse whose prime technology is a map." This statement is also applicable in nonmodern contexts, although the level of mapmaking technology might be different. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 16–19.
11 Inspired by the New Historicism approach, studies on cartography have recognized more and more that maps are not "truthful" representation of facts, but rather expressions of political, economic, and religious interests. See J. B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
12 Sima Qian. "The Biographies of the Assassin-Retainers."
13 Ibid.
14 Sigmund Freud. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), vol. 18, 36.
15 Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1963), vol. 22, 203–215.

16 Ibid., 211.
17 Havi Carel, "Born to be Bad: Is Freud's Death Drive the Source of Human Evilness?" http://verakl.bol.ucla.edu/FR170X/Freud-death-drive.pdf (retrieved July 10, 2013). Carel's article also delves into the ethical dimension of Freud's concept of the death drive.
18 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (London: Penguin, 1998), vol. 1, 140.
19 Benjamin Elman, "Geographical Research in Ming-Ch'ing Period," *Monumenta* 35 (1981–83): 1–18.
20 Some of the border zones represented on the maps, such as Tibet and Xinjiang, were not surveyed due to political sensitivity and accessibility.
21 Peter Purdue, "Boundaries, Map, and Movement: Chinese, Russian, and Mongolian Empires in Early Modern Central Eurasia," *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (June 1998): 263–286.
22 The Kangxi Atlas was first engraved on 41 copper plates, stored in Shenyang Imperial Palace. It was reprinted under the name "Confidential Map of the Qing Empire (*Qing neifu yitong yudi mi tu*)" in 1929, scale 1:1,400,000.
23 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959), vol. 3, 585.
24 Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001). See "Introduction: Cartography and Ethnography as Early Modern Modes of Representation," 1–32. Hostetler also proposes that Manchu achievements in cartography certainly kept up with and may have surpassed those of Europe.
25 Laura Hostetler, "Contending Cartographic Claims? The Qing Empire in Manchu, Chinese, and European Maps," in *The Imperial Map*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 93–132.
26 For the significance of world geography records in nineteenth-century China, see Wang Hui, *Xiandai zhongguo sixiang de xingqi* (The rise of modern Chinese thought) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), vol. 1, part 2, 619–642.
27 The claims concerned the southern steppe known as the Little Pamir and a northern steppe known as the Alichur Pamir. The Little Pamir bordered on territories and tribes of the Hindu Kush within the sphere of British influence. The Alichur Pamir was claimed by the Chinese as part of the "New Dominion" of Chinese Turkestan. For a contemporary report on this dispute, see "England, Russia and China on the Pamir Plateau," *The Times*, November 16, 1892, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/52428765 (retrieved July 23, 2013). This was one of many territorial tensions between the two powers. It engaged multilateral interests that brought in Britain (through British India) and Afghanistan. The diplomatic intervention of Britain, which sought to protect its own orbit in the Far East, prevented Russia from gaining full ownership of the disputed land. Russia negotiated separately with Britain and China, with Russia and China agreeing to abide by the status quo until further delimitation was made. In 1895, without consulting China, Britain and Russia reached an agreement that left only one of the eight Pamirs under Chinese control. See S. C. M. Paine, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia, and Their Disputed Frontier* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 272–274. John W. Garver, "The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute in the Pamir Mountains Region," *The China Quarterly* 85 (1981): 107–118.
28 For a complete biography of Hong Jun, see Zhao Erxun 赵尔巽, ed., "Hong Jun zhuan (A biography of Hong Jun)," in *Qing shi gao* 清史稿 (Sketch of Qing history) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976–77), vol. 41, 12485–12486. Hong had been actively involved in international affairs as the ambassador to Russia, Germany, and Austria for the Qing government from 1887 to 1890. He kept the government abreast of the European situation, even foreseeing a large-scale war in Europe within a decade, an insight that was proved nearly accurate by the outbreak of World War I.
29 For the Protocol of Kashgar and Protocol of Novyi Margelan, see Necati Polat,

Boundary Issues in Central Asia (Leiden: Brill, 2002), appendices 5 and 8 respectively.

30 National Palace Museum in Taipei preserves an original copy of this map. Based on the signature and seal, the map was made by Russians. Additional tags in Chinese affixed to the map imply it was amended for the convenience of the Qing officials who might not have known Manchu. They also indicate that some Qing officials had seen this map. This map was also translated into Chinese, entitled "Supplementary Kashgar Map of Sino-Russian Border Demarcation." A digitized version is available at www.npm.gov.tw/exh98/frontier/ch3.html (retrieved July 16, 2013).

31 He reported the purchase of this map to the emperor on May 24 by the lunar calendar, 1890. Sun Guangqi and Zhu Jianlin, eds., 孙光祺 朱剑琳整理, *Hong Jun Zouzhe xuanlu* (Selected reports of Hong Jun《鸿钧奏折选录》, www.dfzb.suzhou.gov.cn/zsbl/1651527.htm (retrieved July 16, 2013).

32 *Hong Jun Zouzhe xuanlu*.

33 Hong himself was an established historian of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), with 30 volumes of *Yuanshi yiwen zhengbu* 元史译文正补 (Evidence of and Supplement to the Translated Yuan History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985) and should have known very well the significance of precision and the necessity of rigor. Unfortunately, when dealing with geography, he was not as cautious as he should have been.

34 *Hong Jun Zouzhe xuanlu.*

35 Inspired by the New Historicism approach, studies on cartography have recognized more and more that maps are not truthful representation of facts, but rather expressions of political, economic, and religious interests. See J. B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

36 Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, in *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading*, ed. John P. Muller and William J. Richardson (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 28–54.

37 The reversed relationship of possessing and being possessed is inspired by Barbara Johnson's analysis of Poe, Lacan, and Derrida, "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida," in *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading*, ed. John P. Muller and William J. Richardson (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 213–251.

38 Zeng Pu, *Nie hai hua* (A flower in the sea of sins) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), chapter 28.

39 My analysis of the "purloined map" in *A Flower in the Sea of Sins* is inspired by the scholarship on Edgar Allan Poe's "Purloined Letter." See Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," trans. Alan Bass, in *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading*, ed. John P. Muller and William J. Richardson (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 173–212; and Frederic Jameson, "Marx's Purloined Letter," *New Left Review* 209 (1995): 75–110.

40 See Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

41 Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: The Orion Press, 1964).

42 Richard Sorabji, "Space," in *Matter, Space, and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 125–215.

43 For instance, Michel de Certeau, "Spatial Stories," in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 91–130; and Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 14–25.

44 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27. Foucault had started considering space within his philosophical framework early in his career, from the late 1960s. Its belated appearance in print form in 1984 leads to the false idea that

Foucault did not approach the space issue until he had finished most of his corpus on history.

45 Ibid.

46 Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York: Verso, 1989).

47 Foucault, "Of Other Spaces."

48 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Maurice Dobb, trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 21.

49 Foucault, "Of Other Spaces."

50 The adjective "long" here is intriguing, defining both space and time as similarly measurable.

51 For a Marxist critique of the Enlightenment, see Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 2000).

52 Benedict Anderson has convincingly argued that nationalism, usually a collective historical consciousness, can cross boundaries and exist beyond national territories. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2000).

53 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 21.

54 Ibid., 28.

55 Scholars in European literature have introduced space and space-related categories in literary criticism and further understand literature in relation to its context. See, for example, Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900* (New York: Verso, 1998); and Kristin Ross, *Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

56 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), especially the following three chapters: "Here and Now," "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for Transnational Anthropology," and "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." David Harvey also contributes substantively to the understanding of space, especially in relation to the postmodern condition. See David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1990): 418–434; "The Experience of Space and Time," in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), 201–323; and "From Space to Place and Back Again," in *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (London: Blackwell, 1996), 291–326.

57 Henri Lefebvre, *Production of Space* (New York: Blackwell, 1991), 31.

58 See Catherine Vance Yeh, *The Chinese Political Novel: Migration of a World Genre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015); David Der-wei Wang, *Fin-de-siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849–1911* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 102–111.

59 Foucault describes two kinds of heterotopias: crisis heterotopia, i.e., privileged, sacred, or forbidden places in primitive society, and heterotopia of deviation, i.e., rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in modern society. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces."

60 For an in-depth discussion of utopia, see Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

61 C. T. Hsia, "Obsession with China: The Moral Burden of Modern Chinese Literature," in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 533–554.

62 In the third lecture, on livelihood, of his "Three Principles of the People (*Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主义)" in August 1924, Sun put forward the proposition that the ultimate

goal of livelihood and the final solution to the peasant problem would be to achieve "land to the tillers." Sun Yat-sen, *Sun Zhongshan wenji* (Collected works of Sun Yat-sen) (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1997), vol. 1, 275.

63 I refer to the report in *Mao Zedong*, 2nd edn (Tokyo: Sōsōsha, 1983), vol. 1, 207–250.

64 Ding Ling's *The Sun Shines Over the Sanggan River* (Taiyang zhaozai sanggan he shang, 1951) and Zhou Libo's *Hurricane* (Baofeng zhouyu, 1948) are the representative pieces portraying land reform in Communist-occupied areas. Although Ding Ling and Zhou Libo had a clear agenda to glorify Communist land reform, both works reveal violence and extremism within this movement and some unreasonable practices of land embezzlement and distribution.

65 For example, Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor*.

66 Hsia, "Obsession with China," 533–554.

67 See Huang Ziping, *Geming, lishi, xiaoshuo* (Revolution, history, and fiction) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996); Chen Jianhua, *"Geming" de xiandaixing: zhongguo geming huayu kao lun* (Modernity of "revolution": an archaeology of Chinese revolutionary discourse) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000).

68 For instance, Marston Anderson, *Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990); and David Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

69 Yomi Braester, *Witness Against History: Literature, Film, and Public Discourse in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Ban Wang, *Illuminations from the Past: Trauma, Memory, and History in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Robert Chi, "Picture Perfect: Narrating Public Memory in Twentieth-Century China," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2001.

70 The 20-episode *Huo Yuanjia* (dir. Xu Xiaoming, Hong Kong, 1981) was the first Hong Kong-made TV drama introduced to the mainland in 1984; it received the highest audience rating of the year.

71 For study on Chinese urban space, see Deborah S. Davis, Richard Kraus, Barry Naughton, and Elizabth J. Perry, eds. *Urban Space in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1995).

1 The will to land, the will to revolution

From the soil, down to earth

> Thirty-sixth year [211 BC]: Mars lodged in the mansion of the Heart Star. A meteor fell on Dong Province, turning into a stone when it reached the ground. One of the common people inscribed on the stone: "*The First Emperor will die and his land be divided.*" [my emphasis] When the First Emperor heard of this, he sent the imperial secretary to investigate, but no one would confess to the deed. In the end the emperor had all the persons living in the vicinity of the stone seized and put to death, and had the stone burned and pulverized.
>
> Sima Qian, "The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of the Qin," *Records of the Grand Historian*[1]

Whether curse or prophecy, "The First Emperor will die and his land be divided" suggested the end of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC). Only with the downfall of the despotic Qin could the other six states end their ignoble existence under the iron tyrant. In its original context the Chinese term *difen* 地分, "his land be divided," did not connote a redistribution of the land to its tillers, but rather the shattered land of the state and the breakdown of a ruthless dynasty. History proved the prophecy at least half right: the First Emperor died one year later in 210 BC, not long after his Qin dynasty had claimed sovereignty over China. But the land that was then divided into Wei 魏, Shu 蜀, and Wu 吴 was soon reunited and expanded as the even greater state of Han 汉 under the leadership of Liu Bang 刘邦 (256–195 BC). Though harassed by surrounding tribes from time to time, the region continued to survive, consolidated, even until today, under the glorious appellation of China in 202 BC.

Like anything else taken out of context, "his land be divided" found a new fate nearly two millennia later when Mao Dun 茅盾 appropriated the epithet and put it into the mouths of peasant rebels in his rewriting of the first recorded mass-scale peasant insurgency in Chinese history, led by Chen Sheng 陈胜 and Wu Guang 吴广.[2] In Mao Dun's retelling, "The First Emperor will die and his land be divided" expressed the peasants' primitive desire for land, a desire repressed and denied within the feudal system. Like most writers on historical subjects, Mao Dun tried to make the ancient speak on behalf of its contemporary counterpart. In the 1930s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had to move to

the countryside after a series of frustrations in the city. The CCP was struggling for survival, establishing revolutionary bases and winning peasants over to the revolutionary cause by promising them land and other equal opportunities in the new society. As a consciously conformist writer, Mao Dun showed his identification with the CCP through his ostensibly progressive writing by drawing attention away from petty-bourgeoisie intellectual abstractions and focusing on the down-to-earth realities of the peasantry.[3]

"Down to earth" should be understood literally here. There are several English equivalents for *di* 地 or *tudi* 土地 in Chinese: land, earth, soil, ground, and so on. In this chapter, different English referents of 地 and 土地 are used for contextual convenience. China has traditionally been an agrarian country for thousands of years. As the pioneering Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong 费孝通 discovered in the 1940s, its society is fundamentally rural. He described China as a nation based on the soil with a personal anecdote: The first time he went abroad, his nanny wrapped some dirt scraped from a stove in red paper and put it in his suitcase as a blessing.[4] "Go tilling with sunrise; back home with sunset" (*ri chu er zuo, ri luo er xi*) has been a typical description of conventional Chinese life. Not much theorization is needed to explain how much land means to a nation that bases its livelihood on the earth.

The land matters on multiple levels. First, land is the basic productive resource of the peasant masses. Second, soil is where people's roots are fixed. Third, earth is more tangible than its counterpart, heaven. On earth people find a foothold, build a house, and grow their food; in other words, they spend their lives materially in this world. These three imports are interrelated. On the basis of the above three levels, moving from the concrete to the abstract, I propose to understand the literary depiction of land as a gateway to the configuration of space in the specific context of modern China. I define space here as the three-dimensional domain perceived by human senses through the interplay of physical experience and imagination. Consequently, land reform in the 1920s is the beginning of the spatial reconfiguration of modern China.

Land reform has many precedents in China and plenty of counterparts abroad since modernization. Many of the uprisings throughout China's long history were intended to reform land ownership in favor of peasants.[5] The most spectacular and influential one might be the Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom (*Tianchao tianmu zhidu* 天朝田亩制度), put in place in 1853 during the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64) (*Taiping tianguo* 太平天国).[6] Peasant movements were a dynamic force in regime changes throughout the dynastic period and are an essential part of premodern Chinese history, especially within the Communist historical-materialist outlook. Such movements can appear to be cyclical, uncanny returns of the repressed over two millennia, continuing until the foundation of the People's Republic of China. From our perspective today we might be amazed by the history of revolt by landless peasants like Chen Sheng and Wu Guang and the thousands who followed in their footsteps for centuries. Perhaps we should also be astonished by the fact that Chinese peasants in the twenty-first century are still far from owning the land they work, even though the slogan

"The people are sovereign over their land" (*Renmin dangjia zuozhu* 人民当家做主) has hung over China for more than half a century.

The Chinese narrative of social(ist) revolution is universally well known: After a series of failed experiments in urban uprisings,[7] the revolution moved to the countryside and recouped its strength.[8] This move offered Mao the first opportunity to take the lion's share of the credit for the successful Chinese revolution, since he realized the feasibility, importance, and necessity of peasant revolution in his *Report of the Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement* (1927), even though he denounces his arch political rival Chen Duxiu, the former central leader of the CCP, as "the Right opportunist."[9] Because distributing land in promise and in practice was the fundamental concern of peasant revolution—sometimes called agrarian revolution—I use "land reform" rather than one of those two terms to emphasize the significance of land in this movement. Mao must have been impressed by the victories of the rebellious peasantry, and may well have been inspired by those who succeeded in overturning the previous dynasties and establishing their own.[10] Revolution in China may have meant, for Mao and many others, the struggle for land. However, his ambition, and that of the peasants, encompassed much more: to him, it was the means; to the masses, it was the end. Ends justify means, but means do not ensure ends.

Land reform provides a field in which the oppressed masses of the old society take center stage to vent their rage in a compelling action that makes obtaining their goal palpably close. The peasants' will to secure land, which had been ruthlessly repressed for thousands of years, was transformed into the will to revolution under the new circumstances conditioned by Communist mobilization. My objective is to trace the genealogical origin of revolution transforming space to the land reform in the 1920s Chinese Communist agenda. I argue that land, as a concrete materialistic form as well as the base of space, was the first object to be revolutionized. In this chapter I focus on literary manifestations of land reform as an intermediary between land and revolution. The relationships among land, writing, and revolution are complex. Land, both cause and effect of the revolution, is presented as an object of the peasantry's collective primitive desire in these writings, as well as an effective means to engage the peasants in the revolution. With the will to revolution looming large, the will to gain land gave place to a grander project: class struggle and national salvation.

Writing played a dubious role in this revolutionary practice. Intended to promote the idea of transferring land to the tillers, it expresses in an accessible style the peasants' quest for land. The solution suggested is, however, wishful thinking. More subversively, these writings unintentionally reveal the limits and even the impossibility of land reform. I understand land reform as an attempt to redefine human beings' relationship to land, by means of possessing it or losing it. With the change in the relationship of humans to land, i.e., the redistribution of land among people, social relations change too. The identification of a person with a particular piece of land embodies the individual's position in physical space; it also determines a person's material distance from others, and so constitutes the basis of human social relations.

I start with a comparative and contrastive reading of three of the earliest political texts addressing the significance of land in Chinese revolution: Sun Yat-sen's "Land to the Tillers" (*Gengzhe you qi tian*, 1924), Li Dazhao's "Land and Peasant" (*Tudi yu nongmin*, 1925–26), and Mao Zedong's *Report of the Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement* (*Hunan nongmin yundong kaocha baogao*, 1927; *Report* hereafter). I then examine how some of the motifs from these texts, e.g., "land to the tillers" and "down with landlords and evil gentry (*dadao tuhao lieshen*)" are used in contemporaneous literature such as Mao Dun's "Mud" (*Nining*) and "Great Marsh District" (*Dazexiang*), Bai Wei's *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* (*Dachu youling ta*), and Hong Shen's *Wukui Bridge* (*Wukui qiao*). Intriguingly, the literary works do not respond to the earlier two texts that are historically significant and address land issues specifically. Instead, they echo the rhetoric introduced in Mao's *Report*, which hardly touches on the issue of land distribution but instead serves as a meticulous guide to fighting the landlords and gentry.

From revolution to rhetoric, from politics to poetics

In their earlier period, neither the Nationalists nor the Communists attended to the significance of peasants in revolution adequately. After the collaboration of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the CCP in January 1924, the peasant issue appeared on the Nationalist agenda. Following a series of revolutionary experiments—some failed, some successful to varying degrees—Sun Yat-sen expanded his vision to include the peasants. In August 1924, Sun delivered the third lecture on livelihood from his "Three Principles of the People" (*Sanmin zhuyi*) and proposed that the ultimate goal of livelihood and the final solution to the peasant problem would be to achieve "land to the tillers."[11] In the same month, he made a speech on "land to the tillers" at the commencement of the first Peasant Movement Institute (*Nongmin yundong jiangxisuo* 农民运动讲习所) initiated by the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. Sun addressed three issues: (1) as the majority of the Chinese populace, peasants should form the base of revolution. The success of revolution depended on the consolidation of peasants; (2) as peasants were the most miserable class in Chinese society, their interest should be considered in disseminating "Three Principles of the People"; and (3) "land to the tillers" was the ultimate key to rescue peasants from their distress.[12] In theory, Sun had realized the crux of Chinese revolution. Unfortunately, he did not come up with a set of effective methods to put his theory into practice before he died in 1925.

Meanwhile, the importance of peasants to the Chinese Communist revolution gradually emerged. The pioneering Chinese Marxist Li Dazhao probed the issue of land and peasants in an article written at the end of 1925 and the beginning of 1926. His discussion has five purposes: (1) to describe the equal land ownership movement in Chinese history; (2) to document the consistency of peasant bankruptcy; (3) to identify yeomen and tenant farmers as the majority and the most miserable among peasants; (4) to propose giving farmland to the peasants; and (5) to suggest the organization of peasant associations and self-defense forces.[13]

Li acknowledged Sun's insight on equal land ownership and regretted that he did not live long enough to see it. Li had predicted: "Chinese nationalist revolution will not be far from success if the mass of peasants get organized to engage in the revolution."[14] Introducing a few scientific statistics and full of rational argumentation without political instigation, Li's article is more a political treatise in the form of a sociological survey of the Chinese peasantry's status quo than a propaganda pamphlet.

In his early discussions of the peasant movement, Mao Zedong aligned himself with Sun and Li. In September 1926, Mao came straight to the point in the opening of an essay: "The peasant problem is the central issue of nationalist revolution. The nationalist revolution will not succeed if peasants do not rise up to support it."[15] Over the course of a year, Mao emphasized the substantial role of peasants in revolution in almost all his articles,[16] with the strongest emphasis in his *Report*. Mao must have been familiar with Sun's and Li's discourse on land, peasants, and revolution since both texts were among the most popular articles in the circle surrounding the Peasant Movement Institute—Sun made the speech at its commencement and Li's essay was chosen to be on the syllabus of the institute. Mao himself was in charge of the sixth workshop of the Peasant Movement Institute. *Report* was written only two years after Sun's lecture and one year after Li's work on the potential revolutionary power of the peasantry, but its effect on the literary world was far more extensive than that of its predecessors.

For a long time, *Report* has been considered one of the most important texts of the Chinese revolution. Structurally, *Report* tackles three issues:[17] It describes the vigorous peasant movement in the five counties of Hunan and argues against antipeasant movements; it defines the poor(est) peasants, including the hooligans, as the revolutionary vanguard and says they should become leaders of the revolution; and it calls for the peasants to organize under peasant associations to overthrow landlords and gentry, and summarizes 14 deeds the peasants have achieved under the leadership of the associations. However, the central focus of *Report* is to lay out general strategies for working with the peasantry, such as identifying enemies and specific methods to fight them, i.e., interrogation, protest, incarceration, and execution. Despite its title, as Roy Hofheinz points out, *Report* lacks all the elements of a party report—references to organized effort, accounts of party activity, recommendations about policy.[18] Besides the above tangible political messages, its contribution is on multiple levels, all of which are most efficacious as propaganda.[19] Only one-tenth of *Report* actually pertains to the necessity of the peasant movement. The remaining nine-tenths is devoted to elaborate arguments on the legitimacy of violence and its proper implementation. In fact, *Report* functions as a companion to mob rule.

Poetics of violence

Mao establishes a poetics of violence in *Report*. He first identifies landlords and gentry as the object of the violence and forges a cluster of neorevolutionary terms

consisting of "local tyrant," "evil gentry," "violence," and "insurrection." Using the rhetorical strategy of synecdoche, Mao defines an entire class by one of its parts—he does not differentiate good landlords from bad landlords. They are all put in the single category of "landlord tyrants" (*tuhao* 土豪.) In the same way, he collapses the gentry class. All gentry are classified as "evil gentry" (*lieshen* 劣绅). Since *Report*, landlord tyrants and evil gentry have been blamed as the primary domestic cause of sinning and suffering in Chinese society, so that there is hardly a single landlord or member of the gentry presented as a positive figure in literary or artistic works.[20] In contrast, peasants are characterized as the oppressed subjects in need of enlightenment to overthrow the class causing their misery.

After identifying the two opposite classes—the oppressor and the oppressed—involved, Mao expounds the *raison d'être* of violence: that is, what revolution is all about. To quote one of Mao's most well-known mottos:

> A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. *A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class*.[21] [my italics]

This saying is so idiomatic that few people delve into the logic of the argument. Mao begins the definition through negation—saying what revolution is not. He first implicitly aims at the urban CCP sympathizers, especially educated youth who like the notion of revolution as a fad but are not free from the bourgeois outlook and inclinations. Mao attacks activities associated with the leisure class, like dinner parties, creative writing, and painting. In doing so, he establishes that the peasant revolution is not going to be a bourgeois revolution; instead, it will annihilate bourgeois mindsets and activities. The most distinctive feature of the peasant revolution is the unconditional endorsement of violence of one class against the other—peasants against the landlords and gentry.

In the hermeneutics of revolutionary violence, Mao employs the rhetoric of tautology. He repeats the same or similar arguments in different sections under different subtitles, presumably addressing different issues; thus, one argument on the same issue is spread throughout the entire article. His advocacy of violence permeates the text from beginning to end, in both the section opposing the overreaching of the peasant movement and the section identifying revolutionary vanguards. Mao also repeats the figurative image of "overturn and step on" when discussing the struggle against landlords and gentry. By means of these rhetorical strategies, Mao argues for the use of violence in land reform.

Pedagogy of mobocracy

Mao not only legitimizes revolutionary violence, but also demonstrates concrete techniques for peasants, including riffraff, to implement it. He comes up with an

inventory of struggle skills by summarizing 14 great activities that peasants have practiced in the country and explicitly encourages them to continue. The list consists of the basic models of struggle against landlords and gentry, similar to Russian formalist generalizations about the prototypes of Russian mythology. A well-coded formula, it sets the parameters for literary manifestations of fighting landlords with dramatic elements for many years to come. The enumerated 14 plots are selected and patched together to form literary narratives.

Mao unconditionally approves all violent acts done by peasants, no matter how militant and hooliganistic. *Report* served as a manual on smashing landlords and gentry politically and economically, as well as detailed measures to be taken: protest, public struggle,[22] imprisonment, exile, and even execution.[23] Mao endorses the terror that peasants produced: "In sum, there must be terror for a period everywhere in the countryside. Otherwise, we cannot crack down on the counterrevolutionary activities. Neither can we bring down the gentry's power."[24] From Mao's point of view, no matter what means are used, as long as they help to overthrow the landlords and gentry, they are legitimate beyond question. Terror is granted unconditional endorsement.

Revolutionary anti-ethics

Mao refutes the charges of some conservative Communists at the time that the peasants were going too far under the peasant associations. He admits that peasants are in a sense "unruly" in the countryside. Nonetheless, he attributes their so-called "exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong" to evil gentry and lawless landlords who themselves have driven peasants "too far." Mao endows peasant associations with supreme power in dealing with all kinds of issues in society. This institutional machine overrides legislature, judiciary, and administration. By and large, peasant associations support peasants' defiance of law and order. It would be just to Mao if the peasants lolled on the ivory-inlaid beds of young ladies from the households of the landlord tyrants and evil gentry—which implies the physical insult of women in those households. *Report* is radical enough not only to defy the traditional law and moral system but also to establish a set of revolutionary antiethics.

To report, to prefigure

Mao speaks on his own behalf. He plays multiple roles in and out of the text. If *Report* is compared with a staged drama, Mao is the playwright, director, producer, and protagonist simultaneously. This is one of the earliest of Mao's writings with a full representation of himself, his ego writ large. It is composed as a solipsism; he acts more as a prophet than a reporter.

Although it appears to be based on a field survey, *Report* aspires to prefigure the future rather than reconstruct the past. All of the events and statements Mao recounts serve as references or even guidance for upcoming revolutionary activities. Many paragraphs do not concern the past or ongoing circumstances, but

focus on painting the future of revolution. Mao uses violent natural images like thunderstorms and hurricanes to prescribe revolution in an apocalyptic way in the opening part of *Report*:

> In a very short time, in China's central provinces in both north and south, several hundred million peasants will rise up like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, landlord tyrants, and evil gentry into their graves.[25]

Mao's prediction is not realistic, based on his survey. He pretends not to see the threat posed by the formidable power of the local militia and Nationalist forces that would support the landlord and gentry classes, and continues to construct the panoramic vista of the revolutionary future with words. While pleased that "those who formerly prostrated themselves before the power of the gentry now bow before the power of the peasants" and "the world since last October [1927] is a different one," Mao repeats: "Those who used to rank lowest now rank above everybody else; this is called 'turning things upside down.'" Mao's vision in *Report* is a fantasy, and this was soon proved by history. The peasant movement was crushed in a few months, with thousands of deaths. Mao retreated to the desolate mountains with only a handful of followers, the defeated leader of a peasant revolt.

Report mainly argues for violence and delineates the organization of peasant participation in the movement. The fundamental issues of land distribution and tax reduction are barely touched upon. Mao's concern is how to mobilize peasants to revolution rather than resolve the fundamental problems of the countryside. In order to accomplish this, he adopts an effective strategy: rhetoric. Although political instigation is not exclusive to *Report*, no other earlier writings by Mao himself are as rich and radical in the rhetoric of violence. The exchange of revolution for rhetoric is significant. It symbolizes the exchange between politics and poetics.

There are striking similarities between literary works dealing with land reform and Mao's *Report*: the endorsement of violence, suggestions for mobocracy, the urge to overturn the established moral and ethical order, and efforts to find a resolution to revolution. By displaying these resemblances in rhetoric and conception between revolutionary pamphlets and literary creation, I mean to highlight the influence of revolution on literature. The revolutionary rhetoric in Mao's *Report* has provided literary writers with ample resources for their creative writings. Sun Yat-sen and Li Dazhao's articles address land reform in a more fundamental and reasonable way. However, they have little influence on literary works. This may well be due to the lack of compelling rhetorical devices in Sun's and Li's political treatises.

Down to earth

> Land to the tillers.
>
> (Sun Yat-sen, "The Three Principles of the People")

> "The First Emperor will die and the land be divided."
>
> (Sima Qian, "The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of the Qin", quoted in Mao Dun, "Great Marsh District")

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, since 1924 equal land distribution to peasants was a top priority on both the Nationalist and Communist agendas. In two years, the peasant movement prevailed in several southern provinces like Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Hunan. As it gained momentum, the attitudes of Nationalists and Communists diverged. Even within the Communist camp, people's opinions differed. Mao's *Report* was the result of an individually conducted survey aimed at arguing against those who thought that the peasant movement was going too far. As I have discussed, *Report* served more as a pedagogical index to mob rule and a forecast of the revolutionary future than a political directive, mostly due to the exchange between revolution and rhetoric, between politics and poetics. Mao was not alone in forging revolutionary rhetoric and conjuring up political poetics. His counterpart in literary production was equally devoted to constructing the poetics of revolution.

Mao Dun maintained a high-profile position in and out of his literary narrative of early Communist revolution. His act of escaping with a check for 2,000 yuan at a critical moment for the CCP and fleeing to Japan is often read as questionable allegiance to the Communist cause when considered alongside the complexity and ambivalence represented in his fiction.[26] His trilogy *Eclipse* (*Shi*) opened a gateway to the real(ist) mise-en-scène of the Great Revolution. Besides giving attention to urban intellectuals stuck in the maelstrom of the revolution, Mao Dun showed earnest interest in the peasants' fate in rural revolution before presenting his macroscopic understanding of rural bankruptcy in *Midnight* (*Ziye*). Although they also concern the issue of land, "Great Marsh District" and "Mud" offer completely different outlooks on Communist land movements in the countryside. Here I situate the two stories concerning land reform in the larger context of Sun's "land to the tillers" movement to show how the literary writer responded to land reform and how he differed from or accorded with politicians in laying out the project of land distribution.

Since "land to the tillers" became an irresistible lure to the peasants in the revolution under both Sun Yat-sen and Li Dazhao, Mao Dun borrowed "The First Emperor will die and his land be divided" from Sima Qian to express a desire repressed for centuries, although it originally had nothing to do with land ownership. Even though Sun Yat-sen, Li Dazhao, and Mao Zedong all addressed that issue, it does not seem that Mao Dun responded to either Sun or Li. On the contrary, the philosophy used in his depiction of the struggle over land is mostly Mao Zedong's, especially the emphasis on the peasants and class differences.

Mao Dun bridged the gap between Sun and Li (both stressing equal land ownership) and Mao (skipping equal land distribution, emphasizing class struggle) in a true-to-history manner in his narrative.

Mao Dun and Mao Zedong shared the same outlook on the peasant revolution. Mao Dun practiced what Mao Zedong prescribed in *Report* in his literary writings. Although Mao Dun eventually interpreted the peasant insurrection as a struggle for land, this piece of "land" was no less polemic. It is clear that Mao Dun imposed "land to the tillers" onto the ancient peasants; he was well educated in the Chinese classics and was familiar with the uprising led by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang, especially as Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* was required for traditional education. Thus this anachronism cannot be attributed to ignorance or a careless mistake, but is an intentional fabrication. Mao Dun's visionary solution to land distribution in his short historical story "Great Marsh District" is subverted by his other work, "Mud," in which the Communist promise of land to the peasants only leads to their disastrous end.

Land politics does not stop here. It signifies on both literal and metaphorical levels, and would be an issue in Chinese political life throughout the next 50 years: land reform in the Communist areas in the late 1940s and early 1950s, struggle against landowners in the following political movements. Meanwhile, writers depicted land distribution in their fiction. "Mud" and "Great Marsh District" propose different resolutions, but whether intended as pro- or anti-Communist land proposals, both works are lost in authorial denial. Mao Dun was obsessed with disavowing these two short stories in his later years. I argue that besides practical political concerns, Mao Dun's disavowal epitomizes the dilemma of Chinese land ownership and the author's disillusionment with the inability to find or even fantasize a possible solution.

As Sima Qian recorded, the Chen Sheng and Wu Guang uprising happened the following way. In July 209 BC, 900 recruits from among the poor were marching to the frontier, Yuyang, for guard duties, herded by two Qin army officers. Chen Sheng and Wu Guang were two camp leaders. They were stuck in the great marsh district due to continuous rain. According to the law of the Qin dynasty, they all would be put to death because of this delay. Chen Sheng and Wu Guang decided to rebel. In order to win support from the people, they acted in the name of Prince Fu Su and Xiang Yan, the general of the state of Chu. Fu Su was the eldest son of the First Emperor but was murdered by his brother, the Second Emperor, who then seized the throne. Chen and Wu put a piece of silk inscribed with "Chen Sheng the King" into a fish belly, then assigned a soldier to buy the fish for cooking. Thus the inscribed silk was revealed to the public. Meanwhile, Wu Guang and his followers hid in the wilderness, pretending to be foxes crying: "Restore the Kingdom of Chu! Cheng Sheng the King!" The soldiers were all astonished.

One day, Wu Guang deliberately provoked the Qin officers and was severely beaten. This made his fellow soldiers very angry. Wu snatched the chance and killed the officer on the spot. In the meantime, Chen had killed the other officer. Chen and Wu then gathered all the men and said:

> Since we are caught in a heavy rain, we are already late. We cannot make light of our own lives. If one has to die, he should die like a man. Are the princes and lords and prime ministers born leaders?

The crowd responded in unison: "We will follow you." Chen Sheng and Wu Guang thus became the leaders of the uprising.[27]

Mao Dun copied most of the plot, even including details, from Sima Qian without making substantial changes. Nevertheless, he took a radical step further in "Great Marsh District" by adding to the original a strong flavor of class conflict.[28] He replaced the rebellious Qin soldiers with class-conscious peasants. The commanding officers are well-to-do landowners. Correspondingly, all of the 900 conscripts belong to the poor peasant class. Chen Sheng has a "poor peasant's face, slightly wrinkled and darkened by the sun." Mao Dun skillfully linked the uprising to the stone fallen from the sky two years before, which in Sima Qian's narrative had nothing to do with the uprising led by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang. Mao Dun added a twist here, transforming the soldiers' struggle for survival into an unquenchable desire for land:

> Thinking with joy of planting on their own land, the 900 conscripts feel that the only thing worth risking their lives for is land. They are not interested in "Chen Sheng the King." If they have to go on having emperors, they want one who will be different from the old emperor, one who will give them *land of their own to till* [my emphasis].[29]

After 2,000 years, the conscripts from the bottom of the Qin hierarchy are resurrected. Their long-hidden class consciousness is awakened so that they realize that the archenemy—landlords—is causing their misery. Survival is no longer their ultimate goal, but becomes a means to change their landless status. The peasant revolt appears as an idealized picture:[30]

> The wildfire from the underground breaks out! The crash of slaves breaking their chains spreads from camp to camp. Every village, every country in the realm ruled by the Qin Emperor is rocked by the explosion in Great Marsh. Oppressed peasants rise to overthrow! Like a great tide they sweep away the corrupt officials, the cruel repressive laws!
>
> . . .
>
> The First Emperor is dead! The land will be divided!

The concluding sentence is intriguing. It appears to be a slogan cried out by the rebels, but as mentioned above, it is in fact a stone inscription that descended apocalyptically from heaven. Mao Dun was fascinated with unmasking superstitions. As an atheist, he preferred everything to have a human rather than a heavenly origin. He would not pray up to heaven, but rather down to earth.

The awkward device of imposing class consciousness onto the rebellious soldiers of Qin may make "Great Marsh District" appear artistically limited. The

reasoning behind the story is like that of Mao's *Report*: first, class explains all; second, the irreconcilable conflict between the rich and poor peasants is the ultimate origin of this struggle; third, any means are reasonable to overthrow the rich peasant class. In spite of all the above, at least three questions make this story all the more compelling: What motivated Mao Dun to go back to the allegedly first peasant insurrection? What was behind his intentional misuse of historical materials?[31] Why did Mao Dun make his *raison d'être* of the peasant struggle a piece of land, which was not the case in the recorded history?

The puzzle of land in "Great Marsh District" can be better understood in conjunction with Mao Dun's other short story, "Mud," which offers a different outlook on Communist land reform. So I will delve into "Mud" for a different picture, then return to the superimposed land issue in Mao Dun's re-creation of the legendary tale of Chen Sheng and Wu Guang.

Written in April 1929 in Japan, "Mud" tells how the CCP army entered a village to develop peasant associations and propagate Communism, then retreated when another army arrived. The story is set in 1927. It opens on a morning after a long night of gunfire, presumably the aftermath of the Northern Expedition.[32] Immediately the gray-uniformed soldiers come into the village. They hand out leaflets, paste up slogans, and go house to house knocking on doors, getting people to come out. A few pinched, sallow faces show up, men still wearing queues. But they do not understand what the gray-uniformed young men are saying. It sounds to them like a made-up language.

The title of the story alludes to the dilemma faced by Communist movements in rural areas after the coup d'état of Chiang Kai-shek, with the KMT slaughtering the Communists on April 12, 1927, as the watershed. *Nining*, or mud, literally means a type of mire in which people can get stuck without a way out. To make the title directly symbolic is typical of Mao Dun. As he did with his novellas *Disillusionment* (*Huanmie*), *Vacillation* (*Dongyao*), and *Pursuit* (*Zhuiqiu*), about the loss of direction of the urban bourgeois Communists, Mao Dun used "Mud" to signify the condition of the land reform that the Communists promoted in the countryside. "Mud" can also be taken literally. It draws attention down to the earth. What kind of soil is it? Neither a patch of productive field with golden ripening wheat nor a piece of prosperous land with hopeful residents, but a mixture of dirt and water in which poor and dispossessed villagers struggle like worms.

The gray-uniformed people, apparently representing the Communists, promise land to the villagers. But this turns out to be false. When they realize that their desire for land will never be fulfilled, the villagers give up their belief in the Communists. Ironically, the promise that the Communists expected to use as a tool turns into an incentive to subvert the Communists themselves. When he realizes the impossibility of land ownership, the village tough, Living No Predicting (*Huo wuchang*), starts cursing the gray-uniformed people: "It all sounds nice, but it's really a swindle! I haven't yet seen a chunk of mud, much less land. Those sons-of-bitches!" Intriguingly, when the villagers' possession of land seems unlikely, their desire for it turns into a collective desire to possess women.

Communizing in this context is understood as equal accessibility to both the material (land) and the corporeal (women). After Living No Predicting curses the Communists for not guaranteeing them land, some other villagers immediately switch the focus to merrymaking through women.

> "Inhuman sons-of-bitches! They are merrymaking in the temple. The Seventh saw it with his own eyes, right? Then they cheat us by denying it. Who believes them?" a younger one said, blinking his eyes.
>
> "They should let us have some fun! We want to have some fun too," another one said.
>
> "They say they're not sharing out wives! Hey! The five or six new ones, what are they there for? So they only share among themselves? Let us gents share theirs! Only sons of bitches would not come along. Fuck!"
>
> "As if you have to tell us! That one with the long legs, whose ass wiggles when she walks, she makes me drool."
>
> Everyone burst out laughing, swallowing a thick mouthful.
>
> "Let's do it! Penting up the heat all our lives, we've had enough. This is a chance hard to come by. Whoever hesitates is a lousy son-of-a-bitch!"
>
> No Predicting jumped up to make the declaration. A sudden burst of wind obliterated the last part of what he was saying. The yellow dirt blew up from the ground and rolled itself into a curtain of dust, enveloping them all.

This scene predicts something ominous. Once again, it contains an image of mud or dirt, which is related to the turmoil of putsch. The curtain of dust clothing the gathering villagers also symbolizes that no matter how hard they struggle, their fate is sealed: The mud symbolically functions as a tomb burying the peasants alive.

"Mud" presents a vivid miniature of the shadowy side of land reform. The peasants understand the key concept of Communism: sharing everything, even wives. Mao Dun was well informed of the development of the peasant movement. At the beginning of April 1927, he was appointed editor-in-chief of *Hankou Republic Daily* (*Hankou minguo ribao*),[33] a newspaper propagating CCP ideology. Mao Zemin, Mao Zedong's brother, was the general manager. *Hankou Republic Daily* was very active in publicizing the peasant movement, and Mao Dun was exposed to many reports about peasants fighting landlords. The KMT and CCP did not agree on whether the peasant associations were going too far. This difference of opinion surfaced even within the CCP. To rectify this, Mao conducted a field survey and wrote the *Report* to support peasant violence. Mao Dun wrote a few editorials in the paper championing the peasant struggle against landlords and gentry.[34] There were also rumors circulating at the time that the Communists shared wives, which shocked the majority of traditional peasants.

In "Mud," both women and land are considered possessions. Sharing possessions is interpreted as having equal access to both. In the flyer handed out by the gray-uniformed people, there are pictures of modern women. Old Man Huang's

little son, The Seventh, a cowherd and farmhand, only wants to look at the girl pictured on the flyer, with her slim waist and short sleeves, raising both arms in the air. Seeing the bare-armed girl laughing in the midst of four or five men, holding onto one another's arms, Old Man Huang can't help blurting out a curse: "Goddamn! This means sharing wives for sure." His other son, The Third, feels lucky that his wife has passed away. The Seventh replies: "Communizing isn't so bad; after all, we don't have any women in our household."

Soon after this, the peasant association is established. The women in the village also have to organize an association for themselves. Old Man Huang feels uneasy about women having their own organization. He regrets having been involved and worries that people in the village will not forgive him for his "wrongdoing." In the meantime, The Seventh finds the whole thing amusing, but is a bit unhappy that they have not "shared out the wives." "Nobody was ever serious about sharing wives—dammit, he thought." At the end of the story, when owning land is still in the air, The Seventh continues to fantasize about the beautiful girl on the flyer with her bare arms extended. In his delirium, his lips quiver, as if to say: "It was a swindle all along! Fuck!"

The relationship of land to human beings becomes more problematic as literacy plays an ambivalent role in "Mud," as the foundation of power and subjectivity. Chinese peasants' dispossession of land for thousands of years could be attributed to their illiteracy. They are unable to become landowners without potent agency, such as a politician's theory and practice or a writer's vision and imagination. This does not necessarily mean peasants do not have the drive to claim land for their own. Sometimes it is strong; other times it is completely repressed. Being able to read and write helps peasants to articulate their quest. As masters of literacy, politicians and writers are able to act and are capable of acting on behalf of peasants, as both Mao Zedong and Mao Dun demonstrated.

"Mud" shows that even if a peasant *is* literate, he is unable to be the agent for his own group; again, peasants can only exist as subjects—but without subjectivity. Their desire cannot be fulfilled without the intervention of someone qualified. Old Man Huang is the only literate person in the village. Forty years ago, he took a preliminary civil examination to join the imperial bureaucracy. However, his beliefs are not as progressive as they should be. As a result, Old Man Huang has a nostalgic longing for the imperial China:

> What is this Republic stuff? The emperor is better! Sixteen years of the Republic and there has been fighting every year. This year, too, of course! In the spring it is Marshal Wu's troops, then it was the Fengtian army, and now…

With these words, Old Man Huang expresses his discontent with the separatist warlord regimes in Republican China.

Old Man Huang knows all the characters printed on the flyer, but he cannot figure out what they mean. The flyer is supposed to propagate and indoctrinate peasants with Communist ideas. However, the characters on it turn out to be

empty signifiers that do not make sense to most of the illiterate peasants. Even someone like Old Man Huang cannot interpret them in an appropriate way. More ironically, the image of the woman with the characters becomes the most important part of the flyer to the illiterate masses, including characters like The Seventh. The flyer functions both negatively and subversively in reality: Failing to convey its intended message, it also creates uneasiness among the peasant masses who develop an alternative desire to land possession—the desire for women. This dysfunctional, or more precisely malfunctional, flyer is just one of hundreds of instances that expose the unbridgeable gap between the Communists and the peasants. Literacy may work as an instrument of oppression,[35] but here it results in the literate being oppressed. Old Man Huang is called to serve in the peasant association organized by the gray-uniformed people, which only brings him to a disastrous end: He is executed together with his son, The Third. (The Seventh survives by not returning home the previous day.) Poor Old Man Huang even feels relieved when he recognizes the troops' flag and understands that the characters written on its edge are the same as those of the soldiers under his "superior." Only the number is different.

There is no doubt that the Chinese Communists assumed agency in land reform. They presented themselves as acting in the peasants' interest. However, the Communists in "Mud" turn out to be incompetent. They not only cannot keep their promises but also bring disaster to the peasants they are supposed to help and protect. As shown above, the narrative of "Mud" is focused on the peasant subjects. Almost all of those with a presence in the story are named, or to be precise, nicknamed: Pockmarked Li, No Predicting, and so on. In contrast, the alleged Communists appear to be, in both a general and a generic sense, just gray-uniformed people. They are basically anonymous, physically invisible but virtually everywhere. The peasants voluntarily adjust their behavior upon their arrival. Unlike their counterparts presented in other works with similar motifs by leftist writers, even by Mao Dun himself, the Communists in "Mud" are speechless except for two succinct sentences interrogating Old Man Huang at the end of the story.[36] Their words are mediated via the peasants. The only literate person in the village, Old Man Huang, recognizes only two characters in the flyer they have distributed, "farmer" (*nong*) 农 and "union" (*he*) 合. The slogan the Communists have come up with seems fragmentary and does not make sense. There are no other clues to help readers integrate the whole phrase. It is a signifier that is impossible to decipher. The emptiness of the propaganda characters exactly accords with the emptiness of the Communist promise of land to the peasants. "It is a swindle after all!" as The Seventh frequently puts it.

Both "Mud" and "Great Marsh District" deal with the relationship between man and land, but each is distinct in political orientation and narrative strategy. However, Mao Dun disavowed the two works in his later life, especially "Great Marsh District."[37] As early as 1931, when his most recent works—including "Mud" and "Great Marsh District"—were collected in an anthology, Mao Dun expressed his dissatisfaction with the form and content of both. This could be interpreted as Mao Dun being humble. He also frankly stated that these endeavors

were far from "maturity."[38] Whether they were mature or not, they contain many distinct signs of class struggle and were extolled by the author's own camp and condemned by the enemy.[39]

Mao Dun was not proud of "Great Marsh District," notwithstanding the attention it received.[40] In 1958, then serving as the cultural minister of the state, Mao Dun once again voluntarily criticized the story by calling it too conceptual and restated that he never liked it.[41] Even if he did not express his disfavor of "Mud" publicly, Mao Dun rejected this story in other ways. In 1958, when preparing for the publication of *Collection* (*Mao Dun wenji*), Mao Dun decided to exclude "Mud" and four other short stories.[42] In doing so, he admitted he was giving up his favorites (*ge'ai* 割爱, in his own words. He explained that he excluded them because the five pieces belonged to the same category as "Creation" (*Chuangzao*), "Poem and Prose" (*Shi yu sanwen*), "Color Blindness" (*Semang*), and "Cloud" (*Tan*) in both theme/content and artistic form. Anyone who reads "Creation" and the others will understand his thoughts on those past events.[43] However, anyone who reads "Mud" can tell how different it is from both "Creation" and other writings that appear in *Collection*. Mao Dun's words may explain away his rejection of the four other works, but are definitely not true in the case of "Mud." The story has only been republished twice since its debut in *Monthly Novel* (*Xiaoshuo yuebao*) in April 1929.[44] The *Collection* was a great honor and the first chance for Mao Dun to reexamine and collect his works as a whole and to extend his readership. The volume is supposed to be representative of Mao Dun's whole literary career, since he had written most of his fiction by the late 1950s. Why did he give up "Mud" and offer a reason so easily refuted?

We may find a clue in his own biography. In 1980, one year before his death, Mao Dun started writing his memoirs. Concerning "Mud," he wrote:

> According to the news from China, the troops of the CCP and KMT were still having small-scale battles in the countryside. Therefore I wrote the short story "Mud" (April 3, 1929). It was the first time that I wrote about the countryside. But the peasants in the story were far too laggardly. This also indicates that it doesn't work to write about the countryside simply based upon the news passed from China without one's own observation and analysis about the country.[45]

It seems clear that the reason "Mud" was left out of *Collection* was due to the backwardness of the peasants and the negative representation of the country. Mao Dun confessed that there had been changes in his thought from 1928 to 1933.[46] Apparently he was struggling to achieve the correct political outlook. To further answer this question, I will examine Mao Dun's personal experience as well as the actual macro history of the time.

April 12, 1927 marked the split between the United Front of the CCP and the KMT. When the KMT started a massive slaughter of Communists, the CCP had to move underground. Mao Dun quit *Hankou Republic Daily*, evaded arrest by the KMT, disappeared with a check for 2,000 yuan of the CCP's money, went to

Japan in July 1928, and returned to Shanghai in April 1930. During this time he lost contact with the CCP. As a result, he lost his party membership for life.[47] Mao Dun wrote a few works in Japan, including "Mud." His first literary work after returning was "Lin Chong the Leopard King" (August 1930). In the next two months he wrote and published "The Stone Tablet" and "Great Marsh District," with growing class consciousness from one story to the next. In "Mud," the peasants are primitive, backward, unawakened, and even violent—everything the Communists expect them not to be. The latter three historical stories are flavored with the peasants' radical progressiveness. How could Mao Dun's outlook change so radically in only a year, before and after his return to Shanghai?

The contrasts between "Mud" and the historical trilogy are distinct: against versus for the Communist agenda, refinement versus awkwardness in artistry; natural flow versus abrupt turns in plotting; subtlety versus roughness in characterization; and little versus a plethora in ideological intervention. These works have only one thing in common besides dealing with land and peasants: Mao Dun kept denying and denouncing both for different reasons. The historical trilogy can be understood as an offering that Mao Dun sacrificed to the CCP—a gesture of redemption and an act of reconversion to Communism. He had to compromise artistic spontaneity with political advocacy in order to prove his support for the Communist revolutionary cause.

From "Mud" to "Great Marsh District," Mao Dun continued to explore the issue of land and human beings in the Chinese Communist revolution. Reading the stories together, one can also see his efforts to more clearly define the relationship between peasants and land. However, Mao Dun could not find the way necessary for the peasants to have the land they desired. The soil he came up with was originally dirt, as elusive as dust in the air. Although he eventually created land for the peasants by going back to history, it was essentially groundless since he invented it through untenable historical re-creation. Moreover, metaphorically, by fabricating the land in retelling Chen Sheng and Wu Guang's story, Mao Dun found a foothold for himself to reclaim his allegiance to the CCP. The fictional land serves as a site to present his revolutionary self. Since the land itself is full of polemics—it literarily descended from heaven, inscribed on the stone—Mao Dun's opposition of land versus humans collapses upon historical proof. Land ownership continued to be a daydream of peasants, much as The Seventh fantasizes about the woman in the picture at the end of "Mud."

Theater: imagined production of social space

> Beat! Bring death to this landlord tyrant and evil gentry! (continuing beating) He (Hu Rongsheng) is a vampire, the enemy of humankind!… He swallowed our blood, sucked our brains, and deprived us of our lives.… He is our enemy. Beat, beat him to death! (tussling with Rongsheng)
>
> (Bai Wei, *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower*[48])

> I am the local gentry! Peasants always listen to what the gentry say. They will do whatever I want.
>
> (Hong Shen, *Wukui Bridge*[49])

> Down with landlord tyrants and evil gentry; all power to the peasant associations.
>
> (Mao Zedong, *Report*)

Besides the unconscious primitive desire for land, peasants in the 1920s had another desire: for better status in society. This was clearly expressed through the emergence of peasant associations. The quest for land was an effort by the peasants to position themselves physically in a natural space. The attempt to change social relations was a crucial part of their endeavor to define themselves in a social space—in society as a whole and in relation to others, including fellow peasants and their opposites, the landlords and gentry. Peasant associations reinforced solidarity among peasants and exacerbated the conflict between the peasants and their oppressors.

Peasant associations developed rapidly in the 1920s, especially under Chinese Communist mobilization. In March and April 1921, one of the founders of the Shanghai Communist Group (*Shanghai gongchan zhuyi xiaozu* 上海市共产主义小组), Shen Dingyi (沈定一 1883–1928),[50] launched a peasant movement in his hometown, Yaqian village, Xiaoshan county, Zhejiang province. He was originally a squire of the village and was influenced by the Russian October Revolution and Marxism, prevalent at that time. He first reduced taxes for his own tenant peasants and spent his own wealth on almsgiving and running schools. On September 27, he persuaded the peasants to set up peasant associations in Yaqian village. This was the first peasant association led by a Chinese Communist. Despite being purged by the county and province in December, the association had many succeeding organizations.

Peng Pai (彭湃 1896–1929), the forerunner of peasant movements in Guangdong, started a peasant association consisting of only six members in Haifeng in July 1922. In less than half a year, the total number of members increased to 100,000, one-quarter of the county's population. One year later, the peasant association of Guangdong province was established. By the end of June 1926, peasant associations had spread to more than ten provinces, such as Guangdong, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Henan, Guangxi, and Shaanxi. With the success of the Northern Expedition starting in January 1926 and the capital of the Nationalist government moving to Wuhan, the center of the peasant movement also moved, from Guangdong to Hunan. In the province of Hunan, the first Peasants' Congress was convened on December 1, 1926.

In the first half of 1927, Hunan peasants burst onto the national stage. Huge demonstrations in the provincial capital, Changsha, and its precincts led to the army firing on the peasants in May 1927. In other parts of Hunan, peasant violence—the looting of landlord households, attacks on landlords, and battles with local armies—broke out around this time. For some weeks, many landlords were

too scared to appear anywhere on their estates and took shelter in the city. The peasants' actions received wide publicity in the national press, especially *Hankou Republican Daily*, as the then editor-in-chief Mao Dun recalled in his memoir.[51]

Virtually for the first time since the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s, the Chinese peasants had forced themselves into the attention of both the government and the populace. The debate became heated immediately and resulted in a division not only between the KMT and the CCP, but also within the CCP itself. Mao Zedong, who had been actively involved in organizing peasant meetings and protests, stepped forward to defend the peasants. As analyzed earlier in the chapter, his *Report* served as a guide to violence against the gentry and landlords. The slogan "Down with the landlord tyrants and evil gentry, all power to the peasant associations" became an embedded concept and a creed among peasants to fight their oppressors. Landlord tyrants and evil gentry gradually evolved into symbols of ferocious power in rural China. This section will examine how the phantom of *Report* loomed large in literary—precisely, dramatic (in its literal and figurative senses)—production. I examine how the fight against landlords and gentry was depicted in two plays, and how the playwrights initiated a dialogue with Mao's political manifesto.

Beat up the landlord tyrants

Mao's contribution of identifying landlords and gentry as the archenemies of peasants in the rural areas should not be underestimated. Beating up the local tyrant offered peasants an easy way to struggle against their perceived oppressors. It would be a substantial part of the rural revolution in China for many years to come.

One of the earliest texts depicting the landlord as a fiend, Bai Wei's play *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* dramatizes many issues against the backdrop of land reform, like class confrontation, ethical disorder, and male domination. Written at the crisis of the Great Revolution and with the agenda of supporting the CCP's agitation in the countryside, *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* centers on the fight against the landlords. Bai Wei makes the chief demon a malicious landowner-cum-feudal patriarch.

In the list of characters, she explicitly categorizes the Master of the Hu household, Rongsheng, as "landlord tyrant and evil gentry." As the play develops, Rongsheng evolves into not only an oppressor who exploits the unprivileged, but also a sinful man who commits incest with and homicide against his own descendants. Rongsheng's crime in transgressing moral and ethical boundaries overshadows his wrongdoing in taking advantage of the peasants as a landowner. His role as the landlord is not as monstrous as that of the sex maniac, dominating husband and incestuous father. His villainy lies more in social transgression than economic profit. Gradually, the supposedly economic conflict between the landlord and the peasants is replaced by social disturbance that contradicts moral and ethical norms. This tendency to emphasize the moral deficiency of the landlord

reflects the Communist desire to represent landlords as a condemned social group.[52] Based on the case of *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower*, I would argue that the struggle between the landlord and the peasants reveals the social disorder resulting from economic inequality, especially the landlord's unlimited privilege stemming from his possession of land. Beating up the landlord tyrants is a way to express the anxiety over social disorder and to restore a sense of normality.

The ghost tower, as the title makes clear, is the central symbol of the play. The site of a ruined tower where Rongsheng locks up disobedient women, the ghost tower is also the symbol of the Hu household. Rongsheng is the despot; other family members all denounce him for turning the house into a tower of ghosts. He even dresses up as a ghost to terrify his concubine Shaomei out of an alleged affair with his son Qiaoming. Qiaoming admits that he would become a distressed spirit and the first prisoner in the ghost tower. David Wang has discussed the male domination in *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* and its reference to Lu Xun's "On the Collapse of Leifeng Tower" (*Lun Lei Feng ta de dao diao*).[53] As a male descendent, Qiaoming is the only person capable of challenging Rongsheng's authority, both patriarchal and sexual. However, he is still under his father's oppression; much more so are the foster daughter Yuelin and young concubine Shaomei. It does not take a strong feminist stance to connect the image of the ghost tower with the male phallus, particularly given the fact that Rongsheng is a sex maniac. He first rapes Xiao Sen, the would-be revolutionary woman warrior, and begets Yuelin. Then he harasses his foster daughter, who turns out to be his biological child. Since the son Qiaoming falls in love with Yuelin and the father Rongsheng is about to commit incest with her, Rongsheng becomes the sexual rival and oppressor of his own son.

The "social tragedy" label that Bai Wei gave the play deserves further analysis. *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* relates a family tragedy. The familial and the social do not contradict each other since the conspiracy between them works perfectly well. The perversion of morals and ethics in the family parallels the turbulence in the larger context of the society. The displacement of family members within the familial structure is representative of the whole social disorder, which calls for revolution to restore the social norms. The Hu household is on the verge of collapse even before the peasant Ling Xia intrudes as both a romantic rival of the son and father and a challenger of class privilege. Rongsheng's moral corruption happens long before his exploitation of his tenants starts.

Besides the most extreme form of familial disruption, incest, almost all the Hu family members are displaced. Nobody is entitled to the position he or she holds. The father does not do a father's job; the son and daughter do not act their proper roles. Rongsheng does not possess the decency and authority of a father according to either a Confucian value system or modern ethics. He deserts his own baby without mercy, then buys the girl as a maidservant and almost commits incest with her. He kills both his son and daughter. All this is only half of the familial dysfunction. Xiao Sen is deprived of the right to be a mother. She gives up the baby to escape the stigma attached to illegitimate mothers. Ironically, her duty of protecting her child is fulfilled by her true lover, a man, Guiyi.

Guiyi secretly keeps an eye on Yuelin by serving Rongsheng as his majordomo. His devotion to Xiao Sen reaches a climax at the moment he sacrifices his life to save Yuelin. Guiyi is a doubly symbolically castrated figure. First, he is bereft of the right to love Xiao Sen and has to be his rival's servant. Second, he replaces Xiao Sen as the mother of Yuelin, exchanging his masculinity for maternity to protect his enemy's child. Yuelin is not the only character without a mother. Qiaoming's mother is also absent. His substitute mother figure, Rongsheng's concubine Shaomei, has ambiguous feelings for him. His mother substitute cannot adequately protect him, and Qiaoming is soon killed by his father. The familial tension eventually culminates in mutual homicide between father and daughter.

The collapse of family bonds demonstrates the urgent need to build up a whole new world. Bai Wei was motivated to denounce the old and promote the new. The characters live in an upside-down world, in which most of their assigned social roles are displaced. Rongsheng's position as a conventional patriarch is being challenged by two adversaries—Ling Xia and Qiaoming. The former challenges his socioeconomic status as a landlord and the latter aims to overthrow his paternal authority. Rongsheng is not totally blind to this. In the second round of their conversation, at the beginning of the play, he says to Shaomei: "I am old, after all. Whatever is under the sun is *yours*" (my emphasis). Shaomei is aware that she is not yet part of the new world and says to Rongsheng: "You'd better not give a shit, ah? After all it is *their* world, the youths'." At the end of the play, Yuelin does a surrealist performance after being shot, singing and dancing: "Ah, What a world it is!/Red, yellow, green … so colorful!/Our world,/Is coming from our blood (crazier, dancing more violently)/Ha ha ha!…/Reversed!… All is reversed!/The world is turned over!… New, wonderful!" The alternation between the old and new worlds is directly metaphorical: Yuelin's death results in a rebirth. She is singing at the end of her life: "Reversed, all is new!/I am swinging in the cradle of 'birth,' swinging, swinging…/I am being born. I am born!… 'Birth' gives me a revival! 'Birth' gives me a revival!/We shall resist all with death./We are 'revived,' we are 'revived'!" Xiao Sen then says to Yuelin: "The demon is dead. The world is *ours* now" (my emphasis). To whom does "ours" refer?[54]

Fight Out of the Ghost Tower has long been considered emblematic in its representation of peasant–landlord conflict and women's status in post-May Fourth China. However, looking closely at the text, we see that the clash between peasant and landlord, for example, Lingxia and Rongsheng, is secondary. The confrontation is more within the Hu family than between the two classes. Rongsheng is more vicious as an immoral person than as a greedy landlord. Though it is a societal tragedy as Bai Wei claims, the drama is a familial tragedy as well. When all of society is in the tumult of revolution, how can a family escape the tragic bigger scenario? In this sense, the Hu family is indeed a ghost tower, and is doomed to be subverted and deconstructed. The displacement of father, daughter, and son in the theatrical space is also a symptom of moral and ethical disorder in the real social space. Bai Wei's anxiety over the conflict

between classes is not as great as her anxiety over the social disorder resulting from revolution. The eagerness to restore ideal normal/moral social relations finds expression in the solution to the dramatic conflict, i.e., Xiao Sen and Yuelin's coalition of mother and daughter. The crude surreal way the drama ends shows that the hope to restore social normality will be unrealized. The world is far from being "ours."

Down with evil gentry

The conflict between gentry and peasants was a constant source of tension in the Chinese countryside. As a privileged class, the gentry not only were masters of the land and property, but also held power over the symbolic realm, i.e., moral judgments and legal justice. In Mao's schema, evil gentry are equated with landlord tyrants, an extreme position wherein every landowner and member of the gentry is an enemy. While *Fight Out of the Ghost Tower* sought to put down the landlords, *Wukui Bridge* aimed at flattening the gentry.

Kui 奎 is the name of a constellation. Wukui, or star number 5 of the Kui constellation, in Chinese superstition, is the star that dominates one's fate. As the play *Wukui Bridge* narrates, during the Qing period, two generations of the Zhou family did well in the imperial civil exam. As is conventional practice among Chinese, in order to commemorate their ancestors they remodeled the family graveyard and rebuilt the bridge over the river in front of the graves. This bridge is named Wukui, intended to protect the Zhous against bad geomantic omens. The village is going through a severe drought one summer. The rice paddy on the east side of the Wukui Bridge is short of water because it is higher in elevation. The engine pumping water from the river cannot reach that field because the bridge is too low for the ship carrying the engine. In order for the pump to water the rice paddy, the bridge must be torn down. The play centers on the struggle of peasants to tear down the bridge while the gentry Zhou family defends it.

The bridge, supposedly linking two places that are impossible to travel between otherwise, is twisted into an obstacle. Wukui Bridge connects a few key passages of the land over the river. However, its connecting function diminishes and it clogs the waterway, causing separation instead. The physical space around it is bisected. The part above is monopolized by the Zhou and the part beneath belongs to the peasants. It is also a symbol of social strata, gentry and peasant, and the conflict around the bridge mirrors the uneasiness between the two classes. Presumably, the bridge is meant to function as above, to connect, not to obstruct. The peasants' request to remove the bridge shows their primitive passion to overthrow the dominant class. Therefore, to get rid of it is not only a simple issue of watering a field but also, more importantly, a challenge to the boundary between the two classes.

The conflict becomes more apparent since Wukui Bridge is the private property of the gentry Zhou. When he passes the bridge, peasant Li Quansheng has an argument with Hired Hand A of the Zhous:

HIRED HAND A: What are you doing here?
LI QUANSHENG: Don't you see? I am sitting here.
HIRED HAND A: You cannot sit here.
LI QUANSHENG: How come? Isn't it a bridge on a road? Cannot everybody pass, cannot everybody sit?
HIRED HAND A: Everyone can sit, except you.
LI QUANSHENG: Wonder why.
HIRE HAND A: Gentry Zhou orders: others don't matter. Only you call for tearing down the bridge. So you are not allowed to approach the bridge.
. . .
LI QUANSHENG: What a pity! This bridge is on the road. So many people pass by. It is beyond his control. . . . Why not advise Gentry Zhou to move the bridge back to his home and have it locked in a closet? If he does, I cannot sit here. Ha ha ha![55]

Li Quansheng challenges the validity of the bridge as private property in a seemingly naive way. When Hired Hand B tries to talk him out of the leading role in breaking the bridge and promises him benefits on gentry Zhou's behalf, Li refuses:

> This is my field. Here is a river. There is water in the river. As long as the water reaches my field, I'll have a way to live. Why bother to rely on others' mercy and feed on the bread thrown upon the water?

Water is a common resource shared by the poor and rich, peasants and gentry. But the bridge serves as an impediment to distributing water as public wealth. Water directly determines the peasants' future because if the rice is dried out, all the villagers will starve. The restriction of the bridge thus becomes a life-and-death issue.

The conflict does not stop here. It crosses geographical boundaries and escalates into a conflict between China and the West. As Chinese people commonly call imported stuff something foreign (*yanghuo*), the villagers have nicknamed the imported engine pump "foreign dragon" (*yanglong*). Gentry Zhou skillfully manipulates the grassroots antipathy to the foreign, which emerged in the late nineteenth century and intensified after the Japanese invasion in the early 1930s, to attack the introduction of engine pumps in the village. He manipulates the patriotic instinct of the peasants to confront the foreign. Gentry Zhou attacks the progressive peasant Li Quansheng by saying:

> You said you need to tear down the bridge in order for the ship to transport the engine pump. We Chinese have always used windmills. It is ordained by the saints. Our China is established as an agrarian country. For thousands of years, we have been relying on the windmill. . . . How come all of a sudden we need the "foreign dragon"?

A few old peasants are even persuaded. He continues his tirade:

> The foreign dragon is made by foreigners. Would the rice be dried out if the foreigners had not come? How can it be that Chinese people plowed as usual before foreigners and foreign things came to China, without going through drought or starvation every year?

Zhou takes advantage of the peasants' ignorance of the foreign and anxiety over the monstrous pump to protect his individual interest. He even illustrates the foreign dragon's disadvantage by saying young peasants will start gambling when they are exempt from windmill labor.

Ironically, although he is a die-hard Chinese gentry with a strong revulsion for the foreign, Zhou uses an imported crabstick. He beats the earth with his walking stick to show his anger and curses: "This is the good of foreign stuff!" He does not mind if an object is foreign when it meets his, and only his, demand. He has a completely different attitude when the foreign is disadvantageous to him, no matter how much it means to the populace. Gentry, the local elite, were supposed to direct local development in traditional Chinese society. However, Zhou is backward in accepting the foreign and modern for popular benefit. He is even left behind by young peasants like Li Quansheng. Even so, he still considers himself the spokesman: "I am the local gentry! The peasants always follow what the gentry say. They do whatever I say." Zhou is infuriated at Li's defiance: "The rural business, if not decided by gentry, could it possibly be decided by villagers? The world is indeed upside down!"

The introduction of modern knowledge is gradually changing the foundation of rural society. Peasants were accustomed to practicing religious rituals, such as praying for rain. As Hired Hand A puts it: "Peasants rely on heaven to eat. How can we not believe in heaven?" The superstitious belief is countered by the educated youth Dabao. Sixteen years old, Dabao is enrolled in a middle school in the city. He is the representative of science and knowledge. He tries to make the peasants understand that they cannot rely on heaven for food but need to be down to earth and rely on their own human power for their livelihood. He puts it simply: "You yourself plow the field.… Peasants depend on their own labor to eat." In contrast, Dabao's father, Xie, is Zhou's seneschal and actively involved in praying for rain. On the one hand, he understands that the bridge is the direct cause of drought in the peasants' rice field; on the other hand, he defends the face and authority of Zhou. Xie is sympathetic to the peasants' situation but dares not challenge Zhou's privilege. His son fearlessly breaks out of the feudal shackles, speaking from the basis of modern science and knowledge. The introduction of Dabao illustrates an urgent change in Chinese society toward science and law, instead of domination by human will and feelings.

When he realizes his own inability to defend the bridge, Zhou has to resort to his judicatory accomplice Milord Wang. Wang threatens the peasants, taking advantage of their ignorance of law. Claiming that the law is impartial to everyone, he quotes several items of criminal law to prove that the peasants'

protest against Zhou is actually illegal. The country people are intimidated by its supremacy. Consulting the actual criminal law in 1930, we find the items Wang cites are indeed made up.[56] Wang threatens to have the country people arrested if they continue to assemble and insist on dismantling the bridge. Gentry Zhou beats up peasant Chen cruelly since Chen supports tearing down the bridge. This is illegal but goes unpunished, and Li reveals the judicial hypocrisy: "The law nowadays, if not on the gentry's side, would it be possible that it's on our peasants' side?" His cohorts also realize Zhou's violation of the law by physically abusing Chen. The peasants are irritated and demand justice. They finally team up and destroy the bridge. The privileged space above, monopolized by Zhou, no longer exists, and the merging of space above and below adumbrates the equal social standing of gentry and peasants. Mao's project of "down with landlord tyrants and evil gentry" is half accomplished with the Wukui Bridge toppled in a dramatic way.

Fight Out of the Ghost Tower and *Wukui Bridge* are far from impeccable as plays. Their significance lies more in their treatment of social concerns than artistic achievement. As one of the pioneers of modern Chinese drama, Hong Shen stands alone in both theory and practice. He does not try hard to explain his switch from ceramic engineer to dramatist for the sake of social change; it was more out of personal interest than for social reform. But in 1935 Hong Shen did tell a story similar to the one about Lu Xun's slide show incident:[57]

> In the spring of 1922, I came to know Mr. Cai on the ship back to China.… We talked a lot on the ship. He asked me: "What do you do drama for? Do you want to be just a play actor or a Chinese Shakespeare?" I said: "I don't want to be either of them. If possible, I would love to be Ibsen."[58]

Hong Shen had many chances to tell this story, either in a preface to his own work or in his essays on drama, but he did not do so until more than a decade later. Mr. Cai does not appear in Hong Shen's other narratives. Whether a real or an imagined person, he helps Hong Shen articulate his aspiration in and with drama: He would rather be a socially significant playwright than a universally acclaimed dramatist. This story explains in retrospect the agenda behind Hong Shen's previously written works, and the preconditions for his later creations.

By dramatizing the fight against the landlord and gentry, Bai Wei and Hong Shen initiated a dialogue with Mao's pedagogy of violence as explicated in *Report*. Here, I want to highlight the resonance of theatrical space and revolutionary space. In the cases of Bai Wei, Hong Shen, and Mao Zedong, theatrical space and revolutionary space are not mutually exclusive but rather inclusive. The transaction of acting (in theater) and action (in revolution) continues throughout. As described above, the theater is presented as a site to display societal chaos. The endeavor to reorganize and restore normalcy is also conducted there. The principles by which the conflicts are resolved in the drama are the same as the poetics of violence advocated by Mao in *Report*. His pedagogy of violent revolution offered nuanced instructions about how to direct a revolution

on- and offstage. Theater is not a pure dramatic space to present social issues but an imagined social space in which the old social problems are solved, sometimes violently, and the new social relations are projected and produced.

Conclusion

Roaring earth: land on fire

> A single spark can start a prairie fire.
>
> (Mao Zedong, "A letter to Lin Biao," 1930)

> The wildfire from the underground breaks out!
>
> (Mao Dun, *Daze xiang*, 1930)

> Let them set fire [to the Lis' house]!
>
> (Jiang Guangci, *Paoxiao de tudi*, 1931)

In 1930, the CCP was still haunted by the fiasco of the first Great Revolution. The party lost all its influence in the cities and had to retreat to the remote countryside to survive. Many who strongly believed in communism could not help being disillusioned with the Chinese Communist revolution. In response to Lin Biao's expressed doubt about the future of the Chinese Communist revolution and the Red Army, Mao Zedong assured his comrades and followers of the future with an analogy: "A single spark can start a prairie fire."[59] Mao's prescience was proved later by history: Chinese Communists recouped their power after enduring incredible hardship, and eventually conquered the mainland.

When Mao Zedong likened his own revolutionary act to setting the land ablaze, his counterparts, both fictional and real, fomented revolution through arson. The revolutionary arsonists view their actions as supporting justice of a certain kind.[60] In the novel *Paoxiao de tudi* (Roaring earth), peasants set fire to landlords' property. The revolutionary leader Li Jie faces a dilemma when he is asked if his house should be burned down like those of other landlords. Li's father is one of the biggest landowners of the village. Li has already cut his ties to the family and considers his father an enemy, but he still loves his bedridden mother and innocent little sister. It is excruciating for him to see his mother and sister die in the fire his own revolutionary comrades set. Intriguingly, the inner, real motivation for Li Jie's acquiescence to the arson is to prove to the revolutionary peasants his own loyalty to the cause. "If I didn't allow him to set fire to the Lis' house, wouldn't I make him [Carpenter Li] doubt me? Then I would be afraid that the peasants in the village would doubt me." Very soon he finds a legitimate reason for his decision: "It is painful for me. I am after all a human being.… However, I can endure.… As long as it is helpful to our cause, I can bear whatever pain."[61]

There is no direct description of the fire, but this does not reduce its significance in the context of revolution. Jiang's counterparts in the West, Byron,

Shelley, and Victor Hugo, all with something of a Prometheus complex, wrote about fire to show their defiance. Fire can destroy and may also bring about a rebirth. As Gaston Bachelard writes in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*:

> It [fire] rises from the depths of the substance and offers itself with the warmth of love. Or it can go back down into the substance and hide there, latent and pent-up, like hate and vengeance. Among all phenomena, it is really the only one to which there can be so definitely attributed the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture. It is cookery and it is apocalypse.… It is a tutelary and a terrible divinity, both good and bad. It can contradict itself; thus it is one of the principles of universal explanation.[62]

On one hand, fire is the most effective means to destroy the old world. It also burns the good elements down to ashes. In burning Li's house, in order to demolish the landlord Li Jingzhai, the peasants put the lives of his wife and daughter on a sacrificial altar.

James Scott's study of Malaysian peasants' low-profile technique of resistance is applicable here: The ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups include: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on.[63] Arson is one of the most powerful weapons of the weak. Chinese peasants are not the only group that have employed arson as a social protest. In European Russia it was sometimes a means of resistance against exploitation by gentry and landowners in the early 1900s.[64] The fire at the Lis' house not only violates what E. P. Thompson calls "moral economy,"[65] but also makes the action per se questionable because of its defiance of morals and ethics. Li Jie commits patricide for a socially justifiable reason. He is the murderer of his mother and sister without any excuse except in his own interest—reinforcing the peasants' trust in him and building up his own authority as a revolutionary leader. Jiang would have never anticipated that a fire intended as a radical and genuine expression of revolutionary passion would not only discredit Li Jie's revolutionary motives but also call into question his own philosophy of revolution.

The story of *Roaring Earth* starts with revolution about to break out in the countryside. Some strange but exciting epithets like "revolutionary army," "rent deduction," "land revolution," and "down with the landlord tyrants and evil gentry" are circulated in the rural village. As the struggle develops, especially with the advent of fire, the Li household is razed to the ground, but more importantly the old society dominated by landlords and gentry is symbolically burned down. Li Jie's action of breaking away from his family is remarkable, although a bit simplistic and formulaic. He detaches himself from the class his family belongs to. When he returns from the revolutionary army to the village to mobilize the peasants, he is determined to stand on their side and fight against the landlords, one of whom is his own father. The rupture of familial bonds is a recurring theme in early modern Chinese revolutionary literature.[66]

The collapse of corrupt old families wishfully predicts that the old social system will fall to pieces. The reorganization of society based on class rather than consanguinity points to the inherent aim of revolution—to change social relations fundamentally.

In literature, whether in the relationship of man to land ("Mud," "Great Marsh District") or in social relations among human beings (*Fight Out of the Ghost Tower*, *Wukui Bridge*), land has been written as a material object to be claimed. Land as persona appears in *Roaring Earth*. Jiang is not yet avant-garde enough to treat the earth as an independent character or go beyond the symbolism of personifying land to give vent to the peasants' anger, so he translates uneasy peasants in revolt into roaring earth. This makes earth a figure (of speech). Not silent anymore, it bursts into uproar together with the suffering peasants. At the end of *Roaring Earth*, after the landlord regains the village, the peasants retreat to Jingangshan (apparently referring to the first revolutionary base established by Mao Zedong in Jinggangshan), a remote mountain area. As history often goes against humans' will, Jinggangshan was finally lost as a Communist stronghold. The peasants who followed Mao there once again had to go on an untried road—on the Long March.

Notes

1 Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 59, translation modified. Watson translates *qian-shou* 黔首 as "black-headed people." *Qianshou* is a general appellation for common people, in virtue of the black coif worn by common people during the Warring States period (475–221 BC) and the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC). In the twenty-sixth year (226 BC), the First Emperor ordered that the title for the common people be changed to *Qianshou*, one of many uniform measures taken since the unification of Qin. See "The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of the Qin," in *Records of the Grand Historian*.

2 In 209 BC, the first year of the Second Emperor of Qin, Chen Sheng (Chen She is the polite name) and Wu Guang were enlisted in a group of 900 by the Qin army and were sent to garrison Yuyang. They encountered heavy rain in Daze Village and would be unable to reach their destination on time. According to Qin law, all the people would be punished by death because of the delay. Thus Chen Sheng and Wu Guang decided to start a revolt since they would have to face death in any case. Although they failed, the slogan they shouted out—"Kings and nobles, generals and ministers—such men are made, not born"—inspired many more Chinese peasants to rise up later on. See "Chen She shi jia (The hereditary house of Chen She)," in *Records of the Grand Historian*, 217–226.

3 Mao Du's trilogy of novellas, *Disillusionment* (*Huanmie*), *Hesitation* (*Dongyao*), and *Pursuit* (*Zhuiqiu*) written in 1927 and 1928, expresses his vacillation through the characters of urban petty bourgeois intellectuals in the tumultuous revolution of the time. He embraced unreservedly the Communist agenda in the trilogy of historical short stories "Stone Tablet (*Shijie*)," "Lin Chong (*Baozi tou Lin Chong*)," and "Great Marsh District (*Daze xiang*)" written from 1930 to 1931.

4 See Fei Xiaotong, "Special Characteristics of Rural Society," in *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, trans. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), chapter 1.

5 Both the peasant insurgence (875–84) led by Huang Chao (?–884) and the peasant uprising (1627–44) led by Li Zicheng (1606–45) called for equal land ownership.

6 According to "The Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom": The division of land must be according to the number of individuals, whether male or female; calculating upon the number of individuals in a household, if they be numerous, then the amount of land will be larger, and if few, smaller; and it shall be a mixture of the nine classes.… All the fields in the empire are to be cultivated by all the people alike. Franz Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents, vol. 2*, *Documents and Comments* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1971), 313–315

7 A major form of struggle for the early Chinese Communists was organizing protest and insurgence among workers in big cities such as Guangzhou and Shanghai. The last failed armed uprising in the city was led by Zhou Enlai in Nanchang on August 1, 1927. After that, the Communists completely lost their position in the city and had to retreat to the countryside.

8 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 304.

9 Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 162.

10 Mao Zedong mentioned peasant insurgency in classical China as a positive example to inspire the students at the Peasant Movement Institute many times in 1926. He said that Chen Sheng and Wu Guang represented the sheer interest of peasants. Mao Zedong, lecture on "Peasant Issues" at the sixth Peasant Movement Institute, 1926, in *Long zhi hun: Mao Zedong lishi biji jiexi* (Soul of the dragon: analysis of Mao Zedong's notes on history), ed. Tang Han and Zhen Xiao (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1998), vol. 1, 188. As for Huang Chao, the leader of the peasant revolt in the late Tang, Mao said he was also acting in the peasants' interest. The reason he lost is that Huang waged insurrection from beginning to the end (without establishing a new regime). Ibid., 1121.

11 Sun Yat-sen, *Sun Zhongshan wenji* (Collected works of Sun Yat-sen) (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1997), vol. 1, 275.

12 Ibid.

13 Li Daozhao, "Tudi yu nongmin (Land and peasants)," in *Li Daozhao wenji* (Collected writings of Li Dazhao) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999), vol. 5, 67–80.

14 Ibid.

15 Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong ji* (Collected writings of Mao Zedong), 2nd edn. (Tokyo: Sōsōsha, 1983), vol. 1, 175.

16 Especially in "Zhonguo shehui ge jieij fenxi (The class analysis of Chinese society)," in Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), vol. 1, 13–21.

17 I am referring to *Report* in Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong*, 2nd edn. (Tokyo: Sōsōsha, 1983), vol. 1, 207–250. In other editions, as in *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong*, *Report* is not structurally divided into three parts. I chose this version because it was the one circulated at that time, not the revised one collected in *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong* later in the 1940s.

18 Roy Hofheinz Jr., *The Broken Wave: The Chinese Communist Peasant Movement, 1922–1928* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 31.

19 Hofheinz does a remarkable analysis of *Report*. He indicates that Mao's contribution to the discussions of peasant movement strategy lay rather in the area of psychology. He also shows *Report* is an utter fantasy, as were many of Mao's other widely touted visions—the Great Leap Forward of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. Ibid., 29–35.

20 Xie Baoyu, a Chinese writer residing in Canada, portrays positive landlords in his recently published *Meigui ba* (Toronto: Greenwilds Press, 2006). This voluminous novel has been well received among anti-Communist critics. Liao Kang acclaims it as "revealing the original sin" of Chinese Communists and vindicating long-wronged landlords in Communist China. "Jieshi yuanzui: ping Xie Baoyu de changpian xiaoshuo *Meigui Ba* (Revealing the original sin: a review of Xiu Baoyu's novel *Meigui*

Ba)," *Beijing zhi chun* (Beijing Spring) 162 (2006): 95–98. While criticizing the demonization of landlords in mainstream literary works from the 1950s to the 1970s, Hu Ping praises *Meigui ba* as "a chronicle of rural China in Maoist era" and "a grand tragedy." "Shuping: xiwang you gengduo de *Meigui ba* (Book review: hoping for more works like *Meigui ba*)," www.guancha.org/info/artshow.asp?ID=41017 (retrieved April 6, 2007).

21 Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Readings* (Beijing: Waiwen chubanshe, 1971), 30.

22 The public struggle included making landlords parade with a "tall hat" on their head, followed by people drumming, gonging, and carrying banners, a humiliation of landlords and gentry. It anticipated the form of struggle meetings years later, especially during the Cultural Revolution.

23 The General Secretary of the CCP, Chen Duxiu, admitted that the early peasant movement in Hunan committed infantilism such as arrest, forfeiture, imprisonment, etc. due to the lack of party supervision. Chen Duxiu, "Hunan zhengbian yu tao Jiang (Hunan coup and anti Chiang Kai-shek)," in *Chen Duxiu Wenzhang xuanbian* (Selected works of Chen Duxiu) (Beijing: Sanlian chudian, 1984), 424–428.

24 Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Readings*, 30.

25 Ibid., 24.

26 See David Wang's analysis, "Fictive History: Mao Dun's Historical Fiction," in *Fictional Realism: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 25–66.

27 See Sima Qian, "Chen She shijia," in *Shiij san jia zhu* (Records of the grand historian with three annotations) (Yangzhou: Yangzhou gujishe, reprint, 1990), 64–69.

28 Before *Great Marsh District*, Mao Dun published "Leopard King Lin Chong (*Baozi tou Lin Chong*)" and "Stone Tablet (*Shijie*)" in *Novel Monthly* (Xaoshuo yuebao) in August and September 1930, respectively. Both short stories are based on the classic historical novel *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*). In "Leopard King Lin Chong," Mao Dun started trying to explain insurgence in Chinese history with the unavoidable conflict between peasants and the oppressors. He described Lin Chong as "a child of peasants, he was born with endurance and abidance. Nevertheless, he is rebellious, as all peasants primitively are." Mao Dun, *Mao Dun Quanji* (Complete works of Mao Dun) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1985), vol. 8, 195–201.

29 Ibid., 212.

30 Ibid., 216.

31 It is less likely that Mao Dun made use of historical material unintentionally. He read through history classics when he was little and mastered a comprehensive knowledge of early Chinese history. In his memoir, Mao Dun expressed that he had read extensively on early Chinese history, including the four history books *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, *Hou hanshu*, and *San guo zhi* from middle school to Beijing University. Mao Dun, *Mao Dun Zhuanji* (Special collection of Mao Dun) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1983), 407.

32 From 1926 to 1927, under the alliance with the Soviet Union and the CCP, Chiang Kai-shek led the National Revolutionary Army marching from Guangzhou to the north. Its main objective was to end the separation by local warlords in the north to unify China. In April 1927, immediately after the Northern Expedition successfully concluded, Chiang launched a coup and ended the collaboration of the KMT and CCP.

33 From March to June 1927, the peasant movement had been the hottest topic of *Hankou Republic Daily* (*Hankou minguo ribao*). Peasant associations and the Peasants' Congress received extensive coverage in the *Daily*.

34 Mao Dun, "Zhengli geming shili (Collecting revolutionary forces)," *Hankou Minguo Ribao* (*Hankou Republic Daily*), May 26, 1927; "Suqing gexian de tuhao lieshen (Liquidate the landlord tyrants and evil gentry in all counties)," *Hankou Minguo Ribao*, June 18, 1927.

35 D. P. Pattanayak, "Literacy: An Instrument of Oppression," in *Literary and Orality*, ed. David R. Olson and Nancy Torrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 105–107.
36 One is "What have you done?" The other is "Is this your son? Don't you have a younger one?"
37 The other two in his trilogy of historical fiction are: "Leopard King Lin Chong (*Baozitou Lin Chong*)" and "Stone Tablet (*Shijie*)." Mao Dun wrote this trilogy in three months, soon after he returned to Shanghai from Japan in 1930; all were first published in *Novel Monthly* (Xiaoshuo yuebao) from August to October 1930.
38 "Sumang qianyan (Preface to *Sumang*)," *Mao Dun Zhuanji*, 818.
39 When the anthology was to be reprinted, "Lin Chong the Leopard King" and "Great Marsh District" were deleted because the KMT censored these two stories for preaching too much class struggle. Mao Dun, "Yijiu sansi nian de wenhua 'weijiao' he fan 'weijiao' (Cultural extermination and anticultural extermination in 1934)," *Xinwenxue shiliao* (Historical data of new literary materials 1982), No. 4.
40 Liu Yazi singled out "Great Marsh District" to praise in his poem "Fox crying 'Chen Sheng the King' in the wildfire, An occasional ornament becomes unusual." *Rainbow* and *Eclipse* are well-known among people; my own favorite is "Great Marsh District." Liu Yazi, *Liu Yazi shixuan* (Selected poetry of Liu Yazi) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1981), 222.
41 He further explained that in the summer of 1930, because he disliked the form and content of his early works (1928–29) but could not find new subjects, he decided to write a historical novel about the first peasant uprising in Chinese history. Originally it was a quite ambitious project, starting with the First Emperor uniting China and continuing through Liu Bang (256–193 BC) establishing the Han dynasty. He then abandoned the project as he realized that even if such a novel was well-written, it would be separated from the masses and reality after all. Mao Dun ended up with the existent "Great Marsh District." "Mao Dun wenji diqijuan xu (Prologue to collection of Mao Dun)," *Mao Dun quanji*, vol. 21: 538–540. In this prologue he admitted that he was aware that historians would disagree with him on some historical issues (e.g., Chen Sheng, Wu Guang, and the 900 people taken as enslaved peasants of the six states who are conquered by the Qin and lose all their land; the two army officers are the well-to-do landowners of the Qin ruling class). He just kept it the way it is.
42 They are: "Suicide (*Zisha*)," "A Woman (*Yige nuxing*)," "Peg-top (*Tuoluo*)," and "Before the Sunshine Comes (*Guangming daolai yiqian*)."
43 "Mao Dun quanji di qi juan houji" (epilogue of volume 7 of the collection of Mao Dun), *Mao Dun quanji*, vol. 9, 538–540.
44 Both in the 1930s, *Sumang* (Wild Grass, May 1931) and *Mao Dun duanpian xiaoshuo ji* 1 (Short Stories of Mao Dun Volume 1; September 1934) respectively. The latter was reprinted in 1984.
45 Mao Dun, *Mao Dun Zizhuan* (Autobiography of Mao Dun) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi chubanshe, 1996), 207.
46 "Mao Dun quanji di qi juan houji (Prologue to *Complete Works of Mao Dun*)," *Mao Dun quanji*, vol. 9, 538–540.
47 He was granted party membership posthumously as requested in his last words.
48 Bai Wei, "Dachu youling ta (Fight out of the ghost tower)," in *Bai Wei zuopin xuan* (Selected works of Bai Wei) (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1985), 245–332.
49 Hong Shen, "Wukui Qiao (Wukui bridge)," in *Shong Shen xuanji* (Selected works of Hong Shen) (Hong Kong: Xinyi chubanshem 1958), 109–110.
50 For the whole life of Shen Dingyi, see R. Keith Schoppa, *Blood Road: The Mystery of Shen Dingyi in Revolutionary China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995).
51 Mao Dun, *Mao Dun Zizhuan*, 169–175.

52 For example, He Jingzhi and Ding Yi, *White-haired Girl* (*Bai mao nü*), trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1954). In this opera, landlord Huang Shiren grabs peasant Yang Bailao's daughter Xi'er as his concubine to pay Yang's debt to Huang. Fed up with mistreatment at the Huangs', Xi'er escapes to the mountains and lives on food offerings in a village temple nearby. Huang encounters Xi'er in the temple when he comes to worship and mistakes her for a ghost. Later, when the Communist Eighth Route Army arrives and cracks down on landlord Huang, Xi'er reunites with the Eight Route Army soldier Wang Dachun. In the Communist context, this opera has been praised as a masterpiece condemning landlords and old society. Its motif is summarized: "The old society forces humans into ghosts; the new society restores ghosts to humans." In this opera, the class struggle between landlord and peasant is transformed into a confrontation between genders: the male landlord and peasant's daughter. Thus gender privilege replaces class exploitation. See Meng Yue, "*Bai mao nü* yanbian de qishi (Revelation of the transformation of *White-haired Girl*)," in *Zai jiedu: dazhong wenyi yu yishi xingtai* (Rereading: mass literature/arts and ideology), ed. Tang Xiaobing (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 68–89.

53 David Wang, *The Monster that is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 56–59.

54 Coincidently, Mao Zedong touched upon whose world this was when he met the overseas students in the Soviet Union in 1957: "You youth are like the morning sun at 8 or 9 a.m. The world is ours, also yours. It is yours after all." Mao Zedong, "Zai mosike daxue huijian zhongguo liuxuesheng shi de jianghua (Talks at meeting with Chinese students at Moscow University)," in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Mao Zedong's Manuscript Since the PRC) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1988), vol. 6, 649–651.

55 Hong Shen, "Wukui qiao," 193–194.

56 In the play "Wukui Bridge," Wang quotes four articles from criminal law to admonish the rebellious peasants. These quotes are not from the standing criminal law of the Nationalist government during the republican era, but were made up by Wang. For the actual articles, see *Xianxing liufa quanshu* (Complete works of six standing laws), ed. Guo Wei (Shanghai: Huiwentang xinji shuju, 1932), 464, 469, 484, 492.

57 In "Preface to *Call to Arms* (*Nahan zixu*)," Lu Xun explained why he gave up his medical career for literature. When he was studying medicine in Sendai, Japan, one day before class his Japanese instructor showed a slide in which an alleged Chinese spy working for Russia was executed during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–05. Lu Xun was shocked to see the apathy of the onlooking Chinese compatriots. Realizing it was more important to cure the Chinese spiritual malaise than physical diseases, Lu Xun decided to quit his medical training and awaken the Chinese with his pen. *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete works of Lu Xun) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), vol. 1, 417. Critics have pointed out that since the slide in question has never been found, it is possible Lu Xun created this narrative to justify his switch from medicine to literature. Leo Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 18. Also Rey Chow, "Preface," in *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

58 Hong Shen, *Hong Shen wenji* (Collected plays of Hong Shen) (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1959), vol. 4, 532–538.

59 At the end of 1929, Lin Biao, a young aspiring Red Army officer, wrote to Mao Zedong expressing his concerns about the future of the Red Army. In his reply Mao criticized Lin Biao for his pessimistic views, then common in the party. Mao pointed out that despite the formidable situation, the Red Army would thrive and succeed through guerilla war with the "spark and prairie" analogy. Mao Zedong, "A Single

Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), vol. 1, 117–128.

60 Wang, *The Monster that is History*, 60–62.

61 Jiang Guangci, "Paoxiao de tudi (Roaring earth)," 381. *Jiang Guangci wenji* (Collected works of Jiang Guangci) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1983), vol. 2, 155–421.

62 Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, trans. Alan C. M. Ross (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1964), 7.

63 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 29.

64 See Cathy A. Frierson, *All Russia is Burning! A Cultural History of Fire and Arson in Late Imperial Russia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), especially chapter 4, "The Fiery Brand, Russian Style: Arson as Protest, Peasants as Incendiaries" and chapter 5, "Arson as Impotent Spite or Potent Practice: Peasants as Vengeful, Covetous, or Wily Actors."

65 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 63–65.

66 For instance, Ba Jin's trilogy *Jia* (Family), *Chun* (Spring), and *Qiu* (Autumn) depicts the collapse of the traditional Chinese family and the rebirth of individuals who break ties with their family.

2 The Long March

From the search for a promised land to a site of memory

> It broke the record of expeditions in history.… The Long March is unprecedented in the annals of history. The Long March is a manifesto, a propaganda team, a seeding machine. Since the time when Pangu divided the heavens from the earth and the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors reigned, has history ever witnessed such a Long March as ours?
>
> Mao Zedong[1]

As early as 1935, with the Long March barely over, Mao Zedong began to set the tone for how the event would be remembered. It was to be understood by the Chinese people as proof of the perseverance and vitality of the Red Army and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Through the help of American journalist Edgar Snow, the Long March introduced a positive image of the Chinese Communists to the world and indicated the hope of the Communist cause in China. In the past eight decades, the Long March has been embedded into different layers of Chinese social life. Both mainstream ideology and individual everyday acts carry on the legacy: grand institutional commemorative events and re-walking by individuals. Meanwhile, the Long March discourse has been actively circulated in politics, history, literature, the arts, and popular culture, and the Long March spirit is continuously propagated by the Party. Immense numbers of books have been produced about it, including official histories, textbooks, diaries, memoirs, and also revolutionary sagas that are based on historical facts and therefore serve to demonstrate historical authenticity. The Long March is one of the most durable themes or "main melodies" in Chinese literature and films. In recent years, avant-garde art and pop culture have broken through the framework of traditional representation. In 2002, a New York-based curator, Lu Jie, organized "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display": a series of artistic events including exhibitions, workshops, and artistic creations along the route of the Long March. In 2004, the path of the march became one of the main routes of "Red Tourism" promoted by Party institutions. All of these phenomena indicate that the Long March has gone beyond the significance with which a revolution would endow it. In both visible, conscious, commemorative activities and invisible, unconscious, and imaginative acts, it has evolved into a site of shared collective memory.

During the past two decades, historians have made significant progress in discovering the facts of the Long March. Some formerly taboo areas have been explored and scholarship has begun to treat the march more as a historical subject and less as a myth or miracle. However, numerous other books related to the Long March have produced a boom in the study of the subject and have even created new confusion about already unclear facts. Therefore, in this chapter I will investigate the Long March legacy and explore how and why the Long March has had such a long-lasting influence. Unlike conventional assessments that highlight its historical weightiness, the chapter will emphasize the nature of the march's spatial exploration within Chinese geography and the lasting impact of that exploration upon China and the world. As with Odysseus and his journey, Mao would not have attained the status of hero if he had not gone through the trials of the march; nor would the Long March have become the foundational myth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) without its large-scale grandeur.

The Long March is a spatially significant event to begin with. First, the people of the new Soviet Republic of China were displaced from the revolutionary bases they had set up a few years earlier.[2] This drove the Soviet government into retreat. Second, this journey to the west forced the Chinese Communists to traverse some of the most daunting natural barriers. Their enormous physical sacrifice was later transformed into symbolic capital that circulated through historiography and was necessary to justify the CCP's legitimacy. Third, the Long March was also a process in which social relations were transformed. The political struggle involved redefining the power hierarchy in terms of upward versus downward movement, top versus bottom, and central versus marginal, a redefinition that continued to exert influence long after the founding of the PRC. Long March veterans were to form the nucleus of the national leadership in the following decades. Fourth, internationally, the march enabled the Chinese Communists to gradually wean themselves from Soviet influence and start on their own way as Mao rose to the center of power during and after the march and the Chinese Bolsheviks' authority receded. Fifth, the Long March became an indispensable site of collective social memory for Chinese people to revisit and remember their revolutionary past across space and time.

This chapter consists of four parts. The first describes the actual journey of the Soviet Republic of China as represented by the Red Army's geographical route from the southeast to the northwest.[3] The second demonstrates the formation of the Long March as a national myth in discursive space, particularly through historical narration. The third part analyzes various cultural products in the representational space of the Long March. Centering on its virtual space, the fourth part explores how and why the Long March evolved into a site of Chinese collective memory and continues to haunt people in China and beyond.

In search of a promised land

After the breakup of the first United Front of the Nationalist Party (KMT) and the CCP in April 1927, the CCP launched an armed uprising in Nanchang on

August 1, 1927. It was soon put down by the KMT.[4] Immediately afterward, Mao Zedong led the Harvest Uprising in September at the border of Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, but this too was quickly crushed. The remaining forces retreated to Jinggangshan under Mao's leadership and established the first revolutionary base after moderate success with guerrilla warfare. With the expansion of the base and the strengthening of the Red Army, the Soviet Republic of China was founded in November 1930 in Ruijin, Jiangxi. Mao was elected the Chairman of the Soviet government.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek began an extermination campaign that lasted four years. The Red Army managed to defend against the first four attacks of the Nationalist Army and preserve most of the revolutionary bases. In September 1933, Chiang, determined to demolish the Red Army, personally led the fifth extermination campaign. He deployed one million troops, besieging the Soviet area in Jiangxi from all sides. The CCP, with only 100,000 troops, was also much more poorly equipped than the Nationalist Army. In addition, a Red Army tactical error, allegedly due to the leftist adventurism of Wang Ming, resulted in the dramatic shrinkage of the Soviet area after a year of battles and struggles. The CCP and its Red Army were on the verge of being wiped out.[5] On October 16, 1934, 86,000 people, mostly central Red Army (aka the First Front Army) troops and officials of the central CCP bureau, started marching from Yudu, Jiangxi, to the west. Their original plan was to join forces with the Second and Sixth Corps (aka the Second Front Army), led by He Long and Xiao Ke, in west Hunan. On a more idealistic level, they went in search of a promised land.

It was not an easy journey. During the first month they passed through the first three blockades with minimal losses and entered southern Hunan.[6] There, by the Xiangjiang River, the Red Army endured its first baptism by fire. The troops were not prepared for a *long* march as only a few high-ranking officials knew that they were retreating. The common soldiers were not informed where they were going, so the army proceeded extremely slowly. They carried much extra equipment, including a currency-printing machine. This slow pace turned out to be a fatal mistake. From November 25 to December 1, 1934, the Red Army endured severe attacks from the Nationalist Army along the Xiangjiang River.[7] Because of their heavy material burden, the troops were unable to cross the river as quickly as they needed. By the time they made it across, the Red Army had been reduced from 86,000 to 30,000. They climbed over the mountains in Guangxi and entered Guizhou, where the local army, known as double-gunned troops—one gun for fighting and the other for opium smoking—was weak. They occupied Zunyi easily on January 7, 1935.

Zunyi became well known as a historically significant city after the Long March. From January 15 to 17, 1935, the central Political Bureau held a large meeting there to discuss the lessons from the retreat and where to head next. Mao was elected a standing committee member of the Political Bureau, which restored part, but not all, of his power within the Red Army. It was decided that the Red Army would go north and set up revolutionary bases in Sichuan. In order to get rid of the pursuing Nationalist troops, the Red Army had to go back

and forth across the Chishui River, a branch of the Yangtze, four times by the end of March. They entered Yunnan in late April. After passing over the Jinsha River, an intimidating natural barrier, around May 10, the Red Army broke through Chiang Kai-shek's encirclement. They then crossed an isolated Yi minority area. On May 21, the Red Army was challenged by the Dadu River, where Shi Dakai, the king of Wing during the Taiping Rebellion, had suffered his final defeat in 1863.[8] The Communist troops seized an iron-chain bridge in Luding and crossed at the end of May. They reached the foot of Jiajinshan, the snowy mountain. In the middle of June they climbed over it to Maogong, where they met with the Fourth Front Army led by Zhang Guotao, who had begun his retreat toward the west from the revolutionary bases in Hubei, Henan, and Anhui in October 1932.

The celebration of the union of the two armies was like a feast, joyful and harmonious. The Fourth Front Army had 45,000 troops, while the First Front Army numbered fewer than 10,000.[9] Both were optimistic about their future. But disagreement surfaced between the leaders of the two forces over the issue of the leadership of the CCP in general, and of the Red Army in particular. Zhang suggested a meeting to rectify the CCP's wrong political route and to reelect leaders. Mao and his supporters turned down Zhang's proposal and insisted on sticking to the decision of the Zunyi meeting. The conflict resulted in separation: After two months of rest and struggle with Zhang, Mao led the First and Third Corps of the First Front Army north. Zhang stayed and then headed south with the remaining forces. Mao and his followers suffered heavy losses trudging through the wild grassland. On September 16 they took the Lazikou Pass. From there, they opened a way to the north, and reached a town called Wuqi in northern Shaanxi in November 1935. At the beginning of July 1936, the Second Front Army led by He Long joined the Fourth Front Army led by Zhang Guotao at Ganzi (in modern-day Tibet). In October 1936, the Second and Fourth Front armies arrived in Huining, Shaanxi, welcomed by the First Front Army, which came to Shaanxi in October 1935. Thus concluded the Long March.

Yan'an was chosen as the capital of the Soviet Republic of China and continued to be the revolutionary Mecca of Chinese Communists for many years. Beset by drought and famine, the Shaan–Gan–Ning border region was experiencing a severe shortage of material resources. Ironically, the Long March in search of a land of milk and honey ended in one of the most unpromising environments, though at a safe distance from Chiang Kai-shek's iron fist.[10]

Constructing the discursive space of the Long March

As soon as the Long Marchers set their feet on the road to the west, the Soviet Republic of China ceased to exist except in name. The republic was shattered, especially after the fatal defeat at the Xiangjiang River, and was replaced with the Party and the Red Army in both discursive practice and reality. In this section I will trace the origin of the Long March myth to the earliest records endorsed by the CCP. In view of the popularity of the historical discourse after

the formation of the Long March myth, the following discussion will focus on the earliest and most obscure historical registers.

Writing about the Long March started before the march itself was over. It is not unusual for a political party to stage an event to serve its own purposes. But the case of the Long March may have set a record for politico-historical writing in China and the world in two respects. First, the writing of the march as history began even while the troops were still on their way, not knowing exactly where they would end up and still in danger of being annihilated by the KMT. Second, it took a short time—roughly two decades—for the march to evolve from a military retreat into a national myth.

Blueprint of the utopian Long March

Besides the reports and messages on the KMT side in newspapers, the earliest record of the Long March on the CCP side was *Suijun xixing jianwen lu* (Experiences of the march westward). It was written as early as 1935 and published in Shanghai in 1936.[11] The author, pen name Lian Chen, was a captured Nationalist Army doctor. This first-person narrative recounted his experience of marching with the central Red Army as a prisoner.[12] Most of the significant events along the way were recorded from a seemingly objective and nonpartisan point of view. Lian Chen's text explained to people in the KMT-occupied areas how the Red Army broke through the four blockades and passed natural barriers like the Wu River, Jinsha River, Dadu River, and even snow-covered mountains. The narrative stops at the joining of the First and Fourth Front armies because, according to the book, Lian Chen was then set free by the CCP to go home. He expressed strong concern as a common citizen for the fate of the country while the Japanese were invading and accused the KMT of killing their own countrymen. Taking advantage of his position as an insider in both the Nationalist Army and the Red Army, the narrator compares the two forces from the beginning to the end and highlights the superiority of the Red Army. He even concludes with three reasons it survived and succeeded: solidarity, support from the people, and strong leadership.

Lian Chen may have been the first to make Chinese people believe in the heroism and authenticity of the Long March, mostly because of his unimpeachable narrative perspective. In fact, he was neither a military doctor serving in the 59th Division of the Nationalist Army nor a captive of the Red Army, as he claimed in the book. There is no doubt that he experienced the Long March as a witness, but he was the representative of the central CCP assigned to the Fifth Corps of the Red Army: Chen Yun, a member of the Executive Political Bureau of the CCP since 1931. In May 1935, after the Red Army crossed the Dadu River, Chen was dispatched to take command of the CCP's underground organizations in Shanghai. He wrote this small book in the summer of that year and then left for Moscow for the third congress of the Comintern. He reported about the Long March and the Zunyi meeting in October; his report was later published under the title *Yingyong de xizheng* (The heroic march to the west) under

the name Shi Ping in the combined first and second issue of the Comintern magazine (Chinese version) in the spring of 1936.

Chen Yun's disguise was successful. Few people were suspicious of his fictional identity. The story was all the more convincing, having been told by a Nationalist doctor instead of a common Red Army soldier. His use of two different sets of vocabulary, KMT and CCP, facilitated his narrative. He employed Nationalist terms, referring to the Red Army as *chijun* (literally red army, but in a pejorative sense) and to Chiang as the Chief Commissioner, as the KMT usually did. However, the partiality of the narrative is obvious. The Red Army is described as a force full of humanity, heroism, and solidarity. The comprehensive information about the march is also beyond a general doctor's knowledge, so much so that impressed readers thought that he must have spent extra effort to research the event. The narrator's identity became questionable when readers found that he was telling a legend of victory, without a single detail on loss or failure. For example, he wrote only a few lines on the battle of the Xiangjiang River. According to his account, the Red Army crossed the Xiangjiang peacefully without any loss at all.[13] But as mentioned earlier, the Red Army suffered tremendous losses there: half of the troops died and its numbers drastically fell from 86,000 to 30,000. Lian Chen or Chen Yun's record enjoyed temporary popularity, mainly in the KMT-occupied area.[14] It fell into obscurity after a few more reprintings, and was supplanted by Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*.

Lian Chen's true identity was revealed in 1985 when *Suijun xixing jianwen lu* was reprinted in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Zunyi meeting.[15] Most of its original wording was retained, except for a few pejorative words about the Red Army. *Chijun* (pejorative red army), for example, was changed to *hongjun* (meaning Red Army); *zhumao* (a homophone of "pig's hair") to "Mao Zedong and Zhu De"; the term "Chief Commissioner" for Chiang was changed to "Chiang Kai-shek." Ironically, the overt error about the Xiangjiang battle was not corrected, even though the actual losses incurred had long been known. This was not rectified until the book was included in *Chen Yun wenxuan* (Selected works of Chen Yun).[16]

Suijun xixing jianwen lu opened a door for the people in the KMT-occupied area to learn about the Red Army and the Long March from a different viewpoint. It encouraged them to believe in the glory and justice of the Long March so as to discredit the Nationalist government. However, this book appears to have been a false blueprint for people to construct an impression about what happened in the Long March. The expedition was described as an ideal experience filled with egalitarianism, mutual affection, high morale, and humanity. For the people living in the high-pressure environment of the KMT, the depiction of the Red Army community would have sounded like a utopia.

Utopia and utropia expanded: red star over the world

I argue that the community of the Red Army during the march itself was not a utopia. Instead, it was a utropia—a kind of utopia constructed of tropes toward

which outsiders were attracted, to follow Apter and Saich's discussion of Yan'an as a revolutionary simulacrum.[17] The Communist discourses used tropes to construct the migrating entity composed of the Red Army and the central CCP during the march as a utopian society.

The term "Long March" had not yet been created when the event actually started. Originally called withdrawal or retreat (*zhuanyi* or *chetui*), the "Long March" did not exist in the summer of 1935, even after the Red Army had finished two-thirds of its journey. Chen Yun's *Suijun xixing jianwen lu* does not use the term to describe the event. He called it "expedition to the west" (*xizheng*). The earliest extant written use of "Long March" is dated September 12, 1935; it is in "Guanyu Zhang Guotao tongzhi de cuowu de jueding" (Decision on Comrade Zhang Guotao's mistake).[18] In October, after the Red Army crossed the Min Mountain, Mao wrote his spectacular poem "The Long March." After that, its title became the standard term for this event. Two months later, Mao expounded on the significance of the march in a public speech, now well known, stating that "the Long March is a manifesto, a propaganda team, a seeding machine." It is a figurative description that history has proven to be literal.[19] These three definitions prescribed almost all of the writings about the Long March for many years to come. Many appear to be little more than annotations to Mao's manifesto.

Within the utropian system of Long March discourse, the red star is the most prominent individual sign. Initially an emblem on the soldiers' hats, the pentagonal star became a synecdoche of the Red Army mostly thanks to Edgar Snow. Even though Snow did not see any megalomania in Mao in 1936—one of the few wrong predictions he made about the Chinese revolution—Mao did evolve into the only red sun during the Cultural Revolution 30 years later. Snow appeared at exactly the right moment for Mao. In 1936, the Red Army and the CCP had just finished their retreat and found a temporary headquarters in northern Shaanxi. Snow's arrival in Shaanxi and his passion for publicizing the Chinese Communists were indeed a blessing to Mao and his cohorts. Still considered by the official Nationalist government as "red bandits" (*chifei*) and known as unorthodox rebels to the rest of the world other than the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communists needed a forceful spokesperson. A reporter from Missouri sympathetic to the Chinese Communist revolution, Snow was most eligible for this role. Mao knew well that Snow's report would be his first public appearance on the stage of not only China but, more importantly, the world. To use John Fairbank's phrase, "Mao was prepared to put himself on record."[20]

Mao's collaboration with Snow proved fruitful. There was mutual appreciation, if not mutual admiration, between them. Snow respected the Chinese Communist revolution and was amazed by its achievement. He was reconciled to being a recorder of "history as lived by the men and women who made it" and claimed his reports were "the first authentic account of the CCP and the first connected story of their long struggle to carry through the most thorough-going social revolution in China's three millenniums of history."[21] Snow can be understood as a transcriber of Mao's storytelling. Therefore, his annals of the Long

March are also the story Mao prepared to tell to Chinese outside the expedition and to people throughout the world.[22]

Those few victorious battles among many defeats were highlighted enough to impress readers with the army's success rather than failure. Whenever he disagreed with Mao or held a different perspective, Snow expressed it in the form of commentary. Although he recognized Mao's strategy, charisma, and leadership, Snow did not refrain from criticism. He speculated that considerable Communist exploitation of the peasantry must have occurred in the Soviet area in Jiangxi and other provinces during the year-long campaign of encirclement.[23] Snow also emphasized the importance of psychological factors behind the anti-Japanese mantra during the march.[24] Thanks to his insistence on writerly independence and objectivity, Snow's accounts were seldom challenged for their credibility. This is also why *Red Star Over China* has stood the test of time as a historical record and a classic document of the early Chinese Communist revolution.

Although he was impressed by Mao's nonindividualistic heroism, which was twisted to the opposite extreme three decades later during the Cultural Revolution, Snow discovered Mao's variable use of personal pronouns when recounting his own personal history. Mao kept using "I" in talking about his early life, whether he remained in a dominant role or a marginal one. However, when he moved on to the topic of the Red Army, the pronoun was altered: The singular "I" was replaced with the collective "we." It was "no longer Mao Tse-tung, but the Red Army; no longer a subjective impression of the experiences of single life, but an objective record by a bystander concerned with the mutations of collective human destiny as the material of history."[25] The shift from "I" to "we" is symptomatic of the expansion of Mao's ego. Snow did not see it this way; he rightly predicted that Mao and his fellow Communists would rule over China, but he did not anticipate that Mao was about to become a totalitarian ruler, as was soon proven by the overwhelming Rectification Campaign in Yan'an.[26] The Red Army and the Long March were the seed money for his long-run political capital, which Mao would not concede to any rival. He put himself in the position of spokesman of the Red Army. In this way, Mao diluted himself as an individual into the sea of the masses. "I, the person" was sublimated into "we, the people." The transition from the "I" to the "we" took hundreds of thousands of lives of the Red Army, before and after the Long March.

Snow was more a prophet than a historian. When the thousands of little red stars had just been baptized in blood along the march and their next step was still uncertain, he predicted that the red star would soon be over China. It did not take long: Mao soon occupied the center of power within the CCP and took up the mantle of PRC authority. All of the other red stars were lost to dimness, but one remained shining in the sky—the red sun, the symbol of Chairman Mao.

The experience in exile for 12 months offered the Communists necessary legitimacy in the production of the Long March discourse, which was crystallized in *Red Star Over China*, targeting foreign audiences. Within China, the CCP took on the responsibility of showing how grand their expedition was. The

Chinese Communists knew well that agitprop was their trump card from the very beginning. While enjoying a temporary peaceful rest and recovery after an exhausting, year-long journey, they compiled an account of their "hard times." The project was one of their earliest efforts to shape the Chinese vision of the Long March.

As early as the spring of 1936, the CCP organized an editorial board and planned to gather a collection of documents and diaries of the Long March.[27] This work was done in February 1937, but the account was not published until November 1942.[28] Having been written in 1936, not long after the end of the march, most of the work in *Hongjun changzheng ji* (An account of the Long March of the Red Army) kept the original flavor of the event despite unavoidable selectivity in content and a partial stance favoring the CCP. It recounted most of the important heroic battles against the Nationalist Army and presented the most arduous trials the marchers went through, but noted little defeat or loss.[29]

The historiography endorsed by the CCP in the late 1930s and 1940s succeeded in shaping the Long March into a foundational myth of the PRC in the 1950s. This journey to the west is the Chinese Exodus, under the leadership of the Chinese Moses, Mao Zedong. The Long March functions in the PRC in a similar way to Genesis in the Christian community. Its credibility is beyond doubt; there is little question about its cause and effect. The Long March served as an object of worship for later revolutionary aspirants. During the Cultural Revolution, the march became an inspiration for youth to participate in revolution. They mimicked the Red Army and came to Yan'an from far and near to pay their respects and to look for revolutionary truth. Meanwhile, historical writings continued to add a halo to sanctify the Long March. The 50th and 60th anniversaries of the event in 1986 and 1996 marked the climax of systematic writings about it.[30] Some sensitive or previously taboo topics were not avoided, such as the huge loss at the Xiangjiang River and Tucheng, and this revisionism was a big step in confronting historical truth, especially in a founding national myth.

Besides the institutional compilation of the Long March history, various personal accounts, including diaries and memoirs by the old Red soldiers and officers, record the march from an individual perspective.[31] Since the 1980s, a genre similar to the traditional historical saga has flourished in Long March discourse. Under the guise of documentary literature (*jishi wenxue*), this group of writings confuses readers with the conflation of fictional literature and history. It also represents the embarrassing ambiguity of this particular genre—which used to be called "reportage"—in China. Many unreliable specifics get widely circulated due to failures in judgment and depiction. One typical case is accounts of the cipher telegram that directly led to the split between the First and Fourth Front Armies.[32] This plethora of publications produced a false boom in purportedly "factual" writing about the Long March. It contributed little to the clarification of murky records and uncertain facts. Continued writing about the Long March in the 1980s and 1990s has produced a great quantity of material. Nonetheless, the deficit in quality proves the difficulty and limits in sorting out facts from historical records mixed with fabrication and fiction.

Taboos lifted

Whose Long March? Almost all records hold that the Long March started in October 1934, when the First Front Army set out from Jiangxi, and ended two years later, in October 1936, with the joining of three forces: the First, Second, and Fourth Front Armies. The Long March we usually hear about consists of the route covered by the First Front Army. As the CCP's core military force, it was given the lion's share of the credit for the Long March. More than nine out of ten works about the Long March pertain to the First Front Army. CCP history books do acknowledge the contribution of other armies to the final victory of this military action. Here, the question arises: Since there is no doubt that the Fourth Front Army participated in the expedition and deserves a chapter in the whole movement, why is their excursion truncated—part of it being included in the Long March but the rest not?

From May to July 1932, the KMT launched the fourth encirclement of the Red Army. The focus moved from the central Jiangxi Soviet to the Soviet area in Anhui, Henan, and Hubei. Zhang Guotao, then the vice chair of the central Soviet government, was put charge in this area in April 1932. He led the main force of the Fourth Front Army in retreat toward the west in July 1932. In November, they arrived in northern Sichuan and built up a Soviet base. After 80 days of marching and battle, the Fourth Front Army had shrunk from 16,000 to 9,000.[33] They did not ask the central CCP for approval to withdraw. The central CCP was infuriated to learn that Zhang had given up, and criticized him for his "rightist escapism."[34] Zhang, however, attributed the retreat to the failure of the CCP's Soviet policy. He realized that the Chinese people had difficulty recognizing and accepting the Soviet government because the Chinese transliteration of its Russian title into "*suwei'ai*" was totally new and alienating. Some people even believed "*suwei'ai*" was a personal name.[35] He wanted to establish a People's Government in Sichuan, following the same policy as the Soviet government but with a more comprehensible name, but his proposal was denied by the central CCP. Zhang finally managed to start a United Northwest Government for the unification of minorities in west China. Based in northern Sichuan, Zhang and his army recovered and developed. When they learned from a Nationalist newsletter that the First Front Army had entered Sichuan, the Fourth Front Army crossed the Jialing River at great cost to help them march to the north. After the First and Fourth Front armies met at Maogong, because of the diverging evaluations of the CCP's route and the sharing of power within the CCP and the Red Army, Mao went on to the north and Zhang returned to the south. Zhang eventually led his army to northern Shaanxi in October 1936, having joined with the Second Front Army earlier in July. Later, the West Route Army, mainly composed of the Fourth Front Army, was smashed by the Islamic minority cavalry troops in the northwest. Zhang was blamed. But according to the political structure of the CCP, the West Route Army was directly commanded by the Central Committee, which was under Mao's control. Mao could have cracked down on the remains of the Fourth Front Army to annihilate dissidents for choosing the

wrong military tactics. With this defeat, Zhang lost his political capital to compete with Mao in Yan'an. He finally chose to surrender to Chiang Kai-shek, but Chiang did not entrust Zhang with an important position in his Nationalist government. Zhang moved from Taiwan to Hong Kong in 1949 and died in exile in Canada in 1979. He was portrayed as a traitor in CCP history books and his Fourth Front Army was not given the credit they deserved in the battles against the KMT.

The truth is that the Fourth Front Army started on the road to the west two years earlier than the First Front Army. It was considered a politically wrong move by the central CCP at the time. Zhang's decision was not appreciated until after the First Front Army and the CCP retreated from Jiangxi and went on their way to the isolated west for survival. If their retreat could be legitimately called the Long March later in history and in practice, there is no reason not to acknowledge that the journey of the Fourth Front Army is part of the Long March. Zhang was the inventor of the strategic retreat that was later endorsed and utilized extensively by Mao. Zhang's independent movement and later conversion to the KMT were separate issues.[36] His role in leading and developing the Red Army cannot be underestimated. The earliest publication on the Long March sanctioned by the CCP, *Hongjun changzheng ji* in 1942, centered on the First Front Army only. The compiler of a later edition in 1958 attended to the ambiguity of the Second Front Army in the historical accounts of the Long March. Consequently, the title of the book was modified to *Hongyi fangmianjun changzheng ji* (The Long March of the First Front Red Army).[37] It contained most of the articles from *Hongjun changzheng ji* and professed that the definition of the Long March was based on the directive by Mao in "On Tactics of Anti-Japanese Imperialism" and "On United Government." Thus the compilers excluded the march of the Second Front Army from 1932 to 1933, together with some other earlier excursions of the Red Army, from their discussion of the Long March.[38]

Escape or anti-Japanese campaign?

Many history textbooks depict the Long March as a mobilization toward the north in order to resist the Japanese. More and more evidence has shown that the goal of anti-Japanese resistance is a later embellishment by the CCP propaganda machine.

The northeast was lost to Japan after September 18, 1931. On January 28, 1932, the Japanese bombed Shanghai. On April 15, 1932, the temporary central government of Soviet China announced war with Japan. It was an expression for show rather than action, especially since the CCP was still busy with the antiextermination campaign. From April to May, the Red Army suffered great losses in the battle at Guangchang. The leaders considered withdrawal, the tactic of "distracting the tiger with a small piece of meat to preserve the whole chicken."[39]

In the beginning of July, the CCP reorganized the Seventh Corps of the Red Army into Anti-Japanese Pioneers (*kangri xianqiandui*) and ordered them to

Fujian, Anhui, and Zhejiang provinces to develop a guerrilla war, establish some Soviet areas, and disseminate the CCP's anti-Japanese policy. The true goal was to distract the Nationalist Army from the Soviet area in Jiangxi province so that KMT pressure on the central Red Army would be relieved.[40] The campaign was wiped out in only a few months, with the main leaders either killed or captured.

The original plan for the central Red Army was to go to west Hunan and unite with the Second Front Army; this was soon made impossible by the Nationalist obstruction. After that, the central army had to keep changing their aim, depending on the circumstances. Their destination was never clear, from setting up bases in Sichuan and Guizhou to joining with the Fourth Front Army. The decision to go to north Shaanxi was not made until they arrived at Hadapu in September 1935, when they accidentally learned from the newspaper that a group of Red Army troops led by Liu Zhidan and another force led by Xu Haidong were there.[41]

The anti-Japanese campaign can be easily exposed as false. At that time Japan occupied the northeast and Shanghai, but the Red Army was going in the opposite direction. Even after they arrived in Shaanxi and announced the anti-Japanese manifesto in December 1935, Mao did not take anti-Japanese resistance as seriously as expanding the Soviet area to compete with the KMT. The Fourth Front Army was sent west to occupy Gansu and Xinjiang instead of northeast to fight the Japanese. Mao tried to preserve his own force and resisted the Japanese only rhetorically. Peng Dehuai led the 100 regiments of the Eighth Route Army and triumphed on the anti-Japanese front in 1940.[42] However, he was not praised as a hero but criticized by Mao for exposing the strength of the Red Army too early. Mao held a grudge against Peng for doing this. Years later, at the Lushan conference in 1957, which marked the downfall of Peng and many alleged "rightists," Mao said: "It is patriotic to let the Japanese occupy more. Otherwise, it would be Chiang's country."[43] Despite his ostensible commitment to fighting Japan, Mao intentionally let the Japanese remain powerful and unimpeded enough to restrict Nationalist influence on the mainland while preserving his own influence.

The representational space of the Long March

Henri Lefebvre defines representational space as

> embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces).[44]

In other words, representational space is a semiotic universe related to social life. It is first a system composed of symbols and second a referential index to social reality. The previous section discussed how the Long March is configured in the historical discursive space. The following part will be devoted to its representational space.

"Someday someone will write the full epic of this exciting expedition"—thus predicted Edgar Snow in "The Long March" chapter of *Red Star Over China* in 1937.[45] The following half century has seen numerous writings about the Long March, but the "full epic" Snow expected seems an impossibility and has yet to arrive. Ironically, the unborn *epic* was transformed into a virtuoso *lyric* in Mao's hands, which could both write verse and charismatically wave at people while leading a crusade:

> The Red Army fears not the trials of the Long March,
> Holding light ten thousand crags and torrents.
> The Five Ridges wind like gentle ripples
> And the majestic Wumeng rolls by, globules of clay.
> Warm the steep cliffs lapped by the waters of Golden Sand,
> Cold the iron chains spanning the Tatu River.
> Minshan's thousand *li* of snow joyously crossed,
> The three armies march on, each face glowing.[46]

Between the epic and the lyric lie plenty of representations of the Long March, including cultural productions in different media and genres. The Long March has carried multiple meanings throughout Chinese society, offering legitimacy for a regime, building up national pride as an instance of collective consciousness, and inspiring literary and artistic works. At the turn of the millennium, it was revived once again by a cultural industry in a global context, producing the hit TV series *The Long March* and the extensive exhibit "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display." Chinese readers today could hardly link the Long March with a military fiasco, which it in fact was. In this section, I will examine several clusters of representations of the Long March over the past few decades to see how and why a mythical domain of a nation gets represented through words, voices, and images in the field of cultural production.

Melodramatic visions of the Long March

By "melodramatic," Peter Brooks means a mode of dramatization, especially certain extravagant representations, in which the intensity of the moral claim impinges upon the characters' consciousness.[47] Brooks aspires to define a mode of excess characterized by heightened dramatization in order to signify two extremes: good and evil, darkness and light, salvation and damnation—no matter what genre the representation belongs to. Meanwhile, melodrama aims to operate on human emotions, to stimulate emotional identification rather than denial. On top of that, it would be expected to result in a positive epistemological response, not a negative denunciation. A philosophical reflection upon the meaning of the melodramatic is not anticipated.

"Melodramatic" as defined by Brooks aptly describes the earliest representations, including opera, drama, and especially cinema, of the Long March in the 1950s. Interestingly, Brooks locates the origin of the melodramatic within the

context of the French Revolution at the dawn of the nineteenth century, which is not arbitrary given the historical circumstances.[48] The Long March is one more case proving that the aftermath of revolution can be a perfect incubator for a melodramatic imagination. Assuming there are four modes of imagination in terms of dramatization, not in the literal sense of the word, they could be: comic, tragic, melodramatic, and farcical. Hardly any other mode besides melodrama was used in representations of the Long March in the 1950s.

This cluster of Long March representations is fundamentally burdened with the task of yielding meaning. Without exception, works about the Long March dwell on the bitterness that the Red Army endured, with slight differences in agenda: highlighting the sacrifice and wisdom of great leaders or presenting the hardship in preserving humanity among the masses. They function like parables, teaching moral lessons in figurative language. Morality is the central message in the production of meaning. This morality goes beyond individual love or hatred. It is elevated to a collective consciousness identifying with one value appreciated by this particular group and denouncing others. The central message is that the Communist Party gave much on behalf of the Chinese masses and the Nationalist Party was the oppressive other.

Intriguingly, the oppressive other is very often absent in these works, so that the Long March story appears to be a monologue, like that of an old hero recounting his glorious past. The moral judgment is absolute: The bad is extremely bad and the good exceptionally good, without any compromise. Since the bad is mostly absent, what is presented is either good or perfect. As we will see later, many works become sagas of dauntless heroes and hagiographic accounts of a sublime collective identity. On top of the moral evaluation, the representations of the Long March are characterized by strong emotionalism. The Long March always begins with grief, sadness, agony, and distress. These emotions are invariably and suddenly transformed into hope and bliss at the moment of conclusion. This kind of emotionalism works on human psychology. It aspires to evoke sympathy from viewers and transform it into unconscious acceptance.

Melodrama originally defined a genre of drama with musical accompaniment.[49] The 1950s saw the first wave of imagining the Long March in various cultural fields, including opera, drama, and fiction. Li Bozhao, a propaganda team veteran of the march, led the way in 1951 by writing the three-act, nine-scene opera *The Long March*, which recounted stories of the valor of the Red Army with lyrics in the most essentialist and archetypal way.[50] The key events around Mao were highlighted with heavy strokes. Li had received professional training in music and dance in the Soviet Union. Her work is more a play of songs (*geju*, the equivalent of "opera" in Chinese) than an opera. The melodic version could be taken as a genuine hallelujah for Mao and the Long March.

Similarly, Chen Qitong drew a prototype of revolutionary geography for the Long March with his six-act play *Wanshui qianshan* (Hundreds of mountains, thousands of rivers, 1955; *Mountains and Rivers* henceforth). Chen joined the Red Army on the journey from Sichuan to north Shaanxi. *Mountains and Rivers*

covers the critical trials that the army overcame. Mao does not show up on the stage but is explicitly alive in the dramatic world. Although it is ostensibly a eulogy, the play still functions in the melodramatic mode. Chen had only two years of elementary education and no background in playwriting, and it shows: there are too many characters in the drama; the plot development throughout is not feasible for staging; and the one and only scene about the Nationalist headquarters in act IV is far-fetched to the core.

Despite the amateurish level of their opera and drama respectively, Li and Chen rank in the first tier of melodramatic authors of the Long March. Although their works are flawed when considered from the perspective of generic parameters, they did not fail to tell or repeat the heroic expedition. Both works' main task was to convey the message crystallized in the officially sanctioned accounts of the Long March; the form mattered little. The authors' lack of mastery of operatic and dramatic technique was partly compensated for by their sincere dedication to the cause, and primarily by the privilege of having participated in and testified to the event.

Both Li and Chen emphasized their own identity as members of the Red Army. As witnesses of this event, they felt obligated to represent it. Thus their writings could be considered "authentic," with the authority of a witness to represent history, especially a traumatic event. Chen had a strong compulsion to write about the Long March.[51] Li claimed that she had true feelings to express since she had worked in the Red Army for so many years and knew it deeply.[52] Their motivations are questionable. By looking at the opera closely, we can see that there is a disparity between Li's claim and what the work actually does. On the one hand, she grounded her writing on her status as a witness of the Long March. She could only write subjectively and stressed the importance of her personal experience. However, she elevated the "personal" to the "collective" once she started writing, transforming her "self" into a spokesperson for all people. Thus erasing her personal memory of the Long March, she assumed the role of agent to create a eulogy on behalf of the Chinese people. The whole opera appears to be a collective expression of the Chinese people's love and affection for Mao and the Red Army.

Echoing the hardship the Red Army suffered on the march, the process of writing the two works was a struggle too. Both authors mention little about the difficulty of representation in their melodramatic pieces. Elsewhere, however, they talked excessively about what to write. Li claimed that she wrote and rewrote her piece seven times.[53] Chen's effort to write the play spanned nearly two decades. Taking criticism and suggestions, Chen revised and finally completed *Mountains and Rivers*.[54] Apparently his creative process included thorough censorship by the author and others, as with hundreds of other cultural productions in socialist China. In such circumstances, the putative author does not matter much, as the writing process is in fact collective. This erasure of individual authorship corresponds to socialist outlooks on material possession—social property belongs to the state and the collective rather than the individual. It also corresponds to the process of the individual witness being sublimated into the collective identity of the people.

Mountains and Rivers illustrates both the splendor and the embarrassment of the Long March in new China. Chen regretted that he could not draw a panoramic picture because he only covered the journey from Sichuan to Shaanxi; this concern was at the root of his difficulties in writing about the Long March. He implicitly confirmed that only the witness has the right to write. Due to the unavailability of early drafts of the play, we cannot compare and contrast the different versions. However, Chen confessed that there were a few episodes not true to the facts but written as such for artistic consistency. For example, he described a battle on the grassland between the Red Army and the Tibetan cavalry in Act V. From Associate Director Fu Zhong of the Political Department of the PLA, Chen learned that this description contradicted the CCP's minority policy and weakened the effort to achieve solidarity between the army and other minorities, like the Red Army and the minority Yi portrayed earlier in the play. Therefore, he replaced the Tibetan cavalry with Nationalist soldiers.

A similarity between Li's opera and Chen's play is the virtual absence of the enemy. Chen devoted one scene to the Nationalists in act VI. Blunt and coarse, it features characters with only official titles, no personal names. These Nationalists are generic and stereotypical. Chen himself admitted that this scene was a failure[55] and attributed this to his limited knowledge about the enemy. Li, on the other hand, did not even depict any enemy. She said: "I don't want the ugly look [of the enemies] to appear on the stage because the space that I reserve to praise the Red soldiers and officers is far from enough! Why bother to write about those ferocious reactionaries?"[56] Without vivid enemies on stage, Li's and Chen's works look like one-role plays. Whether the character is Xie or Wang in *The Long March* or Zhao or Li in *Mountains and Rivers*, they are basically one role under the collective name of Red Army. Mao is the person behind the curtain who dubs the dialogue for all of the characters on stage.

Li must have known the power of propaganda in the Long March, having been an active member of the propaganda team of the Red Army. The series of songs in the opera reach the peak of agitprop. The propaganda team is given close-ups. Li Fenglian, a hardworking member, does a superb job encouraging soldiers in their trials and publicizing the CCP's route. Her songs crystallize revolutionary heroism and turn the actual heroic events into the sublime. Li and Chen were fairly successful. The opera *The Long March* was staged for 45 performances and had audiences of 76,000 in a short time.[57] Chen's play gained equal popularity and was adapted into a film in 1959. These writers are well known for the message they try to convey, not for composing a masterpiece in opera or drama, which once again proves they belong to a *uni-form*, whether opera or drama. People remember their work as related to the Long March. Li and Chen happened to be unconsciously self-reflective upon the role of propaganda in the march. This kind of self-reflection deconstructs their own writings. Their works are exactly like the songs in the opera and the play: Disseminating correct ideas about the Red Army for a period of time, being submerged into the ocean of myriad pieces of uniform sermons, and fading from people's attention today.

Deciphering the myth and constructing the red kingdom

The prominence of the Long March in historical and semihistorical fields contrasts sharply with its scarcity in imaginative fiction. It takes only a minute to count the works of fiction on the Long March, beginning with Wang Yuanjian's series of short stories in the late 1950s and the voluminous novel by the veteran reportage writer Wei Wei. These works feature a set of symbols that constitute a symbolic kingdom. This can be understood as the legacy of socialist realism, which, unlike critical realism, emphasizes complying with socialist principles and being true to reality. There is one and only one referent for each symbol. This basically restricts the multiple interpretative possibilities: It takes only one step to go from the symbol back to the referent. For instance, a red ribbon can only be read as a symbol of the Red Army on the route of the march, nothing else.

Several generations in mainland China since the 1950s are familiar with the writings of Wang Yuanjian. His series of works depicting the Long March and the Communist revolution in the Soviet area brought him nationwide popularity. Because of his strict adherence to the Communist agenda, he was among the few writers to survive the political upheavals without his writing career being interrupted, despite the fact that most of his peers, whose works later became the so-called "Red classics of the Republic," were ultimately purged during the many following campaigns.

Qigen huochai (*Seven Matchsticks*, 1958) is one of Wang's most representative works. Its inclusion in Chinese textbooks for elementary education proves its political correctness and favor by the Party ideology. With no more than 2,000 Chinese characters, *Seven Matchsticks* briefly recounts the fate of two Communist soldiers who have become separated from the rest of the army. On the verge of death, one of the soldiers passes his last seven matchsticks to the other, Lu Jinyong. Lu offers his dying comrade his last pinch of barley flour, but the latter declines: "No. It is of n … no use." The soldier uses his remaining energy to bring out a certificate of Party membership, packing the seven matchsticks inside: "The red heads of matchsticks clustering, at the heart of the crimson signet of the Party, look like a bunch of flames." When the anonymous soldier falls down and dies, his hands are "held up, as if a road sign, pointing in the direction in which the army marched." What happens after that could not be briefer. Predictably, Lu obtains energy from nowhere and catches up to the main body of the army before dark.

This text is apparently coded from official discourses of the Long March into figurative language in the form of narrative. The symbols here are straightforward and the whole narrative is oriented teleologically. Whatever is considered "unnecessary" is replaced with rhetorical ellipses—suspension points. *Seven Matchsticks* serves as a melodramatic illustration to the history written by the Communists. The mini-story was acclaimed as a masterpiece immediately after its publication. Leading critics contributed their reviews with equal exaggeration of its achievement. They understood the flat characterization as plain,

clear, and natural,[58] and that the glory of the subject matter overshadows all artistic flaws.[59] Wang Yuanjian tried hard to add a footnote to the already established historical discourse.

However, an observant reader cannot lose sight of the intriguing as well as successful points in *Seven Matchsticks*. The hardship that the Red Army underwent is concretized in this vivid picture. The anonymity of the dead soldier is highly allegorical: How many such sacrifices have been made in anticipation of victory? The contrast between the named Lu Jinyong and the anonymous soldier further indicates the paradox of history. After all, history is written by those who are alive, even though the silent dead ones contribute more to the story with their lives. The anonymous soldier could have sneered at his namelessness while the witness, Lu Jinyong, is inscribed on paper.

Wei Wei did not take significant steps beyond Wang, except in length. *Diqiu shang de hong piaodai* (The red ribbon on the earth, 1987; *Red Ribbon* thereafter) enlarges upon well-known battles and struggles within the Party. It recounts the whole story: the defeat at the riverbank of Xiangjiang, the significant meeting at Zunyi, the miraculous crossing of the rivers Jinshajiang and Daduhe, and the final joining of forces in north Shaanxi. Almost all major warfare against enemies and conflicts within the Party are covered. When its first draft was finished at the end of 1986, exactly half a century had passed since the conclusion of the Long March. Wei Wei took his work as a heartfelt offering to the commemoration of the event. The dedication reads: "To the heroes of the Long March." But his good wish was appreciated only by the Long March veterans. The old generals who experienced the Long March enthusiastically prefaced his novel and collection. By comparison, the attention from literary critics was moderate at best.

Wei Wei aspired to compile a complete documentation of the Long March from a writer's point of view rather than a historian's. He follows what history textbooks tell him along the main plot line and creates details around those narrative kernels. His creative input appears to be limited to filling in gaps in history by making characters speak. Direct speech is the primary feature of the novel. This work mainly provides a supplement to received historiography. Wei Wei's practice reveals the crisis of writing history in other genres: The more mighty the history, the more challenging the task. Although Wei Wei spent 90 percent of the 470,000 words in depicting dialogue, the novel does not break out of the set pattern of representations of the history of the Long March.

Red Ribbon illustrates the legacy of reportage, a genre that reached its peak in the 1950s in socialist China. At that time Wei Wei himself was a master at reporting warfare on the Korean front.[60] His *Shui shi zui keai de ren?* (Who are angels?) was one of the most melodramatic propaganda pieces ever written in China. Millions of Chinese learned about the Korean War through Wei Wei's writings. His work helped to mobilize the Chinese people to support the People's Republic of Korea in the war against America on the mass-psychological level. Despite not being branded as "reportage" or "documentary" (the former gradually declined and was replaced by the latter), *Red Ribbon* has a lot in common with Wei Wei's previous reportage writings: it is based on actual events, documenting, ostensibly

supportive of the official ideology, eulogizing, etc. It is an enlarged version of reportage on the Long March.

The production process of *Red Ribbon* resonates with the actual Long March in every aspect, even the length. For example, Wei Wei subjected himself to great physical challenges in order to write the book. Although he was over 60 and suffered from heart disease, he revisited the route the central Red Army covered during the Long March twice, in 1983 and 1984. In the summer of 1983, on the way to look for graves of Red soldiers, Wei Wei fell down and sprained his ankle. This accident becomes a necessary referent in later discussions of *Red Ribbon*.[61] The injury afforded him one more bit of legitimacy in presenting the Long March. This invokes the logic of author, authoritarian, and authority. Only if an author experiences an event does he or she have the authority to write about it. This type of authentic, first-hand writing of course receives much support and favor from the authorities.[62]

Red Ribbon is a case of literary dislocation, a deviation from the norm of literary production in a specific social context. Wei Wei wrote a novel that would have been remarkable between the 1950s and the 1970s, but not in the late 1980s. In other words, *Red Ribbon* does not really fit in the contemporary Chinese symbolic context even though the author kept the ongoing social reality well in mind and tried to connect his work with contemporary social practice. His hope that comrades would relay the revolutionary torch, accept the revolutionary ideas and fervor, and assimilate them into their spirit, action, and flesh could not but be frustrated. The novel even invited resistance from high school students who questioned whether Mao is glorified or his heroic acts are made up.[63] Except for the enthusiasm of old Long Marchers and a nostalgic few who grew up with Wei Wei's reportage, *Red Ribbon* received a lukewarm response, although it won several awards from mainstream cultural institutions.[64]

Uncovering the blind spot, filling the void

The representational space of the Long March is enormous and all-encompassing. It is constructed with many types of media: opera, drama, fiction, and cinema, representing excesses of victory, triumph, and gains with infinite repetitions and derivatives. This excess sharply contrasts with the extreme deficit, even absence, of representations of loss and death, despite the fact that only one out of ten marchers survived the trial.

In the earliest melodramatic vision, Li Bozhao disallowed the presence of the Nationalists in order to highlight the heroic Red soldiers. Chen Qitong tried to bring enemies onstage but was not successful. The huge losses at the Xiangjiang River and Tucheng have never been favored topics of Chinese writers. Li and Chen instead elaborated on the few so-called victories, which are actually only a few successful escapes within an overall disastrous retreat. All of the few sites where the Red Army skillfully escaped from the Nationalist Army are used as locales to stage the heroism of the Red soldiers and the wisdom of the Red leaders: the Wujiang River, Chishui River, Dadu River, and Jinsha River, looming large in both literature and film.

This representational space displays a blind spot. I designate it a space of voidness, a special room embodying absence, loss, and death. From the very beginning, loss and defeat have been denied, as Lian Chen's account of the battle on the Xiangjiang River illustrates. Since then, loss has been a forbidden subject. It is always replaced with rhetorical ellipses or intentionally deleted. By the same token, the presence of the archenemy is denied too. Loss and death become something unspeakable. To follow Baudrillard's logic, by and large, representations of the Long March pretend that it does not have what it has (the loss) and that it has what it does not have (the victories).[65] The mechanism operates through denial.

Within the void, there is an extraordinary case of death—*Lu Dai zhi si* (The death of Lu Dai) by the leftist writer Feng Xuefeng. Feng walked the whole Long March with the Red Army. At the end of 1937, after debating the direction of literary creation with Zhou Yang in Shanghai, he returned to his hometown in Zhejiang to write a novel about the Long March. Originally entitled *Hong jin ji* (An account of the Red March) and later changed to *Death of Lu Dai*, the manuscript of 500,000 characters that he spent three years writing and rewriting was lost and never discovered after he was arrested by the Nationalists in 1941. Except the author himself, only another writer, Luo Binji, had read it. After the PRC was established, Feng started to write the novel again. Nobody has ever had a chance to read the manuscript. In 1957 he was classified as a member of the rightist clique of Hu Feng and purged. After he was acquitted in 1961, Feng began to rewrite the novel a second time. However, he was informed that it was not appropriate for him to write on such a revolutionary subject as the Long March. In despair, Feng burned the whole manuscript. He was not vindicated until 1979, three years after his 1976 death due to lung cancer.

It is a pity that Feng was so restricted, since he wrote works in all genres except the novel. The manuscript is a huge loss to Chinese literature even if it was not a masterpiece, especially considering the double status of Feng—as a literatus who had proved his ability with previous literary achievements and as a witness of the Long March—in addition to the immediacy of his response and his engagement in the project over three decades. There is little evidence of what *Death of Lu Dai* really looked like. The only thing we can be sure of is that it is all about death; we do not even know who the protagonist, Lu Dai, really is. After all, the Long March was a journey full of deaths, hundreds of thousands. The fate of the novel—dead twice even before its birth—may be taken in a way that uncannily resonates with the Long March itself.

The blind spot of loss and death began to be filled in the mid-1980s. In 1986, a special issue of the journal *Jiefangjun wenyi* (Literature and arts of the People's Liberation Army) commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Long March. This issue displayed both the mighty influence of the dominant Long March discourse and the alternative impulse to reveal the trauma and loss inherent in the march. The inside front cover and inside back cover were printed with artworks by seal-carving artists. The front was inscribed with Mao Zedong's poem "The Long March" (Figure 2.1). The back was imprinted with the place names of 20 sites that the Red Army passed along the march (Figure 2.2). This act of inscribing the

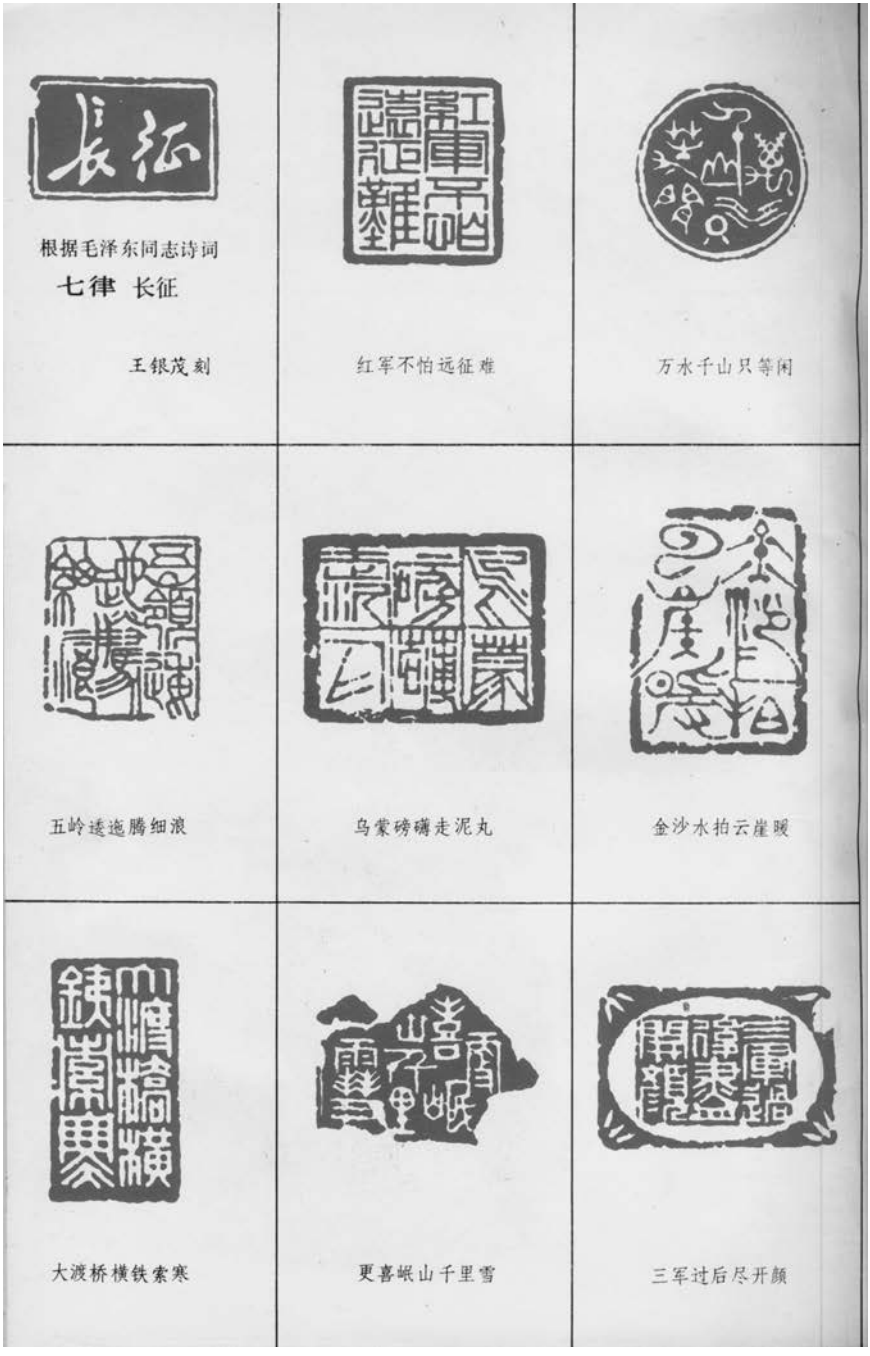

Figure 2.1 Seal carving of Mao Zedong's poem "The Long March," 1996.

Figure 2.2 Seal carving of the place names of the sites along the Long March, 1996.

characters, especially Mao's lyrics, to commemorate the event reveals the imposition of revolutionary discourse, no matter to what extent it is romanticized.

A special column, "The Long March Forum" (*Changzheng bihui*), in this issue collected three works written by new-generation military authors after visiting the Long March sites. Acknowledging the miracle and sublimity of the Long March, these pieces explore the formation of the epic, unmask the mythic aura around the march, and reveal the status quo after it was over. They fill the void in the orthodox history of the Long March with vivid details. These three works are: Cheng Dong's 程东 *Xiyang Hong* (Red sunset), which records interviews with old Red Army soldiers along the route and collects the scattered memories preserved among them;[66] Jiang Qitao's 江奇涛 *Mating shengsui* (Sound of a horseshoe), which describes how a squad of women soldiers of the Fourth Front Army overcame all kinds of difficulties and caught up with the main force;[67] and Qiao Liang's 乔良 *Lingqi* (Mourning flag), which recounts the vicissitudes endured by the small town of Hongmaojing in Guangxi province over the decades since the Red Army passed through.[68] Despite the differences in subject matter and narrative perspectives, implicitly or explicitly, they share similarities in thematic concern, writing stance, and historical reflection.

First, in contrast with previous narratives that stress the hardship of the central Red Army, these three works focus on marginal groups in the Long March, including the women soldiers of the Fourth Front Army, the guerrilla fighters dismissed in the middle of the march, and Red Army deserters who joined the local militia and ended up killing Red soldiers. Unlike the heroes in history, they do not comprehend the revolutionary ideals and sacrificial spirit. Their actions are motivated by the desire to live, resist death, return favors, and avenge wrongs. We see vices in these petty characters: jealousy, greed, confounding of right and wrong. They even return more evil for evil. In this world without heroes, the sublime is nowhere, although the writers are not intentionally avoiding it. None of the characters achieved anything heroic in battle. They disappeared into "collective anonymity." After half a century, they finally find a fleeting presence in literary works.

Second, death, loss, and cruelty become an endless obsession. Death accompanies the Long March from beginning to end. In these works, death does not appear in the form of dry figures; nor is it strategically omitted as in legendary sagas. It is represented directly and realistically, as is the cruelty of killing. Unlike the spectacular decapitation in Lun Xun's *Ah Q zhengzhuan* (True story of Ah Q), beheading becomes an everyday challenge to the guerrilla fighters—to behead or to be beheaded. As depicted in *Red Sunset*, "They kill each other desperately. Blood shed with the sword, death follows shooting. It is just killing, killing hard. It is either you killing me or I killing you, killing everywhere.… One dies after another, piles of deaths."

Half of the Red Army died in the Xiangjiang battle. People's memory of this tends to stop at the scene in which the injured commander of the 34th division, Chen Shuxiang, took his life by disemboweling himself after being captured, lest the enemy trade him for ransom money for the Nationalist government.

However, the Xiangjiang battle was only the prelude to a bloody war. Immediately afterward, all the local forces in Guangxi province started slaughtering Red soldiers. "How pathetically the Red soldiers died!" Erguaizi repeatedly begins his story in *Mourning Flag*. "It is red from the top to the bottom of the mountain after the battle, full of blood." The Long March becomes a real corporeal trial. Four soldiers of the local troops cut out organs from the division commander's corpse for a reward. But through the logic of otherworldly retribution, they die one after another, each losing the organ he chopped off. The vicious head of the local army dies horribly, his whole body cut into pieces by the anonymous character "that man." *Mourning Flag* enumerates various punishments in Chinese history: live burial, decapitation, dismemberment, and piercing the testicles with an iron rod. These punishments are not only employed against the Red Army but also adopted within the Red Army, e.g., the testicle punishment is used on the so-called "anti-Bolshevik" clique. In degree of cruelty, the natural challenges at the Jinsha River, the Dadu River, the snowy mountain, and the grassland are less ferocious than the spectacular bodily punishment. This indicates that the cruelty and bloodiness in history should be attributed less to natural causes than to man-made calamities.

Third, these writers acknowledge the historical outline of the Long March not by cleaving to the Party line but by attempting to fill in some of the gaps in previously solidified historiographies. They add meditations upon history, implicitly admitting that they assume the role of mediator as well. Some interviewees expressed unwillingness to tell about their Long March experience. To them, it was a hardcore traumatic experience, and what they suffered has little to do with what the Long March came to signify later. The glory of the Long March does not bring them reputation, pride, or luck; they are invisible in its history. As *Mourning Flag* puts it: "They walk, just walk. They do not know this is the Long March. This epic appellation happens much later."

Compared to the authoritative writings of the Long March veterans Li Bozhao and Chen Qitong, "The Long March Forum" series is more moderate in stance and does not intend to construct a complete grand epic. It does not claim to be accounts from direct witnesses or to emulate history. The writers of the series play the role of mediator. Thus they do not have to be loyal to history or to be cautiously objective. They even enjoy abusing the privilege by inserting their observations and reflections. Unlike *Red Ribbon*, *Red Sunset* does not use any direct speech. All of the interviewees' words are presented by paraphrasing. But the account remains fragmentary and even inconsistent. In this way, these writings present a nuanced picture of the Long March.

Morning Flag goes one step further. The vicissitudes in the 50 years since the Red Army passed are presented through the look of Qingguolaodie and the "speaking" of Erguaizi. With the help of their eyes and mouth, we see what we cannot see, and hear what we cannot hear in history books. Qingguolaodie and Erguaizi are not spokesmen of the Party. They do not know how the history books record what has happened around them. To a larger extent, they are not conditioned by the mighty historical discourse. They have the common people's

perspective and their visions cover individual, petty characters, family and rural everyday life. Through the lens of Qinggoulaodie, we see the happenings in the small town over five decades: Jiucui's puppy love with "that man," her marriage, bearing a son, and her own death; "that man" joining the Red Army and dropping out, participating in the killing of Red soldiers, then dismembering the leader of the local troops. Erguaizi keeps telling stories of the wrongdoings of the Liaos and the Heis, as well as the good deeds of Li and Luo to save Red soldiers, until he dies of throat cancer, his lips moving as if speaking. He would have felt gratified to know that the new-generation military writers continue the storytelling he never finished.

Revolutionary geography on the silver screen

The Long March has been one of the main themes of cultural production since the establishment of the PRC. All of the major sites where the Red Army successfully eluded Nationalist pursuit or bore down on the Nationalist troops naturally became settings for PRC film producers to stage the heroism of the Red Army and create the monumentality of the Long March, from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, creating a grand revolutionary geography. The combination of geographical sites and human endurance bridges the natural (space) and national (solidarity). Since the mid-1980s, with the breakthrough in literary writings on the Long March, some films begin to supplement, complicate, reflect upon, and even challenge previous mainstream cinematic productions about the march. According to narrative scope, Long March films in the PRC can be divided into three categories: partial or single episodes of the revolutionary saga—films like this include *Wanshui qianshan* (Hundreds of mountains, thousands of rivers, dir. Cheng Yin, 1959), *Tupo wujiang* (Breaking through the Wu River, dir. Li Shutian, 1961), *Jinsha jiangpan* (At the bank of the Jinsha River, dir. Fu Chaowu, 1963), *Daduhe* (The Dadu River, dir. Lin Nong, 1980), and *Si du chishui* (Crossing the red water four times, dir. Cai Jiwei, 1983); complete epics such as *Changzheng* (The Long March, dir. Zhai Junjie, 1996); and fragmentary sidelights like *Jiejie* (Sister, dir. Wu Yigong, 1984), *Ma ti sheng sui* (Sound of a horseshoe, dir. Liu Miaomiao, 1987), and *Hard Times* (Xindong suiyue, dir. Guang Xinlan, 2004). I will focus on three films from each category to discuss how cinema reinforced the Long March myth in the early PRC but later demystified and tore down the mythological Long March.

As discussed earlier, as a play script *Mountains, Rivers* is limited, for it is more storytelling than dramatizing. The filmic version breaks through those limitations and explores a new cinematic universe. It establishes a cornerstone for revolutionary geography focusing on the Long March, especially in the medium of film. First, despite its title, *Hundreds of Mountains, Thousands of Rivers*, the film is condensed into one (Dadu) river, one (snowy) mountain, and one (grass) land. Second, the camera zooms in on the main characters so that the film becomes more hagiographical. Third, the musical score, especially the non-diegetic pieces, provides a revolutionary motif that became something of an anthem as it was replayed and varied in later films on the Long March.

The film cuts off the first two scenes of the play—"Loushan Pass Battle" and "Passing Through the Minority Area." It starts with the Red Army seizing the iron-chain bridge over the Dadu River. The battle there was a miracle not only in Long March history but also in China's long history. No fleeing troops successfully crossed the river. In 1863, king of Wing Shi Dakai of the Taiping Rebellion was defeated by the Qing royal army. Shi was dismembered and his 40,000 troops were burned alive. Chiang predicted that the Red Army would reenact Shi's tragedy at the Dadu River. When they reached the ferry at Anshunchang, a small village on the riverbank, there was only one ferryboat. It was not possible for the Red Army to overcome this natural barrier with only one boat.

Under a local ferryman's guidance, they decided to seize the bridge 100 miles away. The Red Army set a record by marching 40 miles every day along rugged mountain paths. The boards of the bridge surface had been removed by the Nationalist troops. Fortunately, they did not blow up the bridge framework, but only 13 iron chains were left. A selected group of 17 warriors undertook to occupy the bridge. They scrambled along the iron chains while being fired at by Nationalist troops on the other bank. They took over the bridge after a tough battle, at the cost of 17 lives and some injuries.[69] The Red Army eventually got rid of the Nationalist pursuers. The second and the third part of the film depict their trials over the snow-covered mountain and on the grassland respectively. The battle at Loushan Pass is skimmed over. They soon welcome the celebration of joining with another branch of the Red Army in northern Shaanxi.

It is certain that the film script was in good shape in terms of characterization and plotting after numerous revisions under the collective efforts directed by playwright Chen Qitong. In this sense, the film repeats most of the drama's story. But the film features more monumental moments than the play, mostly thanks to the basic features of the medium: sound plus image. In each section, there is one long row of people in the troop marching in a different geographical background. First, twinkling torches held by soldiers shuttling along the mountain path are linked together in a long take. Second, thousands of people trek over the snowy mountain in an overwhelming storm. They compose a picture of a winding dragon of gray and blue against bright white snow. Third, clusters of campfire are spread on the grassland, like shiny stars stretching to the horizon. These three scenes echo one another structurally and form a symbolic picture of the Long March against China's landscape.

Parallel to the stupendous images, the soundtrack in the film is ostensibly stirring. Except for a few scenes accompanied by deep and plaintive music, most of the rest of the movie is immersed in high-spirited and energetic songs and music. Passing through the grassland is the toughest trial: not a single household within sight, fluky weather, and running out of grain. The swamp threatens to devour people at any moment. The incarnation of the Party, Political Instructor Li Youguo, is the moral and spiritual support of the whole battalion. On the eve of walking out of the grassland, the soldiers are at the end of their physical endurance. Li leads them in singing "International." The song goes from diegetic to

nondiegetic. First only the people around him take his lead and begin to sing. Then the song is heard all over the grassland, with soul-stirring rhythm.

Mountains, Rivers tells only a small part of the long story of the Long March. Basically, it features overcoming and triumph instead of loss and defeat. The narrative incompleteness could be related to anxiety over the national stability and sufficiency of a new China not yet in its teens. When the film was being produced in the late 1950s, China was going through the hardest time, with the whole nation in great famine. The hunger that Chinese people suffered was no less than that of the Red Army in the grassland. Almost all of the stories of the army passing through are centered on the struggle for food. There is a short essay, "Jinse de yugou" (Golden bard), in elementary Chinese textbooks relating how an old officer caught a few small fishes to save his soldiers.

It has been a stereotypical story that people boiled leather belts to fill their stomachs in the grassland. There was really not much to eat in both the universe projected onto the silver screen and the actual world inhabited by the viewers. The spectators of *Mountains, Rivers* must have sympathized with the characters in the movie. They were undergoing the same suffering: having no food and struggling at the edge of death. Thousands of lives were given up to the atrocity of the grassland. They did not die in vain, they were at least sacrificing for a greater cause: To drive the Japanese devils out of the homeland and beat up the Nationalist bandits as claimed in the film. Back in reality, 20 years passed while the Japanese and the Nationalists retreated from the mainland, and starvation revisited China more severely. Ironically, the one who led the Red Army to overcome hunger in the grassland now was the creator of this greater famine. As justice was done to the martyrs in the Long March with tributes like *Mountains, Rivers*, the injustice endured by the innocent common Chinese people in the late 1950s was not yet fully revealed, even though there were hundreds of times more victims.[70] Thus one can see clearly the different treatment of hunger under the same regime for the same political purpose. The ghosts long buried in the grassland were recalled to support the legitimacy of the new regime. Although they had to sacrifice for the second time, their oral desire was fulfilled by making them speak (although not for themselves) rather than eat. In contrast, millions of the newly dead became homeless spirits and scattered around hundreds of mountains and thousands of rivers. They did not get even modest coverage to have justice done. Their mouths were shut, with their stomachs empty forever.

The complete filmic version of *The Long March* did not come out until 1998. Some critics may say that it circumvented the hunger and defeat within the parameters of official discourse and composition of a hagiography for Mao. But its effort to envisage the truth of history, especially the struggle within the Party, should be fairly appreciated. The Red Army's Waterloo at the Xiangjiang River is not a taboo any longer. Many other issues never touched before were represented in cinema for the first time. This film by and large reflects the level of recent studies of the Long March, with more archival research and evidence revealed in the relatively free political climate since the 1980s. It does not deconstruct the pattern that Mao led the Red Army out of its plight, but the aura

around Mao is far less than in previous mediations. The film depicts the route that Mao marched on to the center of power with the Red Army as well as the CCP. As a whole, *The Long March* appears to be supplementary to previous cinematic representations. It intentionally skips the crucial points that have been fully revealed in other movies. This makes room for less-known struggles and defeats in battle. Meetings about destination and division in leadership are given unprecedented emphasis. By contrast, the victories illustrated earlier are only mentioned lightly when necessary.

The film *Long March* opens with the fierce battle on the bank of the Xiangjiang River, where the Red Army lost half of its forces. The water is dyed red, with bodies of Red soldiers floating around. This is the longest scene in the whole film. The combat lasts some 20 minutes of screen time, during which the Nationalist troops are off-screen. Combat planes are their evil substitutes. After bombs are dropped, rows of Red soldiers fall down and their bodies are dismembered. At the end of the battle scene, the Nationalist and Communist troops engage in head-to-head combat. The fighting solders are shot in slow motion, in addition to images being blurred. Viewers cannot tell who is who. It is certain that characters stab each other with bayonets, but no blood is shed. It looks like surrealist dancing. Finally, one fighting image is superimposed onto the other, from blurring to disappearing in flame. This method of technical filtering reduces the degree of actual violence shown. When the fighting scene is over, the camera gets close to a severely wounded Red fighter who is shown with a subtitle to be the division commander Chen Shuxiang, as two supposedly Nationalist soldiers approach him. They are seen by the camera from behind. Chen lacerates his own intestines with his hand lest he be captured alive. The episode ends here, not including the more brutal part of the story: Chen's body is beheaded and his head hung on the city gate to admonish people against joining the Red Army.

The "main melody" Long March films have dominated on the mainland for years. They are part and parcel of the whole grand narrative of the republic. The heroism of the Red Army, the sacrifice of the Chinese Communists, and the wisdom of Mao's leadership all have become deeply rooted in Chinese people's collective consciousness. Nonetheless, a different tune is not totally muted. As opposed to the male-centered magnificent sagas, it seems low and delicate. Films with this tune are no less powerful by presenting human beings in extreme conditions: *Mati sheng sui* (The sound of a horseshoe, dir. Liu Miaomaio, 1987), *Jiejie* (Elder sister, dir. Wu Yigong, 1984), and *Xindong suiyue* (Hard times, dir. Guang Xinlan, 2004). They switch the focus from the male majority of the Red Army to marginal women soldiers. Women replace men to become less stable signifiers of the national myth. *Horseshoe* is marginal in every sense of the word. First, it is about a squad of women. As far as we know, only 30 women marched with the central Red Army, out of 86,000 who set out from Jiangxi. Most of them were dependents of high officials of the army and Party. But the eight women in the film have nothing to do with the central leaders of the Red Army or the CCP. Second, they are affiliated with the Fourth Front Army. As shown in an earlier section, the Fourth Front Army was destroyed in fighting against the

Nationalist Army and competition for power with the First Front Army. Although they started marching to the west two years earlier and were far stronger when the two forces joined, they never became the main group in the Long March, particularly because of Zhang Guotao's independent movements. Being about women attached to the Fourth Front Army makes *Horseshoe* a film about the margin of the marginal. Third, the whole story has never been seen in any official record of the Long March. Unlike almost all the other movies, *Horseshoe* is not based on a historical account or related to any possible actual event. The film is adapted from a novella by a military writer, Jiang Qitao.

The background is Sichuan after the army was defeated in attacking the wartime capital, Chengdu. The whole army has to retreat to the north and pass through the grassland for the third time, pursued by the Nationalist Army. This squad of the transportation battalion retreated from the front as well. As soon as they cross the bridge, Colonel Chen gives the order to bomb it in order to get rid of the Nationalist troops, regardless of the Red troops on the other bank. One of the women soldiers says: "The battle behind is horrible. Many people died!" Having worn out their straw shoes and walked too long, their feet are bloody. A woman soldier named Shaozhi and Chen develop mutual feelings during an encounter one night. On the eve of entering the grassland, many wounded soldiers and officers are being dismissed, including Chen, who lost both of his legs in a battle. Shaozhi is sent out to see him. When she arrives, Chen has taken his own life by shooting himself in the head. Shaozhi returns to her squad, which is summoned to deliver wire to a soldiers' station. As they arrive, they find out that it is actually a scheme to dismiss them indirectly. They decide instead to catch up with the main force. The rest of the movie presents vividly how they overcome all hardship and finally are reunited with the main force.

Unlike in other mainstream Long March films, the sublime can hardly be seen in *Horseshoe*. The protagonists are women, not as big as heroes. They are just human beings: they laugh and cry, and are jealous of another's man sometimes. They are not exactly sure what they are doing or why. Their aim is to follow and catch up with the (male) main force. To the disappointment of feminist critics, they are not as progressive as expected and do not struggle for gender independence. They even seem inferior to their male counterparts in national or social consciousness. They never denounce the Nationalists for driving them out of their homes or the Japanese for occupying their country. On the contrary, they keep cursing the natural calamities and their biological obstacles like menstruation.

As opposed to the grand narrative in earlier cinema, *Horseshoe* appears petty. It is a cliché that the film credits are superimposed onto Mao's calligraphy of the poem "Long March" on a scroll in other movies. In *Horseshoe*, the background for the film title and credits is an endless list of people who supposedly died in the Long March, inscribed on gray-yellowish papyrus. The characters are vague, but the audience still can tell they are names of ordinary people, not the high-profile leaders like Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, etc. *Horseshoe* is an elegy for the common people. When the woman soldier Shaozhi and Colonel Chen meet one night, they do nothing but hold each other. As they depart, Chen asks for her

name. Shaozhi keeps silent. Chen leaves, saying, "I'll find out." Shaozhi is late to bid farewell to Chen for the last time, and she returns to her squad silently. There is another powerful scene of silence. Shaozhi is trapped in the morass of the grassland. A Tibetan cavalry troop approaches and circles her. (The Tibetan cavalry was hostile to Red soldiers.) Shaozhi is frozen. As the horsemen leave, without saying anything or hurting her, shot in slow motion and accompanied by sounds of the horseshoes, Shaozhi finally shouts aloud: "My name is Shaozhi." It can be read as a highly symbolic act. Facing her love-at-first-sight and superior, she remains silent. At the edge of death, her long repression is released. Her last cry is echoed in the sky above the broad grassland. Following that are calls from her companions in the squad: "Shaozhi! Shaozhi!" They are looking for her, but only find her corpse half sunk in the marsh. Her "last cry" can be understood better in conjunction with many other last cries in revolutionary films. In the particular genre of "revolutionary-historical" film, the most typical scene is of a life sacrificed for the cause: "Long live the Chinese Communist Party!" "Long live the Red Army!" Compared to such sublime spectacles of the last cry, Shaozhi's death seems unbearably light. Nevertheless, hidden in her cry is a concern for an individual humanity that does not get sublimated into a transcendent experience of Party identification. The opening background of a name list also makes the collective anonymity outweigh single monumentality. Shaozhi's and her companion's cries could be an unconscious effort to shake the cornerstone underneath the monument of the Long March.

Horseshoe does not contribute to the sacredness of the national myth. It rather breaks down the grand narrative into small pieces, and appears fragmentary vis-à-vis the complete mainstream films. Women were a marginal group in the actual event of the Long March, but in this narrative framework women replace men as the central signifier. It is not only a subversion on the gender level, but also a challenge to the established system of epistemology of a historical event, namely, the Long March, and even constructs a new and alternative system. It cares less about building up or consolidating the national myth than about projecting its concern with people as human beings when survival is most important. The sublime cannot overcome the instinctual desire to survive. When they catch sight of a dead horse on the riverbank, women soldiers Juanfen and Xiaohuazi jump into the water to fill their empty stomachs with the horse body, regardless of the torrents. They pay with their lives. Many other Red soldiers died of poisonous water and plants in the grassland. Hunger and thirst are as hard to take as the bullets of enemies.

Mountains, Rivers, *The Long March*, and other revolutionary sagas are epic in narrative, image, and sound. By contrast, *Horseshoe* is a lyrical piece that does not aspire to shape heroes. Another film similar in style and theme is *Elder Sister* by the renowned director Wu Yigong. Wu tries some experiments in exploring the theme of the Long March. The film tells the story of women soldiers of the West Route Troop of the Red Army who underwent double misery as women in battles with Islamic cavalry. Wu's ambition was frustrated due to uptight censorship. The original ending scene is poetic and meaningful: The girl

walks around the grave of the woman soldier three times, then goes to look for the Red Army. Yellow sand sweeps; violins start playing. This scene was changed by the censors to one take in which the red flag flies in the sky. The hidden agenda of this revision is obvious. Neither *Elder Sister* nor *Horseshoe* has ever been a big hit. They are as marginal in release and box office success as their narratives are in the continuum of representations of the Long March. Alternatives to the mainstream national myth are still highly repressed.

Different from those revolutionary sagas, *Horseshoe* and *Elder Sister* make the first effort to confront the loss in cinema. *Horseshoe* opens with the dialogue: "It is so horrible behind. Many people died!" Yaomei (or Youngest Girl) is wakened by a nightmare in which she has lost both legs. She is so terrified she begins to cry. Other sisters hurry to comfort her: "Look, your legs are still here." Soon after, Colonel Chen loses his legs in a battle. This time, it is not a dream. The nightmare is staged in reality. Chen knows what it means to be without legs, and he shoots himself in the head. The woman soldier Dajiao (or Big Feet) is well known for her endurance and a pair of big feet. She cannot move all of a sudden and her legs are numb. Fortunately she regains feeling in her legs and becomes one of the only three who survive the march. Only high officials have horses to ride; all others have to walk. Everybody knows how much the legs mean to life along the march. Even without sophisticated psychoanalysis, we may decipher how Yaomei's dream is related to reality. She must have been anxious about losing her legs out of a sheer drive for life. Her worries are not unreasonable. This trilogy of legs—anxiety over loss, actual loss, regaining—is also a portrait of the Long March from the beginning to the end: before they started, the Communists feared losing the revolutionary bases; on the march, they did lose them; after they finished the journey, they reclaimed the bases. As the actual loss is laid bare, the aura around the Long March is being lost too.

It took four decades to go from *Mountains, Rivers* to *The Long March*, from part to completeness. Mao steps out from behind a curtain. His rise from being denied political participation to decision making is a long one. The film *The Long March* eventually exhibits a panoramic picture. The Xiangjiang River baptism in blood might be the first spectacle ever made out of the biggest fiasco of the Red Army on the march. On the one hand, it breaks through previous limits in representing death and violence with sensual vividness in images; on the other hand, it has to largely repress the desire to express the loss literally. The close fighting scene is treated to reduce bloodiness and violence.

I read *Horseshoe* as a parable of loss. In fact, the Long March per se is all about loss: of bases, of lives, of power, and even of destination. Unlike earlier movies highlighting gains, *The Long March* makes a genuine effort to grapple with the losses. It is not an easy task. Too much exhibition may subvert the verdict that the Long March ended up a victory. But the dialectics of the loss and gain help resolve the problem: This loss contributes to the final gain. This is the transaction between defeat and triumph. *The Long March* begins with Mao's loss of power. When the loss of the whole Red Army reaches the extreme at the riverbank, Mao welcomes his entrance to the power palace once again. He is

allowed into a meeting of the Political Bureau to discuss where to go next. Mao is on the way back to leadership of the Red Army and has strengthened it since the Zuiyi meeting. When they passed the Min Mountain, the Red Army was about to reach their destination. It was then and there that Mao composed the mighty lyric "The Long March." He was on the way to winning power in both the political domain and the discursive space. No matter how hard they try, the representations hardly break away from the discourse that Mao's lyric prescribes. The poem recapitulates the route composed of spots where the Red Army has glorious victory to report, and its poetic power is infinite. Many titles of the representational work come directly from Mao's lyric: *The Long March*, *Hundreds of Mountains, Thousands of Rivers*, *The Sound of a Horseshoe*, etc.

The virtual space: the Long March as a site of memory

The Chinese people have inherited more from the Long March than any other event in modern Chinese history. Its impact is long-lasting and extensive. Everyone who grew up from the 1950s through the 1980s is familiar with honors named after it, like the title "Long March Pioneer" (*changzheng tujishou*) bestowed upon those with high achievement in socialist production. Not only is it held in awe as an essential part of the nation's glorious past, the Long March also lives with us today. Most importantly, it works as a site of Chinese collective memory.

Since the founding of the PRC, the Long March has never failed to be an object of grand commemoration every five years, even during the Cultural Revolution when most veteran Long Marchers, including Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi, were purged. It inspired thousands of Red Guards to march to the revolutionary Mecca, Yan'an, to look for the truth of revolution.[71] Generations of people in China have been obsessed with walking the route. Marching to Yan'an has become an integral practice of revolutionary worship. Corporeal involvement in the Long March embodies the peculiar significance in remembering the event. As stated earlier, writers about the Long March often go on the march in person in the quest for a true representation, as Wei Wei did. There are some others, including both Chinese and foreigners, who go on the march in a manner similar to the pilgrims visiting the Stations of the Cross and Mecca. The Long March possesses them like a phantom. They are called to join the pageant from China and outside. An old Red soldier, Chen Jing, walked the Long March three times from 1986 to 1992. Chen's legacy was carried on by a staff member in military service, Lian Hongning.

While Chen and Lian's action is more symbolic than actual, given that they finished most of their journey with the help of vehicles, two Englishmen completed the route of the Red Army to the letter. Andrew McEwen and Ed Jocelyn started in Yudu on October 16, 2002. They spent 384 days and finally arrived in the county of Wuqi (which used to be the town where Mao and the Red Army arrived) in north Shaanxi on November 3, 2003. McEwen and Jocelyn were followed by major media all the way. One major selling point in reporting this

event was that they were foreigners. Many Chinese readers were amazed to see the courage and perseverance necessary to walk the Long March in two foreigners. Besides that, the intriguing part could be that the two Englishmen replicated—in the true sense of the word—the Long March with their bodily practice.[72]

McEwen and Jocelyn restaged the Long March across time and space. They tried to copy the exact route and walked at the exact speed of the Red Army. However, they were not able to march as fast along certain stretches due to the challenge of the natural barriers. This proved the insurmountability of the Long March. While admiring them for achieving something their Chinese peers did not, Chinese people could be proud of the magical power of the miraculous Long March that their recent ancestors created. Here the relationship of gazing and being gazed at was reversed. First, the Long Marchers showed a spectacle to the world achieved through luck, will power, and great cost of lives. Half a century later, the two Englishmen trekked the old way. Their blonde hair and green eyes added an exotic flavor. To Chinese, their copy of the Long March was a wonder. The two white men became the object of the gaze while thousands of Chinese who live along the route witnessed and millions of others watched through the media.

The year 2002 saw a revival in interest in and representations of the Long March worldwide. The curator Lu Jie launched the Long March Foundation in New York. He organized a series of events along the route of the Long March, titled "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display," which included exhibitions of avant-garde painting, performance art, sculptures, workshops, etc. (Figure 2.3). Almost at the same time, another Chinese artist, Zhang Qikai, based in Berlin, designed an art event called "The Long March: Across Europe," which sought to revive European memory of the Long March. Its subtitle, "Red Star Over Europe," intentionally resonates with Snow's *Red Star Over China*, written 65 years earlier.[73]

The original idea of "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display" came into being when Lu Jie studied art exhibit design in London in 1998, but was put into practice in collaboration with Qiu Zhijie four years later. Holding the double status of curator and artist, Lu and Qiu were concerned more with the status of contemporary art than with what the Long March really is and means. They kept repeating that this exhibit was open to all kinds of artistic conceptions and forms, not confined to the subject matter: "The Long March is a metaphor." Hence it did not necessarily respond to the historical reality and can be understood from the perspective of culture and ethos.[74]

Seventy-odd artists from China and abroad participated in this event. Their works were designed to be exhibited at 20 spots along the actual route of the Long March. It was declared over after they reached the Dadu River, the twelfth site in the original plan. The curators explained that they had achieved their plan so far and foresaw that the rest of the exhibitions would move away from openness and uncertainty—the original aim of this project. But the exhibitions and workshops continue at their base in Beijing. The innovation of the walking

Figure 2.3 The map of "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display," 2004.
Source: Reproduced with kind permission by the Long March Project, Long March Space.

display initiated a hot discussion about the format of art exhibits, the current art exhibition system, and the relationship of art to audiences. According to the curators, "The Long March" was an exhibit about an exhibit (metaexhibit, my formulation), not a display juxtaposing objects of art in a traditional static space. The spatial exploration with artistic works is also an archaeological adventure of local art along the route, and some unknown artists were brought to the forefront, such as Jiang Jiwei and Luo Xu.

Despite the organizers' stressing that the exhibit was not necessarily related to the actual Long March, the most powerful and excellent pieces are, without exception, inspired by the Long March and relevant memories of socialist experience. The banner Xu Bing designed for this event echoes the Chinese Communist Party flag, with cartoonlike sketches of a hammer and sickle (Figure 2.4). Xu gained attention for his creation of *Tianshu* (A book from the sky) in the 1980s—a kind of "writing" composed of figures that resemble Chinese characters but in fact are not. He later took a radical step by writing English words in

Figure 2.4 The banner of "The Walking Visual Display of the Long March," by Xu Bing.
Source: Reproduced with kind permission by the Long March Project, Long March Space.

square Chinese calligraphy. The characters on the banner are the English "Long March" but in Chinese calligraphy (Figure 2.5). The Long March becomes an interface of the exchange of two languages—English and Chinese—on the surface, two cultures virtually.

"Walking Display" went beyond the limits of representation. It came up with different versions of mapping the Long March. The series of exhibits composed a picture of an artistic and cultural Long March. The map of the march tattooed on the back of an artist from Inner Mongolia, Qin Ga, physically created a site of collective and individual memory (Figure 2.6), proving again how critical bodily expression can be in social memory.[75] In the proposal the artists designed a Long March route in the United States. Using satellite navigation, the German artist Engel Ghandi would follow the same line in the United States as the "Walking Display" in China covered, so that he could map out a visually identical route to that of his Chinese counterparts.[76]

In Europe, Zhang Qikai staged a modern live performance of the Long March in June 2002. The participants wore the Red Army uniform and marched from Berlin to Kassel. They did some art exhibits at sites along the route. Without systematic promotion in the mass media in China, "Red Star Over Europe" did not shine for long. It created a transient spectacle on the continent of Europe and

Figure 2.5 The Long March: English calligraphy, by Xu Bing.
Source: Reproduced with kind permission by the Long March Project, Long March Space.

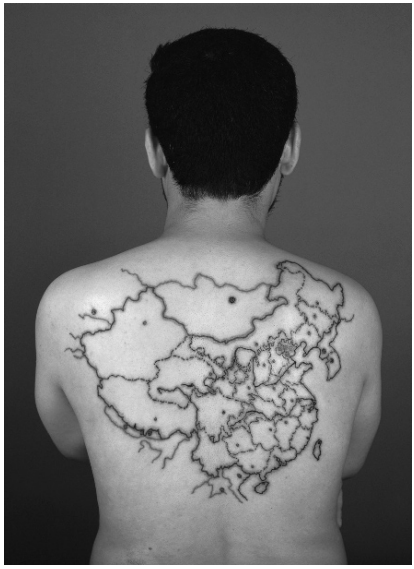

Figure 2.6 Tattoo of the Long March map on Gin Ga's back.
Source: Reproduced with kind permission by the Long March Project, Long March Space.

a few online postings. In contrast, "A Walking Display," with its website as a base and efficient networking with both serious and popular journals in China and even in the West, won plenty of attention.

Facing the revival of a national myth in a global context, one cannot help asking: What is the Long March? Why has it continuously inspired various cultural productions? Lu Jie has been frustrated by the failure to find sponsorship from foreign organizations to support his plan. Interestingly, later discussion

deviated from the event per se back to the old issue of the relationship between China and the West. Lu Jie expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that contemporary Chinese artists accept without reservation the influence of Western avant-garde art and aim at exporting themselves to the West. He called for returning the vision to China: "We expect to start from understanding ourselves, to cultivate an instructive attitude: it is important that we find something from our own history and experiences to contribute to the world."[77] Here the "Walking Display" is not merely a symptom of anxiety over the crisis of contemporary Chinese art in a global context. It is also an effort to find a promised land for Chinese art and a collective identity for Chinese people. Furthermore, in their "manifesto" of "The Long March: A Walking Visual Display," the curators professed that their mission, among many others, was to construct the people's memory of the revolutionary wars during the past 100 years and of the socialist experience in China.[78]

With a website as a base, "Walking Display" situates the Long March in a virtual space within which the actual event becomes an empty signifier. The art pieces in cyberspace lose reference to what really happened in the history of the Long March. Instead, they are indexed to the discourse of the Long March. People do not have to go on the trial through thousands of mountains and millions of rivers. Clicking a link, they can experience the adventure with the troop of "Walking Display" in the virtual space.

My original inquiry about the Long March comes from the spatial grandeur of this event. Its dimensions are vividly illustrated with maps. The Red Army is the cartographer of the domain of the mainland both literally and figuratively. The troops went through some primitive areas where human beings had barely set foot. Their pioneering exploration also offered them the necessary credit to claim the mainland. By doing so, they inscribed themselves against Chinese geography as well as history, and became the true founders of China. However, mapping the Long March itself reveals the politics inherent in the historical discourse of this military retreat. The first Long March map compiled by the People's Liberation Army, which continues to serve as the official map, truncated the routes of the Second and Fourth Fronts of the Red Army led by Zhang Guotao. Their journey to the west two years earlier than the central Red Army is not included in this cartographical discourse. In the most circulated version of this map, the route traversed by the central Red Army is marked by a bold red artery, while the path by the Second and Fourth Fronts is denoted in black (Figure 2.7). In China, red symbolizes the orthodox, revolutionary, and positive; black suggests the heterodox, rebellious, dark, and negative. The signification at the visual level indicates the attitude and recognition of the CCP toward different branches of the Red Army. In order to show a complete picture of the path taken by the Red Army during the Long March, I draw a map with neutral colors representing different branches of the army (Figure 2.8). From this map, we can see the so-called "strategic retreat" that started with Zhang Guotao in 1932, two years earlier than the retreat by the Central Red Army. With this effort, I try to rectify the tendency in the official discourse to stress the contribution of the

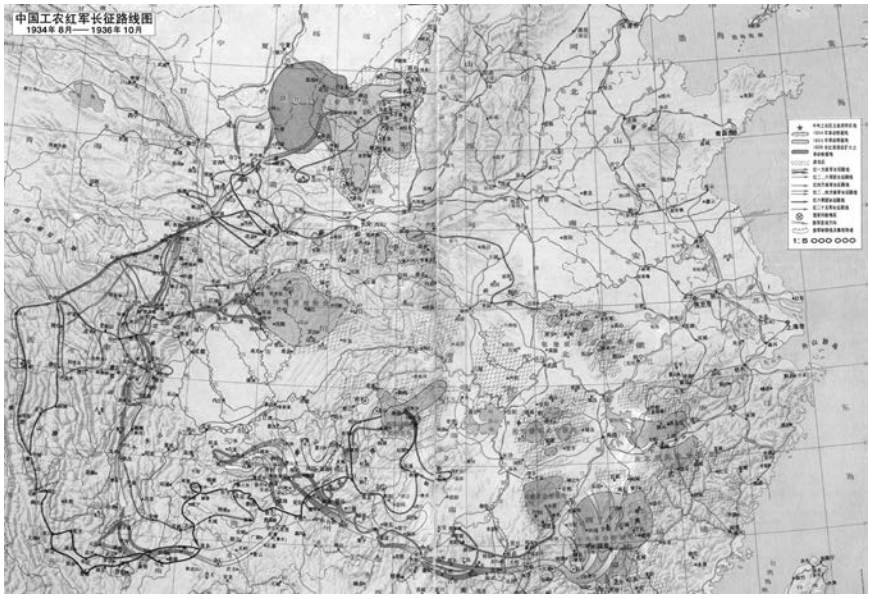

Figure 2.7 The official map of the Long March 1934–36, by the PLA.

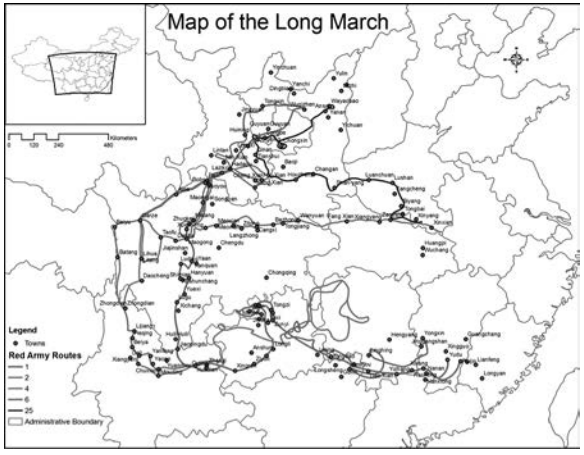

Figure 2.8 The map of the Long March, by Enhua Zhang.

Central Red Army, which thus reinforces the prominence of Mao in the foundational myth of China.

As an unprecedented spatial adventure, the Long March is inscribed as a national myth in modern Chinese history, which is filled with humiliation and oppression. It arouses the national consciousness deep inside millions of Chinese

and stimulates them to patriotic acts. People outside China are amazed as well. Writers and artists find inspiration in the Long March. Businessmen see in it the potential to accumulate capital.[79] To modify Mao's formulation of the event's significance, it is fair to say: The Long March is a utropia. In a decade, it made millions of people around the world believe that the CCP and the Red Army overcame the Nationalists and had the potential to defeat the imperialists. The Long March has become a crusade. It calls for many followers to trek on the path, regardless of bloodshed and sweat, to pursue the gospel in the revolutionary sense. The Long March is a site of memory. It captures people's imagination about their national past and offers a virtual space to mourn the loss and glorify the sacrifice.

Notes

1 Mao Zedong, "On the Tactics of Anti-Japanese Imperialism," in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Zedong* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986), vol. 1, 65–87.
2 The Soviet Republic of China, aka Jiangxi Soviet, was established on November 7, 1931, at the first National Soviet People's Delegates Conference in Ruijin, Jiangxi province, with Mao Zedong as the chairman. As the name shows, the Soviet Republic of China followed the model of and received assistance from the Soviet Union. It was dissolved in September 1937 when the CCP issued the manifesto to unite with the Nationalists in fighting the war with Japan.
3 The historical facts of the Long March are reconstructed based on records by different institutions and individuals, including both the CCP's and the KMT's compilations of books and archives, as well as individuals' memoirs and diaries.
4 Since 1932, August 1 has been recognized as the anniversary of the birth of the Red Army in the uprising. It continues to be celebrated as the anniversary of the PLA today.
5 Mao and his followers did not admit that the CCP's lesser strength led to its loss of the fifth antiextermination campaign. They imputed the failure to the impractical and wrongheaded military tactics of Li De (Otto Brian), the military counselor appointed by the Comintern, and his chief supporter Bo Gu (Qin Bangxian), who then assumed the function of secretary-general of the CCP but without the official title.
6 Before they marched, the Red Army representatives Pan Hannian and He Changgong negotiated with Chen Jitang, the commander of the Nationalist troops in Guangdong, to get by. Chen cooperated with the Red Army out of fear that Chiang's forces would enter Guangdong and weaken his own power in the name of wiping out the Red Army if there was a battle within the territory of Guangdong.
7 I refer to the central Nationalist Army directly controlled by Chiang Kai-shek and local armies led by warlords by the general designation of Nationalist Army. Chiang did not have absolute power over the local armies. The friction and mutual distrust between the central and local armies to a certain extent helped the Red Army escape the Nationalist extermination effort.
8 In 1863, 400,000 troops of the king of Wing Shi Dakai of the Taiping Rebellion arrived at the bank of the Dadu River while the royal army of the Qing dynasty was chasing them. Ten thousand pioneer soldiers crossed the river. At this time, Shi's favorite concubine gave birth to a boy. He delayed their plan to cross the river and even called back the troops on the other bank in order to celebrate the birth. The royal army caught up. The river was swelling and full of waterfalls and torrents; the Taiping troops had missed the best chance to cross. The Qing court denied Shi's appeal to exchange his own life for the lives of his family and soldiers. He himself was put to

death, his was body dismembered, and his army was buried alive. Chiang predicted that the Red Army would restage Shi's tragedy at the riverbank.

9 Zhang Guotao, *Wo de huiyi* (My memoir) (Hong Kong: Mingbao yuekan chubanshe, 1974), vol. 3, 1123.

10 For Yanan as a mobilization space, see David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 190.

11 In the Nationalist discourse, the Long March is referred to as the Communist bandits escaping westward (*gongfei xicuan*). For the Nationalist record of the event, see Hu Yugao, ed., *Gongfei xicuanji* (An account of the Communist bandits escaping westward) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1982), 2 vols.; Cai Xiaoqian, "*Hongjun xicuan huiyi* (Memoir of the Red Army fleeing west)," in *Taiwan ren de changzheng jilu* (Record of the Long March by Taiwan people) (Taipei: Haixia xueshu chubanshe, 2002).

12 The account, originally published in the first issue of *Quanmin yuekan* (People's monthly), a journal founded in Paris by the CCP in March 1936, noted that it was finished in August 1935 in Shanghai. It came out as an offprint in the Soviet Union and soon afterward in China in 1936. This little brochure was popular in the Nationalist area for a while and was reprinted a few times, sometimes under different titles. The title was changed to *Cong dongnan dao xibei* (From the southeast to the northwest) in the edition by Mingyue chubanshe. It was also included in *Changzheng liangmian xie* (Two faces of the Long March) together with E. Snow's *Changzheng erwan wuqian li* (The Long March: 25,000 *li*) by Dawen chubanshe.

In the 1938 edition, the same title was used but the author's name, Lian Chen, was concealed and the credit went to Mengqiu (aka Xu Mengqiu) as editor and author, probably for the small section of episodes about heroic events he added (Shanghai: Shenghuo chubanshe, 1938).

13 Chen Yun, *Suijun xixing jianwen lu* (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1985), 6.

14 Snow does not seem to have known of Chen Yun's pamphlet when he was working on *Red Star Over China*, but he consulted *An Account of the Long March* compiled by the First Front Army (Wayaobao, August 1936). Harrison Salisbury referred to *Suijun xixing jianwen lu* in the version edited by Xu Mengqiu in 1938 and did not mention the original by Lian Chen. Salisbury's description of the book is not precise due to his indirect source. Harrison Salisbury, *The Long March: The Untold Story* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 110.

15 Chen Yun, *Suijun xixing jianwen lu*.

16 *Chen Yun wenxuan* (Selected works of Chen Yun) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1995), 6.

17 Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 224.

18 The decision was passed at the meeting of the central Political Bureau held at Ejie (Gansu province) on September 12, 1935. Published based on the mimeograph version preserved in the Central Archive of China. http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-11/30/content_2276121.htm (retrieved March 6, 2005).

19 The original text is different from the one used most often now; it is much briefer and conveys a similar message, but with a slight moderation in tone:

> The central Red Army escaped Chiang Kai-shek with the Long March of 25,000 *li* in twelve months. The Long March proclaimed the total failure of imperialists and their running dog Chiang Kai-shek in encircling, pursuing, obstructing, and intercepting us. It broke the record for expeditions in history. The Long March pointed out the road for more than 200 million people in eleven provinces to be free of suffering and attain national salvation as a propaganda team. It also sowed myriads of revolutionary seeds as a seeding machine.

Mao Zedong, "Guanyu muqian zhengzhi xingshi yu dang de renwu jueyi (Decision on the political situation and the Party's task)," in Mao Zedong wenxian ziliao

yanjiuhui (Research committee on Mao Zedong's archive), *Mao Zedong ji* (Collected works of Mao Zedong) (Tokyo: Sōsōsha, 1983), vol. 2, 19–40. For the most popular version of Mao's remark on the significance of the Long March, see Mao Zedong, "Lun fandui riben diguo zhuyi de celüe (On tactics against Japanese imperialism)," in *Mao Zedong zhuzuo xuandu* (Selected readings from the works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1986), vol. 1, 65–87.

20 John K. Fairbank, "Preface to *Red Star Over China*," in Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

21 Ibid.

22 Snow was not proficient in Chinese. The interpreter Wu Liang-p'ing helped him overcome the language barrier to communicating with Mao. Snow wrote down Mao's answers in English, and Wu translated them into Chinese for Mao to check for accuracy. The way that the interviews were conducted minimized the error between Snow's understanding and Mao's intention.

23 Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 187.

24 Ibid., 205.

25 Ibid., 172.

26 From 1941 to 1945, Mao Zedong mobilized a massive campaign in the name of rectifying the Party. This movement was indeed a campaign to eliminate dissidents. As a result, many members and intellectuals were purged for their criticism of or alleged disloyalty to the Party.

27 Because of the unavailability of some of the designated people, who were busy with other tasks, the original plan was changed. It is not clear if this project was under Mao's commission. On August 5, 1936, Mao, as the chair of the Central Committee of Military Affairs, in collaboration with Yang Shangkun, who then was the director of the Political Department of the Red Army, made the announcement calling for articles for a collection entitled *25,000 Li* originally but later changed to *Hongjun changzheng ji* (An account of the Long March of the Red Army) from both officers and soldiers who experienced the Long March. It received an immediate and enthusiastic response. They collected more than 200 pieces made up of more than 500,000 words by the end of October. Not only the intellectual officers but also those barely literate wrote down their own stories. They selected 100 pieces of memoirs and ten songs, and created a few indices at the end of the work, including a detailed itinerary and explanatory statistics, which became the basic source of later reports and studies on the Long March.

28 Snow cited statistics from a book called *An Account of the Long March* in English in his *Red Star Over China*. He footnoted them: "First Army Corps (Wayaobao, August 1936)." It shows that part of *An Account of the Long March of the Red Army* was published in 1936 when Snow was working on his book. I cannot locate this source. It might be nonexistent today since the low-quality printing paper due to the shortage of resources could hardly endure for decades. Snow mentioned that anti-Communist pamphlets sent out by the KMT were collected and preserved for later use. The CCP collected the paper and printed their slogans on the reverse side. It is ironic that the strife between the KMT and the CCP over the Shaanxi region converged literally on the same page of paper in the form of propaganda.

29 Balujun zhengzhibu xuanchuanbu (Propaganda Branch of the Political Bureau of the Eighth Route Army), ed., *Hongjun changzheng ji* (An account of the Long March of the Red Army), 1942. The copy I consulted was donated by E. Snow to the Harvard Yenching Library. It was originally a presentation copy from the commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army Zhu De to E. Snow.

30 The CCP's two agents—the PLA and the Central Party School—assumed the task of compiling histories of the Long March and the Red Army. More than 100 historical books about the Long March were produced from 1986 to 1996. To name only a few: *Hongjun Changzheng* (The Long March of the Red Army) in the voluminous

Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu (Historical materials series of the PLA of China) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1990–93); Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi diyi yanjiubu, ed., *Hongjun changzheng shi* (The Long March history of the Red Army) (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1996).

31 For instance, Chen Changfeng, *Gensui Maozhuxi changzheng* (Long March with Chairman Mao) (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1959); Cheng Fangwu, *Changzheng huiyilu* (Memoir of the Long March) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1977); Tong Xiaopeng, *Junzhong riji: 1933–1936* (Military diaries: 1933–1936) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1986); Huang Guozhu, Zhang Yabin, Jia Yong, He Pingping, and Chen Xin, eds., *Wo de changzheng: Xunfang jianzai lao hongjun* (My Long March: Interview with the Red Army veterans) (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyi chubanshe, 2005).

32 An actual copy of this telegram may not exist today. According to the accounts of the CCP, Zhang Guotao refused to go north after both armies joined together. On September 1, 1935, Ye Jianying, then the chief of staff of the front headquarters, reported to Mao a telegram from Zhang Guotao to Chen Changhao, ordering Chen to prevent the central (Red Army and CCP) from going north, by force if necessary. Mao interpreted it as Zhang scheming to usurp the central power. Thus he led two corps to the north on the same night without informing Zhang, regardless of the fact that Zhang was the political commissar in general of the Red Army. See Fan Shuo and Ding Jiaqi, *Ye Jianying zhuan* (Biography of Ye Jianying) (Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 1997), 154–202. Many "documentary writings" on the Long March use the telegram to fabricate historical details during the Long March, e.g., Wen Xiantang, *Shifeiquzhi: changzheng zhong de zhengzhi douzheng* (The rights and wrongs: political struggles during the Long March) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1996); Shang Fangcheng, *Changzheng neimu: yige cong kuibai zouxiang huihuang de kuangshi shenhua* (The untold Long March: an unprecedented myth of from fiasco to glory) (Beijing: Zhongguo yanshi chubanshe, 1996).

33 Zhang Guotao, *Wo de huiyi*, 1052.

34 Ibid., 1071.

35 Ibid., 983.

36 After Mao headed north in September without informing Zhang, on October 5, 1935, Zhang established another central CCP in Zhuomudiao, as opposed to the original central CCP led by Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, Zhang Wentian, etc.

37 *Hongyi fangmianjun changzheng ji* (The Long March of the First Front Red Army) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1958).

38 Note 1, "A Summary of the Long March of Chinese Peasant and Workers' Red Army," Appendix, 451–469.

39 The command was issued under the name of the central CCP, the People's Committee of the central government of Soviet China, and the military committee of the Chinese revolution. Li De was allegedly the decision maker.

40 *Hongjun changzheng shi*, 21.

41 It has been agreed that Mao and other leaders of the central Red Army learned about the Red Army in northern Shaanxi from newspapers, but which one was not clear. The newspaper has been proved to be *Dagong bao* (L'Impartial), September 15, 1935, page 3. See "Daodi shi na yi zhang baozhi ding qianquan (Which paper determines the future)," *Zhonghua dushu bao* (Chinese book review), September 20, 2000.

42 After the Xi'an Incident in 1936, the KMT and CCP formed the United Front against the Japanese. The Red Army was incorporated into the Nationalist Army as the Eighth Route Army.

43 Li Rui, *Lushan huiyi shilu* (Accounts of Lushan Conference, enlarged version) (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1998), 182.

44 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 33.

45 Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 206.

46 Mao Tsetung (Mao Zedong), *Poems* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976). This poem has been adapted into a song, still popular in China today. A dozen lyric songs recounting the Long March were created as a special collection, "Songs of the Long March," in 1965.
47 Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), ix.
48 Ibid., 14–15.
49 Ibid., 14n14.
50 In collaboration with Yu Cun and others. The script of the first performance by the People's Institute of Arts of Beijing was published by the institute in October 1951.
51 Chen recalled having said to the comrades in the propaganda troupe after they seized Lazikou pass: "If I have the ability to write, I must write something about the Long March." Chen Qitong, "Houji (Postscript)," *Wanshui qianshan* (Hundreds of mountains, thousands of rivers) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1955).
52 She said explicitly: "There is one thought throughout. I want to write about Chairman Mao, to sing the praises of the Long March. It is certain." Li Bozhao, "Xu: wo zenyang xie *changzheng* (Preface: How I wrote *the Long March*)," *Changcheng* (The Long March) (Beijing: Renmin yishu juyuan, 1951).
53 After the opera *The Long March* had been staged and well accepted, Li Bozhao started conceiving a play of the Long March. She finally finished the drama *Beishang* (Going north) about the conflict between the First and Fourth Front Armies after revising eight times. Li Bozhao, Shu Yuan, Li Bin and Yang Shaoming, *Beishang* (Going north) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982).
54 He started writing a three-act play, *Jianku lucheng 20,000 li* (Hard journey of 20,000 *li*), in fall 1938. It was finished one year later. But he himself was upset about it because of flaws in story, motif, and characterization. Its form does not even look like a play. He realized that there were insurmountable difficulties in representing the Long March in drama. In 1948, Chen rewrote and finished the second draft, *Erwan wuqian li changzheng* (The Long March, 25,000 *li*). It turned out no better than the first. In spring 1949, he wrote it for the third time. The title was changed to *Tieliu liangwan wuqian li* (Iron flow 25,000 *li*). The Propaganda Bureau held a few discussions on the play. Later, it was staged a couple of times by the cultural troupe in the army. In 1953, the Cultural Section of the Political Department of the Committee of Military Affairs organized several conferences to discuss the play. See Chen Qitong, "Postscript."
55 Chen Qitong, "Postscript."
56 Li Bozhao, "Preface."
57 Li Bozhao, "Excursus," *Changcheng* (The Long March) (Beijing: Renmin yishu juyuan, 1951).
58 For instance, Mao Dun, "Tan *qigen huochai* (On *Seven Matches*)," Wang Yuanjian, He Yantai, Ding Maoyuan, and Wu Xiuming, *Wang Yuanjian yanjiu zhuanji* (Beijing: Jiefanjun chubanshe, 1983), 262; Hu Jingzhi, "Qigen huochai jianxi (Brief Analysis of *Seven Matches*)," *Wang Yuanjian yanjiu zhuanji* (Beijing: Jiefanjun chubanshe, 1983), 263–267.
59 A study of Wang Yuanjian in the early 1980s points out the flaw that protagonists in Wang's works have a lot in common rather than being distinctive. Zhu Bing, "Yu qiong qian li mu, geng shang yiceng lou: Wang Yuanjian tongzhi de chuangzuo daolu (To have a bigger vision, step one more flight upward: on Wang Yuanjian's writings)," *Wang Yuanjian yanjiu zhuanji* (Beijing: Jiefanjun chubanshe, 1983), 113–125.
60 See Charles Laughlin, "Socialist Reportage," in *Chinese Reportage: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 222–262.
61 Nie Rongzhen mentioned the accident in his preface. The authors of *Wei Wei ping zhuan* (Biography of Wei Wei) even bothered to write to the doctor who treated Wei Wei in Sichuan for verification of the accident. Yang Bing, Tian Yi, and Fang Dong, *Wei Wei pingzhuan* (Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2000), 292–294.

62 As a veteran military writer, Wei Wei wrote under the aegis of the Party. *Red Ribbon* was highly evaluated by the Long Marchers. Nie Rongzhen wrote a passionate preface for its first edition. He specifically appreciated the comprehensive picture of the Long March presented in the novel and expanded to the struggles within the Party. Nie affirmed the authenticity of leaders of the Red Army characterized by Wei Wei. Yang Chengwu wrote the preface to the ten-volume *Wei Wei wenji* (*Collection of Wei Wei*) in 1998 (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe 1999), vol. 1. In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, Wei Wei wrote a biography of Mao, *Huashuo Mao Zedong* (On Mao Zedong), for which the secretary-general of the CCP, Jiang Zemin, wrote the calligraphy for the title and the preface was written by former vice chairman of the Military Committee, Yang Shangkun.
63 Yang Bing *et al.*, *Wei Wei ping zhuan*, 252–253.
64 It ranked as one of the ten books recommended for teenagers by the central Communist Youth League. Wei Wei was awarded the "Guide of Life" (*rensheng de lubiao*) prize and a prize from *People's Literature* for this book.
65 Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 3.
66 In *Jiefangjun wenyi* (Literature and arts of the PLA) 10 (1986): 64–90.
67 Ibid., 34–63.
68 Ibid., 8–32.
69 The statistics of casualties in the battles along the march are only a rough estimate.
70 This film was made during the Great Famine from 1958 to 1962. See Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe 1958–1962* (New York: Walking Publishing Company, 2012).
71 As recorded in the documentary *Morning Sun*, dir. Carmen Hinton, 2003.
72 Their journey has been further promoted with two books: Li Aide (Ed Jocelyn) and Ma Pu'an (Andrew McEwen), *Liangge ren de changzheng* (New Long March) (Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi chubanshe, 2005); Li Aide and Ma Pu'an, *Hongse zhi lü: 384 tian chongzou changzheng lu* (Red journey: Rewalking the Long March in 384 days) (Beijing: Wuzhou chubanshe, 2005).
73 See www.longmarchspace.org and http://arts.tom.com/Archive/1001/2002/8/23-81302.html respectively for further information about these two events.
74 Tao Qingmei, ed., "'Changzheng: yige xingzou zhong de shijue zhanshi' xilie yishu huodong dangan (Archiving 'The Long March: A Walking Visual Display' and related artistic innovations)," *Shijie* (Horizons) 8: 112–142. Unless otherwise noted, references for "A Walking Display" are from the website: www.longmarchspace.com.
75 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), especially chapter 3, "Bodily Practice," 72–104.
76 The proposal has been suspended and a substantial piece of this work is not yet available.
77 Lu Jie and Qiu Zhijie, "Curators' Words: On 'The Long March: A Walking Visual Display,'" www.longmarchspace.com/huayu/czr-2.htm (retrieved March 16, 2003).
78 Ibid.
79 The route of the Long March has become an artery of "Red Tourism" promoted by the Party institutions since December 2004. See Tian Zhimin, *Zhongguo hongse lüyou* (Red tourism in China) (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2005); Qi Xuan, Zeng Hao, Wang Sufang, and Zhu Xiaoji, eds., *Hongse lüyou* (Tour of revolution) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2005).

3 In search of a home(land), lost in revolution

The solo journeys of Xiao Hong and Ding Ling

> In order to go to the School of Dreams, something must be displaced, starting with the bed. One has to get going. This is what writing is, starting off. It has to do with activity and passivity. This does not mean one will get there. Writing is not arriving; most of the time it's *not arriving*. One must go on foot, with body. One has to go away, leave the self. How far must one not arrive in order to write, how far must one wander and wear out and have pleasure? One must walk as far as the night. One's own night. Walking through the self toward the dark.
>
> Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*[1]

Chapter 2 dealt with the collective spatial experience of men organized in a military troop after losing their base. In this chapter I will examine the individual journeys of women searching for a home(land). My premise is that travel from one place to another is a spatial practice. In the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese intellectuals were involved in a series of nationwide migrations due to the Japanese invasion and internecine struggles between the Nationalists and Communists. The most visible of these migrations occurred when China's three leading universities (Peking, Tsinghua, and Nankai) were moved to Kunming and united into a single institution to avoid being bombed by the Japanese. Of the thousands of intellectuals and writers who traveled extensively when China was in crisis, I focus on two female writers—Xiao Hong and Ding Ling—as examples of the interrelation between individuals and changing space. In the epigraph above, Hélène Cixous stresses the essential role of travel, the experience of displacement and wandering, in writing. I argue that Xiao Hong's and Ding Ling's journeys interconnected with their writings in both form and content, and their works convey both their sense and their sensibilities of locality and dislocation. Despite their different degrees of engagement with revolution, both Xiao Hong's and Ding Ling's works show an identification with the national consciousness. This chapter highlights the relationship between individual journeys, revolutionary acts (or the lack of revolutionary acts, in the case of Xiao Hong), and writings as a complement to the collective migration, glorified revolution, and grand narrative of the Long March. Besides the textual analysis based on their mobility and writings, I

draw two maps of the life routes of Xiao Hong and Ding Ling in order to illustrate their spatial trajectories.

Xiao Hong (1911–42), a prominent writer with a powerful realistic yet lyric portrayal of Chinese life in the 1930s and 1940s, moved from Manchuria to Shandong, to Shanghai, to Wuhan, to Shaanxi, back to Wuhan, to Chongqing, and ultimately passed away at 30 in Hong Kong (Figure 3.1). Ding Ling (1904–86), a leading leftist writer, led a legendary life amid the vicissitudes of Chinese politics for nearly half a century, a trajectory interwoven with the different periods of China's revolution and politics. By creating a dialogue between their wandering lives and writings, I seek to understand how each female writer articulates her own experience of locality and dislocation and perception of space in relation to the fate of the nation. Xiao Hong's works demonstrate an obsessive concern with the loss of a nation on the macro level, represented by a personal longing to return home. In contrast, Ding Ling embraced revolution throughout her life, but her writings, especially in the private genres, including diary and memoir, reveal the polemics of her revolutionary agenda. The geographical sites where she engaged in the revolution—Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Yan'an, Hebei, and Heilongjiang—constitute a mini-topographical history of women's experience in the tumultuous Chinese revolution (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.1 The life route of Xiao Hong, by Enhua Zhang.

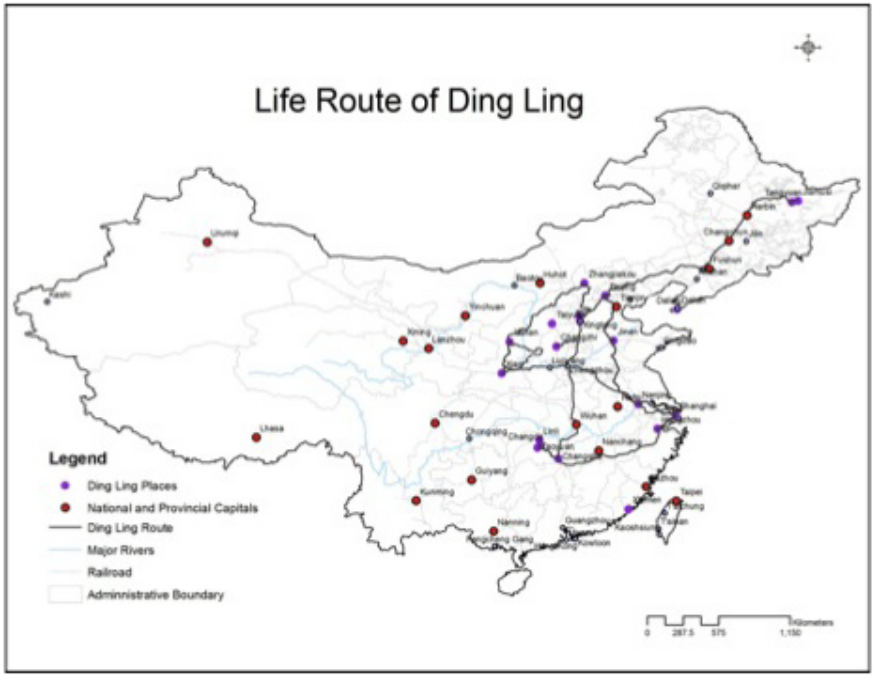

Figure 3.2 The life route of Ding Ling, by Enhua Zhang.

In sharp contrast to the male-dominated collective expedition of the Long March, which has been integrated into the heroic foundations of the PRC through discursive construction, the voyage to Yan'an in search of revolutionary truth, undertaken individually by thousands of females, is far less appreciated and attended to. It was no social outing or fun excursion to outlying areas. Japanese airplanes above and the KMT blockade on the ground aggravated the difficulty and risk. But whether out of zeal for or ignorance about revolution, the women's aspirations were not frustrated. Xiao Hong and Ding Ling were only two of the thousands of people eager to join the revolution, along with many star actresses from metropolitan Shanghai, such as Chen Bo'er and Lan Ping (the late Mme. Mao). Xiao Hong withdrew halfway, stepping onto a road of no return—not out of disillusionment with the revolution, or because she foresaw the Communist intrusion into literary production following Mao's "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art,"[2] but because of her habitual temperament aggravated by conflict with her partner, Xiao Jun. Ding Ling was more persistent. Her pilgrimage did not stop at the revolutionary Mecca of Yan'an; ironically, the second half of her journey ended at the Great Northern Wasteland (Beidahuang). I will highlight the remarkable sites on the life routes followed by Xiao Hong and Ding Ling in order to present the individual female journey of revolution across space

as alternative and complementary to the collective male expedition in the Long March**.**

In search of home: Xiao Hong in and out of the field of life and death

> Why can't I sleep? I feel irritated, agitated, nauseated, and scared; my heart is pounding and I want to cry.
>
> I wonder, do I feel this way because I've been thinking about my old home?
>
> . . .
>
> I have never really had strong feelings about the idea of "home," but when I hear other people reminisce about their homes, I grow anxious too! Even before that piece of land became Japanese, I never did have a "home."
>
> My sleeplessness lasted right up until dawn. Just before daybreak, amid the sounds of artillery fire, I could hear the crowing of a rooster echoing over the open country—just like back "home."
>
> (Xiao Hong, "A Sleepless Night"[3])

This extract from Xiao Hong's short essay titled "A Sleepless Night" was written at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Exiled in Shanghai, the female writer from Manchuria had been "homeless" for six years—"homeless" in the double sense of having broken ties with both her family and her homeland while it was under Japanese occupation. The excerpt also contains a paradox: Xiao Hong was afflicted with a severe case of insomnia caused by her homesickness, yet she claimed she had "never really had strong feelings about the idea of 'home.'" The entirety of Xiao Hong's works reveal that she had always been obsessed with home, whether consciously or not. Had she lived long enough to write another essay on the subject, she might well have revised the latter part of the quotation to "I have always and will forever continue to have strong feelings about the idea of 'home.'" In this section, I will juxtapose Xiao Hong's vagrant life with her work in order to examine how her travels intersect with her writings while the nation was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Japanese. To what extent does her spatial experience affect her literary creation? How does her work convey an individual, female perception of space? How is it different from a male-dominated journey like the Long March?

Xiao Hong's experience of displacement means a lot more than an ordinary individual journey. Her break with her patriarchal family coincided with the Japanese subjugation of Manchuria. The double loss by running away from her family constitutes a nexus of home and homeland that is the point of departure for approaching Xiao Hong as an individual female traveler around China, and a representation of feminine spatial perception. I juxtapose the significant sites along Xiao Hong's travel route with her writings at those places, which without exception articulate a call for home in one way or another.

Market Street: the girl who ran away from home

> This was "home": no light, no warmth, no sound, no color—a lonely home, an impoverished home, little more than a desolate outdoor square where not even weeds would grow.
>
> (Xiao Hong: "Frost Covered His Upper Lip"[4])

Xiao Hong was born into a well-off landowner family in Hulan County, Heilongjiang province on June 2, 1911. Her first recorded excursion was in 1916, at the age of five, when she went shopping for a ball in downtown Hulan. As she recounts in "Dun zai yangche shang" (Squatting on the rickshaw, 1934), she got lost and was sent home by a kind rickshaw puller. This first adventure away from home left her with a bittersweet memory. She was excited to see the outside world and amazed by her own audacity while she was lost. However, she felt sorry for the kindhearted rickshaw puller, who was not appreciated or rewarded by the Zhangs for his favor, but beaten for allegedly teasing the little kid—letting her squat on the rickshaw instead of sit. In fact, the little girl had chosen to do so.

At the age of 16, Xiao Hong left home for Harbin and entered the First Municipal Girls' Middle School. She was active in school and got to know a progressive college student, her later lover Lu Zhenshun, during the student protest against Japanese railway construction in the northeast in 1929. She fled with Lu to Beijing to escape an arranged marriage with a son of the local warlord, Wang Enjia. The two years from 1930 to 1932 were disastrous for Xiao Hong. First Lu broke up with her under pressure from his family. When she returned to Harbin without any assured source of support, Xiao Hong went to Wang. They cohabitated in a hotel for a few months. Wang then deserted her, leaving behind hundreds of dollars worth of debt to the hotel, as her baby's due date was approaching and the swollen Songhua River was about to flood the city.

In despair, Xiao Hong wrote to the supplement of the magazine *Guoji xiebao* (Common international) seeking help. She began a relationship with Xiao Jun, a contributor to the journal. With the help of Xiao Jun and the editor of the journal, Xiao Hong got out of the hotel. She gave birth to a baby girl, but the child was given away since they could not afford to raise the baby. Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun first moved into the Europa Hotel together, then to No. 25, Market Street, where they stayed for free by means of an exchange whereby Xiao Jun acted as a private tutor to the household.

It was about this time that Xiao Hong started writing. According to Xiao Jun, she wrote some love poems published in a local paper, *Dongbei shangye zhoukan* (Northeast commercial weekly), after they met.[5] Xiao Hong's first work is "Qi'er" (Abandoned child, 1933), based on her own recent experience. The poem's persona talks to herself: "What should I do? No home, no friends. Where shall I go? I came to know him only recently. But he has no home either!"[6] The abandonment reveals both the character of the deserted woman—the fictional incarnation of Xiao Hong—and the baby discarded by her mother. Even though

they could hardly make ends meet, Xiao Jun and Xiao Hong were productive writers. They collaborated on a collection called *Bashe* (Trudging). As the title predicts, the couple soon went on a long trek, fleeing to Qingdao for a short time and then to Shanghai the following year. Besides this joint volume, Xiao Hong wrote dozens of essays recording their life in bits and pieces, published in a collection titled with the location of their residence, Market Street, in August 1936.

Although they were in serious financial constraints, Market Street was one of the very few places in her life where Xiao Hong enjoyed relative security and stability as an adult. This collection of essays recorded the couple's hardships between 1932 and 1934. Two-thirds of the pieces registered their experience of bitterness. Starvation and cold attacked them on a daily basis. Xiao Hong kept a detailed record of how they coped with hunger day by day: borrowing money from every possible source, pawning their belongings, selling labor for a few pennies, and so on. Hunger even drove Xiao Hong to think of stealing. Overcome by fear and self-reproach, she failed on the first try. "I opened the door a second time. This time I was determined. So what if it's stealing! I'd steal, even if it were only a few *khleb* rings. This was for my hunger, for his hunger."[7] But the khleb (Russian bread) had long since disappeared; it had been eaten.

The protagonists—Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun under the names of Qiaoyin and Langhua—struggle to survive in *Market Street*. The text recounts every detail of the joys and sorrows of their life. Despite the ordeals they face every day, they enjoy each other's companionship. Their love helps them to endure their suffering. No matter how shabby and unstable their home was, for Xiao Hong it was the first place she had felt a sense of belonging and love since her grandfather passed away a couple of years earlier. On the one hand, she was content with the stability that her companion provided—protecting her despite the lack of work, money, and food. On the other hand, she felt acutely the loss of home and sympathized with the diasporic experience, as "Suofeiya de chouku" (Sophia's pain) shows. Xiao Hong's vision of homeland on the national level was limited during this period.

Unlike standard systematic autobiography, *Market Street* is a series of anecdotes. The pioneering Xiao Hong scholar Howard Goldblatt holds that it is an anecdotal, imaginative re-creation of the author's life during her final years in Harbin, with a special emphasis on her private rather than public role.[8] Xiao Hong did not situate herself within grand historic circumstances. Nor did she intentionally cut herself off from any connection to major occurrences. She was absorbed in a small world of love and survival with Xiao Jun. But she also avoided recounting her own recent personal trauma—being deserted and deserting her own baby. The heroine of the essays is only active in the domestic realm, doing routine chores as a housewife. As a whole, *Market Street* functions as a personal testimony to Xiao Hong's last bittersweet days in Manchuria.

Qingdao: living in the nightmare of the field of life and death

In June 1934, due to threats to their safety and liberty from the Manchurian and Japanese police, Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun fled to Qingdao to join their friend

Shu Qun 舒群 (1913–89), who had gone ahead of them to look for an underground Communist organization. During their three-month stay, Xiao Hong wrote her most famous novella, *Sheng si chang* (The field of life and death). It features a rich repertoire of insulted and damaged women. This spatial relocation did not greatly affect her literary concerns. Rather than being enthralled by the scenic seaside city of Shandong Peninsula, she was haunted by the suffering and struggling women in her homeland of Manchuria. Her days in Qingdao were a continuation of the nightmare in Manchuria, not in real everyday life, but in literary daydreams.

Xiao Hong's early works, including "Guanggao fushou" (Advertising assistant), "Kan fengzheng" (Look at the kite), "Yefeng" (Night wind), and "Wang a'sao de si" (The death of Wang's wife), express without exception strong concern and compassion for the underprivileged class in society. With these works, her writing developed and matured the theme of wronged female characters, which reached a climax in *The Field of Life and Death* (*Field* hereafter). Differing significantly from her predecessors such as Bing Xin冰心, Lu Yin 卢癮, and Bai Wei 白微—who were more concerned about class-privileged intellectual women's oppression by the feudal patriarchy—Xiao Hong was interested in peasant women, the lowest of the lowest class, who, unlike their male counterparts, faced two enemies, imperialism and patriarchy.

It is no accident that writers who are exiled due to foreign invasion tend to be more enchanted by the theme of homelessness and to create characters who are dislodged, displaced, uprooted. Here I view the trope of homelessness and longing for home as a metaphor linking the character, the writer, the text, and the context. The characters, especially the suffering women, are displaced at the domestic level under the oppression of patriarchy, and their homes are shattered by the threat of Japanese invasion. Xiao Hong was literally homeless in that she broke with her parental family and lived like a vagrant with her lover; at the same time, her homeland of Manchuria had already been lost to the Japanese. Her text is both a symptom of trauma resulting from homelessness and an effort to cure it.

Based on observations of female suffering in familial and colonial circumstances, I will demonstrate that the disfiguration or disintegration of domestic space is a symptom of homelessness, as well as an eternal call for a home. The figure of suffering women present in Xiao Hong's work, though grounded in traditional cultural conceptions and preceded by early enlightenment works, is a distinctively modern projection of Chinese people who lacked rootedness and control over their own lives, having been dislocated by the parallel forces of patriarchy and colonization. By focusing on damaged and displaced women, Xiao Hong depicts the uneven and unequal access of men and women both to modernity in the native context and to the national cause in the colonial context. In other words, Xiao Hong reveals that Chinese peasant women could not be situated in a literal home in a patriarchal dominant society; nor was their longing to be situated in a home possible within the larger context of the homeland.

Wang's wife, the first of Xiao Hong's suffering women,[9] has special significance. Her appearance anticipates the different faces of damaged women in *Field*. A widow, Wang's wife lives with a little adopted girl, Xiaohuan. The story contains elements of class-consciousness. Wang's wife and Xiaohuan form a special social bond: one has lost her husband, while the other has lost her parents. But the connection can still hardly be called a "familial" one. A central figure in the family—that of the father—is absent. After Wang's wife's death, Xiaohuan is lost and homeless once again. The story ends with Xiaohuan's call for a return home.

> Zhusanye stepped toward the root of the tree, touching Xiaohuan's hair:
> "Wake up, wake up, child, let's go home!"
> "Mom, I feel cold!"
> Zhusanye said:
> "Go home! Where is your mom? Poor kid, don't say dreaming words!"
> Awake, Xiaohuan realized that her mother could not hold her in her arms that night and cried:
> "…Mom, go … go *home* … with me…" (my italics)

Xiao Hong tends to situate abused women in the domestic sphere to demonstrate class inequity in the larger social space. The gender disadvantage of women becomes a powerful weapon to denounce societal injustice, not only between men and women but also between the oppressor and the oppressed. What is intriguing is that Xiao Hong projects the disadvantaged class, which supposedly includes both men and women, onto the figure of a pregnant woman. The pregnant peasant woman becomes representative of the entire peasant class. As a result, her gender disadvantage turns into a fictional privilege.

Xiao Hong uses gender disadvantage as a trope of class oppression in other works as well. More notorious is the example of the *White-Haired Girl*, which has drawn criticism for its transformation of a gender disadvantage into class privilege in the Communist agenda.[10] Sexual assault becomes a metonymy of class exploitation. Another example is Lin Daojing's mother in *Qingchun zhi ge* (Song of youth), who went mad and drowned herself after having been raped and kicked out of the landlord's family. Grouping these suffering women together does not mean to assign Xiao Hong a nationalistic mission, nor to cast blame by making her work analogous to Communist propaganda. Rather, gender is one of the most effective strategies, if not the only one, for the oppressed to curse the oppressors.

The female body is used as a metaphor for the struggles of the Manchurian people under Japanese invasion. One example is the dramatic change in Yueying's appearance. She is the most beautiful woman in the fishing village, but her body deteriorates considerably with the onset of paralysis. Her lower body is even immersed in her own excrement and maggots.

> The pregnant woman with her still bulging abdomen sat in silence, her body drenched with cold water. She dared not move a single muscle, for like the child of a patriarchal society, she lived in dread of her man.

> Once more unable to sit up, she was undergoing torment.… This poor woman—had there been a hole beside her, she would have jumped in. Had there been poison beside her, she would have swallowed it. Feeling hate and contempt for everything, she nearly kicked over the window sill. She was willing to break her own legs if necessary. Her body was being torn to shreds by the heat, as though she had entered a steaming vessel.[11]

As soon as it is born the baby dies; the female body is the site where birth and death meet. The span between birth and death is extenuated so that both extremes of a life converge at the same temporal juncture and spatial site. The scene repeats and extends the death of Wang's wife. The anonymous woman quoted at length above, known as Sister Five's elder sister, is not even given a name. Namelessness has a double significance in this context: first, it shows the insignificance of a woman in a patriarchal society; and second, a nameless figure is also a generic one. The woman does not merely signify herself but is also an embodiment of the group to which she belongs. Three more women share the suffering of childbirth. The narrative shifts between detailed depictions of women in labor and the succinct portrayal of male domination over women. Inserted into the labor scenes are two depictions of animals giving birth. As Xiao Hong herself concludes: "In the village, men and beasts busied themselves in birth and death."[12]

The analogy between (wo)man and beast conveys the lack or the deformity of humanity. Humanity is further related to the deformed body in the text. Two-and-half Li is a cripple, and his son is called "Tunnel Leg" (*luoquantui*) because of the physical condition of his legs. The most shockingly deformed female body in the novella is Yueying's. She used to be a beauty, but now,

> her legs like two white bamboo poles stretched out before her, her skeleton formed a right angle with the *k'ang*. It was a human shape composed of nothing but threads. Only the head was broader; it sat on the torso like a lantern atop a pole.

Yueying can only speak by moving the tip of her tongue. Even so, she cannot stop condemning her husband: "That heartless animal dreams of ways to torture me."[13] Heartlessness (*meiyou tianliang*) is a synonym, in Chinese, for a lack of humanity.

In *Field*, the uterus is an overriding trope of the class of underprivileged women, first in the familial circle, then in the larger societal milieu. The womb should be respected, if not worshiped for the ability to procreate. However, it is cursed as the origin of all misfortune by both the child bearer and her male counterpart. Moreover, the biological function of the uterus is erased: It rarely succeeds in producing a new life and more often than not actually causes death—a dead baby or a dead mother, or both. The uterus becomes a microcosm of the volatile social space where the characters live, alternately looming large and dwindling away. As it becomes visible, the swollen uterus of pregnancy becomes

a female deformation. The womb becomes a nexus linking the internal and the external, as well as this human being—always a woman—with her society. Unlike men's physical impairments, the deformation of the female body involves gender politics: It could be ultimately attributed to man's sexual instinct or even intrusion. Women in this context have no right or ability to decide their destiny.

At the end of the novella, the women peasants join in a collective male call for resistance to the Japanese. Lydia Liu has observed the gender inequality hidden in that action and in the male-dominated nationalist discourse.[14] *Field* has been read in relation to the concept of home and homeland ever since its initial publication. The work was received favorably by Lu Xun, who could not help but recall his own experience in 1931 when he and his family were trapped in the fire in Shanghai's Zhabei District as the city was bombed by the Japanese. He saw "the tenacity of survival and the resistance to death forcefully permeate the pages" and wrote that the "keen observations and an extraordinary writing style add considerably to the book's vividness and beauty. Its spirit is robust."[15] With Lu Xun's support, the novella was published in the Slavery Society Series.[16] Hu Feng 胡风 (1902–85) further elevated the work in the spirit of nationalism: "These antlike, ignorant men and women, sad but resolute, stood on the front line of the sacred war of nationalism. Once they were like ants, living in order to die. Now they were titans, dying in order to live."[17] Both Hu Feng and Lu Xun projected their own nationalist beliefs onto *Field*. Xiao Hong would not have expected that the body of her work would become a battlefield for gendered nationalist interpretations. In any case, the drama she acted out in the real field of life and death during wartime more explicitly demonstrates that that struggle was even tougher than the one on paper.

From Tokyo to Chongqing: imaginary homecoming—the women outside Manchuria

Xiao Hong's essay "Jiazu yiwai de ren" (Person outside the family) is also included in *Hulan he zhuan* (*Tales of Hulan River*, *Tales* hereafter). As the title suggests, despite living within the household, Uncle You does not belong to the family. And despite her similarity to Shen Congwen, particularly his fictional and nonfictional accounts of his home region, Xiao Hong is seldom linked to native soil writers.[18] On the one hand, she was writing much later than the trend of native soil literature; on the other, China was experiencing a national crisis in the 1930s and 1940s. In such circumstances, the national necessarily overshadowed the native, and Xiao Hong is understood more in relation to the nation. But the Manchuria—especially the county of Hulan River—that she visited and revisited was not merely a geographical site but also a topographical locus, a textual coordinate that conveys both a personal yearning for home and the Chinese people's collective suffering from the loss of homeland.

Xiao Hong's work is characterized by accounts of rustic figures, provincial customs, festive conventions, pseudo-religious practices, and so on, which constitute the basic traits of native soil literature. These local colors are observed

with a double vision: to identify them with an insider's eye yet with reflexive hindsight. Both the past she underwent and the present she was experiencing are projected onto the same geographical site, which exerts influence in both dimensions of time. Since Xiao Hong left Harbin for Qingdao in 1934, she had never been back to Manchuria. But Manchuria lived on in her literary world.

Xiao Hong's existence as a displaced person does not point simply to her physical dislocation from her homeland; rather, it indicates an effort to relocate, not only physically but also mentally, psychologically, and pathologically. Her home in Manchuria repeatedly appears in her works, and suggests not so much a geographically verifiable place with particular significance to Xiao Hong, but a topographical system of coordinates to project her mindscape as a displaced individual. These geographical sites can be further understood in connection with her traumatic experience as a homeless wandering woman during the national crisis, an experience that distinguishes Xiao Hong from other native soil writers.

Life eventually improved for Xiao Hong after *Field* was published under the aegis of Lu Xun in 1935. Unfortunately, Xiao Hong was not productive afterward due to her difficult relationship with Xiao Jun, even though her living conditions were more conducive to writing than before. In July 1936 she went to Japan for health reasons and for respite from the deteriorating relationship with Xiao Jun. The sojourn in Tokyo only aggravated her loneliness and homesickness, and she returned to Shanghai in January 1937. The return to Shanghai did not alleviate her nostalgia for Manchuria, which resulted in the serious "Sleepless night" discussed earlier.

Xiao Hong began the telling of her *Tales* by recounting the life of Uncle You, the person outside of the family, when she was stuck in Tokyo. It took her two years to finish *Tales*. After she moved to Hong Kong, she revisited the back garden of her house in Manchuria by composing an elegy in which a common hired laborer lamented his unfulfilled love. These two pieces—"Person Outside the Family" and "Back Garden"—are incorporated into *Tales* as chapters 6 and 7 respectively, with subtle changes. Four years separate the composition of these two pieces, both about people who lived at the boundaries of "my" family.

During the ten short years of her literary career Xiao Hong had been haunted by her early days in Hulan River. However, not until she moved to Hong Kong did she succeed in returning to the panoramic field of Hulan River through her writing. Before that, she only recounted bits and pieces about her old family—such as the story of her back garden and of the person outside—through which she could touch upon her home. *Tales* is Xiao Hong's last effort to imaginatively fix her nostalgia for home. But when she was back after nearly ten years of wandering, she saw nothing but terrain full of fissures and scars:

> After the harsh winter has sealed up the land, the earth's crust begins to crack and split. From south to north, from east to west; from a few feet to several yards in length; anywhere, anytime, the cracks run in every direction. As soon as harsh winter is upon the land, the earth's crust opens up.

> The severe winter splits the frozen earth.
> . . .
> The skin on people's hands is split open by the freezing cold.
> . . .
> The days grow even colder:
> Water vats freeze and crack;
> Wells are frozen solid.[19]

A series of fragmented images are listed mechanically: split, cracked, frozen. The harsh and cold winter leaves nothing to the country but scars. The narrator observes this from a bird's-eye view: The main area is cut into four pieces by two main streets, like a cross. Then the aerial view is lowered to the ground level and the focus is switched from the prosperous downtown to the relatively desolate Road Two East. Here the camera zooms in. The big hole in Road Two East is expanded infinitely. It is indeed a sinkhole devouring lives and property. The narrative shifts between diegetic and nondiegetic. Thus it produces the effect of being both about the actual hole and a commentary on people's responses to the hole and their ways of dealing with it.

The commentarial narrative adds to the text one more dimension—that of reflection—and achieves an effect similar to cinema. It turns into a portrayal: not a representation of what her home looks like, but rather a mediated picture with a voice-over. The voice-over serves as a critical footnote to the picture. The drawing of the landscape is not purely presentational, but a narrative in motion and with dialogue. I introduce a device drawn from the visual arts to illustrate the opening chapter of *Tales* because, in effect, the narrative brings forth a sequence of montages—a series of takes with no mechanical relation to one another.

I coin the term "generic narrative" to describe the narrative of the first two chapters of *Tales*, which appear to drift away from the rest of the novel. By "generic narrative," I mean things that are narrated but not concretized, without necessarily being connected to each other, and instead are only scattered around in the field of narrative. An important feature of generic narrative is that the figures and things narrated remain nameless and are simply identified in general, categorical terms. Generic narrative works not in a temporal line, but rather in a spatial structure. It does not point to a complete story, but rather to a presentation of things. The two beginning chapters of *Tales* are more like a documentary, seemingly objectively perceived, but with a subjective eye behind the camera. The narrator is absent and invisible: she or he is hidden. With the omnipotent perspective of seeing, things in every corner can be viewed without temporal or spatial limitations: from the "fire clouds" at the sunset in the sky to the big hole on the earth; from routine bean-curd peddling in this world to funerary ornament shops for the dead in the other world.

From the panoramic vista of people's everyday life in Hulan River, the narrative moves to their festivals and celebratory occasions: the dance of the sorceress; the red sorghum dance; releasing river lanterns; outdoor opera performances;

and the festival at the temple of the Immortal Matron on the eighteenth day of the fourth lunar month. These events are recorded in an anthropological way, but with cynical and speculative comments appearing as nondiegetic narrative. Like the characters in the first chapter, the figures in this chapter are generic. They are nameless and generally referred to as man and woman, girl and wife, old and young. The absence of specific terms of address for each character indicates that the narrative is universal to some extent and reinforces the impression of the static existence and lack of dynamics in the countryside.

The first two chapters of *Tales* are seemingly independent from the rest of the narrative, but they in fact offer a broader background to the events described in the following chapters. I would even say that the next seven chapters are detailed illustrations of the first two. As early as 1946, Mao Dun was aware of this structural feature of the novel, and pointed to it in response to readers inclined to argue that it should not be considered a novel due to the lack of a narrative thread running through the book. Mao Dun settled the question in the strict sense with a lyrical formulation: "it is a narrative poem, a colorful genre painting, a haunting song."[20] I would take one step further. Indeed, the first two chapters act as a prelude, highlighting the main issues that echo throughout the following five chapters. There is an increasing tension: chapter 3 is a sweet song of "my childhood"; by chapter 4, "my" home has become desolate; the child bride is described in chapter 5; the person outside "my" family—Second Uncle You—returns in chapter 6; and near the end of chapter 7 the novel is relocated to the back garden.

The epilogue sounds like an elegy for the Hulan River: "In earlier days, it was where my Granddad lived, and now it is where he is buried.… The former masters of that rear garden are now gone. The old master is dead; the younger one has fled."[21] Hibernating and suffering from serious illness in the southern pearl harbor of Hong Kong, Xiao Hong visits her faraway homeland in Manchuria through writing again and again. On the eve of Hong Kong's loss to the Japanese, how could she stop thinking about her native land? She could not help but write, as she confessed in the final lines: "The tales I have written here are not beautiful ones, but since my childhood memories are filled with them, I cannot forget them—they remain with me—and so I have recorded them here."[22]

With the help of Xiao Hong's recollections, we may create a new vision to move beyond the parameters that autobiography sets in order to understand *Tales*. The feminist critic Shari Benstock has proposed the term "life-writing" as a category that encompasses memoirs, diaries, letters, and journals, as well as the *bildungsroman* and other personally inflected fictional texts.[23] Under the flag of life-writing, autobiography and autofiction are combined into a unique conflation of verifiable facts and aesthetic fabulation. Xiao Hong's confession is by no means misleading. First, she admitted that she, as the author vis-à-vis the work, not the narrator versus the text, was personally involved—it is about (her) life; second, she *recorded* not the actual events but her memory—it is self-writing.[24] In other words, literature for Xiao Hong is the enactment of memory. In this sense, *Tales* can be read as a life testimony constructed belatedly, "not simply a

testimony to a private life, but a point of conflation between text and life, a textual testimony which can *penetrate us like an actual life*."[25] In addition to the two points Xiao Hong conveyed directly in her confession, we may deduce a third one from this paragraph—she has to write in order to exorcise the memory. Apparently Xiao Hong herself was aware of using writing to cure her nostalgia and yearning for home. But to what degree did she succeed in curing herself by writing? An examination of her late work "Bei zhongguo" (Northern China, finished in March 1941) will show that Xiao Hong was still obsessed with China even when she was not only outside Manchuria, but far from the hinterland of China.

While staying in warm Hong Kong in early spring, Xiao Hong was dreaming of the snow in her homeland. The opening sentence of "Northern China" is "It has been snowing since morning." In the cold winter, people are cutting wood. It is a scene that repeats the opening part of *Tales* in the sense that both concern cutting a whole into pieces. A thick round log is divided into two in the middle, then each piece is cut into two more. The objects are scattered on the ground. The logs are personified: They are cut at the point of the *waist*, and some of them are *standing*, others *lying* (my italics). It is a naturalistic description, but laden with metaphorical significance—which is not far-fetched, considering that Xiao Hong intentionally alluded to it in Wannan Incident.[26] Not far from the residence where lumberjacks are laboring, some others are felling trees on both sides of the road. The trees are deep rooted, for they have been growing there for some hundred years. "It is easy to fell the tree, but hard to uproot it."[27] Xiao Hong, as a dislodged person in an alien place, is only too familiar with the feeling of uprootedness. The arboreal metaphor reflects a metaphysical sedentarism in the national context. "The naturalization of the links between people and place leads to a vision of displacement as pathological, and this, too, is conceived in botanical terms, as uprootedness. Uprootedness comes to signal a loss of moral, and later, emotional bearings."[28] Magpie nests are dislodged with the felling of the trees, and only the newly constructed nests are strong enough to stay in the branches. "The birds would be homeless."[29] All these images and narratives metaphorically point to the homeless condition of Chinese people under Japanese occupation.

The owner of the trees and the house, Master Geng, misses his son, who left home to fight the Japanese and has lost contact with his family. According to a fortune-teller, he is doomed to be "flesh-cut-from-bone" (*gurou fenli*). Master Geng has fallen ill through worrying about his son. He keeps writing to him, but the letters are never delivered since there is no address to send them to. Writing for Master Geng is both a symptom of and a cure for the sickness. He writes so many letters that the housekeeper he asks to send them out can recite them in their entirety despite being completely illiterate. The housekeeper reads a letter to laboring workers while holding it upside down: "To the anti-Japanese hero of the Great Republic of China, Geng Zhenhua, from his father." One of the workers corrects him by inserting "my son" before the name of Geng Zhenhua. He too is very familiar with the letter, though he is also illiterate. The housekeeper must have omitted the words to avoid causing offense to his master,

according to traditional Chinese protocols covering relations between a master and his servant. The son is named Zhenhua, which literarily means to rejuvenate China, a signifier heavily loaded with patriotic passion. The letter is significant as an image linking both the writer/addressor and reader/addressee. But the exchange is suspended in this context. The letter will never reach its targeted receiver, only the illiterate housekeeper and lumberjacks, who even subvert it. The scene where the housekeeper turns the letter upside down is highly allegorical: It once again concretizes the strong sense of being displaced, disorderly, overturned, and uprooted.

Being obsessive with writing to his son substantiates Master Geng as neurotic. When he is sober, he demands that his men cut down the trees and cut them into short pieces. He still keeps writing letters. Whenever anyone visits, he asks the guest to take a letter to his son. If the letters could be delivered, this would lead to the whole family being slaughtered due to his anti-Japanese sentiments. He is incarcerated in a rear room and then moved to a desolate pagoda in order to be kept away from people, and in the end is suffocated by smoke: "He was lying, with a hand on his breast. He looked as if he was sleeping, but it seemed that he had a lot to say."[30]

The title "Northern China" itself is a significant gesture and shows how Xiao Hong tried to exert linguistic power through the acts of naming and metonymy. The story is intended as an immediate response to the notorious internecine struggle between the Nationalists and Communists. Xiao Hong's irony is subtle but perceptible. Geng's son Zhenhua is supposed to rejuvenate China and save the nation by fighting the Japanese, but in the end he dies at the hands of his compatriots. Xiao Hong must have been shocked and extremely upset at the sight of Chinese killing Chinese while the whole nation was suffering loss. This short piece is also interwoven with her own longing for home. On the verge of death, the woman writer, then only 31 years old, could not help but think of home. Whatever she wrote, she had to project her homeland onto her work. That may be the reason why she responded to an incident in the south by fabricating it as something related to her northern homeland.

Xiao Hong suffered a strong sense of loss because she was forcefully separated from her homeland. Since she could not physically return, she found an alternative way back through writing. Similarly, Master Geng continuously writes to his son when there is no way to contact him. This continuous effort of writing is in vain because the letters are never delivered. Furthermore, Master Geng had written so long and so much, but when he died he still "had a lot to say." What of Xiao Hong's writing? Did it reach her other self—the self that possesses her homeland—and complete the reunion, repairing the loss? Xiao Hong seems to have been aware of the paradox. She must have known the impossibility of articulating the unspeakable pain of home-longing. Xiao Hong mined her own experience for her writing, but she hardly touched upon the trauma of leaving her baby to others for good, or the death of her newborn child. Could she have projected her own double preoccupation of "flesh-out-of-bone"—leaving her baby behind, and being separated from her old home and

motherland—onto Master Geng? We have no evidence to help answer these questions. But here we see the limits of writing as therapy. Xiao Hong was yet to be cured. She still "had a lot to say."

Hong Kong: no home to go to—let's escape with Paul Ma[31]

Xiao Hong seems to have become disenchanted with the indulgence of yearning for Manchuria after she moved to Hong Kong. She bid farewell to Manchuria after finishing the requiem devoted to the spirits buried in Hulan River. She had witnessed millions of Chinese fleeing the war and this must have made an indelible impression on her. Even though she joined the procession of fugitives and became one of the refugees in Hong Kong, Xiao Hong took an introspective and satirical look at their flight, mixing laughter with tears. When people have no home, what else can they do but escape?

In *Mao Bole*, Paul Ma is the eldest son of a Chinese man who believes in Christianity and worships the West. The father names his son Paul Ma (Ma Baoluo—transliteration of Paul—in Chinese) after the Western tradition. But the son does not like the name and changes it into Mao Bole, phonetically similar to Ma Baoluo but indigenous to Chinese culture, in which *bole* refers to a person who specializes in discovering talent. Paul Ma abstains from religious belief but inherits a reverence for the West from his father. His three children are named Dawei, Yuese, Yage (a girl)—transliterations of David, Joseph, and Jacob respectively. He shows innate contempt for his fellow Chinese, frequently uttering the phrase "Goddamn Chinese!" Paul Ma is constantly preoccupied with escape. He is forever ready to flee again, sleeping with his clothes on like a firefighter who needs to be ready to go at any time. Paul Ma retreats from Qingdao to Shanghai by himself when he fears that his hometown will soon be lost to the Japanese, though it will be a long time before this happens. When the Japanese attack the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937, he succeeds in persuading his family that Qingdao will soon be Japanese. His wife and children follow him to Shanghai. The family of five has to retreat to the inner city of Wuhan after Shanghai is bombed on August 13, 1937. They end up stuck in Wuhan, waiting for another chance to escape, this time to Chongqing.

Paul Ma practices a philosophy of solipsism. Driven by sheer instinct for survival even under circumstances in which his life is not endangered, he cares about nothing except himself. He is overwhelmed by the Japanese occupation. Besides the overriding pursuit—escape—Paul Ma's ambition is to become a writer. Very often he sighs: "If I were a writer, I would pursue nothing but fighting the Japanese. China will have no future if the Japanese are not resisted!" He is more opportunistic than genuinely concerned with the future of China. "Isn't it the time to write anti-Japanese literature? Wouldn't it be the leading power of China [to write anti-Japanese literature]? How great the work is! It is the thing really propelling the wheel of history." His ideal is to enlighten the Chinese through his pen. Yet Paul Ma does not practice what he preaches. He never completes any anti-Japanese writing, nor does he ever try. Eventually, when he is in

Wuhan and is reunited with an innocent childhood playmate, Miss Wang, Paul Ma is inspired to write her love letters, which he signs "Yours, Paul." Ironically, the only writing he completes is not delivered to the intended reader—he never has a chance to bring the billet-doux out of his pocket to hand it over to Miss Wang.

Paul Ma's commitment to the nation is superficial. Sometimes he clamors that he wants to join the army to fight the Japanese. But he never really wants to go to war. He says so only to threaten his father and wife to meet his demands because they do not want to lose him on the battlefield. He is injured during the escape to Wuhan when he crosses the Songjiang Bridge and falls off. As soon as he comes to his senses, he is appalled, thinking that he is injured. He even hallucinates that he has lost his left leg. Overly paranoid, he exists in a future world filled with horror and schizophrenic speculations, a living nightmare. As China is gradually lost to the Japanese, Paul Ma's consciousness is taken over by the paranoid in his unconscious, so that he can no longer tell the boundary between reality and fantasy. When people ask him why his nose is bandaged, Paul Ma proudly replies: "I am an honorable soldier."

Different from much of mainstream literature, Paul Ma is totally out of time, if not timeless—just as he is always out of place, not at home even when he is in part of his own country not under Japanese occupation. His individuality overrides national demands. Unlike Ah Q's spiritual anesthesia, Paul Ma not only does not know what the problem is but also does not know its solution. The only action he can think of and has been pathologically used to is to escape. He only feels secure when he is going someplace else, yet more often than not, he does not know his destination. Uncannily, Paul Ma's destiny echoes what the author experienced in real life. Xiao Hong seems to have enjoyed writing this novel very much. She shared the first chapter with a friend and pointed out to him how ridiculous Paul Ma is.[32] She was not fully aware that this seemingly amusing piece is also sad, as well as incomplete, without any conclusion that tells where Paul Ma will end up.

Home plays a paradoxical role in Xiao Hong's creations. In her personal accounts, she did not express much attachment to her patriarchal family because of oppression by her father and the loss of her mother when she was eight. But she was so enchanted by her childhood in Manchuria that two-thirds of her opus is set there. She was exceptionally sensitive to home-related images and issues, and these became all the more conspicuous after she relocated to Hong Kong. Xiao Hong conveyed her longing for home a few times in her letters. Not long before arriving in Hong Kong, in a letter to Hua Gang, she wrote:

> Hong Kong is a lot more comfortable [to live in] than Chongqing, food and housing not bad. But I want to go back to Chongqing every day. Staying here outside [China], it looks as if I cannot leave my homeland (*guotu*).[33]

The longer she stayed in Hong Kong, the more she missed Chongqing. She wrote to Hua Gang again in January 1941:

> It has been a year since I moved to Hong Kong. I do not know when I might be able to go back to Chongqing. Staying outside for long, I cannot help missing the homestead (*jiayuan*). The weather here in Hong Kong is fine. More and more people are going out for excursions. Is Chongqing still as foggy as usual?[34]

As a female writer in exile during a national crisis, Xiao Hong wrote with a double identity: female and national. One cannot be separated from the other. Her early writings attend more to female experience, especially women's suffering in a patriarchal society, with *Field* as the primary example. Her later works bear witness to an individually experienced loss of nation. The image or notion to which I draw attention here—home—links both sets of writings. In the former, women, despite being within a family, are totally displaced and superseded by men. In the latter, the Chinese are rendered homeless through the country's subjugation to the Japanese. In her writing, Xiao Hong searches for a home both as a woman and as a representative of the Chinese people as a whole.

Xiao Hong was never strongly for or against one ideology or another. Her writings express deep concern with humanity amid the sociopolitical turmoil but still keep a reasonable distance from leftist pedagogy and the Communist propaganda apparatus. She seldom lets social concepts devour artistry. Nevertheless, as with many other modern Chinese writers, her pen is moved by her conscience. The switch of her focus from nostalgia for home on the Hulan River (Manchuria) to Chongqing becomes all the more revealing in this context. In her early wandering period within Manchuria, Xiao Hong was already writing from her own experience and what she witnessed. For her, the problem of suffering women lies in the fact that they are homeless both in the microcosm of home—the patriarchal family—and on the macrocosmic level under the Japanese occupation. Within six years, from 1934 to 1940, Xiao Hong covered half of China geographically and traveled from Qingdao to Shanghai, to Tokyo, back to Shanghai, to Shanxi, to Xi'an, to Wuhan, to Chongqing. She was haunted by Manchuria even when she was in Japan, leading to one elegy after another for the lost country, constituting a sonata of lament in *Tales*.

Finally, after she went into exile in Hong Kong—then still a British colony—Xiao Hong's homesickness increased. The domain she missed went beyond Hulan River, beyond Manchuria. Now the whole of China became her object of longing. The wartime capital of Chongqing became the place on which she could project her yearning. With Chongqing as the substitute for her hometown in Manchuria, Xiao Hong's project becomes all the more polemical and paradoxical. Her longing for a home as an individual is immersed in a grander collective undertaking of regaining and reclaiming the nation. According to Luo Binji (1917–94), who accompanied Xiao Hong in her last days in Hong Kong, Xiao Hong had a plan in mind to write about the Red Army during the Long March. She said, when she was bedridden, "My half account of *The Red Chamber* will be written by somebody else." *The Red Chamber* refers to a work on which she planned to collaborate with Nie Gannu (1903–86) and Ding Ling after visiting

the revolutionary bases, the snowy mountain, and the Dadu River once success (in the Anti-Japanese War) was eventually achieved. Regrettably, she did not live long enough to write about the Long March. Nor is there material to explain why she remained fascinated by this event. She might have been touched by what the Red Army underwent when she visited Linfen, Shanxi, and Xi'an in Shaanxi, probably her first contact with that force. Or perhaps the journey echoed her own diasporic experiences since leaving Manchuria in 1931.[35] Though she passed away at a young age, she was at least lucky enough not to see the two camps of Chinese—Communists and Nationalists—in a life-and-death fight for the city that had been the object of yearning for millions of Chinese, including both Xiao Hong and Paul Ma, just a few years earlier.

Ding Ling: now/here to go back—embracing the revolution, losing the self

Ding Ling had embraced the revolution since the beginning of the 1930s when she emerged as a leftist writer. She never stopped, despite the ordeals she had to endure. No other woman writer in twentieth-century China can be said to have been more involved and engaged with revolution than Ding Ling.[36] She engaged with revolution in a double way: in her writing and in person. She joined Yan'an and led her drama troupes to perform for the soldiers and officials at the front. She suffered physical hardships in the Great Northern Wasteland during the Cultural Revolution. However, although Ding Ling devoted her pen to the revolutionary cause, her good intentions were only partly appreciated. Her criticism of the Communists—despite her good intention—led to physical punishment, in the form of labor, imprisonment, and exile, which happened to many Chinese writers and intellectuals at the time.

Throughout Chinese history, many intellectuals have been physically punished for their writing. The case of Ding Ling was exceptional because of her extensive corporeal engagement, particularly her constant travel to different places. She covered two-thirds of the mainland and reached both Eastern Europe and America during her 82 years of life. Her travel route constitutes a map of an individual journey *to* and *of* revolution against the confinements of Chinese geography.

Ding Ling's writing initiated an active dialogue with her travel experience. She had a tendency to write about herself *at* and *about* the moment of crisis, when she struggled either with herself or others toward a new direction. I use the term "auto-inscription" to describe Ding Ling's writings about the self, mainly in two genres: diary-fiction[37] and memoirs (I exclude here her real diary entries, since they serve a different function from that of diary-fiction).[38] "Auto-inscription" has a double meaning here: She inscribed herself onto the writing and inscribed her life route onto Chinese geography with her extensive coverage of her own travel experience. Of the localities she dwelt in—at those where she encountered a transition, a sense of loss, an actual loss of freedom or love, or a lack of security—Ding Ling would become introverted, recording what she

experienced in a hardcore realistic or mimetic way in diary-fiction or memoirs. Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, and the Great Northern Wasteland (Beidahuang) are such places. However, at places such as northern Shaanxi and Beijing, where she enjoyed a strong sense of belonging to, recognition by, and identification with the Communists, her writings were more concerned with outside circumstances than her inner self. In other words, Ding Ling tended to be reflexive upon the self at and about the moments and places of greater unhappiness.

Based on the interconnection between the localities and the writings, I choose four significant sites—Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, and the Great Northern Wasteland—in Ding Ling's life, where she underwent crises and recorded her suffering, in order to examine the negotiation of her lived suffering in those particular spaces and the attendant representation of bitterness in the auto-inscribed spaces. The purpose is not to determine to what extent she was true to the real facts. Rather, it is to understand the way she viewed her present self in her diary-fiction and her past self in her memoir. Her auto-inscription registers a witness to her growing pains from a wandering petty bourgeois female intellectual to a devoted revolutionary warrior. The diverse experiences she lived through in various spaces—self-absorbed in Beijing, converted to Communism in Shanghai, fading away in Nanjing, committed self-exile in the Great Northern Wasteland—formed the milestones for the development of her vagrant life, like that of the protagonist in a picaresque novel. Ding Ling combined her identities as an author and as a heroine. She became a character in her own writing by the act of auto-inscription and acted out the role of the fictional self in real life. As her passion for revolution increased from one place to another, attaining its climax in the Great Northern Wasteland, Ding Ling's self diminished little by little. The process through which she embraced the revolution is also the one through which she lost her self. Ding Ling was the living version of a fictional heroine like Lin Daojing from the revolutionary classic *Song of Youth*. Revolution and self are an irreconcilable pair: She could be either one or the other, but not both at the same time.

In her lifetime, Ding Ling witnessed the main revolutionary events of modern Chinese history. She shared the blessings of the Republican Revolution as a child and teenager because of her progressive and enlightened mother. She went to a modern school and was influenced by the new May Fourth thinking. At the age of 17, with her mother's support, Ding Ling broke off her betrothal to her cousin. The following year, she went to the Common People's Girls School established by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Shanghai with her friend Wang Jianhong (1901–24), who was later to become Qu Qiubai's (1899–1935) wife. Study did not seem productive. They spent the fall in Nanjing and returned to Hunan for the lunar new year. They came back to Nanjing the next spring and registered at Shanghai University in August 1923. While the love between Wang and Qu developed and they got married in January 1924, Ding Ling felt lonely and not engaged in her studies. She returned home in early summer 1924. Wang soon died of tuberculosis contracted from Qu. When she arrived in Shanghai one month later, Ding Ling shed tears besides Wang's coffin. The two years of

wandering in Shanghai and Nanjing did not greatly prepare Ding Ling for her future career. She was primarily immersed in her small circle of friends, including Wang, Qu, and others, and was not involved in public activities.

In the summer of 1924, Ding Ling traveled alone to Beijing. She maintained her original goal of attending school there, but was not really interested in preparing for the entrance exams. Instead, she learned painting and French with individual tutors. In this way she came to know Hu Yepin (1903–31). They began to live together in the fall of 1925. In spring 1926, the couple went to Shanghai, where Ding Ling hoped to become an actress. But with her dream to be a film star unrealized, Ding Ling and Hu Yepin returned, disillusioned, to Beijing that summer. Their adventure in Shanghai had not been totally in vain—it stimulated Ding Ling's maiden work, the short story *Meng Ke*, in 1927. Her second work, *Shafei nüshide riji* (Miss Sophia's diary), brought her national fame.

In spring 1928, Ding Ling and Hu Yepin moved to Hangzhou, but before long they returned to Shanghai. The next year, with Shen Congwen (1902–88), they launched the Black and Red Publishing House, issuing two magazines monthly: *Honghei* (Black and red) and *Renjian* (The world). Their publishing business was not successful; it went bankrupt in 1930. In order to pay its debts, Hu left Shanghai in the spring of 1930 to take up a teaching position in Jinan. Ding Ling stayed in Shanghai and continued to write. She joined Hu in April, but the couple had to move back to Shanghai in May because Hu had been placed on the wanted list due to his progressive tendencies. He joined the Leftist League and the CCP and became engaged in organizing and participating in Communist activities. On November 8 their son Jiang Zulin was born.

On January 17, 1931, Hu Yepin was arrested by the Nationalists, along with four other members of the Leftist League. They were executed on February 7, and came to be commonly referred to as "The Five Martyrs of the Leftist League."[39] Shen Congwen accompanied Ding Ling to bring the baby home to Hunan, where her mother helped to take care of him. She became more active in leftist cultural activities and in September 1931 accepted the position of editor-in-general at a Leftist League journal called *Beidou* (Pole star). Meanwhile, her own writing became influenced by leftism. In November she started to cohabit with Feng Da (1902–90). In March 1932, Ding Ling joined the CCP at the introduction of the leftist dramatist Yang Hansheng (1902–93). On May 14, the Nationalists secretly arrested Ding Ling together with Pan Zinian (1893–1972) when Pan came to visit Ding Ling, because her partner Feng Da disclosed their residential address to the Nationalists. It became a big story in Shanghai and worldwide. The Leftist League and the pro-Communist cultural circle launched a campaign to rescue Ding Ling and Pan Zinian.

At first the Nationalist government denied any knowledge of Ding Ling's whereabouts. For a while people believed that she had been secretly executed by the KMT, but she had actually been transferred to Nanjing and imprisoned there. The Nationalists tried unsuccessfully to convert her to serve the government's aims. She gave birth to a daughter with Feng Da in October 1934. In 1936,

taking advantage of her limited freedom, Ding Ling managed to resume contact with the CCP. With the Party's help, she escaped from Nanjing to Shanghai, and arrived in northern Shaanxi in October. Ding Ling was warmly welcomed by the CCP officials, including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhang Wentian, in person.[40] She busied herself with reporting from the battlefield and was put on an editorial board assembled to compile the history of the Red Army and the Long March. However, she did not participate in the actual compilation of the accounts because she was sent to the front with the Northwest Battlefield Service Troupe (*Xibei zhandi fuwutuan*).

Ding Ling's escape from the Nationalists aroused suspicion that she would have betrayed her comrades and confessed to the Nationalists. An investigation led by the Organizational Organ of the central CCP in 1941 proved her innocence. However, her essays and stories, which expose the living conditions and social inequity in Yan'an, led to criticism at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Arts. With the CCP's promotion of land reform in the Communist-occupied areas, Ding Ling was inspired to write the masterpiece *Taiyang zhaozai sanggan he shang* (The sun shines over the Sanggan River) in 1947 and 1948. She held a variety of posts in literary and cultural administration after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). From 1955, Ding Ling underwent one purge after another until she was fully rehabilitated in 1980. She finished two memoirs in her later years. One is about her imprisonment in Nanjing and the other about her hard times in the Great Northern Wasteland.

The following discussion is not a thorough survey of Ding Ling's works. Instead, I want to contrast her geographical life route throughout the twentieth century with her writing of the self. In other words, Ding Ling's actual lifetime journey and her autobiographical writings will be read side by side. Here too, the juxtaposition of the travel with her writing of the self is not intended to reveal to what extent Ding Ling's own account accords with facts or the truth. Rather, it points to the tension and negotiation between the objective world of the life journey and the highlighted locations and spheres of activity that she created. In contrast to the massive Long March and the collective effort involved in narrating it, both her journey and her self-writing are personal and individual. Nonetheless, that personal journey toward hope or survival and the individual account capture much of the actual lives and narratives of thousands of common people during this period.

Focusing first on her personal life journey, I will concentrate on two aspects of Ding Ling's work—her memoir and her diary. Both are autobiographical in nature. I also argue for the inclusion of her fictional works written in the form of diary entries. Even though not all are expositions on her own life, the diary form reveals Ding Ling's fictional self, irrespective of whether there is ever any resemblance to the real Ding Ling.

Beijing: Miss Sophia's birth and imaginary death

> Live quietly. Die quietly. Ah! I pity you, Sophia!
>
> (*Miss Sophia's Diary*)

> I decide. I will die someday after all. Death, death is natural to me. No one in the world will be surprised at [my death].
>
> "I will die. I will die." She persists, speaking to herself from time to time.
> ("Suicidal Diary")

Ding Ling's first success in her writing career came in Beijing with *Miss Sophia's Diary*. Although diary-fiction is not predominant among her works, it is a genre she had been writing in continually during her life journey from Beijing to Shanghai. She resumed with two memoirs about her tribulations in Nanjing and the Great Northern Wasteland when she finally made it back to Beijing after years of trials under both the KMT and the CCP. As noted earlier, both the diary-fiction and the memoir focus on the self. Ding Ling maintained the continuity of writing herself from her early career until the end of her life.

Since the publication of *Miss Sophia's Diary*, Miss Sophia has inspired critics to discuss issues of female subjectivity, patriarchal ideology, gender politics, and narratorial strategy in the diary.[41] This piece has been widely discussed from various angles, situated within the trend of post-May Fourth women's liberation, disease and literary exposition, comparative studies with other national literatures, and so on.[42] Ding Ling reached her peak with *Miss Sophia's Diary*, her first attempt at this genre; her later works of diary-fiction are not comparable in terms of literary achievement, and there were few of them. But this small group of writings raises a necessary critical question because of its pertinence to her self. Since *Miss Sophia's Diary* has been given ample critical attention, I will focus more on the obscure diary stories.

Ding Ling left enough traces of her own life in her maiden work *Mengke*, especially with the protagonist's search for stardom in the film industry in Shanghai. Unlike Mengke, who chooses to put up with the alienation and discomfort endemic to the business, Ding Ling returned to Beijing to indulge in the decadent fantasy of Miss Sophia. The link between the heroine and the author is not strong enough to say that Ding Ling was in any way representing herself in the image of Sophia. Nevertheless, Miss Sophia proved that Ding Ling was a master at revealing the inner self of the protagonist, if not her own self.

At the end of her diary, Sophia decides to live the rest of her life as a recluse. Ding Ling in 1928 was obsessed with the female death drive. Following the acclaim she received from *Miss Sophia's Diary*, Ding Ling finished "Zisha riji" (Suicidal diary) at the end of that year. It is the story of a woman called Yisa who entertains thoughts of death and suicide. Dejected about life and completely enchanted by death at the start of the narrative, Yisa forces herself to get out of bed to write diaries. She decides to keep the journals till the day of her death. The story does not relate why the heroine has lost interest in life and pinned her hopes and pleasures on death. The second entry of the diary suggests that Yisa is burdened by financial problems. From the third entry on, the diary looks like a letter before death:

> I died, on this day. There is no reason to explain. I am dejected about everything and cannot feel the need to live. I have lost all curiosity. I do not envy the reputation of suicide. No reason makes me feel there is anything wrong with suicide.… My death is not forced. I have no romantic background. This news does not deserve any other person's mourning.[43]

She is hesitant about death on the fourth fictional day:

> If only there were one person in the world who thought there is some need for me to live, I would do whatever might be needed to live on. If there were only someone who would be sad at my death, I would die. I think I will die happily. But now, I cannot die.

Yisa goes back and forth between life and death. On the 26th, her birthday, Yisa writes the last words in her diary. She once again confirms: "It is going to be real this time. I cannot postpone my death day." She even asks her father to visit her mother's tomb on her behalf. Unexpectedly, Yisa's story is twisted on the last day of the diary. She sends the landlady away by giving her the manuscript of the diaries to sell for money to pay the rent.

"Suicidal Diary" subverts itself in that it is not composed of pure diaries. Supplementary to the main entries, there are explanatory words expounding what is happening to Yisa both psychologically and physically. She does not die in the end. Just as Sophia immerses herself in decadence, so Yisa takes pleasure in imagining her own death. Her diaries are a witness to her imaginary journey toward her end. As Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker puts it: "The diary is a record of her attempts 'to talk herself into' the act and of her failure to carry it out."[44] Nevertheless, the outcome of her written record subverts all her belief in and sincerity about the act of suicide. Her strong death drive succumbs to her instinct to live, no matter how harsh reality may be. Yisa starts the diary with a wish for suicide, but as this desire becomes stronger and stronger and almost reaches its climax, the wish falls apart and reaches its finale. It ends in an act of exchange in order to make a living: a tool for money. The transaction is symbolic, and a proof of the incredibility of the diary. The written words in it are not so different from fiction written to capture a readership and make monetary profit, and are a type of superb performance and showmanship. Despite all this, "Suicidal Diary" was not among Ding Ling's favorite writings. In the preface to *Yiwai ji* (Unexpected collection), she expressed dissatisfaction with the collection: "There were worse writings [than this collection] before, like 'Suicidal Diary.' I wish it would go out of print as soon as possible."[45] Ding Ling's dislike of the story, or even denial of her authorship, demonstrates her regret at having written a piece of work that does not live up to her expectations. Her postscript remarks about this piece de facto discloses the mechanism by which she manipulates writing, as Yisa exchanges her diaries for money in "Suicidal Diary."

Suicidal Diary does not construct a plaintive or ghostly atmosphere. Instead, it invites readers to share the joy and beauty of death. *Sophia* has an

illusive ending, implying that the heroine will die without being noticed. In contrast, Yisa assures readers that all her records might be a sort of illusion. They may not be real. When she eventually becomes disillusioned at the prospect of her imaginary death, Yisa returns to real life and dispenses with the diary in favor of making a living. *Suicidal Diary* can be understood as a sequel to *Miss Sophia's Diary*. To a certain extent, Yisa projects what Sophia's life would be like after *Suicidal Diary*. At the same time, the book takes a satirical look at *Miss Sophia's Diary*. It may inadvertently and retrospectively expose that work's hidden agenda: just as Yisa did with *Suicidal Diary*, Sophia may have sold her diary for money to live on. This is exactly what happened to Ding Ling. She claimed three years later that she was Miss Sophia, and she lived on.

Shanghai: Sophia does not die, I live

> Now I try to write, whatever it is. But I don't know why I am afraid. I cannot write any more [for today].
>
> ("Madam Yang's Diary")

> I will let the entire past pass without trace. I will just look forward, without looking back.
>
> ("Sophia's Diary II")

The diary Ding Ling wrote in Beijing expressed her petty bourgeois sentiments. Likewise, the two diaries she composed in Shanghai reveal her conversion from a decadent wandering intellectual to a persistent leftist. As early as January 1931, the month of Hu Yepin's arrest, Ding Ling completed "Yangma de riji" (Madam Yang's diary).[46] Like Xianglin's wife in Lu Xun's *New Year's Sacrifice*, Madam Yang is one of the thousands of insulted and damaged women, but unlike her, Madam Yang does not keep asking the educated master if there is another life after all. She is lucky enough to take shelter in a female progressive intellectual household, with Miss Sun as her master.[47] Miss Sun kindly teaches the illiterate Madam Yang to learn characters by keeping journals so that she can write herself, though in a limited way. Xianglin's wife has to rely on the educated other, the first-person narrator, to look for the truth of life or death. Madam Yang is not troubled by this issue. Armed with literacy, she can express herself independently and have her inner voice heard.

The literary text is presented as a record of what Madam Yang learns each day from Miss Sun. She cannot help doubting her ability to write. Under Miss Sun's encouragement, she finally starts to keep a journal, with Sun correcting the characters. Madam Yang incorporates her own story into the diaries, and notes that she is 25 and that her husband has asked her for money since he can barely make ends meet in the countryside no matter how hard he works. Madam Yang cannot help much either. She has difficulty finding a job in the city. Miss Sun is not financially well off either. She does not really need help but has taken

Madam Yang in out of compassion. As the diary ends, Madam Yang indicates that Miss Sun is participating in some clandestine progressive activities.

The six journal entries that Madam Yang keeps subvert the credibility of the diary as a whole. Even though the author was trying hard to mimic how an illiterate handmaid might write by choosing simple words and presenting plain thoughts, insightful readers can see that this would be impossible for a servant woman to accomplish. Why Ding Ling chose the diary genre to convey the concerns of intellectuals and their compassion for the proletariat is an interesting question. The piece represents more an intellectual projection of their own roles in the grand project of awakening the Chinese masses than an example of illiterate peasants consciously picking up pens to make their voices heard. "Madam Yang's Diary" is therefore a meta-diary. The narrator keeps a log about how these diaries came into being. Contrary to Ding Ling's intention to enhance affective power by deploying first-person narrative, the "metaness" of this text puts both her motivation and her effort into question: Wasn't she manipulating Madam Yang to prove the ambition of intellectuals to reform the Chinese mentality?

Ding Ling soon restored the credibility of the diary as a form by working her own life into "Shafei nüshi riji erbu" (Miss Sophia's diary II).[48] Several months after her husband's execution, still suffering from the loss, Ding Ling resumed the project of Miss Sophia. Even though she titled the story "Miss Sophia's Diary II," the protagonist "I" does not bear any resemblance to Sophia. In "Diary II," Ding Ling completely blurred the boundary between fiction and reality. She made Sophia step out of the bookcase and live in the real world. Ding Ling claimed that she was Sophia without even thinking of assuming a persona, or asking if there was any difference between the fictional character and her real self. The interaction between Miss Sophia, the first-person narrator in "Diary II," and Ding Ling is compelling. Ding Ling seems to have felt a strong impulse to be the agent of the three characters. The overt autobiographical elements make even the most cynical critics believe that the narrator in "Diary II" is Ding Ling per se. She was writing about herself.

First, "I" confesses that she has not kept diaries for several years. To dispel idleness, she revisits the journals she kept before and is surprised to find that herself and the image (*ying*) inscribed on the yellowish paper are so distinct from each other. Here, an interesting dialogue between four doubles—the image in the diary and the author back then, the author then and now, the image in the diary and the author now, the image in that diary and the one in the current journal—is generated. The narrator compares herself with the image reflected on the paper she herself imprinted. Upon looking at the "mirrored" image in the paper, "I" feels the passage of time and the difference between the image and her self.

Second, "Diary II" recounts briefly what the author went through during the years since the inception of Miss Sophia. Reality seemed to move in the opposite direction from what both she and her lover had hoped for. All that awaited her was torment. She recalled the relationship with Hu and the age of innocence they spent together. But now she was living through the unexpected and excruciating

loss of him. Unlike the illusory exposition of Sophia's feelings for Ling Jishi, the beau from Singapore, Ding Ling laid bare her sentiments after Hu's martyrdom in "Diary II" without any reservation. She revealed her despair, distress, disturbance, and all other kinds of affliction. She was lost in the dilemma between sense and sensibility. Rationally, she knew that she should get past the agony and move on. Still, she could not help letting grief dominate her.

Third, "Diary II" serves as a channel for Ding Ling to unleash her bitterness. She proclaimed:

> I just write it for myself to read. No. Probably I do not need to read it. I just want to make use of the leisure time to write something free and easy, as a form of relaxation.… I feel keeping a journal is the best way to prevent myself from wandering in the street. For a while, I ran on the road terribly. My room was too small to hold my frenzied heart, since the emotional impulsion is too strong. However, it has become better in the past week. I wrote some articles.[49]

Apparently, Ding Ling was using writing as a method to heal herself, if not as a form of catharsis. "Diary II" also forms a crucial part of her remembrance of her own and her husband's past. So it was part of the mourning service Ding Ling performed for her lover. "Diary II" has multiple functions here. It invites readers to peep at Ding Ling's inner feelings after the loss of Hu Yepin; it gives a very different impression from her other works. Apropos of its function, after comparing *Miss Sophia's Diary* with Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* and Mao Dun's *Erosion*, the Japanese critic Aiura Akira argued that "Diary II" worked as a preface to *Miss Sophia's Diary* even if it was written much later.[50] To take this point one step further, I would argue that "Diary II" justifies *Miss Sophia's Diary* with a few years' hindsight, whether or not Ding Ling desired or expected it to do so.

Ding Ling continued to reflect upon herself throughout the writing of "Diary II." She had ambivalent feelings about writing the journal. On the one hand, she could not help it. Her inner struggle and suffering triggered her to write as a cure, to kill time, or as catharsis. On the other hand, she could not get rid of doubts about what she was doing. In the beginning, Ding Ling thought it would be good to supplement the fiction she wrote with her own history in the journal. As the diary continues, she seems to lose confidence: "I cannot continue to write like this any longer. It is not like a diary at all." She did not make it clear what would be "like a diary," but she was keeping *Miss Sophia's Diary* in mind. She suffered anxiety that she would never write anything as good as *Miss Sophia's Diary*. The comparison between these two works is revealing. While confessing that *Miss Sophia's Diary* was embellished, exaggerating reality, Ding Ling thought more highly of it than "Diary II," even though the latter is more realistic and the former work more ornamented. She thought of *Miss Sophia's Diary* as the real diary and of "Diary II" as the false one, although it is more realistic.

In contrast with the systematic structure and plot development in *Miss Sophia's Diary*, "Diary II" has only two entries is much less organized and more rambling. Readers can tell that the author was very disturbed when she was recording either trivialities or mental endurance. She does not seem to have had a clear agenda for writing it in mind either. Nor did she know where the narrative would go. "Diary II" was left unfinished, mainly because of her unexpected arrest by the KMT. Ding Ling never attempted another diary-fiction after this. Since her life continued, it would make more sense in her writing of the self to have an open ending than to complete the project.

But why would Ding Ling go back to Miss Sophia three years later, as a release for her woe and grief? How was the transformation from Miss Sophia to the "I" in "Diary II" possible? What generated the impulse for Ding Ling to take Miss Sophia as a medium to express her mourning, to cure her mental wound, to search for a direction in the future?

I will go to the ending of *Miss Sophia's Diary* for the answers. Miss Sophia decides to go to a place where nobody will know her to waste the rest of her life. In "Diary II," Ding Ling expressed her appreciation for those who worried about Sophia's future. At the same time, she assured readers that Sophia did not waste her life, as she professed in her last diary. Her life thereafter was embodied in the "I" of "Diary II." She fell in love with a cheerful man with whom she experienced the ecstasy of love and the joy of being new parents. Then she lost her beloved.

First, Miss Sophia became a palpable embodiment of the site of Ding Ling's memories, especially about the past as it related to the trauma she was experiencing at the time. Although she was also experiencing loss and despair and had indulged in decadence, Sophia was luckier than the "I" or, more precisely, Ding Ling in the present. Second, Ding Ling acted out Miss Sophia's life in the real world, outside the fictional sphere it occupies in *Miss Sophia's Diary*. A couple of years later, when Ding Ling looked deep into her wounded inner world, she could not help thinking of what she had done with Sophia. Thus, she revived the character and made up for Sophia's blind spot with her own experience. Third, Miss Sophia assumed the role of a vehicle not only for Ding Ling but also for many other repressed Chinese women to release their depression. She would be the perfect medium to convey whatever unspeakable pain might lie inside. The fundamental difference between the heroines of the two diaries is that the former took advantage of decadence and the latter tried hard to get rid of it. As Feng Jin understands it, "Diary II" showcases Sophia's action of denouncing and exorcising the emotional old self in order to represent her growth.[51] The transformation of Miss Sophia from decadence to enlightenment symbolized Ding Ling's desire to get over the pain of loss and to head toward a new future. But her wish was only partly fulfilled. She did gradually step out of the shadow of Hu Yepin's death and became a member of the CCP in 1932. Her life changed for the better. Before long, she was forced to share part of Hu's fate—to be arrested by the KMT. Fortunately, she survived the trial under the KMT, but unfortunately not that under the CCP.

Ding Ling was still fascinated with diary-fiction as late as 1978. During a short transitional period in the village of Hebei after imprisonment in Qincheng, and before restoration in Beijing, she thought of writing another diary-story:

> I conceived a short story over the nap at noon. A middle school teacher goes back to the farm in the countryside. The severe calamity caused by the Gang of Four will be represented through his life. The story will be in the form of a diary, imitating Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman*. One would bemoan the fact that the countryside changed so much for the worse after years. But once I woke up, I could not help being afraid to offend some people if the story is deep and real. There is not the freedom to do so in China so far. *Thoughts on March 8th* made me suffer for decades. The old scar is there. How can I ask for trouble and leave the mishap to my offspring?[52]

Ding Ling could not help but be cautious about her writing after years of ups and downs. Here we see the intriguing politics of the diary genre. On the one hand, she was afraid to write the diary-story out of fear of a possible purge, so she gave it up. On the other hand, she recorded the aborted diary-story in her real diary. She drew the line of demarcation between diary and diary-story, between public and private writing. Ding Ling applied self-censorship to her public writing based on her previous experience of persecution. However, in the genre of private writing, she registered both the conceptual and the renunciative process of her writing plan. To a certain extent, the boundary between the public and private genres, the diary-story and the diary, is blurred.

To Ding Ling, the diary presented a way out for the repressed diary-story. She was cautious, but not enough to realize that the diary would become the root of her curse in various struggle campaigns in the PRC. She was rather naive to believe in the absolute secrecy of her diary. Its undeniable expression of dissatisfaction about freedom in China could have brought upon her another wave of purges, had China not been relieved of the intense political pressure that existed from 1955 to 1976. She may have had a hidden agenda to blame the Gang of Four through the mouth of the middle school teacher, as Lu Xun had done to feudalism through the madman. Ding Ling did not get a chance to vent such a denunciation after all. When she eventually revisited her misfortunes of the previous 20 years in her memoir, she did not accuse whoever placed the curse on her either. Instead, she was appreciative of the restoration of her own reputation as well as the national order, belated though it was. Her accusation of wrongdoings, after the aborted diary of the middle school teacher, was repressed once and for all.

Nanjing: world of ghosts

> Xuefeng, you do not understand the anguish I have been putting up with during the past few years.… How can you let me return to that hell! You really do not understand me. You only know the hardship of the Long

> March. The Long March was of course very hard. But you were in a group, with numerous close comrades. You were fighting against the enemy under the sun. You did not experience the tribulation I underwent by myself in the den of monsters with headsmen and hypocrites. You do not know how hard it can be to spend even a single second [in the hellish world]!
>
> (Ding Ling, *World of Ghosts*[53])

On May 14, 1933, following her partner Feng Da's disclosure of her address, Ding Ling and her visitor Pan Zinian, a Chinese Communist activist, were arrested by the KMT police at her apartment in Shanghai. They were secretly and immediately transferred to Nanjing. Their cultural circle was shocked by Ding Ling and Pan Zinian's disappearance. They protested the high-pressure policy of the Nationalist government and launched a rescue campaign. But the Nationalist authorities denied all knowledge of their whereabouts. For a while, people believed they had been executed clandestinely. Indeed, Ding Ling was confined under KMT supervision in Nanjing for three years until she managed to escape to Yan'an in October 1936. Her survival under KMT imprisonment sowed the seeds of her problems under the Communist regime. She was suspected of betraying the CCP to the KMT first during the Rectification Campaign at Yan'an in 1942, and then in the purge of the "Anti-Party Clique of Ding Ling and Chen Qixia" in 1955. As a result, Ding Ling spent 12 years laboring in the Great Northern Wasteland, and five more years in prison.

Ding Ling experienced tribulations under both the Nationalist and Communist regimes. In the early 1980s, right after her reputation and position were restored, Ding Ling started writing her first memoir about the Nanjing days, and then another about the period of hardship in the Great Northern Wasteland. The two memoirs, *Wangliang shijie* (World of ghosts) and *Fengxue renjian* (Universe of wind and snow), show the efforts Ding Ling made to construct the space of the ordeal in which she once lived. These two biographical works serve as witness to her experience of displacement. Literally, Ding Ling was forced to leave the place where she once resided. Metaphorically, she was removed from the normal social role she used to assume. Psychologically, she felt a sense of loss in her psyche.

Exactly 50 years after she was arrested by the KMT, in June 1983, Ding Ling began to write about her days of imprisonment in Nanjing. She recounted the story from her arrest to her arrival at northern Shaanxi from a first-person perspective. According to the memoir, except for trying to persuade her to collaborate on some writings to serve the Nationalist government, the KMT did not really give her a hard time. Other than being without personal freedom, Ding Ling led a relatively easy life for three years. She tried a few times to make contact with the outside but failed. She managed a short trip to Beijing in May 1936 and eventually ran away from Nanjing to Shanghai. From there, she went to northern Shaanxi.

The point of this discussion is Ding Ling's attitude toward and motivation for writing the memoir rather than the actual accounts within it. As a whole, *World*

of Ghosts tends to condemn the KMT and to highlight Ding Ling's efforts in fighting against the Nationalists. In the meantime, this memoir served as a belated public announcement to appease people's curiosity and puzzlement about her imprisonment in Nanjing, as well as an excuse for why it took her three years to get away from Nanjing. She was not exactly confessing to her wrongdoings, if there were any. She was trying to prove that she had a clean past. Ding Ling revealed that due to her loneliness and weakness, she succumbed to Feng Da's warmth, which led to the birth of their daughter. That caused the Communist suspicion that, if not a traitor, Ding Ling cooperated with the Nationalists during her imprisonment. Ding Ling attributed all her resentment to the Nationalist government. Even though Wang Shengdi, a former Communist who converted to the Nationalists, reminded her that Hu Yeyin was arrested because a Communist informed on him to the Nationalists, Ding Ling refused to listen to him; she insisted: "Hu Yepin was killed by the KMT."[54] As history reveals, Hu's death resulted from the struggle for power between the Bolsheviks and the native Communists within the CCP.[55]

Ding Ling downplayed the easy life of her Nanjing days. Instead, she tried hard to impress on readers that she experienced trials every day. She portrayed the circumstances as a ghostly hell. However, her presentation of the prison environment does not substantiate her argument. Only if she had enough evidence to prove that she had tasted bitterness could Ding Ling prove her loyalty and dedication to revolution and the Communists. During the 50 years between the arrest and the memoir, she did not bring up the subject of her imprisonment. She avoided it in her first publication after regaining freedom by using obscure words:

> Unexpectedly, I got a chance to be away, living in a sequestered place. Time passed. It was three years long. Although I had absolute space and more materials, I did not write. I just kept thinking. Thinking too much made me fret.[56]

She was evasive about her days in Nanjing to avoid both offending the KMT and evoking suspicion from the CCP. If she painted her life in Nanjing as oppressive, the Nationalists would be unhappy and prove that she was not telling the truth. If she revealed any of the ease and comfort she had enjoyed in Nanjing, the Communists would think she must have collaborated with the KMT and betrayed the Communists. Ding Ling chose to recount her imprisonment in Nanjing only when it was safe to do so. Her accounts served as both a belated accusation of the KMT and a confession to the CCP.

World of Ghosts functioned as a site where Ding Ling could unleash her bitterness over the 50 years of trials she endured. It does not stem from her confinement by the KMT government, but from the long years under the Communist regime. In other words, she only went through the bitterness when the so-called "bitter days" were over. What she endured under the Communist regime after the Nanjing imprisonment was much more severe than the three years in

Nanjing. Paradoxically, her other memoir about the decade in Heilongjiang was motivated by a different agenda, though both recollections record hard times.

The Great Northern Wasteland: Universe of Wind and Snow

In 1958, when her husband Chen Ming was sent down to Heilongjiang to carry out labor reform, Ding Ling voluntarily joined him in constructing the Great Northern Wasteland. She ended up spending 12 years there before being sent to jail in Qincheng in Hebei in 1970. During those years, along with many other wrongly labeled rightists sent to the countryside for labor reform, Ding Ling performed various kinds of farm work—raising chickens, cultivating the land, and the routine chores of a peasant family—while suffering from chronic diabetes. When the Cultural Revolution broke out, she experienced a harder time, being severely persecuted by the Red Guards from Beijing. After she was rehabilitated, and subsequently actively engaged in a variety of cultural activities, Ding Ling tried hard to catch up on the works she had conceived of but neglected during the previous two decades. In her last and posthumous work, Ding Ling told of her bitter days in the Great Northern Wasteland.

Universe of Wind and Snow is composed of two parts. In part one, Ding Ling relates her arrival in the Great Northern Wasteland and the peaceful early days there. Despite the challenge of adjusting to the harsh living conditions, she leads a relatively easy life since she is far away from the intense struggle in Beijing and the people are nice to her. Part two tells of the affliction she experiences in the cowshed after the Cultural Revolution spreads out to Heilongjiang. Ding Ling recounts a series of examples of human kindness in her life during that time, her gratitude for those who helped her, and her enjoyment of mixing with the grassroots. Even though she suffered a lot, she does not express any hatred either for the Party or for the Red Guards who struggled against her. She even forgives and misses the young women who scorned her and kept her from taking a noon nap. Compared to many other memoirs about the antirightist movement and Cultural Revolution, *Universe of Wind and Snow* is less loaded with charges against the Party or her personal rival. Ding Ling seems not to have connected her own unfortunate experience with the Party or the state. She just told her personal story, without much reflection or remorse, but full of forgiveness for those who maltreated her.

Given the recentness of the events narrated in the memoir and the availability of relevant archives and documents, *Universe of Wind and Snow* does not impress readers with unknown facts or reveal secrets hidden in the author's memory. To say this is not to depreciate this work; the low-key tone in which Ding Ling narrates the long suffering of 20 years could be more symptomatic of her trauma without scars than accusations drenched with blood and tears. People who wonder at her identification with the Party despite all the unfairness it heaped upon her should be more puzzled and even impressed by the mighty power of the Party to brainwash: No matter what has been done to the person, the person identifies with the Party.

World of Ghosts and *Universe of Wind and Snow* cannot be fully understood without reference to each other. Even though both are about misfortune under a political regime, the agenda of each is very different. *World of Ghosts* aspires to curse the evil Nationalist oppression of intellectuals and writers. In contrast, *Universe of Wind and Snow* does not appear to express any dissatisfaction with or complaint about the CCP. Ding Ling led a harsher life, encountered more insult and struggle, and was more unfairly treated in the Great Northern Wasteland than in Nanjing. Nevertheless, she did not express any appreciation for the special and generous treatment she received from the Nationalists during those three years, and she did not make any complaint about the 20 years in the cold and isolated northeast, where she endured both natural hardship and social humiliation. When she was finally rehabilitated, she was very grateful to the CCP for having restored her position and reputation.

The titles of these two memoirs are much more revealing than their contents. *World of Ghosts* was intended to describe the monstrous atmosphere of society under Nationalist control. But the circumstances reflected in the memoir are not as ghostly as might be expected from the title. On the contrary, the heroine in the narrative enjoys considerable freedom. There was no intense antagonism between Ding Ling and the KMT agents, and it seems that they got along. Given the ease of her life during imprisonment—aside from the absence of social freedom—Ding Ling could have been content with her situation. However, she tried so hard to convince the audience that the world she lived in was as hideous as a hell. Unfortunately, she did not suffer enough to show that she had maintained partisanship, integrity and loyalty to the Party. She was treated like a special guest, so much so that some Nationalist officials were jealous of her. She even got a chance to receive higher official company on her vacations. Ding Ling managed to sustain her dignity as a human being under the confined supervision of the Nationalists.

Ding Ling applied natural tropes to the title of her memoir about her self-exile in the Great Northern Wasteland. *Fengxue renjian* literally means a human world of snow and wind, a vivid description of the harsh natural environment of northeast China. A synoptic disadvantage that was a feature of the region where she lived with so much suffering became a synecdoche for both the endurance of natural disaster and social injustice. The title implies a sociopolitical ordeal set in the context of natural disadvantage, connoting the apocalyptic significance of the disaster of the Cultural Revolution. As soon as we compare her life in Nanjing and in Heilongjiang, it is apparent that the latter was a lot harder. She lost the basic dignity of a human being and had to endure humiliation and struggle. The Great Northern Wasteland was much more an inferno than Nanjing. And it was more a world of ghosts, especially during the Cultural Revolution, when all of China was full of ox demons and snake ghosts. In this sense, *World of Ghosts* is a more appropriate title for *Universe of Wind and Snow*. Ding Ling's husband and posthumous spokesman, Chen Ming, reinforced the politics of the titles of the two memoirs:

> Ding Ling entitled her memoir recording her imprisoned days by the Nationalists in Nanjing *World of Ghosts*. At that time, the outward environment was indeed full of ghosts and spirits, like a hell. She named this one *Universe of Wind and Snow* because even though the wind and snow were chilly enough to penetrate to the marrow, she was in a human world, after all. She could still feel the warmth of human beings.[57]

It is paradoxical that Ding Ling tried to portray her humane life when she was confined in Nanjing as an inhuman ghostly world but only moderately degraded the world during the Cultural Revolution in the Great Northern Wasteland to a naturally undesirable universe. Thus the hidden agenda—dehumanizing the Nationalists and naturalizing the Communists—that lies beneath the titles of the memoirs emerges. The introduction of natural tropes in the title of *Universe of Wind and Snow* inadvertently exposes Ding Ling's effort, wish, and inability to make sense of her suffering. The national disaster for Ding Ling, as the Cultural Revolution unfolded full of blood and tears of thousands of people, comes naturally, just as the wind and snow come to the Great Northern Wasteland every year. She overcame innumerable trials and hardships to reach the Promised Land at Yan'an, which did not reward her with a promising future. Instead, she paid several times over her imprisoned time in Najing in the Great Northern Wasteland. A quarter of her life was wasted.

The four sites I have selected here are the spaces in which Ding Ling was struggling, either with herself or with others. When she was in Beijing, Ding Ling articulated the wandering and distress of a young woman intellectual through Sophia's voice. After Hu Yepin's death, Ding Ling revived Sophia and identified herself with the character. This time, in the fictional diary, she acted out what Sophia's life might have been like in real life. The genre of diary-fiction provided a channel to regain her senses and express her sentiments in searching for her self. As for the hard times in Nanjing and the Great Northern Wasteland, she did not record these on site; once she was restored, however, she started the project of reenacting her personal history. Although there was not much time in between the composition of these two works, the memoirs have different agendas—one to curse the Nationalist oppression and the other to rationalize the national disaster under the Communist regime. As a result, Nanjing and the Great Northern Wasteland are presented as completely different spaces, the world of ghosts and the human world. The two spaces are displaced: The world she named as ghostly turned out to be full of more human sentiments, while the world she called human was a universe of demons and ghosts.

Notes

1 Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 65.
2 Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art," in *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 458–484.

3 Xiao Hong, "A Sleepless Night (Shimian zhiye)," in *Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Women's Literature from the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy D. Dooling and Kristina M. Torgeson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 363–366.
4 Xiao Hong, *Shang shi jie* (Market street), trans. Howard Goldblatt (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1986), 42.
5 These poems could be those included in *Xiao Hong shi zi xuan* (Self collected poems of Xiao Hong), never published, in a manuscript stored at the Lu Xun Museum in Beijing.
6 Xiao Hong, "Qi'er (Abandoned child)," in *Xiao Hong xiaoshuo quanji* (Complete stories of Xiao Hong) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1996), 149.
7 "Hunger," *Market Street*, 23–29.
8 Goldblatt, "Introduction," *Market Street*, xv.
9 The story was written on May 21, 1933, and published in the supplement to *Datong bao* (Cosmopolitan), *Yeshao* (Night post). It was included in the collection *Bashe* (Trudging), by Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun and published with their own funds in October 1933.
10 Meng Yue, "*Bai mao nü* yanbian de qishi (Revelation of the transformation of *White-haired Girl*)," in *Zai jiedu: dazhong wenyi yu yishi xingtai* (Rereading: mass literature/arts and ideology), ed. Tang Xiaobing (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 68–89.
11 Howard Goldblatt, trans., *Two Novels by Hsiao Hong* (*The Field of Life and Death* and *Tales of Hulan River*) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 53–54.
12 Ibid., 56.
13 Ibid., 40.
14 Lydia Liu. "The Female Body and Nationalist Discourse: Manchuria in Xiao Hong's *Field of Life and Death*," in *Body, Subjects and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 157–177.
15 Lu Xun, "Preface to *The Field of Life and Death*," in Howard Goldblatt, trans., *Two Novels by Hsiao Hong* (*The Field of Life and Death* and *Tales of Hulan River*) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 277–279.
16 The other two novels listed in the same series are Ye Zi's *Fengshou* (Harvest), and Xiao Jun's *Bayue de xiangcun* (Village in August).
17 Hu Feng, "Epilogue to *The Field of Life and Death*," in Howard Goldblatt, trans., *Two Novels by Hsiao Hong* (*The Field of Life and Death* and *Tales of Hulan River*) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 279–282.
18 For a full discussion of Shen Congwen as a prominent native soil writer, see David Der-wei Wang, "Imaginary Nostalgia: Shen Congwen and Native Soil Fiction," in *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 247–289.
19 Goldblatt, *Two Novels by Hsiao Hong*, 113–114.
20 Ibid., 288–289.
21 Ibid., 275.
22 Ibid.
23 Shari Benstock, "Authorizing the Autobiographical," in *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Shari Benstock (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 10–33.
24 Felicia Ho presents the selfhood in Xiao Hong's works that transcend the limits of Euro-American and Chinese patriarchal nationalism. Chapter 4, "Xiao Hong's Spectrum of Selves," in "Full Spectrum of Selves in Modern Chinese Literature: From Lu Xun to Xiao Hong," PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2012.
25 Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 13–60.

26 In January 1941, the Nationalist Army trapped and killed 9,000 members of the Communists' New Fourth Army, including high-ranking military officers such as central commander Ye Ting, and their relatives.
27 Xiao Hong, *Xiao Hong xiaoshuo quanji* (Complete stories of Xiao Hong) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1996), vol. 2, 343.
28 Lisa H. Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees," in *Culture, Power, and Place: Exploration in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 52–74.
29 Xiao Hong, *Xiao Hong xiaoshuo quanji*, 343.
30 Ibid., 365.
31 "Paul Ma" is an enlarged version of a short story, "Taonan (Escape)," recounting the experience of a junior-high school teacher, He Nansheng, who flees from Nanjing to Shaanxi. *Xiaohong xiaoshuo quanji* (Complete works of Xiao Hong), 213–220.
32 Xiao Hong, "Zhi Hua Gang (To Hua Gang)," in *Xiao Hong xiaoshuo quanji* (Complete stories of Xiao Hong) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1996), vol. 2, 1311.
33 Ibid., 1308.
34 Ibid., 1313.
35 Luo Binji, *Xiao Hong xiao zhuan* (A brief biography of Xiao Hong) (Shanghai: Jianwen shudian, 1947), 155–160.
36 People may question this point with the case of Qiu Jin (1875–1907), a martyr during the Republican Revolution. The thing that primarily differentiates Ding Ling from Qiu Jin is that the former was a writer to begin with while the latter emerged as a revolutionary even though she composed prose and lyrics.
37 For scholarship about the genre of diary-fiction in European literature, see H. Porter Abbott, *Diary Fiction: Writing as Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Lorna Martens, *The Diary Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
38 The distinction between diary and diary-fiction is that diary writing recounts what happened based on real life, while diary-fiction borrows the form of diary writing but introduces a narrative that is not necessarily a record of real life. In other words, diary writing is defined by virtue of its content but diary-fiction is named after its form.
39 This incident is presented as one of the cases of high-handed cultural oppression by the Nationalists in China. The internecine struggle within the CCP led to the tragic loss. See Tsi-an Hsia, "Enigma of the Five Martyrs," in *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1968), 163–233.
40 Ding Ling won Mao's favor upon her arrival in Yan'an. Mao even composed a lyric (*ci*), "Lin Jiang Xian," which was sent to Ding Ling at the front by telegram.
41 Feng Jin, "The 'Bold Modern Girl': Ding Ling's Early Fiction," in *The New Woman in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001), 149–170; Yan Haiping, "Rhythm of the Unreal [I]: Early Ding Ling and a Feminist Passage," in *Chinese Women Writers and the Feminist Imagination, 1905–1948* (London: Routledge, 2006), 168–199.
42 See Yuan Liangjun, *Ding Ling yanjiu ziliao* (Ding Ling study) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986); Andrew Schonebaum. "Vectors of Contagion and Tuberculosis in Modern Chinese Literature," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 17–46.
43 Ding Ling, "Zisha riji (Suicidal diary)," in *Ding Ling wenji* (Collected works of Ding Ling) (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1983), vol. 2, 171–180.
44 Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker, *Ding Ling's Fiction: Ideology and Narrative in Modern Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 38.
45 Ding Ling, "Yiwaiji zixu (Preface to unexpected collection)," in *Ding Ling yanjiu*

ziliao (Ding Ling study), ed. Yuan Liangjun (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986), 112–113.

46 Ding Ling, "Yangma de riji (Madam Yang's diary)," in *Ding Ling wenji* (Collected works of Ding Ling) (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1983), vol. 3, 55–59.

47 In the text, Madam Yang calls her master "Sun Xiansheng" or "Mr. Sun." In the Republican era, it was common to address a female intellectual as "Mr." to show respect, especially when the woman assumed the role of a teacher.

48 In *Ding Ling wenji*, vol. 2, 171–180.

49 Ibid.

50 Aiura Akira, "Riji wenxue: Shafei nushi de riji yu kuangren riji fushi de yitong (Diary literature: similarities and difference between *Miss Sophia's Diary*, *Diary of a Madman*, and *Erosion*)," in *Ding Ling yu zhongguo xin wenxue: Ding Ling chuangzuo liushi zhounian xueshu taolunhui zhuanji* (Ding Ling and Chinese new literature: a special collection of the Symposium in Commemoration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of Ding Ling's Creation) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1988), 226–235.

51 Feng Jin, *The New Woman*, 180.

52 Ding Ling, "Zhangtoucun shenghuo riji (Days in Zhangtou village)," in *Ding Ling wenji* (Collected works of Ding Ling) (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1995), vol. 9, 330.

53 Ding Ling, *Wangliang shijie, fengxue renjian: Ding Ling de huiyi* (World of ghosts, universe of wind and snow: Ding Ling's memoir) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1989), 100.

54 Ibid., 16.

55 Tsi-an Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness*, 163–233.

56 Ding Ling, "Yiwai ji zixu," *Ding Ling yanjiu ziliao*, 112.

57 Chen Ming, "*Fengxue renjian* qianyan (Preface to *Universe of Wind and Snow*)," in *Fengxue renjian* (Universe of wind and snow) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1987).

4 Dialectics of retreat and return

Spatial imagination between the mainland and Taiwan in the 1950s

In 1949, with the power of the Communists growing across the mainland, the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan to preserve their remaining forces. Since then, the strait between the mainland and the island has cut one nation into two, with both claiming to be the legitimate China.[1] The absolute physical division of national space did not prevent them from imagining each other across a brief passage of time and distance. Besides sporadic military conflict, the confrontation between the Nationalists and Communists continued in the form of words, but the battle in the literary field has been no less ferocious than in the field of arms.

Both Taiwan and the mainland encouraged the excessive production of propaganda literature, which ran to millions of words in place of millions of bullets. After four years of mortal conflict between the Communists and Nationalists from 1945 to 1949, both parties finally got a respite. Intriguingly, in spite of the enemy being at a safe distance, neither of them seemed confident about the rare peace they had achieved, although they had longed for it for more than a decade; nor did they fully enjoy the time free from strife. Both were disturbed by the imaginary coming of the enemy. Thus, the factual spatial separation did not cut the psychological tie, whether in the form of interdependence or hatred. Both Communist and Nationalist lived in the shadow of the other's intimidating image. The battle in the imaginary realm between the Communists and the Nationalists spoke of the discord between national space and the psychological sphere. The inability of territorial sovereignty and spatial independence to guarantee a free mind in the psychic universe is best represented in the contest between the revolutionary-historical novel in mainland China and anti-Communist fiction in Taiwan.

On the surface, Chinese literature on both sides of the strait diverged in terms of thematic concerns and narrative structure. However, the political motivation and aesthetic principles that directed literary production were fundamentally the same. During the early period of the PRC, epic-scale novels flourished, a genre later referred to as revolutionary-historical novels (*geming lishi xiaoshuo*). These "red classics" typically told the story of heroic figures in revolutionary history with a teleological orientation and went on to frame an entire generation's public memory of national history. In Taiwan, under the KMT's propagandistic crusade

to return to the mainland, writers first attempted reconquest through literary fiction. This latter category of works is called "anti-Communist fiction" because of its political commitment.

Both revolutionary-historical novels and anti-Communist fiction register the physical division of China, as well as the psychological consequences of the national divide, in their ostensible stance of being true to reality. No matter how poignant each one is in disclosing the other's wrongdoing, injustice, and moral degeneration, the Nationalists and the Communists meet in these works—almost without exception—on the old battlefield of the years before 1949. For the revolutionary-historical novelists, their project is to imagine their own land and space. For the writers of anti-Communist fiction, it is to imagine the space that once belonged to them but has been lost. In this chapter, by comparing revolutionary-historical novels and anti-Communist fiction, with Du Pengcheng's *Baowei Yan'an* (Guarding Yan'an, 1954) and Chen Jiying's *Chidi* (Red earth, 1955) as examples, I investigate how the spatial imagination across the strait between the mainland and Taiwan operated on the level of narrative, and how this imagination reflected and embodied the psychological repercussions of the split in 1949.

Following the spatial categorization discussed earlier in this book, this chapter is divided into three parts. First, I look at the issue of locality, showing the significance of physical space in reality through fiction. Like the cardinal importance of specific locations in military maneuvering, fictional settings offer both revolutionary-historical novels and anti-Communist fiction prime positions from which to attack the other. Meanwhile, these localities illuminate the human attachment of both the Communists and the Nationalists to specific places. Second, I investigate the trialectics of individual, family, and nation, analyzing the social construction of human relations as advocated by both parties in their respective generic representations. Family as the nexus between individual and nation is given different degrees of priority by each side. Third, I use the dialectic between retreat and return to expose the way localities are reclaimed by both parties in their constructions of symbolic space. For émigré mainlanders in Taiwan, exile on the small island was supposed to be temporary. They strongly believed that they would return to their home(land) in the near future. Desire for real or imaginary possession introduces heavenly power into the natural world so that symbolic space is connected with the supernatural world.

Revered as the revolutionary cradle of Chinese Communists, Yan'an has received ample popular and critical interest. He Jingzhi's 1956 poem "Return to Yan'an" is familiar to several generations because it was included in the middle school Chinese textbook.[2] Reporters and researchers on the Chinese Communist Revolution have noted the geographical distinctions of Yan'an and its significance since Mao's arrival there. I will not rehash the critical consensus on Yan'an as a geographical site, incubator of Chinese Communist revolution, and its long-lasting influence in Chinese life. The revolutionary manifestations in Yan'an's physical and social location have been brought to the fore by Edgar Snow, Mark Selden, Shum Kui-kwong, David Apter, and Tony Saich.[3] My

concern in this chapter is larger than Yan'an per se. I take Yan'an as a synecdoche to see how the national space is literarily imagined, socially configured, and symbolically claimed through the revolutionary-historical novel. This spatial imagination is especially poignant, given that a regime outside the mainland—the Nationalists in Taiwan—claims this very territory and the anti-Communist fiction writers convey the same desire to reclaim it.

On top of the comparative and contrastive investigation of the revolutionary-historical novel and anti-Communist fiction through the spectacle of space, the chapter takes the cause of the antagonism between the mainland and Taiwan to be the intervention of the other.[4] Jacques Lacan's postpsychoanalytical discussion of the split of self and the other in one entity[5] is useful here, alongside the phenomenologist Emmanuel Levinas's concept of the self and other manifest in two different entities.[6] The enmity between the mainland and Taiwan immediately after the great divide in 1949 mostly resulted from the threat of the other, both real and imaginary. Because of the existence of the aggressive other, each self cannot achieve its completion, nor can it be content as an independent national entity. Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection is instructive for understanding the Nationalist campaign to profane the mainland in view of the Communist crusade to construct a sacred Yan'an.[7] The mainland to the Nationalists is the abject; it is where the Nationalists emanate from. Since it has been taken over by the Communists and has lost its purity, the Nationalists are forced to abnegate it. Yet the mainland continues to be an object of eternal longing.

The two parties across the strait are so alike in self-presentation, political coercion and psychic disturbance. But neither side could admit this resemblance. Each side needs the other to provide and reinforce the legitimacy of its political structure and ideological inculcation. In other words, they offer each other the premise of existence but disidentify with each other. Ironically, it seems that neither party realizes that in revealing the devilry of the other, they inadvertently expose their own vices, however industrious they are in persuading people of their own virtues. The Communists and the Nationalists are paired like the one and its other in the mirror, splitting and collaborating for more than two decades.

Locality matters: Yan'an versus red earth

Methodologically, it may seem outdated to focus on fictional settings in an effort to discover the meaning of certain works or genres. One might argue that all literary works are set in a certain scene or that structuralism reached its limit in the last century. So why bother to stress localities? First, in the two genres under discussion, fictional locality goes beyond its textual parameters. It initiates a dialogue with history and social politics as a consequence of the formulae used in these works and as part of their overt political functions. It is deeply integrated into the miniature reconstruction of social relations, the background for symbolic significance, as well as a site of psychological consolation. Second, revolutionary-historical novels and anti-Communist fiction are usually discussed in terms of historical construction, in which national history is written and reinforced while

spatial construction, including territorial definition, demarcation of national space, and the imaginary possession of another land—is neglected. Spatiality has fallen victim to a narrow and conservative comprehension of history, which is sometimes mechanically combined with the evolution and even the revolution of historical processes. This tendency is embodied in the term "revolutionary-historical novel," as if it had little to do with space, and the genre might more usefully be termed "revolutionary-spatial novel."

I see the construction of localities in *Guarding Yan'an* and *Red Earth* as an attempt to transcend both the physical environment and actual events by scrutinizing the spatial and temporal coordinates of sociopolitical history. I argue that these sites are careful and purposeful constructions intended to shed light on particular aspects of society. Organizing a fictional space is more than a textual effort. It mirrors and envisions human societies, and thus shapes the world in which we live. This may seem an overstated reaffirmation of the value of literature, but within the rubric of various slogans advocated in literary production on both sides of the strait, its utility is evident. People shared the conviction that those in the other space were as vicious in the past as described in the fiction, and remain so. At one level, the problem of space—physical or social—can be posed quite simply: It is assumed that revolution is strictly and properly an affair of redirecting history, but in fact, the actual possession of physical space is prior to revolutionary change in history. In this sense, writing or rewriting history can only be possible after the acquisition of land. With half a century's hindsight, whether by Communists or Nationalists, space represented as localities in the aggressive literature on both sides deserves to be seen as an active force in literary texts and social context.

As the category of the revolutionary-historical novel indicates, and as most works within the category demonstrate, *Guarding Yan'an* pivots on the task of shaping the history of the revolutionary period in favor of the Communists. Plenty of scholarship has addressed the historical orientation of these writings in recent years.[8] As a complement to the historical significance of this group of works usually emphasized and discussed in depth by literary critics, here I highlight the usually neglected feature of space in the revolutionary-historical novel, with *Guarding Yan'an* as the case in point. Space, as expounded in the opening of this book, denotes meanings in at least three layers: the physical, the social, and the symbolic. First, the revolutionary-historical novels are all set at the sites of former battles with the Japanese or with the Nationalists. This physical site of battle always refers to the real site of conflict, like a *mise-en-scène* for staging the real battle. Second, the protagonists in the revolutionary-historical novels break down the structure of traditional family relations and the kin unit and instead build up a communal society based upon class identity. Third, the revolutionary-historical novel expresses a collective desire to possess the old battlefield, if not the whole mainland. These works construct a symbolic space to achieve that imaginary reconquest.

The authors of the works under discussion both had firsthand experience of the places in which they set their novels. Du Pengcheng (1921–91) was born in

the small town of Hancheng in Shaanxi. For a time he attended a Christian primary school and accepted the Christian faith, but he abandoned it when he found that God did not answer his prayers for food. He said years later: "Hunger is more powerful than God."[9] Du participated in anti-Japanese activities in 1937 through the Liberation Pioneers of the Chinese Nation (*Zhonghua minzu jiefang xianqiandui*), an organization affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In 1938 he went to Yan'an, and he entered Yan'an University in 1941. He joined the CCP in 1945 and started his career as a journalist.

Du started composing *Guarding Yan'an* as early as 1947, when he joined the No. 2 Column of the Northwestern Field Army for the battles around Yan'an. The main sources of the novel include Mao Zedong's "Issues on Tactics of Chinese Revolutionary War" (*Zhongguo geming zhanzheng de zhanlüe wenti*), commentaries and editorials by the Xinhua News Agency, and news reports, essays, reportage, plays, and journals that he had written himself. He originally planned to write a full-length report recounting the whole process of the Liberation War[10] in the northwest, from the retreat from Yan'an to the expedition to Pamirs. Du finished a draft of a million words in 1950. In the next three years, he revised the novel nine times, making hundreds of changes, and finally completed it at the end of 1953. Once published in 1954, the novel was so well received that it was reprinted three times, over one million copies in five years.

Like Du Pengcheng, Chen Jiying was well known as a veteran newsman. He had worked at *Dagongbao* (L'impartial) during the early 1930s in the north before he established his fame as an anti-Communist fiction writer in Taiwan in the 1950s.[11] In 1945, after the Sino-Japanese War was over, he visited Manchuria from Chongqing as a representative of the Nationalist government to assist with the takeover. In 1947 he went to the northeast for the second time. The following year, he witnessed the Nationalist loss to the Communists. In 1949 he escaped in haste from Beiping (today's Beijing) with his family, going to Taiwan. Chen became one of the first writers to take up a pen in the fight against the Communists in the 1950s.

Besides sharing the profession of journalism, both Du and Chen harbored an emotional attachment to the places they wrote about. In his postscript, Du described in detail the process of writing *Guarding Yan'an*. In 1950 he returned to Shaanxi from the frontier Xinjiang with the manuscript to visit his dying mother. He found her dead when he finally reached his home. In deep regret and grief over this loss, Du began his nine revisions of the manuscript that led to its publication in 1954. The parallel between the author's loss of his mother and the Communist loss of Yan'an may not be merely a coincidence. Du's recollection of his mother upon completion of his book speaks of the melancholy that the Communists suffered when they lost the cradleland of Yan'an. Freud's theorization on mourning and melancholia is especially helpful in understanding Du's double loss in both the text and context of *Guarding Yan'an*.[12] Chen's connection with the mainland is more provocative. On the one hand, he cannot help expressing abhorrence toward the defilement of the mainland by the Communists. On the other hand, he also articulates a strong desire to return to and

reclaim the motherland. In the following, I will examine in detail the significance of Yan'an and red earth as fictional localities.

Defending Yan'an or deserting Yan'an

Yan'an had been both the revolutionary Mecca and the cradle of Chinese Communism since 1935. It was in Yan'an that the Red Army found the resources and safe conditions they needed to recover after the enormous losses they suffered during the Long March. During the decade between 1935 and 1945, the northern Shaanxi area, with Yan'an at its center, served as the revolutionary base and shelter for the Chinese Communists to expand their own forces while the Nationalist army was preoccupied with fighting the Japanese. The Japanese defeat on August 15, 1945, brought Chinese people peace only temporarily. The war between the Communists and the Nationalists broke out when they could not reach an agreement during the negotiations in Chongqing in October 1945. Yan'an, as the Communist center, undoubtedly became the target of Nationalist attack. *Guarding Yan'an* tells of the series of battles that took place in 1947 during the retreat of Mao Zedong and the Central Party from Yan'an on the eve of the Nationalist approach.

Yan'an is not only a physical site for the Communists and the Nationalists to fight over but, more importantly, a *totem* of Chinese Communist revolution. Because of the sacred symbolic meaning of Yan'an in Communist discourse and practice, any destructive acts against it are considered profane and blasphemous. In this sense, the Communist loss of Yan'an to the Nationalists becomes a taboo subject.[13] Yan'an is where the Chinese Communists first built the structure of the People's Republic. Therefore, Yan'an holds a more significant position than other revolutionary bases like Jinggangshan in Chinese revolutionary geography—after all, the victory in Jinggangshan was fleeting and the area was finally lost to the KMT. When the Nationalists approached Yan'an, the reluctance of the Communists to retreat was as much as a determination to guard the red capital, a feeling that is fully expressed in *Guarding Yan'an*. Since the loss of Yan'an to the Nationalists was an irreversible fact, imaginary possession became a mission for those engaged in cultural production. Moreover, literary works of imaginary possession served as therapy for those suffering from the actual loss of Yan'an.

Du Pengcheng intended to compose an epic on the "Liberation War" fought in the northwest from 1945 to 1949. After numerous revisions, his work was distilled into a close-up of the battlefield within the area around Yan'an. These repetitions of the writing process not only aimed to present a picture of the long and hard development of a revolutionary-historical novel but also, more important, to explore the reason and rationale for this shrinkage in scope. Du stated in a straightforward way why Yan'an should be positioned at center stage: "The north of Shaanxi and Yan'an made innumerable contributions to Chinese revolution.… Because the Central CCP and Chairman Mao are in Yan'an, Yan'an becomes the heart of China, the headquarters of Chinese revolution, and the

source of victory."[14] These two sentences show the significance of Yan'an to Chinese revolution both factually and metaphorically. While the cornerstone of *Guarding Yan'an* is how much Yan'an contributed to the Chinese revolution, in the novel that place is presented more as a backdrop to the construction of idealized socialist prototypes.

Over a short period, Chinese people developed an intense attachment to Yan'an that manifested itself not only in their everyday behavior, but also in a vast number of texts, including song lyrics, reportage, fiction, and film. This attachment flows from the practice of superimposing certain values on Yan'an, even ascribing holiness to it. Once the Red Army arrived in 1935, the CCP began to shape Yan'an as the heart of Chinese revolution. As the end of the long trail of 25,000 *li*,[15] Yan'an was presented as a blessed home for the Chinese Communists: It is a holy place in Chinese geography. As such, it necessarily involves cult rites. People pay reverence to Yan'an and would give their lives to protect it from blasphemy. The war over Yan'an in this sense became a crusade on the Communist side. Unfortunately and ironically, the campaign to defend Yan'an actually resulted in the abandonment of the holy center, under the euphemistic name of better defending it.

The Red Earth*: the mainland*

As opposed to the Communists' efforts to defend their sacred home, the Nationalists spared no pains to profane their old homeland. While Du Pengcheng was constructing his literary defense of Yan'an, his counterpart in Taiwan, Chen Jiying, was pursuing a similar project of relating the Nationalist loss of the northeast and Beiping to the Communists. In *Red Earth*, Chen chronicles the vicissitudes of the Fan family from 1945 to 1949, the years of the wars between the CCP and the KMT. As the author writes, the family saga that is the backdrop to his story was drawn from real historical events of the period. But the characters and the plot are narrated as fiction, centered on two generations of the Fan family. Three brothers—Fan Jin, an old intellectual holding on to traditional orthodox values; Fan Shen, a frustrated progressive patriot; and Fan Tong, an active bureaucrat in the Nationalist government—lead their lives in different directions after the victory over the Japanese in 1945. The second generation—including Zhiying, a devoted army officer, unafraid to die for the Nationalist cause; Zhijie, a rebellious Communist; and Zhihao, a financial opportunist—are all striving for a way out of the political mire in which they are stuck.

Red Earth can be placed in the literary tradition of family sagas that stretches from the May Fourth enlightenment initiated by Ba Jin in the 1920s to the work of Lao She in the 1930s.[16] To this tradition Chen added an ideological message. He employed a Nationalist cliché to explain his motives for writing: He had wanted to condemn the contagious disaster of the red takeover of the mainland in the short four-year period after the Sino-Japanese War.[17] Besides sharing the determination and commitment to "fight against the Communists, restore the nation" with all anti-Communist fiction, Chen declared the multiple tasks of *Red*

Earth: to convey the suffering and passion of the Nationalist people to the world in order to restore justice, to record the lessons to be learned from the failure of the national project, to compose an elegy for Chinese society during the four years after the Sino-Japanese War, to footnote Chinese history before its loss (to the Communists), and to take an oath to fight the Communists and restore the nation.[18]

At the beginning of the story, three young army officers—Leng Fang, Fan Zhiying, and Feng Zihe—withdraw from the anti-Japanese front at the end of the war. They stop by the Fan household in Beiping and then proceed on their way to help take the northeast from the Communists.[19] Because of the Communists' growing power and Soviet intervention, Manchuria does not fall into Nationalist hands after the Japanese surrender. As devoted Nationalist fighters, the three comrades join the guerilla war against the Communists. They have to retreat in defeat as the Nationalists gradually lose land and people in the northeast. They finally manage a narrow escape and make it back to Beiping, only to find that they have to make a larger and longer escape to the island of Taiwan.

Red Earth is set mainly in the northeast and Beiping, places that figured prominently in Chen's personal life. Chen realistically describes the cruelty and bleakness of the battlefield in the northeast. Besides the slaughter that the three aspirant youths witness in the guerilla war, Hongxi Street in the suburb of Changchun is described as an earthly inferno. Because of the Communist blockade, the food supply to Changchun has been suspended for a few months. City residents flee to survive, and the only way out is Hongxi Street. Communist troops construct a network of electrified cables to keep people from escaping so that the area around Hongxi Street becomes a Chinese Auschwitz. People attempting escape are electrocuted. The street becomes a death valley with thousands of corpses piled up, rotten and stinking. Among the bodies are thousands of starving refugees struggling to survive. The boundary between life and death is totally blurred. Living people are scattered around, and the street will soon become their grave. When they are finally able to leave, they find that no better future awaits them: The Nationalist stronghold of Jinzhou is lost; General Fan Hanjie has been captured; the Communist troops are attacking Shenyang. By the time Leng Fang leads the retreat to Shenyang, the city has fallen to the Communists. Now deranged, Leng is taken back to Beiping by his comrade Fan Zhiying.

Chen chose to set his novel in the northeast and Beiping because they hold a special place in the topography of the Chinese imagination. As depicted in the novel, the northeast has always had an ambiguous relationship with the central mainland. Throughout China's long history, no government has ever secured lasting or firm control over this frontier. Intermittently harassed by the foreign nationalities of Korea and Yamato since the eighth century, the northeast has wavered between forced loyalty to the imperial court in central China and slavery to regimes in the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese archipelago, and even Vladivostok. The area suffered more mishaps from the late nineteenth century, including the confrontation with the Japanese, which culminated in the establishment of the puppet government of Manchuria in 1932.[20] The Japanese surrender

gave the Chinese people hope for the recovery of the long-lost land in the northeast. But because of Soviet intrusion and Communist interference with the takeover, the Nationalists were finally squeezed out of the area. Possession of the northeast would have made China complete, and its loss was seen as an ominous sign. When they returned to Beiping, the Nationalists found their chances of taking over China even slimmer.

In the novel, in contrast to the chaotic battlefield in the northeast (except for the damage to the city at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937), Beiping survives the war unscathed and resumes its role as the Nationalist capital in 1945. Moreover, Beiping serves as the symbol of Chinese orthodoxy and cultural essence, which is to some extent incompatible with the progressive revolutionary culture. As opposed to the overwhelming pro-Communist atmosphere in places like Yan'an, Beiping still acknowledges a leisure culture and allows for the existence of a group of people who do not quite identify with the Communist agenda, whose pursuit of leisure is not much interrupted by the ongoing war despite the inconveniences caused by political instability. This leisure class has to work for bare necessities too. They do not belong to the privileged class or have any property, but survive through street peddling. Yet they are indifferent to the Communist cause that claims to liberate the lower class. Furthermore, the Fan residence in Beiping is a microcosm of preserved Chinese traditions. Their residence complex is the quintessential traditional Chinese household, with three compounds and courtyards, connecting verandas, and wings on both the east and west. The living rooms are decorated with rare paintings and calligraphy by Tang Yin and Xu Shichang.[21] This depiction of the Fans' household accords with the Nationalist belief that they have inherited the orthodox legacy of Chinese tradition and culture.

The juxtaposition of the northeast and Beiping illuminates the dual relationship of the frontier to the capital. For while the frontier often separates itself from the central capital but cannot cut its connection, the central capital always aims to have control over the frontier but cannot fully achieve it. The tension between the territorial margin and the center enhances the unpredictability of the frontier's future. In *Red Earth*, the loss of the frontier eventually makes the possession of the capital hazardous. No matter how strong the Nationalist determination to protect their old capital, when the border is lost to the enemy, the city's fate is in the other's hands.

Constructing social space: the trialectics of individual, family, and nation

As defined above, social space is understood as the architecture of social relations, and the particular concern of this chapter is the relationships among people as they are placed in society. Two aspects of social space to consider are family and nation, both based upon specific definitions of human relations, genealogy, class, and the subordinate relationship of the family unit to the nation. This section explores social space in *Red Earth* and *Guarding Yan'an*, with an emphasis on their distinct conceptions of nation and family.

When the nation is lost, where has home gone?

Red Earth records only the failures suffered by the Fans. Their familial glory belongs to a past when the Communists were still weak. They manage to survive the hard times during the war, expecting the bitter days to be over once it ends. But life only gets worse when another war—between the Nationalists and the Communists—starts. An examination of the structure of the Fan household reveals the origins and process of its collapse. The mainstays of the household are incapable of supporting the family. They have to pawn their belongings in order to meet the routine expenses of a dozen people. The patriarch, Fan Jin, upholds Confucian principles, but everything in life thwarts his will. None of his descendents will be his successor. The eldest son teaches in a university, content with being an intellectual. His second son serves as a clerk in the municipal government, disconsolate and achieving nothing. His youngest son, Fan Zhiying, is a youth with aspirations who joins the Young Salvation Army to defend the Nationalist government. The second branch of the family defaces the reputation of the Fans. Fan Shen is a good-for-nothing person despite his previous involvement in new thinking in the post-May Fourth era. He kills time by drinking and strolling around with a birdcage. His only daughter, Fan Zhijie, renounces the family and joins the Communists. The third offshoot of the Fans is the most powerful but also the most decadent. Fan Tong returns from Chongqing and takes an important official post in the temporary takeover government in Beiping. His son, Fan Zhihao, holds a managerial position in a bank and marries the daughter of a well-off family, who turns out to be a wartime opportunist. The whole household is run by an extremely intelligent and capable woman, Tao Pin, Fan Zhiqiang's wife. As the novel states, and as many critics have pointed out,[22] Tao Pin is very much like the character Wang Xifeng in *Dream of the Red Chamber*.[23] Although Chen denies it, the likeness between *Red Earth* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* suggests that he may have been inspired by that novel. Nonetheless, the Fans differ to a significant degree from the Jia family in that the misfortune of the Fans is very much attributed to the disaster of the Communist takeover.

The social structure of the Fan family is organized on the basis of kinship, with family seen as both the basic unit of society and the focus of concern in the novel. In this sense, *Red Earth* condenses the National(ist) disaster into a family tragedy; the social chaos caused by the war is mirrored in familial disorder. Especially at the end of the story, with the collapse of the household, some of the family members do not assume the positions they are supposed to. Fan Jin's son-in-law even physically attacks Fan's wife. Fan Jin's two grandsons participate in the demonstration against Fan Tong. Meanwhile, Fan Tong indulges in affairs with actresses. Fan Tong's name is a pun on the Chinese word for a rice bucket or good-for-nothing, showing that he has been placed in this degrading role by the author. Fan Tong's decadence is the last straw. The Fans' home is taken over by a rising Communist cadre, a former collaborator with the Japanese called Xie Bin. Some family members flee by airplane to Taiwan while the rest stay in the mainland, lost in the abyss of suffering.

When the home is torn down, the nation rises

In contrast to *Red Earth*, in *Guarding Yan'an* the social structure is grounded in class. It is constructed through the communal bonding of individuals with little reference to their family background.[24] The military unit becomes the basic cell of society, and the members of the troop are all men. They live a completely communal life, eating, sleeping, fighting, and even dying together. The force binding them within the community is more than just comradeship: There is such intimacy among the officers and soldiers that at one point the company commander, Zhou Dayong, helps an injured soldier, Wang Xiaoqun, to urinate,[25] something beyond what a superior officer is supposed to do for those he commands.

Along with this intimacy is the denial of any degree of privacy. The supposedly private spaces like diaries and letters are broken into by other members of the community. The company's instructor, Wang Chengde, peeks at Zhou's diary. When discovered by Zhou, Wang grabs the journal and reads it through. However, Zhou benefits from the invasion of his privacy: Through Wang's peeping eyes, Zhou's noble inner self is revealed. His journal is filled with victorious talk of warfare to boost the morale of the troops and self-reflection and self-criticism to improve his adaptation to Communist requirements. At the end of the story, Zhou has grown into a superhero with few human defects by means of self-discipline and his experience in the war.

Like the diaries, letters open the private space of the self in service of the public cause. Wei Gang, a vice commissar of the company, writes letters to the Party and to his brother Wei Yi, the regiment sergeant, which emerge posthumously to express his readiness to sacrifice himself for the cause and brotherhood. Both the diary of Zhou Dayong and the letters of Wei Gang assume an intermediary role, a means for the soldiers to articulate their passion for and devotion to the war in particular and the Communist cause in general. Even private writings allow for very little personal feelings, to say nothing of individuality. The effacement of private space in the service of the public interest shows that Communism demands the negation of the self in the name of the people and in the interest of others.

Though there is little reference to the families of the officers and soldiers in the novel, the whole troop, together with the local common people, form a familial structure with Mao as the patriarch. The old woman, Mrs. Li, leaves her home for shelter in the wild grass. Besides a few items of clothing and some pancakes, she carries a portrait of Mao with her. She says: "[I have] no home now. I carry Mao's portrait all the time. It is so dejecting to think of the hardship of the times. Whenever I am discouraged, I will look at our Chairman Mao [for spiritual support]."[26] Mao becomes the source of power and hope. The military chef Sun Quanhou saves his quota of food for others and starves to death. When he sees others write to Chairman Mao, the illiterate Sun starts learning characters in order to write such letters himself. In his posthumous notebook, people find the characters "Chairman Mao" filling the pages. Sun's wish will never be fulfilled.

Both Mrs. Li and Sun make an effort to reach Mao, but never achieve their goal. Mao resides within this communal bonding but does not exist as a corporeal entity. He is indeed never visible to his people in the troop. But the officers and soldiers all feel he is ubiquitous, sustaining dialogues with him through letters or before his portrait every day. On the retreat route, the regiment meets Mao's troop. Without a spoken order or notice, the soldiers all realize that it is Chairman Mao, as if the troops were connected by telepathy: "All of sudden, a powerful energy went through the army line like an electric shock, through everybody's heart."[27] Mao's nonexistent existence in the troop complicates the structure of the communal society: He stands at the top of it. This homogeneous communal bonding is in the service of one person—Chairman Mao.

The big family is constructed out of the ruins of thousands of individual families. The destruction of family in the novel seems to have little to do with heavy conscription by the CCP; instead, it is attributed to Nationalist corruption. Mrs. Li summarizes Nationalist evildoing in the most elliptical way, which Zhou and the readers have heard hundred of times:

> Land tax, assigned duties, pillage, and illness [are all around us]. No food, no clothes. My son is enlisted and my daughter-in-law has been raped. The only property we collected through working hard our whole life has either been taken away or set on fire by the Nationalist bandits.[28]

This has been a standard description of Nationalist wrongdoings in China for decades. Similar stories, with the Communists as the evil protagonists, circulated in Taiwan for years too.

The CCP and the KMT never miss a chance to speak ill of the other, exposing the impurity that exists in the other's social space. They use the same tricks to demonize each other. In many revolutionary-historical novels as well as in films with a similar theme, one tactic used to sabotage the KMT's image is to expose their moral decadence. Within this device, rape becomes the principal weapon. *Guarding Yan'an* is no exception. Her daughter-in-law being raped is part and parcel of Mrs. Li's bitterness. But who committed the crime? There is no clue in the story. The Nationalists are used as substitutes for all nameless criminals: robbers, rapists, and suppressors. They are also the reason for the soldiers to fight and the target of their fighting. For example, in the middle of the march, when the soldiers run out of energy and slow down, the regiment commissar, Li Cheng, calls for Zhang Younian, a soldier from a poor peasant family, and tells his story to encourage the other soldiers to march on. In addition to Zhang's father being jailed for a faked crime, his little sister was raped by the village head and see hanged herself the next day.[29] Immediately after this, all soldiers rise up and burst into the slogan: "Down with feudal power!" "Down with Chiang Kai-shek's government!"

Meanwhile, the Nationalists do the same thing to denigrate the Communists. The family of Meifeng, the maid at the Fans' house, lives on the outskirts of Beiping. Wang, a Communist cadre, pursues Meifeng to be his wife. As romance

sprouts between Meifeng and Fan Zhiying, the Fans agree to the engagement so that the cadre's request will be denied. In revenge, Wang classifies Meifeng's family as rich peasants in the land reform movement. As a result, her whole family collapses: Her father is buried alive, her mother goes mad, her brother is conscripted, and her sister-in-law is married off to a Communist. Both the CCP and the KMT use the trope of rape to defame each other. Sexual invasion is used as a powerful weapon to expose the other's moral decadence, so as to reveal the social disorder within the other social space.

In spite of all these similarities between *Guarding Yan'an* and *Red Earth*, their attitudes toward the war, whether the goal is to build a new China or restore the nation, are different. *Red Earth* is filled with detestation of war and killing. The three fighters on the northeast front in particular witness too much bloodshed and are naturally repelled by the sight of humans killing each other. The fear of death overwhelms them every day. What they get from fighting in the war is physical wounds, mental disorder, and anxiety about death. In comparison with his Communist counterpart, the Nationalist gets no pleasure at all from the war. By contrast, the Communist warriors are a lot braver. They seem to develop a strong craving for self-sacrifice in order to serve others within this particular community, and the Communist cause in general. The main protagonist, Zhou Dayong, is the model *par excellence*. Seeing his soldiers struggling with injuries from a skirmish, he feels as if a knife were piercing his heart. He hates himself for being unable to bear all their tribulations or to relieve their starvation, fatigue, and wounds by suffering himself. Likewise, the Communists have an unquenchable thirst for blood: They indulge in an ecstasy of killing, with no fear of injury or death. There are quite lengthy descriptions of cutting and thrusting, projecting the virtues and heroism of the protagonists.[30] Slaughter is granted validity without any reservation, even in a fight where Chinese are killing Chinese.

International allies

Intriguingly, both the Communists and the Nationalists target an international enemy behind their compatriot rivals, and each identifies the other with the international enemy at its side. Hence, the war between the CCP and the KMT is equated with the one between the Soviet Union and the United States. *Red Earth* constantly condemns the Soviet intrusion at the time of the Chinese retaking of Manchuria from Japan and declares blatantly that the USSR was profiting from the Sino-Japanese War in Manchuria rather than aiding the Chinese. At the same time, *Guarding Yan'an* considers the Nationalists to be running dogs of the American imperialists, regardless of the aid the mainland received from the United States during World War II. In this sense, the civil war is not just between Chinese, but an international war of communism against imperialism. This war continues after the founding of the PRC, in fear that the imperialist Americans might come back to China someday.

To retreat is to return: the symbolic space beyond Yan'an and red earth

Symbolic space is the site of cultural production and the circulation of cultural capital. This space becomes further represented in institutional and ideological products, and works of literature and the imagination. After analyzing the significance of red earth and Yan'an as physical space, and the structure of social relations represented in each of the two works, this section focuses on the construction of symbolic space on both sides. Since fiction can be taken as a certain type of representation of reality and a reference to social practice, I will discuss both symbolic space and representational space, not assessing all the subtleties between them. The following section investigates the issues both novels touch upon, including failure, trauma, return, the fantastic, and ghostliness, to show how and why these symbols are intertwined in a symbolic attack upon each other.

Retreat, retreat, always retreat

The KMT eventually fell back to Taiwan, and accordingly the Nationalists had no choice but to deal with the reality of retreat. Anti-Communist fiction similarly cannot address this withdrawal. From the very beginning of *Red Earth*, along with the victory over the Japanese, the possibility of a Nationalist loss has been lurking in Manchuria. The Soviet Union interrupts the Nationalist takeover of the northeast and supports the Communists in the expansion of their power. Because of their insufficient military strength, these three ambitious forces have to wage guerilla war in mountainous areas. They have sporadic success. But without the support of a regular army, the small units go from one failure to another. The three protagonists are dispersed in the woods but luckily reunited later in the city. One is injured, one is mentally disordered, and only Fan Zhiying remains sound and in good health. This depiction of a series of failures may reflect the experiences of frustrated émigré mainlanders in Taiwan, as Chen Jiying tries to find a reason for the grand fiasco of the Nationalists' losses in China.

Like many Nationalist officers and soldiers at the front, Fan Zhiying, Leng Fang, and Feng Zihe all hate retreating. When the notice to withdraw is received, Leng Fang cannot help cursing: "Damn, retreat again! Retreat! Retreat! Retreat! Always retreat!" They all understand the reasons for the failure in the northeast: the dispersal of military power, lack of flexibility, and so on. But there is just no way for them to let the commander know the lessons they have learned in previous battles. Fan Zhiying remains sober. He sighs with regret: "As armymen, we are by no means afraid of failure. We do not fear admitting to failure and we continue on the road to another failure!"[31] When Leng Fang doubts the feasibility of guerilla war, the film star *qua* female partisan even criticizes him for being defeatist. The housemaster, Fan Jin, judges the situation and comforts his son based on his experience:

> Since the northeast is lost, Beiping and Tianjian are endangered now.… All of this is so disappointing. As long as faith persists, we are not afraid of failure. We spent the first five or six years of the eight years of the anti-Japanese war in failure. Victory eventually arrived. So don't be afraid of failure. What worries me is not considering the failure and not carrying out enough self-reflection.[32]

Beiping is soon lost to the Communists, taken over through peaceful negotiation.

Retreat is the paramount issue in *Guarding Yan'an* too. The story starts with the liberation army withdrawing from the Communist capital Yan'an. Since the days until the Nationalist takeover of Yan'an are numbered, it is really urgent for the central CCP to leave as soon as possible. The Communist soldiers are as unwilling to give up Yan'an as the Nationalist Army was to retreat to the inner pass of the Great Wall overlooking Manchuria. Outnumbered by the Nationalist Army of Hu Zongnan, the liberation army has no choice but to abandon Yan'an. They endure brutal battles and suffer great losses. Some soldiers cannot fully understand the military tactics. The army officers inculcate into them the involutionary theory of carrying out revolution: "We retreat from Yülin just in order to attack enemies better."[33] By the same token, the ultimate goal of giving Yan'an up now is to regain it once and for all. As the slogan printed on the wall in Yan'an declares: "Yan'an, the Holy Land of Democracy, belongs to us. We must come back to Yan'an."[34]

Trauma: unspeakable pain

The failure on the mainland and the retreat to Taiwan was without doubt a source of physical and psychological trauma for thousands of Nationalists. In the preface, Chen admits that the trauma of the young officers in the northeast symbolizes the trauma of the whole Nationalist army.[35] In his discussion of mid-century Chinese literature, David Wang situates Taiwan's anti-Communist fiction in the larger genre of scar literature and keenly points out the connection between national disaster and human psychology.[36] As a veteran anti-Communist writer, Chen knew just how to illustrate the parallel between the scar and national calamity. Fan Zhiying and his fellows all get injured at the front during the guerrilla war. Chen describes their wounds in great detail, listing each ailment together with the soldier's name, official rank, native place, age, and symptoms. Leng loses an arm as a result of his injuries. Fan Zhiying and the woman warrior Qu Fangxia recover after the shrapnel has been removed. The physical wounds are not the worst. Leng Fang used to be quick and sharp. Losing contact with others in the battle, Leng finally manages to escape from the nightmare that is Hongxi Street outside Changchun and flees to Shenyang alone. He is driven mad by his recollections of the eerie death scene, and Fan Zhiying finds him raving in the ruins of Shenyang. Never recovering from his mental disorder, Leng Fang goes to Taiwan in the custody of Zhiying. Insanity relieves Leng from the agony of being in exile. The rest of the émigré mainlanders can

visit their homeland and be reunited with their dispersed families only in dreams.

Both the Nationalists and the Communists experience a series of failures in the war, but their response to the frustrations is different. Both parties try to make sense of their failures by claiming that their sacrifice today prepares for a bright future, but as the victors, the Communists do not suffer much afterward, while the loss of the mainland to the Communists destroys the Nationalists' morale. As they look at the mainland in the distance across the strait, their disaporic sentiments are just part and parcel of the whole traumatic aftermath. Moreover, the outcome of the conflict also determines their attitude about the war: The Communists welcome any degree of challenge and take pleasure in bloody fights and other tribulations; the Nationalists loathe war and can hardly bear the brutality and loss that it brings. In this sense, in the Communist outlook war is a necessary passage, and the hardship it involves will be well compensated. But all the Nationalists can think of after the war is bitterness and loss.

Nothing but ghosts and demons

In the Nationalist imagination, the mainland, the red earth, and the ghost world are a triad. At the very beginning of *Red Earth*, the old man Douzhi'er (Soybean Milk) Zhang tells Dalong (Big Dragon), the grandchild of the Fans, a ghost story. He warns the child against belief in ghosts:

> Though I'm telling you a ghost story, you must not believe in the existence of ghosts. You're still little. When you grow up, you will come to know that all ghost stories are made up by humans. A human is a ghost. A ghost is human. In this world, what's the difference between humans and ghosts? I'm not fooling you. All joking apart, the ghost story I'm going to tell you is a human story.[37]

Then Zhang tells Dalong the suicide legend of the Fans' household. When he has finished, Zhang relates the devil story in Chinese national history—the eight foreign allies pillaging Beijing—and then the devil story of the Japanese invasion of China. In the process, Zhang unconsciously combines the legend-based ghost story of the Fans with the factual devil story of China, grounded upon national history along the lines of the *gui gushi* (ghost/devil story). During this elision, he unwittingly equates the devil with a ghost ("ghost" and "devil" are one word in Chinese, 鬼).

Through Zhang's storytelling, Chen constructs a scheme for understanding the red earth as a ghost world, the invaders as devils, and the Communists as demons. Moreover, the Japanese invasion forces the Chinese to become ghosts themselves. Fan Zhiqiang used to be a clerk in the Beiping municipal government but is out of work when the Japanese arrive; the victory over the Japanese finally gives him a chance to express his feelings and aspirations:

> I was not born a drunkard or a drinking ghost.… I have not worked for eight years. I am really distressed. Beiping is filled with devils. I cannot be dominated by devils. Nor can I fight devils. I can only pretend to be a demon.[38]

Upon witnessing the fearsome death scene created by the Communists in Hongxi Street, Leng Fang cannot help cursing: "Goddamn! The ghost world would be better than this!"[39] When the Communists eventually take over the Fans' house, Dalong argues that the building belongs to the family. The Communist mayor mockingly refutes his claim: "This house was not yours long ago.… Such a little boy even can make up a ghost saying!"[40] The trope of *gui* (ghost/devil) continues throughout *Red Earth*, encompassing the foreign invaders, the Communists, the frustrated Nationalist loyalists, and even the naive child living under Communist oppression. It collapses the red earth into the land of ghosts and devils. This ghost world is incompatible with the human and the humane world in which the Nationalists used to live and which they are trying to bring back to China.

In the name of heaven

The use of the ghost/devil trope can help us to better understand how and why both *Red Earth* and *Guarding Yan'an* rely on heavenly power to secure the possession of China. Both works employ realism, and most of their plots and their characters are presented in lifelike ways. But both novels reach a point where realism does not naturally lead to the envisioned end, and both authors include heavenly power, such as the supernatural or apocalyptic elements, to support their ideology. In *Red Earth*, Mayor Xie Bin occupies the Fans' residential complex under the aegis of the new Communist regime. The lamp in the living room falls down and hits Xie's head. Then the trees in the garden are split by lightning. In *Guarding Yan'an*, in the middle of a fierce battle, several soldiers cannot see any hope of survival. They jump off a cliff to avoid capture. But a miracle follows: They do not die, thanks to an outcrop on the cliff face, an incident that the author Du described as "fantastic."[41]

Both revolutionary-historical novels and anti-Communist fiction are part of the tradition of realism, which explains their narrative arc—from real history toward a political conclusion. However, realistic writing is not necessarily real, natural, or credible. Realistic works can also go beyond the earthly world to the supernatural world by inviting heavenly powers to make impossible wishes come true or to ensure that justice is done. Especially when the world becomes illogical and beyond the rule of reason, only divine power can contradict the irrational. In *Red Earth*, the Fans are frustrated at the mishaps that befall them in rapid succession. Their home is even occupied by the corrupt bureaucrat protected by the Communist government. When earthly revenge is not possible, the author resorts to supernatural retribution to enact justice, as when the lamp hits Xie on the head. As the victorious party, the Communists do not need to wish for revenge against their enemies, but they still rely on heavenly forces to create rebirth, as when the soldiers' noble attempt at suicide is thwarted in *Guarding Yan'an*. Likewise, another soldier, Wei Gang, is considered dead by his comrades but actually survives.

Heavenly power is thus invited to restore social order and justice in *Red Earth* and to sustain a cycle of resurrection in *Guarding Yan'an*. Real society is so unsatisfying that it is cast as a dystopia. This technique of using a higher power to resolve discontent is an intrusion of mystery into real life, because the means to solve the problem comes from beyond the reach of common sense. Once supernatural power participates in disentangling the social imbroglio, the human world goes beyond mankind's control. Thus, the boundary between the natural and supernatural worlds is blurred.

The supernatural would be incomprehensible without the help of natural agency. Under the aegis of heavenly intrusion, *Guarding Yan'an* and *Red Earth* introduce apocalyptic elements to construct their vision of the mainland. The two stories end before final victory is achieved by either side. *Guarding Yan'an* stops at the troops' retreat from Yan'an, and *Red Earth* ends with the Nationalists surrendering Beiping to the Communists. Then the novels employ supernatural power to compensate for their protagonists' actual loss. The ending scenes are apocalyptic. First, in *Guarding Yan'an*:

> In the north, in the sky above the Great Wall, a huge storm arose, with thunder and lightning. The storm and thunder sweep the forest, the hills around Yan'an, and the Yellow River where the Chinese fought for thousands of years, surging into the distance.[42]

At the end of *Red Earth*, there is a heavy rainstorm:

> All of sudden, a flash of lightning sweeps the sky. Thunder follows. Kaboom! The arches on both the east and the west yard collapse. Soon only the sound of hubbub and wailing is heard.

As Zhang and other people walk in the rain, he sees a white cloud coming from the southeast. He points it out to Dalong and says: "Dalong, look at the blue sky over there." "Yes. It is the blue sky." Seeing this, people cry out in surprise. Soaked, but with a joyful expression on his face, Dalong looks at the sky in the southeast and says in an innocent voice: "I see. Let's go there!"[43] This paragraph can be seen to refer directly to Nationalist ideology, since a blue sky and white sun are the principal symbols of Nationalist China. The final scene expresses the wish that the Nationalists will come back to reclaim China someday. The child's participation in this moment adds more hope for the fulfillment of the wish; the imagination exerts its full power. These two scenes are written in an apocalyptic way to project an ideal vision of the world.

Return and return

Finally, when leaving the mainland behind becomes unavoidable and irreversible, return becomes an obsession for both the author Chen Jiying and his characters. First, Fan Zhiying returns home to Beiping from the southwestern front

after the war is over. The urgent situation in the northeast does not allow him to stay for long. He sets out to fight the Communists. The second time he comes back from the northeast, Beiping is on the eve of being lost to the Communists. Hundreds of families are broken apart, some going to Taiwan and others staying in Beiping. Those Nationalists who are left behind to suffer Communist oppression wish they had gone with their relatives; those who go to the small island wish they could return someday. Provocatively, Zhang experiences both leaving and return in his dream. His grandson, Pengfei, serves in the airforce and has fled to Taiwan. In his dream, Pengfei comes back and takes him away by airplane. He sees the whole mainland immersed in a red and bloody sea, spreading for thousands of miles. After flying for hours, he finally sees the blue sky and the white sun above green fields, a sight full of good omens. His grandson says to him: "Grandpa, it is so wonderful here. This is a human world. Our homeland has become a ghost universe. Stay here for a while. I must send you home someday." He replies: "Of course, we must go back."[44] For thousands of émigré mainlanders in Taiwan, return is the teleology of their exile in Taiwan. Many of them dream of going home but can never fulfill their wish.

In his dream, Zhang sees thousands of blessed miles of green fields, supposedly on the island of Taiwan, in contrast to the cursed red earth on the mainland. The green fields are signs of a promising future and overflowing freedom. According to the contemporary literary critic Zeng Xubai, *Red Earth* is the first part of what Chen intended to be an anti-Communist trilogy. The other two were entitled *Lüdao* (Green Island) and *Woye* (Oasis) in Chen's plan, but were never written.[45] Back in the 1950s, when mainland China was taken as a synecdoche of totalitarian Communism, Taiwan was described as green to highlight its democracy and freedom. Chen's wish turns out to have been fulfilled when the island did indeed become green half a century later, though he may never have thought that the Nationalist Party, to which he had committed his whole life, would lose its power over the island: It became green not through the Nationalists, but through the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Chen was fortunate not to have lived long enough to suffer disillusionment after the Nationalist defeat in the 2000 presidential campaign.

The troops in *Guarding Yan'an* are similarly obsessed with returning. They are forced to give up their revolutionary Mecca, but they believe they will come back eventually. Their return is presented as a revival that includes the resurrection of the dead and the reconquest of Yan'an. The company commander and several other soldiers jump off a cliff in order to escape capture, and both the enemy and their comrades think they have died. But they return alive, thanks to the cragged features of the cliff. Another form of revival is described by means of substitution. The chief of the regimental staff, Wei Yi, has a brother, Wei Gang, who is assumed to have died in battle. People find his letter to his brother and the Party, expressing brotherhood and dedication to the cause. Later on, Wei Yi dies at the front, and Wei Gang comes back. Somehow he survived the battle. His return activates the trope of revival: Wei Yi's death is not in vain; it is compensated for by his brother's revival. This revolutionary poetics thus resonates with religious principles, especially at the level of death and rebirth.

Dialectics of retreat and return

On the surface, the conflict between the mainland and Taiwan is a game of attack and defense. They fight over the object—the mainland. The one who eventually obtains it is anxious about losing it someday. The one who loses it is determined to get it back. One side tries to consolidate control over the space and the other makes an effort to reclaim it. It is understandable that the Nationalists would be obsessed with returning to China. Yet intriguingly, the mainland is still preoccupied with imaginary loss. This suggests a strong sense of insecurity on the mainland and explains its compulsion to defend itself. Ironically, *Guarding Yan'an* is actually about the process of losing Yan'an. The defense of the revolutionary capital turns out to be in vain and the stronghold ends up in the enemy's hands. In this sense, *Guarding Yan'an* should have been volume one of a multi-volume work, depicting how Yan'an is lost to the Nationalists. Then a later volume could have recorded the return of Yan'an to the Communists. The title *Guarding Yan'an* seems misplaced: Although it could also be translated as "Keeping Yan'an" or "Defending Yan'an," it is in fact about retreating from Yan'an. Even though Yan'an has come back to the Communists after its temporary loss to the Nationalists, it does not feel secure. Instead of enjoying the pleasure of possession, the Communists express strong, overriding anxiety over the loss of their revolutionary heart. *Guarding Yan'an* articulates so much pain over losing the revolutionary Mecca but little about the pleasure of regaining the revolutionary heart.

Red Earth displays a similar irony. Zhang is not one of the Fans. As an outsider, he witnesses all the misfortunes that the family experiences during the war. Moreover, he is a talented raconteur, and the novel begins with his telling a ghost story to the child of the Fans and ends with another story relating his dreams. Neither story is real, but both make ample reference to reality. His dream of coming back to the mainland expresses the Nationalist desire to reclaim and restore China, but at the same time reveals that return can only be achieved through dreams. There is no doubt that the author was devoted to the Nationalist cause and would have been unaware of the subversiveness of Zhang's storytelling. Chen's wholehearted devotion to the Nationalist project also inadvertently collapses: As Zhang can only return in dreams, Chen could only pursue his ideal of a return to China on paper. Nonetheless, literature offers a channel for their return across the strait, across space.

Conclusion: can words succeed where war failed?

The literary war of the 1950s between the mainland and Taiwan can be seen as an extension of the war over the mainland from 1945 to 1949. The war in physical space had forced the Nationalists onto a peripheral island. Despite their military defeat, they could not reconcile themselves to surrender in any other aspect. With the call of anti-Communist fiction writers to active mobilization against the Communists, the military struggle is turned into an ideological competition. Can words succeed where war failed?

To answer this question, I turn to Louis Althusser's analysis of ideology and the state.[46] Before 1949, the fight between the Communists and the Nationalists was military, but in the 1950s it turned into an ideological contest. Both parties took their ideology seriously and truly believed in its power to build the solidarity of their own side and to demoralize the enemy. In spite of military failure, one does not have to surrender in the ideological realm. To forestall disillusionment following defeat, ideology is best presented in the form of a dream, as Zhang does in *Red Earth*. Althusser concludes: "Ideology is thus thought of as an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud."[47] However, ideological victory cannot bring success on the material level, and although the Nationalists can claim triumph in verbal fighting, they have not conquered the mainland. On the contrary, after 50 years, having given up the ideal of restoring the nation on the mainland, the Nationalists have to confront both the implicit threat of violence and the offer of amity from the other side of the strait in their continuing effort to realize an independent state with an ambiguous national name—Republic of China.

Notes

1 The Nationalists established the Republic of China (ROC) on January 1, 1912, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, after overthrowing the Qing dynasty the year before. The ROC was the official government of China until 1949, when the Nationalists lost the mainland to the Communists in the civil war (1945–49) and withdrew to Taiwan. Mao Zedong declared the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949, on the mainland, while the ROC continued in Taiwan. With its replacement of the ROC as the representative of China at the United Nations in 1972 and the establishment of US–PRC diplomatic relations in 1979, the PRC rose to represent China in world affairs more than the ROC.

2 He Jingzhi, *Hejing zhi daibiaozuo* (Representative works of He Jingzhi) (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1992), 73–77.

3 Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 63–64. Mark Selden, *The Yen'an Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Shum Kui-kwong, *The Chinese Communists' Road to Power: The Anti-Japanese National United Front, 1935–45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1–16. After examining the social relations and geographical environment of Yan'an, David E. Apter and Tony Saich go on to argue that Yan'an is a revolutionary simulacrum in *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 141–260.

4 David Ross Fryer, "The Other and the Self: Creating the Subject," in *The Intervention of the Other: Ethical Subjectivity in Levinas and Lacan* (New York: Other Press, 2004).

5 Jacques Lacan, "*The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Theory*," in *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977).

6 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

7 Kristeva describes abjection as a psychological mechanism through which one undergoes the state of crisis, self-disgust, and disgust toward others in the process of constituting his or her subjectivity. The thing one feels to be repulsive is the abject, i.e.,

excrement, vomit, and even the maternal body. The subject is stuck in an unsettling relationship with the abject, fascinated and repelled, distressed and relieved, inclined both to disregard and to possess. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1–18, 32–35.

8 For instance, Huang Ziping, *Geming, lishi, xiaoshuo* (Revolution, history, and novel) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996); Chen Jianhua, *"Geming" de xiandai xing: zhongguo geming huayu kaolun* (Modernity of "revolution": an archaeology of the Chinese revolutionary discourse) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000).

9 Du Pengcheng, "Pingfan de daolu" (Ordinary path), oral record of Du Pengcheng, collected by Chen Yu and Yu Shuiqing. In Chen Yu and Yu Shuiqing, eds., *Du Pengcheng yanjiu zhuanji* (Special collection of Du Pengcheng study) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1983).

10 A standard term coined by the CCP for the civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists in China from 1945 to 1949.

11 Chen Jiyiing. "Zihuan (Autobiography)," in *Chen Jiying zixuanji* (Self-selected works of Chen Jiying) (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi, 1975), 3–12. Chen's books about *Dagongbao* provide indispensable materials for the study of this newspaper. See Chen Jiying, *Baoren Zhang Jiluan* (Newsman Zhang Jiluan) (Taipei: Wenyou chubanshe, 1957); *Hu Zhenzhi yu dagongbao* (Hu Zhengzhi and *L'impartial*) (Hong Kong: Zhanggu yuekanshe, 1974); *Kangzhan shiqi de dagongbao* (*L'impartial* during the anti-Japanese war) (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi, 1980); *Wo de youyuan yu jizhe shenghuo* (My experience as a postman and reporter) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1988).

12 See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1995), vol. 14: 237–258.

13 Sigmund Freud, "Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence," in "Totem and Taboo," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1995), vol. 13, chapter II, 1–162.

14 Du Pengcheng, *Baowei Yan'an*, 21–22.

15 During the Long March, the central force of the Red Army (aka the First Front Army) covered a distance of 25,000 *li* (12,500 kilometers, about 7,350 miles) from the starting point in Jiangxi province to the destination of Yan'an. The march was longer than the geographical distance between these two places since the military maneuver involved detours and repeating the same path.

16 Ba Jin's trilogy *Jia* (Family), *Chun* (Spring), and *Qiu* (Autumn), Lao She, *Si shi tong tang* (Four generations under one roof).

17 Chen Jiying, "Zhuzhe zibai (Author's confession)," in *Chidi* (Red earth) (Taipei: Wenyou chubanshe, 1955).

18 Ibid.

19 In June 1928, after being captured by the Nationalist Revolutionary Army, Beijing (the northern capital) was renamed Beiping by the Nationalist government, which kept the capital in Nanjing (the southern capital) to reinforce that the warlord government in Beijing was not legitimate. In 1949, when the Communists regained this city, Beiping was renamed Beijing.

20 For the relationship of Manchuria and China, please see Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), especially chapter 2, "Manchukuo: A Historical Overview," 41–86, and chapter 5, "Imperial Nationalism and the Frontier," 179–208.

21 Tang Yin (1470–1524), a talented painter and calligrapher during the Ming dynasty; Xu Shichang (1885–1939), famous for his achievements in poetry, calligraphy, and painting, was the President of the Republic of China from 1918 to 1922.

22 Zeng Xubai. "Du *Chidi*" (On *Red Earth*), in Chen Jiying, *Chidi* (Red earth) (Taipei: Wenyou chubanshe, 1955), 433–435.

23 Cao Xueqin and Gao E, *Hong lou meng* (Dream of the red chamber) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1982).
24 David Wang points out that the troop in *Guarding Yan'an* has a homo-communal bond. *The Monster that is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 163–165.
25 Du Pengcheng, *Baowei Yan'an*, 186.
26 Ibid., 123.
27 Ibid., 240–241.
28 Ibid., 300.
29 Ibid., *Baowei Yan'an*, 190.
30 Ibid., 294.
31 Chen Jiying, *Chidi*, 188.
32 Ibid., 358.
33 Du Pengcheng, *Baowei Yan'an*, 260.
34 Ibid., 25.
35 Chen Jiying, "Zhuzhe zibai," 1–4.
36 Wang, *The Monster that is History*, 148–160.
37 Chen Jiying, *Chidi*, 3.
38 Ibid., 31.
39 Ibid., 346.
40 Ibid., 429.
41 The founding theoretician of the fantastic, Tzvetan Todorov, declared that the demise of fantastic literature came at the end of the nineteenth century, which implicitly indicated the incompatibility of modernity and the fantastic. He defines it as "hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event." Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 25.
42 Du Pengcheng, *Baowei Yan'an*, 527.
43 Chen Jiying, *Chidi*, 430.
44 Ibid., 426.
45 Zeng Xubai, "Du *Chidi*" (Reading *Red Earth*), in Chen Jiying, *Chidi* (Red earth) (Taipei: Wenyou chubanshe, 1955), 433–445.
46 Althusser points out that the Marxist understanding of social structure containing a base and superstructure is precisely a spatial metaphor: the metaphor of topography. Acknowledging the state as a repressive apparatus, or a "machine" of repression, Althusser goes one step further by distinguishing the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) from Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs). RSAs include the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, and the prisons, and they function through violence. Religion, educational institutions, communications, and cultural products such as literature, arts, and sports constitute ISAs and function through ideology. RSAs and ISAs reinforce each other, but RSAs are more determinative. The efficiency of ISAs is limited if it is without the support of repressive violence. Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 135–145.
47 Ibid., 159.

5 The specters of revolution haunting China

Phantasmatic space of the Cultural Revolution[1]

> Down with all the ox ghosts and snake spirits.
>
> Chen Boda, *People's Daily*, June 1, 1966

Geographical space was a primary object the Chinese Communists strove to possess before 1949 in one way or another, from the struggle for land ownership through land reform and the search for a promised land, to the Long March, to engagement in the anti-Japanese wars and fights with the Nationalists for the mainland. However, the founding of the People's Republic did not guarantee their sovereignty over China. They still feared losing the mainland to their rivals, including the Nationalists in Taiwan and the revisionists in the Soviet Union, as well as the more remote threat of the American imperialists. Except for the battles with the Nationalists on the imaginative level, within the territory of China, revolutionary struggles targeting the reconstruction of social relations had been ceaseless in all political movements in the social sphere since 1949, culminating in the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

The Cultural Revolution reconstructed China's space in different dimensions. First, even though ownership of the physical space of China was not at stake anymore, the effort to consolidate this ownership never stopped. Thousands of young students and urban intellectuals were dispatched to border zones like Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Yunnan to develop the frontier. This movement can be understood as part of a larger project of defending territorial sovereignty. Second, and most important, constructing a new social space based on a new hierarchy had been at the top of the agenda of the Cultural Revolution. Changes to social space accordingly nurtured transformation in symbolic space. Third, in order to implement the Cultural Revolution, "model plays" (*yangbanxi*) emerged; these soon became the main cultural production in the symbolic space and were heavily loaded with political messages. In addition, numerous alleged class enemies in real life or as depicted in literature and art were considered the residual enemies of previous revolutions: landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, bad elements, rightists, capitalists, revisionists, etc., all designated by the generic term "ox ghosts and snake spirits."

The phrase "ox ghosts and snake spirits" comes from Tang poet Du Mu 杜牧 (803–52), who created this neologism to characterize his peer Li He's 李贺

fantastic style in poetry. "Whales and turtles, ox ghosts and snake spirits, are not as fantastic as [Li He's] style."[2] In the original context, this phrase conveys humans' vast imagination of the unreal fairyland of animals, and the monstrous images are also related to the fantastic. Thus the original ox ghost and snake spirit described an incredible bestial world. After a millennium, when the phrase was resurrected to designate a downgraded social group during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese society was full of monstrosity.[3]

Despite the recurrence of the fantastic in the 1,000 years of Chinese history after Du Mu, the phrase "ox ghosts and snake spirits" was not revived until the late Qing, when Wen Kang used it in the voluminous novel *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (Saga of heroic men and women).[4] Here, the phrase has a connotation closer to its literal meaning of crooked and evil figures. "Ox ghosts and snake spirits" gained a pejorative sense after that. Although ghosts or demons (*gui* 鬼), especially foreign devils (*yangguizi* 洋鬼子), were a prime target of curses throughout the Chinese anti-imperialist struggle, ox ghosts and snake spirits were never on the spectrum of enemies until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

This phrase did not become a synecdoche of "the enemies among the people" immediately at the start of the Cultural Revolution. The term experienced a transformation during the mid-1950s. In March 1955, in a speech at a meeting of the Chinese Communist Party on national propaganda, Mao Zedong remarked: "Some ox ghosts and snake spirits have been staged recently," referring to the traditional operas about spirits. Then he used the same term to mean the rightists: "Let the ox ghosts and snake spirits come out and make trouble … which should not be called seducing the enemies with bait, but hurling oneself willingly into the net."[5] At the start of the 1960s, with escalating class struggles, the phrase was extended to signify alleged class enemies: "Landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, bad elements, and ox ghosts and snake spirits all come out.… [Under such circumstances,] with at least a couple of years, a decade, at most several decades, a counterrevolutionary restoration nationwide will be unavoidable."[6] On June 1, 1966, in an editorial in *Renmin ribao* (People's daily), Chen Boda, team leader of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, declared that the goal of the Cultural Revolution was to bring down all the ox ghosts and snake spirits. Thus, this term was carried to the extreme throughout the Cultural Revolution.

Chen's statement further reveals that the Cultural Revolution was intended to exorcise the ghosts and spirits. It also suggests that the people who launched the movement lived in horror of being haunted by their enemies, real and imagined, who would come back to overturn the Communist regime and restore the old social order. As history proved ten years later, most of the people condemned as "enemies" during the Cultural Revolution were wronged and innocent. Those designated as "ox ghosts and snake spirits" were only substitutes for and spirits of the imagined enemies. In this sense, the Cultural Revolution transformed China into a phantasmatic space, a ghostly world both literally and figuratively.

Besides various sociopolitical factors leading to the massive outbreak of the Cultural Revolution,[7] the movement was a reaction to events in the recent past.[8]

Although they claimed victory over the "Nationalist reactionaries," "American imperialists," and "Soviet revisionists," the Communist regime worried about international enemies of all sorts. Even within China, after a series of collectivization movements and purification campaigns, prime targets in previous Communist revolutions such as landlords, capitalists, and rightists did not seem to disappear, but lurked among the people as if they would put their reactionary ideology into action at any time. The Communist regime lived in anxiety and paranoia that the enemies from the past would return.[9] They were haunted in both practice and discourse.

In the aftermath of "the ten years of calamity," the Cultural Revolution itself has become a haunting object in both the real life and the memory of Chinese people. First, in everyday life, sent-down youths and rehabilitated intellectuals cannot forget their Cultural Revolution experiences, which evoke bitterness and tears more than sweetness and laughter. Second, in terms of social hierarchy, Deng Xiaoping emerged as the most important Party leader after Mao, due to his contribution to ending the so-called "ten years of calamity" and opening China to the world. Third, in the symbolic space, the Cultural Revolution has been a leitmotif of cultural production. Almost no literary movement or cultural phenomenon since the late 1970s has not responded to it, directly or indirectly.[10] However, except for denouncing it in the immediate aftermath to legitimize Deng's government, the Party barely gave any attention to the Cultural Revolution afterward. There are no official commemorative activities, which is unusual given the prevalence of commemorative culture in China.[11] The recollections and research that are conducted are done by individuals rather than institutions. The Cultural Revolution is a paradox: present, sometimes immanently so, in public life, yet repressed officially. It is ironic that it lives on like a specter, haunting and possessing Chinese people today as previous revolutions haunted the Cultural Revolutionary China of the past. The people's conscious or unconscious responses can be seen as an effort to exorcise the spirits of the Cultural Revolution.

There are two meanings behind phantasmatic space in the Cultural Revolution.[12] One is that the movement transformed China into a phantasmagoric space that covered the three types of spaces I defined at the beginning of this book: geographical, social, and symbolic. First, everyday physical space was filled with so-called "ox ghosts and snake spirits." For those put into these categories, China was as macabre as the inferno where cursed ghosts and spirits reside. Second, normal social order was turned upside down. Under the aegis of absolute proletarian authority, law and order gave way to the abusive power of those who were entitled to act for the proletariat, e.g., Red Guards and insurrectionist workers. This created extreme chaos, analogous to a disorderly hell. Third, spirits of previous revolutions were dominant figures in cultural production. All model plays featured heroic characters in the previous revolutionary wars against the Japanese or the Nationalists.

The other meaning of phantasmatic space in the Cultural Revolution is that the movement itself continues to live as a spirit in Chinese society and to possess

people from time to time. In other words, products of the Cultural Revolution persist like phantoms, as living objects like human beings and inanimate objects like restaged model plays and their reincarnations.[13] These phantoms sometimes achieve a conspicuous presence in mainstream mass culture.[14] I take two exemplars—each living a lasting afterlife in one way or another—to illustrate the phantasmatic space of the Cultural Revolution.

Old Ghost (Lao Gui, alias of Ma Bo) was one of the generation born at the time of the founding of the PRC, and he grew up with the revolutionary sagas about the past of the Republic that were prevalent in the culture. Motivated by these models, Old Ghost participated in the revolutionary feast by mimicking his predecessors. He organized a small group of friends to march from Beijing to the revolutionary Mecca, Yan'an. Then he led the group to the southern frontier with the intention of joining the Vietnamese in their fight against the American imperialists. Repatriated by the frontier troops, he did not give up the idea of defending the country. He and his comrades went to Tibet to obtain arms in order to protect China from Soviet invasion. When all these plans fell apart, he volunteered for the Construction Corps in Inner Mongolia and spent several years there. In the 1980s and 1990s, Old Ghost finished two autobiographical accounts of his personal experiences, including his formative years in Beijing, his exploration of the Chinese frontier, and his hard times in Inner Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution.[15] His narratives describe a revolutionary prodigal son's odyssey on the Chinese mainland. Nonetheless, his retroactive engagement in a revolution has lost its authenticity. In *Xue yu tie* (Blood and iron), he compiles a comprehensive list of revolutionary sagas that influenced him deeply. This book also shows that Old Ghost is possessed by the revolutionary spirits glorified by the People's Republic. The way he names himself reveals this self-identification. He has become *old* while still young, a *ghost* while alive. Old Ghost is a perfect example of the phantasmatic operating on the level of the personal psyche.

The second example is the story *Hongse niangzi jun* (Red detachment of women, dir. Xie Jin, scriptwriter Liang Xin, 1961). Set in the 1930s on exotic Hainan Island, the film *Red Detachment of Women* tells the story of Wu Qionghua, who grows from a peasant girl with a personal vendetta to a Communist fighter pursuing liberation for all humankind. The film was adapted into a ballet and became popular in China during the Cultural Revolution. Following its restaging as a model play in the late 1980s, *Red Detachment of Women*—by now one of the orthodox Red classics—was repopularized in the nostalgic fever of the mid-1990s when a nine-episode TV drama, *Qiongzong nübing* (Women soldiers of Hainan Column, dir. Yu Yehua, 1996), came out. The show appeared to be a sequel to *Red Detachment of Women* and related how the women's column fought the Japanese during the invasion of Hainan Island. The title was changed to *Red Detachment of Women* when the series was released on VCD/DVD, most likely for marketing purposes. Subsequently, the new millennium saw a surge of new adaptations of "Red classics." A 21-episode TV remake of *Red Detachment of Women* became the focus of the controversy surrounding the adaptation of these works in 2004. Meanwhile, two writers of the TV series collaborated on a

novel, which was published the same year. Lawsuits about copyright and contracts were filed around the novel publication and the TV production. As a performative spectacle, *Red Detachment of Women* experienced a continuous reincarnation and reconsumption as a gendered revolutionary romance from a socialist context to a postsocialist one. It has become a kind of spirit of the Cultural Revolution and continues to haunt China at the institutional level.

In this chapter I analyze *Blood and Iron* and *Red Detachment of Women* side by side, although there is no direct influence of the former upon the latter. Aside from artistic details, *Red Detachment of Women* is similar to other works produced in the 17 years between 1949 and 1966 in terms of didacticism, narrative structure, and characterization.[16] The Red classics were created using similar formulas and agendas to convey the central message: Had the Chinese Communists not gone through fire and water, China's happy present would have been impossible; only the Chinese Communist Party can save China. Old Ghost does not directly refer to *Red Detachment of Women* in his book, likely because he is more interested in the male experience than the female one. Despite the presence of Hong Changqing, the positive, heroic male lead in the women's detachment, the story does not appeal to Old Ghost. Immersed in a revolutionary culture, he is either not interested in Wu Qionghua's feminine beauty and the hidden romance between Qionghua and Changqing, or consciously suppresses his sensibilities since they do not conform to the puritanical principle of life during the Cultural Revolution.

Phantom of the Cultural Revolution (I): Old Ghost of *Blood and Iron*

Old Ghost was born into an intellectual family in 1947. His mother, Yang Mo, was the acclaimed writer of the Red classic *Qingchun zhi ge* (Song of youth, 1956). Raised in the countryside of Hebei province by an aunt on his father's side until age four, he returned to his parents in Beijing for education. *Blood and Iron* chronicles his life from kindergarten to graduation from high school, including the period before he joined the Construction Corps in Inner Mongolia in 1968. This autobiographical narrative is a detailed account of his experience growing from a country kid to an aspirant revolutionary youth. Very much like a hero of a picaresque novel or *Bildungsroman*,[17] Old Ghost leaves home and makes a long journey by foot all over the country. Besides listing his itinerary, *Blood and Iron* describes his pilgrimage to the holy revolutionary Mecca through the side narrative of his psychological transmutation.

The comprehensive list of revolutionary stories Old Ghost presents in *Blood and Iron* contributed to his revolutionary consciousness and explains much of his path. Most, if not all, of his revolutionary mentality is cultivated through popular readers, films, and songs, most produced or imported from the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s.[18] He directs his instinctive motivation according to revolutionary standards, pondering day and night how to become a true revolutionary. During the Great Famine, he requests the lowest quota of food

despite the fact he is a growing adolescent and requires much more. His true motivation is that he believes that heroism triumphs over all hardship, not to mention hunger. Even his infamous act of stealing steamed buns from his aunt's kitchen does not shake his belief. Whenever he suffers, Old Ghost thinks of a heroic character from a revolutionary story to encourage himself.

In Old Ghost's narratives, his preoccupation with emulating the revolutionary models turns his everyday acts into mimicry of the heroic figures he admires. But such imitation cannot fulfill his aspirations; he wants real revolutionary action. Motivated by the Red Army, Old Ghost inspires a team of his schoolmates to go to the far south, hoping to join the Vietnam War and fight the Americans. After innumerable trials and hardships, they arrive at the battlefield in Guangxi province on the border of China and Vietnam, but they are sent back to the home front because according to a Party directive, student volunteers are not allowed to join the battle. Old Ghost does not give up, though. Tormented by the idea that the Soviet revisionists will come back to invade China, he plans another journey to Tibet with trusted comrades to purchase arms so that they can fight the Russians. Old Ghost is only one of thousands of youths who threw themselves into revolution by imitating their predecessors. Many others followed the path of massive migrations, rewalking the Long March to the holy land of Yan'an.

Through these migrations, walking to Yan'an, Old Ghost and his peers map China both literally and metaphorically (Figure 5.1). By leaving their footprints on the land and savoring the bitterness of their trials, being ever willing to

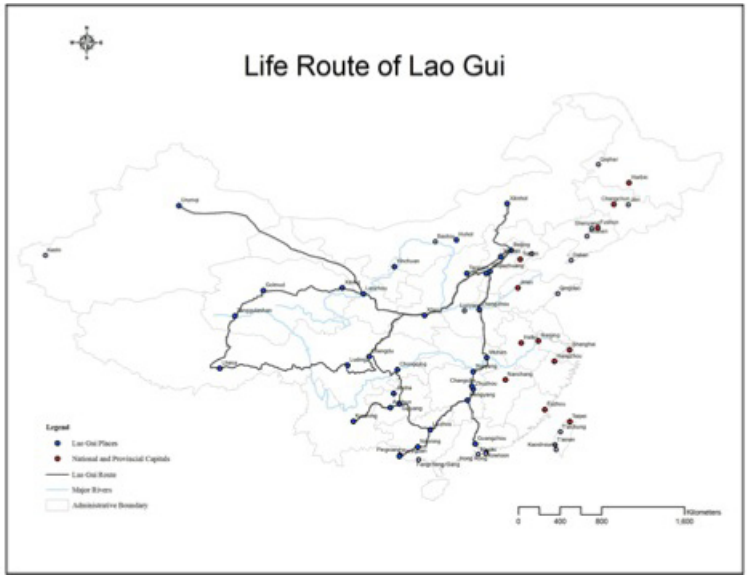

Figure 5.1 The life route of Old Ghost (Lao Gui), by Enhua Zhang.

defend the country on the frontier, they find a way to secure their collective ownership of this land and their national sovereignty. The voluntary act of mapping and remapping China corresponds to the collective anxiety about losing the country to enemies, as shown in Old Ghost's dreams of fighting the Russians.

The Cultural Revolution not only reconfirms the ownership of the geographical space of China, but also stimulates radical changes in the social space of human relations, mainly by redefining the social hierarchy based on bloodline and class standing. The revolutionary heroes belong to the category Old Ghost reveres; he condemns their opposites, even if they include his mother or sister. The dismantling of traditional social relations causes chaos in morality and ethics. Old Ghost dares to confront his mother by disregarding some urban customs, like taking a bath and brushing his teeth, because real revolutionaries do not care about these routine trivialities. He considers his mother and sister revolutionary targets because of their bourgeois living habits.

His adulatory attitude toward revolutionary heroes is only one part of Old Ghost's relationship with the past. The other is his view of the group he condemns. Here I juxtapose Old Ghost and his mother, Yang Mo, as well as their respective works, to display the distorted mother–son relationship against the larger social disorder and explore how and why the two generations responded to their revolutionary experiences differently. The antagonism between mother and son reveals not only personal conflict within the domestic circle, but also clashes between two generations from the same social class.

Both Yang Mo and Old Ghost chronicle the experiences of the youth of two generations. The characters in their writings are very mobile, always on the way somewhere, often to unknown destinations. Their physical growth is concomitant with their journey across space. Their travels compose revolutionary cartographies of two generations, but these are uncannily similar. Yang Mo's *Song of Youth* relates the tale of Lin Daojing, who runs away from home in Beijing to escape an arranged marriage, then meets and marries her first love, Yu Yongze. After being inspired by the revolutionary Lu Jiachuan, she divorces Yu, eventually joining the mass movement under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Old Ghost first recounts his bitterness from 1969 to 1975 as a laborer in the Construction Corps in Inner Mongolia in *Xuese huanghun* (Blood red sunset). When the memoir begins, Old Ghost is disillusioned with the proletarian Cultural Revolution in the capital and voluntarily goes to the northern frontier. During eight years there, he is disconnected from his family, oppressed by the local cadres, betrayed by school friends, and isolated by his workmates and his relatives. In his second work, *Xue yu tie* (Blood and iron), Old Ghost recollects his childhood and adolescence before he settled down in Inner Mongolia, showing how a shy bumpkin boy from an old revolutionary base grew into an aspiring youth in the mass proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Whether their work is factual or fictional, both Yang Mo and Old Ghost write in the larger frame of the *Bildungsroman*. Yang Mo projects some of her own experience into *Song of Youth*. Lin Daojing as the reincarnated Yang Mo

progresses from an innocent young girl with petty bourgeois sentiments to an intrepid proletarian warrior, going beyond her own circle of love and hatred and gradually immersing herself in the proletarian masses, eventually embracing the grand patriotic cause. The alter ego of Old Ghost, referred to as Lin Hu by other characters in *Blood and Iron*, was deserted by his parents as a child and feels very uneasy after they are reunited; he is estranged from his classmates and teachers until he finally becomes secure through his growing masculinity. Before he goes to Inner Mongolia, he does not truly involve himself with the mass movement in the Cultural Revolution. Most of his acts aim at shaping himself into a heroic individual. He continues to pursue this heroic self while in exile in the northern frontier, but only runs into one frustration after another.

Compared to Lin Daojing's "growing up," Old Ghost's wandering experience appears to be "growing down." Both characters live through tumultuous revolutionary years, but the extent to which they are accepted—their situations in the social space—are distinct. Lin Daojing is always enmeshed in the closely intertwined revolutionary network, full of traps of betrayal and support from loyalists. Under the guidance of a male Communist, Lu Jiachuan, she cuts her ties with her partner, Yu Yongze, a nerdy intellectual who shows no concern for social realities, and throws herself into the glorious work of national salvation. Throughout her voyage she constantly quenches her personal desire and cultivates a love for the masses. In stark contrast, Old Ghost is never truly involved in any social group or attached to anybody. There is no mentor to speak of in his life; he always acts on his own with an unruly chivalry. Never giving up his quest of the self, he focuses exclusively on building a heroic image and does not truly subscribe to revolution of any kind. Moreover, he tries to achieve his revolutionary ideal by means fair or foul and fulfills his own desires in the name of the revolution. For instance, he steals Tibetan knives and guns, intending to fight the Russians. He degenerates from an aspirant with revolutionary zeal to a revolutionary hooligan and finally to an exiled egomaniac. To a certain degree, Old Ghost manages to maintain his self even during the period least conducive to the construction of individuality. During the years in Inner Mongolia, he is forced to join but never truly integrates himself into the masses.

In their writings, Yang Mo and Old Ghost project different concepts of organizing human relations into an ideal society. Although both their works are set against the backdrop of revolution as mobilized by the Chinese Communist Party, the societies the characters try to build are different. Lin Daojing and her comrades take the establishment of a harmonious human society as a mission based on mutual proletarian love. However, Old Ghost and his fellows are on a mission to smash the old world by propagating class hatred, which inadvertently helps disintegrate human society. Thus in *Song of Youth*, Lin Daojing, her revolutionary sister Jiang Ping, and her mentor Lu Jiachuan all give up their selves and individuality for the sake of the masses and collectivity. On the surface, Old Ghost acts in the name of revolution. But his goal is to cultivate individual heroism, not sacrifice his self for the collective.

The social spaces the two generations inhabit tolerate different degrees of romance and love. Romantic love and proletarian love coexist in the process of achieving the revolutionary goal in *Song of Youth*. The path by which Lin Daojing switches from Yu Yongze to Lu Jiachuan is also the process by which she gradually gives up love for an alleged bourgeois intellectual and embraces love for a proletarian fighter. When Lu Jiachuan dies a martyr, Lin Daojing's love for him is transformed into wholehearted dedication to the revolutionary cause. In contrast, romantic love is repressed in Old Ghost's experience. Revolutionary asceticism does not encourage or even allow for it. His romantic feelings are channeled into violence: Old Ghost beats up the girl he likes best in his class. The abnegation of romantic love makes love for the proletariat the only legitimate sensibility.

Yang Mo and Old Ghost strongly dislike each other's work. Old Ghost's formative years witnessed the production and popularity of numerous heroic revolutionary stories. *Song of Youth* stands above many others, with sales figures of five million copies. But in *Blood and Iron*, Old Ghost never shows any interest in his mother's masterpiece. He is ashamed that Yang Mo is the author of a work with bourgeois sentiment and wishes she had written stories about the revolutionary battlefield instead. Yang Mo is opposed to Old Ghost writing *Blood Red Sunset*. At one point she seizes the whole manuscript. When Old Ghost asks her to return it, she refuses, thinking she has the right to control her son's writing. Old Ghost has to rewrite the book. This mother–son relationship is the opposite of the Oedipal complex. He hates her for her bourgeois lifestyle and writing; she oppresses him as an authoritarian mother. In his account of growing up, we hardly see the presence of a mother in any form. Lack of maternal love partly explains Old Ghost's predilection for violence, and his cruelty in participating in the revolution.

Blood and Iron not only unravels the positive revolutionary mentality of Old Ghost but also reveals its dark side. He goes to Yucai Elementary School, exclusively for the children of the Party officials. The children there are told that they are different from the everyman: They are revolutionary offspring and have a natural blood tie with revolution. These little kids thus have a strong sense of duty to carry on their revolutionary heritage. In the summer of 1962 at the age of 15, Old Ghost revisits his hometown in central Hebei province, the anti-Japanese base during the Sino-Japanese War where numerous revolutionary stories and films are set. He is deeply shocked to see how the peasants struggle with famine and surprised to hear a little kid with bare buttocks curse Chairman Mao because of hunger.[19] He enjoys being in charge of the country kids, and after returning to Beijing he feels lost and misses the countryside very much. However, his longing for that life merely reveals his eagerness to be a mass leader.

Old Ghost provides a thorough list of the revolutionary spirits who possess him and his generation: the revolutionary heroes born during the recent past of the PRC, including Red Army soldiers, anti-Japanese heroes, teenage heroes, and heroes on the Korean front, as well as imported Soviet models like Paul Korchagin and the Young Guardsmen. These models have given him a set of

revolutionary ethics and aesthetics that he practices in both theory and actions. He is strongly impressed by the film *Shangganling* (Shanggan Mountain, 1956), in which Chinese volunteer soldiers followed their orders to keep still and would rather be burned to death than put out the fire on their bodies, lest they be discovered by an American air patrol. On the burned front bombed by the American air force, water was scarce and valuable, so they drank whatever was available. To emulate these heroes on the Korean front, Old Ghost adds a pinch of earth to his water and drinks it all. He does not fit in with his family or school, both of which privilege the higher classes within the Party hierarchy. In order to become as intrepid as his heroes, Old Ghost trains himself by sleeping with a skull.[20]

The identification with revolutionary heroes results in a warped revolutionary ethics and aesthetics. Old Ghost does everything explicitly and implicitly in the name of revolutionary sacredness, including snatching money from his parents' house to go south and steal guns and knives in Lhasa. His perverted aesthetics echo his twisted ethics. Urban habits seem too bourgeois to him, and he consciously abandons them. He is not comfortable with new clothes and intentionally makes them dirty and worn before wearing them. He overrides neatness with dirtiness, prettiness with ugliness, and order with chaos.

His warped aesthetics are embodied by his personal emblem. He buys a new notebook, specifically for recording the aphorisms of heroes and great leaders to encourage himself. He thinks of designing a personal mark for his notebook, since all nations, leagues, armies, and even pirates have their own emblems. After drawing many sketches, he comes up with a final version: a skull symbolizing perseverance; a hammer and sickle symbolizing revolution; a pair of broadswords symbolizing force; and two ears of corn symbolizing his hometown in the primitive countryside.[21] This personal emblem crystallizes the aesthetics and mentality of Old Ghost. On the surface, its signification resonates with the revolutionary principle in general during the high Maoist period, which upheld revolutionary immolation, the power of force, and the privilege of the countryside. The personal emblem also shows the negative side of the revolutionary mentality of Old Ghost and his generation. The hammer and sickle are borrowed from the Party flag. Old Ghost explicitly expounds its meaning, which is revolution, just like on the flag. The incorporation of broadswords articulates the longing for legendary chivalry, which echoes the Party's use of force or even violence. The new invention on this personal emblem is the skull. As the most striking symbol of the past, the dead, the residue of a life, the reminder of a bygone spirit, and the part of the body that resists disappearance and decay, it fully represents the past revolutionary spirits that totally possess the soul of Old Ghost. Thus on the real body and mind of Old Ghost, the revolutionary spirits initiate a conversation with the new generation of revolutionaries. Old Ghost, therefore, not only is symbolic in name but also functions as a real ghost in real life.

Phantom of the Cultural Revolution (II): *Red Detachment of Women* and its reincarnations

As an indispensable piece of the Chinese revolutionary repertoire, *Red Detachment of Women* (film 1961; ballet 1964; TV drama 2004) demonstrates both the merits and the limits of Chinese cultural production during the 17 years between 1949 and 1966.[22] Scholars have studied how *Red Detachment of Women* performs ideology, e.g., its role in shaping Chinese collective memory about the revolutionary past.[23] Since the mid-1990s, this story has been a favorite in the adaptation and rewriting of the "Red classics." A nine-episode TV drama, *Qiongzong nübing* (Women soldiers of Hainan column, title changed to *Red Detachment of Women* for VCD/DVD distribution), appears to be a sequel to *Red Detachment of Women*. A 21-episode TV remake became the focal point of controversy around the adaptation of "Red classics" in 2004. Meanwhile, two writers of the TV series collaborated on and published a novel with the same title.

As the most politically correct and representative revolutionary genre, model plays are always set in a historically significant locale. Hainan Island, aka Jade State, is the southernmost Chinese territory besides the internationally disputed small islands in the southern China Sea. Sovereignty over this island had special significance when China's biggest island, Taiwan, was occupied by another government that also claimed sovereignty over China and was internationally recognized as the official representative government of China until 1972, when the People's Republic of China (mainland) replaced the Republic of China (Taiwan) at the United Nations. In view of these larger national and international circumstances, using Hainan Island as the setting of *Red Detachment of Women* is not simply the personal preference of the playwright. The location expresses the collective drive to consolidate this frontier zone. Cultural production in the socialist context is rarely an individual accomplishment, either in the form of involuntary revision after public discussion or conscious self-censorship.

Beside its geographical significance, Hainan Island in *Red Detachment of Women* combines utopian thinking and dystopian reality. On the one hand, the island is far away, isolated from the mainland, and full of exoticism—the perfect setting for a utopia. People there are encouraged to develop fraternity, mutual affection, and selflessness, and to sacrifice for others. On the other hand, in terms of material supplies and the larger social environment, the Women's Detachment suffers from wartime austerity and the blockade by the Nationalist enemies. Like the male-dominated troops of the Red Army in the Long March and the Eighth Route Army in the civil war with the Nationalists, the members of the detachment live in a highly hierarchical community with a male leader. The social space is regulated by strict protocols on relations between superiors and underlings, men and women. This antinomy between utopia and dystopia also reflects the dialectic of romanticism and Communism. Thus, although it is implied throughout the story, the romantic love between the innocent heroine and the veteran Communist can only be repressed and censored. But this romance has

managed to obtain unconditional release in the story's afterlife of multiple reworkings and adaptations, sometimes with a strong eroticism.

As presented in the most popular art forms in late twentieth-century China, including film, ballet/model play, and TV drama, *Red Detachment of Women* has permeated various aspects of Chinese culture. It participates in constructing two pasts of China. First, *Red Detachment of Women* was an essential tool for people in the 1960s and 1970s to learn about the Communist struggle in 1930s China.[24] Second, since the 1990s, as one of the Red symbols of the Cultural Revolution, the story has not only helped people who experienced the Cultural Revolution firsthand to recall their memories, but also opened a way for the next generation to imagine what that period was like. The translation of images, plots, characterizations, and soundtracks from one version to another shows the multiple transformations in China's social space, in terms of ethics, aesthetics, sexuality, and commodities. The pedigree of *Red Detachment of Women* is a miniature of Chinese societal changes from the 1960s to today.

The long afterlife of *Red Detachment of Women* also presents a perfect case through which to investigate how cultural production circulates in transformative symbolic space in correspondence with the changes in social space. The following section will examine the TV adaptations and rewritings of *Red Detachment of Women* to show the legacy of "Red classics" in the new Chinese cultural context. Following the start of gender troubles in the film plot, these adaptations switched the emphasis from *soldiers* (in the original film and ballet) to *women*. Thus the release of love and eroticism became common in the remakes. Taking these adaptations as a form of afterlife, I argue that *Red Detachment of Women* has become a phantom of the Cultural Revolution, continuing to possess and haunt today's China.

Origin: Red Detachment of Women *in film and ballet*

In the summer of 1958, the writer Liang Xin finished the script of *Red Detachment of Women* after living on Hainan Island to gain local experience for a few months. At the beginning of the story, a Communist cadre, Hong Changqing, in the guise of a rich merchant from Southeast Asia (*nanyang*), encounters Nan Batian, the local landlord.[25] At the Nans' mansion, Changqing happens to witness a runaway servant girl being caught and severely flogged as punishment. With the good intention to free her from misery in the landlord's household, Changqing proposes to buy the girl as a maid. Nan agrees. Thus Qionghua leaves with Changqing. As they cross Boundary Hill, Changqing frees Qionghua and directs her to join the Communist women's militia. On the way to the Women's Detachment, Qionghua runs into a child bride, Fu Hongliang, who is married to a carved wooden mannequin, a dead boy's substitute. Qionghua persuades Honglian to come along with her.

At the military base, Qionghua finds out that Hong Changqing is actually the Party Representative in the Red Army. Under his lead, they plan tactics to crush Nan's clique. Qionghua and Honglian are sent to spy on Nan. Driven by revenge,

Qionghua violates Hong Changqing's orders and shoots Nan. He is injured but escapes. Changqing confines Qionghua to the guardhouse as punishment. A few days later, he leads Qionghua and others to trap Nan. They catch him and drag him to a parade and public trial in the village, but he escapes through an underground passage. Qionghua is shot by Nan's guard while chasing him. On the way back to the military base after recovering, Qionghua meets Changqing at Boundary Hill. By this point they have developed a mutual infatuation, but there is no actual love scene. Qionghua expresses her desire to go undercover in order to kill Nan. Changqing takes her to headquarters and shows her a map of China (Figure 5.2). He says, "Hainan Island is only a tiny part of China. Only collective struggle, not individual revenge, can liberate the whole country." Qionghua is enlightened and applies for Party membership. The map thus serves as a tool for Changqing to awaken the consciousness of "imagined community" in Qionghua.

Later, the Nationalist government sends an expeditionary force to the island to wipe out the Communists. The Women's Detachment is defeated at Boundary Hill by the combined Nationalist and Nan militias. Qionghua and other soldiers retreat, but Changqing is captured. He dies a martyr. In agony, Qionghua witnesses him being burned alive. The Nationalist commander does not want to pursue the Communists anymore because they have been crushed, but Nan Batian insists on cutting the weeds and digging up the roots out of personal revenge. He is killed by Qionghua in the ensuing battle. The film ends with Qionghua taking Changqing's place as the Party Representative of the Second

Figure 5.2 Changqing shows Qionghua a map of China.

Detachment of Women. But a final victory of the peasants over the landlord is not presented in the story.[26]

Wu Qionghua, one of hundreds of heroines, grows from an innocent village girl who harbors strong personal vendettas to a Communist fighter who embraces the liberation of the whole country. Her experience has been questioned by some scholars due to the male intervention in the process. They point out that Hong Changqing directs and plays the role of mentor in Qionghua's maturation.[27] Male dominance in women's liberation has developed into a device in Chinese women's *Bildungsroman* tales. Another example is Lin Daojing, the heroine of *Song of Youth*, who grows from a petty bourgeois intellectual into a revolutionary under a male's lead. Qionghua's most recent predecessor would be Xi'er, the white-haired girl.[28] Xi'er's story has been crystallized into an epigram: old society turns humans into ghosts while new society turns ghosts into humans. The success of *White-Haired Girl* in China also proved how the magic onstage performance can be manipulated to reinforce the magic of the state.[29] Viewers who saw the play in the theater for the first time without knowing the end might have the same feeling as from watching a phantasmagoria show: the instinctual horror of seeing a ghost live on stage. As the play unfolds, White-haired Girl is a man-made ghost who performs the Communist ideology. The manipulation of the ghost shows the hidden side of the Communist propaganda, in which spirits and ghosts contradict the allegedly scientific belief of Communism that allows no room for superstition. However, in *White-Haired Girl*, the issue is not science versus superstition, but class. In the landlord-dominated society, Xi'er exists as a ghost. She can only regain herself as a human being when her own class, the peasants, dominate. Then and only then can the landlords and their kind be denounced as ghosts.

Just like many revolutionary stories produced during the early PRC, *Red Detachment of Women* restages the revolutionary heroism of the Communists and the devilry of the Nationalists and their followers from the recent past. For the audience, these characters are like spirits: They have a form on the screen but no embodiment in reality. The revolutionary tales produce revolutionary spirits similar to the supernatural figures projected during the phantasmagoria show, but they create a very different affect among the spectators. The phantasmagoria show creates horror and disidentification, but the revolutionary stories aim at inventing sublimity and promoting audiences' identification with the revolutionary heroes. The main attraction of phantasmagoria lies in the psychological repercussions among the spectators: excitement, fear, horror; most are negative because of the alienating images projected onto the phantasmagoria screen. *Red Detachment of Women* is also capable of stimulating both positive and negative feelings among the audience. Besides the sublimity that all revolutionary stories strive to arouse, the filmmakers mobilize affect by laying bare Qinghua's suffering in the Nans' household and Nan ruthlessly burning Changqing alive; audiences generally and naturally develop a deep hatred of the landlord Nan Batian and his followers as well as the less visible Nationalists. The most effective way to mobilize affect is through public experience both in and

out of the cinema. In the film, the Communists hold a public parade to denounce Nan Batian after catching him. Villagers gather to speak their bitterness against him. Speaking bitterness in public had been a practice among the Communists since the 1920s to fight landlords and other privileged classes. Nan retaliates by torturing Changqing in public later on. As Changqing is being burned alive, the nondiegetic "International" rises. The actual audience of the film in the theater would be moved along with the viewers of the scene within the film.

Except for the absence of the gender advantage the male landlord has over the female country girl, Qionghua's fate is no better than Xi'er's. Fed up with ill treatment by the Nans, Qionghua is determined to run away but is caught and flogged severely. In its depiction of the landlord's suppression and the innocent girl's suffering, *Red Detachment of Women* is a remake of *White-Haired Girl*. In both stories, after the intervention of the Communist agency—the Party Representative and the Eighth Route Army respectively—the heroine is eventually liberated. Nonetheless, *Red Detachment of Women* goes one step further. In *White-Haired Girl* the Nationalists have not been attacked as class enemies, mainly because the Communists and Nationalists were united to fight the Japanese at the time the play was written. However, in the 1950s, with the Nationalists aiming to return to the mainland, the landlords and the Nationalists naturally became class enemies to the Communists.

The originator of *Red Detachment of Women*, Liang Xin, reiterates the authenticity of the film script. He emphasizes that the character of Wu Qionghua is a synthesis from various sources in history and his experiences. A closer look at the history of the Women's Detachment on Hainan Island shows barely any resemblance between Qionghua and those real women soldiers. Liang admits that the fictional prototype was a woman revolutionary fighter named Liu Qiuju who was not affiliated with the Women's Detachment at all. There was indeed a female martyr of the detachment, but she was of the generation that followed. Other sources include several women comrades of Liang's.[30] These statements show that the story of the real Women's Detachment was at most an inspiration for the film script. As for Hong Changqing, the Party Representative who makes the liberation enterprise more problematic, he is a complete invention. However, interpreting *Red Detachment* of *Women* in relation to the revolutionary history of Hainan Island can become a trap. I propose to understand this film as well as its derivative productions in relation to their contemporary historical context, i.e., the conditions in which they were being produced, because the context is more related to the story's contemporaneity than its past.

Not shackled by the concept that *Red Detachment of Women* is anything but a truthful representation of the revolutionary history of Hainan, I see it as a projection of the contemporary mentality. In other words, *Red Detachment of Women* has more to do with the 1950s PRC than with the 1930s Nationalist China. The film script creates the Red women soldiers on Hainan Island, not vice versa. Wu Qionghua, Hong Changqing, and other revolutionaries are thus revolutionary spirits, despite the materialistic notion that spirits do not exist but are instead human creations.

The film of *Red Detachment of Women* was released on July 1, 1961, in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. Immediately the movie created a socialist realist gaze with its legend of a revolutionary man and woman set on the southern frontier. Chinese audiences during the Maoist period were familiar with revolutionary stories with similar formulae. However, *Red Detachment of Women* produced a sense of estrangement among Chinese audiences, mainly because of its strong exotic flavor. The tropical landscape on Hainan Island, filled with coconut trees, extended people's imagination of their own community to a faraway borderland not accessible to them in their lived experience. Thus, *Red Detachment of Women* combines the man-made revolutionary history with the coming-into-consciousness of an imagined whole China.

After a year of rehearsals and revisions, on September 25, 1964, the dress rehearsal for *Red Detachment of Women (B)* took place at the Tianqiao Theater in Beijing. The ballet version created an aesthetic wonder in the history of art, combining several pairs of supposedly binary elements into one synthetic artistic entity without making it look like kitsch. Artistically, this reformative Chinese version of ballet is as fine as its Western counterpart. Folk dances from several regions, including the minority dance of Li locals on Hainan Island and the popular rice-sprout dance in the Communist-occupied area in the 1940s, are incorporated.[31] More importantly, this ballet represents fully the central aesthetics of the artworks of the Cultural Revolution—red, light, and bright—and the "three prominences" (*san tuchu*): among all the characters, give prominence to the positive characters; among all the positive characters, give prominence to the heroic characters; among all the heroic characters, give prominence to the main heroic characters. According to these aesthetic principles, the leading female character in the film version is replaced with the male lead, Hong Changqing, in the ballet, which breaks the tradition that the lead role in ballet is female.

Not knowing much about classical Western ballet, an art with bourgeois origins vulnerable to animadversion in early socialist China, Chinese mass audiences hardly noticed how far *Red Detachment of Women* had gone from Western tradition. Meanwhile, however localized it was, both Chinese and foreign audiences were impressed by the new form. Chinese viewers were struck by the dancing on tiptoes, while foreign audiences were amazed to see guns as props in a ballet. Despite their familiarity with the narrative, though, Chinese audiences could not overcome their alienation from this novel form of *Red Detachment of Women (B)*. This sense of estrangement provided the audiences with an experience that was not part of their real life. *Red Detachment of Women (F)* suggests the romance between Hong Changqing and Wu Qinghua, but a didactic revolutionary lesson takes the place of any love scene. Qionghua (Jade Flower) is changed into Qinghua (Distinct or Clear China) to avoid femininity and to strengthen patriotism in the ballet version, and the pas de deux allows bodily intimacy between Qinghua and Changqing without violating puritanical revolutionary ethics. Likewise, among the ubiquitous desexualized uniforms for men

and women during the Maoist era, the bare legs of ballerinas with shorts and a uniform jacket would appease male curiosity about and imagination of female bodies.

As the overriding aesthetic fundamental to visual arts during the Maoist era, red, light, and bright on the model play stage projects an idealized picture of a state in revolutionary frenzy. Real life was in stark contrast with the stage. The everyday horizon was gray, dark, and gloomy. There was red, especially cruel blood, in everyday life, but most often it was not related to acclaimed heroic figures, but to all sorts of allegedly condemned counterrevolutionaries at public rallies and struggle sessions. In this sense, the red, light, and bright can be considered the opposite of real life. The constructed theatrical atmosphere is thus similar to the phantasmagoric theater: People see the other world, different from their lived experience, and feel alienated, shocked but satisfied by savoring objects normally taboo.

The afterlife of Red Detachment of Women

There are two layers of meaning behind the idea of an afterlife for *Red Detachment of Women*. First, it implies that Liang Xin excavated the women soldiers from long-forgotten history with the vivid details and elaborate artistic embellishments in his film script. Second, *Red Detachment of Women (F)* inspired other cultural creations, including the ballet (1964), two TV dramas (1996 and 2004), and the novel (2004). Outside China, besides Chinese and French restagings of the ballet version, *Red Detachment of Women (B)* was integrated into the opera *Nixon in China*.[32] Over nearly half a century, the story has played a double role in shaping people's memory. First, as an artistic piece popular for two decades in the 1960s and 1970s, *Red Detachment of Women* is a quintessential part of the people's attempt to learn about their revolutionary past, i.e., 1930s China in the struggle with the Nationalists and the Japanese. Second, in the 1990s, *Red Detachment of Women* helped people to recall their memories about their recent past during the Cultural Revolution. *Red Detachment of Women* constructs two pasts: the historical context of its origin and the historical context of its production and circulation. In other words, it is associated with two different historical periods that are not necessarily related. For example, in the 1990s, when people think of *Red Detachment of Women*, they may recall the film and ballet without any reference to its historic origin in 1930s China.

These reincarnated forms of *Red Detachment of Women* show a compulsive drive to keep the Women's Detachment alive through various efforts. The film stops as Wu Qionghua takes the place of Hong Changqing and continues the fight on Hainan Island. Apparently, this suspended ending does not satisfy audiences' curiosity about the fate of the Women's Detachment, whether in fact or in fiction. This curiosity surfaces as the government arouses revolutionary consciousness through various commemorative activities. Reports about surviving women soldiers frequently appear in newspapers, from Party organs to local tabloids. Meanwhile, in popular culture, there are constant efforts to recast the story

to make it relevant to the present day. All these endeavors appear to invoke the spirits of the women soldiers. However, when they return in the later remakes, these women are quite far from what people remember. People cannot help feeling strange while watching these revived spirits of women soldiers on screen.[33]

The sequel to Red Detachment of Women*: the TV drama* Women Soldiers of Hainan Column

As I argued earlier, the original version of the story gains legitimacy by claiming to be truthful to history. However, in the derivative texts, like the TV dramas and the novel, historicity is not an issue. Those texts are more concerned with the contemporaneity of the women soldiers. The first TV drama, *Women Soldiers of Hainan Column*, came out in 1996 amid the fever of nostalgia about the Cultural Revolution, and was later released under the title *Red Detachment of Women* on VCD/DVD. Some critics may deny this TV drama a place in the genealogy of *Red Detachment of Women* for two reasons. First, its main plot is not based on *Red Detachment of Women (F)*. Second, it commits an anachronism since it is set against the later anti-Japanese background, not the struggle against landlords and the Nationalists. However, it constantly reminds the audience of its relevance because of the similarities of character names to those in the film and random but well-planned references to the Women's Detachment either in history or in previous representations. I consider this TV drama a sequel to the film and ballet in the pedigree of *Red Detachment of Women*.

In the film, the Red Detachment of Women forms in 1931 and is soon cracked down upon by the Nationalists. However, in the TV drama, Japanese invaders become the archenemies instead of the landlords and the Nationalists. The class conflict in the film escalates into a national confrontation in the TV drama. The main characters are identifiable with the ones in the film, but have different characteristics. The female lead, Qiongmei, the equivalent of Qionghua, is forced to marry a local landlord, Fang. On the way to the wedding ceremony, Qiongmei runs away. She is rescued by a Nationalist officer, Haisheng, equivalent of Hong Changqing. Haisheng then drops out of the Nationalist Army and joins the Communist Army. After marrying Haisheng, Qiongmei joins the Women's Detachment, which later develops into the Women's Detachment of Hainan Column under the Communists' lead. The women fight the Japanese alongside their male comrades. Haisheng dies in battle. In the end, the Japanese invaders and the traitor landlord, Fang Zhenwu, are captured and killed.

A distinctive difference between the TV drama and the film is the use of love as a theme. Romance is the primary means of organizing character relationships in this drama. In *Red Detachment of Women (F)*, the romantic feelings between Wu Qionghua and Hong Changqing are palpable but not expressed. The repression of romantic love can be explained by the practice of revolutionary asceticism and puritanism during the time the film was produced. However, romantic love permeates the TV drama. The main characters are presented in pairs, and

the female lead is saved from being a child bride by a man who later becomes her husband.

Gender troubles start in *Red Detachment of Women (F)*.[34] Even critics without much feminist sensitivity will notice the male's role in leading the female toward liberation in the Communist discourse. The TV drama tries to shed light on the women's effort in their own liberation. The existence of the detachment itself expresses their equality with men: these are women as women soldiers, not as undercover men fighting on the battlefield. In the opening part, one of the leading male characters, Ma Die, recalls the past as several young people visit him and Qiongmei: "The women in Hainan had been oppressed by the regime, clan power, patriarchy, and the authority of husbands. The Communists helped Hainan women to be free from those authorities." Ma Die underscores the Communists' devotion to women's liberation through his voiceover. However, the Communists in the TV drama play the part of women's oppressors. The Party will not approve the marriage request of woman soldier Xiu E and Ma Die unless it is granted by Xiu E's husband, who has had no contact with her for three years. Xiu E has no right to divorce him even if he disappears for so long; the husband makes the ultimate decision on the marriage. The Communists do not act in the interest of Xiu E, but instead add more oppression by enhancing the male dominance over women.

In the TV adaptation, the Japanese invaders are depicted as sexual perverts. After failing to win over the captured women soldiers, the Japanese try to make Xiu E and Yuexia turn in other Communists through torture. Xiu E is hung up and flogged. As the camera focuses on her bare waist, she becomes an object of the male Japanese imperialist gaze. The replacement of landlords and Nationalists with Japanese imperialists transforms the domestic class conflict into international colonization, but then the struggle between Japanese imperialists and Chinese colonized is reduced to a fight over gender privilege. The advantage of the male Japanese over the female Chinese reveals that in the anticolonial imagination,[35] the subjects tend to imagine themselves as victims on the level of gender inequality rather than economic exploitation, political coercion, and military attack. The colonial evil is fully presented through the trope of rape, which becomes a powerful metaphor for denouncing colonialist crime through sexual as well as moral corruption.

Despite its innovations in plot and characterizations, this TV adaptation constantly tries to respond to its predecessors. There are three sources of influence. First, the real figures in the history of the Women's Detachment: The female lead, Qiongmei, mentions a village that once offered shelter for Feng Baiju, a real soldier, but Feng does not appear. No character is even close to Feng. Second, the TV drama makes a tenuous link with the film using the prop of two-dollar coins. In the film, Party Representative Hong Changqing gives Qionghua three dollars at Boundary Hill when he sets her free. Qionghua keeps the money and submits it as her Party dues when she is granted Party membership. At the beginning of the TV drama, Haisheng gives Qiongmei two dollars on behalf of his mother. Later on, Qiongmei donates the money to buy food for

the army. Third, the costumes in the TV drama are inspired by the ballet version. The women soldiers wear knee-length shorts but long-sleeved jackets. Apparently, this mix-and-match is inherited from the 1964 costume design of *Red Detachment of Women (B)*.

The producers of this TV drama work hard to connect it with the orthodox *Red Detachment of Women*, including its real history and previous production. They may, however, have neglected the quintessential factor behind the long-lasting popularity of the story: the iconic image of Wu Qionghua and Hong Changqing. In other words, the Chinese audience has already accepted that *Red Detachment of Women* is all about the pilgrimage of the innocent serf girl Wu Qionghua in the cause of liberation of all humankind. Without these fundamental elements, the TV drama does not really tell the story of *Red Detachment of Women*, but just appropriates the popularity of the Red women soldiers.

The TV remake: Red Detachment of Women

Red Detachment of Women was revived again in 2004, with another TV remake and a novel based on it. Similar to the film, *Red Detachment of Women (T)* tells the story of how Wu Qionghua grows from an innocent peasant girl only seeking personal revenge into a staunch Communist fighter pursuing liberation for all mankind. However, this version provides more supporting characters and elaborate details about Qionghua's experiences in her childhood and youth. For example, it explains her hatred of landlord Nan Batian. Nan wants to seize the Wus' land to build an ancestral temple and so sets their house on fire. Qionghua's parents and little brother are killed. In avenging her family, Qionghua ruins Nan's ancestral temple. After being captured, Qionghua runs away and then is rescued by Hong Changqing. She joins the Women's Detachment, kills Nan Batian, and takes over.

In *Red Detachment of Women (T)*, besides Honglian, a few more down-trodden figures serve as a foil to Qionghua. First, a young girl sold into the local brothel resists by cutting off her hair and scraping her scalp with scissors, since no man wants a bald girl. She is later referred to as Little Bald (Xiao Guangtou). The madam sells her to Nan's attendant as a virgin boy to be sacrificed for the ancestral temple. Little Bald is found to be a girl the night before the sacrifice ceremony and is raped by Nan's head assistant. While Little Bald is being taken away by the temple guards, Qionghua escapes to set fire to the ancestral temple. She is captured but manages to climb out through a hole in the ceiling of the prison in the middle of a typhoon. Under the guidance of Hong Changqing, Qionghua decides to join the Red Army with Honglian. On the way to the military base they are arrested by human traders who sell women to brothels in Guangzhou. Once again, Qionghua succeeds in getting away with Honglian and Sis Li, a Li minority girl previously captured by the traders.

As in the beginning of the film, Qionghua is preoccupied with running away in the opening of *Red Detachment of Women (T)*. The TV remake dwells on specifics about how she does this. Some of her escapes are not possible without

another woman's sacrifice. The producers may not have been aware of the paradox in fabricating this plot. The first instance comes when Little Bald falls prey to Nan's head assistant, Fourth (Laosi), and is raped. Qionghua's purity is maintained at the expense of another girl's loss. No matter which and how many female characters are added, they all serve without exception to preserve Qionghua's virtue and enhance her heroism. This can be understood as another variation on the established revolutionary classics and model plays.

Another supplementary character is a rich girl from Southeast Asia who joins the Women's Detachment together with her suitor, Doctor. She used to be Changqing's neighbor and looks up to him as an idol; she follows him to Hainan Island to fight for her Communist ideal. She is called Southeast Asian Girl (Nanyang nü) by the other women soldiers. They welcome her as a newcomer but are antipathetic to her bourgeois habits. Although isolated in the beginning, Southeast Asian Girl wins respect and recognition from the other women for her knowledge and ardor. She appears to be Qionghua's rival for Changqing's favor not only in military practice but also implicitly in romantic love. Southeast Asian Girl is presented as a model romantic revolutionary girl. Her life reaches its finale with her wedding at the site of her execution with her fiancé, the perfect denouement of revolution and romance.[36]

The way the added female characters are named is revealing. They are all nicknamed according to their characteristics: Southeast Asian Girl, Tall (Dagezi), Little Bald, Sis Li, etc. The generic names make the characters representatives of their social group. Each possesses a feature distinctive to her physical aspect or social origin. Tall has been abused by her husband; Little Bald is sold to the brothel under the aegis of Nan Batian; Sis Li is sold to human traders for a brothel in Guangzhou. They are all replicas of the insulted Honglian, Qionghua's earliest foil figure in the original film. On top of that, these additional characters are created to die. None of them lives long enough to see their archenemy, the local landlord Nan Batian, killed. Their deaths are shot in slow motion and to look poetic. Southeast Asian Girl and her fiancé Doctor hug and kiss at their wedding ceremony, which is followed immediately by their execution. The camera goes around them in slow motion, making a full circle. The whole scene looks like they are relishing their unification with the eternal. Honglian jumps off a cliff as enemies are about to capture her. The slow motion makes her look like a bird flying in the sky, free and peaceful. Sis Li drowns herself in a lake as the Nationalist soldiers approach. She appears to enjoy absolute serenity while submerging under the water. Both of these scenes are shot against stunning landscapes. The characters' disappearance looks as if they are returning to Mother Nature. There is no visual presence of their body after life; blood and cruelty are absent. These lyricized death scenes are in stark contrast with the merciless execution of the male Communist by being burned alive.

In contrast to the feminizing of the women soldiers, Nan Batian's masculinity is undermined in *Red Detachment of Women (T)*. First, he does not have a real wife. His substitute wife is a maiden girl he receives upon his mother's request.

He treats this woman like a servant. Unlike the typical image of the landlord as a sexual pervert, with the exception of his passing attraction to Qionghua, Nan Batian does not show any interest in women. He is presented as a filial figure: receiving a girl his mother assigns to him, playing mahjong with his mother, and building the ancestral temple. After his mother dies, he swears to avenge her death by capturing Wu Qionghua and making a sacrifice of her. His total submission to his mother even in his personal life weakens his subjectivity as a man. Moreover, according to Confucian belief, there are three ways to be unfilial, and the worst is to not produce offspring.[37] *Red Detachment of Women (T)* reveals that Nan Batian is sterile. This signifies that the class to which he belongs is doomed. In contrast, even though Honglian dies, she leaves behind a baby girl. The Communist revolution has a successor.

The original film approves of the military tactics that the Communists use. The Communists are "heads up," e.g., Hong Changqing fools Nan Batian by playing a rich munitions supplier from Southeast Asia. The film does allow Nan to beguile the Communists and indicates that he is shrewd enough to escape when captured. The TV remake extends these tricks to the Communists. In a way, the narrative is interwoven with the use of parallels. That is, in *Red Detachment of Women (T)*, Nan Batian and his allies do what the Communists do to them in the film. First, Nan sets fire to Qionghua's house and burns her parents and little brother to death. In revenge, Qionghua burns Nan's ancestral temple. Nan's mother is extremely distressed by this and dies. Second, at the beginning of *Red Detachment of Women (T)*, Qionghua is obsessed with running away and revenge. She escapes through a hole in the ceiling. After being captured by the Women's Detachment, Nan Batian flees through an underpass. His actions against the detachment gradually become more of a personal feud: He wants to capture Qionghua as revenge for his mother's death. Third, Qionghua shoots Nan in the left shoulder. Later on, while chasing Nan, Qionghua is shot in the right of her chest. In the end, Qionghua feigns being a sacrifice in front of Nan. She kills him, and Nan becomes the real sacrifice for her family and dead comrades.

Red Detachment of Women (T) makes retribution—in the form of replacement—more complicated. The Communist Party is not always the favorite. In this TV series, disguise is a strategy employed by both sides. The madam of the brothel takes a few prostitutes and tricks Wu Qionghua and the women soldiers in order to steal weapons from them. The deceit is conspicuous in combination with the notorious purge campaign prevalent in the Red Army.[38] A Nationalist officer disguises himself as an underground Communist official and infiltrates the Communist camp. He instigates a ferocious purge of Hong Changqiang, Wu Qionghua, Southeast Asian Girl, and Doctor. As a result, the Women's Detachment suffers great loss, and Southeast Asian Girl and Doctor die at Nan Batian's hands. The use of disguise does not stop there. After Hong Changqing is captured, Nan's head assistant, Fourth, dresses like Changqing to ensnare women soldiers, and two of them are trapped. Disguise is a common strategy to show the wit and wisdom of the Communists in revolutionary-historical classics. Seldom are the Communists deceived by their enemies.

This TV remake employs disguise as a main resource to extend the story, create suspense, and find a resolution to the dramatic conflict. In the end, Qionghua pretends to turn herself in to Nan Batian as a sacrifice. The women soldiers and the Red Army soldiers play actresses and actors in costume to get inside the sacrificial temple. In the middle of the ceremony, they start shooting. Eventually, Qionghua kills Nan Batian. This final scene should be understood as poetic justice: Virtue is ultimately rewarded and vice defeated. Intriguingly, Nan's ancestral temple becomes a multifunctional locale: a sacrificial site, a performance stage, and a judicial forum. This triumphant ending seems to be a dress rehearsal for the ultimate victory of the Communists over the landlords and the Nationalists.

The release of love and use of eroticism became common practice in adapting "Red classics." Some adaptations go to such an extreme that they become more like "peachy or yellow classics" (a euphemism for romance or eroticism in Chinese) and cause the audience's and critics' aversion.[39] In response to this phenomenon, the Broadcasting Bureau of China issued a notice, "On the Issues Related to Adapting Red Classics into TV Series," on April 9, 2004. This announcement criticizes some adaptations that "misunderstand the original works, mistake the masses, and mislead the market." It further points out that in pursuit of high audience ratings and entertainment, some interweave too many emotional entanglements around the main characters, add too many love scenes, and romanticize too much in characterization.[40] While still in the process of shooting, *Red Detachment of Women (T)* was among those adaptations singled out. An ensuing announcement delivered by the Broadcasting Bureau of China, "On the Censorship of TV Series Adapted from 'Red Classics,' " defines "Red classics" as literary masterpieces known nationwide, with revolutionary history as the subject matter. The liberty to adapt "Red classics" was thus moderated.

The novel: Red Detachment of Women

Two of the scriptwriters of *Red Detachment of Women (T)* published a novel by the same title. The novel goes one radical step further by adding a narrative from the first-person perspective, that of a new character, Qionghua's adopted granddaughter. There are slight differences between the stories of the Women's Detachment in the novel and the TV drama. For instance, Nan Batian is fertile and his concubine is expecting. Since the previous discussion has covered similarities between these two versions, the following analysis will focus on the narrative from the first-person perspective.

Qionghua's adopted granddaughter grew up in Hainan Island but now lives in Beijing, a beautiful woman writer. When the novel begins, she is bored with her life in Beijing, breaks up with her boyfriend, and returns to Hainan Island on a quest to trace her grandmother's story. Fully informed by the film *Red Detachment of Women* as well as the earliest derivative texts around it, she is more interested in the women soldiers as women than as soldiers: "What I am concerned with are those women who either sacrificed their lives or survived as

daughter, mother, wife, sister, or just as woman. When facing the war, they made a life choice or they had no choice."[41]

Most of this novel repeats and enlarges the story of Wu Qionghua as a woman soldier. The additional prefatory words from the granddaughter's viewpoint relate some episodes from the grandmother's life after her time in the Women's Detachment. Grandmother never marries, though her stunning beauty impresses everybody in the village. The granddaughter witnesses Qionghua having sex with Zhong Bo, nicknamed Devil due to his rightist status during the Cultural Revolution. Zhong Bo later marries a child bride, arranged by his parents. As the narrator remembers, Grandmother keeps her affair with Zhong Bo secret until her death. Once Grandmother schemes to poison Zhong Bo's wife, who is already paralyzed, but later she drops the plan. When the narrator visits Zhong Bo, she meets Liang Zhong, a botanist from Beijing doing field research for his book on tropical plants. He is also researching sources for a TV series script about the Women's Detachment but does not really know what to write. He is disappointed when he interviews the old Red Army soldiers in the Memorial Garden of the Women's Detachment, because what the soldiers say is no different from the film. "The film is taken as life."[42] Liang decides that the surviving members of the Women's Detachment are living a life prescribed by Liang Xin's film. Stored in the Memorial Garden, repeating stories and getting paid for taking pictures with visitors, they are virtually commodities. Coincidentally, the granddaughter encounters a TV producer, Fu Tian, who produced the TV drama *Red Detachment of Women* and claims to be the grandson of Nan Batian.

The granddaughter cannot help reflecting upon the history of the Women's Detachment and their afterlives as women instead of soldiers, using her grandmother as an example. On the one hand, she constantly challenges what has been recorded in history and presented in film about these women soldiers. On the other hand, she is not motivated enough to construct a different story to replace those versions. As she claims, "The revolutionary story has become legend, not the history proper."[43] Paradoxically, whenever she mentions the history of the Women's Detachment, she turns to the officially endorsed records. Although not intended to subvert the tale in the film or the legend in history, her narrative initiates a dialogue between the history of the Women's Detachment and previous representations of it. Even though she does not invent a new version, her intervention leads to an alternative construction of this history.

It is ironic that her quest for her grandmother's past turns out to be a kind of self-salvation.

> The best way for me to prove I've bid farewell to being a beautiful writer is to come up with a *Red Detachment of Women* based on Grandmother's true life in my memory. It must be different. But this difference will fulfill some intrinsic necessities and rectify some of the history.[44]

The granddaughter's status as a writer who constantly contests previous accounts of the Women's Detachment, as a character in a book entitled *Red Detachment*

of Women, qualifies this novel as standard metafiction. Besides the history books about the Women's Detachment, it alternates among three narratives: Liang Xin's film, Liang Zhong's TV drama script (presumably, Liang Zhong is the alter ego of Liang Xin as the first scriptwriter), and her novel. It incorporates three layers of reflection: The granddaughter's character implicitly points out the different functions of the three narratives; Liang Xin's film extracts a legend of the Women's Detachment out of real history; and Liang Zhong tries to confront the intentional omissions in Liang Xin's film, like the purge campaign within the CCP and Red Army. The granddaughter's story departs from the other two by switching the focus from the grandmother as a soldier on the battlefield to the femme fatale figure in her domestic circle. What she recounts is the afterlife of the woman soldier.

Among the different versions of *Red Detachment of Women*, there has been a growing tendency to stress the gendered characteristics of the women in this particular military unit. This gradually reverses the fact expressed by the film—that women can be soldiers—and shifts the focus to women soldiers as women. Especially in the novel, Grandmother is depicted as a very attractive, feminine figure. She has superb beauty, smooth skin, conspicuous breasts, and a slim waist. However, the first-person narrative makes her subject to the male gaze, given that the authors of the novel are male. Thus the novel appears to be a product of male imagination about a female writer recollecting the memories of her grandmother. This female protagonist is actually a narrator manipulated by male writers. It is no wonder that Grandmother is depicted as a sexy beauty.

Corresponding to the emphasis on the female characters' status as women, the expression of erotic love escalates from the film to the TV series to the novel. As discussed earlier, the film indicates the affection between Hong Changqing and Wu Qionghua, but the revolutionary asceticism prevalent at the time does not allow many explicit expressions of love. While reconfirming the love between Changqing and Qionghua, *Red Detachment of Women (T)* places more emphasis on romantic gestures in other characters, for example, the hug and kiss of Southeast Asian Girl and Doctor before their execution. The novel provides more blatant sex scenes. Grandmother's affair with Zhong Bo becomes a well-known fact in the village. At the age of five, the granddaughter witnesses them having sex in the field. Additionally, this novel provides a showcase of the granddaughter's private life. She gives a detailed description of making love with her boyfriend and the exciting intimacy with the other writer, Liang Zhong. This is a radical change from the taboo status of erotic love in the original film to the absolute freedom to present the most intimate encounters in the novel.

The female narrator's intervention fulfills her quest for the afterlife of the female soldiers of the Women's Detachment. Her position as a granddaughter facilitates her observation of her grandmother's life, and her account of that life after the Women's Detachment shows the curiosity of the narrator and her generation about this particular group of women. The continuity in a familial circle indicates the revolutionary legacy on the micro level. A supplementary example is Nan Batian's grandson. How ironic that Nan's descendent produces a TV

drama of *Red Detachment of Women*! The authors of this novel seem to be unaware of the self-referentiality in their own writings. Taking advantage of the position they occupy in history, they play with the available materials on the Women's Detachment, whether factual or fictional. They incorporated all the resources, melted them down, added their own reflections, and shaped them into a new form of writing. Media reports focused on the controversy over the copyright on the cover and inside-cover photo between the publisher and photographer. *Red Detachment of Women*, in whatever form—film, history, TV drama, or photography—has become a contested site in which to represent, to confront, and to reflect history.

As products of Maoist China, Old Ghost and *Red Detachment of Women* have undergone revision and reshaping from the socialist to the postsocialist era. Both are revolutionary exemplars of their time and both involve mimetic activity.[45] Old Ghost's emulation of his revolutionary predecessors only leads him to deviate from the essential components of the master narrative of the Cultural Revolution. He cultivates a subversive revolutionary ethos through systematic indoctrination in school and constant exposure to popular revolutionary culture. "Ox ghosts and snake spirits" used to be a designated term for the denounced class enemies during the Cultural Revolution. Old Ghost identifies himself with the ghosts through his choice of name. In relation to his redemptive autobiographical narrative, this can be understood as an effort to redeem his lost past and soul. Old Ghost is one of the lost generation produced by the Cultural Revolution. Inspired by their revolutionary predecessors, they set their feet on the Long March, walking across China to the revolutionary Mecca Yan'an, the frontier, where the nation needs them most. They wander the vast geographical space of China, with their youth as their revolutionary offering. Far from home, they are cut off from their regular human relations and thrown into a precarious revolutionary network. As Old Ghost records, they have tasted alienation, betrayal, and hysteria amid ethical disorder and the degeneration of social space. After all this bitterness and hard times, Old Ghost realizes he has been old while young and has turned into a ghost while alive. In this sense, death has gone beyond corporality: His soul has been dead. Although he is an atheist, the ghost represents the last resort for him to rescue his soul.

Red Detachment of Women, originally a repressed revolutionary romance with an exotic setting, later emerged as a model work of revolutionary art. Later remakes have tried to ease the "anxiety of influence" but often resulted in parody. Territorial imagination about the frontier expresses the effort at geographical consolidation of China by constructing the revolutionary history of this marginal island. In virtue of its similarity with Taiwan in terms of peripheral location and tropical landscape, I understand Hainan Island in *Red Detachment of Women* as a substitute for Taiwan occupied by the Nationalists. In later adaptations, this geographical imagination gradually diminishes as Chinese territorial sovereignty becomes more established (except the South China Sea). But the changes in images, plots, and characterizations voice transformations in social space in morality, ethics, and sentiments from socialist to postsocialist China.

Besides the expression of romantic love on the surface, these reincarnations display a compulsive drive to keep *Red Detachment of Women* alive. Similar to the Long March representations, the revolutionary history about the Women's Detachment tends to parry the fact that very few soldiers of the Women Detachment survive. Considering that they are still young when the story ends, the effort to resuscitate *Red Detachment of Women* also conveys a sense of melancholy over their loss of youth. Despite innovations, these adaptations have had to dance around the repression of romance and erotica by the government; they still hardly surpass the parameters prescribed by the original films. No matter how ambitious, the new producers barely break through the ingrained images of Wu Qionghua and Hong Changqing, the often-recited story of a serf girl who takes revenge and becomes a Communist fighter. As a glamorous "Red spirit," Wu Qionghua and *Red Detachment of Women* will not disappear over people's horizons any time soon. They will continue to live as a specter in China.

Notes

1 The title of this chapter is inspired by Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).
2 Du Mu, "Li He ji xu" (Preface to *Li He's Collection*). Due to the major theme of the ghost world in his poetry, Li He has been acclaimed as "ghost poet" by later Chinese literary critics. *Du Mu quanji* (Complete works of Du Mu) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 94–95.
3 On monstrosity in modern Chinese literature and history, see David Wang, *The Monster that is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), introduction and chapter 6.
4 Wen Kang, *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* (Saga of heroic men and women) (Taipei: Guiguan tushu chuban youxian gongsi, 1987), 858.
5 Mao Zedong, "Zai zhongguo gongchandang quanguo xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua (Speech at the national propaganda meeting of the Chinese Communist Party)," in *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Selected works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1977), vol. 5, 416.
6 Mao Zedong, "Gei Jiang Qing de xin (Letter to Jiang Qing)," in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Mao Zedong's manuscripts since the PRC) (Beijing: zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998), vol. 12, 71–73.
7 Scholars in political science, history, and anthropology have delved into the causes of the Cultural Revolution. Roderick MacFarquhar traces the origins of the Cultural Revolution back to the ten years of development in politics and the economy from 1956 to 1966. Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, vol. 1, 1974; vol. 2, 1983; vol. 3, 1997); his most recent book with Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), provides an accessible and comprehensive account of the Cultural Revolution. Andrew Hall Wedeman, *The East Wind Subsides: Chinese Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Cultural Revolution* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute Press, 1987).
8 Yiching Wu describes socialist bureaucracy as "enemies from the past." Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), chapter 2. In this chapter, as "enemies from the past" I include enemies both within and outside the Party-state apparatus.

9 I draw on Freud's "uncanny" to examine the Cultural Revolution from the perspective of "return," "coming back," and "haunting." Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (New York: Penguin Books, 2003) and Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1975).
10 For instance, scar literature (*shanghen wenxue*) from 1977 to 1980; the roots-seeking movement (*xungen wenxue*) and avant-garde writings in the mid-1980s; and the nostalgia fever in the mid-1990s.
11 The year 2006 was both the 70th anniversary of the Long March and the 30th anniversary of the official conclusion of the Cultural Revolution. Commemorative Long March activities get huge coverage in the mass media while the Cultural Revolution receives little attention in China.
12 For the "ghostliness" and "phantasma" of the Cultural Revolution, I am indebted to Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
13 Paul Clark offers an insightful analysis of different cultural representations of the Cultural Revolution, including film, dance, opera, and literature: Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Barbara Mittler's recent book *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012) not only analyzes the cultural products of the Cultural Revolution but also investigates their afterlife in contemporary China.
14 For details about haunting, see Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
15 Lao Gui, *Xue se huanghun* (Blood red sunset), trans. Howard Goldblatt (New York: Viking, 1995); Lao Gui, *Xue yu tie* (Blood and iron) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998).
16 See Li Yang, *Kangzheng suming zhilu: "shehuizhuyi xianshizhuyi" yanjiu (1942–1976)* (The road of resisting fatalism: a study of "socialist realism" 1942–1976) (Changchun: shidai wenyi chubanshe, 1993).
17 For a comprehensive analysis of the genre of *Bildungsroman*, see Franco Moretti, "The *Bildungsroman* as Symbolic Form," in *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (New York: Verso, 2000), 3–13; for Chinese *Bildungsroman*, see Mingwei Song, *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900–1959* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).
18 *Pingyuan liehuo* (Blaze on the plain), *Sanqian li xingjun* (March 3,000 miles), *Hong haizi* (Red child), *Gangtie Zhanshi* (Iron soldiers), *Shanggan ling* (Shanggan Mountain), *Baoer kechajin* (Pavel Korchagin), and *Geming lieshi shichao* (Poetry of revolutionary martyrs), to name only a few.
19 Lao Gui, *Xue yu tie*, 105.
20 Ibid., 56–57.
21 Ibid., 111.
22 Hereafter, *Red Detachment of Women* refers to the prototype of the story as narrated in Liang Xin's film script. The suffixes *(F)*, *(B)*, *(T)*, and *(N)* will be used to refer to different versions: film, ballet, TV drama, and novel respectively.
23 Robert Chi, "*The Red Detachment of Women*: Resenting, Regendering, Remembering," in *Chinese Films in Focus: 25 New Takes*, ed. Chris Berry (London: British Film Institute, 2003), 152–159.
24 For the revolutionary history of women in Hainan Island, please see Qiongya fuyun shiliao zhengji yanjiu lingdao xiaozu, ed., *Qiongya funü geming douzheng jishi: xinminzhu zhuyi gemingshiqi* (Record of women's revolution and struggle in Hainan: New democratic revolutionary period) (Unknown publisher, 1985).
25 Historical evidence shows that overseas Chinese did not participate in the revolutionary activities in Hainan until 1937, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out.

Hong's identity was probably inspired by the Southeast Asian Chinese support of and participation in the anti-Japanese struggles in Hainan after 1937. See Fu Sizhi, "Qiongqiao huixiang fuwutuan pianduan huiyi" (Recollections about overseas Chinese returning to hometown to help [anti-Japanese struggle]), in *Qiongya geming genjudi caijing shuishou shiliao xuanbian: geming huiyilu bufen* (Selected historical data of finance, economics, and revenue in Hainan: revolutionary memoir II), eds. Hainan xingzhengqu caizheng shuishoushi lingdao xiaozu bangongshi and Hainan xingzhengqu danganguan (Haikou: Hainan remin chubanshe, 1984), vol. 2, 62–65; Fang Ke, "Huiyi xinjiapo huaqiao de kangri jiuwang yundong (Recollections about anti-Japanese activities by overseas Chinese from Singapore)," *Qiongya geming genjudi caijing shuishou shiliao xuanbian: geming huiyilu bufen*, vol. 2, 66–67.

26 According to Feng Baiju—one of the earliest Communist leaders in Hainan in the 1920s and 1930s, who founded the First Independent Division of the Qiongya Red Army—the revolutionary force was reduced to several dozen in 1933 after the main forces of the Red Army lost in 1932. Feng Baiju, "Zhongguo gongchandang de guanghui zhaoyao zai hainan dao shang (Communist brilliance shines over Hainan Island)," in *Qiongya geming genjudi caijing shuishou shiliao xuanbian: geming huiyilu bufen*, vol. 1, 479–482. Another witness confirmed that a very limited Communist revolutionary force survived the battles with the Nationalists in 1934. See Wang Yuebo, "Huiyi qiongya geming genjudi zhonghouqi caijing gongzuo de gaikuang (Overview of the finances and economics in Hainan revolutionary bases)," in *Qiongya geming genjudi caijing shuishou shiliao xuanbian: geming huiyilu bufen*, vol. 2, 20–22.

27 Shuqin Cui, *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), chapter 4.

28 He Jingzhi and Ding Yi, *White-Haired Girl* (Bai mao nü), trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1954).

29 See Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), especially part 3, "The Theater of Divine Justice."

30 Liang Xin, *Hongse niangzi jun: cong juben dao yingpian* (*The Red Detachment of Women*: From script to film) (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 1962), 212.

31 Rice-sprout Song or *Yangge* is a kind of folk performance popular in northern rural China, usually singing and dancing by a group of people in certain patterns, with the accompaniment of rhythmic drumming. In the early 1940s, the Communists promoted Rice-sprout Song in Yan'an as a vehicle to disseminate their ideology.

32 Commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Houston Grand Opera, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, *Nixon in China* was premiered at the Houston Grand Opera, October 22, 1987, director: Peter Sellars, composer: John Adams, libretto: Alice Goodman. I have written a separate paper on the cultural translation between the Chinese revolutionary "model play" and Western performance art with *Red Detachment of Women* and *Nixon in China* as an example. In this chapter I will not pursue further how particular images, tropes, and forms traveled from the West to China and then from China to the West, but focus on the transformation of *Red Detachment of Women* within China.

33 On the uncanny, please see Héléne Cixous, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The 'Uncanny')," *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (1976): 525–548; and Samuel Weber, "The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment," *Modern Language Notes* 88, no. 6 (1973): 1102–1133.

34 Judith Butler, "'Women' as the Subject of Feminism," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 3–8.

35 Homi Bhabha's theorization of mimicry and colonialism is helpful for understanding the anti- or countercolonial imagination in China. See Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 85–92.

36 Rewritings of "Red classics" tend to highlight the repressed love in the original works. On the analysis of revolution and love in modern Chinese literature, see Jianmei Liu, *Revolution Plus Love: Literary History, Women's Bodies, and Thematic Repetition In Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 1–32.
37 Jin Liangnian, ed., *Mengzi yi zhu* (Translation and annotation of *Mencius*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 165. Mencius did not explain what the other two unfilial ways were. According to Zhao Qi, a commentator of *Mencius* in the Han dynasty, they are: seemingly accepting the parents' will but not following it; not being able to provide financial support when the parents get old. *Mengzi yi zhu*, 166.
38 The purge campaign, first launched by Zhang Guotao, the vice chairman of the Soviet Republic of China and the leader of the Fourth Front of the Red Army in the revolutionary bases of Hubei, Henan, and Anhui in 1932 to annihilate dissidents in the name of eliminating counterrevolutionaries. Thousands of Red Army officers and soldiers were severely tortured and wrongly executed during this campaign from 1932 to 1934.
39 For instance, in the TV series *Linhai xueyuan* (Tracks in the snow forest, 2004), based on the novel with the same title, the main character, Yang Zirong, is portrayed in a love triangle with bandit leader Zuo Shandiao.
40 "Guanyu renzhen duidai 'hongse jingdian' gaibian dianshijun youguan wenti de tongzhi," www.people.com.cn/GB/14677/22114/33943/33945/2523858.html (retrieved March 9, 2007).
41 Guo Xiaodong and Xiaojian, *Hongse niangzi jun* (The red detachment of women) (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 2003), 3.
42 Ibid., 274.
43 Ibid., 4.
44 Ibid., 128.
45 See Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), especially "Mimetic Worlds: Invisible Counterparts," and "Alterity."

Coda

Cartography of revolution—*The Entire Nation is Red*

On September 5, 1968, Revolutionary Committees were founded at the same time in the two northwestern autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. Thus each of the 29 administrative districts on the mainland had its own Revolutionary Committee. The only exception was Taiwan. Two days later, the *People's Daily* and the *People's Liberation Army Daily* celebrated this event in their editorials with the headlines: "Long Live the Success of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Let's Celebrate the Founding of Revolutionary Committees in All Provinces, Autonomous Regions, and Direct Municipalities (Except Taiwan)." Epigrammatically, the editorials said: "The entire nation is red."[1] The National Postal Bureau planned to release a postage stamp to commemorate this accomplishment. Postage stamp designer Wan Weisheng was entrusted with the project. In the first draft, Chairman Mao stood immersed in a red sea in the center, waving his right hand. The masses at his right side, featuring workers, peasants, and soldiers, holding Mao's works in their hands, looked up at Mao. This draft was not approved. In the second version, Wan replaced the image of Mao with a red map of China inscribed "The Entire Nation is Red" and kept the masses with Mao's works in their hands. The second draft was approved and put into print, but for some reason was not distributed. The third and final version was slightly modified from the second one: The red map of China loomed large, taking up half of the picture, blurring the slogans of banners among the people and highlighting the three representatives of the masses: workers, peasants, and soldiers (Figure 6.1). Compared to the previous drafts, the final version gave the greatest prominence to the theme "The Entire Nation is Red."

The stamp was scheduled to be released officially on November 25, 1968. On November 23, Chen Chao, a stamp collector, bought some "All Red" at a post office branch in Beijing. Chen worked for the Chinese Cartography Press. With his professional eye, he noticed there was something wrong with the map. Looking closer, he discovered that the contours of the map were not precise, and that the Xisha and Nansha archipelagos were not included. He reported it to the Postal Bureau. The Postal Bureau immediately ordered that "All Red" be withdrawn. But a handful of the stamps had already been sold, and they became treasures in the collectors' market. Years later, some replicas appeared in philatelic

Figure 6.1 Blueprint of Postage stamp: "The Entire Nation is Red," 1968.
Source: Reproduced with kind permission by Wan Weisheng Postage Stamps Museum

circles. Since the 1990s, those stamps of "The Entire Nation is Red" that were not withdrawn to be destroyed have increased millions of times in value.

The politics around "The Entire Nation is Red" does not stop at the exclusion of the Xisha and Nansha archipelagos. China's map is the major image on the stamp. Striking as it is, the mainland is painted red while Taiwan remains white. Thus the ironic question pops up: If the entire nation is red, why is Taiwan white? Isn't Taiwan a province, i.e., an indispensable part of China, as the PRC claims? This little stamp reveals many antinomies in both revolutionary logic and reality. On the one hand, the design, under the banner of re-presentation, truthfully describes China's situation: The entire nation is red if the Revolutionary Committees herald redness, except in Taiwan. On the other hand, if Taiwan is still white both literally and figuratively (white terror), how can it be said that "the entire nation is red"? Doesn't that statement implicitly disclaim Taiwan as part of China?

The subject mattered in the socialist production of literature and art during the Maoist period, most of all during the Cultural Revolution. The model plays and other officially endorsed forms of literature and art were all in tune with the revolutionary agenda of the time. Beyond the dominance of revolutionary subjects in model plays, the Cultural Revolution was an era when the invention, production, circulation, and consumption of objects of all kinds cooperated to define

revolutionary culture. Unlike a subject that is constructed in order to solve problems, this object, a postage stamp, created problematic issues itself.

"The Entire Nation is Red" was not a piece of spontaneous artwork. The designer was well aware of the political significance of his mission. Going through Party censorship three times and finally getting approved, this stamp was definitely considered politically correct. Yet despite the hyperpolitical sensitivity in the design process, involving both individual compliance and institutional inspection, "The Entire Nation is Red" could not withstand a professional gaze. Due to his expertise in cartography, Chen Chao was particularly struck by the imprecisions, such as the inaccurate contours of the map and the exclusion of the archipelagos in the Southern China Sea. But he did not notice the paradox in the picture that "The Entire Nation is Red" while Taiwan is white.

Beyond the phenomenal world around the postal stamp, "The Entire Nation is Red" poses multifarious questions relating to politics, psychology, and the sociology of material objects. The "material unconscious"[2] inherent in this postage stamp reveals a lot about both everyday life and symbolic acts during the Cultural Revolution. Here I understand the postage stamp as an exchangeable national object that qualifies as a commodity. Like a national flag and a national emblem, images on postage stamps, especially commemorative stamps, represent the nation. "The Entire Nation is Red" was made with the distinct intention of representing China by way of a synecdoche, with a national map and three representatives—workers, peasants, and soldiers—as national subjects. Thus, it is distinct from other commemorative stamps characterizing national treasures like distinctive species or cultural heritage sites. "The Entire Nation is Red" becomes what Zizek calls the "sublime object of ideology."[3]

The issuance and withdrawal of "The Entire Nation is Red" was not simply an accident in the Chinese postal system. Aesthetics and politics converge within the $30 \times 40\,mm^2$ of this little stamp. What desire and fantasy does "The Entire Nation is Red" embody? Through what mechanism is it assigned value beyond economics? How is it made meaningful epistemologically? What is the excess or deficit between its intentional value and its accidental worth in the circulative network? I may not be able to answer all of these questions. However, posing them indicates the spectral power this stamp possesses within and beyond its market of exchange.

To begin with, there is no doubt that "The Entire Nation is Red" is imprinted with extra value beyond its assigned monetary value, which is eight cents. It is not a proportional calculation between its actual cost and its worth, as is the case with banknotes. "The Entire Nation is Red" per se is not simply a symbol of value; it has a number of symbolic values. Central is the symbolism that describes how it is produced and supposed to function. The problem lies in the contradiction between symbolism and reality. Produced under the direction of symbolism, it runs into a challenge in the quest for realism. This contradiction might have been resolved by consulting a professional cartographer. But the red China and white Taiwan are after all irreconcilable, whether one relies on symbolism or realism.

"The Entire Nation is Red" crystallizes the desire and fantasy of the revolutionary subjects during the Cultural Revolution. It characterizes China both literally and figuratively. In everyday reality, China is red with its overwhelming red flags, red covers of Mao's works, and red badges on the Red Guards' armbands. In theater, the stage is lit red. In the symbolic world, the field of cultural production, objects are made in red. "The Entire Nation is Red" presents red China with a visual image: the red map. It displays a microcosm of the nation, where both the everyday horizon and symbolic space are red.

"The Entire Nation is Red" regained its spectral power not long after it was repressed, this time in the market value of the stamp. Because of its rarity and political reference, "The Entire Nations is Red" became valuable to collectors. In 1996, the thirtieth anniversary of the Cultural Revolution, a set of two "The Entire Nation is Red," vertically connected, was auctioned off at some US$37,500. Another square sheet of four "The Entire Nation is Red" was auctioned off at US$93,000 in 1997. In the same year, at the Chinese Postage Stamps Exposition in Guangzhou, a printing plate of 50 "The Entire Nation is Red" was exhibited. At that time its market value was estimated at US$1,200,000. The act of withdrawal was intended to stop the stamps from circulating, to make "The Entire Nation is Red" disappear lest it diminish the national sovereignty symbolically. Supposedly, most withdrawn stamps were destroyed by melting the plates or burning the printed stamps, but this repressive action did not fully kill "The Entire Nation is Red." The stamps already in circulation were away from the iron hands of government control. However, the effort to remove the threat to sovereignty inadvertently built up more market value for this national object. If we divide the lives of "The Entire Nation is Red" into two periods, before and after the withdrawal, the time before functions as a symbol, heavily loaded with political implications and manifestations. That political power gradually diminishes in the after time in the stamps that survived the repression. Despite its fading political significance, "The Entire Nation is Red" gained a market value millions of times its original exchange value. Ironically, its original political value was translated into market value.

I would like to end my pursuit of "Cartographies of Revolution" with a personal anecdote from my research on Red tourism. On June 24, 2009, at Mao Zedong Square in his hometown, Shaoshan City, Hunan province, Jie Li and I witnessed thousands of visitors from all walks of life and all over China come to revere the bronze statue of Mao Zedong, six meters high, weighing 3.7 tons, standing on a pedestal of 4.1 meters. They offered wreaths, bowed (some even knelt down) to the statue three times, made a wish, and walked counterclockwise from right (a homophone of *blessing* in Chinese) to left around the statue. At the left entrance of the square stood an information booth, the only one on the square, authorized by the Municipal Administration of Shaoshan City to sell wreaths and additional services for their presentation. The tariff listed the price: with music, 200 RMB; with someone to officiate, 200 RMB; with honor guards, 400 RMB. The all-inclusive service cost 1,200 RMB. The majority of visitors came in groups from the same work unit, making this tour with government

money. Our camera followed two honor guards who carried away the wreaths in front of the statue to the lower backstage. They removed each ribbon inscribed with the names of the presenters and replaced it with a blank one. Then they put the wreaths on display at the booth for resale.

During our stay in Shaoshan we dined in local restaurants named after Mao, where Mao's favorite braised pork was advertised as the house special. On the way back, we stopped at a newly finished building complex displaying gigantic billboards with the red characters "Impression City: People's Commune," painted with popular propaganda posters of the 1950s. The representative at the customer center treated us like potential investors who might pour capital into this multifunctional center offering shopping, entertainment, and relaxation. One page in the pamphlet summarizes the gist of the real estate developer's purpose: "Use yesterday's memory to make today's money" (*Yong zoutian de jiyi huan jintian de qian*), printed on an enlarged one-yuan bill of Chinese currency from 1960. Right at that moment, I decided this phrase should be the title of a round-table discussion on the Communist legacy in China proposed for the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in 2010. This print literally exemplifies the transition and transaction between the socialist past (memory) and the Communist present (money) in China.

Notes

1 "Wuchan jieji wenhua da geming de quanmian shengli wansui" (Long live the success of the Great Proletarian Revolution), *Renmin ribao* (People's daily), September 7, 1968, editorial on the front page.
2 Bill Brown, *The Material Unconscious: American Amusement, Stephen Crane, and the Economies of Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 13–19.
3 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989).

Appendix

List of Chinese characters

Bai Wei	白微
Baowei Yan'an	保卫延安
Bashe	跋涉
Bei Zhongguo	北中国
Beidahuang	北大荒
Bing Xin	冰心
Cai Jiwei	蔡继渭
Changzheng tujishou	长征突击手
Changzheng	长征
Chen Boda	陈伯达
Chen Jiying	陈纪滢
Chen Qitong	陈其通
Chen Sheng	陈胜
Chen Yun	陈云
Chen Yun wenxuan	陈云文选
Cheng Dong	程东
Cheng Yin	成荫
Chetui	撤退
Chiang Kai-shek	蒋介石
Chidi	赤地
Chifei	赤匪
Chijun	赤军
Chuangzao	创造
Dachu youling ta	打出幽灵塔
Daduhe	大渡河
Daze xiang	大泽乡
Deng Xiaoping	邓小平
Difen	地分
Ding Ling	丁玲
Diqiu shang de hong piaodai	地球上的红飘带
Dongyao	动摇
Du Mu	杜牧
Du Pengcheng	杜鹏程

Dukang	督亢
Ernü yingxiong zhuan	儿女英雄传
Fan Wuji	樊於期
Fangong xiaoshuo	反共小说
Fei Xiaotong	费孝通
Feng Da	冯达
Feng Xuefeng	冯雪峰
Fengxue renjian	风雪人间
Fu Chaowu	傅超武
Gao Jianli	高渐离
Ge'ai	割爱
Geming lishi xiaoshuo	革命历史小说
Guang Chunlan	广春兰
Guanggaofushou	广告副手
Gui	鬼
Guizi	鬼子
Guoji xiebao	国际协报
Haiguo tuzhi	海国图志
Hankou minguo ribao	汉口民国日报
He Jingzhi	贺敬之
Hong Jun	洪钧
Hong Shen	洪深
Honghei	红黑
Hongjun	红军
Hongjun changzheng ji	红军长征记
Hongse niangzijun	红色娘子军
Hu Feng	胡风
Hu Yepin	胡也频
Hua Gang	华岗
Huangyu quanlan tu	皇舆全览图
Huanmie	幻灭
Hui Yan'an	回延安
Hulan he zhuan	呼兰河传
Hunan nongmin yundong kaocha baogao	湖南农民运动考察报告
Huo Yuanjia	霍元甲
Jiang Guanci	蒋光慈
Jiang Qitao	江奇涛
Jiazu yiwai de ren	家族以外的人
Jie Jie	姐姐
Jiefangjun wenyi	解放军文艺
Jing Ke	荆轲
Jinggangshan	井冈山
Jingke ci qinwang	荆轲刺秦王
Jinsha jiangpan	金沙江畔
Jinshi	进士

Jishi wenxue	纪实文学
Ju Wu	鞠武
Kanfengzheng	看风筝
Kangri xianqiandui	抗日先遣队
Kangxi	康熙
Kashigaer zhongguo dingjie tu	喀什噶尔中国定界图
Kunyu wanguo quantu	坤舆万国全图
Lang Hua	郎华
Lao Gui	老鬼
Laocanyouji	老残游记
Li Bozhao	李伯钊
Li Dazhao	李大钊
Li He	李贺
Li Shutian	李舒田
Lian Chen	廉臣
Liang Xin	梁信
Lieshen	劣绅
Lin Nong	林农
Liu Bang	刘邦
Liu E	刘鄂
Liu Miaomiao	刘苗苗
Liu Shaoqi	刘少奇
Lu Jie	卢杰
Lu Xun	鲁迅
Lu Yin	卢隐
Lu Zhenshun	陆振舜
Ludai zhi si	卢代之死
Luo Binji	骆宾基
Ma Bo	马波
Ma bole	马伯乐
Ma ti sheng sui	马蹄声碎
Mao Dun	茅盾
Mao Zedong	毛泽东
Maodun wenji	茅盾文集
Meng Ke	孟珂
Nie Gannu	聂绀弩
Nie hai hua	孽海花
Nining	泥泞
Niuguisheshen	牛鬼蛇神
Nongmin yundong jiangxi suo	农民运动讲习所
Paoxiao de tudi	咆哮的土地
Peng Dehuai	彭德怀
Peng Pai	彭湃
Qi'er	弃儿
Qianlong	乾隆

Qiao Liang	乔良
Qiao Yin	悄吟
Qigenhuochai	七根火柴
Qin Ga	琴嘎
Qin Wuyang	秦舞阳
Qing shi gao	清史稿
Qingchun zhi ge	青春之歌
Qiu Zhijie	丘志杰
Qu Qiubai	瞿秋白
Quanguo shanhe yipian hong	全国山河一片红
Renjian	人间
Renmin dangjia zuozhu	人民当家做主
Renmin ribao	人民日报
Ruijin	瑞金
San tuchu	三突出
Semang	色盲
Shafei nüshi de riji	沙菲女士的日记
Shafei nüshi riji erbu	沙菲女士日记二部
Shanghai shi gongchanzhuyi xiaozu	上海市共产主义小组
Shangshijie	商市街
Shen Congwen	沈从文
Shen Dingyi	沈定一
Shengsi chang	生死场
Shi yu sanwen	诗与散文
Shi	蚀
Shimianzhiye	失眠之夜
Shu Qun	舒群
Shu	蜀
Shui shi zui ke'ai de ren	谁是最可爱的人
Sidu chishui	四渡赤水
Sima Qian	司马迁
Suijun xixing jianwen lu	随军西行见闻录
Sun Yat-sen	孙中山
Suwei'ai	苏维埃
Taiping tianguo	太平天国
Taiyang zhaozai sangan he shang	太阳照在桑干河上
Tan	昙
Tian Guang	田光
Tianchao tianmu zhidu	天朝田亩制度
Tudi yu nongmin	土地与农民
Tudi	土地
Tuhao	土豪
Tupo wujiang	突破乌江
Tuqiongbixian	图穷毕见
Wan Weisheng	万维生

Wang a'sao de si	王阿嫂的死
Wang Enjia	汪恩甲
Wang Jianhong	王剑红
Wang Yuanjian	王愿坚
Wangliang shijie	魍魉世界
Wanshui qianshan	万水千山
Wei Wei	魏巍
Wei	魏
Wen Kang	文康
Wu Guang	吴广
Wu Jianren	吴趼人
Wu Kuiqiao	五奎桥
Wu Yigong	吴贻弓
Wu	吴
Xiao Hong	萧红
Xiao Jun	萧军
Xiaoshuo yuebao	小说月报
Xibei zhandi fuwutuan	西北战地服务团
Xie Jin	谢晋
Xindong suiyue	心动岁月
Xinshitouji	新石头记
Xizheng	西征
Xue yu tie	血与铁
Xuese huanghun	血色黄昏
Yan'an	延安
Yang Mo	杨沫
Yangge	秧歌
Yangma de riji	杨妈的日记
Yefeng	夜风
Yinghuan zhilue	瀛环志略
Yingxiong	英雄
Yongzheng	雍正
Yuanshi yiwen zhengbu	元史译文正补
Yudu	于都
Zeng Pu	曾朴
Zhai Junjie	翟俊杰
Zhang Ailing	张爱玲
Zhang Guotao	张国焘
Zhang Qikai	张奇开
Zhang Wentian	张闻天
Zhao Erxun	赵尔巽
Zhou Libo	周立波
Zhuanyi	转移
Zhuiqiu	追求
Zhumao	朱毛

Zisha riji	自杀日记
Ziye	子夜
Zunyi	遵义

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