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Chinese Scar Literature on the Cultural Revolution as Testimony

by

Zhigang Huang

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

**Department of Comparative Literary Studies
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
September, 2001
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Chinese Scar Literature on the Cultural Revolution as Testimony

submitted by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedicated to my father Huang Dingyu, Chinese translator of Sergei Eisenstein, and my mother Zhao Wei, a language teacher, whose talents and intelligence were suppressed by national catastrophes in China

Abstract

Chinese Scar Literature on the Cultural Revolution as Testimony

This thesis employs a framework of literary testimony to examine the Chinese Scar Literature on the Cultural Revolution and political campaigns preceding it during the Mao era (1949-1976). This literature testifies to the wounds and scars left by a traumatic period of recent Chinese history. Though Scar Literature experienced its high tide between 1977-1984, my thesis will argue that it has been ongoing since that time. I examine the texts of Scar Literature in the framework of testimony, as theorized by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their influential study *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992), where the concept is closely connected to issues of history, memory, and witnessing. My own analysis surveys genres of autobiography, documentary fiction, and fiction, all of which, despite their different relationship to “truth claims,” attempt to find a mode of access to traumatic events. The autobiographical works chosen as examples are by Nien Cheng, Yue Daiyun, and Chen Kaige; the works of documentary fiction by Zhang Kangkang, Zhang Xianliang, and Chen Ruoxi; and the fictional works by Liu Sola and again Zhang Xianliang. In my analysis, the binary of works written and published inside and outside the People’s Republic of China will constitute the most important point of comparison. The two groups of writers write differently because of their varied material conditions of production and reception. My comparison focuses on such issues as censorship, self-censorship, and targeted audience. Today, texts of Scar Literature continue to appear in different parts of the world as well as in China.

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My thanks also go to my parents who nurtured in me a passion for literature from my childhood. Their unusual liberal and democratic way in their children's education provided me with lasting endurance and belief in individuality, which helped me to survive and succeed in both the Chinese and Canadian worlds. Also, I would like to thank my daughter Bird for her encouragement during my long years of doctoral studies. Her positive and romantic attitude in her adaptation to her new country- -Canada- -kept inspiring me and urged me on to complete my thesis.

Romanization, Names, and Citations

There are two major systems of romanization in the spelling of Chinese names: *pinyin* and Wade-Giles. For consistency, I follow the most recent system used in mainland China and now also in the West and place other spelling in brackets if necessary, for example, Li Bai [Li Pai].

Family names come first in Chinese. For the Chinese names of the writers, I follow the names used on the title page of the originals or the English translations. For example, Nien Cheng's family name is Cheng whereas Yue Daiyun's family name is Yue. I use Liu Sola rather than Liu Suola because that is the spelling of her name on the title page of the English version of her novel, *Chaos and all That*.

Following the citations by Chinese writers and critics, I use the standard Chinese order, i.e. family names come first. For example, Zhang Xianliang and Zhang Xudong, I would cite them as (Zhang Xianliang 30) and (Zhang Xudong 30). If there is no possibility of confusion, I cite only the family names, for instance, (Yue 30). But if the name is in the Western order, as in the case of George Kao, I follow that order, in contrast with Kao Hsin-sheng, whom I cite with his family name first: (Kao Hsin-sheng 30). I also cite some English names fully for clarity, for example (Lynn White 30) and (Hayden White 30).

I give the titles of the original publication first. For works published in Chinese I give the title in *pinyin* first, then the English translation in brackets; for example, *Yinxing banlü* [*The Invisible Companion*].

List of Abbreviations

CCP	The Chinese Communist Party.
GMD	Kuomintang government or the Nationalist Party headed by Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] which fought the CCP. I use “GMD” for both kinds of spellings, “Guomindang” and “Kuomintang.”
PRC	The People’s Republic of China.

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PREFACE

“Forget, forget everything!” Shout as loud as you will. No one can forget those harrowing years. Let the next generation decide what it was all about, let them write the histories; there will be people who want to do this work. But shouldn’t we leave them some factual information and accounts of what it was really like? Why can’t we write down our experiences truthfully? Are we supposed to forget the wounds of the past and let them fester, forget all the hurt just for the sake of looking to the future and moving forward?

Ba Jin, *Random Reflections*

It has been suggested that testimony is the literary—or discursive—mode par excellence of our times, and that our era can precisely be defined as the age of testimony.

Felman: *Testimony*

This thesis explores what has been called Scar Literature, the subject matter of which is the testimony to the turbulence of a recent period in Chinese history. Lu Xinhua’s 1978 short story “*Shanghen*” [The Scar] is usually credited with inaugurating this literary movement. It is a story of a mother and a daughter’s experience during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). After denouncing her mother, who has recently been categorized as a traitor of the Maoist revolution, the daughter joins other educated youths and settles down in a rural area. However, she still finds herself living under the shadow of what is characteristically demonized as a “black” family background, as the enemy of the people, in other words. At the end of the Cultural Revolution, after confirming that her mother is officially rehabilitated, she rushes back to her sickbed, but it is now too late to see her alive. In a moving letter she has left behind, her mother recounts that although she has scars on her body, the wounds on her daughter’s heart might be even worse. The

usefulness of this story as a parable for my own subject here lies in the way it moves visible scars to invisible ones, bodily trauma to the trauma of the “heart.” I want to suggest that the texts of Scar Literature testify to sometimes invisible as well as belated versions of the history of the Mao era, providing another access to the period.

In this context, Shoshana Felman’s notion that ours is “the age of testimony” (5) seems especially helpful in reviewing recent Chinese history. In what follows, I want to expand on the concept of testimony introduced and developed by Felman and Dori Laub. Their book *Testimony* is the collaboration of a literary scholar and a psychoanalyst. Together, they explore the notion of testimony in the survivors’ oral accounts of the Holocaust, in classic literary works, and in films. “Testimony,” the authors tell us, “is the process of bearing witness to a crisis or a trauma” (Felman 1). In our post-traumatic age, testimony becomes a mode of access to the events which are unassimilable at the time of their experience. Felman and Laub conclude that testimony is closely connected with such issues as witnessing, memory, and history (xiii).

The term “testimony” is useful to frame my discussion of Scar Literature because this literature is about a national catastrophe written from the position of witnesses who had experienced it firsthand. Having just survived a decade of national havoc, people in the PRC still remain haunted by the violent history of this decade and years leading up to it.¹ The writers of Scar Literature choose testimony as their mode to deal with the devastation of this period. Against the gap in the official historical records of the national catastrophe, these writers take up the responsibility to fill this chasm.

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¹ From this point on, I will use the term “PRC” to refer to the People’s Republic of China.

I begin by describing Scar Literature as it has slowly emerged against the background of national catastrophe and showing why the Chinese people's coming to terms with trauma was delayed. The Cultural Revolution was a violent and wholesale abuse of power. The disruption of social order, the destruction of national and cultural treasures, the wide usage of "red" (good) and "black" (bad) labels for people, the demonization of intellectuals, the physical violence between people, and the tearing apart of families all contributed to the chaos of that decade (1966-76) throughout the nation. In order to show what enabled the Cultural Revolution, I trace its formation back to the beginning of a hegemonic Maoist discourse. Through both coercion and consent, the population was subjected to a constant and ubiquitous surveillance which functioned both externally and internally, extending the works of the state apparatus of schools, work places, neighbourhoods, and families already in place. In Maoist discourse community, individuals either had to conform or face the risk of being expelled from the community, like the mother in Lu Xinhua's story "The Scar."

Scar Literature, I want to argue, is the testimony of this recent history. In my analysis, I will raise questions about why the writers are compelled to tell their stories and why they feel that it is their responsibility to testify. Following the devastating events of the Cultural Revolution, some people prefer to ignore the past while others still remain numb. Yet the writers of Scar Literature set out to confront this trauma and heal their wounds. The material and experiences of these traumatic events require the mode of testimony, not only for the sake of the first generation, but also, as Ba Jin the leading and senior writer suggests, for the generations to come, so that history will not repeat itself.

When "other modes of knowledge" of the recent past are scarce, "literature as a

precious mode of witnessing” gives us a means to access history (Felman xx). Scar Literature provides us with a special mode to access history through these texts produced under conditions of censorship and self-censorship. On the one hand, the party-state of the PRC discouraged people from any open discussion of the Cultural Revolution, including the activities of remembering and recording the recent past. On the other hand, due to the slowness of changes in policy after the Cultural Revolution, many people still lived in the shadow of the horrendous past and prefer to keep silent. The imprisonment of vocal dissidents reminded people of the danger of this position and prevented them from speaking up. Despite all these negative factors, writers of Scar Literature continued to testify. Facing the threat of criticism and even imprisonment, they have been fighting courageously and gaining ground gradually.

My main comparative structure focuses on the writings by writers from inside the PRC and those by the writers from outside the PRC. I will highlight the differences in their texts which proceed from varied conditions of production and reception. For instance, the writers writing from outside the PRC are free from political persecution. They can criticize Mao and the Party explicitly.²

With regard to publication, they do not have to face state censorship or exercise self-censorship for material survival. By comparison, writers from inside the PRC have to be wary of the political persecution which has historically begun in the field of literature and arts. In order to ensure the publication of their works, they have to write with the constant awareness of state censorship. Self-censorship also functions for writers to

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² In the thesis, I use “Party” to refer to the Chinese Community Party (CCP).

protect themselves. Finally, the writers in discussion choose different narrative strategies, depending on their audiences: in the PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the West.

Organized generically, this structure reminds us that testimony takes different forms. Autobiographies seem to promise transparent truth claims. Yet reading through the autobiographies included in this thesis, we find that the authors' backgrounds, the stance they take when they write, and their past education, help to shape their representations of the historical events in question. Documentary fiction resides in the hybrid mingling of personal accounts and fiction. It combines the function of the eyewitness with fictional frames, which often mask dangerous truth. For example, Zhang Kangkang uses a liar and a lunatic to voice her opinions on the Rustication movement. In comparison with autobiographers and documentary novelists who hold fast to the unmediated truth claim, writers of postmodern fiction challenge the very notion of truth claim and foreground the work of representation. Attempting to provide a counter-history, postmodern fiction disrupts the dominant literary discourse left by the Mao era.

Chapter I of the thesis provides an explanation of the emergence of Scar Literature, the historical context of the Cultural Revolution, the formation of the Maoist discourse community and the Maoist system of discipline and punishment. These all form the historic background and conditions from which the writers of Scar Literature narrate their stories.

Chapter II discusses the genre of autobiography. I have chosen three writers who may be seen to testify for different groups: Nien Cheng for the intellectuals who returned to the PRC after 1949, Yue Daiyun for indigenous intellectuals, and Chen Kaige for the educated youths of the Rustication movement. Because of the differences in their

backgrounds, each of them testifies from a certain perspective—Nien Cheng from outside the PRC, Chen Kaige from inside, and Yue Daiyun from a middle ground.

Chapter III analyzes the genre of documentary fiction. Each of the three writers I have selected to compare here experienced the Cultural Revolution. Chen Ruoxi testifies for the onlookers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the West. Zhang Kangkang testifies to a life on a farm during the Rustication movement and she also represents the educated youths sent down to the rural areas. Zhang Xianliang testifies for the imprisoned and confined people on labour farms. Furthermore, he uses the labour farm as a mirror to reflect Chinese society as a whole.

Chapter IV of the thesis focuses on postmodern fiction. Both Zhang Xianliang and Liu Sola employ a range of postmodern strategies in their work. In contrast to the autobiographers and writers of documentary fiction, Zhang Xianliang and Liu Sola problematize the notion of transparent truth claim, although they too assume the position of witnesses. Thanks to the ground gained from the struggles of previous Chinese writers, more recent Chinese writers from the inside can now almost speak as freely as writers from the outside, despite the remaining risk they take of criticism and more rarely, the possibility of imprisonment.

All these genres are evidence of the richness and range of the recent writings of a turbulent historical period, which scarred the “heart” as well as the body. In my reading of Scar Literature, I hope to add a new page to what Felman has called the age of testimony.

Chapter I

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND TESTIMONY

To bury! To forget! During a short time, I did want to forget the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution, but failed to do so, even when I begged for help from the spell of ghosts. ... To remember the catastrophe is not for others but for ourselves and for younger generations.

Ba Jin, Random Reflections

Chinese Scar Literature appeared on the Chinese literary scene shortly after the end of the Mao era (1949-1976). It exposed the wounds and scars left by the period, especially those incurred by the Anti-Rightist campaign (1957-1959) and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Thanks to the changes in the political climate in the late 1970s- -Mao's death (1976) and the end of the Cultural Revolution- - Chinese writers were permitted to write about their experience of the past. In 1977, Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) came back to power and "consolidated his support among intellectuals by encouraging them to denounce the Cultural Revolution's policies" (McDougall and Louie 332). Many political and literary actors were thereby encouraged to investigate and correct the errors of the past that had led to the Cultural Revolution. The *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the government, "sponsored a forum to criticize 'Gang of Four Literature.'" Writers and critics found that they could speak out, because people could now assign blame to the Gang of Four for the national catastrophe. At the Fourth Congress of Writers and Artists in 1979, which sought to provide

guidelines for arts and literature, Deng Xiaoping made a speech promising an end to the Party's interference in artistic creation. He said that instead of "issuing administrative orders or presenting demands that literature and art be subordinate to a temporary, specific, and direct political assignment," "the Party committees at all levels" should "help writers and artists meet the conditions for making literary and artistic undertaking flourish, elevate literary and art levels, and create excellent literary and art works..." (Deng 13). Deng promised writers and artists freedom in their creation by quoting Lenin who said that "[in literature] it is absolutely necessary to guarantee that writers have ample room for individual creation and inclination, and ample room for different ideas, imagination, forms and contents" (10).³ In short, without the thaw in politics, the emergence of Scar Literature in the People's Republic of China (PRC) would have been impossible.

Liu Xinwu (b. 1942) and Lu Xinhua (b. 1953) heralded the phenomenon of what came to be called "Scar Literature." The short story "Ban zhuren" [The Teacher in Charge] by Liu Xinwu, published in *People's Literature* in November 1977, tackled the chaos left by the Cultural Revolution, especially in the education system. It called on people to save the younger generation abused by the Gang of Four. It encouraged writers to reexamine the psychological trauma left by the Cultural Revolution, a decade of catastrophe in the PRC. On 11 August 1978, Lu Xinhua published a short story entitled "Shanghen" [The Scar] in *Wenhui Daily*, which gave the movement its name. The text tells a story of a mother and a daughter who have gone through traumatic experiences during the Cultural Revolution. "The Scar" immediately became controversial and drew a

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³ Deng's speech was first published in *Wenyi Bao* [Literary Gazette], 11-12, 1979 (Glodblatt 14).

great deal of attention in society (Pan 463). Lu Xinhua's title of the story "The Scar" caught the essence of the time. The Cultural Revolution was declared to be over officially and gradually people in the PRC were awakened from a nightmare after being traumatized collectively. The word "scar" reflected the wounds people had incurred and carried the urgency of the need of addressing the wounds for the healing process. Shortly after, the term "Scar Literature" began to spread, and similar works appeared. These works were characterized by the description of trauma and the display of individual experiences and social problems, because Scar Literature enabled writers to restore and develop the tradition of realism (463). The fact that it appeared before the Communist Party's denunciation of the Cultural Revolution is evidence of the writers' bravery and courage. The conference of the Chinese Writers Association held from December 1984 to January 1985 affirmed that Scar Literature was a remarkable landmark in the literature of the New Period (463).

The publication of the "The Teacher in Charge" and "The Scar" shocked Chinese society and aroused heated discussions. One debate focused on whether writers should look back and expose scars. The centre of the debate was an article "Xiang qian kan a! Wenyi" [Look Forward! Arts] by Huang Ansi. Huang said that Scar Literature only looked backwards, and therefore the texts made their readers sad and depressed. In Huang's opinion, literature should look forward and serve the Four Modernizations (King 1981 89). "Huang's ideas were criticized as idealistic and vague—idealistic because his demand for an end to 'backward-looking literature' was taken to imply that the damage caused by the Cultural Revolution was now a thing of the past, and vague because he gave no clue as to how literature should 'look forward' and serve the Four

Modernizations” (89).

Another debate was on whether literature should focus on praises or exposure. Those critics who still clung to Maoist ideology accused Scar Literature of being a literature of exposure.⁴ They claimed that Scar Literature exposed too much about the dark side of society, and that it had a negative influence on people’s political views. They argued that literary works should continue to praise the Party and write about the bright side of socialism, which had been the principle of socialist realism since 1949. Because Scar Literature criticized the wrong Party policies during the Cultural Revolution and exposed social problems and collective trauma, the question remained whether this type of literature should be encouraged. Critics insisting on the principle of socialist realism included Li Jian who wrote “Gede yu quede” [Praising Virtue and Lacking Virtue], in which some statements resembled what Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife, had said in 1965 (King 1981 87-88).⁵ Li Jian argued that artists should praise virtue (*gede*) and stop exposing the dark side of society.

The argument was attacked by the other critics who insisted that the new period needed literature of exposure. One article, “Lun baolu zai shehui zhuyi wenxue zhong de diwei” [On the Position of Exposure in Socialist Literature] by Xing Xiaoqun and Ding Dong, pointed out that praising and exposure were inseparable in literature, and the key

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⁴ Maoist literary theory defined literature as a tool for politics, and therefore literature should praise socialism, the Party, and the government instead of exposing their mistakes.

⁵ Li Jian said that: “You eat grain grown by the peasants and wear clothes made by the workers, yet you erect no monuments to [i.e. you fail to praise] the masters of the country when you flourish your three-inch pens. I ask you: where has your morality gone?” Jiang Qing said fifteen years earlier: “The grain we eat is grown by the peasants, the clothes we wear and the houses we live in are made by the workers, the People’s Liberation Army stands at the forefront of national defense for us, and yet you do not portray them. I ask you:... where is the artist’s ‘conscience’ you talk so much about?” (King 1981 87-88).

was what to praise and what to expose (57). Furthermore, both writers claimed that it was wrong to criticize Scar Literature and literature of exposure as soon as they emerged (58). Another article “Guanyu ‘gedepai’ de zagan” [On the Praising School] by Qiu Shangchuan reinforced this argument. Qiu said that it did not help the literary field to group literary works as *gede pai* [praising school] and *quede pai* [exposing school], all the while encouraging the former and condemning the latter. People should judge a literary work by what it praised or exposed. The writers of exposure literature should not be put in fear if their works exposed the deeds of the “Gang of Four” (Qiu 71). Socialist literature exposed the dark side of society, so that people would try to help the Party to correct the errors (Xing and Ding 58). Both articles argued that Literature of exposure should be encouraged. Ba Jin (b. 1904), a prolific writer in the 1930s and 1940s and also a rehabilitated writer in the late 1970s, argued that if writers were “praising virtue” only, they would ignore the wounds of the past. Writers of “exposure literature” should be given a chance to describe the people who were “covered with wounds.” The wounded should be allowed to “clean their injuries and put on bandages” (Ba 1984 175).

In short, the majority of critics, writers, and readers believed that the emergence of Scar Literature was a positive development of profound social and historical significance. It explored faults in the social system, mistakes made in the past, and various kinds of wrong-doings in society. Although works of Scar Literature reflected life in society through stories of individual and family misfortune, the intent of the exposure was to heal wounds and trauma left by the Mao era (Pan 463-64).

Important as it is, a thorough study of Scar Literature has not been undertaken. In China, most studies revisiting the Mao era are discouraged, including Scar Literature. In

the West, scholarship centering on contemporary Chinese literature seems to be so busy following the present literary schools, such as Root-Searching Literature and Avant-garde Fiction, that it overlooks Scar Literature. Even though the period usually ascribed to this literature is roughly between 1976 to 1984, my dissertation will argue that although Scar Literature experienced its high tide during the decade after Mao's death in 1976, it has been ongoing since. The reasons for my expansion of the time period of "Scar Literature" are numerous. Descriptions of traumas associated with the Mao era continue to appear in Chinese literary works after 1984. Many literary works categorized as experimental or postmodern exhibit these features and can therefore be seen as an extension of the movement. If its purpose was to heal the wounds, Scar Literature had not reached its goal by 1984 and it could not, because the trauma inflicted on Chinese society by a decade of catastrophe could not be easily assimilated. In this respect, Scar Literature parallels literary work on the Holocaust, which continues to appear more than fifty years after the event. According to psychoanalytic theory, the response to an overwhelming traumatic event is sometimes delayed and knowledge of the event is always incomplete for survivors (Caruth 1995 4-5). In China, some people have only recently begun to acknowledge and attempt to deal with the trauma they experienced during the Cultural Revolution. Writers are no exception. By discouraging writers from revisiting the catastrophe of the Mao era, the government makes it difficult for society and individuals to heal. For all these reasons, I propose that Scar Literature is still ongoing in different styles and forms. That is why the publication dates of the literary works I have chosen range from 1974 to 1992. Also, the appendix to my thesis lists works dealing with trauma left by the Mao era despite their years of publication.

Historical Context

In what follows, I propose to discuss the following sub-topics, which are inevitably related to my larger theme. In order for my readers to understand Scar Literature, I will provide the historical context for the emergence of the literature. The Cultural Revolution and the Anti-Rightist campaign are the major historical events that writers of Scar Literature discuss. Therefore, I provide background information about these events. Yet the Maoist ideological control started long before these events, so I will trace back to the starting point of the Maoist discourse. Together with the implementation of the discourse was the process of discipline and punishment of the Maoist system. Since I will refer back to Maoist discourse time and again in my analysis of the literary texts, I elaborate on such concepts as Maoist discourse community and the Chinese panopticon, so that my readers will follow my arguments in later chapters. After the historical events, the Chinese people were left in a post-traumatic state. I will examine the collective trauma and individual trauma the Chinese people experienced. Since testimony is the mandate of survivors of historical catastrophes, the survivors of the Cultural Revolution were no exception. They testify in order to prevent another disaster and to warn the younger generation. Museums and memorials are mediums for people to remember. Because the Chinese government did not respond to the call to build a museum of the Cultural Revolution, the writers of Scar Literature have been building such a museum with their literary works. From the vast collection of the texts, I have chosen three genres for my thesis, namely autobiography, documentary fiction, and fiction. I will show how writers present history with reference to facts and imagination. Within each genre, I will compare writers from inside China with those from outside China.

What enabled Scar Literature also impelled the recovery of a longer history and it was now possible to tell this story for the first time. Scar Literature recorded historical events of the Cultural Revolution. During this time people endured inhuman experiences, such as terror, violence, forced labour, imprisonment, and rustication, while the entire nation suffered from heavy damage with regard to its cultural heritage, economic structure, and value systems. Through the process of literary presentation, writers in the PRC had to question people's actions during the Cultural Revolution. Specifically, these writers asked why individuals turned to mass organizations and why they remained obedient without asking questions. In exploring questions about the period of the Cultural Revolution, Scar Literature writers found themselves expanding the history of the PRC, which was a history of repression. While Lu Xun (1881-1936) compared China to "an iron house" under Confucianism and feudalism around 1919, the time of the May Fourth Movement (Martin and Kinkley 176),⁶ I would compare China from 1949 to 1976 to an "ideological iron house," in which people's minds were imprisoned. In fact, the excesses of the Cultural Revolution were only part of a much longer history of ideological repression. In this section of the chapter, I am going to deal with the following issues: What is the Cultural Revolution and what enabled it? What are the events leading up to the Cultural Revolution? By what means was power perpetuated by the Maoist party in terms that were both coercive and designed to produce consent by ideological means?

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⁶ "Lu Xun (pseud. of Zhou Shuren, 1881-1936, from Shaoxing, Zhejiang) was China's leading modern writer and social critic. Beginning in 1918, he used vernacular Chinese to write short stories bearing devastating criticism of traditional culture. At the end of his life, Lu Xun turned increasingly to the left, playing an active role in the League of Left-wing Writers after 1930" (Martin and Kinkley 272).

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution involved the entire population of nearly one billion people in the PRC (Yan and Gao 2).⁷ Several factors contributed to its emergence. Firstly, the economic system of the PRC after 1949, with its communal ownership, which took place gradually, and the centralized economic planning, turned the country into “an intensely bureaucratic managerial state” (3). Political authority

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⁷ Scholarship on the Cultural Revolution is abundant. One of the best books in Chinese on the movement is *Zhongguo “wenge”shinian shi* [Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution] published by Dagongbao Press in Hong Kong in 1986. It is a narrative history of the Cultural Revolution. Written in Chinese, it became an instant best seller in Hong Kong, the PRC, and Taiwan. Its authors are Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, husband and wife. Yan is a physicist converted to political scientist and Gao was a physician but is now a sociologist. They were members of the Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, an official organization that supervises all research and human sciences. The authorship and subsequent publicity invited official attention and censorial measures from the Chinese government and the Communist Party. Both of them continued in the long-established tradition of protest of scholars in China, aiming at the improvement of moral constants in China. Actively involved in democratic movements, Yan Jiaqi was placed on the list of the twelve most wanted after the Tian’anmen Square incident. He escaped with Gao Gao to France and has lived in exile ever since. The authors have experienced the historical event themselves and collected first-hand materials for their book. *Politics and Purges in China* by Frederick C. Teiwes analyzes the rectification campaigns and high level elite purges. It also interprets elite conflicts at the politburo level in the Mao era. Furthermore, it examines the norms shaping inner Party life generally and their decline in the pre-Cultural Revolution period (Teiwes Introduction xiii). *Politics of Chaos* by Lynn White focuses on the participation of the people from the entire nation in the historical event. The book defines the Cultural Revolution as an act of violence by and against millions of people. Focusing on the labelled social groups, Lynn White’s work tries to find the causes for the violence and chaos during the “institutionalized campaign” (Lynn White 7). Because the nationwide movement emphasized class struggle, White’s analysis helps to comprehend the situations of the movement. There are works of testimony on human suffering during the Cultural Revolution, including Anne F. Thurston’s *Enemies of the People: The Ordeal of the Intellectuals in China’s Great Cultural Revolution* published by Knopf in 1987, and Arthur Kleinman’s *Social Origins of Stress and Disease: Depression, Neurasthenia, and Pain in Modern China* published by Yale University Press in 1985. There are also essay collections on the topic, including *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* edited by W. Joseph et al. This book is a collection of essays on various topics about the Cultural Revolution, including politics, economics, and culture. *The People’s Republic of China 1949-1979: A Documentary Survey* by Hinton, Harold C. is a collection of Chinese documents published in English translation. Consisting of five volumes, the order of volumes, sections, and documents is largely chronological. The documents are grouped under headings that correspond to the main policy issues that concerned China during the period from 1949 to 1979. The editor provides a brief commentary preceding each text.

Among this rich scholarship on the Cultural Revolution, I use the following as the major sources for my purpose. I use Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao’s *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution* largely for dates and facts. Lynn T. White’s *Policies of Chaos: the Organizational Causes of Violence in China’s Cultural Revolution* provides explanations and analysis of the movement. I use it to reinforce my arguments. I also use Anne F. Thurston’s *Enemies of the People: The Ordeal of the Intellectuals in China’s Great Cultural Revolution* for my discussion on the people’s sufferings during the national catastrophe.

controlled people's lives. Secondly, in Mao's opinion, the force of Liu Shaoqi (1900-1969), the president of the state who encouraged economic development of the country rather than political campaigns, posed a great threat to him. The gap between Mao and Liu increased continuously and reflected permanent tensions in the Party. Mao relied on "people's worship of him" to launch "a large scale campaign" in order to get rid of his opponents, who were headed by Liu (3). Thirdly, people in the PRC were deprived of the democratic means to voice their opinion. At the same time, the "despotic political system" encouraged autocracy and bureaucracy, and granted special privileges to the leadership of the Party and the government (3). Some sources also argue that "the Gang of Four Maoist leadership" is "the cause of the Cultural Revolution" (Lynn White 4). "A few high-placed members of the Party elite inspired hundreds of millions of people to work for a more egalitarian China, and thereby throw out their rival in Beijing who had different goals" (4). "The Cultural Revolution as a mass movement was made possible with the help of the administrative policies used in the whole pre-1966 history of the PRC" (8).

Towards the end of 1964, the conflicts between Mao and Liu became well known. Mao believed that Liu had set up a "command headquarters" to oppose him, and moreover "at least one third of the authorities in the country were in the hands" of people "he could not trust" (Yan and Gao 7). According to him, most of the artistic and literary institutions had turned towards revisionism, and schools and universities were controlled by "capitalist class intellectuals" (7). When Mao used his personal cult to call on people to expose darkness, his action coincided with people's resentment of bureaucracy, despotism, special privilege, and greed in the leadership of the Party and the government.

A historical play, “Hai Rui baguan” [Hai Rui Dismissed from Office], is widely credited with igniting the Cultural Revolution.⁸ The play praised a historical figure Hai Rui who dared to “speak the truth” and upbraided the emperor (24). In 1965, Yao Wenyan (b.1931), later a member of the Gang of Four, wrote an article attacking the play, stating that the play was anti-party. According to him, the play showed that the “bad” elements of society, which had lost power after 1949, wanted to fight against the dictatorship of the proletariat. Knowing Mao’s intention, Jiang Qing (1913-1991) and her collaborators forced the media to criticize the play. In November 1965, Mao ordered that all of the newspapers in the country carry Yao Wenyan’s article. But Mao’s order met with resistance, including from the mayor of Beijing, Peng Zhen (1902-1977) himself. In April 1966, Peng Zhen was dismissed from his position as mayor in Beijing, and this “descent was the first signpost of the Cultural Revolution” (33).

In May 1966, Beijing University was chosen to be the centre of the Cultural Revolution. Jiang Qing and her collaborators set the strategy of “starting the fire” at the university (40). Some of her collaborators went “to incite the left to write big character posters and thereby rally the masses” to oppose the university’s Party committee. Their efforts resulted in a poster entitled “What Are Song Shuo, Lu Ping, and Peng Peiyun Really Doing in the Cultural Revolution?” (40).⁹ The targeted authorities of the university were criticized for “suppressing” and “forbidding mass revolution” (40). On August 5,

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⁸ Other sometimes cited causes of the Cultural Revolution include a speech that Mao’s defense minister Lin Biao gave in September 1965; or an inspirational statement by Mao himself on May 16, 1966 (Lynn. White 4).

⁹ Lu Ping was the Beijing University’s president and Party secretary and Song Shuo was the deputy head of the University Affairs Department of the Beijing Party Committee.

Mao himself demonstrated his support for the Red Guards in a poster entitled “Paoda silingbu—wode yizhang dazibao” [Bombarding the Command Post—My Own Big-Character Poster] (53). With this poster he named Liu Shaoqi and his group as “reactionary capitalists.” A “preeminent target,” Liu Shaoqi was “unable to defend himself, given the accepted understanding that whoever was under attack had no right to speak except in self-criticism.” This hidden rule had become the party’s tradition since 1942 in Yan’an (Teiwes xlvii). After several Party meetings, Liu’s position in the central leadership dropped from the second to the eighth, giving way to Lin Biao (1907-1971), who catered to Mao’s need for a cult of personality (Yan and Gao 64).

May 1966 saw the rapid increase of the cult of Mao, and the birth of the Red Guards. The first group of the Red Guards was middle school students who “organized to acquire collective strength” (57). Soon the Red Guards came into play on the political stage. The oath of the first group of Red Guards was to guard the red power and the highest guiding principle for their actions was Mao Zedong Thoughts (57). Taking the liberation of all mankind as their responsibility, the Red Guards swore to protect the Party and Mao to their “last drop of blood” (57). In July 1966, the Red Guards from Qinghua University Middle School declared the following in a big-character poster:

Revolution is rebellion, and the soul of Mao Zedong Thought is rebellion. We must pay special attention to “applying ourselves,” that is to say, to pay special attention to “rebel” (*zaofan*).¹⁰ To dare to think, to dare to speak, to dare to act, to dare to intrude, and to dare to revolt is, in one word, to dare to *zaofan*. This is the most precious quality of a proletarian revolutionary and the fundamental principle of proletarian Party spirit! To not *zaofan* is 100 percent revisionism!... The revolutionary should ... shatter the old world and send everyone and everything into chaos, the more chaos, the better. (58)

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¹⁰ Translator’s footnote: *Zaofan* connotes turning all things upside down and has meanings which suggest the three English words: revolution, revolt, and rebellion.

The Work Groups sent by Liu Shaoqi to middle schools regarded the attack on Red Guard organizations as one of their key actions in the Cultural Revolution (58). In contrast, Mao sent his warm support to the rebellious spirit. Mao's steering of the Cultural Revolution included taking advantage of the forces inside and outside the Party in order to defeat Liu Shaoqi (60). Mao also relied on the power of propaganda to increase people's worship of him (60). In 1966, Mao gained the title of "Four Greats," which included Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Commander, and Great Helmsman (63).

In August 1966, exhorted by Lin Biao, the Red Guards started an unprecedented "Destroying the Four Olds" movement. The Four Olds included old thoughts, old culture, old customs, and old habits (65). According to the Red Guards, all service industries of the capitalists such as "barber shops, tailor shops, photograph studios, and used book stalls" belonged to the Four Olds, and therefore should be destroyed (65). Old things such as Hong Kong-style haircuts and clothing, and denim jeans, were also to be changed (65). Overnight, old street names were altered into "East-Is-Red Boulevard," "Aid-Vietnam Road," and "Anti-Revisionism Road" ("where the Soviet Embassy was situated") (66). Showing loyalty to Mao, some people even changed their own names into Weidong (defending Mao Zedong), or Yongge (permanent revolution) (67). To prove they were more revolutionary than others, people "ostracized each other" and went to the streets to "attack many whom they did not even know" (Lynn White 8). Major historical and tourist sites became the targets of the Red Guards. "Buddhist icons, plaques, and scrolls of the lofts and halls" were "destroyed and replaced by pictures of Mao" (Yan and Gao 70).

From August to November in 1966, at Tian'anmen Square, Mao inspected the Red Guards from all over the country eight times. Through the inspections, the deification

of Mao reached new heights. In August, the central committee of the Party supported the “Mass Exchange of Revolutionary Experiences” (*Da chuanlian*), in which thousands and thousands of students came to Beijing to exchange experience. Meanwhile, Beijing students went to other provinces to convey propaganda. Because Beijing was the centre of this movement, schools became reception centres. Transportation of goods was halted in order to facilitate the movement, during which “chaos reigned everywhere” (89). Red Guards grouped together to destroy the Four Olds, excelling at “the art of beating people with their belts” and smashing anything they considered as the Four Olds (88-89).

In October 1966, Lin Biao declared that Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping employed a line which fundamentally differed from Mao’s line.¹¹ In December, slogans such as “Down with Liu Shaoqi” and “Down with Deng Xiaoping” appeared in Beijing (100). Liu Shaoqi’s personal life was threatened by the Cultural Revolution as well. His daughter and son wrote posters against him under Jiang Qing’s instruction (134). The lawlessness of the Cultural Revolution deprived him and his wife of “the rights of common citizens” (135). Jiang Qing and her cohorts put the people who had once worked with Liu and his wife in detention or under investigation. In order to obtain confessions or proof that Liu Shaoqi had been a traitor to the work union, and that his wife had been an American special agent, these people were persecuted to death or forced to fabricate unjust proofs (356-365). Liu Shaoqi, the president of the state, was persecuted to death in 1969 after months of maltreatment and humiliation (163).

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¹¹ The term “line” could be interpreted as a direction to take with a set of policies. For example, a “Two-line Struggle” was used to refer to the conflicts between the top party leaders, normally between Mao and his enemies of a certain time period.

The Red Guard movement subsided by 1968, while overpopulation and unemployment led to the rise of the Rustication movement. The Party began the movement because it feared that factions formed at the early stage of the Cultural Revolution might clash with each other again and thus cause social disturbance. The Red Guards had finished playing their role, yet they could not easily forget the violence which was intended to be the expression of revolution (Leung xviii). They could not continue their education either, for the universities and colleges were closed during the national chaos. Thus, in the Party's view, "sending these restless young people to the remote countryside was a quick way of dispersing remnant factions and reducing potential social problems..." (Leung xxi). Therefore, Mao issued his directive on the 23rd of December 1968 in *People's Daily*:

Urban educated youths should go to the countryside to receive re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants. [We] must convince and mobilize cadres and other people in the city to send their sons and daughters who have graduated from junior and senior middle schools and colleges to go to the countryside. Local cadres should welcome them. (Leung xxii-xxiii)

About 17 million urban middle-school and college students were sent, on Mao's order, to the rural areas during the Rustication movement ¹² between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s (Rosen 1).¹³

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¹² The idea of rustication was not new. It was an integral part of Maoist Thought, designed to counter the historical inequalities between cities and rural areas and between physical and mental labour. Along this line, the "reforming" of the intelligentsia had been in practice since the founding of the PRC. The intellectuals were always the target of political movements and objects of re-education by workers and peasants. In the 1950s, many intellectuals were sent to the rural areas to work with the working people for the "reformation" of their thoughts (Djang xi). Also, the problems of "overurbanization" and urban unemployment became acute after the failure of the Maoist socialist experiments such as the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s. Sending urban people to rural areas was a solution to the problems (Rosen 9).

¹³ About the Rustication movement, Stanley Rosen asks us to "consider the following figures:" "By the end of 1978, 17 million youth had left school and gone to the countryside as part of the Rustication movement. Early in 1979, there were still approximately 10 million in the countryside. By the end of August 1979,

From 1959 to 1966, Lin Biao energetically promoted the cult of Mao. Through great efforts in these years, he advanced over Liu Shaoqi and Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), and became “second only to Mao in power and position” (Yan and Gao 179). Yet Lin Biao’s clique wanted Lin Biao to be the president (306). In 1971, his followers planned to seize power by using military force and the document of their plan was called the 5-7-1 project. Later in the year, knowing that Mao was going to dismantle the clique, Lin Biao and his followers decided to take action first. They planned to hit Mao’s train in Shanghai using flame-throwers, the number 40 missile, or anti-aircraft gun (333). As if sensing something dangerous, Mao ordered his train to speed for Beijing after a short stay in Shanghai, giving no time for Lin’s clique to conduct their assassination. With their deeds exposed, Lin and his clique boarded a Trident 256 heading for the Soviet Union. It is said that the plane ran short of fuel and crashed in Wenduerhan, Mongolia on September 13, 1971 (330-33).

After the fall of Lin Biao, a number of central Party leaders were rehabilitated and resumed office thanks to Premier Zhou’s efforts. In 1973, Mao made the self-criticism that he had wronged some top leaders in the Party, blaming it on Lin Biao (455). He allowed Deng Xiaoping to come back to Beijing “to assist Zhou Enlai with the rectification and restoration of the economy” (455). Yet Jiang Qing’s clique strongly opposed the empowering of Deng.

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Jiang Qing “boasted herself as the standard bearer of literature and the arts” (369). She tried to influence the ideological and

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however, only 5 million remained down on the farms” (1). Ding Yizhuang, the author of *The History of Chinese Educated Youth*, terms the Rustication as a movement of 20 years involving 20 million youth (1).

cultural field by reforming the Beijing opera. The Eight Model Plays were the results of her efforts. She hoped that people “would gather under the banner” of Eight Model Plays, and therefore “elevate her to the throne as the future queen of China” (400). Under her control, the film industry was closed and about 400 films made after 1949 were criticized (401). At one point, no films but those of the Eight Model Plays were allowed to be seen in the country.

In September 1976, following the deaths of Premier Zhou Enlai in January 1976 and Martial Zhu De in July 1976, Mao died of illness. Shortly after, the Gang of Four was arrested and brought to trial. The Cultural Revolution finally concluded in October, 1976. During the national catastrophe, law, human rights, democracy and civilization had been trampled. The president of the state had been persecuted to death, and millions of innocent people had been attacked and mistreated. Mao himself had “controlled the legislative, judicial, and administrative powers, and individuals had exerted their best efforts to gain power” (529). It is said that “about one hundred million people (one tenth of the country’s population) suffered” and “twenty million died” in the Cultural Revolution (Lynn White 7). “Not enough can be done to alleviate the sense of guilt among survivors, their fears that the movement might recur, and the wounds that many Chinese still feel” (7).

The fact that a country of almost a billion people was plunged into chaos for a decade begs the question: what made the Cultural Revolution possible? I want to argue that the following factors contributed to the decade of catastrophe. Firstly, the PRC remained a single party-state after 1949, and the Party had complete control of internal affairs. With only one party in power, there were no opposition parties to check policy-

making. Secondly, the weak judicial system was under the control of the party-state even before the Cultural Revolution. In turn, it was completely paralyzed during the Cultural Revolution. Thirdly, the “official good and bad labels for groups” drove groups to fight against each other in order to secure their own labels (8). The labelling also sanctioned violence in society. Fourthly, individuals capable of independent thinking had been silenced during the past political movements. Since anyone could be termed anti-revolutionary, most people watched the Cultural Revolution unfolding, rather than expressing their own opinions about the movement. The dominant force was represented by Mao and it suppressed and silenced different opinions. Fifthly, the Cultural Revolution could not have happened without the consent of the masses. The consent was formed partly out of the fanatic worship of Mao and partly out of the fear of being expelled from the community. Since Chinese culture was largely a collective culture emphasizing conformity, participation of the masses in political campaigns reinforced their sense of belonging.

In spiralling back to the history before the Cultural Revolution, we find that what came to be called the Anti-Rightist campaign, was one of the movements after 1949 that silenced the Chinese intelligentsia. Feeling secure about its control in 1956, the Party invited criticism both from inside and outside the Party. The movement was named *Shuangbai* [Double Hundreds], because the purpose of the movement was to “let a hundred flowers bloom and let a hundred schools contend.” People were suspicious and cautious at first, but upon encouragement from the Party, they spoke out about their good-willed criticism. Some people, especially intellectuals, started to voice their dissatisfactions with some Party policies and strategies, including the cult of Mao. For

example, in Beijing University some posters “compared Mao to the Pope, and his writings to the Bible” (Yue 8). Sensing the threat, the Party immediately launched the Anti-Rightist campaign and began the persecution of the out-spoken intellectuals. Upon Mao’s instruction that most people were good comrades and only five percent were really against the Party, each institution regarded this five percent as a ratio in the campaign. During the campaign, each intellectual had to locate a target hastily in order to protect himself/herself from falling into the unlucky minority. “Many intellectuals were rusticated” in the countryside and the independent spirit of the intelligentsia was destroyed during the Anti-Rightist campaign (Lynn White 145).

Since in the rest of the thesis I will refer from time to time to the concepts of the Maoist discourse, the Maoist discourse community, and the Chinese panopticon and its system of discipline and punishment, I will explain these concepts in the sections to follow. I use discourse analysis to examine the formation of the Maoist discourse, and the Maoist discourse community, and the subjects within the discourse community. I employ Catherine Belsey’s work to explain the term “discourse” and “subject.” *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic* by David E. Apter and Tony Saich is one of the sources using discourse analysis in the context of Maoism. I refer to it for theoretical dimensions to reinforce my analysis of the Maoist discourse community.

The Maoist discourse shares the features of any discourse. According to Catherine Belsey, a discourse is “a domain of language-use, a particular way of talking (and writing and thinking). A discourse involves certain shared assumptions which appear in the formulations that characterize it” (Belsey 5). “Discourse” as a term comes into widespread usage with the turn to a linguistic paradigm following Saussure. Saussure

posits language as a field of differential relations; in turn, any particular statement or language use is seen as operating in a wider network of relations. As a result, a particular discourse does not so much have an “author,” or a determinate point of origin, as it exists within the conditions of possibility generated by a certain place and time. In linguistic terms, this is the *langue* that generates a particular instance of *parole*. We might also suggest that this model of language operates to challenge any notions of art or aesthetics as operating autonomously from a wider cultural and political field.¹⁴

The Maoist discourse began to form with the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921. Greatly encouraged by the Soviet Union’s success in its application of a Marxist-Leninist theory of socialism, Mao Zedong established his “-ism” through various means such as public lectures, writings, and discussions. The Maoist discourse proceeded from several premises. It was assumed that only Marxist socialism could save China, with the CCP as agent and the proletariat as the major forces. Composed of workers, peasants, and soldiers, the proletariat should unite to overthrow the existing powers of feudalism, imperialism, and bureaucratic capitalism and to become the owners of a socialist New China. Yet it should be noted that Mao, as a “storyteller,” not only employed a borrowed “-ism” of the West, Marxism, but also used ancient traditional Chinese narratives as allegories to form his discourse. A well-known example is his article “Yugong yishan” [The Foolish Man Removing the Mountains]. The article was not only used to convince the Chinese people of his doctrine, but also to “empower” them. “The Foolish Old Man Removing Mountains” was an ancient Chinese fable that Mao

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¹⁴ This explanation of discourse is a result of a discussion between Dr. Barbara Gabriel and me on key issues of this section: discourse and subjectivity.

appropriated and endowed with contemporary political meanings. The “Foolish Old Man” in question is determined to remove the mountains which block his way, no matter how many generations it takes to complete the task. The oppression the Chinese people suffered from Imperialism, Feudalism, and Capitalism was symbolized by Mao as Three Big Mountains on the heads of the Chinese people. The “Foolish Old Man” served as a model of Chinese people who wanted to get rid of the Three Big Mountains.

The Anti-Japanese war (1937-1945) also contributed to the formation of the Maoist discourse. The Party’s propaganda made people believe that the Communist Party really fought against Japanese, while the Guomindang (the Nationalist government) pretended to fight but retained its forces for later battle against the Communist Party. The corruption and incompetence of the Guomindang government also made people disappointed. Appealing to Chinese people’s patriotism, the Communist Party won more and more people on its side.

After Mao came to power in the Party, Maoism strengthened its dominance by cracking down on other “-isms.”¹⁵ Gradually Maoism established itself as a hegemonic discourse around the early 1940s in Yan’an. It was in Yan’an, the symbolic capital, that Mao formed a discourse community bound together by his revolutionary belief and storytelling. Apter and Saich’s definition of a discourse community goes as follows:

Within the large framework of discourse theory, two model tendencies can be identified. One is logocentric; the other is econocentric. As a discourse community, Yan’an represents the logocentric model.... The logocentric model is concerned less with choice than with projections made on the basis of some doctrinal definition of necessity that specifies its own rules and theoretical principles and for which it provides its own logic. Deterministic

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¹⁵ The term Maoism specifies a coherent and independent ideology imposed by Mao and the Party. For detailed information, see Tu Weiming Endnote 2, p.178.

rather than probabilistic, the logocentric model “works” when it persuades people to “convey” their private narratives and personal interpretations to the collectivity. (2-4)

The Maoist discourse community in Yan’an generated power and constructed its “own language of belief.” Within this discourse community, individuals accepted Mao’s oracular vision for the country. Consequently, they made an oath to devote themselves to the realization of the Maoist vision and to contribute to the collective actions. At the same time, the individual could “transform one’s own condition by altering the conditions of society at large.” To realize the dream of transforming the Old China, the believers of Maoism had to conform to Maoist ideology. The features of the Maoist discourse community included a strong sense of belonging, commitment, and affiliation. Once individuals chose to be a member of the discourse community, their choice became a permanent obligation. To disagree equaled disloyalty and to quit meant betrayal (4-6).

In Yan’an, Mao acted both as a saviour of the Chinese people and as an agent conveying new truths. Just as Mao said, “A single spark can start a prairie fire” (Benton and Hunter 4),¹⁶ so the Maoist discourse community expanded until the founding of the PRC in 1949. It was at this time that the whole nation became a large discourse community. This was achieved by the Party’s successful employment of what Louis Althusser has called ideological state apparatuses, including the media, education systems, neighbourhoods, and even family. The result of these institutions persuaded the majority of Chinese people to accept Maoist communism as a faith. The incessant

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¹⁶ “Traditionally this cliché spelled both a warning (that small mistakes can multiply into a catastrophe) and a hope (that a mighty force can grow from small beginnings). In Mao’s construction, the emphasis is on its second, positive meaning: that a handful of dedicated Communists can create a revolution. ‘Prairie fire’ refers to the revolution that Mao intended...” (Benton and Hunter 4).

nationwide political campaigns made sure that the Maoist discourse became a hegemonic discourse that was infused into every social institution.

The achievement of the dominant discourse marked the PRC as a party-state, which was characterized by the lack of a basic judicial system. It resulted in “the words of top leaders being taken as ‘law’,” “life-long tenure of the party cadres, and the concentration of power” (Goldman 63). Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Maoists in China suppressed Chinese traditional values and imposed the values of a communist society on the Chinese people either by coercion or by force if faced with resistance. Moreover, the Party not only persuaded people to believe in the values of a communist society, but it also encouraged people to make self-sacrifice for these values. The “lofty” goal of a communist society made it justified for the Party to crack down on any dissent. The Maoist Party-state also demanded from the Chinese people certain attributes such as: absolute obedience to the Party, selflessness in building socialism, and the prioritizing of state and collective interest over that of either the individual or the family unit. Another feature of the Maoist discourse was the attempt to exert control over every aspect of individuals’ lives.

It is obvious that the Maoist discourse had functioned well after 1949. This was achieved by imposing upon the Chinese people an ideology, and therefore recruiting all of them into subjects. As we know, “the destination of all ideology is the subject,” which is the individual in society, and “the role of ideology is to construct people as subjects” (Belsey 58). As for the individuals, “it is only by adopting the position of the subject within language, that the individual is able to produce meaning” (59). The Maoist discourse made sure that all of its media used the Maoist terminology in order to recruit

its subjects. One of the various techniques that enabled the Maoists to succeed was their interpretation of the meaning of an individual life. According to Maoism, it was not until people had totally put aside their individual interests, and seen themselves as serving the Chinese revolution that their lives had become meaningful. The Maoist narrative also used exemplary models to convince the Chinese people. These models included the cultural archetype of the “Foolish Old Man,” which we have discussed, alongside heroic figures such as Lei Feng (1940-1962) who sacrificed their lives to their duties.¹⁷ One additional example was Norman Bethune, a Canadian, who travelled thousands of miles to selflessly help the cause of the Chinese people’s liberation. The last model was especially powerful in that it suggested that if a foreigner would like to help the Chinese revolutionary cause, how could a Chinese citizen hesitate? Mao thus established Dr. Bethune as a model which could serve to interpret the meaning of individual life for all revolutionary subjects:

We must all learn from him the spirit that is so completely free from selfishness. Starting from this point, one can become a person of great use to the people. A man’s ability may be great or small, but if only he has this spirit, he is already a noble-minded man, a pure man, a moral man, a man who has left vulgar taste behind, a man who is useful to the people. (Mao 1954 Vol. 3 105)

Following these models, Chinese people turned themselves into willing subjects in ways suggested by Catherine Belsey’s Althusserian model of ideology. They recognized or misrecognized themselves “in the ways in which ideology interpellated them” (Belsey

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¹⁷ Lei Feng was a driver in the People’s Liberation Army who was killed at work when “a telegraph pole fell on him” (Becker 281). “His diaries expressing his profound devotion to the party and to Mao were published” (Leung 312). After his death, Mao issued a slogan “Learn from Comrade Lei Feng” followed by the “Learn from Lei Feng Campaign” (Leung 313). Therefore Lei Feng, an ordinary soldier, became a model for the entire nation (Becker 281).

61). The ideology “addressed them as subjects, called them by their names, and in turn recognized their autonomy.” As a result, they “worked by themselves” and “willingly adopted the subject-positions necessary to their participation in the social formation” (Belsey 61).

How was it possible that within such a short time frame Maoism succeeded in recruiting the Chinese people into becoming obedient subjects? Integral to answering this question is an understanding of a heritage where the Confucian emphasis on conformity, and the suppression of what Western liberal culture would consider individuality had been a permanent feature in Chinese culture. The absolute obedience of the minister to the emperor in a state, and the son to the father in a family, was one of the codes by which Chinese society functioned. Although Mao Zedong himself had been one of the May Fourth (1919) activists who vehemently and caustically attacked the Confucian tradition, he nevertheless assumed a traditional Chinese role of paternal saviour in the course of “liberating” the Chinese people. The ubiquitous slogans included: “To devote infinite loyalty to the Party;” “To read Chairman Mao’s works, to heed Chairman Mao’s sayings, to act according to Chairman Mao’s instructions, and to be Chairman Mao’s good soldiers.” The model of the Confucian parent-leader remained intact in this slogan: “Heaven and earth are great but greater still is the kindness of the Party and parents are dear but dearer still is Chairman Mao.”

The Maoist Party also assumed moral authority. The Maoist morality is goal-based. He Baogang says that “The Marxist and Maoist doctrine of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ in reality led to an absolute monopoly of power” (105). Even violence was justified for the achievement of the proletarian dictatorship. In other words, the

Maoists could conduct any immoral deeds without feeling guilty for their political or private goals (105). The goal based morality, the socialist superman, and the lofty goal all functioned as integrated parts of the Maoist discourse.

The Cultural Revolution could not have happened in the PRC without the implementation of a system of surveillance which bears comparison with what Foucault had theorized as the Panopticon, a concept derived from Jeremy Bentham's model prison constructed as an all-seeing eye. The concepts of discipline, punishment, and the panopticon will help us to understand the way in which a new Chinese subject was constructed under Maoism who "internalized" dominant ideology. They will also help us to comprehend how Scar Literature writers testify through literary texts. The panopticon here refers to surveillance not so much of the body as of the mind.

Foucault introduces the concepts of discipline, punishment, the panopticon, and the prison for his study of the Western penal system in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.¹⁸ No matter in which state, discipline functions mostly on an ideological level. The purpose for this is always to warn the "potentially guilty." Supreme control is maintained by the panopticon, along with discipline and punishment, and consequently not a single citizen can escape its gaze. In the PRC, Maoist theory after the success of the

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¹⁸ The notion of Panopticon came from the British thinker Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Foucault explains the notion as follows: "Bentham's *Panopticon* is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately" (Foucault 200).

revolution was continuous revolution, which purged numerous innocent people. The purpose of these continuous revolutions, in the form of political campaigns, was as much to destroy the targeted enemy as to warn the potential enemy. Foucault's remarks can be applied here: "for the convict, the penalty is a mechanics of signs, interests and duration. But the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment. For punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potentially guilty" (Foucault 108). The importance of the role which ideology played in the political campaigns under Maoist control can be seen from the set vocabulary used each time: "To seek unity of thoughts" and "To seek unity of action."

Since 1949, the Maoist government has mastered what Foucault calls "the general recipe" "for the exercise of power over men," which is

the "mind" as a surface of inscription for power, with semiology as its tool: the submission of bodies through the control of ideas; the analysis of representations as a principle in a politics of bodies that was much more effective than the ritual anatomy of torture and execution. (Foucault 102)

Unlike Foucault's model in which such self-surveillance takes the place of corporeal punishment, both existed side by side within the Maoist state. Yet Foucault's example of the panopticon is useful in establishing the degree to which the apparatus of power was internalized by individuals and was exercised through schools, slogans, and daily representations. At the same time, each citizen was under the watchful eye of his/her fellow citizens, for example, children reporting their parents, neighbours spying on each other. Each political movement under the Maoist rule in China led to the perfection of the tacit codes of the ideological iron house. Each time people's minds were the main target, and new terms were added to the "revolutionary" vocabulary. One of the most obvious

codes was that Chairman Mao/the Party equaled the Truth, the law, or the rule. There was no judicial system in place to interfere with the persecution of intellectuals during the Anti-Rightist campaign, and to stop the anarchy and genocide at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Exercised partly by coercion and partly by willing consent, the power of the Maoist discourse operated as internalized surveillance in the manner of the “panopticon” (201). Since we compare the PRC to an ideological iron house, the Foucaultian notion of the Panopticon applies in the Chinese context. The major effects of the Panopticon were

to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (Foucault 201)

The internalized surveillance of the Chinese people along with the ever-present threat of physical danger and coercion consolidated the power of Maoism. In turn, the structure of the Chinese political apparatus, i.e. the work unit system, acted as a machine for sustaining power relations. At the supreme level was the “Great Helmsman,” giving instructions. Each citizen knew that he/she was one of the bearers of Maoism.

In addition to the internalized surveillance, existence of the “permanent file” was incorporated into the system. Each member of a work unit in China had such a file that was kept by the personnel department of his/her work unit. It included “his or her class background, education, information about personal matters such as marital status, conduct, attitudes, beliefs...” (Tu 164). The importance of the file was expressed clearly

in *To the Storm*, when a young teacher voiced his opinion bitterly: “[I]n the socialist system, everybody’s destiny was controlled by his file.... [T]he leaders don’t trust the people, but the files they trust absolutely” (Yue 13). The individuals in this discourse community not only represented this Chinese society, but they were also the products of Maoist power.

The panopticon controlled people; and conversely, people conformed to the controlling system and therefore perpetuated the system. The Chinese panopticon facilitated the Maoist rule that caused nationwide catastrophe and left the Chinese people traumatized on a grand scale. After the Mao era, writers of Scar Literature found themselves responsible for testimony. They confronted the trauma left by the Mao era and embarked on the task of telling the stories of the period.

In order to accomplish the task, writers of Scar Literature had to come to terms with trauma and memory. After three decades of living under suppression, Chinese people needed to recognize their traumatic experience in order to assimilate it. The word *chuangshang* [trauma] is commonly used by Chinese people talking about the Cultural Revolution.¹⁹ Although *chuangshang* might not be used in the psychoanalytical sense, I would like to make a connection here to the Western notion of trauma, because it is

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¹⁹ The introduction of Western scientific psychology to China began in the late 1800s but the institutionalization of psychology did not begin until the 1920s, when psychology departments were established in universities. The psychological work during this period remained imitative of the Western psychology in nature. The studies of psychology in the Mao era leaned more towards psychology in the Soviet Union. During the Cultural Revolution, the study of psychology halted and the Institute of Psychology at the Social Science Academy in Beijing was closed. Post-Maoist China saw the revival of the social science and human science studies, including psychology. Psychology was officially recognized as an important basic science. While universities resumed psychology departments, they also started new programs. Official journals on psychology were published and read nation wide (Petzold 213-226). Actually, when people talk about the Cultural Revolution, they use the word “trauma” in combination with other words referring to the psyche, such as “trauma on the heart” or “spiritual trauma” (without connotations of religion).

relevant to discuss the texts of Scar Literature which is the writing of traumatic history. I will lean on the works by Cathy Caruth on this issue. The Western psychoanalytic definition of trauma, following Freud, is

[a]n event in the subject's life defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychic organization. In economic terms, the trauma is characterized by an influx of excitations that is excessive by the standard of the subject's tolerance and capacity to master such excitations and work them out psychically. (Laplanche and Pontalis 465)

Laplanche and Pontalis explain that in medicine and surgery, "trauma" generally means "any injury where the skin is broken as a consequence of external violence, and the effects of such an injury upon the organism as a whole" (465). "In adapting the term, psycho-analysis carries the three ideas implicit in the notion of physical injury over on to the psychological level: the idea of a violent shock, the idea of a wound, and the idea of consequences affecting the whole organization" (466).

During the Cultural Revolution, many people experienced a shift of social status and consequently the loss of the identity they had been used to. The principle of class struggle gave labels to people and grouped them into "red" (good) and "black" (bad) categories. With the attempt to belong to the Red categories, people participated actively in the movement. About the mass participation in the Cultural Revolution, Lynn White comments that:

China's Cultural Revolution engaged "masses"—large groups in cities—but not mainly the hopeless or the powerless. It mobilized local leaders and their families to preserve or restore privileges. It spurred capitalist-labeled (especially intellectual) families to correct injustices against themselves. It also motivated cadres' families to defend their gains of previous years. Personal and material, not just collective and ideal, motives were essential on all sides of the Cultural Revolution. (15)

During the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, nationwide violence was experienced to such extremes that all levels of society were involved, ranging from officials at the very top, such as the president of the state, to nameless victims, such as a teenager who was beaten to death for deserving the pejorative epithet “the counter revolutionary bastard dog” (Yue 188). Their experience followed Kai Erikson’s understanding of “individual trauma” as “a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively” (187). The sudden change of social status, with such demonized names as “oxen, ghosts, serpents, and devils,” “poisonous serpents” was beyond the victims’ understanding at the time. Overnight, the intelligentsia found themselves changed, like Kafka’s hero in “Metamorphosis,” into something less than human.

In addition to individual trauma, Chinese people under Maoist rule also experienced a collective trauma in exactly the term outlined by Erikson: “a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality” (187). During the Cultural Revolution, the family bond, the basic unit of a society, was severely harmed by the prevailing eagerness of individuals to belong to the “red” class. Therefore, the family member who had been categorized as one of the “black” classes became an obstacle to the political life of the others. This explained why some people betrayed their family members in order to be “progressive” and why some children rejected their parents who happened to be categorized as enemies of the people. Work units where people worked were impaired by this tension. Neighbourhoods were also damaged by caution, suspicion, and spying. In his autobiography, Chen Kaige (b.1952) confesses the hatred he carried towards his father in

his teens and examines the cause for this type of abnormal family relationship in a Chinese community. Ba Jin also tries to find the cause for the abnormal situation. In his discussion on the beginning years of the Cultural Revolution, he wonders: "How could those naive fourteen- or fifteen-year-old students of high school and those so-called revolutionary leftists all at once turn into blood-thirsty animals, like tigers and wolves?" (Ba 1988e 24). The answer lies in his own statement: "Without God, there would not have been animals. We are all individuals" (1996 54). The "God" he refers to is the charismatic leadership of Mao himself. Zhang Kangkang (b.1950) also implies the same point, using the well-known Western parable "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen. She points out that the tragic sufferings which millions of people endured during the Mao era resulted from "witch-hunting" or "chasing after the wind" (Zhang Kangkang 1995 204). The Chinese people paid very heavily for the excesses of Maoism. In order to remain in the revolutionary class, many people joined political struggles to victimize others without any reasoning and questioning. In this way they became collective accomplices. In either case, Mao was responsible for the national havoc. As Zhang Kangkang says: "The self-proclaimed tailors were hateful, of course, but if there had been no foolish emperor, there would not have been the emperor's clothes" (204). Whereas scholars in the West could freely speak about events; Zhang Kangkang, a writer in China, could only allude to the events by employing a Western fairy tale. Another point Zhang implies is that only an innocent child could speak the blatant truth, since most adults had been silenced by Maoist power. Such was the nature of trauma for the public in the PRC. Trauma affected the Chinese nation as a whole in every aspect, including the value system, the education system, and the private sphere.

According to Cathy Caruth, “to be traumatized is to be possessed by an image or event” (Caruth 1995 4-5). The traumatic event strikes survivors with such a shock that they do not have the time or capacity to understand and assimilate the traumatic event fully. That is why trauma is belated both in knowledge and in assimilation (4-5). Usually, the survivors of either a natural or human catastrophe have been so closely involved in the events that they could not possibly understand the catastrophe. It is almost paradoxical to say that on the one hand, being victims, they are the only people who possess the truth of the event; but on the other hand, they have developed certain numbness during or after the event which prevents them from grasping the knowledge of the event. In this paradoxical manner, the traumatized “carry an impossible history within them,” and in turn, they become “the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (5). In other words, there is no direct access to a traumatic history.

Recent psychoanalytic studies tell us that “the phenomenon of trauma both urgently demands historical awareness and yet denies our usual modes of access to it” (Caruth 1995 151). Traumatic recollection is not a simple memory. The paradoxical situation appears that while the images of traumatic events remain accurate, they are “inaccessible to conscious recall and control” (151). In some cases the traumatic reliving appears to be waking memory and in other cases there is nothing but amnesia. In short, “the ability to recover the past is closely and paradoxically tied up in trauma, with the inability to have access to it” (152). The flashback or traumatic reenactment that survivors have conveys both “the truth of an event, and the truth of its incomprehensibility” (153).

Trauma is intimately bound up with the question of truth. The traumatized themselves often confront the question within their own knowledge and experience. In the Chinese context, Scar Literature writers faced this dilemma. They possessed the “truth of an event” (153), yet because trauma was tied up with the question of truth, they had to tackle the post-traumatic state in order to present what they have possessed. The events returned to them, crying to be presented, as trauma “required integration both for the sake of testimony and for the sake of cure” (153). Moreover, these writers had to face another risk, which was the loss of precision or force of the traumatic event. It was due to the fact that the transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allowed the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one’s own, and others’, “knowledge of the past, might lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall” (153). It was with this complexity that Scar Literature writers took up the task of testimony.

For the victims of traumatic events, all the previously existing registers and references in life suddenly lost their full weight. The continuity of life was interrupted, the meaning of life and death converted: death was better off than survival, faith in individuals turned out to be a mere illusion, and a moral dimension in life vanished. In short, as Langer summarizes that “history failed the individual and left him victim ... to the tyranny of the actual” (80). As a result, individuals lost faith in human-kind as a whole, as Jean Améry suggests with regard to victims of the Holocaust:

Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured.... Anyone who has suffered torture never again will be able to be at ease in the world, the abomination of the annihilation is never extinguished. Faith in humanity, already cracked by the first slap in the face, then demolished by torture, is never acquired again. (Levi 1988 25)

While losing faith in humanity, the victims of the two historical catastrophes also lost hope in themselves, because their desire for survival overshadows their human dignity. After the events, individuals tried to suppress their memory in order to continue with their lives, yet these memories might surface at any time. Ba Jin revealed that in his sickbed, he shouted loudly time and again in his nightmares when he revisited the scene when Red Guards climbed over the walls of his courtyard and broke into his house for a search (Ba 1988d 111). Obviously, Ba Jin was still haunted by memory, which involved “a continual reliving of some wounding experience in daydreams and nightmares, flashbacks and hallucinations, and compulsive seeking out of similar circumstances” (Erikson 184). Such tension continued in one’s life, as Amélie Rorty states:

The continuity of the self is established by memory; disputes about the validity of memory reports will hang on whether the claimant *had as hers*, the original experience. Puzzles about identity will be described as puzzles about whether it is possible to transfer or to alienate memory (that is, the retention of one’s experience) without destroying the self. (89)

In order to continue with their lives, the victims of trauma had to suppress part of their memory of a certain past, otherwise the past was going to destroy them. The continuity of the self remained at the expense of the shutting down of some memory.

The process of healing for a traumatized group of people depends, to some extent, on the way in which the traumatic past is remembered. Monuments and museums function as a central location for the traumatized people to commemorate their past experience in order to come to terms with it. These memorials symbolize the public memory in artistic ways. James Young suggests that

the “art of memory” encompasses not just these memorials’ aesthetic contours, or their places in contemporary artistic discourse. It also includes

the activity that brought them into being, the constant give and take between memorials and viewers, and finally the responses of viewers to their own world in light of a memorialized past—the consequences of memory. (1993 ix)

Monuments are erected and memorials built so that people in a nation shall remember and never forget (3). It is for this reason that Ba Jin insisted on the importance of building a museum of the Cultural Revolution. It was needed for the sake of both the country's past and future. On behalf of himself as well as others he claimed that people need to try their best to prevent a second Cultural Revolution, which would "destroy the Chinese nation completely" (1988e 134-138). In spite of this demand by Ba Jin and other scholars, building a museum of the national trauma has never become a project for the Chinese government.

James Young comments on the function of museums to consolidate the collective identity of a nation by focusing on shared memories:

[A]ll societies depend on the assumption of shared experience and memory for the very basis of their common relations, a society's institutions are automatically geared toward creating a shared memory- -or at least the illusion of it. By creating the sense of a shared past, such institution as national memorial days, for example, foster the sense of a common present and future, even a sense of shared national destiny. In this way, memorials provide the sites where groups of people gather to create a common past for themselves, places where they tell the constitutive narratives, their "shared" stories of the past. They become communities precisely by having shared (if only vicariously) the experiences of their neighbours. (Young 1993 7)

As the government of a collective culture, the Chinese party-state might have seized the opportunity of producing reconciliation with the past by encouraging the public to form a shared memory of the Cultural Revolution. The party-state had not always opposed such a sharing of experiences. On the contrary, visitation of the past was one of the Party's strategies to fortify its power. The Party called upon people to remember the happy life it

had brought to them in comparison to their miseries under the previous governments.

Yiku sitian [recounting past miseries and thinking over present happiness] was one of the typical activities to raise people's revolutionary consciousness throughout the Mao era.

Among the numerous monuments and museums in remembrance of the Party's revolutionary struggles all over China, there stand in Tian'anmen Square the Chinese Military Museum and the Monument of People's Heroes, which students and visitors frequent in order to keep well in mind "the heroes' blood shed for the present happy life."²⁰ Yet while the memory of the Maoist victory was heroic and triumphant for the party-state, the ending of the Cultural Revolution involved unresolved problems. Blaming the national catastrophe on the Gang of Four was as far as the state could go.

Furthermore, since Maoist doctrines, as a guide for the PRC, were formed collectively as the party grew, the result of the re-visitation might have meant the denial of the Party.

Whereas for Holocaust remembrance "the number of monuments and memorials spaces" "reached into the thousands, with dozens more being proposed and erected every year" (Young 1993 ix), not a single memorial or museum of the Cultural Revolution has been built in the PRC, despite the efforts of scholars. This indicates how the government recognizes only a politically expedient or favourable past.

It seems ironic that the writer Zhang Kangkang could visit an exhibition of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in West Berlin but not in China. After her visit, she wondered:

It is impossible that we, the Chinese, will put up an exhibition like that, too. Why do we have to leave that to a German friend? Of course, what is more important is memory, not an exhibition. Perhaps, it is even not only memory,

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²⁰ This was a popular slogan at the time.

but a downward spiral digging, a painful confrontation, a relentless but thorough examination and rethinking of the self, of our nation, and of the culture of our nation. (Zhang Kangkang 1996 221-27)

Ba Jin's five volumes of *Random Reflections* are such a testimony. His writing shows his struggle to deviate from the Party's emphasis on looking forward to the future instead of looking back to the past.²¹ But "you cannot brush away the pain by giving something else," a survivor of the Holocaust comments on the memory of his people's persecution (Langer 52). The pain left by a tragic decade in China cannot be easily assimilated by the Chinese people. Ba Jin wonders whether China should cover up or expose its wounds and scars for the sake of patriotism:

Sometime ago, certain people were unhappy with novels and short stories like "The Scar," and therefore called them "Scar Literature." It is said that these works expose our own wounds and show our own shortcomings and hence mar our country's honour.... In my opinion, the unhealed wounds are more detrimental and terrible than Scar Literature. We must face reality, and not hide our illness and decline medicine.... Some people remain of the opinion that if one keeps silent, the wound can heal by itself. These people cannot face the fact that they too have their wound though they blame others for speaking out. (Ba 1988b 41-42)

Writing in his sickbed in his eighties, Ba Jin uttered his "powerless shout." In the Preface to the whole collection (1988), he says: "after speaking out the truth, I can leave the world with ease. I can say that these five volumes of *Random Reflections* are 'a museum' exposing 'the Cultural Revolution' built with true words" (1988e 220).

The builders of different sections of this imaginary museum include all Scar Literature writers. Whereas the Holocaust is remembered in every possible mode- - videotapes, monuments or museums, as well as literary narratives- -the Chinese national

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²¹ Some Chinese people interpreted sarcastically the idea of "looking forward" as "looking for money," because in Chinese, "forward" and "money" are homophones. The implication is appropriate because China is undergoing a transition from a planned economy to a market economy.

catastrophe is remembered mostly by testimonial writings. Scar Literature therefore carries a significant historical mission.

Before they summon up their courage to testify, people have to acknowledge the existence of trauma. In China, the awareness of trauma came along very slowly. Erikson notes that “[t]he collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with ‘trauma’” (Erikson 187). In the Chinese context, dealing with the collective trauma is even more difficult because people have not been encouraged to find ways to recognize trauma and thus to assimilate it.

After the Cultural Revolution and the trial of the Gang of Four, the Party reassured people that such a catastrophe would never repeat itself, and the focus of the whole nation would be on economic development instead of class struggle. As if awakened from a nightmare, the Chinese people were at first relieved and then rejoiced. But traumatic experiences could not be assimilated easily, since the Party did not make an effort to encourage people to tell and discuss their individual and collective trauma. On an individual level, life was no longer the same for the traumatized:

Traumatized people often scan the surrounding world anxiously for signs of danger, breaking into explosive rages and reacting with a start to ordinary sights and sounds, but at the same time, all that nervous activity takes place against a numbed gray background of depression, feelings of helplessness, and a general closing off of the spirit, as the mind tries to insulate itself from further harm. (Erikson 184)

After the national catastrophe, the majority of the Chinese people processed information about their country, especially information from the official media, very skeptically. They tried to make sure that there were no signs of a second Cultural Revolution coming.

Political caution dominated every aspect of their life. Yet writers of Scar Literature feel the urge to testify.

Testimony

In the present world, testimony has become “a privileged contemporary mode of transmission and communication” (Felman 17). “It has been suggested that testimony is the literary- -or discursive- -mode par excellence of our times, and that our era can precisely be defined as the age of testimony” (17). If testimony is so important in the present time, we have to ask the question: what is testimony? Dori Laub gives us the definition as follows. “The testimony is ... the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness; reconstitutes the internal ‘thou,’ and thus the possibility of a witness or a listener inside himself” (Laub 70). Shoshana Felman reinforces the point by analyzing the relationship between our time and testimony. We live in a post-traumatic age which has “survived unthinkable historical catastrophes” (Felman 1). Among them the Second World War is the biggest historical catastrophe, which still demands studying even after more than fifty years. In China, the Cultural Revolution, which lasted a decade, left Chinese people such a devastating trauma that it takes time and effort for them to come to terms with it. In this post-traumatic age, testimony becomes a means for people to acknowledge trauma and try to assimilate it. The “process of testimony” is “the process of bearing witness to a crisis or a trauma” (1). The witnesses bear a solitude before testimony, yet they feel the responsibility to give their accounts, because the testimony cannot “be simply relayed, repeated, or reported” by others “without losing its function as testimony” (3). Therefore, testimony is an act which

a witness of a traumatic event advances from silence to words. By turning the silence into verbal or written words, the witnesses address their testimonies to others. In this act, the witness is “the vehicle of” the event, “a reality, a stance or a dimension beyond himself” (3). In other words, the witness’ personal account of an event becomes an access to the event.

In an era of testimony, contemporary literary works often use testimony both as their subject matter and a medium of the literary transmission (5). Testimony acts as a mode to our relation to traumatic events of the contemporary history (5), including the Second World War and other war atrocities. Felman tells us that:

As a relation to events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference. (5)

Testimony tells parts of an event. The witnesses do not attempt to provide “a complete statement, a totalized account” of the events they explore. Crisis of truth makes testimony very central and “omnipresent in the recent cultural accounts of ourselves” (6). In short, testimony involves such issues as witnessing, truth claim, memory, and history.

This theorizing of testimony is relevant for my project because firstly, the people in the PRC have just survived a catastrophe which lasted a decade. Nowadays, they live in a post-traumatic state. Writers of Scar Literature confront this trauma courageously, and it is not surprising that they choose testimony as their subject matter as well as the mode for the literary creation. Secondly, knowing that there are not sufficient historical accounts of the Mao era, the writers feel the responsibility to fill the gap with their literary testimonies. The sense of historical consciousness urges them to take up the task

of recording history. Thirdly, the writers of Scar Literature are all firsthand witnesses of the historical events in the Mao era, including the Cultural Revolution, the Anti-Rightist campaign, and the Rustication movement. They feel the need to record their memory for themselves, for generations to come, and for the audience outside the PRC.

For the survivors of a traumatic event, Holocaust or the Cultural Revolution alike, the imperative to tell is one of the major motives behind testimony. In his article "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle" Dori Laub comments on this statement of a survivor: "We wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to tell our story" (63). While agreeing to the statement, Laub finds that the opposite is "equally true:"

The survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories; they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive. Here is, in each survivor, an imperative need to tell and thus to come to know one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life. (63)

This "imperative to tell" can become a task and burden on the survivor's mind. Also, the pressure of the task continues with the passage of time (63).

Involved in the task of testimony is also the impossibility of telling. Because telling is impossible, some survivors keep silent about the traumatic event. Fifty years after the Holocaust, some survivors feel that they have just begun the process of testimony (64). The years of silence did not give them peace and they became the victims of a distorted memory (64). "The longer the story remains untold, the more distorted it becomes in the survivor's conception of it, so much so that the survivors doubt the reality of the actual events" (64). Between the present everyday life and the memory, there exists the "loss of a sense of human relatedness" (64). Therefore, giving testimony is an act to

repossess one's life story. It is "a form of action and a change" to pass through so that "one can continue or complete the process of survival." The past traumatic event "must be reclaimed" because it remains a force affecting the survivor's life in the present (70).

Another motive behind testimony is the responsibility that survivors have. For example, writers of Scar Literature sensed a burden in their role as witnesses. They felt greatly compelled to record their experiences before Mao's death, but circumstances would not allow them to testify. Yet the responsibility they felt persisted. On the topic of responsibility, Felman suggests that

since the testimony cannot be simply relayed, repeated, or reported by another without thereby losing its function as a testimony, the burden of the witness- -in spite of his or her alignment with other witnesses- -is a radically unique, noninterchangeable, and solitary burden.... To bear witness is to *bear the solitude* of a responsibility, and to *bear the responsibility*, precisely, of that solitude. (15)

This experience is similar to what happened to writers of Scar Literature, including Zhu Lin (b. 1949), who could not unburden themselves so easily:

I witnessed and experienced many terrible things in the countryside [including the rape of female educated youth by local cadres], but all these could not appear in print. I felt that I should record them. I was very nervous and afraid. The things I had recorded obviously were not in accord with the policy of the time, nor was my writing style. They were entirely opposite to what the Gang of Four was propagating. If my writings had been discovered, I would have been labelled a reactionary. So I hid them here and there, and sometimes I got so nervous that I wanted to burn them. (Zhu 274-75)

Zhu Lin, although nervous and frightened about her own writings, nevertheless, belonged to the brave ranks of those people who felt a strong sense of responsibility as witnesses of a catastrophe and knew the importance of recording the truth. Her deeds resemble those of individuals who risked their lives in order to preserve the archives of the Holocaust:

Among them was David Graber, a 19-year-old worker, who notes on August 3, 1942: "We welcomed each new document with such joy! We were aware

of our responsibility. No, we were not afraid of the risk, conscious as we were of perpetuating an entire chapter of history, more precious by far than the life of a partisan.” (Wieviorka 25) ²²

An example of a *zhiquing* writer’s testimony is the short story “A Land of Wonder and Mystery” (1985), in which Liang Xiaosheng (b. 1949) depicts the death of three *zhiquing* when they were trying to open up land around Ghost Lake.²³ When asked whether this kind of incidents actually happened or not, he answered:

In the Great Barren North, two hundred *zhiquing* from my farm died tragically. Some were killed by wolves, some drowned, and some were killed while digging wells, dynamiting rocks, or cutting trees. Some died from exhaustion, and some even committed suicide, particularly after guns were distributed as military weapons. (Liang 118)

Thus, his short story is only a lighter version of a disastrous movement, in which talented youths lost their lives for the so-called “revolution.”

When the survivors have gathered enough courage to tell, other difficulties appear. It seems that “no amount of telling” can “do justice” to the “inner compulsion to tell” (63). When they convey their memory to stories, the survivor face the danger of losing the precision and the force of their memory. Words are not adequate to describe the traumatic experience. Survivors fear that

the transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory that allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one’s own, and others’, knowledge of the past, may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall. (Caruth 1995 153)

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²² In Michel Borwicz, *L’insurrection du Ghetto de Varsovie* (Gallimard/Julliard, Paris, 1966), p. 10, as quoted in Wieviorka (25). The original text goes as follows:

L’un d’entre eux, David Graber, un ouvrier âgé de dix-neuf ans, note en date du 3 août 1942: .... “Avec quelle joie n’avons-nous pas accueilli chaque pièce nouvelle! Nous sentions notre responsabilité. Non, nous n’avons pas craint le risqué, étant conscients de perpétuer tout un morceau d’histoire et cela vaut bien plus cher que la vie d’un particulier.”

²³ *Zhiquing* in Chinese means educated youth. The term denotes the youth who were sent down to the rural areas during the Rustication movement.

All these constitute the impossibility of telling. As to the survivors of the Cultural Revolution in China, censorship from the government adds one more obstacle to testimony. Unlike the victims of the Holocaust who could testify openly, for example, in the Yale University Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimony, the victims of the Mao era could only testify implicitly in their literary works.

As trauma slowly unfolded on a collective level, it started to surface in literary texts. Some elements of trauma were recognized and clarified in them, while conversely, such works as *Suixiang lu* [Random Reflections] and *Yinxing banlü* [The Invisible Companion] compelled readers to deep reflection. In this way, literary creation offered a space for people to negotiate trauma from different perspectives. Some writers started to call for the recognition of the trauma by exposing their own traumatic experience. Among them, Ba Jin was the most active and audacious. In his narrative of traumatic experience, he displayed his thoughts openly. By examining his own trauma and showing it to the public, he tried to awaken more people to admit the existence of a collective trauma. Ba Jin found it hard to examine his soul in depth after more than a decade of silence:

During my writing, I search constantly and come to know myself gradually during my search. I have to anatomize myself in order to know myself. Originally I wanted to alleviate my pain, believing that it is easy to anatomize myself. But in cutting my heart with a pen as a scalpel, I appear to be very awkward. I cannot start because I feel an intense pain. (1988e 211-20)

The wound could never be healed because of the shock and guilt. Few writers at this time dared to express their ideas so explicitly. There were several reasons for Ba Jin's outspokenness. Since he was in his eighties, he wrote his reflections as if he were leaving his will. He said that he could not die peacefully until he had uttered the truth. The late

1980s and early 1990s saw the loosening of the Party's grip on ideology, which explains the publication of *Random Reflections* in Beijing. Moreover, he occupied such an important position in the literary field that it was difficult to persecute him. That is why in his *Random Reflections* he could deal so overtly with such themes as humanism vs. animalism, the Cultural Revolution as an inferno, the exposure and the healing of the scar left by the individual and collective trauma, and the building of a Museum of the Cultural Revolution so that the Chinese people would learn the lesson from history. Intense shame was a widespread response, for the guilt of having given in to Maoist power and therefore perpetuating the Maoist system.

The collective trauma the educated youth suffered during the Rustication movement also worked into their awareness very slowly. Although the Rustication movement was generally called a man-made disaster, different interpretations persisted. Some *zhiquing* writers believed that, but for the experience from the Rustication movement, they would not have become writers at all (Zhang Kangkang 1994 236). Others depicted their experience nostalgically, after the disappointments and difficulties they encountered upon their return to the cities. Moreover, the nation's political situation at different periods complicated the slow process of recognition of the collective trauma. Most of the educated youth had "volunteered" to go to the sites of the Rustication movement. Besides the propaganda, some *zhiquing* writers in their early works had actually favoured the Rustication movement. For example, Zhang Kangkang's first novel, *Fenjiexian* [The Demarcation], actually praised the Rustication movement, when Chinese

literature was still tightly controlled by Maoist politics.²⁴ From the late 1980s on, however, Zhang has been explaining her views of the past consistently. From *The Invisible Companion* (1986) to her most recent autobiographical work *Chi tong dan zhu* [The Red World] (1995), one can trace a clear line of thought: the negation of the Rustication movement, of Maoist thought on revolution, class struggle, and socialism, and thus, of the essence of communism.²⁵

The effects of the collective trauma were examined in Scar Literature from various aspects. Some younger Scar Literature writers complicated the situation in their fiction. For example, Zhang Kangkang in *The Invisible Companion* questions what happens to individual behaviour when moral codes in the Cultural Revolution are no longer fixed. In other words, when authorities tell lies all the time, should an individual lie with them or should he/she rebel in an equally evil manner? In this case, trauma is experienced in a subtle but detrimental way. The individual encounters the collapse of a whole value system. The heroine in the fiction is one of the victims confused by changing moral codes. Although they created literary narratives from different perspectives, the writers of Scar Literature had the common aim to testify the man-made catastrophe so as to record the history of the Cultural Revolution. For the writers dealing with the Rustication movement, their task was to testify the event of the Rustication movement, which involved twenty million youth and lasted for a decade. On the whole, *zhiqing*

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²⁴ *Fenjiexian* [The Demarcation] (also translated as The Dividing Line) was published by Shanghai renmin chubanshe in 1975 (King 1991 332).

²⁵ The terms “socialism” and “communism” here refer to the concepts in the Chinese context.

writers termed the movement “a great waste of human resources,” “no doubt a big mistake,” or a man-made catastrophe (Leung xxii).

Whereas these writers recounted their experiences as victims, Zhang Kangkang deals with the “weakness of people” in her writing (1994 238). She prefers to write about “the spiritual dimension of *zhiqing* rather than their physical sufferings” (236). Still other *zhiqing* writers regarded their literary works as a medium for “examining the negative side of the Chinese national features in order to draw the correct lessons from this disaster” (Lu Tianming 123). Aware of the lack of open discussions of such issues as the Red Guard movement, the Rustication movement, the examination of Mao and Maoism, and the role of the general populace under the Maoist rule, *zhiqing* writers made an effort to fill in the gap with their literary works.

The catastrophe of the decade-long Cultural Revolution demands testimony in various forms, such as discussions, re-examinations, writings, recordings on tapes and videos. Just as in the West, “[a]ll the testimonies of the deportees [in the Second World War] respond to one imperative: to remember, not to forget” (Wieviorka 30), so some Chinese scholars set to the task of examining the Chinese race during the Mao era in order to prevent amnesia. The most active among them, Ba Jin, termed his experience of humiliation and persecution a decade of “ideological slavery” (1988c 48-55). His reflection was timely during the post-Mao era, when the public was facing a “crisis of truth” (Felman 17).

The writers of Scar Literature made great efforts to present history through their literary creation. Regaining their creative abilities proved to be a difficult process after a decade of sterile culture and enforced silence during the Cultural Revolution. In his 1981

article “After 20 Years of Silence We Lick our Wounds: Our Battle for a Place in World Literature,” Zhang Xianliang (b. 1936) writes that

during that 20 years of isolation, Chinese writers almost completely lost their opportunity for artistic development. Under the high-pressure and high-temperature treatment, we were cut off from the literature and art not only of the rest of the world but of China’s past. ... All that fortunate ones could do was write literature to order. Far from improving their artistry, it so restricted them that they lost all our individuality as writers. (1992 81-82)

Yet they lost no time to regain their individuality. Scar Literature came into being with the force of a volcano after a long silence. The fact that most of the texts chosen for this thesis were written during the 1980s shows this strong force.

When writers of Scar Literature embark on their task, they encounter the issue of truth claim. Taking “fact” as my point of reference, I will examine Scar Literature first as it appeared in the form of **autobiography**, which claims to be the closest to fact, then in **documentary fiction**, which is between fact and fiction, and finally in more purely **fiction**, which maintains the greatest distance from fact. I will argue that these three genres share in the problematizing of the dichotomy between fact and fiction.

Truth claim constitutes one of the common features of autobiography. The autobiographers’ conscience plays an important part in the construction of their narratives (Barbour 2), because autobiographers cannot reach the goal of autobiography without a strong conscience. Yet this does not mean that autobiography as a genre is not problematic. Since autobiographers are telling the truth of the past of the protagonists, there are two sets of conscience—one of the authors in the present and the other of the protagonist in the past. This constitutes one of the problematics of autobiography. Other problematics include timing of the narratives, the language an author prefers, and the

targeted audience the author has in mind while writing. Because autobiography is a kind of factually insisted narrative (Young 1988 15), it serves the purpose of testimony. While we acknowledge the aspect of “facts” in autobiography, we have to take into account such issues as narrative, configuration, and presentation. It is possible that “particular representations may have guided writers in both their interpretations of events and their worldly responses to them” (4).

Writers of documentary fiction employ the trope of the novelist as the witness on the one hand, and invoke poetic license on the other hand. In this way, they relieve themselves of “an obligation to historical accuracy” (Young 1988 53). They mix actual historical events with fictional characters. They convince readers that their narratives are true, because they write with the voice of persons who were there right at the sites of the historical events. Their presence functions like a camera, which produces the credibility of photos which readers are ready to accept. Numerous close links between the events the writers experienced and those described in their works demonstrate the authors’ claim, that their documentary fiction is history. Zhang Xianliang spent twenty-two years in labour farms and wrote several works of fiction based on this experience before the publication of *Nanren de yiban shi nüren* [Half of Man is Woman]. Similarly, Zhang Kangkang was one of millions of educated youth from cities sent to rural areas for rustication. She published another work of fiction based on the Rustication before *The Invisible Companion*. Chen Ruoxi (Chen Jo-Hsi) (b. 1938), asserted the factuality of her works after eight years of living in the PRC during the Cultural Revolution. By choosing the genre of documentary fiction, the authors assert their role of novelists as eyewitnesses, reinforcing the authority of testimony in their literary creation. In addition, the genre of

fiction grants a means to fictionalize what could not be said due to the political climate of the time period.

Postmodern fiction is still further removed from facts. It problematizes the possibility of presenting facts and recording history to an even greater degree. Writers of postmodern fiction employ paradox, ambiguity, and irony in their narratives. Postmodern fiction, “keeps its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge...” (Hutcheon 1988 106). Postmodern fiction “confronts the paradoxes of fictive/historical representation, the particular/the general, and the present/the past” (106). Introduced to China in the mid 1980s, postmodernism appears in three forms: “as a poststructuralist theoretical discourse, as an avant-garde intellectual rebellion against the modernist episteme, and as a contemporary consumer culture” (Wang Ning 25). Postmodern works in China include texts not only by writers in the PRC, but also by writers of stateless ethnicities around the world, who have asserted their own sense of Chineseness. Liu Sola (Liu Suola) (b. 1955) is one of the writers of the latter group. In addition to dealing with the shock of traumatic catastrophes and the dichotomy of past and present, writers of postmodern fiction are also concerned with wider issues, such as the local and the global, China and the West. I will argue that fiction which seems furthest removed from facts crystallizes traumatic experiences through their characters’ absurd obsession and the presentation. These works can give us a profound access to the history of the Cultural Revolution as lived experience, a traumatic history inaccessible through other modes.

The Scar Literature texts in these different forms or genres present, as I will show, a variety of versions of history. Each version contributes to the understanding of the

history of the Mao era. Every Scar Literature writer has a different story to tell, “not because what happened to so many others was intrinsically ‘different,’ but because of the way in which victims and survivors grasped and related their experiences comprises the actual core of ‘their story’” (Young 1988 38). My purpose here is not to show which group of writers in a certain genre produce more truthful narratives, but rather to display the interdependent relationship between facts and their presentations. On the same issue as it applies to Holocaust literature, James Young comments that

it is not a matter of whether one set of facts is more veracious than another, or whether the facts have been transformed in narrative at all. The aim of an inquiry into “literary testimony” is rather to determine *how* writers’ experiences have been shaped both in and out of narrative. Once we recognize that the “facts” of history are not distinct from their reflexive interpretation in narrative, and that the “facts” of the Holocaust and their interpretation may even have been fatally interdependent, we are able to look beyond both the facts and the poetics of literary testimony to their consequences. (39)

In their struggle with the dichotomy between fact and fiction, writers of Scar Literature had to face state censorship and self-censorship. The traumatic history of the Mao era posed such a massive psychic shock that the acknowledgement and examination of the trauma have been a painful and agonizing process. In their constant struggle with state censorship and self-censorship, writers of Scar Literature had to negotiate the politics of production and reception. In this respect, writers inside and outside the PRC faced different issues. In my analysis of Scar Literature, the binary of inside and outside the PRC will constitute the most important point of comparison, along with the following considerations: social class, specific location, and the ways in which events are described. What the literary texts under discussion have in common is the tackling of a traumatic

history. The writers of Scar Literature bring us close to the evocation of these traumatic events, which have almost exceeded the range of human experience.

Focusing on the comparison of the texts by writers **inside** and **outside** the PRC, we can see that these two groups of writers wrote differently because of their varied material conditions of production and reception. Firstly, writers in the PRC faced the possible danger of political persecution even though the Cultural Revolution was over. Their fear is justified if we consider the political campaigns during the Deng Era- - the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign (1984) and the Anti-Bourgeois-Liberalism campaign (1986-87). By contrast, writers outside the PRC did not have to be cautious of political persecution, especially when they had decided not to go back to the PRC. Nien Cheng (b.1915) and Chen Ruoxi were among them.

Secondly, writers in the PRC had to face a great deal of self-censorship. They had to imply what they intended to say to convey their meanings without incurring grave political charges. They had to negotiate between their personal voice and the political situation of the time; otherwise their works would not get published. By comparison, their counterparts outside the PRC could write without self-censorship and publish without government censorship. However, this did not mean that they could write without constraints. They were caught between their love of the motherland and their discontent with the Maoist political system under which they had suffered.

Thirdly, the two groups of writers faced a completely different audience, especially during the late 70s and early 80s. The audience for writers inside the PRC appeared to be numb in the post-trauma stage. On the one hand, this audience kept silent for fear of a second Cultural Revolution; on the other hand, they stayed inert with

skeptical questions such as: “If everyone has a traumatic story, what’s the point of telling it?” In contrast, writers outside the PRC faced an audience who welcomed informative texts about the Mao era. This audience was also furious at the abuse of individual rights, such as imprisonment without legal charges or sentences, as in Nien Cheng’s case. The audience inside the PRC was not aware of these Western liberal or democratic assumptions.

Fourthly, whereas writers inside produced literary texts within one culture and for the audience of that same culture; writers outside dealt with more than one culture. Inside the PRC, Ba Jin, a veteran writer in his eighties living in Shanghai, has been fighting a war against a national amnesia of the Cultural Revolution. His *Random Reflections* written in five volumes and first published in Hong Kong, explores the following major topics: humanism and animalism, the Cultural Revolution and “Inferno,” the building of a museum of the Cultural Revolution, and the dialectic between past and the present. In comparison, writers outside the PRC wrote within hybrid cultures, due to their self-imposed exile and their past education in the West; therefore, they analyzed issues such as the global and local, time and space, Oriental and Occidental, and trauma and memory.

In Chapter II, I selected three writers: Nien Cheng representing history from outside the PRC, Yue Daiyun representing history from a middle ground; and Chen Kaige representing history from inside the PRC. Although the historical events they present are the same, their narratives appear to be very different due to their chosen stances. Nien Cheng was born in China, went to university in England, and came back to China in the 1950s to work for Shell in Shanghai. She was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution on the unfounded accusation of being a British spy and her daughter was beaten to death

because she refused to denounce her mother. Nien Cheng left China after the Cultural Revolution, never to return. Nien Cheng's *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1986), one of the early informative autobiographies recounting personal experiences during the Cultural Revolution, criticized the policies in the Mao era in a very explicit manner. Cheng could do so because she was immune from any persecution of the government in the PRC. In her text, her concept of patriotism is separate from the loyalty to the Communist Party. Her attitude towards the Maoist Party cadres is condescending and, therefore, she always plays an upper hand in dealing with them. During her imprisonment she maintains a firm stance to fight for her innocence and integrity. Unlike the majority of the Chinese people, Nien Cheng defends her rights to privacy, which is a foreign concept for the Chinese culture at her time. In contrast with other people, she is not an obedient citizen. In short, she never belongs to the Maoist discourse community.

In comparison with Nien Cheng who based herself outside China when she wrote her book, Yue Daiyun (b.1931) represented history from a middle ground. Yue was educated in China and worked in Beijing University since her graduation. She came to the United States as a visiting scholar and her book was a by-product of her visit.²⁶ *To the Storm*, recounted by Yue Daiyun, written by Carolyn Wakeman, and published in the United States, presents the life of intellectuals under the Mao era. She believes that her life as a Chinese intellectual should be made part of the historical record of the period (Wakeman xviii). In her text, she participates actively in political campaigns and follows the Party's rules to be obedient and loyal. Even when she is wrongly accused of being a

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²⁶ Yue Daiyun is a specialist on Chinese literature and a comparatist. Her academic publications include *Intellectuals in Chinese Fiction* (Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, U. of California, 1988).

Rightist, she labours in rural areas without complaints and patiently waits for her rehabilitation. Yue's tone of narration is less accusative than that of Nien Cheng. At the end of her book, she expresses her confidence in the Party's ability to correct itself and lead the country despite her personal experience during the Mao era. The reason for this stand is that she could not abandon her own ideology since her upbringing was in China and she regarded China as her home. Moreover, she had no intention of staying in the United States permanently.

Unlike Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun's texts whose audience is Westerners, Chen Kaige's autobiography is written from inside China and for the Chinese audience. In *Long xue shu* [Dragon Blood Tree], Chen Kaige not only recounts his individual life as a youth growing up in the New China, but also aims to present a general picture of the Mao era by providing figures and dates of the events. In his autobiography, he shows us that patriotism and loyalty to the Party and Mao are inseparable for his generation. The love of Mao is a habit and it came before the love of one's family members. Chen Kaige examines the ways in which people accept Mao's theory blindly and worship Mao fanatically. Rather than focusing on details as Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun, Chen Kaige tries to provide an analysis of the Cultural Revolution. He also explores the cause for the nationwide violence, which results from the fear of expulsion from the community. Since Chinese culture is basically a collective one, the sense of belonging played a crucial part in people's lives. The purpose of his autobiography is leading people to look back and examine the trauma rather than exposing the details of the Mao era.

The three writers I have selected to compare in the genre of documentary fiction in Chapter III experienced the Cultural Revolution in different locations: Chen Ruoxi in a

university, Zhang Kangkang on a farm during the Rustication movement, and Zhang Xianliang on a labour farm. They present the Cultural Revolution from their own perspectives. Chen Ruoxi was born in Taiwan, went to university in the United States, and came to contribute to Socialist China at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. As a writer, she did not produce a single piece of work during her stay in the PRC. She managed to leave China before the Cultural Revolution and started writing down her experience in short stories and published them in Taiwan and Hong Kong. She unveiled everyday life during this period to her audience in Hong Kong and Taiwan who did not know the details about it. She could name one of her short stories “Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg” (1978). Writing and publishing in Taiwan from 1974, she did not need to censor her work. Had the story been published in the PRC, the title itself could have been an invitation for political persecution and been regarded as blasphemy. In China, one could criticize the Cultural Revolution but not Mao, its instigator. Because she was a writer from outside the PRC and wrote for the audience outside PRC, her tone and stance in her writing are different from those of Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang.

Zhang Kangkang writes about the youth during the Rustication movement and Zhang Xianliang presents the life of “criminals” on a labour farm. Both authors discuss the imprisonment of the characters in the novels. Zhang Kangkang depicts the youth whose identities get shifted from the Red Guards in cities to the educated youth in rural areas. The expectations for the youths to become socialist men prove to be too pretentious. Instead of living up to the ideal socialist men, some youths start drinking with local people, some become dishonest, some go mad, and some commit suicide. Similarly, Zhang Xianliang in his description of labour farm shows how people on the

farm are deprived of the right and opportunity to love and to live a decent life. In comparison with Chen Ruoxi, Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang had to find ways to get their meanings across, facing possible political censorship. For example, in *Half of Man is Woman*, Zhang Xianliang has to provide a horse with the ability of speech in order to drive his point home, and in *The Invisible Companion* Zhang Kangkang voices her opinions through “a liar.” Through their protagonists these authors ventured to ask the question: Have Chinese people progressed or regressed through the Cultural Revolution? Through the conversation between the protagonist and his horse, Zhang Xianliang announces the failures of socialist experiments. He also claims that intellectuals of the Mao era are castrated just as the horses for labour. In my analysis of the three authors in chapter III, I will demonstrate the different ways in which the three writers represented traumatic events.

The two writers I have chosen for the genre of fiction are Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang. Liu Sola, a musician and a writer, was educated in China. From the late 1980s, she began to live in a self-imposed exile in London and New York. As a writer from outside of China, she presents the Cultural Revolution through the life of some Chinese students studying and living in London, England. These students have to deal with not only the unassimilated trauma incurred during the Cultural Revolution, but also the displacement of living in a foreign country. Based in the West, Liu Sola is very much aware of such issues as the local and global, the Oriental and Occidental. In Liu Sola’s *Hundun jia ligeleng* [Chaos and All That], history is not static. Events happening at a certain time and place are beyond the characters’ comprehension even on that very scene and at that very time. It is almost impossible for them to recount them later, though the

traumatic events of the past remain a burden on their minds. For the heroine of the novel, the burden is so enormous that she cannot face reality unless the trauma is assimilated. The memories of the past cry out to be presented, and the heroine has to deal with them in order to face life in another part of the world. In her novel *Chaos and All That*, Liu Sola represents the life of survivors of the Cultural Revolution as fragmented, non-cohesive, and de-centered pieces. The situations of these survivors become more complicated because they have left the site of trauma; consequently, they are not only haunted by the old memories, but they are also experiencing the complexity of hybrid culture.

In comparison, Zhang Xianliang as a writer inside the PRC concentrates more on the issues inside China. Although Zhang's characters have the opportunity to travel in the West, they are observers of Western life and culture rather than active participants. By including Zhang Xianliang both in the genre of documentary fiction and postmodern fiction, I intend to show that some writers have deviated from the position of the firsthand witnesses to the position of fictionists who employ facts and imagination freely. The purpose for their deviation is to grasp the essence of the traumatic event and present it in their texts. In *Xiguan siwang* [Getting Used to Dying], Zhang Xianliang presents an execution ground in an absurd fashion, but his version of history writing demonstrates the essence of the age—chaos. Due to the loosening of state censorship, Zhang Xianliang as a writer inside China could write more freely than before. But that does not mean that he did not receive criticism from the Party authorities. Actually, he was investigated by the government for this book (Avery 1991 xi). In short, the postmodern novels discussed in chapter IV show a lot of similarities, despite the differences. The writers inside China

speak audaciously at the risk of criticism and investigation. In comparison, writers outside China do not have to take such possibilities into consideration.

Scar Literature writers not only exposed the traumatic events despite censorship, but they also broke through the Maoist literary discourse. After 1949, socialist realism became the dominant literary form. One of the key requirements of socialist realism was that literary works had to serve proletarian politics. Therefore, the subject matter of literature had to praise the political system, rather than criticizing it. Scar Literature ruptured socialist realism in two ways. Although realism was still the form used by most texts of Scar Literature shortly after the Cultural Revolution, they were no longer works of *socialist* realism. Writers of Scar Literature exposed the doubts, anger, and discontentment surrounding the Cultural Revolution in various ways. With regard to subject matter, they explored issues based on individual experience, rather than on the collective issues of the Mao era, i.e. class struggle or proletarian revolution. These texts raised question which had been long repressed by the Mao era, such as the value of the individual, the family bond, love, and friendship. Scar Literature texts of the late 1980s and 1990s explored a variety of literary forms and subject matter. Writers both inside and outside the PRC explored trauma and memory using postmodern techniques as well as other experimental strategies. Zhang Kangkang employed stream-of-consciousness in *The Invisible Companion* (1986), whereas Liu Sola dealt with her subject matter in a postmodern fashion in *Chaos and All That* (1991). Around the 1990s, Ba Jin wrote miscellaneous articles and prose pieces to explore the conditions, causes, and consequence of the Cultural Revolution. Whatever the genre the writers chose for their works, the aim of their literary creation remained the same, which was to testify. All of

the writers of Scar Literature were deeply concerned with issues such as humanity and inhumanity, remembrance and amnesia, trauma and healing, testimony and silence, victims and victimizers, and past and present. They wanted their texts to be received as testimonial proof of the national catastrophes. As victims under the omnipresent surveillance and fighters trying to break through the surveillance, Scar Literature writers managed to produce representations of traumatic history behind the iron curtain.

The following chart shows the literary texts I am going to analyze in the chapters to follow.

Literary Texts

Autobiography

Outside	Nien Cheng	<i>Life and Death in Shanghai</i>
Middle	Yue Daiyun	<i>To the Storm</i>
Inside	Chen Kaige	<i>The Dragon Blood Tree [Long xue shu]</i>

Documentary Fiction

Inside	Zhang Xianliang	<i>Half of Man is Woman</i> <i>[Nanren de yiban shi nüren]</i>
Inside	Zhang Kangkang	<i>The Invisible Companion [Yinxing banlǔ]</i>
Outside	Chen Ruoxi (Chen Jo-His)	<i>The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories</i> <i>[Yin xianzhang zhi si]</i>

Fiction

Outside	Liu Sola (Liu Suola)	<i>Chaos and All That [Hundun jia ligeleng]</i>
Inside	Zhang Xianliang	<i>Getting Used to Dying [Xiguan siwang]</i>

Chapter II

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS HISTORY

[T]he idea of the nation as *bios*, a living body, all of whose parts are vitally connected in a single whole, so that each part is in a way a miniature of the whole, related structurally both to the other parts and to the whole, also implied a vast expansion of the scope of national history.... The history of food and sexual practices, the history of medicine and ideas about the body, the history of the family—all these became part of the history of the nation, since they were continuous with each other and with political history.

Jules Michelet/Lionel Gossman

Autobiography and Autobiographer

Historically, the genres of biography and autobiography have had a long existence not only in the Western literary tradition, but also in the Chinese literary tradition. In Chinese literature, they go back to Si-ma Qian [Ssu-ma Ch'ien] (145 B.C.-90 B.C.).¹ In *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, he not only recorded the biographies of celebrities of the past, but also included his autobiography (Watson 3). In later dynasties, some writers incorporated their autobiographies in their essay collections. For example, Li Zhi (1527-1602) of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) had an autobiographical piece called "Zhuowu lun lue" in *Fenshu*. In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Shen Fu (1763-

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¹ Ssu-ma Ch'ien held the position of grand historian at the court of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (140 B.C.-88 B.C.).

1809?) wrote *Fusheng liuji* [Six Chapters from a Floating Life]; an autobiography mixed with the author's comments on the art of living, recreation and leisure, landscapes, literature and the arts (Lin Yutang 4).² Literary history also presents *Autobiography of a Chinese Girl* by Xie Bingying [Hsieh Ping-ying] (1903), published in Shanghai in 1948.³ This tradition of Chinese autobiography continued and, even before the Cultural Revolution, there existed works such as *Gao Yubao* by Gao Yubao (b.1927).⁴ In this autobiography, Gao compares his experiences prior to 1949 with those after, showing that the Communist Party provided people with a much better life.

Following the Cultural Revolution there have been autobiographies on the catastrophe in China, some of which trace history back to the founding of the Party in 1921. These works include *Ganxiao liuji* [Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School: Memoirs from China's Cultural Revolution] by Yang Chiang and *Chi tong dan zhu* [The Red World] by Zhang Kangkang.⁵ In the West, various autobiographies on Maoist China appeared; for example, *Wild Swans*, *Spider Eaters*, and *Mr. China's Son*.⁶ *Wild Swans* depicts the lives of three generations of women—grandmother, mother, and daughter. A large part of the book recounts the life of a family in Maoist China, including years of

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² Lin Yutang also translated the book into English: *Six Chapters of the Floating Life*, (Taipei xinlu shuju 1964).

³ Xie Bingying, *Autobiography of a Chinese Girl* [Nubing Zizhuan]. trans. Tsuichi. (London: Pandora, 1986). Reference: Bettina L. Knapp, *Images of Chinese Women "A Westerner's View* (New York: Whitston, 1992).

⁴ *Gao Yubao*. Beijing, (Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1955).

⁵ Yang, Jiang [Yang, Chiang], *Ganxiao liuji*. Hong Kong: Guangjiajing chuban gongsi, 1981. *Chi tong dan zhu* [The Red World] by Zhang Kangkang, (Beijing: Renmin enxue chubanshe, 1995).

⁶ *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991). *Spider Eaters: a Memoir* by Rae Yang (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997). *Mr. China's Son: A Villager's Life*. By He Liyi and Claire Anne Chik, (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview, 1993).

famine, the Anti-Rightist Campaign, and the Cultural Revolution. *Mr. China's Son* is an autobiography by He Liyi, who was of Bai nationality. Recounting his transition from a Rightist to a teacher, He Liyi provides an account of life in rural areas in China.

In this chapter of the thesis, I will examine three autobiographies on life during the Mao era- - *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1985) by Nien Cheng,⁷ *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman*, (1985) (recounted by Yue Daiyun, written by Carolyn Wakeman), and *Long xue shu* [The Dragon Blood Tree] by Chen Kaige (1993).⁸ The three texts fall into the genre of autobiography, with its various accompanying norms. Robert Folkenflik summarizes the norms of autobiography in his introduction to *The Culture of Autobiography*:

Autobiography has norms but not rules.

- It is usually but not exclusively in the first person.
  - It may be in prose or verse.
  - Autobiography may be truthful or mendacious.
  - Autobiography may also be ostensibly fiction.
  - Autobiography is usually written in old age, or at least in mid-life, but it may be written by the young.
  - Autobiographies are generally written by those who bear the same name as the protagonists of their narratives. But of course some have been written in collaboration with others or entirely ghostwritten.
  - Autobiographies are generally narratives about the past of the writer.
- (13-15)

Examining the three autobiographies against the above norms, we can see that they are all first person narratives and they are all written during the writers' old age or mid-life.

These autobiographies are narratives about the past of the writers, with a special focus on

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⁷ Nien Cheng puts her name in the Western way. Her family name is Cheng and Nien is her first name. Yue Daiyun and Chen Kaige's names are in the order of typical Chinese names—family names first. I refer to the names according to the authors' preference.

⁸ All the quotations from *The Dragon Blood Tree* are my translation.

the Mao era. In Nien Cheng and Chen Kaige's works, the author and the protagonist of the narrative bear the same name. In Yue Daiyun's case, the autobiography was recounted by herself and set down by Carolyn Wakeman, since the intent was to publish the book in English, which is not Yue's mother tongue. Written as a collaboration between the narrator and the writer, it still falls into the genre of autobiography. Although the three autobiographies all follow the norm, it does not mean that these autobiographies are not problematic. Autobiography itself as a genre is problematic, as Folkenflik argues:

Autobiography... is a highly problematic form (some would say genre) that encourages the asking of questions about fact and fiction, about the relations of reality and the text, about origins. Is autobiography to be found in referentiality, textuality, or social construction? Is there a self in this text? The subject is radically in question. (11-12)

Since autobiography as a genre raises these issues, it is impossible to study any autobiography without examining the relationship between fact and fiction, the selection of material by the author, the way in which the author chooses the material for the presentation, and the author's role as an informant, a self-examiner, and a writer of history. Moreover, because the texts under discussion target audiences of more than one nation, nationalism becomes a complicating factor. The author faces the task of how to present cases of the persecution of innocent persons by their own country or their own people. The authors therefore must speak from a certain moral standard that will convince their audience.

The three autobiographies in this study all explore the conscience of the autobiographer, as each of them has to maintain personal integrity in order to present a consistent narrative. In *The Conscience of the Autobiographer: Ethical and Religious*

Dimensions of Autobiography, John D. Barbour gives the definition of “conscience” and maps out its relation with autobiography:

Conscience refers to a person’s moral judgment of his or her own actions and character.... I define it simply as moral self-assessment. Appeals to conscience are autobiographical claims, first-person assertions about how one measures up to standards that may or may not apply to others. Conscience testifies about how moral principles, ideals, and aspirations pertain to one’s own character, and it encompasses the states of consciousness which result from applying these standards to oneself. Conscience is better interpreted as an act or function of the entire self than as a faculty or a separate part of the mind. As the act and process of self-assessment, conscience is inextricably bound up with many other moral concepts, such as ideals of character or virtue, feelings of guilt and shame, and the religious loyalties or ultimate concerns which shape a person’s identity. (Barbour 1)

As we can see from this quotation, an autobiographer’s conscience acts as a core function of the text. The actions of the protagonist are judged against the manifested conscience. The conscience is the focus of integrity showing where the autobiographer’s moral values, virtues, and principles are situated. In each of the three autobiographies under discussion, the autobiographers’ conscience often clashes with what present politics demands of them. Furthermore, the authors’ decision is often pertinent to the very imminent issue of survival.

Studying autobiographies, we are dealing with the conscience of the narrator and that of the protagonist. The conscience of the narrator comes into effect when the author writes the autobiography. Barbour argues that “the autobiography is not simply a description or report on how the author’s conscience operated in the past, but itself represents an act or exercise of conscience” (1). Conscience urges narrators to record their past experiences on paper. Nien Cheng opens the black curtain upon the Mao era and reveals its details to the Western audience from a personal perspective. For Yue Daiyun,

the conscience of a narrator encourages her to treat the representation of her personal experience as historic writing. As for Chen Kaige, the conscience of the narrator calls for the retrospective examination of his generation's experiences. The narrator hopes to find reasons for the violence of the mob and the behaviour of individuals during the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution.

During the process of writing, the narrator also explores the conscience of the protagonist at a particular moment, in order to find explanations for a particular behaviour. As a protagonist, Nien Cheng manages to keep her moral judgment at the cost of freedom and at the risk of her life. In contrast, Yue Daiyun has to suppress her own moral judgment and succumb to the higher power of the Party. The moment she promises to be absolutely obedient to the Party upon joining it, she surrenders part of her own moral values. Her narrative on the whole does not display keeping a moral standard, but hints at a way to manoeuvre between one's moral standard and the Party's policies. Chen Kaige's narrative shows how the youths growing up during the Mao era were deprived of their own moral self-assessment and acted according to the Party's instructions instead, because they did not have their own moral standard to which to refer in the first place. Considering that Chen's primary audiences are readers in China, we can see that his reasoning is most valuable, when people look to themselves for explanations of the dark age, because the government still discourages any retrospective examination of the Mao era.

The conscience of the biographer not only mediates between the author as protagonist and the author as narrator, but also contributes to the construction of the narrative. Barbour argues that:

The construction of a narrative is essential to the operation of conscience, as a person selects events as relevant for inclusion in one's story, characterizes oneself and other agents, locates the self in a community and culture, and construes how intentions, circumstances, and consequences of human action are linked and should be assessed. The act of imagining and fashioning a coherent narrative is a central function of conscience, both in its ordinary workings and in that unusually extended and articulate form of self-examination and expression we call autobiography. (2)

Barbour shows us the importance of conscience in the shaping of a narrative. The autobiographer's conscience plays a crucial role in the selection of material, the selection of the characters, and their places in a culture. For the texts under discussion, we can see that the autobiographer's conscience is at work when the author chooses to include certain incidents and exclude others, so as to make the narrative coherent. It also comes into play when an author decides to set out the chronological order and the extent of the details. The players the authors choose to include in the narrative serve specific purposes and the selection is a result of the exercise of conscience. The location of the self within a community and culture lies at the centre of the autobiographer's conscience. This issue is especially complicated in the cases under study, because each of the authors is located in a different place in the Maoist discourse community and in Chinese culture. The author's past education, family background, and political inclinations all come into play in the location of the narrator.

Conscience is also at work when autobiographers pursue truth in their narratives (12). As a truth claim constitutes one of the common features of autobiography, it becomes necessary to explore the relations between truth claims and autobiography.

Barbour comments on the relation:

The ideal of the truthful conscience decisively shapes the goal of truth-telling in autobiography. Truth has various meanings for writers: the capacity to face

evil, accurate reporting of past events, disclosure of the motives and intentions that explained public actions, or discernment of a pattern or significance in apparently random events. However understood, truth is usually linked to conscience. The writer feels not only an interest in but a moral obligation to search for and define his inner value or standing in relation to ideals. Invoked as the goal of autobiography and the standard for the writer's conscience, truth-telling is an incentive to discerning the self's identity and integrity or their lack. (12)

Here Barbour explores how the abstract concept of truth in an autobiography takes on concrete meaning. In tackling the past, autobiographers are obliged to report the past incidents truthfully and to examine past motives or intentions according to the issues of moral integrity described above. The three authors under discussion all pursue truth in their narratives. The imperative for Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun is to inform the Western audience about the truth of China in the Mao era. Chen Kaige attempts to disclose the motives and intentions that explain public actions. It is the authors' intention to present the events as accurately and truthfully as possible. All three authors feel the moral obligation to present their personal experiences and examine their standing in relation to truth. For them, truth-telling is an incentive to the presentation of the self. In his work *The Conscience of the Autobiographer*, Barbour also introduces a concept of the "moment of truth":

A particular significant aspect of autobiography as an exercise of conscience is the reconstruction of what may be called the "moment of truth." This critical passage in an autobiography presents a person's earliest (or first significant) memory of conscience. The term refers doubly to a formative event in a person's moral development and also to a "moment" we can construe within the autobiographical act when the writer discerns the paradigmatic place of this incident in his life. In the representation of this moment, the writer's conscience first "pronounces judgment" or "bites" with remorse or "whispers the truth." The metaphor used for conscience often determines the quality and significance of later moral experiences. (Barbour 14)

Chen Kaige's reaction towards his father in a public struggle meeting is a critical moment in moral development. At the age of fourteen, he learns to face the conflicts between natural family bondage and political affiliation. Yue Daiyun experiences a similar moral crisis when she has to swallow the dictates of the Party, even though she is confident of her innocence. She describes how her conscience yields to the absolute obedience demanded by the Party. This moment is the key to understanding events in her later life. As Barbour says: "The moment of truth is a paradigmatic event in an autobiography, when a writer dramatizes how his conscience first made significant moral judgments and presents this moment as a key to understanding later experience" (14).

In the analysis of the three autobiographies to follow, various issues relating to conscience arise, such as the character's ideals, virtue, feelings of guilt or shame, and religious loyalties. As a Christian, Nien Cheng maintains her own integrity, facing unfair charges and drawing strength from Christian faith. Chen Kaige carries feelings of guilt and shame typical of his generation. On the one hand, people of this generation can be seen as victimizers as they assumed the role of the Red Guard in the destruction of the Old World under Mao's sanction. On the other hand, the people of the same generation can be portrayed as victims of the Rustication movement, spending nearly a decade in exile in the most remote areas of China. Yue Daiyun experiences rapid changes of identity—from a Party Branch Secretary to a Rightist overnight. Yet she endures the most adverse situations in life while retaining hope for her future rehabilitation.

The three texts are simultaneously stories of success and stories of failure. Robert Folkenflik argues that "most autobiographies are successful stories.... Autobiography as the story of failure or tragedy is relatively unusual" (224). Yet the three autobiographies

under discussion all maintain both elements in their narratives. They can be regarded as successful stories only in the sense that the authors have survived the inhuman persecutions and treatments. Even during adverse times, the protagonists manage to retain their personal dignity, integrity, and moral values. The texts also celebrate friendship, and the heroic qualities of people. On the whole, however, all three of the texts are stories of the tragedy of individuals and families as well as the tragedy of the nation. In other words, they are personal testimonies of traumatic events.

Autobiography, History, and Testimony

An autobiography of a particular time can be regarded as the history of a nation. In Jules Michelet's opinion, a nation can be seen as a living body and the history of each family becomes part of the history of the nation (Gossman 1994 118). According to Karl J. Weintraub, it is only in the latter part of the eighteenth century that "the full view of individuality" emerged, with its dependence upon a "historical sense" (Weintraub 843). Some historians, such as Johann Gottfried von Herder, developed a new view on the relationship between history and the individual: "History was necessary so that men in succession might follow each other in ever-new formulations of their humanity revealing an ever-expanding panorama of human richness" (847). This relationship was termed "collective individuality" or "a collective historical organism" (847). Influenced by the historians of his time, a young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe "wrote his own life as the history of an individual" (847). He regarded his formation as the result of the interaction between the self and the world. His autobiography depicted both the history of an individual and the history of an age. His work had as its premise the notion that "history

of self and history of a world were inextricably linked” (847). From this time on autobiography gained a new “cultural form and function:”

The recognition of a strong historical dimension of all human reality and a modern mode of self-conception as an individuality for good reasons emerged in more coherent form of consciousness at more or less the same time. Autobiography in this context obtained a cultural form and function it did not have before. It became the literary form in which an individuality could best account for itself. The only way to account for a specific person was to tell its story. Self-conscious cultivation of individuality was the same as living in the world with historical consciousness of the world. (847)

In support of the argument that autobiography can be presented as history, we can examine the converse notion that history can be represented as autobiography. In his article “History as (Auto)biography: a Revolution in Historiography,” Lionel Gossman introduces Jules Michelet. To Michelet, history is the “re-presentation of the life of the past” (Gossman 1994 118). He also holds that the nation is a living body and each individual is a miniature of the nation as a unity (118): “J’avais posé le premier la France comme une personne.” (Michelet 1867 xxi). He regarded France as a living person, moving and breathing (Gossman 1994 111-12).⁹ Michelet’s view of the relationship between an individual and history contributed to the understanding of a nation’s history. He argued that each individual as a part adds to the living entity of a nation. The stories of a family and “the history of food and sexual practices” all become part of the history of the nation (Gossman 1994 118). Following Michelet’s concepts, I would argue that each

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⁹ Michelet says: “peuples, races, contrées, s’agencèrent de la mer au Rhin, au Rhône, aux Alpes, et les siècles marchèrent de la Gaule à la France. Tous, amis, ennemis, dirent ‘que c’était vivant.’ Mais quels sont les vrais signes bien certains de la vie? Par certaine dextérité, on obtient de l’animation, une sorte de chaleur. Parfois le galvanisme semble dépasser la vie même par ses bonds, ses efforts, des contrastes heurtés, des surprises, de petits miracles. La vraie vie a un signe tout différent, sa continuité. Née d’un jet, elle dure, et croît placidement, lentement, *uno tenore*. Son unité n’est pas celle d’une petite pièce en cinq actes, mais (dans un développement souvent immense), l’harmonique identité de l’âme” (1867 iv-v).

autobiography on life in the Mao era is a microcosm of the whole history of the nation during the Mao era. On the topic of the author's objectivity in writing history, Michelet insists that there are different opinions on the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. To him,

the historian's subjectivity was not an obstacle to understanding the object; on the contrary, it was a means, a passageway to the object, by virtue of the fact that in his Romantic view of the cosmos everything is continuous with everything else, so that the historian is in the end one with the object of his inquiry. The descent into the hidden depths of history is at the same time a discovery of the hidden depths of the individual psyche; the descent into the psyche is a discovery of hidden history. (117)

In this view, historical writing therefore becomes very subjective, while historians themselves are involved in the process of writing history. In the same vein, while the autobiographies of Scar Literature recount past experience, they simultaneously transmit the history of this past, especially when they consciously state the mission of testifying. For example, Yue Daiyun said that the life of an individual needed to be documented and become part of the historic record (Wakeman xviii). Just as the historian needs to possess the quality of imagination or the power of sympathy and identification with the other, so the autobiographer needs a sense of historical mission. These texts all produce a combination of history and autobiography, which is history-as-(auto)biography or autobiography-as-history.

The three autobiographies can be categorized as "factually insisted narrative" (Young 15). This kind of narrative generally results from "violent events and massive human suffering of the kind exemplified in wars and massacres, revolutions and counterrevolutions, plagues and earthquakes" (15). In the Chinese case, it is the revolutions that have stimulated the outpouring of the narratives.

This analysis will now concentrate on the poetics of the testimonies. In his exploration of writing and rewriting the Holocaust, James Young explains the term “poetizing:”

If we recognize this “poetizing” activity also as one of the bases of worldly praxis, then the issue here becomes not just “the facts” of the Holocaust, but also their “poetic”- -i.e., narrative- -configuration, and how particular representations may have guided writers in both their interpretations of events and their worldly responses to them. (4)¹⁰

In other words, the presentation of the facts also involves the shaping of the presentation, and the factually insisted narrative is composed subjectively. For the Chinese texts, we will examine the elements that determine the authors’ interpretations of the Maoist revolutions and their worldly responses to the revolutions. In addition to the exploration of elements such as the authors’ family background, education, the affiliation to the discourse community, and their display of heroism, the analysis will focus on the way in which the events are represented as well as the events themselves. We will probe the time and place of the testimonies and we will also regard the authors’ language, traditions, and worldviews as crucial elements in the shaping of the literary witness (Young 26). In every version of the Chinese national catastrophe, each author sees, understands, and witnesses the predicament differently, depending on his/her own historical past, religious paradigms, and ideological explanations (26).

The type of analysis used here is not meant to isolate literary efforts from the historical contexts, but rather to base understanding and interpretation on the combination

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¹⁰ James Young also quotes Hayden White to show the meaning of “poetizing.” White suggests: “contemporary critical theory permits us to believe more confidently than ever before the ‘poetizing’ is not an activity that hovers over, transcends, or otherwise remains alienated from life or reality, but represents a mode of praxis which serves as the immediate base of all cultural activity...” (Hayden White 126).

of literary and historical accounts. The purpose of this analysis is to achieve a better understanding of both the Chinese catastrophe, as it happened, and of its “history-as-it-is-written in literature” (Young 5). The aim here is to explore “the plurality of meanings” generated by these texts against the background of national catastrophe (Young 4).

I choose the three autobiographies with the purpose of representing typical groups of people. Nien Cheng exemplifies the group of intellectuals with Western education, who came back to serve their motherland following the founding of the New China (1949). Yue Daiyun typifies the group of indigenous intellectuals educated in China. Because this group witnessed the deterioration of China under the Guomindang (GMD) government, they strongly supported the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and were actively involved in the building of the New China. Chen Kaige belongs to the young generation born around the time of the founding of the New China. This generation experienced the Cultural Revolution in their teens and were subsequently sent to remote areas for rustication. Through their testimonies, the three autobiographers display their own involvement, persecution, disillusion, and hope during the national catastrophe. Although they are writing autobiography, they are also giving readers the recent history of China through their factually insisted narratives.

From ancient times until the present, Chinese culture, by and large, has emphasized harmony in the family and peace in the state. In the three testimonies under discussion, the authors present the rupture of this continuum of peace and harmony by the Maoist revolutions. James Young comments on this aspect of autobiography:

The eyewitness scribe, in particular, has aspired both to represent the sense of discontinuity and disorientation in catastrophic events and to preserve his personal link to events—all in a medium that necessarily “orients” the reader,

creates continuity in events, and supplants his authority as witness. As a result, the more violently wrenches from a continuum a catastrophe is perceived to be, the more desperate—and frustrated—the writer’s attempts to represent its events as discontinuous. (16)

Despite their frustrations, all three autobiographers narrate discontinuous events through their personal links to them. In Yue Daiyun’s case, it is the Anti-Rightist campaign that changes her identity, throws the relationships in her family out of order, and creates societal animosity. During the campaign, each intellectual has to hastily locate a target in order to protect himself/herself. Yue Daiyun’s husband comments on the situation: “‘Sometimes people act just like wolves towards each other,’ echoing a line from *Jean Christophe*” (Yue 5). In Nien Cheng’s case, it is the Cultural Revolution that shatters her career and her routine on the personal level and cuts off China’s link with the rest of the world on the social level. The violent event invades her elegant, luxurious, and highly cultured life. The foreshadowing of the Cultural Revolution comes with concrete actions from Party cadres such as an unexpected call at six-thirty in the morning (6), and spitting on the carpet- -“a declaration of power made in a gesture of rudeness” (7). In Chen Kaige’s case, the signs of the famine years in the early 1960s breaks the continuity of the dreams that he, as a teenager, has of a happy and promising life.¹¹ All the authors begin their narratives with foreboding indications of a major event that disturbs the routine of their lives.

As a witness of these catastrophic events, each of the authors tries to present what happens in such a way that the events themselves remain unmediated, unframed, and unassimilated (Young 16). In other words, the authors, as survivors, aim to present the

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¹¹ In the three years of famine between 1958 and 1962, “at least 30 million people” “starved to death” (Becker xi). See also pages 37 to 38 in Dali L. Yang.

factual narratives as “objectively” as possible. Yet the presentation of a historical event is associated with many issues despite the author’s wish to produce an objective narrative, because all writing or all composition is inevitably construction (17). Writers do not imitate the world, but instead, construct versions of the world (17). In the construction of the factually insisted narrative, various elements come into play. As researchers, we have to examine these elements in order to see how the narratives are constructed. When it comes to analyzing the autobiographies, the following questions should be borne in mind:

- When can the urge to present testimonies no longer be held back?
- Which language does a writer choose for his or her narrative—Chinese or English?
- Why does a writer want to present his or her personal experience?
- Since each author has a specific audience in mind, who is the targeted audience in different cases?

The Cultural Revolution was inarguably a man-made catastrophe which lasted as long as a decade—from 1966 to 1976. In the field of Chinese studies, the Cultural Revolution has been described as “a time of apparently senseless violence” and nationwide chaos, “a holocaust-like event” (Hayden White 8). Millions of people in the PRC were affected and injured to various degrees during or after the disaster. After the death of Mao (1976), the CCP admitted that the Cultural Revolution was disastrously launched by Mao following his theory of continuous revolution.

As we have seen in Chapter I, post-traumatic state features the belatedness of both the acknowledgement and the assimilation of trauma. During the traumatic event, the survivors are so involved in the catastrophe that they cannot understand the event. Therefore, their testimonies often appear much later than the ending of the event.

Autobiographies about the Cultural Revolution are such testimonies. Nien Cheng's *Life and Death in Shanghai* was published in 1986, a decade after the ending of the Cultural Revolution and six years after the author left the site of trauma- -Shanghai- -in September 1980. Moreover, the idea of writing an autobiography did not even come from the author but originated with a friend, as the author says:

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Peggy Durdin, a retired journalist and a dear friend of forty-five years. It was Peggy who first suggested that I put my experience down on paper when I visited her and her husband Tillman in their beautiful home full of oriental treasures in La Jolla, California, in the winter of 1980. (Cheng 488)

A greater lapse of time existed between the end of the author's period of trauma and the recounting of it in *To the Storm*. The book was published in 1985, a decade after the Cultural Revolution. However, what differentiates Yue Daiyun's case from Nien Cheng's is that, for Yue Daiyun, political persecution began in 1958 during the Anti-Rightist campaign, whereas Nien Cheng's ill treatment started at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. As for Chen Kaige, the lapse between the traumatic events and the writing of the events was about a decade.

Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun's autobiographies were written in English and published in the United States. Why did both authors choose to do so? We can examine the cases respectively. When Nien Cheng decided to write the book, she had already left China for good. She had no reason to write and publish in Chinese. Although she could have chosen her mother tongue, publishing her book in the PRC was out of the question. No publishers would be willing to take the risk of publishing a personal narrative full of blatant criticisms of the Mao era. In order to reach a Chinese audience, the author would have had to censor her writing from the beginning. This situation persisted for the

mainland Chinese writers even in the 1990s. For a book like *Life and Death in Shanghai* to appear in the PRC, where censorship in the publishing field was ubiquitous, it had to undergo a lot of changes. Also, for a nation that had gone through a catastrophe that involved everyone, who was interested in listening? Everyone had a story to tell, but most people preferred to keep the sense of pain numb, instead of re-activating it. By contrast, Western audiences seemed to be the right target, because the West tended to welcome any information about the PRC, which had by then kept its doors closed for about a decade. By publishing in the West, the book could definitely attract a lot of sympathetic liberals and humanitarians.

English was most certainly the right language with regard to Nien Cheng's testimony. She clearly addresses her targeted audience in the epilogue: "I felt a compulsion to speak out and let those who have the good fortune to live in freedom know what my life was like in Communist China" (488). Although Chinese was Nien Cheng's mother tongue, English was the language of her ideology. The final phase of her education- -at the London School of Economics- -was conducted in English. Her career demanded the use of English, firstly as the wife of a diplomatic officer of the GMD government in Australia, then as the advisor to the management of Shell International Petroleum Company in Shanghai. English was also the language of her religion, as she showed candidly by expressing her Christianity (46) and she described her recital of Psalms from the Bible at difficult times in her life (111).

In comparison to Nien Cheng's testimony, Yue Daiyun's case is quite different in her use of language. First of all, Yue Daiyun could not write her own book in English, although she possessed reading skills in English. That is why the subtitle of the book

reads "Recounted by Yue Daiyun; Written by Carolyn Wakeman." Following her education and career, we can see that she majored in Chinese language and literature and that her career consisted mostly of teaching in the Chinese Department of Beijing University. Unlike Nien Cheng, Yue Daiyun was not an Anglophile and tended to believe the Chinese government's propaganda about patriotism. As she herself says:

During those impressionable years [1940s] I observed the behavior not only of GMD officials but also of their American allies, those foreign soldiers who seemed to me unbearably offensive as they waved beer bottles and shouted, "Yield!" when their jeeps drove through our city streets. How can they act that way, I often thought; this is my country. Sometimes they would pick up local girls and take them for rides in their jeeps just for fun. ... [F]rom the age of thirteen I always hated Americans.... The details of the American soldiers' behavior may well have been exaggerated, but I was young and filled with outrage at the insult to my friends. Already in those years I had begun to believe that the hope for our future lay in the north with the Communist Party. (Yue 17)

Forty years later, she decided to have her testimony written in English, when she was a visiting linguist on the Berkeley Campus of the University of California. It took her several decades to understand communism in the Chinese version presented by the Party and to get to know people of the world, including Americans. During her stay in the United States which lasted from 1982 to 1984, she figured that a Western audience needed more information, including personal accounts, with which to understand the PRC. Her major purpose in writing the book was to educate Western audiences through her personal account. According to Wakeman, Yue Daiyun

wanted to use her stay in the United States to write a second book, one that would tell her own story. Troubled that the experiences, the motivations, the responses of intellectuals during the thirty years after Liberation were not always accurately perceived abroad, she hoped to contribute to a fuller understanding of China in the West. (Wakeman xviii)

That is the reason why she chose English as the language of her book. In addition to this major purpose, she also wanted her book to be beneficial to later generations in China:

At the same time, she believed that the life of a Chinese intellectual needed to be documented outside the realm of fiction, to be made part of the historical record, so that future generations at home could know, and consequently judge, the events of those three tumultuous decades. With our mutual goal the illumination of China's recent past, we decided, hesitantly at first, to proceed. (Wakeman xviii)

Yue Daiyun's purpose in writing the book coincided with that of Nien Cheng's insofar as they both wanted to contribute to the knowledge of Maoist China in the West. Although Nien Cheng did not state her intention to have her personal narrative serve as a historical record for later generations, her testimony has been read by many Chinese overseas of all ages since its publication.

Chen Kaige's autobiography was the product of a specific period of time. In the late 1980s before the Tian'anmen Square Incident, the political atmosphere was comparatively relaxed. The government transferred its attention more to economics than to politics. Accordingly, state censorship loosened and the cultural market teemed with translations of Western works on philosophy, culture, and literature. At the same time, writers ventured to speak out more about experiences they had hitherto refrained from expressing. That is why Chen could comment more openly on the politics of the Mao era. In comparison with the other two biographies, Chen's text focuses more on the state and community, in addition to the record of personal experience. The structure of the book does not follow chronological events on a personal scale. Rather, it tries to focus on the highlights of the age. The chapter titles illustrate these highlights: [Mao's] Paradise, Descendence, Mobs of Gods, Mad Dust, and Blue Mountains.

An indigenous artist, Chen wrote his autobiography in Chinese. His text was undoubtedly intended for the audience in the PRC. He did not need to advertise his autobiography, because he had established himself as one of the celebrities in the PRC. As a film director, some of his films, such as *Huang tudi* [*Yellow Earth*] (1984), *Da yuebing* [*The Grand Parade*] (1986), and *Bawang bie ji* [*Farewell my Concubine*] (1993), won various prizes at international film festivals: the Golden Palm for *Bawang bie ji* in 1993's British Academy Awards, the Silver Leopard Prize for *Huang Tudi* in 1985's Locarno International Film Festival, and the Jury Prize for *Da Yuebing* in the Montreal World Film Festival in 1987, to name just a few. Because of his social status, he could write his autobiography in Chinese, knowing that it would probably be translated into other languages and, in time, introduced to the West. Actually, the Japanese version proved to be very popular in Japan and was hailed as one of the "best biographies of 1989" (Chen, back cover). However, his autobiography narrated the period of his life before he became a film director—from his teenage years to his years during the Rustication movement.

Autobiography satisfies the writers' attempts to maintain a personal link to the disastrous events and helps them convey a sense of factuality to their audience. At the same time, they were also aware that once written, the trauma of the unassimilability would be relieved. By testifying to their trauma, the writers expected to come to terms with the past in order to face the future. Lawrence Langer outlines the teleology of testimonies as follows: "In fashioning a consecutive chronicle survivors who record their accounts unavoidably introduce some kind of teleology, investing the incidents with a

meaning, be it nothing more than the value of regaining one's freedom" (Langer 40). The survivors of traumatic events testify in order to be liberated from a hideous past.

Although the purpose of the three autobiographies was more or less the same, that of testimony and retrospection, the stance from which the literary witness is presented happens to be quite different. The situation of the Chinese autobiographers resembles that of the Holocaust diarists and memoirists. James Young comments on the latter as follows:

In addition to time and place, the diarists' very language, traditions, and world view played crucial roles in the making of their literary witness. It may always be difficult to distinguish between the archetypal patterns the ghetto diarist has brought to events, those he perceived in or inferred from them, and those that exist in his narrative.... But each victim "saw"—i.e., understood and witnessed—his predicament differently, depending on his own historical past, religious paradigms and ideological explanations. (Young 26)

In other words, although a historical event remains the same, each writer presenting the event provides a different version of the event, due to the writer's personal orientations.

As for the Chinese autobiographers, many factors contribute to the different stance during the catastrophe and the different way in which each author chooses to present the catastrophe. Now we turn to examine some of the differences, including each author's location in the community, with respect to patriotism, subjectivity, friends and identity, departures and returns, and heroism.

Life and Death in Shanghai: Testifying Outside China

Life and Death in Shanghai was written after Nien Cheng left the PRC for good. Because of this fact, it differs from the other two autobiographies discussed in this chapter. Nien Cheng did not have to face state censorship and she was free from political

persecution inside China. She wrote for the audience in the West, who welcomed detailed information from behind the “iron curtain.” Her traumatic experiences during the Cultural Revolution are typical among the people who had “foreign connections,” i.e. those who had studied or worked abroad or those who had relatives abroad. Because of the propaganda against Western imperialism and Soviet revisionism in the PRC, these people were regarded as enemies of the country and therefore were degraded to the status of outcasts during the Cultural Revolution.

Nien Cheng does not belong wholly to either Chinese culture or British culture, because of the hybrid nature of her upbringing and education. She experiences her first departure around twenty years of age, when she leaves her native land. Her other departures have a much greater impact on her life, so much so that the first departure is not described at length in her text. Yet the information given on the cover of the book provides readers with the phases of Nien Cheng’s life:

Nien Cheng was born in [Beijing] in 1915. After studying at the London School of Economics in 1935, she married a Chinese diplomat, and from 1941 to 1948 they lived in Canberra, Australia. Following the Communist Revolution her husband became general manager of Shell in Shanghai until his death of cancer in 1957. She herself then became Shell’s Adviser to management from 1957 to 1966. Nien Cheng left China in 1980. She now lives in Washington D.C. (Cheng, cover)

But the very first of her departures from the motherland creates a remarkable difference between her and her contemporaries, most of whom have never been to other countries. The acquisition of the English language and culture renders her “a passionate anglophile and fluent English speaker” (Cheng, cover). Because of her formation in the West, with its stress on individuality rather than conformity, she has a different worldview than other Chinese of her time, who tend to easily succumb to authority in the Mao era.

The most noteworthy of her returns to the motherland is that of 1949 when she brings her daughter back to the PRC in response to her husband's request (486). Her action shows not only her attachment to her homeland but also a considerable faith in the new government. She is one of many intellectuals living in the West who answered the People's Government's call to return in order to assist in the construction of the New China. Unfortunately, the intellectuals do not have sufficient information about the CCP and neither do the intellectuals in Shanghai at that time. According to Nien Cheng,

[i]n those days, because of the Kuomintang [GMD] blackout of all news about the Communist area, very few Chinese living in Shanghai had any real understanding of Marxism, the Chinese Communist Party of Mao [Tze-tung]. Almost no one knew about the persecution of intellectuals carried out in Yanan in 1942 or the periodical witch-hunts for "spies of the Kuomintang [GMD] and the imperialists" in the Communist Party and Army. The only source of information for Chinese intellectuals about the Chinese Communist Party before 1949 had been the glowing accounts written by some western journalists and writers who made fleeting visits to the Communist-held area of China. (21)

As idealistic liberals, intellectuals of the time, whether residing at home or abroad, believed in the CCP's promise of "peaceful national construction, of a united front including all sections of Chinese society, and of a democratic form of government" (21). Their disappointment with the corrupted and weak government of the GMD at home, or the discontent of living in foreign countries, reinforced their belief in the new government. As it happens, Nien Cheng's decision to return indirectly results in her own house arrest and imprisonment, and her daughter's death. She cannot help linking them together:

It was I who had brought Meiping back from Hong Kong in April 1949, in response to my husband's request. The shocking tragedy of her death, I believed, was a direct consequence of our fatal decision to stay in our own

country at that crucial moment of history. Therefore I felt guilty for being the one who was alive. (486)

She finally chooses to leave her motherland and seek freedom in a foreign country.

Although it is a voluntary choice, it is painful. Despite her education in England and the years she has spent abroad, she is Chinese both in her person and in her cultural formation. We could also say that her choice is a forced one, because her own country deprives her of freedom that is one of the basic tenets of her value system. As she says:

Also I felt sad because I was leaving forever the country of my birth. It was a break so final that it was shattering. God knows how hard I had tried to remain true to my country. But I had failed utterly through no fault of my own. (486)

It is a dilemma that Chinese people in exile continue to face, generation after generation.

In a way, Cheng still regards herself as a Chinese, and she mentions Chinese culture and customs very often in her text. For example, shortly before she leaves the PRC for good, she expresses her attachment to her motherland:

In spite of all that had happened, I was sad to leave China never to return. All Chinese have this feeling of attachment to our native country. No matter how far we travel or how long we are absent, eventually we want to return to die in China. "The fallen leaves return to the root," we call it. (484)

Nien Cheng here presents herself as a patriot of her motherland in a broad sense.

According to her, she and her husband, among their friends and relatives, belong to the patriots who have answered the Chinese government's call to return to the PRC:

One of the outstanding characteristics of educated Chinese of my generation was our keen sense of patriotism, born of our knowledge and experience of the outside world and our concern for China's comparative backwardness. We were acutely conscious of the fact that China's recent history was the record of a great civilization which had been in steady decline for a century. In fact, it was the naive belief that the Communist Revolution might provide China with the impetus for progress that led so many of us to remain in, or go back to, China around 1949. (254)

But no matter how hard she tries to prove her patriotism to China, she will not be considered as patriotic by either the Party or the government. She herself knows that her definition of patriotism is different from that of the government of the time:

[T]he Maoists confused the concept of nation, which means “people having common descent,” with State, which means “an organized political community under one government.” If a man had made an important scientific or artistic contribution to China’s cultural life before the Communist Party came to power, he was supposed to have served not China, but the [GMD] regime. Therefore, he was guilty of helping to sustain the rule of the enemy. (254)

According to this logic, Nien Cheng’s husband could have been easily labelled as an enemy, due to his service in the GMD government. Luckily, her husband died of cancer before the Cultural Revolution and so was spared its persecution.

Although she considers herself a patriot, Nien Cheng certainly does not regard herself as one of the loyal subjects of the Party and the Chinese People’s Government,¹² which are treated as a unity. Ironically, her husband served for a short time as an officer of the communist government, despite the fact that he had been a diplomatic officer of the GMD government.¹³ A year later, “he was allowed to leave the People’s Government and accept the offer from Shell International Petroleum Company to become the general manager of its Shanghai office” (4). We can see here that he is “allowed,” not “assigned,” by the government, which underscores the nature of the relationship. The author adds that, “[b]ecause Shell was the only major oil company in the world wishing to remain in

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¹² Throughout her book, Nien Cheng uses the term People’s Government to denote the Chinese government after 1949.

¹³ Shanghai was taken over by the CCP peacefully. When the Communist representative took over his office, he invited Cheng’s husband to remain with the new government during the transitional period as foreign affairs adviser to the newly appointed Mayor of Shanghai, Marshal Chen Yi. (Cheng 4)

mainland China, the Party officials who favoured trade with the West treated the company and ourselves with courtesy” (4-5). The author lumps the company (Shell) and “ourselves” together as opposed to the “Party officials,” therefore the author and her husband belong at that time more to a foreign company than to the subjects of the party-state. The use of the word “courtesy” implies a host-guest relationship in which the couple and Shell are guests, whereas the People’s Government is the host. Incidentally, Nien Cheng is again treated as an honourable guest after her rehabilitation. After the ceremony of her donation of antiques to the Shanghai Museum, the People’s Government of Shanghai organizes an elaborate dinner party because it wants to put her “in the right frame of mind” (466):

I thought their giving me the same treatment usually reserved for foreign government visitors of senior rank was mainly because I had applied to go abroad. They wanted me to leave Shanghai with a good impression of the government after Mao. (466)

Once again she is regarded as a guest in her native land.

As discussed in the introduction to the present thesis, the PRC under Maoist rule is actually a big discourse community, in which everyone has a place. Nien Cheng, because of her particular educational background and career, is excluded from the discourse community not only by the party-state, but also of her own free will. From the very beginning of the book, we can see that she has a unique life style which differs from the majority of people in the PRC. She lives with servants and a cook in a house full of antiques and luxurious furniture. Her home stands in sharp contrast to the surroundings in Shanghai. As one of her English friends says, it is “an oasis of comfort and elegance in the midst of the city’s drabness” (3).

Because she enjoys so much prestige, Nien Cheng regards herself as superior to most of her countrymen. She knows that she has refinement in life: "I had spent time and thought to make it a home and a haven for my daughter and myself so that we could continue to enjoy good taste while the rest of the city was being taken over by proletarian realism" (3). Outwitting the Party cadres is another feature contributing to her sense of superiority. After she is out of prison but still under surveillance, she tries to do things in her own way. This shows that she does not really want to belong to the community but would rather try to maintain the upper hand during the various psychological games. For example, when Liu Hing, who claims to be her daughter's friend, is sent as bait to make her show her resentment to the Party, she cross-examines him- asking him to point out her daughter's close friend, Chen Lan, from a photo, and demanding to see his work-pass. After laying bare Liu Hing's scheme, she orders him out of her door as follows:

"Liu Hing, I forbid you ever to come to see me again. I have 'foreign connections' and have been wrongfully accused of being a spy of the imperialists. As a scientist at a factory doing confidential work, you have committed a serious mistake by coming to see me. When you go back to your factory, you must report to your Party Secretary at once and confess your mistake. You must report to him exactly what you said to me and what I said to you." (401)

Numerous incidents like this happen after her imprisonment, but each time she seems to be able to see through the opponents' tricks thanks to her intelligence.

Moreover, Nien Cheng has other attributes that differentiate her from her countrymen. It is one of the historical characteristics of Chinese people to be meek and resigned when dominated by a strong governing authority. In ancient times, the authorities were the emperors, while in modern times the authorities turn out to be the government of various time periods. In the institution of a family, children are always

supposed to be meek and resigned to their elders. It is easy for any government to demand its subjects to be meek and resigned, because a nation is considered in Chinese as *guojia*- -a state family (*guo* means state or nation and *jia* means a family). Yet obviously Nien Cheng does not behave according to the code and has to be reminded time and again that she should “try to be meek and resigned” (414).

Another element which excludes Nien Cheng from the discourse community is her point of view on privacy, despite her experience in prison. When she once again has a home, she thinks that she can keep away unexpected visitors. To do this, she sends Ah-yee home in the afternoons,¹⁴ and places a notice at the door: “Because of advanced age and indifferent health, I need rest. Visitors without previous appointment will not be admitted. Representatives of the government on official business are welcome any time” (404). Her student Da Teh comments on her actions:

“Look at that notice you put down there outside your door. Nobody in China does a thing like that. A man’s home may be his castle in England but it isn’t the case in China. When you don’t allow people to come to see you freely and you send Ah-yee away in the afternoons, naturally people wonder what you are up to.”¹⁵

In her opinion, her small apartment, even though assigned by the government to her after her imprisonment, belongs to herself and no one else. In spite of her experience in prison, she has not been disciplined so as to conform to the party-state and to be obedient to its loyal followers.

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¹⁴ Ah-yee is the usual way to address a female help in a household in China.

¹⁵ We can see that the author is subjective when recounting the incident. Her student Da Teh, even with his knowledge of English at that time, could not be so familiar with Western culture as to say that “a man’s home may be his castle in England.” The author here might be projecting rather than recounting.

Nien Cheng's attitude towards the Maoist revolution and the Party's loyal followers can also be a factor contributing to her status as an outsider of the discourse community. Mao's victory in 1949 declared the nature of the state to be a proletarian dictatorship. Because the victory depended largely on the participation of the Chinese peasants, most of these peasants became officials of the Chinese government after the founding of the PRC. In Nien Cheng's eyes, these Party cadres lacked sufficient education and ability in their jobs. During the anarchy of the Cultural Revolution, leadership on various levels worsened, because the officials with "too much education" were condemned and officials with humanistic tendencies persecuted. The rest gained and maintained their power and authority due to people's fear of them rather than any particular ability. Years of political struggles hardened their hearts and minds, and humanitarian values came to sound foreign to them. They demanded respect from the people under them to secure their authority. They can never get any respect from Nien Cheng however. According to Da Teh, these authorities feel quite uncomfortable with her.

"Do you realize there are some people in positions of power who hate your guts? You make them think you despise them. They want to be looked up to, feared and respected. But they think you laugh at them. Why don't you hide your contempt for them and just take it easy sometimes?" (414)

Because of the fear generated from the various political campaigns, most Chinese people remained meek and resigned to these authorities in the Mao era, but not Nien Cheng. Her unbreakable spirit and her adamant denial of any guilt or crime show her zero respect for these authority figures. Instead, she despises them through and through. Once during her

interrogation, the interrogator is even frightened by her stare and shouts at her. At the sight of the interrogator,

I was looking at this well-dressed but rather stupid young man intently, wondering how he could have failed to realize that I laughed merely to break up his carefully arranged meeting. Suddenly he stood up and shouted in an excited voice, "Bow your head! Bow your head! I won't let a class enemy stare at me with eyes like a pair of searchlights!" (236)

From her wording, we can see Nien Cheng's lack of respect by her referring to the interrogator as "a rather stupid young man." Even though she is in a very disadvantageous situation, in prison, she means to disturb the interrogator's "carefully arranged meetings" with her uproarious laughter (233). Her actions clearly show her contemptuous attitude towards the Party cadres.

Before her imprisonment, she outmaneuvers the Party cadres on several occasions by her intelligent strategies. In the beginning weeks of the Cultural Revolution, the violence and vandalism of the Red Guards are rampant throughout the nation. Answering to Mao's call to destroy the Four Olds- -Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs, and Old Habits- -, they tear down Daoist and Buddhist temples, search the houses of whomever they consider enemies, and conduct violent "revolutionary deeds" which overturn the order of everyday life in the whole nation. Anne F. Thurston comments on the situation: "The homes of those under attack during the Cultural Revolution were raided and often occupied by the 'revolutionary rebels,' their possessions removed, stolen, or destroyed" (Thurston 1988 115). The idea of house search was not new, but a search by young people without warrants was the first time in Chinese history (116). Thurston says that

[t]he house search (*chaojia*) was not new to China's Cultural Revolution. In traditional times, under dynastic rule, the homes of accused and discredited officials about to be arrested, exiled, or executed were also subject to search

and to seizure. The house search was used to provide evidence against the accused, and when it was complete, the personal property of the accused was either sealed with *Fengtiao* or stored in official warehouses.... In traditional times, however, authority, even when grossly abused, would never have been vested in the young. It was the young Red Guards of China's middle schools and universities who conducted the house searches of the Cultural Revolution. *Lord of the Flies* may be a universal statement of what the unguided, unsupervised young can become, but China is one of the few places where the nightmare has become true in fact. (116-17)¹⁶

This is what happens to Nien Cheng one day when the Red Guards come to search her house. As they are destroying her antiques, Nien Cheng tries every means to protect her cultural treasures. After her plea has gone in vain, she decides that if she wants to communicate, she must speak the language of the Red Guards (Cheng 58). She successfully prevents the Red Guards from destroying all her antiques by concentrating on the grand scale of the Cultural Revolution:

“I saw a placard saying , ‘Long Live World Revolution.’ You are going to carry the red flag of our Great Leader Chairman Mao all over the world, aren’t you?”...

“Don’t you realize all these things are extremely valuable? They can be sold in Hong Kong for a large sum of money. You will be able to finance your world revolution with that money.”...

“You can sell them or give them to the Museum, whatever you consider right, according to the teachings of our Great Leader.”
(70)

Her use of the Red Guards’ revolutionary vocabulary works well, and she manages to save parts of her collection as a result.

The friends around Nien Cheng also reinforce her sense of superiority in the culture and contribute to her identity. Chinese society throughout history has emphasized conformity and collectivity, and individualism has not yet gained enough ground so as to

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¹⁶ *Fengtiao* are room seals, which during the Cultural Revolution, “were two long narrow paper strips pasted in an X over the door and bearing the date and time of closure,” the name of the organization “responsible for ordering the room secured,” and the official seal (Thurston 1988 115).

be an important factor in people's lives. During the Cultural Revolution, "individualism" was considered as the equivalent of "selfishness" or "the self-centred." Because of the stress on collectivity in society, friends around a person play a significant part in this person's identity. They indicate the social circle or community in which one lives.

Examining this aspect, we can find that Nien Cheng has two groups of friends. One group includes the Chinese who have had their education abroad and returned to serve China; and the other group consists of the foreign officers and diplomats with whom she has become acquainted during her career. Li Chen and Winnie Huang belong typically to the former group. Li Chen graduated from the Royal College of Music in London in the 1930s, and married a Chinese government official. She becomes a professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music after she and her husband have returned to China. Eventually, she chooses to stay in the PRC while her two children live in Australia with relatives (44-54). Because they have similar experiences in London and Shanghai, Nien Cheng and Li Chen become close friends. As Nien Cheng says, "[s]ince her return from Hong Kong, we had seen a great deal of each other. She would often bring her music and spend an evening with me listening to my records. I knew she often felt lonely and missed her children" (48). In the beginning years of the Cultural Revolution, she takes her own life. Another friend, Winnie Huang, has similar experiences but manages to survive the Cultural Revolution. She has a degree in English literature from New England Women's College and returns to China with her husband in the early 1940s (20-21). A teacher of English and Latin at the Medical College in Shanghai, she is a target of persecution during the Cultural Revolution. At her deathbed in 1973, Winnie speaks her thoughts to Nien Cheng: "Meiping [the author's daughter] is

dead. My boys have no future. We could have gone away in 1949, couldn't we? We were fools to have stayed here" (365). Actually, it is still dangerous to express one's opinion so candidly in 1973. But since she is dying of an illness, Winnie realizes that this might be the last chance to talk to Nien Cheng. Winnie also gives her last advice to her friend despite any risk: "Try to go abroad! You can still make it" (366).

The latter group of Nien Cheng's friends consists of mainly non-Chinese diplomats and officials she has come to know during her stay abroad and during her service with Shell in Shanghai. Among her friends from England, Switzerland, France, Australia, Canada, and the United States (488), Sir John Addis is often mentioned in her narrative. He is a "Sinologist with a deep understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture" (149). In the fifties, he served at the British Chargé d'Affaires office in Beijing when he frequents Nien Cheng's home as a guest. He also serves as the first British Ambassador to Beijing in 1972. They share a common interest in Chinese antiques as collectors, among other things (479). In 1978, several years after her rehabilitation, he visits her apartment (484) as an old friend. These friendships considered, we can see that Nien Cheng and her friends do not belong to the common discourse community in the New China, partly due to the Party's exclusive policies and partly due to their own unwillingness to join the Maoist discourse community. It is not surprising that this group of people become the outcasts of society in the years of the national catastrophe.

Generally speaking, survival contains within it an aspect of heroism. This aspect can be clearly seen in many of those who survived persecution during the Cultural Revolution. These individuals clearly demonstrated the desire to live on, and did not succumb to the temptation of suicide as a way out. In some situations, survival was also

connected with resistance—resistance to persecutors and resistance to the domination of the prevalent power. James Young thus comments on the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust:

By definition, in fact, those who survived to tell their witness also have a particular grasp of survival and all that led to it— including resistance, faith, hope, and luck. For the Israeli historian, in particular, testimony from one who survived is likely to be considered testimony from one who also resisted; the heroic aspect of these stories is almost intrinsic in their very existence. (30)

In the Chinese context, the autobiographers hold fast to resistance, faith, and hope in their struggle to survive. Although the authors become the victims of the Maoist revolutions, they remain firmly convinced that they are wrongly accused and maintain the hope that sooner or later their persecution will end. One element of Nien Cheng's heroism is that she tries to keep to her own ideals of right or wrong in spite of the unsteady political situations. In 1966, the former general secretary of the CCP and the chairman of the PRC, the second only to Mao in the Party hierarchy, Liu Shaoqi, is declared a "traitor, a hidden agent, and a scab" (190). While the whole nation's propaganda machinery denounces Liu Shaoqi, Nien Cheng, herself in imprisonment, ventures to defend him. She continues to use his title as chairman, which infuriates her interrogators, one of whom says: "Shut up! You are not allowed to refer to a traitor as a "chairman." But she replies:

"I did it from habit,"... "For sixteen years, the newspapers, in daily broadcasts and in books published by the government printing press, Chairman Liu"... "Liu Shao[qi]...was always presented to the Chinese people as a revolutionary hero who had made a tremendous contribution to many aspects of the work of the Communist Party...I found in Chairman Mao's books several complimentary references to Liu Shao[qi]. It's so difficult to turn round now and think of him as totally bad." (204)

Eventually, history proves her right in defending him. After Mao's death, Liu Shaoqi's name is cleared, although he was long dead since 1969.

Another element of her heroism is her insistence on her innocence. All through the years of her persecution, she denies the unfounded charges that she is a British spy and a counter-revolutionary. She always responds to her persecutors with the same statement and never falters:

“I am a patriotic Chinese and a law-abiding citizen. I've never done anything against the Peoples Government. If the investigations of the People's Government should ever find anybody in the whole of China from whom I have tried to obtain information of a confidential nature, I'm prepared to accept the death penalty.” (214)

Her determination results from her ideology. To her, making a false confession equates to lying. She would rather give up her life than dishonour her late husband by giving false word for the sake of survival that she and her husband had ever been spies for Britain.

Resistance, faith, and hope help Nien Cheng to survive the Cultural Revolution. After the inhuman treatment in prison and the death of her daughter, her only way to continue with life is to leave her motherland. She joins the Chinese living in voluntary or self-imposed exile. The number of these exiles increases after each suppression or crackdown of a political movement, such as the Tian'anmen Square incident in 1989.

To the Storm: Testifying from a Middle Ground

Although Yue Daiyun wrote *To the Storm* outside China, unlike Nien Cheng, she planned to return to China after her scholarly visit to the United States (1982-84). She and her collaborator also faced the audience in the West. Although Yue did not have state censorship concerning the publication of her work, she had to return to China after her

short stay. Therefore her point of view in writing is different from Nien Cheng's. Yue belonged to the generation of intelligentsia who had seen the divided China under the warlords and the humiliated China under the invasion of Japan and the Western countries before 1949. Believing that communism could save China, the intelligentsia got actively involved in the Party's fighting against GMT before 1949 and occupied themselves enthusiastically in the building of the New China after 1949.

Among the intelligentsia, who were eager to demonstrate their patriotism and loyalty to the country, Yue Daiyun shows patriotism in line with the propaganda of the government. She demonstrates her political tendencies through clear individual actions which contribute to collective patriotism. A good example is her response to the PRC's support of the Korean War against the United States. Her prize-winning poem expresses her patriotism to a great extent, as she recounts:

Addressed to Chairman Mao, it was titled, "If Only You Call Us." If Only You Call Us, I had written, we will give up everything, our warm clothes, our comfortable homes, our secure jobs, and follow you. The poem became very popular, and many people wanted a copy. It was not my best poem, but it captured a shared sentiment and expressed what people wanted to hear. Everyone felt proud that China had thrown off the imperialist powers and wanted to prevent that domination from recurring. Patriotic feelings were intense, though no one knew anything about the war really. (Yue 30-31)

From her youth, she not only belonged to the Maoist discourse community, but also occupied prominent positions both as a student and as a member of the faculty at Beijing University. Upon enrolling in 1948, she took an active part in the underground activities of the Democratic Youth League (xxi). In July 1949, she joined the CCP even before the founding of the PRC in October of the same year. In the 1950s, she served as the Party

branch secretary, and took an active role in the implementation of the Party's instructions and in decision-making within the branch.

From all the activities in which she was involved, we can see that Yue Daiyun's personal actions were always closely linked with the political waves of the country. Her loyalty to the Party had never changed. But her fate was changed by the Anti-Rightist campaign, when hundreds of intellectuals including Yue Daiyun were persecuted as Rightists. Anne F. Thurston generalizes about the campaign:

China's politics of persecution entered a new stage. In the antirightist campaign that began in June 1957 as the party's response to the criticisms unleashed during the blooming of the Hundred Flowers, the number of participants—persecutors and persecuted alike—was larger. Hundreds of thousands of intellectuals, artists, and writers—party and nonparty alike—were declared rightists and kicked out of the circle, their punishment ranging from exile in labour reform camps to mere demotion in rank, reduction in salary, and ostracism by friends and peers. ... For many individual Chinese... the antirightist campaign of 1957 was a watershed, the end of innocence, the eclipse of the golden years. (Thurston 1988 65)

From a Branch Party secretary to a Rightist, Yue is sentenced to labour in a rural area. It is certainly the end of innocence for her. Yet despite her strong belief in her own innocence and her doubt of the Party's judgment of her, Yue Daiyun nevertheless accepts its sentence of her as a Rightist, since absolute obedience is one of the conditions one accepts upon joining the Party. As she herself says: "Obedience to higher authority was pledged by everyone who joined the party, and I had accepted this strict discipline willingly" (Yue 26).

Comparing Nien Cheng and Yue Daiyun in this aspect, we can see a great difference in attitude regarding the Party's accusation of each writer's individual case. Nien Cheng's denies adamantly the charge of being a British spy. The action itself can be

regarded as counter-revolutionary, because it is a challenge to the Party's judgment. A popular slogan of the Cultural Revolution shows the belief in the Party's infallibility: "The CCP is a great, glorious, and faultless Party." Because of the constant nationwide propaganda, people tend to follow the Party's instructions without questioning. That is why Yue Daiyun brushes away any doubt that briefly occurs once in a while. The following lines show the logic of her thoughts regarding the Party's decision regarding five of her colleagues shortly before its persecution of her.

A person in my position should always act with confidence to convince others, be worthy of the Party's trust, stifle any doubts or confusion, remembering always that the Party has greater wisdom than any individual, that it liberated all of China, that its judgment was therefore above question. ... Trusting in Chairman Mao and the Beida Party Committee,¹⁷ believing that they knew more than I, that their decisions must be necessary and correct, I had collected material that would be used to accuse five of my colleagues.
(26)

Here we can see that she blindly follows the Party and therefore becomes a victimizer of her colleagues unconsciously. In turn, she would be a victim soon. If she has had a chance to voice her doubts about others' cases, at the time of her own persecution, she has no other way but to obey. Questioning or denial might mean even a more severe sentence for her. She learns to conform to the Party's way, slowly, either through her intuition or through advice from her friends. Lao Wei, also a Rightist sent to the rural area, thus advises her:¹⁸

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¹⁷ "Beida" is the short form of "Beijing University."

¹⁸ Six different kinds of punishment were being imposed on the Rightists, depending on the seriousness of the crimes: the first was an indefinite jail sentence; the second, dismissal from employment to work under the supervision of the labouring people at the monthly salary of sixteen *yuan*, and so on (Yue 43). (according to the current exchange rate, CAD 1 equals 6 Chinese *Yuan*). Yue Daiyun received the second and thus went to the rural area to reform.

"Now we are enemies of the Party, ...even though for years we have devoted ourselves to the revolution. At present we must admit we are guilty and acknowledge that we really are criminals, for only in this way can we resume our normal lives and at the same time help the Party by confirming the correctness of its policy. You must acknowledge that you have done something to oppose the Party and concede your guilt." (63)

When Yue Daiyun tries to protest by reasoning that it would be a denial of truth, Lao Wei shows his logic:

"There can be no absolute standard for truth and falsehood,... for what is true depends always on necessity and circumstance. If you can prove you have a deep consciousness of your mistake, you can return to the side of people, and that is what matters most." (63)

Accepting this whole new way of thinking, Yue Daiyun follows the hidden codes of the Party and waits for her rehabilitation. She never tries to argue with her persecutors. These actions show her willingness to assume her new identity as an outcast and her hope to return to the discourse community. Yue Daiyun and Lao Wei are the innocent intellectuals wrongly persecuted because there have to be targets to meet the quota in educational institutions. Thurston gives us the details in the following:

Educational institutions, from primary and middle schools to technical schools, and up to the level of the university, were assigned quotas—between 5 and 10 percent of their staff—to be delivered to the state as “rightists.” And because the quotas for rightists were often higher than institutions had legitimately qualified rightists to fill, rightists had to be invented. What is more, in a society in which accomplishment was measured by quotas fulfilled and units vied for the status of having not only met but surpassed their obligations to the state, some institutions not only fulfilled their quotas but enthusiastically overfulfilled them. (Thurston 1988 68)

Yue Daiyun’s rightist title is among the invented ones for intellectuals.

Sentenced to labour among peasants in the rural areas, her specific task is to raise pigs. During these months, she suffers from fatigue, humiliation, hunger, and homesickness. Her experience resembles that which intellectuals suffered in the Jewish

concentration camps. Primo Levi describes the embarrassment of intellectuals in Auschwitz:

At work, which was prevalently manual, the cultivated man generally was much worse off than the uncultivated man. Aside from physical strength, he lacked familiarity with the tools and the training, which, however, his worker or peasant companion often had; in contrast, he was tormented by an acute sense of humiliation and destitution. (Levi 1988 132)

Just as the intellectuals in Auschwitz, the Rightists in china were treated as “non-people” or “subhuman.” Tu Wei-ming thus summarizes the status:

The psychopathological condemnation of the Rightists as nonpeople not only denied them any status in society but also robbed them of any dignity or decency as fellow human beings. As a result, they were reduced to subhumans and no longer existed as members of the same species. Thus, the inversionary “speciation” that made them less (“pseudo”) human justified any maltreatment of them. (Tu 166-67)

As a consequence, Yue Daiyun, like other Rightists, is shunned like the plague. Her former colleagues and students accuse her of “poisoning so many students” (31). A former good friend pretends not to know her (50) and even lectures to Yang Dama, a helper in Yue’s home, “Don’t you know she [Yue] is a Rightist, an enemy of the people? Don’t be so nice to her; you must draw a line to separate yourself” (51). It is in this light that Yue Daiyun is recognized on the social plane in Chinese society in which conformity and relationship among people play important roles, rather than individuality and independent thinking as found in the West. Charles Taylor discusses two planes of recognition in a person’s life:

The importance of recognition is now universally acknowledged in one form or another, on an intimate plane, we are all aware of how identity can be formed or malformed through the course of our contact with significant others. On the social plane, we have a continuing politics of equal recognition. Both planes have been shaped by the growing ideal of

authenticity, and recognition plays an essential role in the culture that has arisen around this idea. (36)

On the intimate plane, Yue Daiyun sensed the changes of feelings from her loved ones before and during her first visit home from the countryside. Because of the turmoil, emotions, and depression after she is condemned as a Rightist, Yue Daiyun is advised both by Chinese-trained and Western-trained doctors not to breast-feed her son, who has been suffering from diarrhea (51). Yue thinks angrily about the advice: Even a Rightist does not poison her own baby (51). From this incident, we see how even the intimate mother/son relation is harmed by the political movement. Later, Yue's unnoticed visit from the rural areas disappoints her: "my baby cried when I held him.... My daughter still remembered me, but I immediately felt the distance between us. She greeted me politely, then stood silently, watching" (93). To her distress, she finds that "I had never been able to reestablish my former closeness to my husband" (95).... "How proud of me he has always been before, I recalled sadly, wondering whether I would ever again feel that same admiration" (103). Taylor comments on the importance of love relationships as follows:

Love relationships are not just important because of the general emphasis in modern culture on the fulfillment of ordinary needs. They are also crucial because they are the crucibles of inwardly generated identity. (36)

Obviously, Yue's inwardly generated identity is greatly shaken by her political status, as she says: "I sensed that I had lost something forever, that my worlds had split apart, that life among the peasants had unalterably changed me" (94).

Yue Daiyun survives her sentence to labour as a Rightist with the sympathy and help from the local people. She is assigned to live with an elderly couple whom she addresses as Old Aunt and Old Uncle. Instead of considering her as a political enemy,

they treat her as a daughter, since they themselves are childless. During her stay in the rural area, China undergoes three years of famine, due to the Party's wrong economic policies. But Yue is spared of under-nourishment, thanks to the care the old couple give to her:

Always he [Old Uncle] brought me back something from those trips, sometimes two or three walnuts, sometimes four or five peanuts salvaged from nests where the squirrels had hidden them the previous summer. Old Uncle never ate any of this bounty, saying that he had been hungry many times before, while the famine must be very difficult for me. ...During those months nearly everyone in Zhaitang became swollen from malnutrition,...but neither my legs nor face had grown puffy from dropsy. I always felt certain that those walnuts and peanuts had helped sustain my health. (82-84)

Yue Daiyun receives great generosity at a time of prevalent poverty and famine and the old couple give her "the gift of life itself" when she belongs to the subhuman (82-84). In Chinese society, which emphasizes greatly collectivity and conformity, one's friends reinforce the individual's identity. In normal situations, friends add enjoyment and pleasure to one's life. Yet during hard times, when friends are not available, it is the humanistic values such as sympathy, encouragement, and care that strengthen an individual with the will to live on. Such is the case when Yue Daiyun stays, and labours, in the rural areas.

In the autobiographies under discussion, there are a number of factual and symbolic departures and returns. These result from personal decisions and choices, on the one hand, and from national political and cultural situations of the time period of those actions on the other hand. Each event of departure or return contributes to the whole picture of the protagonist's personal trauma. Consequently, for the whole nation, each

personal trauma constitutes the whole picture of the national catastrophe during the Mao era. In this sense, history is a history of trauma (Caruth 1996 15).

In contrast to those in *Life and Death in Shanghai*, departures and returns in *To the Storm* mostly happen within national boundaries. The centre of the movement is often the CCP. Yue Daiyun always strives for returning, a longing which derives from a strong sense of belonging and a clear demarcation of identity. Furthermore, whereas Nien Cheng's choices of departure or return are largely active, Yue Daiyun's fate either to depart or to return is always determined by the CCP.

Her first departure happens as a result of a political campaign in which she is declared a Rightist. This seems to come from nowhere, as Yue Daiyun has regarded herself as a whole-hearted revolutionary since her early twenties. Her early formation leads to her firm belief in the CCP, after hearing stories of hideous deeds of foreign imperialists. In 1950, she goes to Prague as a delegate from Beijing to attend the second World Student Congress (Yue 83), which is not only a great honour but also shows the CCP's trust in her. Following that, she displays her leadership abilities by addressing a meeting of ten thousand students about her participation of the congress at Beijing University.

All along, she seems to be on the right revolutionary track- -being chosen to stay to teach at Beijing University and getting married to an equally revolutionary teacher on the same campus, who happens to be the son of the president of the university. Suddenly, during her maternity leave, she finds herself declared a Rightist because she has been active in launching a literary magazine. The irony of the incident is that the purpose of the magazine is to praise Maoist leadership and the youths under it. Because Chinese culture

at that time esteems social and political activities in the public sphere as much more important than those in the private sphere, Yue Daiyun herself regards the sentence of a Rightist as political death:

February 7 is an important date in modern Chinese history, the anniversary of the first large-scale mass movement guided by the Communist Party. When I awoke that morning, I thought of the two leaders of the railway workers who, in 1932, had refused to end their strike and had been shot by the warlords. I had always felt deep respect for such selflessness, such devotion to the welfare of the proletarian class. Now on the same date that they were killed, I was to be condemned to a political death, cast out forever from the ranks of the people. Because I had always considered politics so important, this fate seemed almost harder to face than the warlord's bullets. (41)

On a concrete level, Yue Daiyun departs from Beijing for a rural area in Zhaitang and stays with an old peasant family; and from a position of being a teacher to being a Rightist sent for labour and reform in 1958. At this stage, Yue Daiyun suffers from a sense of loss, which was common during the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Cultural Revolution. She has lost her status and honour, her career and dignity. Yue Daiyun and Ning Cheng belong to the victims of the Maoist China who experienced “a profound sense of loss as a result of the Cultural Revolution—loss of culture and of spiritual values; loss of status and honour; loss of career and dignity; loss of hope and ideals; loss of time, truth, and of life; loss, in short, of nearly everything that gives meaning to life” as Thurston comments on the Cultural Revolution (Thurston 1984-85 605-6).

Yue Daiyun's first symbolic return occurs when she joins her husband's family to attend the 1963 National Day celebration at Tian'anmen.

Tang Yong-tong [her father-in-law] received an invitation to sit in the reviewing stand at Tian'anmen Square, where there was to be an elaborate fireworks display attended by Chairman Mao and all of the country's top leaders. Tang Yong-tong was permitted to invite five family members. (Yue 111)

It is a great honour for her father-in-law. However, the fact that he has chosen her to go causes some stir in the opinion of the public, including some suspicion. It is said that a former Rightist, like Yue Daiyun, is still dangerous and can easily carry a concealed weapon. Her father-in-law is deemed to have made a mistake in allowing a former enemy of the people to get so close to Chairman Mao (113). The belated removal of her Rightist label should actualize her return to the rank of "Revolutionary masses," but in the public mind, she is still considered as an enemy. It is no longer possible for her to return to the point from which she has departed, because the grandeur of her revolutionary career is gone forever. Within cultural institutions, Beijing University for example, frost-bitten and crest-fallen intellectuals have learned to keep their mouths shut.

Along with her personal ill-fate, her belief in the Communist ideal has been deeply shaken. Before she is charged as a Rightist, she demonstrates profound belief in the wisdom of the Party. Comforting her husband, she says: "We must trust the Party.... Even if in the short run something about my actions is seen to be wrong, the problem will be resolved quickly" (6). But facts prove her wrong. The problem is not solved quickly, but instead, she is exiled from the capital city to rural areas, where she begins to question the Party's leadership:

My weeks of wandering alone in the mountains gave me endless hours to think, and sometimes I felt almost lighthearted, so pleasant to enjoy this unaccustomed sense of freedom and closeness to nature. But always my mind returned to the same unsettling questions. What had happened to the bright future I had so fervently envisioned for myself and my country. (84)

Through more thinking and talking with other Rightists, she not only begins to doubt her own sentence, but she also questions the right or wrong of the sentences laid on the victims of the previous political movements:

Now I couldn't help wondering as well about the fairness of the sentences leveled against the landlords and other enemies with whom I was suddenly grouped. Again I seriously questioned this system of condemnation. Since I knew that Lao Wei and I did not deserve to be treated as enemies, having never opposed the revolution or the Party, perhaps the others had been accused unjustly as well. By preventing such people from contributing to the construction of the country, by denying them not only social status but even a shared humanity, the Party seemed to be making a terrible mistake. (67-68)

Yue Daiyun's final return in this autobiography is her return to the Party. When she is handed back the membership of the CCP, she accepts it. Yet her whole perspective on the Party has changed considerably:

But even as I recalled the disappointments of my own life and the tragic loss of my friends, I realized that some flame still burned in my heart. It had flickered at times but had never finally been extinguished. Surely the hardships, the losses suffered together, would not be redeemed unless we strive to keep that flame alive. I would join in the efforts to rebuild the Party, convinced that whatever its past mistakes, it alone could lead China forward. I was far less confident of success than in 1949 and far less certain that I could contribute, but I knew that I had to try. (387)

We can see between the lines that she still considers herself as a member of the Party and moreover, she includes herself in the process of correcting the previous errors the Party has made. Unlike Nien Cheng who chooses to live abroad in exile, Yue Daiyun remains a subject of the party-state and a member of the Party.

The Dragon Blood Tree: Testifying Inside China

Chen Kaige wrote *The Dragon Blood Tree* inside China. He was conscious of the state censorship and the possibility of political criticism. Facing the audience in China, he

focused more on the experience of his generation than the detailed experience of an individual. In comparison with the other two autobiographies, his tone was controlled rather than blaming and accusatory. He aimed at the examination of the cause of the catastrophe and the mass participation in it, so that a lesson could be learned for the future.

Chen Kaige's generation is often referred to as "the generation born and grown up under the red flag." They were born around 1949, the birth of the PRC, and they grew up under the new social and educational systems of the PRC. Therefore, it is not surprising that the party-state expected this generation to be absolute loyal subjects. For the new generation educated in the New China, patriotism almost equals love for the Party. Patriotism in Chinese is "To Love one's Country" (*aiguo*). Since China of the Mao era was a party-state, the love of one's country was inseparable from the love for the Party and vice versa. Furthermore, since the state in Chinese resembled state family in Chinese (*guojia*), according to the Chinese tradition, all the family members should show their respect to the head of the family—Mao in this case. Between the state family and one's natural family, the state demanded that citizens give priority of place to the bigger family—the state family. In the same way, the loyalty to the head of the state should supercede the loyalty to the head of one's natural family. The head of the state family designed a paradise for his hundreds of thousands of family members. This paradise had its own rules and own plans for the future. Mao imagined an ideal egalitarian society: with all people as critics of the old society, and the builders and guards of the new society. With hammers, they could work; with hoes, they could farm; armed with guns they could fight against enemies; and with pens they could write articles. Mao's vision of

the New China led the nation's politics and economy to disaster. The Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s resulted in a nationwide famine with a death toll of thirty million (Becker xi). Although the authorities blamed the Soviet Union's withdraw of support as the cause of the famine, Chen reasons that:

The nationwide Great Leap Forward in 1958 was the cause of the famine in the early 1960s. Yet it was only the first act of the play—Mao's Paradise. The curtains were still open but the players retreated for a while. The intermission happened at a cost of the death of twenty to thirty million people. (Chen Kaige 7)

No sooner had people recovered from the famine, than a further series of political campaigns was instituted. By the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Mao had become a God to worship in this paradise, due to the efforts of several Party leaders, such as Lin Biao (Yan and Gao 179). For Chen's generation, the figure of Mao played a major part in every youth's life. Chen comments that the love of Mao became institutionalized to the point that it was a love not so much of feelings as of habit (36). This generation naturally became Mao's disciples. The Cultural Revolution began in 1966, in which worship and sacrifice existed next to each other in everyday life. The nationwide event, which would last for a decade, disrupted the continuity of normal life for the Chinese people. In work places and in communities, harmonious everyday life gave way to parades and struggle meetings. Anne F. Thurston shows us the picture:

The street parades and house searches were special events in the lives of China's "ox ghosts and snake spirits." Struggle sessions, always dehumanizing, sometimes violent, were the primary and most frequent means through which the accused were attacked. They were usually held in the work unit of the accused—in classrooms, offices, or auditoriums—and it was colleagues, students, friends, and sometimes even relatives, people one knew and saw everyday, who participated in the attacks. Subordinates were pitted against superiors, students against teachers, friends against friends, colleagues against colleagues, and often, children against parents and spouse against

spouse, rending the very fabric of Chinese society. When spouse and children refused to join as persecutors, they were often... forced nonetheless to accompany the accused, reluctant witnesses to the humiliation of the relative they refused to betray. (Thurston 1988 121)

The following scene Chen Kaige describes in his autobiography is an example of such a struggle session. One evening during the Cultural Revolution, his father, a famous film director, is classified as a former Guomindang member, a Counter-Revolutionary, and a Hidden Rightist. He experienced the following during a struggle session with other artists:

When my father's name was called, the crowd shouted "Down with Chen Huaikai!" and I shouted, too. I heard my own voice—it was very loud. One Red Guard called my name and I went forward in front of people's stares. Now I don't remember what I said. I only remember that my father glanced at me once and I shoved him on his shoulder. I am not sure how heavy the shove was, but after all, I shoved my father. (Chen Kaige 66-67)

This scene reminds us of the gray zone during the Holocaust discussed by Primo Levi. The son's action of shoving his father is an act of mimesis. Eager to identify himself with the Party cadres of the Cultural Revolution, he must imitate their actions. He knows that if he pays homage to hierarchic authority, the Party cadres in this case, he is likely to gain some power. In this way, he might attain an otherwise unattainable social elevation (Levi 48). The protagonist in the autobiography is one of the oppressed who seek power. This group among the oppressed has been contaminated by their oppressors and unconsciously strives to identify with them (48). Primo Levi comments on the similar situations in the concentration camp:

The harsher the oppression, the more widespread among the oppressed is the willingness, with all its infinite nuances and motivations, to collaborate: terror, ideological seduction, servile imitation of the victor, myopic desire for any power whatsoever, even though ridiculously circumscribed in space and time, cowardice, and finally, lucid calculation aimed at eluding the imposed

orders and order. All these motives, singly or combined, have come into play in the creation of this gray zone, whose components are bonded together by the wish to preserve and consolidate established privilege vis-à-vis those without privilege. (Levi 1988 43)

This gray zone possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge” (42). In the Chinese context, whether or not to identify with the oppressor is the choice of inclusion in, or exclusion from, the mob. The son at this specific moment has two choices—to join the crowd and betray his father, or to join his father and become an enemy of the mob. As he is a member of the Maoist discourse community, chances are that he has to choose to stay within the community, otherwise he would end up being an outcast. His choice happens to be an instinct for surviving, too. He does not even hesitate before making the decision as if he knows the other choice is unavailable. In comparison, in *Life and Death in Shanghai*, similar choices lie before Meiping, the author’s daughter. Her persecutors hope that she will join their side and denounce her mother. Because Meiping refuses to do so, she is beaten to death by the persecutors (Cheng 433). In comparison with Meiping, Chen Kaige seems to have chosen life over death. Actually, Chen’s reaction towards his father at this particular moment is the consequence of his past formation; whereas Meiping refuses to denounce her mother because her value system has been built in the West, mainly in Australia. She has not been a full subject of the Maoist discourse community; and therefore she often receives different treatment politically. In contrast, Chen Kaige’s formation is typical of the youths growing up in the PRC. He is among many children who have the same feelings towards their parents during the Mao era.¹⁹

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¹⁹ According to some film critics, denouncing his father was Chen Kaige’s founding experience and it haunts him in the darkest ways. Chen Kaige might feel that the Cultural Revolution is part of the essence of

Early in 1964, two years before the Cultural Revolution, a student had to make a choice between her mother and the Party:

A little girl from Beijing panicked in front of an exam topic—"Mother," because her mother was a landlord and pronounced as an enemy at the time. In the end, she took the Party as her mother, praising its splendour and warmth, meanwhile expressing her hatred towards her natural mother. Thus her composition won praises. (Chen Kaige 41)

Growing up in this atmosphere, the children are told time and again that love is related to class. Class is the crucial line used to separate love from hatred, and natural family relations are no exception. Love for the leader and the Party remains unchanged but love for one's own family members and relatives changes according to their class status. Hatred, in contrast, is a stable element here (42). Due to his formation, Chen's response at the struggle meeting is not surprising, as many parents suffered from ill treatments not only from the Red Guards, but also from their own children.

However, the natural family relationships are not easily severed. Chen Kaige's decision at his father's struggle meeting is not made without pain. He has to hold back his tears and suffer the guilt of acting against his father deep in his heart.

I could not shun the hot and praiseful eyes around me, and kept on speaking desperately. Suddenly, I felt I loved this stranger very much at this moment. When I tried to shove him, I found that this awesome and strong father was after all very weak. It seemed that at this moment he became a real father. .... At fourteen years old, I had already learned to betray my own father. How could this be? The held-back tears flew to my throat, salty. Where did they come from? What did they want to prove? It was also strange to me, when a child tore himself and his father to pieces in public, he still heard laughter from the crowd. What kind of people was this crowd? (67)

Chinese culture, and he is driven to expose the existence of betrayal in every corner of Chinese history. Critics see betrayal as a motif in all Chen's films. In his new film, "Jingke ci Qinwang" [The Emperor and the Assassin], that he now realizes was an unconscious homage to his father, who died five years ago, Chen decided to play the role of Lu Buwei, the prime minister of the Qin kingdom, who is actually the emperor's father (Brunette).

His action also alters his relationship with his father. It might be the first time he sees this patriarchal figure in a position of weakness, after all the years of regarding him as a strong and powerful parent. But ironically, it is when the father suddenly becomes a stranger that he loves him more. After showing his weak side, the father seems more real to his son. Apart from his own voluntary will, the crowd plays a role in his decision. When he is called, he does what the crowd expects him to do, and in return he is rewarded by their praise. The discourse community follows special rules in the Mao era. That is why an action to denounce one's own father gains encouragement instead of indignation in the community, in which class struggle, rather than natural bonds, decides human relationships.

In addition to the discussion of human relationships, Chen in his autobiography also examines the issue of the violence that occurred nationwide at the outset of the Cultural Revolution. Many deaths resulted from violence. "Haunting the Cultural Revolution hanging over it like a cloud, was the ever-present specter of death" (Thurston 1988 132). Survivors

remain haunted by what they saw, remembering the incidents in vivid detail, needing still to bear witness, to share that painful, jarring, grotesque detail—the splattered brains, the rope still swinging, the absence of blood, the writhing of the body, the colour of the face, the swollen bodies of the drowned. (132)

Young people died after fighting against each other. "Halfway between Jinan and Nanjing, in a field of sorghum, [people] found the bodies of more than a hundred young students, fatalities of a battle between rival Red Guard factions" (133). At "the height of the violence" in China's capital city Beijing, "trucks patrolled the streets, picking up the

dead” (133). Exploring the political and psychological causes for such violence, Chen Kaige argues in his autobiography that, violence in the Cultural Revolution was neither due to war, nor murder. But group after group of people fell. This kind of direct bodily clashes, torture, humiliation, ill-treatment, and killing is still puzzling him and shocking to him after twenty years. It could have come from the Marxist theory: “Violence is the midwife of a new society,” or from many years of education on hatred rather than on love. But neither of the reasons could explain the phenomenon fully. Many people admitted afterwards honestly: when they used violence against people, it could be an animal-like urge, but it is not mainly out of real hatred (Chen Kaige 79-80). So Chen asks the real reason for violence. In Chen’s opinion

it is fear. The reason for a person to be human lies in the fact that a person can not be absolutely separated from the community. The progress of civilization makes sure that the way an individual ranks in a community is reasonable. The fear of being outcast from a community is human beings’ original fear.... It is especially true in China because it carries special significance: the system in China makes sure that an individual’s benefits and rights be granted through the state. In other words, whatever an individual has is supposedly given by the state. In a society when career opportunity, housing, moving, education, even reproduction and marriage are all decided by the state, to give up what is granted is to give up survival itself. Therefore the only choice for people is: whatever happens, one must stay within this state. When this becomes the only choice, it is no longer a choice. (80-81)

The author’s analysis of violence explains much of what he observed, including a house search that happened to his family.

Chen’s home becomes the target for this kind of violence because his father, a non-Party member, is of suspect loyalty, and the family possesses a lot of books. Books, other than Mao’s works, are considered items containing old thoughts, and therefore Red Guards have good reasons to burn them. The Red Guards who come to search Chen’s

house are all his friends at school. Some of them usually come to look for him and they would go out together on bicycle. But this time one of them informs him: “Chen Kaige, we’ve come to search your house” (69).

It dawns on him later who has informed the Red Guards for the house search. It is Chen’s classmate at school who is also a neighbour. His mother works for the same film company as Chen’s parents, and his father has been in prison. He is not a Red Guard himself. Why does this classmate try to harm Chen’s family? In a more vulnerable situation for a house search than Chen, he might figure that by putting Chen’s family in the spotlight, he saves his family from being attacked. Or by approaching the Red Guards, he appears to be closer to the Party cadres and therefore could gain some trust from them. Chen’s comments on the movement of the mob might shed some light on this incident:

The Cultural Revolution was a movement of mobs with fear as the essence. Unlimited violence emerged from people’s fear to be left behind. In an over-populated society, the only way to protect oneself was to beat others down. People rivaled with each other without the slightest intention to yield, in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the community.... For the same purpose—survival, there was not a lot of difference between the victimizer’s violence and the victim’s obedience.... (81)

During the house search, the family members should stand aside and answer the Red Guards’ questions, instead of trying to guard their possessions. If family members tried to rebel, unimaginable things would happen. “A youth, infuriated by the house search, held up a kitchen chop, but ended up being chopped to pieces by the same chop” (73). During the whole process when his house is searched, Chen does not say a single word. He neither ventures to save any family possessions, nor asks for a chair for his sick mother. Chen’s silence is the result of fear of death, to some extent, but it is more a result of fear of being ostracized by the mob (73). He watches silently his Red Guard friends tearing

silk clothes, cutting the high heels off shoes, breaking picture frames, taking away cash, bank accounts, a camera, and a clock, reading old letters and then destroying them, and at last burning books.

After they finish their house search, one by one, his Red Guard friends shake hands with him, as if rewarding Chen for his silence. They conduct the action “as though they have just rescued him from a gang of murderers; and as though they could get certain gratitude for what they have done” (74). Ironically, soon after, most of them see their own houses being searched by other Red Guards. They never expected that it could happen to themselves (76). During a matter of several months, several millions of families witnessed their houses getting searched. Some celebrity’s house got searched tens of times. The houses had hardly anything left after these searches (76). Chen in his autobiography asks:

What keeps on surprising people, including Red Guards, is the reason why in a republic, whose constitution stated to protect people’s private possessions, some citizens, even those youth not old enough to be citizens, could destroy or confiscate other citizens’ possessions. The actions were not condemned but supported.... The victims not only suffered economically, but also lost spiritual assurance due to the destruction of their keepsakes of the past. (75-76)

Such is the purpose of building Mao’s ideal paradise—the destruction of the old system and the establishment of a new one. The building of the paradise also involves the death of a lot of people.

During the Holocaust and the Cultural Revolution, hundreds and hundreds of people died and some of the deaths were suicides. Comparing the cases from the two traumatic events, we can see that the phenomenon of suicide bears different features. As to the Holocaust, suicide happened *after* the event rather than during the event, because it

was only after the event that victims were allowed the time to have “a flood of rethinking and depression” (Levi 76). Primo Levi provides us with three reasons why suicide happens after victims achieve freedom.

- Suicide is an act of man and not of the animal. In concentration camps, “people lived precisely like enslaved animals and let themselves die but did not kill themselves.”
- The prisoners were too busy with survival to think of anything else.
- Suicide is born from a feeling of guilt that no punishment has attenuated. In concentration camps, there was no need to punish oneself by suicide since one was already experiencing it by one’s daily suffering (Levi 76).

In comparison, there were a lot of cases of suicide *during* the Cultural Revolution. Some chose to die instead of enduring the political pressure, such as Xiao Ning’s mother who hanged herself. Others could not bear to see the world turning upside down. The playwright Lao She’s death is such a case. Prior to the day of his death, Lao She (1899-1968) and several other playwrights were beaten, tortured, and forced to watch costumes of the Peking Opera burn. Following this, he was tortured again in two other places. Three tortures in one day forced him to commit suicide. The playwright came from a poor family, and was “intensely patriotic” (Vohra 148). After the Party gained power in 1949, he returned to Beijing from the United States and remained a writer to write about Beijing and its people. Famous for his use of Beijing dialect, he gained the title “People’s artist” (148). It seems that he had to endure all the humiliation by the people of Beijing whom he

praised in his literary works, and he was tortured for his good deeds.²⁰ Still others preferred death to humiliation. Li Chen in *Life and Death in Shanghai* was among this group:

[S]he committed suicide after a particularly humiliating experience at a struggle meeting when the Red Guards placed a pole across the gate of the Conservatory less than four feet from the ground and made Li Chen crawl under it to demonstrate that she was “a running dog of the British imperialists” because of her education in England and then held a struggle meeting afterwards to compel her to confess her “love for western music.” She was found dead the next day, seated by her piano, with the gas turned on. The note she left behind held one sentence: “I did my best for my students.” (Cheng 54)

Li Chen committed suicide as a means to maintain her dignity. As Thurston generalizes, people killed themselves in anger, in fear, or out of despair (Thurston 1988 139): “Some killed themselves in anger, out of protest over the humiliation to which they had so unfairly and unjustly been subjected.... Some killed themselves in fear, as the only means of escape.... But most killed themselves out of despair, in the hopelessness born of depression” (139).

A unique feature relating to death in the Chinese context is the debate on the issue of homicide or suicide. Except for the obvious cases of suicide, usually the victims’ persecutors insist that the victims have committed suicide, whereas the victims’ family members suspect that the victims have been tortured to death and demand investigations. Because most cases boiled down to the issue of homicide or suicide, Chen Kaige analyzes the issue in some depth. Due to the lawlessness prevalent during the Cultural Revolution, few deaths were the result of a sentence issued by the judicial system. Most such cases were the result of persecution by Red Guards—beating the victims till they admitted their

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²⁰ For details of Lao She’s death, see also Anne F. Thurston (1988) pp. 137-38.

supposed guilt (Chen Kaige 105). Thurston also elaborates on this issue:

Many deaths attributed during the Cultural Revolution to illness or suicide were in fact murder. In some cases, when attempts at suicide were at first not successful, the revolutionaries ensured they became so. ... Many suicides were engineered. Sometimes the accused would be kept awake, under the glare of lights, for several days, constantly interrogated by rotating teams. The accused—disoriented, confused, weak, and teetering as he walked—would then be taken to the roof of a building and led to the edge. If, in his disorientation and confusion, the accused fell to his death, the death was reported as suicide. So were deaths where the fall had been preceded by a push. (Thurston 1988 136)

About this phenomenon, Chen asks the question: Why is homicide better than suicide in the family's opinion? (105). Once again, Chen refers to the key concept to solve the question: the fear of being outcasts:

Since everyone's survival depended on the community and everyone carried the fear to be ostracized from the community, suicide, an action to withdraw from the community voluntarily, was a betrayal to the community and a despise on the common fear and therefore a despise on the people in the community. Consequently, suicide was a great evil because it shook the sense of security in the community. A sentence describing the persons who chose to commit suicide at the time was that they preferred death in order "to shun deliberately the people and the Party." (106)

Common sense tells us that there is little basic difference between homicide and suicide, if victims have lost their freedom completely and have to suffer inhuman torture. To Chen, the death of the famous playwright Lao She is suicide on the surface, but homicide in essence.

Chen's analysis of the homicide/suicide issue demonstrates the rules and disciplines of the Maoist discourse community. Belonging or affiliation becomes the crucial key to people's lives in the PRC. Loyalty to the discourse community and the Party is commitment and remains a permanent obligation. Opting out is betrayal (Apter and Saich 7). Because suicide is an action of opting out, most victims during the Cultural

Revolution intend to withstand to the last minute, for the sake of the future of their families. In a similar vein, families of the dead try their best to prove that their beloved had been killed rather than committed suicide. Thurston also elaborates on this issue:

To commit suicide during the Cultural Revolution was officially regarded as a betrayal of the revolution, of which the suicide itself constituted proof.... The stigma of having betrayed the revolution was passed on to the descendants and relatives of the suicide victim himself. Many refrained from suicide during the Cultural Revolution not because they wanted to live but in order not to bring shame to their families. (Thurston 1988 138)

In the chaotic period full of violence and deaths, friends around oneself are vital for one's survival and the sense of identity. Like other teenagers who have just embarked on the road to find identity, Chen Kaige has a strong desire to affiliate with a group so as to prove his identity. He tries to break from the supposed bondage of his family in order to be accepted by his friends. At school, Chen suffers through the humiliation and inferiority associated with his family background. With classmates whose fathers occupy top positions in the government, he, as a son of a non-Party member, struggles to prove himself a worthy member of the group. Because of his academic achievements, he is accepted by the privileged high school—Beijing No. 4 High School for Boys that most children of the Party leaders attend. During the beginning years of the Cultural Revolution, his friends at school are among the first to become Red Guards. Chen tries every means to be part of the group, because in this particular society, “I can exist only in the collective. Only after I am proved by others, I can be real” (81).

Shortly after the event of the house search, Chen joins the crowd in the street in a Mao suit with a Red Guard band on his arm. “In my despair I still hope to be accepted as a member of the mob” (81). One of the trademark characteristics of the Red Guards at

this time is the way in which they would treat perceived enemies without the slightest sympathy. Swearing and beating others are the basic traits to prove one's membership or affiliation. In 1967, Chen proves his affiliation by beating a stranger for the first time in his life. One of his friends sees a man touching a woman's breast in a public swimming pool. He and his friends decide to show their power to this man. It is almost unimportant whether or not the man has really touched the woman. "The important thing is that they need a man to play the role of a failure, otherwise it will not be a play" (82):

From the start, I heard my own heartbeats. The veins on my forehead turned to a bronze drum, beating along.... I wanted to join my friends in the beating but was timid.... Then I went forward and beat his face with my fist. His cheekbones hurt my hand.... But he did not move. Angered by his indifference, I rushed on to slap his face. Seeing stars in front of me, I felt as if my hand was landing on a horseback. This continued until my friends came to stop me. My palm became numb and my heart beat so fast that I could hardly stand still. I panted heavily for air. (83)

After the incident, he lies under the sun with his eyes closed, as if nothing has happened (82). By beating a stranger, Chen has tasted the joy of violence, which drives away his fear and humiliation temporarily. At last he gets some satisfaction in seeking the power which he has desired for a long time (84). At the same time, he gains some recognition from the mob.

The mob round Chen includes some sons of the top leaders of the Party and army. One of them is F, the son of Beijing's mayor Peng Zhen. F's ups and downs in life displays the existence of classes in Chinese society, despite the authority's claim that the working people have become the owners of the New China. In reality, the leaders of the Party, who had followed Mao all the way to victory, became the elite in the society and enjoyed a lot of privileges. Consequently, their children's lives were closely linked to

their fathers' political fortunes. These children happened to be a problem in society. Anne F. Thurston tells us about them: "Young boys in particular, often the sons of high-level cadres then incarcerated and under attack, formed gangs. They were often at war, one gang against another" (Thurston 1988 130). One youth who was on the fringes of such a gang says: "They smoked and stole things. They were corrupted because their parents had come under attack, and they opposed the Cultural Revolution, opposed Jiang Qing, opposed Chairman Mao" (130). In Chen Kaige's autobiography, F is such a gang member. Before the Cultural Revolution, F's academic achievements are not good enough for him to enroll in Beijing No. 4 High School for Boys, but his father gets him in by writing a letter to the school board (Chen Kaige 31). But in 1966, when his father is out of power, in his bad mood F steals a jeep and strikes a pedestrian down while driving. Caught by the police, he answers that his father is Peng Zhen, which brings him a good beating. He is sentenced to five years of imprisonment. Chen comments on the incident as follows:

In my opinion, F's action was a sign of rebellion against society.... His happiness and misfortune counting on his father, he could never be independent. His conduct was to protest against and challenge power, including patriarchal power. He chose to be himself in an age of family disasters and nationwide chaos. Far from being understood, he was still called "Peng Zhen's bastard dog." Even as a criminal, he was not allowed to become himself. (89-91)

Years later, when Chen sees F again, he works for a community factory. After his father's rehabilitation, he becomes Peng Zhen's son again and owns a company (92).

Zhang Xiaoyu, another friend of Chen Kaige, is a son of a general in the Air Force. Zhang's life also mirrors the chaotic time during the Cultural Revolution. He plays different roles in his friendship with Chen. At normal times, he is one of the most polite

children and Chen's mother likes him for this personal characteristics. Yet he joins others in searching Chen's house. Different from other Red Guards, Zhang seems to feel guilty in conducting the search. When Chen's grandmother asks for a chair for Chen's sick mother, it is Zhang who brings over a chair (72-75). During a later visit to Chen, Zhang's face turns red because of the guilt, confronting Chen's mother (99). Chen and Zhang talk about books in the sterile age when nothing except Mao's works is permitted for reading. Yet these youths have specials ways to access books:

During the Cultural Revolution, public libraries were all closed. Private collections of books, which survived burning, were piled in empty rooms and sealed—to be eaten by worms or to rot. My friends and I would enter from windows and read those books with a small electric torch. (99-100)

In his autobiography Chen Kaige presents the importance of friendship for survival. As teenagers growing up during the national catastrophe, Chen's generation knew how to help each other in life without their parents. After the Red Guard movement, when Red Guards have helped to send a lot of adults to prison or to a "cow shed," the youths find themselves living without their parents' care and instructions.²¹ Anne F. Thurston comments on the situation: "With so many adults either incarcerated or sent to the countryside, the problem of the unsupervised young became acute. Very young children could often be delivered into the care of an elderly relative..." (Thurston 1988 129). Many of these young people "found no one to care for them. Bands of children began wandering the streets, stealing for food and sleeping by night in railway stations, corridors, or huts" (130). Chen Kaige and his friends are in a similar situation, but luckily, Chen's home is not occupied by Red Guards, so Chen and his sister do not have to

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²¹ Because the enemies of the revolution were named "oxen, ghosts, serpents, and devils" the places where these people suffered from confinement were called "oxen pen" or "cow shed."

wander the streets. Once Zhang comes to Chen in a hurry and fear, telling him that the Air Force wants to send the children of the former generals and other leaders to the Northern Shanxi. Unwilling to go, these children are said to be bound with ropes and forced to board trains (101). It is quite ironic that Zhang Xiaoyu comes to seek Chen's help despite the fact that Zhang has participated in searching Chen's house. Having heard that he might be wanted to go to rural areas, Zhang, the son of a general, seeks to hide at Chen's home. Chen and his younger sister are quite heroic to receive him and look after him for two months:

My sister and I arranged for him to stay in my parents' room. At first he did not dare to venture out of his room and used the washroom only at night. At lunch and supper times, my sister would knock at his door and he took his meals in and sent his dishes out after the meals.... As he did not bring extra clothes with him, my sister would lend my clothes to him and washed his, folded them, and sent them back to his room. (101-103)

During this time period, Chen and Zhang might be sixteen or seventeen years old and Chen's sister might be only thirteen years old; yet they manage to survive by themselves. Chen is also loyal to his friend. One day, his school phones Chen asking for Zhang's whereabouts, saying that the Air Force is looking for him. Although the inquirer's tone sounds very serious and demanding, Chen denies any knowledge of Zhang (102). Even though Zhang had joined other Red Guards to search Chen's house; Chen does not show his progressive inclinations by giving up his friend.

On an another occasion, Chen also helps Xiao Ning to deal with the death of his mother:

In an early morning in January or February of 1968, I woke up suddenly to hurried knocks at the door. Sitting up, I could hear my heart beating. Seeing a dark figure at the door, I thought that people came to search my house

again.... Then I heard my neighbour Xiao Ning's unusual voice: "Kaige, get up, quick! ... My mom hanged herself!" (113)

Chen helps Xiao Ning and his sister to lower her body down, call a taxi, and send her to the hospital, though she has been dead for hours (113-115). Xiao Ning is thirteen and his sister is twelve at this time. The youths of Chen's generation not only have to manage their own life routine, but also have to witness death and deal with it during the unusual time. Such traumatic scenes will haunt them for the rest of their lives.

Chen's generation experienced the Red Guard movement and the Rustication movement. In the beginning of the Rustication movement in 1968, youths volunteered to go to the countryside, both due to the appeals from the government, and the pressure from all levels of leadership. The appeals from the government were that the educated youths should show their patriotism by going to places which needed them most. The frontier and the remote provinces needed people for socialist construction (Bernstein 87). The youths should be willing to "bear hardship and privation" and to sacrifice for socialism (87). As the mobilization campaign of Rustication went on nationwide, the degree of pressure increased, for example, there was a rule saying that going to the countryside was a ruler to judge whether a youth was loyal to the Maoist revolution or not, and whether a youth was revolutionary or a counter-revolutionary (Liu Xiaomeng 849). Under the pressure, some volunteered to go, some went because of the perception that the transfer was "inevitable and thus one ought to obtain the best possible deal" (Bernstein 91).

Like most of his contemporaries, Chen's departure from Beijing to Yunnan is forced as well as voluntary.²² The journey there takes four days by train and then four days by bus. On the state farm, the urban youths live with the people of Dai nationality, who live in bamboo houses and grow rice (Chen Kaige 135-36).²³ Yunnan has a tropical climate and the youths from Beijing have to adapt to the weather as well as the local culture.²⁴ Like all the youths in rural areas who performed manual labour (Bernstein 233), Chen Kaige and the youths on the rubber farm labour beyond their own physical capacity. During the movement, the labour of the youths in some places "relieved labour shortages in under-populated communes" or in places which "produced a need for additional labourers" (234). On the rubber farm where Chen Kaige worked, the youths help each other in their community and suffer extreme hardships in a worthless cause, as Chen comments on the movement: "Mao rewarded Chinese farmers who had helped him in gaining power. He made twenty million students call these farmers teachers politely, and share their scarce food." (132). However, in his text, Chen Kaige does not focus on the arduous labour itself, but deals with labour in relationship with nature, and with people. As labour dominates most aspects of the lives of these youths on the farm, Chen matures with the increasing physical strength. He says:

When I was able to cut down one tree after another with my knife, I
acknowledged my self. I got rid of the fear.... I began to believe in myself. No

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²² When his school has sent most of his friends to the army, the rural areas, factories, or mines, Chen Kaige does not have a chance to go anywhere because of his father's political background. Deciding to find a place by himself, he and his friends are given the opportunity to go to Yunnan.

²³ Dai nationality is one of the fifty-five minorities in China and the dominant majority is of Han nationality which comprises over ninety percent of the population.

²⁴ Yunnan province is situated in the south-western part of China. Its bordering countries include Laos and Burma. Its distance from Beijing is about five thousand kilometers.

longer need to prove my own shadow from others' eyes, labour made me healthy. (143)

At the same time, the youths from the cities grow to feel the closeness to nature. In comparison with the politics of the cities, nature offers purity, protection, and hope for the youths. Against the background of nature, mankind appears dirty and insane (154).

However, Chen Kaige criticizes the Rustication movement, despite his positive comments on labour and nature. "The movement is not for progress, because the experiences the youths gained at the cost of time, sweat, and blood... are experiences of an agriculture society after all" (133).

The return of these youths was hard earned. In *Zhongguo zhiqing shi* [*The History of Chinese Educated Youth*], Liu Xiaomeng gave us the details of the youths' efforts in struggling for their return. In late 1978, the youths on farms in Yunnan wrote three open letters to the Central Committee of the Party asking for the permission to return, which were signed by tens of thousand of youths (Liu Xiaomeng 742-44). Some signed with their own blood and some children of the youths also joined the signing with their parents' blood (744). When refused in January 1979, hundreds of youths on the farms went on a hunger strike (747). On Mengding farm, when a high Party official arrived to inspect the situation of the youths, he was welcomed by over a thousand youths kneeling down, crying, and shouting: " We want to go home!" Several weeks later, the Party issued some policies and agreed that the youths could return to their cities (747).

In Chen's opinion, the youths have completed a circle and returned to the starting point, a process that has taken them seven or eight years to complete (Chen Kaige 163).

At the same time, the return means that they have to cut their roots from nature and

people around them for these long years. The separation proves to be tragic in some cases. For example, among the furniture the youths left behind, a boy of about five or six years old is found in a cupboard. A note in his hand reads:

“My mom and dad returned to the city. I couldn’t go with them because I don’t have registration in the city. ²⁵ If they had taken me along, they couldn’t have been able to leave. I won’t cry. I’m a good kid.” (164)

In addition to the abandonment children, marriages break when only one of the couple is legally able to return to the cities in this period. Before the youths are allowed to return to the cities, there are cases where young people would mutilate themselves in order to go back to the cities for health reasons.

From the three autobiographies, we can see that the departures and returns, whether actual or symbolic, occur mostly as a consequence of political movements. The departures do not always promise brighter futures and returns do not necessarily bring order or prosperity to individuals. These departures and returns also reflect the ups and downs of the authors’ contemporaries as well as the vicissitudes of the nation.

So far we have covered the topic on autobiography as a genre of Scar Literature. After examining the authors’ education, historical past, and political inclinations, we have gained a clearer idea about the poetics of the texts. We see the reasons why the authors have interpreted the events in their own particular fashion and their worldly responses to the events (Young 4). The actions each narrator takes during the Maoist revolutions result from the individual’s attitude towards the revolutions. Although the narrators cannot determine their own fate in the events, they still make their own decisions on whether or

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²⁵ With the founding of the PRC, people’s residence was regulated. One had to have registration in order to get rations for food and cloth. Education and careers also depended on registrations.

not to try to survive, on what strategies to take during their ordeal, and on whether to carry on or to give up their basic values in life. It is their strong belief in, and inextinguishable hope for, their eventual rehabilitation that they not only survive the catastrophe, but also provide readers with their personal accounts. These testimonies remain valuable as part of the historical record for readers all over the world to learn and to judge the events that happened during the Maoist rule (Wakeman xviii).

Chapter III

DOCUMENTARY FICTION: TRUTH CLAIMS AND POETIC LICENSE ¹

If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other.

James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*

Whereas truth claim remains an essential feature in autobiographies, it is only one of the characteristics of documentary fiction. Writers of documentary fiction still claim the truth value in their texts, but they also employ fictional devices and strategies. They normally use the third person narrator rather than the first person one in autobiographies. Instead of chronological display of events in autobiographies, writers of documentary fiction have the liberty to arrange their display otherwise. Unlike an autobiography whose author and protagonist bear the same name, documentary fiction does not have this feature, although there might be hints indicating close links between the author and the protagonist. One thing in common with the Chinese writers of autobiography and documentary fiction under discussion is that they all have experienced the Mao era firsthand, and they write from the position of eyewitnesses to the events.

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¹ Quotations from *The Invisible Companion*, *Half of Man is Woman*, and Chen Ruoxi's stories are from English translations of the texts.

Novelist as Eyewitness

When *Yinxing banlǔ* [The Invisible Companion] (1988) by Zhang Kangkang and *Nanren de yiban shi nǚren* [Half of Man is Woman] (1985) by Zhang Xianliang were published, the link between the authors' past experience and the fictional world was well known to the Chinese audience. Traditionally, Chinese readers tend to link a writer's work with his/her life. In each published novel in the PRC, a short autobiographical sketch is put in the beginning pages of the text, providing the audience with information about a writer's past. As for the writers under discussion, readers get information about Zhang Kangkang's past as an educated youth during the Rustication movement and Zhang Xianliang's past as a Rightist who spent years in a labour camp. In *The Invisible Companion*, the "Literary Autobiographical Sketch" of the author goes as follows:

Zhang Kangkang ... was born in Hangzhou in July, 1950. She graduated from junior high school in 1966.... Zhang has had a passion for literature since her teenage years. During her years on the farm, she learned to write and published prose and short stories in newspapers and magazines.
(Zhang Kangkang 1988 i)

In the Chinese version of *Half of Man is Woman*, the introduction of the author reads:

Zhang Xianliang was born in a family of old bureaucrats in Dec. 1936. Because of his poem "Song of the Wind," he was wrongly persecuted as a Rightist, and sent to reform through labour in the bordering lands. For 22 years, he was confined in a labour camp and in prison. During the intervals of each sentence, he worked on state farms. After his rehabilitation in Sept, 1979, he started publishing novels and has won three prizes for excellent novels.... (Zhang Xianliang 1985 ii)

Assuming the roles of eyewitnesses, the authors themselves advertised the connections between their own experience and their literary creation in various ways. In Zhang Kangkang's novel, the two protagonists come from the Hangzhou city, one of the two so

called earthly paradises,² to the Barren Northern Land (*beidahuang*) in Heilongjiang for rustication. The locations—Hangzhou and Heilongjiang, coincided with those locations where Zhang Kangkang resided during the Rustication movement. Similarly, the protagonist in Zhang Xianliang's novel stays in the same labour camp in Ningxia province as did the author himself. Zhang Xianliang's protagonist's last name is Zhang, which shares the same pronunciation as the author's last name, although the scripts of the "Zhang"s are different. In Zhang Kangkang's case, the author and her heroine have a first name with a repetitive sound: Kangkang and Xiao Xiao. In this way, both writers utilized their "testimonial authority as part of their fictional discourse" (Young 51). The Chinese authors intend to retain the factuality of events in a way that is similar to the Holocaust writers, whose "reasons for reinforcing the factual authority in narrative are similar: all of these writers seem to fear that the rhetoricity of their literary medium inadvertently confers a fictiveness onto events themselves" (51).

Similar to Zhang Xianliang and Zhang Kangkang, Chen Ruoxi had gone through the Cultural Revolution firsthand. She was considered a pioneer in Scar Literature because her stories of the national catastrophe appeared as early as 1974, before Mao's death (Kao Hsin-sheng 2). A non-indigenous mainlander, Chen Ruoxi was born in Taiwan and later pursued graduate studies in the United States. As if preparing for the role of a novelist as witness, Chen came to settle down in the PRC in 1966, just in time to witness the whole process of the Cultural Revolution. After seven years of traumatic

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² There is a saying in Chinese: Whereas there is a paradise in heaven; Hangzhou and Suzhou cities are paradises on earth.

experience, Chen and her family left for Hong Kong in November 1973 and later immigrated to Canada in 1974.

Although she began to publish at a young age, Chen did not write a single piece during her stay in the PRC. Just as other Scar Literature writers who delayed in letting out their trauma, so Chen Ruoxi only began writing about the traumatic events after she left the scene of trauma. As a writer “who writes for the sake of conscience,” the mission for her writing was clear—to bear witness (Duke 53):

Once out, ... she was suddenly seized by an overwhelming urge to bear witness in writing to all the people she had left behind—old friends, passing acquaintances, simple men and women who, in their very deprivation, humiliations, and trials, had impressed her with their quiet dignity and irreducible humanity. (Leys xiii)

The other driving force in Chen Ruoxi’s creative writing was a “sense of history—an acceptance of the total historicity... an author inherits from her culture and society” (Hsu 206). In the Chinese tradition, a writer had the responsibility to record events in life. Driven by these forces, she started publishing stories of the Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong and Taiwan as early as in 1974.³ Her goal in writing is “to present a faithful picture” of her experiences and the people she knew (Duke 55). In a letter to Xia Zhiqing [C.T.Hsia] of Columbia University in 1973, she wrote:

... I’m sure you know why we left China; the experiences of these past years are something I want to describe but cannot. And besides, this lightweight stationary could not possibly bear the weight of my ponderous and

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³ “Mayor Yin” was published in *Ming Bao Monthly* in No.107, November 1974, “Keng Erh in Peking” in Nos. 110-12, February-April 1975; “Nixon’s Press Corps” in the August 5, 1976 edition of the *China Times*. “Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg” first appeared (under the title “Ching-ching’s Birthday”) in Hong Kong magazine *Ming Bao Monthly* (No.122, February 1976) and was later included in the collection of stories *Ch’en Jo-hsi tzu-hsuan chi* (Taipei, 1976) (Ing and Boldblatt 1978 ix). Her collection of short stories *Yin Xianzhang* [Mayor Yin] was published in Taiwan in 1976, and *Gui* [The Repatriates] was published in Taiwan in 1978 and Hong Kong in 1979 (Kao Hsin-sheng 1992 331-2).

complicated feelings. (Chen 1976a 5-6) ⁴

The writers discussed in this chapter all assumed the role of the novelist as witness, yet Chen Ruoxi was a writer from the outside and for the outside of the PRC, as opposed to the rest of the writers who wrote for mainlanders. Unlike Zhang Kangkang who participated actively in the Rustication movement, Chen Ruoxi could not totally involve herself in the Cultural Revolution, because she straddled the borderline of an insider and an outsider. As a consequence, she was not persecuted as Zhang Xianliang who had to spend years on a prison farm. When she came to settle down in the PRC in 1966, she brought along her origin—indigenous Taiwanese, and her education—Western humanism. Her way of observation and documentation differs from those of other writers. We find her less angry and confrontational in comparison to Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang. In Chen Ruoxi's stories of the Cultural Revolution, there is a "superb restraint," but "their quiet tone makes their substance that much more disquieting" (Hsu 216). Her stories often have a narrator who is an observer or an outsider. For example, the narrator of "The Execution of Mayor Yin" is "a detached, almost neutral observer" (221). Although Chen Ruoxi "does not voice her condemnation" of the Maoist system, her implications are shown in the incidents in her stories (229).

Whereas Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang wrote for the audience inside China, Chen Ruoxi's targeted audience was in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Therefore, the tone she chose and the role she played as a writer in her stories were closely associated with her audience, who did not have sufficient knowledge of the PRC. This insufficiency was partly due to the fact that the PRC remained a closed society during the Cultural

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⁴ I use Duke's translation of this part of the letter. See Duke p. 56.

Revolution, and partly due to the fact that the government in Taiwan censored any information on the PRC. Each of the two opposing governments- - CCP and GMD- - distorted information on its counterpart to prove itself superior to the other. Possessing the firsthand material on the PRC, Chen had to balance between the material and the possible reception of her audience. That is why the focus of her stories was always people of the PRC, who could be seen as brothers and sisters, relatives, and neighbours to the audience in Taiwan. It is through these people that Chen presented the collective trauma—the disaster in the Mao era. Events relating to political life and death were depicted through children such as in “Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg.” In a similar vein, the omnipresent surveillance of the government was portrayed through the neighbourhood as in “The Residency Check.”

In addition to the issues regarding audience and reception, Chen Ruoxi’s stories had to pass through a different kind of censorship by the government in Taiwan before publication. Ironically, her stories revealing the dark side of the Communist PRC were not welcomed by the authorities in Taiwan at first: “The first impulse of the censors was to ban their publication” (Leys xxii). According to the GMD propaganda, people in the PRC should be suffering from hunger, eating the bark of trees; but in Chen’s stories, people there buy chicken at the market, and eat mutton in restaurants. In addition, the description of the popularity that the premier Zhou En-lai enjoys incurs suspicion: “All this must be the work of an agent of the United Front!” (xxii). But later, Chen’s writings found more favour: “shrewder officials reversed this initial judgment and decided that, on the contrary, it would be better to make maximum use of Chen’s writing, with a few little cuts here and there, for anti-Communist propaganda purposes” (xxii). This decision was

as unfortunate as the earlier one, because both misunderstood Chen's significance.

Commenting on her significance, Simon Leys tells us that in the later 1970s

she remains the only Chinese creative writer of major stature to provide the audience outside the PRC with literary testimony on the Cultural Revolution era, directly experienced from inside China, at the grass-roots level. Because she has successfully tackled a forbidden reality of such momentous scope, her works have come to occupy a towering position in the middle of an artistic desert.... (Leys xv)

Her stories of Maoist China caused a big stir in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Readers responded that her stories provided proofs of history and acted like a dagger sharpened by flesh and blood (Xia 7). Chen Ruoxi herself was very much aware of censorship. As a writer publishing in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the PRC, her works received different kinds of censorship. She gave us the following example:

If a book is published in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the mainland, it invariably comes out in three different editions. Take my work, *Breaking through Enemy Siege* (Tu wei). The Taiwan edition was the original. The Hong Kong edition edited out criticisms of Mao Zedong and descriptions that touched upon the attitudes of people in Hong Kong toward the 1997 deadline (when Hong Kong will be returned to the mainland government). The mainland edition followed the Hong Kong edition, further editing out the allegedly "sexy" parts. Each side takes what it needs, without disturbing the others. (1992a 189)

Besides the common position of novelists as eyewitnesses, another commonality of the three writers is the numerous biographical clues between the author and the protagonist. The authors' portrayal of characters is connected with their own formation and experience. In Zhang Kangkang's fiction, the female protagonist comes from an intellectual family, which she rebels against in order to "make revolution" in the Barren Northern Land with her fiancé. In reality, Zhang Kangkang herself volunteered to go to the same northern land. As she recounts:

“... I had been indoctrinated in school that young people should, without any doubts, go to the countryside or to the remote borderlands. Another reason was that I realized that I could not rely on my parents, because they had their own problems. Not only did I have to be self-reliant, but I also had to do better than other people in order to accomplish anything in life.” (Leung 231)

Zhang Kangkang “worked for the propaganda section in the farm for one year,” during which she must have written many articles against her own conscience (234). She herself confessed that “after 1978, my writing became more honest about life and myself. I did not want to tell lies any more” (235). In her novel, the female protagonist writes articles praising the Rustication movement and passing wrong information about the youth on the farm. This echoes the author’s own experience. The similarities between fact and fiction demonstrate Zhang Kangkang’s deliberate intention to intertwine factual events with fictional events. Moreover, in her novel, Zhang Kangkang purposely blurs the border between reality and dreams. Readers do not get a clear picture of what happens in the real world or in the world of dreams. This phenomenon indicates her stance on the relationship between reality and imagination.

Similarities can also be found in the political life of the authors and their characters. In Zhang Xianliang’s case, he was persecuted as a Rightist in 1957 because of his poem “Dafeng ge” [Song of the Wind]” whereas his protagonist gets into political trouble because of his poetry. As shown in the fiction, the protagonist’s poetry written in 1957 is considered the “proof of his guilt” (8). The author’s introduction informs the audience that Zhang Xianliang spent 22 years in a labour camp and in a prison. The novel narrates the protagonist’s two types of reform through labour, one being in a labour camp and the other being on a state farm. Part One of *Half of Man is Woman* deals with his years in a labour camp and focuses on his encounter with the heroine; whereas the rest of

the novel recounts the events on a state farm where he enjoys more freedom and is permitted to get married.

Chen Ruoxi's documentary fiction also carries numerous connections with her life in the PRC during the Cultural Revolution. In her novel *The Repatriates*, the heroine and her husband have a similar experience as Chen Ruoxi and her husband. Moved by patriotic fervour and a desire to take part in the socialist construction, the heroine Hsin Mei and her husband Hsin Sheng come to settle down in the PRC. Unlike other Chinese students who have paid only lip service and stayed in the United States, Hsin Mei and her husband come to the PRC to serve the people in 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. In her collection of short stories, *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, several stories bear similarities with the author's experience in the PRC. In "Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg," "The Residency Check," and "Nixon's Press Corps" the heroines are all teachers, as Chen Ruoxi was in the PRC. The stories tell of everyday life in the neighbourhood near or on a campus of a university. Chen does not hesitate to mention in the collection of stories that the heroine is often disadvantaged because of her Taiwanese origin or her education in the United States. So the heroine and the author share the same historical background.

Poetic License

However similar the fictional narratives are to the authors' personal experiences as eyewitnesses, the texts under discussion are categorized as fiction. Why did the authors choose to employ the genre of fiction rather than that of diary or memoir? As James Young argues concerning documentary fiction about the Holocaust,

... by mixing actual events with completely fictional characters, a writer simultaneously relieves himself of an obligation to historical accuracy (invoking poetic license), even as he imbues his fiction with the historical authority of real events. By inviting this ambiguity, the author of documentary fiction would thus move the reader with the pathos created in the rhetoric of historically authentic characters, even as he suggests the possibility that both his events and those in the world are fictional. (52)

To the Chinese audience, *The Invisible Companion* and *Half of Man is Woman* are based on actual events—the Rustication movement and the Anti-Rightist campaign; yet the characters of these texts remain fictional. Chen Ruoxi expressed clearly that her work *Repatriates* is a novel instead of an autobiography, despite of the biographical element in the novel.⁵ As she puts it in the Preface to the book:

Although the greater part of this story is written on the basis of my personal experiences, it is primarily a fictional creation and not really autobiography. By the same token, many of the book's characters are drawn from the author's friends and acquaintances, but the characters' words and deeds are all purely of the author's devising and have nothing to do with those individuals themselves. (Chen 1978 1)

While the authors still insist on the eyewitness authority of real events, they rely upon the pathos of these events to appeal to their audience. The strongest of these appeals which Zhang Kangkang uses to evoke the audience's pathos is the parent/child relationships. She thereby presents the survival of a newborn child in crisis. When the child suffers from hunger due to the lack of dairy products, what should the father do? Is it a crime for him to steal a sheep to give his son milk? Moreover, the description of a mother's parting with her son coldly arouses an even stronger appeal to the audience, who are consequently invited to share the dilemma. Is there an alternative other than sending the child to a wet nurse? When the mother hands the son to the wet nurse, the audience

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⁵ *Repatriates*, also translated as *Repatriation*, was serialized in the *United Daily News* (Taipei) and *Ming Bao Monthly* (Hong Kong) from 1977-1978, and revised for publication in August 1978 (Duke 62).

perceives her apathy instead of her tears or heart breaking cries. Questions arise at this moment as to who is to blame. What has put human existence in such a pathetic state? The authors choose fiction instead of memoir or autobiography in order to “invoke poetic license” (Young 52). Poetic license thereby allows the authors to “move readers with the pathos created in the rhetoric of historically authentic characters,” “even though it is possible that the events and the characters in the world are fictional” (52).

Chen Ruoxi also appeals to the audience’s sense of pathos with the topic of parent/child relationships. In *The Repatriates*, everyday life in the heroine’s family with two young children is often overcast by the parents’ past, including their education in the United States. As a consequence of this past, the children will not have the slightest chance to succeed in the society. To free his children from the stigma of his own background, the hero finds a way to die as a martyr. When a flood following heavy rain threatens Nanjing, all the people in the institute where the hero and heroine work are mobilized to save the grain stores. The hero takes the chance to design a death fighting the flood in order to gain the title of a martyr (George Kao 150-54).

Through the use of poetic license, writers can also appeal to the audience’s logos to drive their points home. For example, Zhang Xianliang in *Half Man is Woman* presents dialogues between the protagonist and his horse in the discussion of impotence. In the protagonist’s dreams, he speaks with Mencius on philosophy for one moment,⁶ and then turns to chat about the contemporary political situation in China. He is patted on the head

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⁶ Mencius (372?-289? B.C.) was a Chinese philosopher and teacher of Confucianism.

by Karl Marx and together they discuss Marxist theory. Combining poetic license and literary imagination, the writers under discussion relieve themselves of the responsibility of precise factual authority, even though they still carry on the duty of the novelist as the eyewitness.

In the novels under discussion, the authors integrate testimonial authority with poetic license. The reason for the writers' integration of these concepts is because there is never a clear demarcation between fact and fiction. James Young argues that

... it may be just as difficult to delineate this border between fact and fiction in the first place; for as long as facts are presented to us in fictionalizing media and fiction is presented as fact, the categories themselves remain all too fuzzily defined. If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other.
(52)

As our discussion about the genre of autobiography demonstrates, no matter how forcefully writers attest to the truth value of their texts, autobiographers are still responsible for the subjective positions conveyed in their writings. Consequently, the facts they demonstrate can never be innocent and transparent. To avoid the responsibility of historical accuracy, the documentary fictionists gain extra space by invoking poetic license for their representation of traumatic history.

As James Young argues, the task of the documentary fictionist is to persuade readers to believe that documentary fiction, as opposed to other kinds of fiction, can be as factual and "adequate as history" (61). The documentary fictionists use the concept of testimony as the foundation for their literary creation so as to convey an unusual and compelling experience to the reader. As opposed to fiction, documentary fiction appeals to readers much more because it is more than a mere "reading experience" (61). Unlike

Holocaust documentary novelists, who usually have to give credit to the eyewitnesses for testimonial accounts, Zhang Kangkang, Zhang Xianliang, and Chen Ruoxi do not need to refer to the source. They themselves are the firsthand eyewitnesses and they are writing with the “voice of the person who was there” (Young 56). Armed with the testimonial voice, the writer of historical events functions as a camera. The pictures produced by the camera appeal to readers who are ready to accept the credibility of the images produced. Zhang Xianliang’s novel about the labour camp recounts the events of the Anti-Rightist campaign, which involved five percent to seven percent of the intellectuals of the whole nation (Lynn White 143). Zhang Kangkang’s novel on the Rustication movement narrates the story of an event encompassing 17 million youth from all parts of the PRC. Similarly to what happened to the Jewish people among whom not a single family could avoid persecution during the Holocaust, the Rustication movement had almost every family in the PRC send their youth to rural areas. Therefore, even though both writers claim their works to be fictional, readers can easily relate to facts from their own experience. In this way, the authors provide an “unusually compelling experience” for the reader on the one hand, and appeal to the readers’ own experience and associations on the other hand (Young 61). The result is the combination of fact and fiction, which thereby stimulates pathos in the reader to the utmost effect. James Young comments on this point as follows:

In a way, the literary documentarist draws on the same sort of ambiguity between factual and fictional narrative that the novelist has always generated. Indeed, much of the force of novelistic discourse seems to derive precisely from the ambiguity its dual claims of fact and fiction stimulate in the reader....
(61)

As documentary novelists, Zhang Kangkang, Zhang Xianliang, and Chen Ruoxi “conflate their narratives with rhetorically factual materials” like “eyewitness testimony” in order to gain “a certain factual authority” (Young 62).

Zhang Xianliang gained his factual authority not only because of his 22 years of experience during Ningxia province during various forms of reforms—labour camp, prison farm, and prison, but also by his reputation as a documentary novelist.⁷ His “Flesh and Soul” recounts a story of a Rightist on a state farm.⁸ The story made him famous when it was made into the film *The Herdsman's Story. Mimosa* (1984), to which *Half of Man is Woman* is a sequence, is also a documentary fiction about a Rightist who is released from a labour camp in 1961 to work on a state farm (McDougall 1995 383-85). The close link between fact and fiction in these works granted Zhang testimonial authority long before the publication of *Half of Man is Woman*.

Similarly, Chinese audiences are aware of Zhang Kangkang's eight years spent on a farm. She also established a reputation as a documentary novelist long before she published *The Invisible Companion*. When she was still working on the farm, she wrote *Fenjiexian* [The Demarcation].⁹ Because the Rustication was still ongoing and the Cultural Revolution was not yet over in the early 1970s, the novel followed the prevailing political attitude by praising the Rustication movement. As an educated youth writing about the Rustication, *The Demarcation* retained factual authority that continued to exist

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⁷ In Chinese literary criticism, the term “realist novelist” (xieshi zhuyi zuojia) rather than “documentary novelist” is used.

⁸ “Ling yu rou” [Flesh and Soul] was published in *Shuofang* 9, September 1980. It was translated as “Body and Soul” in and published in *Prize-winning Stories from China, 1980-1981* by Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1985 (King 1991 335).

⁹ *Fenjiexian* [The Demarcation] was published by the Shanghai remin chubanshe in 1975.

when she published *The Invisible Companion*. Unlike *The Demarcation*, *The Invisible Companion* criticizes the movement bitterly.

Although Chen Ruoxi wrote for a different audience—the audience in Taiwan instead of those in the PRC, the key word that defined her writing was still testimony. Having survived the Cultural Revolution without a single piece of writing in the most sterile period of her life, once out, Chen Ruoxi had “a load of living reality that possesses her and presses to be delivered” (Leys xxvi). She was urged to document her experience not only by herself but also by her characters: “This crowd of characters in her memory, countless faces jostling and crying to be heard, who will leave her no rest until they all get written down” (xxvi). For herself, writing served the purpose of assimilating the trauma of seven years in the PRC. As Michael S. Duke comments on her situation:

I believe that through the writing of this fictional account, based on her personal experiences and employing the technique of the objective third-person narrator, Chen Ruoxi came to “final” terms with her Cultural Revolution experiences and arrived at a psychologically acceptable personal explanation of her self-chosen re-expatriation in the light of her continued commitment to the improvement of Chinese society. (Duke 62-63)

Just as Zhang Kangkang’s novels reveal her viewpoint on the Rustication movement, which varies in different periods of time; so Chen Ruoxi’s stories reflect the complicated aspects of everyday life during the Cultural Revolution. It is only when writers themselves are present at the very site of the event that they can produce convincing fiction, as Leys comments on Chen Ruoxi’s case:

[F]or one who has really lived there as a Chinese among Chinese, who has been absorbed, sucked into the maelstrom of reality, who by turns has been sustained and bruised by the dense network of Chinese human relationship—subtle, all-pervasive, warm and cruel, supple and ruthless, bitter and funny, odious and lovable, and always overwhelming—judgments are not easy to pass, and conclusions not lightly drawn. For a writer shaken by an experience

to the very roots of his or her self and left confused and wounded, on the edge of a new discovery, of a new intuition of the world and of one's place in it, fiction writing becomes a uniquely effective response. (Leys xxiii-xxiv)

Chen Ruoxi's audience in Taiwan had two choices for the portrayal of the PRC during the Cultural Revolution: to believe Chen's documentary fiction or to believe the GMD's propaganda. Here, Chen's writings were destined to win, because they were from "the literal voice of a person who was there" (Young 56). As the audience accepted Chen's stories as real, they also expected her to abide by the laws of a serious writer:

If fiction is the best tool for exploring a perplexing and manifold experience, the very laws of the craft prevent the writer from falsifying that experience and from imposing any prefabricated conceptions upon the reader, under the penalty of automatically killing the writer's own creation. Here, artistic achievement is the reward for, and the guarantee of, intellectual integrity. (Leys xxiv)

As if bound by a contract, the writer and the audience reach an agreement—that what she writes is true: "She is now a true writer, she writes as she can, as if under dictation, she is driven by an inner necessity that leaves her no choice but to bear witness to life and reality—our only masters" (xxvi).

Because of their reputation as documentary fictionists, the writers achieve their aim, which is to have readers believe their texts as "true stories." It is only after writers and readers reach this agreement that documentary fiction can generate an emotional response from readers and subsequently reach the "fiction's highest achievement" (Young 62):

That the reader responds to a work differently when he believes that it is "true" and has actually happened than he does when he believes the work only "fiction" is a principal part of a documentary fiction's phenomenology; as such, the emotional experience of such an illusion becomes the aim of the writer. (62)

The emotional experience is an illusion in the hybrid narrative, because the authors create the *sense* that what it represents is real, not that it is real (62).

Using literary texts as testimonies, the three writers under discussion set out to achieve the aim of documentary fiction, which includes “an emotional response to the sense of ‘real,’ a reinforcement of a work’s supposed factuality, and the establishment of the authentic link between writers, text, and events” (Young 62). These writers of documentary fiction present history by referring to their experience as firsthand eyewitnesses as well as by invoking poetic license. When writing the history of the mass sufferings, Chen Ruoxi, Zhang Kangkang, and Zhang Xianliang employ images and symbols to present larger pictures of the traumatic events, in addition to the underlying trope of the eyewitness. These images include prisons, the castrated man, the liar, and the socialist superman. Although what they present is limited individual accounts during two political movements, the authors endeavour to show the panoramic view of a nation during a catastrophe. In the sections to follow, I will compare Chen Ruoxi’s texts written outside China with the texts by the other two writers written inside China. I will show their individual ways in their testimonies of historical events.

Testimony of Daily Life in the Mao Era

Chen Ruoxi as a writer outside China represents the state’s surveillance upon and suppression of people through everyday life. Because she is writing outside China, she can compose her stories without worrying about the state censorship in the PRC. For example, she names one of her stories “Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg,” which is published before the end of the Cultural Revolution. She would have had absolutely no

chance of publishing a story with such a title in the PRC. Chen Ruoxi also exposes the cause of unhappiness in an individual's life story. In "Keng Erh in Peking" Chen points out clearly that it is the authorities who prevent Keng Erh from marrying a lady whose father was a landlord. Although Chen Ruoxi does not accuse the authorities in the story, her reasoning appears apparent to readers. These examples show that Chen Ruoxi as a writer outside the PRC can write about dehumanization and imprisonment of the Mao era more openly than Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang writing inside China.

In "Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg" Chen Ruoxi demonstrates political tensions through children's games, and thus implies the severity of political pressure on people's daily life. If the behaviour and speech of children are under surveillance to such a degree, then readers can imagine the political pressure on adults. In the story we can see that the Chinese Panopticon works effectively in Maoist China that surveillance exists everywhere—in one's work place in the public sphere and among neighbours in the private sphere. Anybody can report on anybody else and the primary motivation is the display of class consciousness. In the story, the person who reports on a four-year-old Hsiao Hung is another little kid in the same kindergarten, which is a day care centre for the staff of an institute.¹⁰ Hsiao Hung has been reported to have said a reactionary slogan: "Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg." Instead of dismissing the report as a children's game, the Party cadres of the political section and the broadcast section come to investigate the whole affair with a tape recorder (42). They are determined to find out who has taught her to shout this slogan. Although Hsiao Hung's father came from an approved background,

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¹⁰ The standard *pinyin* for "Hsiao Hung" should be "Xiaohong," but I retain the spelling used by the translator in the text.

her mother was from a landlord's family. For this reason her mother tries harder in everything she does (44). As both parents are away, Hsiao Hung stays in the kindergarten day and night. The Party cadres come to the kindergarten at ten o'clock at night and ask to have Hsiao Hung wake up. They take turns in "urging her to confess" in order to be "Chairman Mao's good little girl" (43). They question her again and again: "Why did you shout that reactionary slogan? Where did you hear the slogan? Did your daddy say it? Did your mommy say it? Did your teacher say it?" (43). The seriousness of the matter is predicted by the kindergarten teacher: the Party cadres have taped everything and "it will be part of her record forever" (44). The narrator of the story feels sorry for Hsiao Hung:

Poor Hsiao Hung, only four years old, and already she had all of this recorded against her. The tape would be filed away, and if in the future she did anything out of line it would be brought out to prove that she had been a "reactionary since childhood" (44).

Unaware of the gravity of such matters, the children in the kindergarten continue to challenge each other as to who dares to say "Chairman Mao is a Rotten Egg." Soon after, the narrator begins to worry because her son Ching-ching has said it as well. After some questioning, the narrator finds out the details:

That afternoon, as [Tung-tung and Ching-ching] were playing in the garden they had begun by calling anyone they could think of a "rotten egg." After shouting "Daddy's a Rotten egg!" "Mommy's a Rotten egg!" Ching-ching had let slip the name of the one person he should never ever mention. (47)

The narrator is advised that spanking her son will not solve the problem. She should teach her son to love Chairman Mao, as if she has not done so. She feels deeply wronged because her love of her country has not been recognized despite all her efforts. She and her husband did not want their child to be born in a foreign land and they rushed back to China so that their child would be born on their native land. She thinks angrily:

How could anyone say that we did not love Chairman Mao? Why, in order to follow him we had abandoned our families and had come to China, where we had neither friends nor relatives. Time and again my husband told Ching-ching that Chairman Mao was the only family we had. (48)

The story reflects how the Chinese panopticon works: children spy on each other and adults are watched through their children's behaviour. In the narrator's case, no matter how much she and her husband have contributed to the motherland, one slogan from their child can harm their political status and destroy their academic career.

Although adults are cautious in everyday life, children enjoy being mischievous. This time it is Auntie Wang's son, Tung-tung, who has said the wrong thing. Ching-ching tells his family this story: "'In the yard,' Ching-ching stammered, pointing to the window. 'Tung-tung dared me...to say Chairman Mao... a Rotten egg. But I wouldn't say it. It was Tung-tung who said it!'" (64). Now it is Auntie Wang's turn to try to keep her son's behaviour a secret. She makes sure that neighbours who have known about it would not spread the word around. This time the narrator is in a favourable position: "From then on Auntie Wang became my very close friend, and even her husband nodded and smiled whenever she saw me" (66). Although presenting a dark age when a wrong slogan from children could send their parents to prison, Chen Ruoxi displays "small happenings in everyday life of ordinary people" in a subdued tone (Leys xxi). She passes to readers detailed information about the Maoist society in her well-woven story. The intensity of the political situation is reflected in children's games and the suppression of people is depicted in their worries, scrutinizing, and caution. In the dark age, the focus of life is

reduced to one big icon—Mao. Individuals do not dare to celebrate their own birthdays, but are regulated to celebrate Mao's birthday.¹¹ The narrator of the story says:

Since our return to China we had even forgotten our own birthdays. For me birthdays had become a thing of the past except when my colleagues reminded me at the end of each year to take my ration card and buy a catty of Strength and Prosperity Noodles—Chairman Mao's birthday noodles. (Chen 37-38)

In this society, everyday life is saturated with Chairman Mao's quotations and Maoist concepts. These details of life are difficult for people in non-totalitarian states to believe, but Chen Ruoxi convinces readers with her firsthand experience.

In Chen Ruoxi's *The Repatriates*, political tension is present in university teaching. In the following excerpt we can see the surveillance around Hsin Mei, an English teacher.¹² We can also see the links between the author's experience and that of the protagonist in the fiction. Hsin Mei, the protagonist, works as an English teacher in Nanjing Hydraulic Institute. Hsin Mei came from Taiwan and went to school in the United States. The similarity between the author and the protagonist carries the weight of factuality, which convinces reader that the incidents in the fiction are real.

"I Love Chairman Mao" shows an incident in the protagonist's teaching experience. The incident might sound farcical to readers in Taiwan or the West, but it conveys a grave potential danger for an individual in that particular time and place in the Maoist Society. Here, the teaching of the English language is no longer a simple task of passing knowledge, but a dangerous field. The audience can pick on a word or a sentence

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¹¹ Mao's birthday was December 26th.

¹² The standard *pinyin* for "Hsin Mei" and "" should be "Xin Mei," but I retain the spelling used by the translator in the text.

a teacher uses in class and fabricate the implications. Hsin Mei gets criticism from her colleagues for her way of teaching the verb “love.” Wang Te-kuei, who has been assigned to assist her in teaching, comments on one of her lessons:

“In a recent class, she tried to explain the application of the English verb ‘love’ to the students. She wrote on the board the sentence *wo ai Chungkuo* (I love China) and asked one of the students to come up and translate it into English. The student did it without capitalizing the letter C in China. After pointing out the mistake, Hsiao Hsin went on to say that if China is not written with a capital C, it means porcelain, and that a foreigner might think that the writer meant to say he loved porcelain rather than China. It seems to me very undignified to lump China and porcelain together like that....” (Chen 1980 156)¹³

Although it is a fact that the word “china” means differently with or without the capital C, Wang thinks it blaspheme to put China and porcelain together. As a solution, Wang suggests that “I love Chairman Mao” is a better sentence to illustrate the verb “love.”

“If the matter had been thought out beforehand, ‘I love Chairman Mao’ could have been substituted for ‘I love China.’ The meaning of the first sentence not only expresses a beautiful and noble sentiment but is also free from possible complications.” (156)

It is not until this point that Hsin Mei realizes that “Wang Te-kuei has been assigned to her class not so much to assist her as to keep her under observation” (156). At the end of the meeting, a woman teacher who is a Party member concludes:

“This is Hsiao Hsin’s first year of teaching, and she’s still feeling her way”....
 “It is understandable that she should make an occasional mistake. We must also not lose sight of the influence that her background must have had on her. It is inevitable that the reactionary educational system of Taiwan and imperialist America’s corrupt civilization should be reflected in her way of thinking. It seems to me that Hsiao Hsin should spend more time studying the works of Chairman Mao and using Mao Tse-tung thought to remake herself. If she does that and if we all try our best to help her, I’m sure she will become a good teacher.” (157)

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¹³ “Hsiao Hsin” means “Little Hsin,” which is another way to address Hsin Mei.

It is a common practice in Maoist China for people to draw connections between an individual's actions and background. A targeted person with unfavourable background would be criticized for not loving New China or Chairman Mao enough. As for Hsin Mei, her mistakes are always said to reflect the influence of her education in Taiwan and the United States. Due to the government's propaganda in Maoist China, people assume that Taiwan's education system is reactionary and that the civilization of imperialist America is corrupt, even though they have never been to these places. The incident also shows how well the Chinese Panopticon works when teachers are observed and criticized at the slightest deviation to what they should teach in class.

Hsin Mei's experience has a lot in common with the author's. Chen Ruoxi and her husband made the brave decision to settle down in the PRC, but soon were disappointed, as Simon Leys comments on her decision:

As she was soon to discover, that decision was politically naive; yet the decision was also incredibly generous and courageous. (That is precisely what some Maoist sycophants among her overseas compatriots can least forgive her for, since they wisely chose to retain the best of both worlds. They enjoy all the perquisites afforded to them by Western universities, and from time to time they make short luxury trips to China, enough to bolster their image and prestige as China experts in the eyes of their foreign audiences.) (Leys xii-xiii)

It is the experience in the PRC that has inspired Chen Ruoxi to produce her documentary fiction.

In the texts under discussion, there are many instances showing how the Mao era dehumanized people. Dehumanization was one of the characteristics of Chinese socialism. The system intentionally reduced people from complex beings into simpletons, who interacted with the world on a sole principle- -class struggle. We can find numerous

examples of dehumanization in Chen Ruoxi's short stories. In "The Execution of Mayor Yin," we see such a scene: the narrator of the story arrives at Lao Yin's home upon a visit and finds Lao Yin in trouble. Some Party cadres are interrogating him. Teams of Party cadres are sent to read Chairman Mao's quotations and to persuade him to provide the details of his son's death, as the authorities seek evidence against Mayor Yin Fei-lung. They fabricate details for Lao Yin: Mayor Yin Fei-long shot Lao Yin's son. According to them, since it is class hatred, Lao Yin should avenge it and speak up to settle accounts with Mayor Yin, even though the Yins are relatives. They urge Lao Yin as follows:

"This only happened twenty-some years ago, so why can't you remember?"...
 "Besides, he was serving under your son. So many people knew about this, how come your son never mentioned a word to you? He was only eighteen years old, so full of life, and that evil warlord Yin Fei-lung shot him: This is class hatred; how can you not avenge that? And how did your *own* son die? These are the accounts that the Cultural Revolution must settle." (Chen 27-28)

This scene shows the Party cadres coerce Lao Yin into putting class hatred above the traditional relationships between relatives and to denounce Mayor Yin to suit their own purpose. Lao Yin's refusal to cooperate with the Party cadres leads to his death (36).

Another aspect of dehumanization in the Mao era is the constraints that the party-state imposed on people's personal lives. Although unhappy about the constraints, people knew they had no other choice but to conform after they got used to a life with little privacy. However, for intellectuals who just returned from the West, these constraints were difficult for them to accept. In Chen Ruoxi's short story "Night Duty," the protagonist Liu Hsiang-tung experiences the frustration of a regulated life on a school farm. The farm's broadcasting airs certain songs at certain times indicating activities of the day:

The farm's broadcasting had begun. Hsiang-tung did not need a watch to know that it was five-thirty. Every morning the loudspeakers blared out "The East Is Red" to rouse everyone out of bed; then there were revolutionary songs for relaxation during lunchtime and work breaks; and finally "The East Is Red" sent everyone else to bed again. Life was thus regulated, never changing,... (68)

Living in a culture of collectivity, most Chinese people conform to the regulations, especially during political campaigns, in order to avoid trouble; whereas others participate actively in establishing and implementing regulations in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Party. Facing violation of his personal freedom, Hsiang-tung has thought of complaining but gave up the thought.

During his first days in Nanking [Nanjing], before he became accustomed to the shrill loudspeakers, Hsiang-tung felt that they violated his personal freedom, interfered with his train of thought, and virtually forced him into conforming. He had even toyed with the idea of mentioning these objections to the comrade leader as a suggestion for improvement. But he soon discovered that the broadcasting was an integral part of daily life in New China, so he forced himself to accept it, eventually learning to take it in stride. (68-69)

He learns the way to survive in the dehumanized political environment.

"Keng Erh in Peking" is a story in which Chen Ruoxi displays the violation of personal freedom in a repatriate's life. Keng Erh returns to China after completing his doctorate in the United States and works in the Academy of Science, one of the highest academic institutions in the PRC. A bachelor in his late forties, his only pleasure in his spare time seems to be the Fire Pot in a restaurant.¹⁴ His two pursuits in marriage all end in vain, not due to individual choices but to political reasons. His first pursuit ends at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Shortly after their engagement, his fiancée puts in a

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¹⁴ A ring-shaped pot that fits over a charcoal stove and slips down around its chimney. The pot is filled with broth in which the customer cooks thinly sliced meat and vegetables to his own taste. (152)

verbal request for marriage at the textile mill where she works and is told “by her superiors that the matter could be taken care of after the campaign had run its course” (169).¹⁵ Shortly after, she suggests that she and Keng Erh not to be seen together because other people are “talking about them” (169). The final gesture of the breach comes when she returns his engagement gift, the wristwatch. The real reason behind this is that Keng Erh and his fiancée belong to two different classes. Keng Erh is a member of the intelligentsia, who should be re-molded and re-educated by the class of workers and peasants, including his fiancée. Actually, she becomes an assistant section leader of the Workers’ Publicity Corps assigned to the task of re-educating the intellectuals in Peking Technology University (171-72).

Whereas his first pursuit fails due to public opinion and a political campaign, his second one is disrupted with the authorities of the Academy of Science. The authorities postpone granting Keng Erh’s request for permission to marry (185). A year passes before Keng Erh hears from the head of his department. The head informs Keng Erh that his fiancée’s father “was a landlord” and her ex-husband “committed suicide” when under investigation in a political campaign. Moreover, she herself stands accused of vanity and cherishing city life (186-87). Therefore the conclusion from the head is:

“For those of us who work in a highly sensitive spot such as the Academy of Sciences, a wife with this sort of background is certainly not ideal. Our superiors are very concerned about your marital situation, and it’s on the minds of your colleagues as well...” (187)

The hope of marriage is ruined and Keng Erh remains single and alone at forty-nine years of age. In her detailed and moderate description of the repatriates’ personal lives, Chen

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¹⁵ A citizen has to get permission to marry from his or her work place first before trying to get the marriage certificate.

Ruoxi demonstrates the party-state's surveillance on individuals and its violation of personal freedom.

In her writings about the Cultural Revolution, Chen Ruoxi has reached her aim of writing, which is to depict events and people in her life truthfully. By employing "plain and unadorned diction" she has created a group of ordinary and honest characters who would stay in readers' minds (72). Her restrained tone sends implicated messages like silent screams to readers, who cannot but feel the power of her narratives.

Testimony of the Rustication Movement

As a writer inside China, Zhang Kangkang focuses on the Rustication movement. Because she herself has experienced the movement, her representation of it stands truthful to readers. Unlike Chen Ruoxi who could write explicitly outside China, Zhang Kangkang sometimes can only allude to what she intends to write about. Instead of direct condemnation of the Rustication movement, she explores through the concept of the liar to demonstrate her point. From time to time, she has to employ Western fairy tales to imply her meaning.

In comparison to Chen Ruoxi who employs the concept of imprisonment in a more general sense, Zhang Kangkang points out that the farm is a physical site of imprisonment for the youth in *The Invisible Companion*. She conveys the idea that the Rustication movement, despite all the florid wordy tributes paid to it, is in fact an exile. According to Zhang Kangkang, "God had gone back up to heaven after his overthrow, the newborn Red Guards out to the countryside. To each his proper place, Amen" (67). The association between God and the Red Guards carries several layers of political

implications. After all, it is the Red Guards who have smashed God with Mao's sanction. The church, where Xiao Xiao and Chen Xu met in Hangzhou, has been turned into an office for a Red Guard newspaper, where Chen Xu, its editor, sleeps among the Big Character Posters.¹⁶ It is only one of the Christian churches, along with Buddhist temples and Muslim mosques, that the Red Guards demolished or changed their usage during the Cultural Revolution. After the Red Guards had been used by Mao to achieve his political aim, Mao sent them to the countryside. The Rustication was an exile, but the fanatic Red Guards at the time welcomed it. They went to the countryside or bordering lands to show their loyalty to Mao and their rebellion against their family and tradition. They regarded themselves as agents to carry the revolution to the farthest corners of China. But to their disappointment, they landed in a world of reality, instead of the expected world of their imagination. The youth in *The Invisible Companion* arrive at a farm that has been a prison farm in the great barren northern land:

... one batch after another of city kids [replaced] the filthy, ragged labour-camp inmates. The ruined earth walls, the watchtowers, the lookout posts, all these reminded them over and over again that this had once been a prison camp, a prison camp, a prison camp... (2)

Life on the farm proves to be a cold reality. During the day, there are quarrels between the educated youth and in the evenings, tears and crying come from "all the southern girls in the platoon" (3).¹⁷ They have heard about the flood in the southern provinces of China and they predict that they will never see their mothers again. Living and working as a

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¹⁶ Big Character Posters are articles or slogans written on big sheets of paper with large characters and posted on bulletin boards or walls. They were employed at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution for propaganda and attack on individuals.

community, these youth are not only alienated physically from their families and the cities where they have grown up, but they are also alienated psychologically from their childhood memories, urban life style, and former education. Day in and day out, their enthusiasm to make revolution wears out and consequently disillusionment creeps in. While most youth give up thinking about the situation, Chen Xu insists that the Rustication is a variation of reforming through labour, a treatment usually given to criminals.

However, the family and friends of the educated youth can hardly imagine the fights, tears, and homesickness in this community because they constantly receive fabricated reports about the Rustication movement. The Rustication is glorified to such an extent that Chen Xu and Xiao Xiao's visit home is suspected and questioned by his parents. Consequently, the welcome from them becomes half-hearted and thus spoils the youth's joy of being home, because the parents link their visit with possible political connotations. His father comments on their visit: "I am in the Workers' Propaganda Team,¹⁷ and I'm out trying to get people to go off to the countryside, and then my own son..." (63). His mother adds: "People may say you snuck back, or, well, all kinds of ugly things" (63). In this way, politics comes between natural human relationships and thus hinders communication between family members. Moreover, it deprives them of their own ability for logical reasoning. In this particular age, thinking is directed according to Party's policies. Anticipating his family's reaction to their visit, Xiao Xiao has wondered

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¹⁷ During the Rustication, the army structure was used to organize youth in the bordering lands. Thus regiment, platoon, etc. were used.

¹⁸ During the Cultural Revolution, such groups were formed and sent to schools and universities, for the purpose of circulating Chairman Mao's Thoughts.

on their way home whether: “But they’ll say that we’re, that we’re deserters!” (4).

“People” and “they” in the conversations refer to the Chinese masses whose ideology is completely controlled by the Party.

Imprisonment works on a more concrete level on the farm when Chen Xu experiences confinement. From his visit to Hangzhou, he has obtained proof stating that he was a progressive youth during the beginning years of the Cultural Revolution and therefore should be granted important positions on the farm. Instead of getting an important position on the farm, he faces interrogation and arrest. The process of the arrest goes as follows:

“Who do you think you are?”

“Political Work Unit.”

“I’m not going!”

“You don’t go peaceably, we’ll have to tie you up!”

“Try it!”

“Try resisting arrest!”

“Where is your warrant?”

“Judicial process was squashed a long time ago; we’ve got a seal.”

“This is a frame-up!”

“Come on, the government frame someone? Relax!”

“What are you after?”

“You went absent from the Farm for a month without leave; what sort of reward do you expect?”

“I went back to do an investigation.”

“An investigation of who?”

“Myself. I wasn’t a reactionary student, I was a Red Guard leader. I have got proof...”

“Save your breath. Let’s go.”

(96)

We can see here that the arrest is not conducted with legal procedures and people in power can do whatever they want to an individual. After two months of confinement, Chen Xu comes back with a thinner face and high cheekbones. His eyes are “sunken with dark shadows under them” (115). “A straw rope circled his waist over a tattered jacket,

with nothing under it” (115-6). Yet because their registration is on the farm and not in the city, Chen Xu and Xiao Xiao have to stay on the farm. Upon Xiao Xiao’s suggestion, they decide to get married.

In *The Invisible Companion*, we can see how the youth on the farm are gradually dehumanized by their living conditions. The heroine, Xiao Xiao, begins with a firm belief in love but ends up being bitter and disappointed, despite how much she loses in order to earn the right to love. She goes to see Chen Xu and brings food to him when he is serving his interment for trying to protect his teacher, Mr. Jin (77). Xiao Xiao is therefore denounced from her family because of her love for Chen Xu (73). Although her father threatens by saying: “If you love him, don’t even come back home again!” she retorts: “I want love, I want a comrade” (73). When they come back to Hangzhou for a visit, she can neither go to her parents’ home, nor is she welcomed at Chen Xu’s parents’ house. Consequently, she has to stay in the storage shed in the backyard of his parent’s house (87). In spite of all this, she offers to marry him when he is in an adverse condition. After their application to marry is rejected by the authorities on the farm, they have to move in together in a farm shed on the suggestion of their friends. In this way they make their marriage a *fait accompli* in order to get it approved.

Marriage of the educated youth was a problem during the Rustication movement. On the surface, marriage seemed a solution for the youths to stay in the countryside forever, yet the government insisted on the policy for late marriages and family planning for the youths in the countryside. The suggested ages of late marriage for the female and male were 25 and 28 respectively. Since the policy of family planning encountered resistance with peasants, the government hoped that the educated youth would set

examples for peasants in rural China (Liu Xiaomeng 501-2).¹⁹ It was difficult for married couples to get housing in the poor rural areas (504-5).

These factors explain why Xiao Xiao and Chen Xu cannot get a license to marry. While discussing Chen Xu and Xiao Xiao's marriage, some local women relentlessly criticize the authorities on the farm: "They've been going together openly for over a year, why didn't you people over at the Farm give them a license?" (Zhang Kangkang 1996 126). Paradoxically, officer Liu approves their marriage with his promise to allocate to them a light bulb, which is "even more important than a marriage certificate. There wasn't a hallway, not a latrine on the whole Farm with a light in it" (127).

After her marriage, Xiao Xiao is doubly victimized by the Chinese patriarchal society and by the poverty of her time. When Xiao Xiao and Chen Xu arrive at his parents' with their son, "Xiao Xiao was still not welcome.... The one who was welcome was the latest addition to the Chen clan, the first grandson" (206). The shortage of products, including any milk product to raise a child, forces Xiao Xiao and Chen Xu to send their son to a wet nurse in the outskirts of Hangzhou (207). Owing to the hardship and destitution, Xiao Xiao loses her ability to protect and to love her own son.

The doors of the bus closed. She smiled and waved to the wet nurse and the baby. She had thought that she would cry, but not a tear came.... Saying goodbye was not at all so difficult as she had supposed. Nor had she felt the so-called maternal grief that she had imagined. She was leaving very calmly; it was even something of a relief, as though she had only found the baby and now had finally returned him to his family. Why in her case had there been no trace of the final farewell scene so common in stories? (210)

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¹⁹ Varied in degrees, by the 1970s Chinese rural families still held on to the traditional beliefs of "Preference of male descendents to female ones," "More sons, more fortunes," "Raising sons to protect one's life in old age" (Liu Xiaomeng 503).

Before her divorce, she has a chance to see her son again, but she cannot forge her maternal love:

Their meeting had lasted all of forty minutes, and nothing at all had happened. But deep inside she had been waiting all along to be inspired with some maternal feeling. She wondered how she could be so calm, as though she were looking at a friend's baby. She was a little disappointed in herself, and yet somehow she rejoiced when they got off the bus. (283)

We can see that hardship and poverty deprive her of a woman's most natural feeling, that of maternity.

As a significant part of Scar Literature, the literature on the Rustication and the labour camp shows the scars left by the political movement resulting from the idea of rustication. The literary texts under discussion endeavour to lay bare the detrimental consequence of these movements- -the dehumanization and the distortion of moral values. In a sense, the idea of rustication and the labour camp originated from the same notion that physical labour could improve people's mind. The purpose of the Rustication movement was to re-educate the youth from cities using workers and farmers, rather than books and professors in universities. Similarly, on labour camps, the Rightists were supposed to be reformed by being forced into labour. During these movements the Mao era again relied on its means of discipline and punishment in order to realize its goals. For the Rustication movement, discipline was reinforced through the setting of models. Actually, almost all communist regimes exercise discipline with the help of models.

Regardless of the difference between various kinds of socialism or communism, including the kinds practiced by the Soviet Union and China, the notion of the "Socialist New Man" existed in the variations of socialism. This was

a historically shaped model of man, based on the socially accepted system of values, a model of what man *should* be—hence, not a true individual “ego” or a specific personality, but a *model* of such an “ego” or personality, a construct which bears the name “socialist Man.” ...It can be interpreted and formulated in various ways, but it is always ambitious and beautiful—against the background of everyday reality of the socialist society known to us—a true socialist “superman.” (Schaff 259-60)

In China, the Socialist New Man should be the one who lived up to the slogan: “Read Chairman Mao’s works, heed what Chairman Mao says, act according to Chairman Mao’s instructions and be chairman Mao’s good soldiers/students.” The Chinese Socialist New Man was not only ambitious, but also obedient and loyal to the Party. This willing revolutionary possessed a superficially clear sense of identity and self-esteem: “I am as you desire me” (Fromm 74-76).

Guo Chunmei, one of the major characters in *The Invisible Companion*, exemplifies the revolutionary model, whose traits should be selflessness, heroism, and the ability to execute the Party’s policies, even without complete comprehension of them. As an instrument of the Party, she does not possess a sense of self. She is therefore devoid of her own thinking, or she gives it up and instead embraces the Party’s policies as her own decisions. She does not possess her own body either. In one of Xiao Xiao’s dreams, Zhang Kangkang gives us a grotesque picture of Guo Chunmei who is the incarnation of a Socialist New Man:

Someone yelled, Come see the iron girl!... [Xiao Xiao] sees Guo Chunmei, stripped down to a sleeveless undershirt, digging manure. Her chest was as flat as a man’s. She was swinging an enormous pickaxe; it was the size of a ploughshare. Xiao Xiao reached out to pick it up, but it weighed a ton and she couldn’t budge it. And yet Chunmei just touched it and a lump of frozen manure the size of a jeep split open with a thud. ... She touched Guo Chunmei’s pickaxe, then her hands. She discovered that they were made of steel. So were her feet, and her hair was made of strands of wire, her eyes from two steel bullets. ... Have you really turned into an iron girl? “ (112-13)

Several layers of implications exist in the preceding passage. Firstly, during the Mao era it was fashionable to name a unit “Iron Brigade” or “Tough Team,” in order to imply the unbreakable revolutionary spirit and the iron-will to win. People believed in Mao’s theory that revolutionary spirits could produce endless inexhaustible material power. Guo Chunmei is one example of the “heroes/heroines” of the time who labour beyond human abilities. In reality, because human bodies are vulnerable, Guo develops arthritis and has to have one of her legs cut off. In spite of this, she insists on staying on the farm in Heilongjiang, a northern province with extremely cold winters, instead of returning to Hangzhou, which would be a much better place for her health. Secondly, Guo is devoid of conventional femininity. In the Mao era, women were encouraged to overlook their biological difference from men and tried to prove that they are as physically able as men in all walks of life.

The experiments involving the Socialist New Man proved to be a failure in spite of the ideal model- -ambitious and selfless. As He Baogang summarizes:

Mao Zedong attempted to mould “the socialist man” by mobilizing and indoctrinating the masses. In reality, the so-called “socialist [new] man” turned out to be a hypocrite: apparently an altruist, but inwardly still predominantly motivated by innate drives such as self-interest and self-protection. And after all, this “social experiment” proved so cruel that it was undertaken at the cost of millions of people’s lives; it totally ignored individuality, privacy and self-respect, and finally it forced the Chinese to behave in ways defined by the instructions of Maoism and the Party. (He 102)

In the text, Guo Chunmei can be regarded as a hypocrite when she takes part in building a dam. She has to obey the Party Secretary’s instructions during building a dyke through the use of manpower instead of machines. Although she disagrees with the policy personally, she has to follow it. When others suggest using bulldozers to build the dam,

she dismisses the suggestion and reprimands them. She compares the choice to use manpower or machine power to the choice between the socialist line and the capitalist line. "It is an important matter of the correct political line. It's the fundamental question of whether shovels can defeat bulldozers and men win against machines" (Zhang Kangkang 1996 396). But, as Schaff says,

propaganda itself will not do the job. Without the creation of appropriate material conditions, without developing socialist democracy, not in words but in deeds, without furnishing living personal models of a new man, this propaganda will be so far from obtaining results that, on the contrary, by remaining empty verbiage it will discredit the slogans proclaimed and so devalue in popular estimation the values proclaimed. (267)

Guo Chunmei is aware of the uselessness of propaganda as empty verbiage as well. That is why she gives tacit consent to Radish's behaviour- -driving the bulldozer at night to build the dam. Guo Chunmei "seemed to have no intention whatever of putting a stop to his work. In fact, with Radish working like this, progress on the dyke would be much faster" (Zhang Kangkang 411). The example of Guo's hypocrisy is one of many examples of this abnormal age in Chinese history, when nobody dares to point out the truth for fear of being dismissed from the revolutionary masses or being persecuted. Instead, people just wait and watch the failure of most social experiments. In the test, when the wind carries sparks from a cigarette butt to a bush fire thereby burning the whole dyke, the revolution led by Guo seems nothing but a farce, or in Hegel's/Engels's terms: "the irony of history" (Schaff 242).

As He Baogang says, the social experiments involving the Socialist New Man and the Rustication cost millions of people's lives. Readers learn from the novel that the leaders sent trucks of youth to extinguish a bush fire, due to their belief in Mao's

instruction that “human beings can definitely conquer nature.” The youth never come back, including Guo Chunmei’s brother (Zhang Kangkang 1996 406). For most educated youth, various political movements deprive them of their individuality, privacy, and principles of moral values which they have been clinging to from their childhood.

In addition to the discrepancy between theory and practice regarding the Socialist New Man, Zhang Kangkang raises issues concerning moral values. In the catastrophic age people no longer have consistent moral values to guide their interactions with other people. As we have discussed in the previous chapters, the Maoist power not only controls people’s ideology but also their morality. He Baogang analyses the infusion of morality into political institutions in China (He 140-54). He argues that in ancient and contemporary China the government always combined politics and morality in its ruling. Using its power, the government set an example of “moral rectitude” for all citizens to follow. It proposed that if all citizens would uphold virtues, a society should be peaceful and harmonious. Therefore politics was mixed with ethics, and the government should improve the ethical conduct of all citizens (141).

The Maoist rule legitimized a goal-based morality, hence, morality was judged according to whether or not it served the primary goal which was the establishment of a Communist society (147):

The goal-based Chinese Marxist morality shows concern for what is taken to be the interest of society as a whole such as national glory; ... The official goal-based morality demands that individuals should be sacrificed for the well-being of collective interests. What is more, this kind of morality even denies the right to complain about making such a sacrifice. (147)

During the Cultural Revolution, a simplified dichotomy set by Maoism justified violence when the proletarian class tried to win the struggle of the two lines: socialist and capitalist

lines. Worse still, the constant political struggle within the Party resulted in inconsistent policies; consequently, people had to follow the waves even if one policy contradicted the previous ones. Although the primary goal of the Chinese Marxist morality remained unchanged, the unstable politics created confusion in people's moral judgment. Such is the case with the youth in the novel *The Invisible Companion*. Because of their young age, these youth still try to make sense regarding the issue of "right" or "wrong."

Early in the novel, Xiao Xiao wants to figure out Chen Xu's personality. Chen Xu seems to have told some lies. He tells a driver that he and Xiao Xiao are going to the bookstore instead of going home and he denies to the leader on the farm that he has initiated the gang fighting among the young people on the farm. Wondering when he has learned to lie, Xiao Xiao asks him for a reason. This request causes Chen Xu to blow up:

"Why? Why? Even you are starting to interrogate me! Don't you think I've been interrogated enough already? In '68, when I was charged with being a 'reactionary student', I was held for interrogation. I was charged with a 'vicious attack on the revolution' and headed for the execution ground. Do you know how I escaped from the jaws of death? A man takes responsibility for himself. I freely admitted those accusations. But someone else wanted me to overturn them. Wanted me to do it for sure, and do it any way I like."
(Zhang Kangkang 1996 19-20)

Obviously, Chen Xu has become a victim of political changes; consequently, these experiences have weakened his ideal to become a righteous person. He once had the ambition of becoming a Socialist New Man. He dreams of being the first to make revolution on the barren northern land, and to settle down there and to build a new Great Wall (24). It turns out that he and the youth are to be re-educated by people with traditional customs, regional bigotry, and avarice (25). To his disappointment, this reality fails to reach what the revolution has promised. Gradually, the youth's revolutionary

ambitions vanish into the air and their aim of life dwindles to the mere survival on the available means.

With the passage of time, Xiao Xiao is disappointed in Chen Xu. According to her moral values, Chen Xu is a liar and the evidence seems to be abundant. When his new-born son is crying for milk, but no dairy products are available on the farm at that time, he steals a nanny goat from a peasant and tells Xiao Xiao that he has bought it for five dollars from a peasant (198). On another occasion, Chen Xu spends the twenty dollars of a friend (237). When the heroine asks for the reason for his cheating, Chen Xu repeats his theory: “If you don’t want to be a patsy, you have to be a cheat” (237). He even quotes the Russian writer Chernyshevsky to illustrate his point. “There are two kinds of people in the world: cheaters and suckers. If you don’t cheat other people, they’ll cheat you” (20).

Divorced from Chen Xu partly because of different moral values, Xiao Xiao believes herself to be on a correct revolutionary track. She participates in most of the activities on the farm and, moreover, she becomes a reporter of these events. Her articles often appear in a local newspaper. Now, ironically, it is Chen Xu’s turn to accuse her of being a liar. During their unexpected encounter, Chen Xu comments on her writings:

“It looks to me now as though your talent for telling lies has long since surpassed mine!”... With a flick of your pen that ‘hundred-day transformation on Branch Farm No.7’ crap covers the earth. All you have to do is close your eyes and say ‘a single dyke—two political lines’ and all the crows turn into magpies. How many thousands and thousands of readers have you cheated by thoughtlessly painting these phony pictures, by repeating all those lies? And now you’re going to be praised and promoted and given big jobs for it. Shit! Don’t you try to tell me you’ve never cheated anyone, that you’ve never learned how to lie! You made it real big as a liar!”²⁰ (429-30)

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²⁰ The “Hundred-day transformation on Branch Farm No.7” and “A single dyke—two political lines” are the titles of the articles that Xiao Xiao has written and gotten published in the newspaper.

He also touches her sore spot by commenting sharply: “Who’s more honest, the bastard who admits he’s no good or the hypocrites who think they’re so above it all?” (431).

Xiao Xiao herself is uneasy about her writings; but those writings have been approved and praised by Guo Chunmei, her revolutionary model. Involved in the activities on the farm and perplexed by all sorts of confusion, Xiao Xiao signs for Radish without Radish’s authorization in an open letter “Making Revolution on a Farm Forever: An Open Letter to all the Educated Youth.” Urged and pressured by Guo Chunmei, Xiao Xiao participates in Guo’s scheme unconsciously.

Strangely enough, Gou Chunmei, the revolutionary model on the farm, seems to cheat as well in building a dyke. There is also another secret that Guo Chunmei has buried deep in her heart but eventually tells Xiao Xiao. Guo and her brother have made changes in their personal political file, so that they could be trusted. They have managed to erase from their file a part of their father’s past when he was a member of an anti-revolutionary party before the Communists came to power (404-8).

After all these turns and twists on the farm and all the lies and cheating, readers wonder whether or not to agree with Chen Xu. He reasons for his behaviour and questions Xiao Xiao:

“Why don’t you ask about how other people have lied to us? The times we live in, this political movement, this Farm, when have they ever told us the truth? Who is interrogating them? Who is accusing them? .... Why don’t you try asking yourself whether such a society deserves to get honesty and sincerity in return?” (310-11)

When they see the dishonest deeds from almost every character in the novel, and when they see death, poverty, and the loss of human dignity, readers face these questions: Who is cheating? Are some of the educated youth cheating? Or is the entire generation of the

educated youth being cheated? History shows how the suffering of people and the distortion of moral values in the Cultural Revolution created a decade of national havoc.

Testimony of Life on Labour Farms

Zhang Xianliang is also a writer inside China. His text focuses on the labour farm. In his texts, he deals with such issues as dehumanization and imprisonment as Zhang Kangkang. In addition, he explores the relationship between the victim and the victimizer and the topic of impotence that has been a taboo in Chinese society. Like Zhang Kangkang, Zhang Xianliang has to face the same state censorship and political pressure while writing in China. For example, his usage of a horse in the text is one of the ways to encounter the constraints. On the one hand, Zhang Xianliang sets up conversations between the protagonist and the horse so that they can talk about sensitive political issues in China. On the other hand, Zhang Xianliang compares Chinese intellectuals to the castrated horse. He implies that the state uses them as tools for its own purpose. With the presence of state censorship, Zhang Xianliang has to find indirect ways for his narration.

In *Half of Man is Woman*, Zhang Xianliang also shows the destruction of human bonds in the Mao era. From childhood on, Chinese people are taught to abolish the old relations, those being both the natural relations in families, and the traditional harmonious relations within a community. Instead, they are encouraged to establish a new kind of relation based on class.

“They’ve [the authorities] put great effort in these past two decades not into improving relations between men, but tearing apart the bonds that bring men together. I consider that to be the greatest crime they have perpetrated. They’ve destroyed a sense of trust among men. Instead of building good intentions and a readiness to help one another, they’ve made men into wild animals.” (Zhang Xianliang 266)

Turning human beings to animals is one of the characteristics of the Mao era. Some people are turned to tame animals and others into wild animals. An example taken from *Half of Man is Woman* involves a girl of seventeen years old, who draws a clear line between her and her mother, who happens to be an enemy of the people. The girl becomes “a brutal thug” and “she personally breaks the bones of two old landlords” (97). Ironically, the youth’s deeds are carried out in answer to the Party’s call to make revolution. Such slogans as well as people’s loyal belief in the Party and in Mao form a special world—the world of lies and nonsense, as the protagonist describes:

People had made a great show of being earnest during the last twenty years, and with great rectitude had spewed out nonsense and lies. The myriad words and lies created an unreal and yet terrifying world. It was as though I were living in two worlds, a world of my own, and a false world—and it was that second world that actually controlled my days, that decided my living and dying. I wanted to break through that false world, I wanted to break through my own current existence. (241)

Whereas the protagonist intends to break away from the false world, most people perpetuate the world by repeating the nonsense and telling more lies. This is what remains of the pathetic world under party-state control, where people are actively involved in political movements.

In addition to his discussions on human relations in the Mao era, Zhang Xianliang focuses especially on one aspect—impotence—to illustrate the dehumanization of the Mao era. In *Half of Man is Woman*, the protagonist’s impotence is mainly a result of suppression, which comes from state authority on the one hand, and self-suppression on the other hand. By putting the protagonist into a prison and a prison farm in his early twenties, the party-state authorities deprive the protagonist of his right to have

companions of the opposite sex. There is simply no woman in his life there. Yet when he enjoys some freedom as a labourer in a labour camp, he flees at the sight of a naked woman despite her inviting gestures:

Then strong enough to knock me out, an instinctive self-preservation took hold.²¹ At the same time, in her eyes, on her rippling skin, I saw a frightening pain. I saw the tragedy covering both of us. Her thirst and her hunger were my own—she was a mirror to me. Into the desire to possess her came the equally male desire to protect her. My physical need disappeared, in its place was a mental ache. (45)

Subsequently, his pride in conquering his desires overwhelms his regret at losing the opportunity to be with the woman. “I felt the extreme vexation of having lost my chance. At the same time, I felt the self-conceit of having successfully come through a severe trial” (46). His self-suppression results from his past education and his moral values, which consequently makes him different from other criminals in the same labour camp. Instead of trying to be assimilated by people around him, he holds fast to his identity as an educated person. Yet after the encounter with the woman, he questions his past education:

I began to despise the education I had received. Civilization was a cord that bound a man, restraining his actions, making him “responsible.” The natural simple needs of a man’s most basic nature became complex, became ultimately desirable and unattainable at the same time. Had I been one of the common farmers undergoing labour reform I would not have cared. But I also rejoiced in my education. It was education that distinguished me from an animal, that gave me self-control and the power, in a critical moment, to be “human.” It was the force of education that gave me free-will and the power to choose, the power to exhibit the kind of superior behaviour that only humans could show. It was also education that made me realize I was responsible for my own behaviour. (46)

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²¹ In my opinion, Martha Avery’s translation of the sentence falls short of its meaning. The sentence in the original means: After a swell of the impulse which was strong enough to knock me out, my customary suppression gradually took control of the situation.

After all, he still clings closely to his identity and enjoys the sense of superiority it brings him, however insignificant this superiority might seem in the labour camp.

Not until eight years later when the protagonist gets married to the very same woman, does he find out that suppression has led to impotence. Discussing his impotence with his wife, he expresses that he is still a virgin because in the past “there was never an opportunity, never the right situation” (136). This impotence is a result of being inhibited or suppressed for so long (136). By raising the issue of impotence, Zhang Xianliang accuses the authorities for its deeds in the past, which consequently has dehumanized the Chinese people in general. Besides state suppression, the dehumanization manifests itself in many other aspects in this novel, such as: the ill-treatment of prisoners, the deterioration of human relationships, including relationships within the family, and survival in an inhumane environment.

By 1985, the literature of the New Period touched every area except sexuality (Li Feng 153).²² Zhang Xianliang’s *Half of Man is Woman* contained the most explicit erotic descriptions ever in mainstream fiction, and “the debate on whether or not it was pornographic caused an immediate sensation and gave the novel instant prominence” (MacDougall and Louie 385). The novel exploded the taboo of sexuality like a bomb (Li Feng 153). In regard to sexuality, Chinese literature had been limited by the traditional suppression of sexuality and the puritanical morality advocated in the Mao era. The publication of Zhang’s work marked the evolution of artistic concepts and consciousness of morality, and therefore caused some heated debates (154). Critic Wang Fei, among the

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²² The New Period denotes to the period after the Cultural Revolution, usually from 1978 to 1989. The term implies that the history of China enters a new era after the decade of catastrophe.

critics who condemned the novel, said that Zhang praised the basic human sexual pleasure similar to that of animals and used it to fight back the suppression of the Mao era. Wang concluded that Zhang's error came from his worship of sexuality (155).²³

Among the critics in favour of the novel, Ma Aru said that Zhang courageously expressed the protagonist's pain and agony in sexuality and marriage, and therefore exposed how the Party dictatorship castrated and destroyed humanity. In this way, the author helped readers to realize the damage made by the dictatorship (155-56).²⁴

Zhang Xianliang's intention to violate the taboo is double edged. On the one hand, potency and impotence belong to the topic of sexuality that has not been discussed much in literary creation in China. The censorship on this topic is the result of the state's scheme of the extreme application of puritanism. Since it deprived Chinese people of their humanity, Zhang Xianliang attacked the scheme relentlessly. On the other hand, Zhang Xianliang uses physical impotence only as a symbol to denote an impotence of a more detrimental kind, that being political impotence. "The link between sexual impotence and political repression was also a contentious topic" (MacDougall and Louie 385). Zhang intends to "represent the whole of Communist society" during the Mao era through the labour camps (385). In an age where human beings are silenced by political power, only a horse can spell out the truth in this novel. In a discussion between the protagonist and the horse, the latter points out that: "I even wonder if your entire

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²³ Wang Fei "Xing chongbai: dui shehui xiuzheng he shenmei gaizao de pianli" [Worship of Sexuality: A Deviation from Social Improvement and Reform of Esthetics]. *Wenxue ziyu tan* [Free Talk on Literature], 3, 1986.

²⁴ Ma Aru. "Zhang Xianliang de xin shijiao" [Zhang Xianliang's New Perspectives]. *Wenxue ziyu tan* [Free Talk on Literature], 3, 1986.

intellectual community isn't emasculated. If even ten percent among you were virile men, our country would never have come to this sorry state" (Zhang Xianliang 1998 145). Just as horses are castrated so that men can have an easy control over them, so does the party-state emasculate intellectuals so as to silence them. The horse compares the protagonist's status with his own:

"[Y]ou became mentally traumatized, ending up being just like me. The end result has been the same: like me, your life is not in your own hands. You are forced to allow others to order you about, to beat you, to control you, to ride you. Ha, Ha! We really are a pair, we two! An emasculated man and a castrated horse!" (145)

During the three decades under the Mao era, the party-state controlled intellectuals, in the same manner as one of the popular slogan during the Cultural Revolution instructed people: "To throw the enemy on the ground and stamp them with thousands of feet and never let them turn." The reasons for castrating horses are similar to the party-state's reasons for emasculating intellectuals. The protagonist's horse comments on this point: "You know as well as I do why people have castrated us: it's to remove our creative force, make us tractable. If they didn't we would have our own free-will, and our superior intelligence could never be kept in the traces" (147).

The protagonist gains back his potency after his heroic deeds in fighting against the menacing flood. The water breaks a hole in the bank, which protects some villages and the state farm. At the critical moment when the bank is on the verge of collapsing, the protagonist ties ropes around his waist, dives into the water to find the hole, and then covers the hole with straw and a gunny sack (196-97). After the emergency, the villagers praise him and serve him food and wine. Walking back home, he cannot help thinking:

“I was just a ‘cripple,’ just a castrated horse—all I did was in vain, without any meaning. And yet there remained a ridiculous shred of vanity in my soul. A man could still comfort himself with ‘heroism,’ never mind that it was used to save himself rather than others. With the minuscule consolation that I was proving myself, perhaps there was hope, perhaps I could still be saved.” (200)

Upon his arrival, his wife floods him with loving scolds, a steaming bowl of ginger soup to warm his body, and massages his arm and chest. Miraculously, his wife’s warmth helps him to recover his potency. By linking potency with heroism, Zhang Xianliang shows that the recognition of sexual needs cannot be separated from an individual’s political recognition. It is only after the protagonist proves his usefulness to society that he proves himself to be a real man, instead of a cripple, half a man, or emasculated man.

In *Half of Man is Woman*, Zhang Xianliang also raises the issue of the victim and the victimizer. Although he does not use the very terms, “victim” and “victimizer,” he illustrates the relationship by setting an example: the informer and the people being informed. Anybody who has lived through the Mao era is familiar with these terms and the meaning of these roles.

Generally speaking, the party-state encouraged people to inform on any unusual people or situations. The more frequently one reported incidents, the more likely one would be trusted by the Party. As a result, the person stood better chances to be promoted or to be accepted by the Party. In *Half of Man is Woman*, Zhou Ruicheng is such a person. Since he has played the role of an informer, others think that he is better off; but during a conversation with the protagonist, he confesses that he has not lived a quiet life since he became an informer in 1951. He has subsequently been informing against others to whomever was in power at the time (231). Contrary to what other people think, he insists that people he has informed upon have an easier time than the informers because

“people being informed against have to endure only one excruciating moment, when the exposing material is actually placed in front of them. But informers are uncomfortable from the moment they begin to write that material. Time after time I’ve written reports—I can’t even remember how many I’ve written. The leaders knew I was obedient, and that I understood things fairly well. I would probably write at least fifty cases in only one political movement. All together, I must have written five hundred. My heart felt a kind of pressure as I wrote each one.” (231-32)

Because of his deeds as an informer, he loses vitality and activity in life. The role of an informer changes him from an active person, who plays musical instruments and enjoys sports and dancing, to a person living a life being neither a man nor a demon.

“With each case I wrote, I cut off a piece of my life. I did it to save myself, to make sure I could keep living safely—and for that I threw away the most precious thing in life. By now, I’ve become an inhuman man or a demon with human failings. I should have known that only sons of bitches write that kind of materials. In the end, I’ve fallen into this god-forsaken hole....” (232)

During the Mao era, sometimes a person had to hurt others in order to survive. The fear of being an outcast forced individuals to act against other individuals. For the purpose of survival, one had to give up human dignity and abandon moral values, otherwise, one would be ostracized and cast away from other human beings. In a culture of collectivity rather than individuality, the choice was very obvious for a powerless individual.

In the end, Zhou himself gets persecuted and for a long time his case is not resolved but suspended. He is therefore not treated as one of the people, but he has fortunately avoided being sentenced as an “anti-revolutionary” or a “political criminal.” Zhou therefore labours on the state farm, instead of keeping his previous job in the city. He bitterly summarizes his situation:

“I’m neither high nor low. I’ve been dangling in between, getting both the carrot and the stick. Only now do I realize it’s all been for nothing. Can’t you think that’s hard to take? It’s only now that I finally understand that political

term they've invented—'to hang.' It simply means to let a man hang himself." (230)

At this step of the political game, the victimizer/informer becomes a victim. The most detrimental blow to humanity in the Mao era, was the supposed choice to be a victimizer. The real choice for people was that if you do not try to be a victimizer, you would end up being a victim. Moreover, even though one belonged to the rank of victimizers, it did not guarantee that this role would last forever. In time, most of the victimizers would in turn become victims. That was the reason for people to rival each other in the struggle to survive. The rivalry happened everywhere, in one's work place, and in one's community. It even happened in families. In *Half of Man is Woman*, one of the inmates spends three years doing hard labour. As a primary school teacher who wrote poems in praise of love, this inmate is arrested for having "counter-revolutionary opinions," and the person who informs on him is none other than his wife (243). It is ironic that his wife, probably the ideal woman in his poems, turns out to be his deadly enemy. A friend of the protagonist, Hei-tz, tells a similar story:

"I've been through this kind of thing before. It was when I was a Red Guard, damn it all, on the streets of Beijing. This damn bitch took some notebook that her man had written, and she passed it over to me so I would 'report.' Hell, I was a fool then, I didn't think twice. I figured it would do me good to pass it on to the bosses. The man was found guilty and sentenced, and the bitch was awarded a divorce." (248)

In this case, there are two victimizers, one is the wife who considers political life to be more important than her marriage; and the other is Hei-tz, a Red Guard who passes the notebook to the bosses, because he figures it would be beneficial to him. Now in reality, the protagonist faces a similar woman. This woman, who helps him to recover his potency, threatens to hand over his notebook if he divorces her. Hei-tz calls her "a time

bomb” or “KGB” and warns the protagonist that she could send him “into the camps again any time she wants” (248). Under normal circumstances, people do not prefer to hurt others. It is the Chinese panopticon that turns people into the KGB or time bombs. In time, these people would become victims themselves after being informed against by other KGB agents. The Maoist system exposed the last piece of any private thinking or individuality.

Manual labour is one of the ways to reduce people to simpletons, so most “criminals” of each political campaign had to experience reform through labour. Zhang Xianliang’s protagonist is no exception. Yet in the text, his protagonist does not detest labour, on the contrary, he is obsessed with labour. Zhang compares the protagonist’s obsession with labour to the obsession the ballet dancer has for dancing in the film *The Red Shoes*.²⁵

I had felt the strange happiness countless times. When a shovel met my hand, the damp of a hemp bag soaked my shoulder or rice weighed down my back, I entered a mindless oblivion, as if I had put on magic shoes and could jump out into the abyss, could even jump into death. (10)

Like works of Scar Literature, Zhang Xianliang’s text exposes the scars left by the Cultural Revolution and the Anti-Rightist campaign. Yet Zhang is different from other writers. Whereas others only see the pain, Zhang sees joy out of the pain, and whereas others only see scars, Zhang sees the beauty on the scars (Lei 57). The above description of labour is an example. He focuses on the relationship between nature, labour, and the people, and praises the happiness people get from labour. Zhang consciously tries to express the side of scar that refreshes and encourages individuals. This aspect of a scar

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²⁵ The title of the film “*The Red Shoes*” does not appear in the English translation of the novel. But the author uses it in the Chinese original.

not only leads people to the reflection on philosophy of life, but also gives people esthetic pleasure (Lei 56).

So far we have compared the texts of three writers: Chen Ruoxi's representation of history through daily life, Zhang Kangkang's representation of the Rustication movement, and Zhang Xianliang's representation of the labour farm. Each writer presents history from a specific perspective. Together, these representations contribute to the whole picture of the history of the Mao era.

Rupture of Socialist Realism

Whereas Chen Ruoxi did not have to deal with Maoist socialist realism since she was writing outside China, Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang had to find ways to break away from it. They had to overcome a lot of obstacles in their task, because Maoist socialist realism had dominated the Chinese literary field for several decades. The party state negated the traditional literary conventions, and instead, it established a discourse within which literature and art were framed. The cornerstone for literary hegemony was laid down by Mao's 1942 *Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art*, often referred to as *Yan'an Talks*. The talks were delivered at the Forum by Mao himself who announced in blatant terms the revolutionary and ideological role of literature and arts in the New China. Bonnie McDougall and Kam Louie summarize Mao's theory on the relationship between literature and politics in the *Yan'an Talks* as follows:

Mao unambiguously declared that all literature is class-based, and writers should not deceive themselves into thinking that any literature is independent of politics. From this Mao further declared that all literature inevitably acts as a political tool. Writers who profess to be on the side of the masses should eulogize the masses in their writings, while exposure and condemnation are reserved for those elements opposed to the masses. By extension, proletarian

literature should be a political tool of the Communist Party, which leads the masses. Communist writers should not only be responsible to the masses, but more importantly, they must serve the organizational needs of the Party. (McDougall and Louie 1997 195)

After the meeting, Mao's *Yan'an Talks* was circulated in Yan'an, and after 1949 the work became an authoritative guide for Chinese writers and artists to follow in their artistic creation. The writers who preferred to see themselves as individuals were "helped," criticized, persecuted, or killed. Wang Shiwei (1907-1947), a fighter for literary freedom, is an example. He was put on trial because he expressed his liberal ideas in his writings: "Wild Lily" and "Politicians, Artists" (Benton and Hunter 69-77).²⁶ He was under attack also because he suggested that a Rectification Inspection Committee should be elected directly and the contributors of publications should be allowed to stay anonymous so as to "guarantee their human rights" (10).²⁷ Wang's vacillation during the trial shows the Party's effort to "correct" his liberal beliefs. "On the fifth day of his trial he asked to be allowed to resign from the Party and 'go his own way,' and on the seventh day, 'touched by the love of comrades,' he withdrew his request 'made in an abnormal state of mind'" (12). He was executed in 1947, "allegedly without the Central Committee's authorization" (12).

Yan'an Talks not only set tight limits for literary imagination, but also greatly

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²⁶ Both articles were written in 1942. They were criticized as "anti-proletarian and harmful to the communist Party and the revolutionary cause" (Benton and Hunter 75). For further information, see Benton p.75.

²⁷ "On March 18, 1942, at a conference, Wang clashed with the institute's leadership on how to set up a Rectification Inspection Committee. The leaders had decided that cadres above a certain grade should join the Committee automatically, while others should be chosen from among the "masses." Wang disagreed. He thought that the entire committee should be elected directly, and a majority backed him. Wall newspapers, which the leaders of the Institute proposed as a way of backing up the campaign, were also a contentious issue. Wang Shiwei argued that their contributors should be allowed to stay anonymous so as to 'guarantee their democratic rights,' and again the majority agreed" (Benton and Hunter 10).

constrained intellectuals' abilities. After 1949, Mao's *Yan 'an Talks* became the golden rule for Chinese writers and artists throughout the country. Liu Binyan (b. 1925) thus comments on the power relations between Mao's *Yan 'an Talks* and the Chinese intelligentsia: "Why was this piece, of all Mao's works, singled out for such special treatment? Because in it, Mao delivered his severest blow at intellectuals, and pronounced the death sentence on their independence and their critical spirit" (Liu Binyan ix).

After the establishment of Maoist hegemonic literary discourse, writers could only exercise their craft in line with the Maoist policy, which was one in which "literature and art [were] subordinate to politics" (Mao 1980 75). As a consequence, literary creation turned into either eulogy of the existing regime or dry and transparent political polemic. In 1960, Qian Junrui [Ch'ien Chün-jui], the Vice Minister of Culture from October 1954 to September 1963, provided the following ten rationales for revolutionary literary creation. These rationales outlined the new ideological mandate of literature and art.

1. Literature and art serving the workers, peasants, soldiers, and other working people,
2. Literature and art serving socialism,
3. Combining popularization and elevation,
4. Uniting ideological nature and artistry—the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second,
5. Integrating the literary and art workers with the masses of the workers and peasants,
6. Letting the hundred flowers bloom and the hundred schools contend,²⁸
7. Combining the critical inheritance of the legacy and original creation,
8. Combining revolutionary romanticism and revolutionary realism,
9. Letting politics assume command,
10. Following the mass line. (Fokkema 263)

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²⁸ This is a phrase by Mao Zedong indicating the policy of the time.

From the narratives of violence and blood in the literature of Land Reform (1942-1956), to the narratives of acute and intense class struggle (the 1950s to 1970s), literature of the Mao era was reduced to a literature devoid of humanity, with socialist realism as the sole dominant mode.

Some contemporary critics working in the West regard socialist realism as a larger framework than a mere literary mode. In Zhang Xudong's opinion, "Chinese socialist realism comprises a number of related, even loosely interchangeable labels or categories (e.g. 'proletarian mass culture,' 'Yan'an literature and art,' the so called Maoist genre or *Mao wenti*,²⁹ and the 'political mode of writing' including the all-purpose classification of 'official discourse')" (Zhang Xudong 915). This shows that socialist realism is an integral part of the Maoist discourse which dominated the cultural sphere in the Mao era. In the 1950s, the Ministry of Culture in China propagated socialist realism. Its 1953 report stated that Chinese writers regarded "the method of socialist realism as the highest principle in the creation and criticism of all literature and art" (Fokkema 40). Examples of socialist realist writers from both at home and abroad were set for writers and artists to follow. Due to timely introduction and translations, Russian revolutionary writers such as M. Gorky and Ostrovsky became household names among the literate. Although written under non-socialist conditions, Lu Xun's works were classified as literature of socialist realism (42). Some critics even presented the far-fetched argument that "realism already existed in primitive society" (129). In the study of classical Chinese works, some critics believed that "mature realism" began with the poets of the Tang dynasty (618-907) such

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²⁹ See footnote 30.

as Du Fu [Tu Fu] (712-770) and Bai Juyi [Po Chü-yi] (772-846), whereas others thought it began even earlier, in the poetry of Tao Yuanming [T'ao Yüan-ming] (365-427) of the Period of Division (220-598) and in parts of the great work *The Book of Songs*, a collection of poetry ranging from the Zhou dynasty (1100-771 BC) to the time of its completion.

The overwhelming success of socialist realism could not be achieved without the sincere applause from Chinese intellectuals of the Mao era (Zhang Xudong 939).

Performing the function of educating the masses and advocating the Party's policies, they demonstrated and actualized socialist realism in their own literary creations. As Li Tuo analyzes:

[A]s producers and transmitters of knowledge, they all contributed their enthusiasms, gifts, and "most precious youth" to reproducing the Maoist genre,³⁰ although they have been oppressed by it throughout their lives. Even in their most difficult days, in the most awkward moments of abandoning others and being abandoned, of persecuting others and being persecuted, of denouncing others and being denounced, many of them still persisted in producing the Maoist genre, in which they turned self-criticism, criticism, and persecution into particular forms of that genre. (Zhang Xudong 938-39)

However, during the decade of the Cultural Revolution, even socialist realism failed to survive. Most writers were persecuted or thrown into prison. The only exception was Hao Ran (b.1932) who "followed Yan'an line" in his depiction of "the collectivization effort in the countryside" and whose portrayal of heroines Jiang Qing liked very much

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³⁰ Li Tuo "insists on maintaining a distinction between what is commonly termed 'Maoist discourse' (meaning the official, literary, and cultural institutions of Chinese socialism) and his own 'Maoist genre' (which sounds more equivocal). For him, the advantage of 'genre' lies in its distinction from the Foucauldian theory of discourse, in its reference to the 'stylistic edge' by which the practice of the 'Maoist genre repels and oppresses other discourses,' and the relative ease with which the complexity of that practice can be analyzed" (Zhang Xudong 938).

(MacDougall and Louie 257-60).³¹ For some time, not much existed on the literary scene but Mao's poetry, the Little Red Book, and the Eight Model Plays,³² and Hao Ran's *Yanyangtian* [Bright Sunny Skies].

The Maoist literary discourse had confined writers' literary creation to the Maoist ideology, therefore they had to break through the literary hegemonic discourse in the post-Mao era. Influenced by the dogma of socialist realism, Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang had to re-mould themselves so as to produce the kind of history writing that is to their liking. They faced several tasks in order to do this. First of all, they had to re-examine their own ideology. Secondly, they had to explore styles other than that of socialist realism to convey their arguments. Thirdly, they had to maneuver to get through state censorship regarding publication. It took several years for Zhang Kangkang to adjust to new methods for creating literary texts and then face the challenges of history writing. After the death of Mao and the downfall of the "Gang of Four," she had to suspend her writing for about three years in order to switch her point of view. Even in the 1990s, she was not totally free from the past ideology. She admitted that "the literary dogmas of the Cultural Revolution continue to affect me to varying degrees. When I write I can feel the

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³¹ Hao Ran (pen-name of Liang Jinguang) became famous in the 1950s. "His early short stories followed the Yan'an line in emphasizing positive heroes in village life and reflect the general emphasis on the increasing prosperity of the countryside" (MacDougall and Louie 259). "Hao Ran's choice of female protagonists with a high level of political consciousness was very welcome to Jiang Qing for her own agenda in cultural politics" (258). "His first major work, the three-volume novel *Bright Sunny Skies* [was] adopted by the radical left as a model of new fiction." (258). It was one of the very few works from the 1960s available in bookshops during the Cultural Revolution, and was made into a film in 1973" (258).

³² Eight revolutionary model plays consisted of six revolutionary plays in the Peking Opera and two ballets. Some of them were adapted from the exiting revolutionary narratives such as "The White Haired Girl." The model plays were promoted nationwide during the Cultural Revolution. This project was sponsored by Jiang Qing. For further information, see McDougall and Louie p. 346.

pressure on my diction and narrative pattern. I have been trying hard to overcome these influences” (Zhang Kangkang 1994 233).

Because of state censorship, Zhang Xianliang had to tailor his writing in order to fit the current political situations of the time. His first short story “The Flesh and the Soul,” the work that won him fame, passed state censorship for its patriotism. In the story, despite the unjust treatment from the Party, the protagonist—a rehabilitated Rightist—chooses to stay in China and serve his own motherland instead of moving abroad to inherit the fortune his father has accumulated (McDougall and Louie 383-85). Gradually, Zhang Xianliang and Zhang Kangkang established themselves and gained the skills as well as the confidence to rupture socialist realism.

Zhang Kangkang went through the transition from a socialist realist writer to a Scar Literature writer because she knew socialist realism well enough to confront it. In her novel, the portrayal of characters, the satirical tone, the non-linear narrative, and the instability of time and space, all contribute to her challenge to socialist realism both in form and content. Her portrayal of characters shakes the set image of the socialist realistic hero who is “tall,” “big,” and “perfect,” hence the incarnation of the Socialist New Man.³³ Guo Chunmei seems to fit the incarnation, but later she reveals her flaws such as cheating about her personal gains in the dyke building. Chen Xu, as a disappointed youth on the farm, has his heroic traits, despite his “wrong doings” according to Xiao Xiao’s moral values. He uses his lying as the only means of rebellion (301). For him it is heroic to tell

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³³ One of the exemplary novels of the Mao era is *Jinguang dadao* [The Golden Road] by Hao Ran (2 vols. Beijing, Remin wenxue chubanshe, 1972, 1974) that deals with the socialist communes. Its protagonist is named Gao Daquan, meaning tall, big, and perfect. For more information on the fiction, see McDougall 1997, Pp. 376-79.

blatant lies in defiance of the whole distorted social system. In comparison, Xiao Xiao seems to be the symbol of naivete, purity, and righteousness. She persistently pursues hope and truth. She is a symbol of honesty to Radish, after he finds her working silently in the fields for the boys, including himself. She is the hope for Zhou Sizhu, who suffers a nervous breakdown at the end of the novel.

Xiao Xiao's effort to find out about a "cheating flower" symbolizes her pursuit of truth. Here Zhang Kangkang plays on the homonyms of the "cheating flower" (pronounced in Chinese *huang hua*) and "lying" (also pronounced *huang hua*).³⁴ Xiao Xiao makes the effort to ask a scientist on the farm about this flower. She asks the botanist: "It's about the false flowers, the false flowers on cucumbers and watermelons, and things. Are they actually the female flowers or the males? And why are they called false flowers?" (367). The answer from the botanist is that the "false flower" is not a scientific term. The vernacular term might refer to the male flower that will not bear fruit (367). At this answer, Xiao Xiao wonders if there is a neutral flower that is neither male nor female. Zhang Kangkang indicates Xiao Xiao's intention to be a good person, regardless of her surroundings. In her dream, when she is in Heaven, she still tries to solve the riddle of the cheating flower. The wind blows her to Greece, where she recognizes Athena, the goddess of wisdom, Apollo and Zeus. Xiao Xiao asks Athena for a definition of the "false flower." Athena tells her that the flowers that form fruit might be the parents of the false flower (426). After her visit to Heaven, Xiao Xiao is more confused about the riddle of the cheating flower. XiaoXiao's pursuit of the "cheating

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³⁴ "Huang hua" in Chinese can be translated as "cheating flower" or "false flower," but "false flower" could mean "fake flower." Daniel Bryant, the translator of *The Invisible Companion*, uses "false flower" but I prefer "cheating flower" because it is closer to the original meaning.

flower” runs throughout the novel. The symbol of the “cheating flower” is so vital that at one point Zhang Kangkang considered to entitle the novel “The Cheating Flower” (Li Feng 74).

Enlarging Xiao Xiao’s quest for the cheating flower and the liar, Zhang Kangkang continues to question what makes a person. This question pertains to the title of the book—*The Invisible Companion*. Actually, the issue of invisible companion has been in Zhang Kangkang’s mind before she wrote *The Invisible Companion*. When she was talking about the writing of “Summer” in 1983, she said that in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution, “I often feel that there is some invisible pressure around me, a kind of spiritual pressure. It is like an invisible person without a clear face, yet I felt its existence all the time and everywhere” (Zhang Kangkang 1983 68).

On the farm, the educated youth in their early twenties are searching in the dark for their own identities. They are groping in the darkness due to the confusion about moral values in the time period. Zhou Sizhu loses his sanity in the search. But in an age when white can be said to be black and vice versa, only a mad man can spell out the logic of the time. He tells Xiao Xiao:

“It seems like there’s always someone following right behind me. It’s true, it’s been going on for a long time. No matter where I go or what I do, he’s always right there.... When I look at you, it’s as though you aren’t the person you used to be, but someone else, someone I don’t know. And yet I know that this one is you and that one is me. That me looks a little bit like me, and he’s about my age. But just as you are about to catch sight of him, he disappears, so you get a good look at him, but he’s following me just the same, and I can’t stand it. Sometimes he lies on the top of my head, sometimes he crouches inside my heart, sometimes he creeps into my joints, my blood, my insides. He can take any size or shape, but he always sticks close to me”

“Is he a shadow?” she ventured.

“No, no he’s a person.”

“A ghost?”

“No, no he’s a person. I’m telling you, it’s a person. It seems like, it seems like I’m not a single me; there seem to be two of me, two of me folded up together. If you go east, he goes west; if you go south, he goes north, always just the opposite from you.... I hate him. I want to get rid of him, chase him away, but he won’t go. He keeps on talking to me in the middle of the night, making me sing. I think he must be a demon. I want to kill him, to rid the world of a public menace.” ... (423)

Almost all the youth are involved in the struggle. They want to be a certain type of person—normally a kind-hearted, righteous person, but reality forms them in other directions. In this state of contradictions some choose to die; for example, Bian Mutuo hangs himself on the Chinese New Year’s eve. Some choose to numb their nerves by drinking; and others prefer to kill their own individuality and follow whatever the Party instructs.

Perpetually perplexed, Xiao Xiao ventures for an answer in paradise. In an idyllic background, she sees people wandering freely, dancing, reading poems, drinking, and kissing in the pure air and sunshine. Watching more closely, she is startled at her discovery—people around her all have two faces, one in front, another at the back of their heads. “If one face is smiling, the other one is weeping. If the eyes in one face were open, those in the other were closed” (425). When a little girl tells her: “I don’t want to be a two-face, won’t you help me, Ma’am” (426). Xiao Xiao sees that “the little girl’s teeth were pure white and brilliant as pearls. But the face behind her was terribly ugly, with a mouthful of black teeth” (426). Xiao Xiao tries to scrub the black teeth on the little girl’s other face with clouds, but in vain. Then

she gave up; she knew there was no way to change anything. Since there were two-faced people in Heaven, there were probably some in Hell, too. All of a sudden she thought of herself and broke out in a cold sweat. She wanted to look around and see herself from behind, but she couldn’t do it. (426)

On her path to independence after her divorce, Xiao Xiao herself gradually finds out that there is a hypocritical invisible companion hidden within herself (Cai 55). Like Chen Xu, she lies and cheats both unconsciously and consciously (55). Meanwhile, she discovers that people around her have invisible companions, too (55). At the end of the novel, the big project—dyke building on the farm, vanishes in a fire. Xiao Xiao is accused of being a better liar than her ex-husband. Radish is disgusted by her dishonest deeds and Zhou Sizhu goes mad. Walking on the plain, the only thing she knows for certain is that “she could never again go back to where she had been before” (Zhang Xianliang 436).

Instead of the portrayal of the Socialist New Man, Zhang Kangkang depicts typical youths during the Rustication movement. Each of them has qualities that are sometimes contradictory. The Socialist Iron Girl discloses her dishonest deeds to Xiao Xiao. The innocent Xiao Xiao is pushed to make up false descriptions of the farm for the media. Chen Xu who has done wrongful deeds from time to time turns out to be a frank and honest person. Zhang Kangkang thus ruptures Maoist socialist realism in her portrayal of characters.

Zhang Kangkang also uses Western fairy tales and fables to rupture the Maoist literary discourse. The discourse employs patriotism and nationalism to create revolutions. One example of the set dichotomy is native=good and foreign=bad. As parts of her narrative, the fairy tales in certain circumstances drive her point home more effectively than a linear and straightforward narration. For example, in the scene where Chen Xu introduces his fiancée Xiao Xiao to his family, the narration goes as follows:

She was surrounded by eyes, inspecting, suspicious, provoking.
You really are terribly ugly! said the wild ducks. But so long as you don't marry into our clan, it really doesn't matter much to us. The poor little thing!

Getting married had never crossed his mind; he was only hoping that they would let him lie down in the clump of reeds and drink a little water from the marsh. That would be enough for him. (61)

Zhang Kangkang's usage of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling" lays bare the crisis of relationships in the scene on the one hand; and expresses Xiao Xiao's self-consciousness about her presence in that situation on the other hand.

Throughout the novel, there are recurrent references to Western fairy tales, such as lines from "The Fisherman and the Gold Fish."

"Please, Granddad, begged the gold fish, won't you let me go: I'll grant your every wish!" (60)

The king has ass's ears. (367)

A snow-white swan flew down and landed at her feet. Out of its bosom rolled a pure white egg. (200)

The fairy tales appear mostly in Xiao Xiao's day-dreaming. Because her mother is a librarian, Xiao Xiao has become acquainted with Western literature, fairy tales among it. In the barren northern land, she can only put her hope in fairy tales and imaginations instead of in reality.

Zhang Xianliang also uses Western references to illustrate his points when necessary. For example, he borrows Hamlet's famous line, "To be or not to be," to illustrate the protagonist's dilemma of being half of a man (Zhang Xianliang 1998 155). The Western references endow the novel with a sense of universality. He shows the similar quest of people, the Oriental and Occidental alike, with their own identities and values. In the dehumanized world under Maoism, the quest proves to be acute as well as difficult.

Reinforcing the world of fairy tales are Xiao Xiao's dreams in *The Invisible Companion*. Sometimes they are dreams about the beautiful things in life, other times

they are reflections on gang fighting, fear, homesickness, and labour on the farm. Often times, Xiao Xiao's dreams are full of flowers:

White horse lotus, lavender lilies, yellow poppies, scarlet day lilies, emerald china pinks, sky blue wild roses.... There was no telling who was who; it was simply a rainbow, a rainbow coloured wave.... She rolled around in the flower thickets, snug in the coloured clouds. Pollen was shaken out all over her, covering her hair, her cheeks, her lips. (27)

The dream indicates that Xiao Xiao still longs for life in her home city where it is much warmer than the weather in the barren land, and where flowers are bountiful. Some of her dreams are the extension of her search for truth.

Dreams also play important roles in *Half of Man is Woman*, but to different effects. In the text, most discussions on Chinese contemporary politics are carried out in the protagonist's dreams. In these dreams he meets historical figures from the West as well as from ancient China. During his talk with Song Jiang,³⁵ the head of a peasant rebellion, Song Jiang comments on the situations of the current time in which the protagonist lives:

"You're living in an age that's like the reign of Xuan He.³⁶... Tigers and wolves fill the roads, honesty and decency have been knocked aside. The Emperor is ignorant and cruel. What are you waiting for? Raise the standard and rebel!" (Zhang Xianliang 1998 167)

But after the protagonist relays details of the present political complexity, even Song Jiang does not have any suggestions as to what to do for the country. Later Karl Marx joins the discussion on the same topic. He comments on the present situation in China:

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³⁵ Song Jiang Peasant Rebellion headed by Song Jiang happened in Shandong and Hebei provinces around 1111 A.D. It was suppressed by the government of Northern Song in 1121 A.D. Song Jiang is also a character in the Chinese novel *The Water Margin*, which depicts a peasant rebellion.

³⁶ Xuan He (1119-1126 A.D.) (meaning "peaceful reign") was the period under Emperor Huizong in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.).

“Right now, your productive power had essentially been neutralized. You’re trying to scrape by with words and hot air rather than real action. It’s ridiculous that at this time the mouth is developing rather than the hands or the body. Do you really think it can continue much longer?” (176)

Marx, who appears in the protagonist’s dreams, negates the belief that the Chinese Communist Party is carrying on a Marxist revolutionary cause. He also knows that some people distort his teachings for their own personal benefits. They take sentences from Marxist works and use them as theoretical weapons. “They use passages for their own personal profit, either in struggling for power or in oppressing the people” (173). When the protagonist tries to explain that some Chinese are still carrying on the Marxist cause, Marx laughs off the idea:

“Ha ha ha!” Marx bellowed out a laugh that was resonant and wise. “My child, please don’t underestimate my intelligence. I am not so stupid as to believe that what people who come after me are doing is to carry on my work. My work was already finished in 1883. The people of each generation can only do the work of their own period of history. ...” (175)

Zhang Xianliang employs dreams to convey his own political point of view. It is true that *Half of Man is Woman* tells the story of a man whose potency is recovered with the help of a woman. Yet the discussions in the protagonist’s dreams on the topic of the present politics reinforce the subtitle of the novel—Volume one of the *Revelations of a Materialist*.³⁷

Besides employing dreams and fairy tales, Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang also use satire to ridicule the Mao era and defy the Maoist discourse. Images were components of the ideology in the Mao era, whereby everybody knew what certain

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³⁷ The subtitle follows the title in the Chinese version but does not appear anywhere in the English translation.

images were intended to mean. The equations of some images worked like the following during the Cultural Revolution:

The Sun=Mao Zedong
Sunshine=Mao Zedong's Thought

The system of images started in the 1940s when a peasant writer composed the lines of the famous song—The East Is Red. The song goes like this: “The east is red,/The sun rises,/ China produces Mao Zedong.” Literature and art of the time were teeming with the following images: green pines=heroes, and red flags=revolution; Yet Zhang Kangkang attacks this system of images with her own colours:

The sun is grey.
A lake of lead, a lake of blood, and a lake of skeletons.
He strode swiftly away, his fist clenched tight. He could have pulverised the hypocritical sunlight. (Zhang Kangkang 1996 84-85)

Since the Maoist discourse started with ideology, Zhang Kangkang's criticism begin with brainstorming the Maoist mentality; for example, instead of the presence of the Royal family or historical figures on dollar bills, China produced images of workers, peasants, and soldiers on its money. Supposedly, the Chinese revolutionary culture values these people more and Chinese money is called People's Notes (*renmin bi*).³⁸ Yet Zhang Kangkang blasphemes the revolutionary icons by referring to them as “some filthy images of worker, peasant and soldier with fierce expressions on their faces” (230). The setting of the context is even more ironic. Originally, the purpose of the Rustication movement was to have the educated youth from cities re-educated by workers, peasants, and soldiers. In reality, some peasants farming next to the educated youth farm come at night

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³⁸ Ironically, after Mao's death and the Cultural Revolution, the new one hundred dollar note has on it the four generals of the Mao era including Mao.

to steal bags of fertilizer from the farm. Because peasants at the time are grouped into communes, the commune leaders encourage the theft. Worse still, the thieves are equipped with ten dollar bills for bribery in case they get caught red-handed. The thieves also have the right reasons for their deeds: “Look, mister, Won’t you let me off this one time? It ain’t easy, farming ain’t. The State Farm won’t miss a couple of sacks of fertilizer. We got no place to buy any even with the money” (230). During this time period, the permanent members working on the farm are labelled as workers. In the novel, one of them accepts bribery and spends the money on alcohol. Soon enough, the educated youth Chen Xu is “re-educated” by Old Fan who drinks with him in the evenings (227). The naive educated youth from the cities get disappointed or disillusioned by the empty slogans and inefficient management of the Rustication movement.

Another feature of Zhang Kangkang’s satirical tone is evident in the rural women’s conversations during this period of time. The daily conversations are intertwined with quotations from Chairman Mao’s *Little Red Book*. These conversations display the absurdity of an age where people have to censor their utterance with Mao’s quotations. When the women from a nearby farm come to visit the new mother, Xiao Xiao, one of them tells Xiao Xiao not to lie in bed too much. She also adds that:

“And don’t comb you hair during your month, either.³⁹ It’ll make your scalp hurt.... And don’t bathe, it’ll make your bones hurt. Us women don’t have an easy time of it. We have to look after our kids, and after grown-ups too. Chairman Mao tells us, ‘Once the principal contradiction is grasped, if we lead the ox by the nose, all the other problems can be readily solved’.” (186)

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³⁹ According to Chinese customs, after giving birth, a new mother should confine herself for a whole month.

When Xiao Xiao asks: “The baby has had some bowel movements. Why are they black?” She is told: “Nothing to worry about.... That’s womb shit. Once that black, gummy stuff is out, his insides are clean. Chairman Mao teaches us, ‘New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow’” (186). This scene reveals vividly the political situation of the time; moreover, it also indicates the lack of freedom of speech, since common people have to censor their speech, or add Mao’s quotations to everyday conversations in order to communicate. For anyone can turn out to be a class enemy at any time if they are reported by a neighbour or a friend. Another interesting point found in the quoted conversations is that Zhang Kangkang parodies the situation by noting down or conjuring up the mistakes in Mao’s quotations. For example, reading the part “to lead the ox by the nose” inserted into Mao’s quotation, readers have to guess the reason for this insertion. It is possible that the speaker might be illiterate, and mistakes an explanation for a sentence in Mao’s quotation. Zhang Kangkang indicates both the cost and the futility of the Cultural Revolution whose purpose and connotations are beyond common people’s comprehension. Zhang Kangkang’s *The Invisible Companion* with its unique style and techniques attacks the traditional narratives. It breaks the familiar set sequence and concept of chronology, plays with space and time freely, and de-fragments the integrity of a story (Cai 57). Cai Kui calls Zhang’s work “a targeted bomb towards the super stable traditional narrative mode” (55).

Zhang Xianliang also employs a satirical tone to present the absurdity of the age. An absurd age can only be explained by an absurd logic. For people outside, going to labour camps must be hell; but, according to the lead guard, the criminals on the prison farm are fortunate to be there, and consequently not involved in the Cultural Revolution.

In the free world by comparison, the new capitalist roaders, old rich landlords, bad elements, and rightists are paraded in towns and cities. All of them wear paper hats, some have their face painted, and some have half of their head shaved. Confirming that the protagonist is better off here in the labour camp, he says: “[t]he ones who put you into this labour camp must have been your own Creator. Otherwise you’d be out there too with those bastards, letting people ‘rectify’ you to death” (Zhang Xianliang 1998 11). In the chaotic age, the authorities issued rules that the Cultural Revolution should not involve labour camps, and therefore the labour camp remains “a heaven of peace” (12). “The values, concepts, as well as the very way of thinking [are held] so tenaciously by a labour gang that is at odds with the rest of China” (6). In the outside world, persons who make political mistakes are strongly discriminated against, but they are trusted in the labour camp. That is why the protagonist is put in charge of 64 criminals in their everyday labour:

A labour camp is a kind of independent kingdom, set up with all the necessary occupations of life. As a result, the principle of using a man’s skills to the utmost is practised like a religion: whatever a man can do, he will soon find he has been appointed to do. If a doctor enters who used to clean latrines on the Outside, he is soon Chief Internist, treating patients. (6)

Comparing the labour camp with the outside world, Zhang Xianliang refers to the labour camp as a paradise (6).⁴⁰

Zhang Xianliang also employs a satirical tone in presenting reasons why the inmates end up in a labour camp. The following paragraphs are the conversations of the inmates narrating their unlucky or lucky fate:

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⁴⁰ In the Chinese original, the word for word translation of the sentence is “In this chaotic age, a labour camp is a paradise” (Zhang Xianliang 7). Martha Avery’s translation is “With the outside as it is, a gang labour camp is the more rational place” (6).

“Tough, eh. You don’t steal, how can you live? Nothing in your stomach...”

“A flat-nosed man had stolen chemical fertilizer used by his production team and resold it. They sentenced him to five years, but you would think he felt lucky: “Worth it. I was able to buy medicine for my old mother. They gave me five years, but they didn’t take the money back.”

“Yeah, I’m lucky, too.” The misfortune of another prisoner had been that the commune’s cow died on him: they said he had overfed it. “The court asked me, would you rather do hard labour or pay for the cow? I thought it over—in the labour camps you still get something to eat. So I came on in. It’s not so bad....” (19-20)

On the one hand, Zhang Xianliang shows the absurdity of the age by blurring the concept of “lucky” or “unlucky.” To the outside world, going to a labour camp must be unlucky, but some prisoners consider themselves lucky. On the other hand, readers catch glimpses of the country’s economical status from the prisoners’ personal cases. The first speaker has stolen due to hunger; the second has stolen fertilizer for money to buy medicine for his mother; and the third has chosen to go to a labour camp because he could at least have regular meals. The individual cases contribute to the larger picture of the PRC in the early 1960s. Because of the Party’s dogmatic political and economic policies during the Great Leap Forward, a period of hardship lasted for three years during which “at least 30 million people” “starved to death” (Becker xi). Through the use of a sarcastic tone, Zhang Xianliang presents a picture of China. If life in a labour camp is compared to a paradise, the free world outside must be hell. This panoramic picture depicts China, in the Mao era, as a big prison where each individual’s life is controlled by the Chinese Panopticon.

Just as Zhang Kangkang exposes the state control over speech, Zhang Xianliang exposes the state control over the written language, which forces people to quote Mao whenever they write. As an example, the protagonist hands over a marriage application that goes as follows:

QUOTATION OF CHAIRMAN MAO

“Stir up positive elements, unite all those who can be united, do your utmost to turn negative factors into positive factors, in order to serve the great task of building up a socialist society.”

APPLICATION

Whereby in Troop No. 3 the farm-worker Zhang Yonglin...and the farm-worker Huang Xiangjiu...hereby apply to get married. Both parties come forward willingly. They guarantee that after marriage they will continue to remake themselves, will receive supervision and re-education under the leadership of the Party Branch and the Lower Middle Farming Class, and will do their best to aid in the construction of a socialist society. The attention and approval of the Troop’s Party Branch will be appreciated.... (124-25)

Since it goes without saying that anything written should start with Mao’s quotations, it is not easy to choose a quotation which suits the situation. If the protagonist chooses this quotation “Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie,” he can be sure to remain a bachelor for the rest of his life. The logic follows that since one wants to be reformed in earnest, then why would the person want to get married? (124). Yet as a retort to Hei-tz’s comment that “you intellectuals will always be taking somebody else’s whip to thrash yourself” (124), the protagonist finds a quotation that begins the marriage application well. The applicant believes that the approval of the application will stir up positive elements. If the marriage is granted, the couple will surely serve the task of building up a socialist society. The humble tone of the application itself reinforces this purpose. The applicants promise to “continue to remake themselves,” and to obey the “supervision and re-education” under the control of the Troop’s Party Branch.

If finding a quotation for his marriage application seems to be difficult, finding one for the divorce application proves to be harder. The protagonist tries his best, and produces this one:

QUOTATION OF CHAIRMAN MAO

“Conscientiously Struggle—Criticize—Transform.”

APPLICATION

Since their marriage last year, the farm-workers Zhang Yonglin and Huang Xiangjiu have not been able to achieve harmony and unity in their daily lives or in their feelings for each other. If this continues, it will be harmful to the production of the Troop, and will also be harmful to the transformation of the two individuals. Having consulted each other, they have agreed to divorce. From now on, they guarantee they will put greater effort into socialist construction and the transformation of the individual. The approval of the leaders will be appreciated.... (274)

Knowing that the quotation fits nowhere, the protagonist is afraid that the Party secretary would reject the application because of the inappropriate quotation. “I had thought he might give me trouble for using that incongruous and irrelevant Quotation of Chairman Mao, but he didn’t pay attention to that angle” (275). Actually, the protagonist has been prepared if the Party secretary addresses the issue. He would ask him for advice in choosing an appropriate quotation from Mao (275). It is also worth noticing that the applicant links the marriage with politics and points out that until the divorce is granted, the relationship continues to be harmful for the reformation of the two individuals. The selections of quotations and the wording of these applications demonstrate the state censorship of all writings on the one hand, and the control politics has in every aspect of life regarding the public sphere and the private sphere alike.

Positioned as eyewitnesses of the events of the Cultural Revolution and armed with poetic license, Zhang Kangkang, Zhang Xianliang, and Chen Ruoxi present a particular time period in history. Their texts display the imprisonment and dehumanization that the Chinese people experienced during these traumatic events.

Through their testimonies coupled with their literary imagination, the writers wrote down as much as they could and implied that which could not be expressed due to state censorship. Their texts contribute to the understanding of the history of the dark age in the PRC.

Chapter IV

POSTMODERN FICTION: REINTERPRETING TRUTH AND REPRESENTATION

These days, I often take the truth to be imagination and what I have imagined to be the truth.

Zhang Xianliang: *Getting Used to Dying*

And this is certainly not an autobiography, or some historical epic. It's just a collection of scenes and verses, dancing hand in hand in circles large and small. When the circle is complete, the dancers laugh and call it a day.

Liu Sola: *Chaos and All That*

In comparison with autobiography that claims to be closest to facts, and documentary fiction which maintains its truth claim partially, postmodern fiction is further removed from facts. Writers of postmodern fiction deliberately blur the boundaries between facts and imagination. Although the writers under discussion in this chapter have lived through the Mao era, they do not assume the role of the eye-witness. Instead, they problematize the task of presenting history and challenge conventional narratives. Their works provide a different access to the traumatic history of the Mao era. Employing postmodern techniques, these writers confront such issues as the local and the global, trauma and memory, writers and audience, and different versions of history.

History, Historiography, Postmodernism, and Trauma

Postmodernism is characterized by the results of late capitalist dissolution of bourgeois hegemony and the development of mass culture. It marks a major shift away

from modernity's universalizing and totalizing drive. Instead of the "exclusive 'either/or' binary oppositions of modernity," postmodernism asserts the value of "inclusive 'both/and' thinking" (Hutcheon 1993 ix). Postmodernist features such as "paradox, ambiguity, irony, indeterminacy, and contingency" have replaced the features of modernism, including "closure, unity, order, the absolute, and the rational" (ix). Postmodernism values "the local and particular," in contrast to modernism which values privileging of "the general and the universal" concerning "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness" (ix). The "comforting security" of modernism is ruptured by postmodernist questioning (ix). Postmodernism acknowledges the impossibilities and the undesirability of "reaching any absolute and final truth" (xi). But we should also bear in mind that postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon. It "uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (Hutcheon 1988 3).

The postmodernist view of history is that history does not exist except as text. We can only access history through texts: historical documents, historical evidence, and eye-witness accounts (16). Postmodern writing of history and literature tells us that "both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity" (93). Linda Hutcheon comments that

recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. (105)

We can see that historical writing and fictional writing have similar and different features. Yet they are both constructed and organized in their conventional narrative systems. They

do not represent transparent truth but only provide versions of events they write about.

The texts from the past play an important part in both the construction and explanation of the texts in the present.

Historiographic metafiction, a kind of postmodern fiction, asks readers to recall that such terms as “history” and “fiction” are constructed (105). Their “interactions are historically determined” and their explanations change with time (105). Historiographic metafiction “keeps its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here—just unresolved contradiction” (106). This type of fiction “confronts the paradoxes of fictive/historical representation, the particular/general, and the present/past” (106). Historiographic metafiction argues that truth and falsity are not the right terms in the discussion of fiction. Postmodern novels “openly assert that there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth, and that there is rarely falseness per se, just others’ truth” (109). Linda Hutcheon further explores the issue of truth and representation as follows:

The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both “authentic” representation and “inauthentic” copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality (110).

On the other side of the globe, postmodernism as a concept was introduced to Chinese intellectual circles in the mid 1980s. Works of postmodernist theorists, especially those of Fredric Jameson,¹ have played an important part in the Chinese appreciation of

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¹ Fredric Jameson taught in Beijing University in 1985. “The Chinese translation of the transcribed lectures was subsequently published under the title *Huoxiandai zhuyi yu wenhua lilun* (Postmodernism and Cultural Theory) in 1986. The lectures remain to this day the most widely read and quoted work in Chinese discussions of postmodernism” (Dirlic and Zhang 1). Jameson’s works translated into Chinese include

postmodernism (Dirlik and Zhang 1). Postmodernity is a controversial term in regard to China, including but not restricted to the PRC (1). If postmodernity is a phenomenon of post capitalism, then it is not proper to impose the term on a country whose mainland part has not completely reached the stage of modernity, to say nothing of postmodernity (3). However, there are regions in the PRC where socialism and capitalism co-exist. There, postmodernity can be a relevant concept (3). Arif Dirlik and Zhang Xudong argue that “it is precisely such a situation of spatial fracturing and temporal desynchronization that justifies the use of the postmodern against the spatial (as in the nation-form) and temporal (as in the development of a national market of culture) teleologies of modernity” (3). The socio-economy of China features the combination of socialism and capitalism, and planning economy and market economy. This situation marks a significant departure from the Chinese version of modernism (3). Culturally, the concept of postmodernism describes the dynamic situation in China:

It is postmodernism ... as a general description of being simultaneously modernist and modernist manqué, that best characterizes contemporary Chinese culture which, due to the lack of any legitimate normativity or rather because of a synchronic juxtaposition of different, if indeed incompatible, modes of production, gives continuous rise to irony and displaces all efforts to stabilize meaning. The postmodernist wariness of uniformity and of any facile utopian expectation echoes only too well with the specific experience of recent Chinese history. At the same time, the postmodernist obsession with intertextuality and the floating signifier leads to a happy rediscovery of the deconstructive force of the Chinese language. (Zhang Xudong 1993 295)

Zhengzhi wuyishi [Political Unconsciousness], (Social Science Press in China 1999), and *Wenhua zhuanxing* [The Cultural Turn] (Social Science Press in China 2000). There are also works on Jameson, for example, *Wenhua de zhengzhi chanshixue: houxiandai yu jingzhong de Zhanmuxun* [The Political Interpretation of Culture: Postmodernism and Jameson] by Chen Baoguo (Social Science Press in China 2000).

As China enters into the global economy, the nation-form as a unit of analysis is no longer sufficient. Moreover, under the umbrella of the term “diaspora,” the “stateless Chinese ethnicities” around the world have asserted “their own sense of Chineseness” against the nation-form (3). The writers outside the PRC included in my thesis belong to these stateless Chinese ethnicities. On the topic of Chinese postmodernity, Arif Dirlik and Zhang Xudong comment that:

A full accounting of Chinese postmodernity ultimately cannot be restricted to any one Chinese location but must also account for motions of populations that are global and that present the very contemporary problem of contradictions in the global and the local. (7)

In China, postmodernism appears in three forms: “as a poststructuralist theoretical discourse, as an avant-garde intellectual rebellion against the modernist episteme, and as a contemporary consumer culture” (Wang Ning 25). Although signs of all three are visible in Chinese culture, literature, and art, the greatest impact of postmodernism has occurred in the literary field (26).

Postmodernism displays its features in Chinese novels of the 1980s and 1990s. While China’s rapid development during this period has mercilessly proclaimed the death of modernism, the speed of development has provided a source of creativity for literature. Some popular genres of contemporary Chinese literature show the following features of postmodernism:

- rewriting of the past dominant literature (Zhang Yiwu 250) and rejecting “the method of depth and meaning” in past narratives (258)
- employing “exaggerated deformation” and “the playful and farcical” (251)
- disrupting the norms set up by old boundaries and hierarchical structures (255)

- providing a new style of narration (250)
- searching for a direct reflection of language and existence (255)
- changing from “an external focal point” to an internal one (257)
- authors no longer as “the bearers of enlightenment ‘overlooking’ China, as they have not been entrusted by the masses to be the spokespersons for the people. They are expressionists in an equivocal position amid this state.” (257)

Commenting on the main literary trends of mainland Chinese fiction in the 1990s, Zhang Yiwu concludes that these trends

are expressions of the unique cultural imagination of a globalized and marketized China. They project onto a Chinese context the difficult situation facing culture today: On the one hand, China’s economic growth and information exchange have brought new opportunities and possibilities; on the other hand, China faces an unprecedented culture shock. In the midst of this upheaval, Chinese writers have responded with their interpretations of the resulting instability and awkwardness of the time. Since the May Fourth Movement, the myth of Chinese modernism has been duly challenged. It is precisely this tension that has established Chinese postmodernism. (258-259)

Like most of the literary works of the post-Mao era, Chinese postmodernist fiction also deals with trauma. For example, writers of Avant-garde Literature are aware of the “existence of the ongoing traumatic memory-trace of the assault” of the Maoist discourse (Yang Xiaobin 230). Avant-garde Literature demonstrates a “true sensitivity of trauma” (234), says Yang Xiaobin in his article “Maoist Discourse, Trauma and Chinese Avant-garde Literature.”² Thus postmodern writers in China try to present the new era with all

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² While Yang Xiaobin says that “the true sensitivity of the trauma did not appear in Chinese literature until the rise of the Avant-garde” (234), I would argue that the sensitivity to trauma has been embedded in most literary trends since the end of the Cultural Revolution, be it Scar Literature, Root-searching Literature, or Avant-garde Literature.

its rapid development and new cultural phenomena, while having to tackle the historical burden of the past, especially the trauma of the recent past.

In addition to the postmodern novels by Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang, which we are going to analyze in this chapter, the novels and short stories by some Avant-garde writers can be categorized as postmodern, too. These writers, including Can Xue, Yu Hua, Xu Xiaohu, Liu Heng, all experienced the Cultural Revolution as teenagers and therefore their writings “took on the unconscious effects of the discursive violence” of the national catastrophe (Yang Xiaobin 229). The works by Avant-garde writers are marked by “the traumatic effect of Maoist discourse” (230). These writers do not necessarily mention the Cultural Revolution in their texts, but they allude to it. The representative writers of this group are Can Xue and Yu Hua. Can Xue’s writing is also described as postmodernist (McDougall and Louie 410). Her *Tuwei biaoyan* [Breakout Performances] displays a dystopia where the abuses of language, suspicion among community, and fear of danger are rampant (Yang Xiaobin 235-36). The society reminds readers of the society of the Mao era. Yu Hua’s “1986” deals with violence, death, and madness, which imply the society of the present past in China. Yu Hua uses juxtaposition of the past- -the madness and violence- -and the post-Mao society where girls wear make-ups and the Taiwan writer Qiong Yao’s romance novels and boys smoke Marlboro cigarettes (Yu 182). The writers of Avant-garde fiction employ postmodern techniques in dealing with various themes including trauma.

Liu Sola’s *Hundun jia ligeleng* [Chaos and All That] and Zhang Xianliang’s *Xiguan siwang* [Getting Used to Dying], written and translated during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, are postmodern novels. They problematize the possibility of historical

knowledge by introducing different points of views. These novels do not attempt to provide general Truth; instead, they present their versions of history through the descriptions of the particular. Like modernist novels, these postmodernist novels also try to contest the notion of “right ” or “wrong,” yet they deal with it in a playful manner and they do not offer any answers other than getting readers to think. For example, in *Chaos and All That* Liu Sola “takes on a seemingly playful postmodern stance to reexamine such heavy-duty themes as freedom, history, and language” (Zhang Zhen 320). Rejecting the dominant literature of the past, which was in Maoist socialist realism, these novels provide their own styles of narration. Both authors employ exaggerated deformation and the farcical. For example, the scene of the execution ground in *Getting Used to Dying* can be regarded as a kind of exaggerated deformation, while the scene in *Chaos and All That* where the heroine joins the revolution is a farce.

Zhang Xianliang is an indigenous writer inside the PRC, whereas Liu Sola is an artist outside living and working in London and New York in a self-imposed exile. We see similarities as well as differences in their works. In comparison with the works demonstrating major differences by writers inside and outside which we have discussed in the previous chapters of the thesis, Zhang Xianliang and Liu Sola’s works display more similarities than differences. The reason is that while China enters into the global economy, Chinese society becomes more open. Political censorship continues but the party and government find it harder than before to purge or persecute writers. The writers condemned in a political movement have to make open self-criticism, but they would not likely end up in prison. Also, writers inside the PRC find opportunities to visit Western countries. As a result, even though writers stay inside China, they have knowledge of the

West from their trips abroad. Therefore, both Zhang Xianliang and Liu Sola explore the local and the global.

In *Chaos and All That* and *Getting Used to Dying*, the landscapes are no longer fixed and characters no longer centered. Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang use playful or ironic tones to deal with the chaotic past, which results in the comic representations of tragedies during the Cultural Revolution. To awake the inertia of the Chinese people after trauma, the authors challenge them with shocking juxtapositions, for example joining the Red Guard and swearing; and striking images such as the execution ground and the corpse shed. In their attempt to reflect the postmodern situation in the PRC, the authors introduce the notions of the local and the global, and of time and space. Unlike works of autobiography and documentary fiction, settings of which are confined within China, *Chaos and All That* is set in London, England, with flashbacks to China; whereas *Getting Used to Dying* shifts its settings constantly, from cities like New York and Paris to villages in China. In these landscapes, the protagonists examine local and global questions. Along with the settings, the time and space of incidents in the novels change incessantly, as the writers examine the memories of the past and present reality. The fragmented pieces from each protagonist's past surface to present the fragmented self. These together compose the postmodern literary features in the two novels.

The two writers' adoption of postmodern strategies is a result of evolution from their previous explorations in writing. Commenting on Liu Sola's style in "You Have No Other Choice" Li Feng finds the following characteristics. The plot of the novel resembles the anti-novelist narrative structure of the "Black Humour." With no complete story line, the novel has a defragmented and vague plot (258-59). As for the portrayal of

characters, Liu Sola's characters are anti-heroes. Through their absurd habits, restlessness and madness, they express their rebellious shouts against Chinese traditions (Li Feng 259-60). Liu Sola's "You Have No Other Choice" is considered the first example of Chinese postmodernist novels (McDougall and Louie 414). In *Chaos and All That*, Liu Sola continues with her postmodern style. If Liu has to use musical composing to allude to life in "You Have No Other Choice" (Li Feng 260), in *Chaos and All That* she directly raises universal issues, for example, the meaning of life. Her narration "zigzags between absurd events in London and violent episodes of the Cultural Revolution" (Zhang Zhen 320). Similarly, Zhang Xianliang's style develops into a postmodern one gradually. When he wrote "*Ling yu rou*" [Flesh and Soul] (1980), it took him some time to decide on the style. Using sharp contrast, he put multi-layered pictures of life on a collage. Then he depended on the method of stream of consciousness to link one picture of life to another (Lei Da 168). But Zhang adapted his collage and stream of consciousness with Chinese flavour in order for Chinese readers to accept them (168). His stream of consciousness was mixed with plots. As for his collage, there were stories between pictures on it (168). In the late 1980s, Zhang Xianliang's writings were enriched by postmodern techniques. In *Getting Used to Dying*, the story is fragmented, breaking chronology of narration. The story of a writer travelling in the world is interrupted by flashbacks of his life on the labour farm, and on the execution ground. Zhang places his characters freely in China, Europe, and North America.

In their works, Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang keep the issues of trauma and memory as their major focus. For the protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying*, past traumatic incidents have pronounced death sentences on him again and again. The trauma has

formed a shell, which confines him forever. Similarly, for the heroine in *Chaos and All That*, the memories of the past have engulfed her so much that wherever she goes, they keep on haunting her. Representing the millions of people who have experienced the Cultural Revolution and other political campaigns, these protagonists carry with them the scars of the past. The recurrent images and actions in the two novels are highly symbolic. They no longer represent a single incident in a specific period of time, but instead reflect the social structure and political power of the Mao era. These images and actions include the colours on the execution ground and sound of the bullet in *Getting Used to Dying*, and flashbacks and letter-writing in *Chaos and All That*.

Unlike autobiographers who abide by chronology or perceived sequence (Langer 41), Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang present the memory of the national catastrophe in a way which resembles more the way the memory actually works. The memory of a traumatic past rushes to one's mind whenever a slight association in the present triggers a particular moment of the past. In contrast with writers of autobiography and documentary fiction, the postmodern fiction writers do not insist on a truth claim. They employ such techniques as deformation, distortion, and absurdity to present their versions of history. Although the authors do not give chronologically accurate details in their works, they display the very essence of the age, providing a profound access to the traumatic history of the Mao era. By revealing the impossibility of assimilating trauma, these writers continue the task of Scar Literature whose purpose is to heal the wounds of the past. The difficult process of healing which the writers demonstrate tells us that the Chinese people have not yet fully acknowledged the trauma and therefore need to make a great effort to confront and assimilate it. The following sections will show the ways in which the writers

present their versions of the traumatic history of the Mao era. In the pages to follow, I will first show the similarities in the two texts concerning such issues as trauma and memory, various versions of history, and state and individual. Then I will demonstrate the differences in the two texts.

Trauma and Memory

A letter in *Chaos and All That* paints China after the Mao era. Upon the request of the heroine, a friend in China depicts the following:

You want to know what it's like here? I'll give you a list, and you'll know: skyscrapers, fancy hotels, supermarkets, fast-food joints, joint ventures, new policies, epidemics, nepotism, nude art shows, superstars, door-to-door salesmen, export permits, arranged marriages, perfect couples, rock'n'roll, elopement, prostitution, black-market fiction, modernism, human-meat dumplings, private cars, female infanticide, prophylactic dentistry, tourists, money changers, black-market U.S. dollars, TV ads, firearms, factories, wars, henpecked husbands, abduction and sale of women, female professors, female authors, single-parent families, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Coca-cola, fashion, consumer durables, prizewinning movies, getting rich quick, tours, holidays.... (Liu Sola 123-124)

The picture shows that China has entered the global economy by introducing such Western products as Kentucky Fried Chicken and Coca-cola. The economy seems to be booming with the Dengist slogan "getting rich quick" and the emergence of skyscrapers, fancy hotels, supermarkets, and fast-food joints. Meanwhile, feudalistic traditions still persist such as arranged marriages, female infanticide, and abduction and sale of women. The busy picture describes the present China: people are too busy with life to bother about the past. But can they simply brush aside the past, especially the recent decade of catastrophe, and venture into the present like brand new persons? The two protagonists of the novels provide us with an answer.

The protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying* and Huang Haha in *Chaos and All That* are both haunted by the past. Their past interferes with the present no matter where they are. Huang Haha's memories of the past have become a necessity in her present everyday life:

For Huang Haha, recalling days gone by was like taking stimulants. Things that had happened in those days, even the most piddling and insignificant things, were real *events*; as for now, she hardly knew if she was alive or dead. Her problem was that all the time she was living in the present tense she still imposed on it the feelings of the past tense, which made the present tense seem drab and colorless. (24-25)

It is ironic that the time she has spent in a Chinese village seems more colourful than her present life in London. Life in the Chinese village rests on minimal survival, without any luxury. Faeces thus becomes a major concern in life because of its usefulness as manure. The standard to judge whether a youth is well re-educated or not depends on how one handles faeces (53-54). In comparison, London, a typical metropolis of the capitalist world with all its glamour and luxury, seems "drab" and "colourless." No matter how hard she struggles, Huang Haha cannot rid herself of the shadows of the past:

The past had carried Huang Haha back, to live it through again. Her head ached, and she felt dizzy. Try as she might, she couldn't stop the flood of memories, nor could she join them together to make a story. The ghosts of her youth came back to haunt her. Her days were spent communing with people from her past, so that she forgot the real world of the present: the present became the past, and she immersed herself in a real world that was gone forever. She lived in the past, keeping to her old ways, as though abandoning them would leave her helpless and naked. (46)

In fact, her past constitutes such a large part of her identity that she has to cherish it in order to keep herself whole. Time and again, her friends try to bring her back to reality by questioning her: "Can't you face living in the present?" (47).

Haha stood confusedly on the street, as past events, people, places, and conversations seeped out through the cracks in her soul and spread over her body like a putrid, furry mold. The ice-cream vendors, the abusive old man, the old ladies taking their constitucionals – all were gone. Her brain was suspended in midair, filled with the memories of putrefaction; below the neck there was nothing, not even a rumbling in her stomach from those indigestible English baked beans. (54-55)

From this paragraph, we can see that her memories of the past in China are so powerful that they will not allow Haha a moment of peace, overshadowing everything in her present life in London.

Both protagonists of the novels under discussion want to recount their traumatic past in their writings. They have an aim in mind. As Langer tells us, when he refers to the Holocaust: “In fashioning a consecutive chronicle survivors who record their accounts unavoidably introduce some kind of teleology, investing the incidents with a meaning, be it nothing more than the value of regaining one’s freedom” (40). Although they record their accounts with a purpose, the survivors of a catastrophic event could never regain the freedom from the past. The traumatic memories will always haunt them. Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang both describe these memories in their works.

The protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying* experiences a kind of obsession with the past wherever he goes. “I have searched for the appeal of another country and found only the prevailing presence of Chinese and the past. I cannot walk out from under this enormous shadow” (122). Moreover, memories of the past become an integral part of a person’s identity. “Every time he left China he thought he could leave the past behind, but like the skin on his body, past events took to the air with him” (68). The simile shows that memories are not only part of one’s identity, but also a part of one’s physical body. For the protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying*, past and future blur into each other because of

his memories. “The future was uncertain, his battles lay ahead: The one thing that could be depended upon was my memories of the past. I treasure the past the way others treasure the promise of future” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 64). In *Chaos and All That*, the different experiences of the past isolate the Chinese students living in London from Londoners. No wonder the postman comments on Huang Haha: “Funny people, these Asians” (Liu Sola 92). Yet while local people may think these Chinese are out of their mind, the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* thinks that the world outside, not he, is crazy (Zhang Xianliang 1991 137). Both Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang represent the world through their protagonists. They show how the characters in their novels look crazy because they carry history as a heavy burden on their mind.

A Private Version of History

Although Liu Sola claims that *Chaos and All That* is not autobiography (127), we do see in her work her personal experience of the Cultural Revolution. On personal experience, Linda Hutcheon writes:

[i]n granting new and emphatic value to the notion of “experience,” feminisms have also raised an issue of great importance to postmodern representation: what constitutes a valid historical narrative? And who decides? This has led to the re-evaluation of personal or life narratives—journals, letters, confessions, biographies, autobiographies, self-portraits. ... If the personal is the political, then the traditional separation between private and public history must be rethought. (1989 160)

Liu Sola’s version of the Cultural Revolution also makes us question what constitutes a valid historical narrative. According to Mao Zedong, who launched the Cultural Revolution, one of its aims was for China to eradicate all bad cultural heritage of the past, especially that of Confucianism, in order to establish a proletarian culture. For most

Chinese intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution was a red terror, in which they were persecuted, some even to death. Specialists of Chinese culture and history, such as Lynn White and Frederick C. Teiwes, interpret this political movement as an ideological purge.

The Beijing teenagers in *Chaos and All That* have a different version of the movement. For them, the beginning years of the Cultural Revolution mean chaos and anarchy. Almost all the social and cultural restrictions have vanished. The qualifications to join the Red Guards prove to be surprisingly different from a teenager's expectations. The following is the scene where Huang Haha is interviewed by a "leader" of the Red Guards.

He eyed me up and down. "How old are you?"

"Eleven."

"Eleven! A fucking eleven-year-old and she wants to be a Red Guard." His neck bulged. He couldn't have been more than twelve himself.

I just stood there, chest out, tummy in, buttocks back, pigeon-toed, submissive and attentive.

"Class origin?" he snapped.

"Revolutionary cadre!" I held my head high....

"Hm." The boy took his foot off the chair and went over to the desk to pick up some forms. "Can you say fuck?"

Neither of us said a word. All that practice at home for nothing.

He cracked his belt on the chair again. "Got enough guts to beat the shit out of people?"

Silence again. He had us cowed.

"Dare you protect the revolutionary red regime with your life blood?" His eyes opened wider than ever. (16-17)

This scene shows a teenager's understanding of the Cultural Revolution, in which swearing plays a crucial role. This exposure of history detotalizes the totalized history- - the official version. After the Cultural Revolution, some party theorists tried very hard to "render their materials coherent, continuous, unified- -but always with an eye to the control and mastery of these materials" (Hutcheon 1989 62). They had to keep Mao's

theory to continue the propaganda for socialism. By presenting a different version of the past, Liu Sola deconstructs the official version. Her work resembles “historiography” in Hutcheon’s terms, “which is no longer considered the objective and disinterested recording of the past; it is more an attempt to comprehend and master it by means of some working (narrative/explanatory) model that, in fact is precisely what grants a particular meaning to the past” (Hutcheon 1989 64). In Liu Sola’s version of the past, vocabulary of obscenities and lyrics of operas and songs mixed together in the chaotic life of her characters. Liu intends to create an effect of catharsis after the nationwide catastrophe. Zhang Zhen comments on this point: “The omnipresent ‘dirty words’ (*zanghua*) are interwoven with lyrics from traditional operas and contemporary pop music, the two of which are also interpenetrated, producing a hilariously ‘cathartic’ effect” (Zhang Zhen 320). In *Chaos and All That*, what makes a hero depends on how many dirty words he uses. Here is the picture of the hero.

A hero had emerged at our school with a vocabulary of obscenities a hundred times richer than my own. He had written a poster attacking our teacher, which contained two hundred swearwords in the course of its two pages, without a single repetition! The crowds reading the poster blocked the road into the school. (Liu Sola 33)

In addition to swearing, violence is another feature of the era. The conditions to join the Red Guards include beating “the shit out of people,” and “shedding one’s life blood” (17). Swearing, beating people, and shedding blood comprised the tasks of Red Guards, who thought it “their responsibility to torture, insult, and even murder those labelled as ‘class enemies’” (Lin Jing 28). Although they were only between 14 and 23 years old, the “Red Guards’ hatred toward ‘class enemies’ and the cruelty they displayed, according to

report after report, was beyond imagination” (21).³ The violence and cruelty fit Mao’s definition of a revolution, which “is not the same as inviting people to dinner, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing fancy needlework.” Instead, it is “an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows another” (Mao 1954 Vol.1 27). But Mao’s Cultural Revolution, which happened fifteen years after his victory, turned out to be a battle between cliques of people, largely of the same class, fighting against each other on a national scale. The repetition of obscenities in *Chaos and All That* shocks readers in several ways (18). It ridicules the Chinese genteel view of literary creativity: dirty words should not appear in the elegant hall of literature. It emphasizes the destruction of the younger generation during that period of history, when Chinese cultural and moral values were turned up-side-down. The echo of swearwords will always resonate in these teenagers’ future life, leaving a traumatic memory.

However, doubts and contradictions constitute part of Liu Sola’s version of the past, true to what Linda Hutcheon says: “there is an urge to foreground, by means of contradiction, the paradox of the desire for and the suspicion of narrative mastery- -and master narratives” (1989 64). Liu Sola provides her readers with a distorted world from these teenagers’ perspective:

Just look at the papers! They were full of reports that a great and unprecedented Cultural Revolution was about to break out, and then what do you see when you turn on the TV in the evening but Americans marching in the streets in a Cultural Revolution of their own! We were taught that “every word of the Great Leader is a roll of the war drum” and sure enough, there on the TV were Africans shouting, “Long live Chairman Mao!” and beating time on tom-toms. Of course, they just might have been actors dressed up and putting on a show for our benefit, but surely the foreigners we saw on the news queuing for copies of the *Selected Works* [by Mao Zedong] couldn’t all

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³ For examples of the Red Guards’ treatment of “class enemies,” see “The Cruelty of the Red Guards” (Lin Jing 21-25).

be acting, could they? It was said that everyone in the world had a copy of the Little Red Book.... (Liu Sola 12)

We can see that although the teenagers have been brainwashed, they do not accept what they see without suspicion. They express their doubts about “Africans” or “actors” and “queuing” or “acting.” Nevertheless, along with most Chinese at the time, they believe that “two thirds of the world’s foreigners are languishing in despair and need us to go and save them” (7). With their world revolutionary mission in mind, most Chinese people were busy making revolution, nourished only with corn flour buns and cabbages cooked with no meat and little cooking oil.⁴

Having lived through the actual events during the Cultural Revolution, Liu Sola offers her version with intense self-consciousness. She is herself involved in the problematic relation of a private writer narrating the public events. Linda Hutcheon discusses the relation as follows:

Another related form of postmodern writing informed by the feminist revaluation of life-writing and its politicization of the personal is the kind of work that sits on the borderline between fiction and personal history.... The representation of the self (and the other) in history in this form is also done with intense self-consciousness, thus revealing the problematic relation of the private person writing to the public as well as personal events once lived (by the narrator or someone else). (1989 161)

As a teenager, Liu Sola experienced the Cultural Revolution during which her mother went to work in a pig farm and her father was jailed. She joined the Red Guard but soon lost the membership because her parents fell into the category of the class enemies. In *Chaos and All That*, Huang Haha has a similar experience. Although *Chaos and All That* is not an autobiography, the autobiographical elements should not be overlooked. They

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⁴ During the Cultural Revolution, coupons for meat, cooking oil, and wheat and corn flour were rationed to people, and the living standard for common citizens was very low.

carry, often with playfulness and irony, the messages of the writer. These messages are highly political with their “private” nature.

Zhang Xianliang’s *Getting Used to Dying* also sits on the borderline between fiction and personal history, because the incidents of the protagonist’s life coincide with what the author experienced during the Mao era. Both the author and the protagonist have been named as Rightist and spent years on a labour farm. Both of them start to write later and travel abroad as a famous Chinese writer. Yet instead of chronological narratives, Zhang Xianliang chooses the essence of the past as an access to the traumatic history of the Mao era. Although we do not know whether the author himself has been sent to the execution ground, we know that he insists that intellectuals in China have been given spiritual death sentences during the Mao era. “Although the gun may never have been fired, the bullet of fear and repression has lodged inside the brain. Every intellectual in China lives with this kind of bullet in his brain” (Avery 1991 ix). Zhang Xianliang explores in depth the scene of the execution in his novel and concludes that the spectacle of the execution acts as a ritual rather than anything else. The execution has the function of educating the masses. The public parades of the so-called counter-revolutionaries during the Cultural Revolution have the same function.

Although only a fixed spot in a specific moment, the scene of the execution in the novel shows the triumph of the Mao era, when everybody, including children, joins to observe the power of the party-state. The protagonist of the novel, one of the forty-one convicts, sees the audience of this event from a truck parading through streets:⁵

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⁵ “Prisoners have historically been paraded through the streets of Chinese towns before being executed, and the practice of public executions continues in China today. In July 1989, for example, public executions

I saw countless sweaty faces looking up at us, enraptured. They had the most adorable looks on them as they tried to read our expressions. From their own reactions, I did my best to figure out what was written on my placard. This proved to be in vain. I soon realized that all they were interested in was the drama, not the crime. It made virtually no difference who was being executed—what mattered to these people was the execution itself. (108)

The execution itself is no longer a single activity, but a symbolic action displaying the power of the party-state. The spectators watching the process of execution resemble the audience of a drama, ready to absorb its message. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault explains the function of the public execution: “The public execution is to be understood not only as a judicial, but also as a political ritual. It belongs, even in minor cases, to the ceremonies by which power is manifested” (Foucault 47). In a party-state like Maoist China, the public execution was more political than judicial, because some “culprits” did not necessarily go through a judicial process. In the case of the protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying*, the power of the party-state is fully manifested because he not only goes to the execution ground without a judicial accusation, but is also a fake culprit in the sense that he is put there only to show the power of the ruling class, not to be executed. From this incident we can see that the party-state has an omnipotent control over life and death of its subjects: “The right to punish, therefore, is an aspect of the sovereign’s right to make war on his enemies: to punish belongs to that absolute power of life and death...” (Foucault 48). In *Getting Used to Dying*, the enemies of the Mao era include even “a young girl about ten years old” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 110). “It seemed that her crime was to have yelled reactionary slogans- -that is, when she should have yelled “Long Live Chairman Mao!”, it came out as “Long Live some-other-name!” (114).

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were being carried on in Zhoukoudian, to the south of Beijing.” (Translator’s footnote, Zhang Xianliang 1991 107).

Punishing a ten-year-old girl serves an important function for the party-state to educate the civilians, because children are always the first target for a party-state to impose its ideology. Traumatizing children with fear is more effective than killing them in the process of turning them into obedient subjects.

The Party-state and Traumatized Individuals

The texts under discussion present the individuals who have experienced violence, terror, or persecution. Once traumatized, these people carry the burden of the traumatic memories. Their past education, experience, and traumatic events have fragmented the self. In the texts, we see the conflict between the protagonists' past and their present. The protagonists can never start a new life in a foreign land without carrying on the shadow of the old self, because an individual's behavior is always determined by his/her upbringing and education.

In *Chaos and All That* and *Getting Used to Dying*, numerous pieces of evidence illustrate how the dominant communist ideology disciplines individuals in everyday life and the tension remains constantly between the party-state and civilians as subjects. Under the Mao era, ideology acts as a powerful means to ensure the absolute control of the party-state. As Catherine Belsey says: "The destination of all ideology is the subject (the individual in society) and it is the role of ideology to *construct people as subjects*" (Belsey 58).⁶ In Maoist China, education was a tool for politics, as were literature and arts (Lin Jing 76): "Mao speculated that China's education should serve the socialist state

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⁶ The italics is from the original text.

ownership system, notably in serving the CCP leadership and the dictatorship of the proletariat” (74). The task of constructing people as subjects starts as soon as the party-state has been established. As for the targets of the construction, the idea is to aim at them as early as possible. In *Getting Used to Dying*, the ideological construction of the protagonist begins at the early stage of his formative years:

In the past, I remember once loving my mother. But then my teacher warned me about her, told me not to love her any more. According to the laws of class analysis, she belonged to the bureaucratic class- -she should not take any pleasure in bearing such vile, evil spawn as me. All the crimes that later came down on my head were the direct result of her happiness in giving birth to me. So my teacher split me off from the mother I loved. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 166)

In this paragraph, although the “teacher” is not identified, it is obvious for most Chinese readers that the teacher is Mao Zedong, the Great Teacher and Great Leader. The protagonist is like the pupils, who learned the first Chinese characters of slogans and classes such as “Long live Chairman Mao,” “workers and peasants,” “Socialist is good,” long before they learned “father” and “mother” (Lin Jing 86). From the education they got they learned that “it was important to know classes before parents” (86).

The Marxist concept of class was related to ownership. According to Marx, classes arose and were sustained “by differences in the private ownership of the means of production” (Chan 219). In China after 1949, “relations to the means of production had been restructured by nationalizaion and collectivization,” which engendered a “new social structure” (219). However, the Party decided to keep the category of classes. Anita Chan tells us that the Chinese Communist party insisted, with increasing rigour, upon retaining the old categorization of classes, artificially superimposing it upon a new and radically different social order. The party, including Mao, saw the revival of “class hatred” as a

means to keep alive the people's gratitude to the party and their adherence to the party's demands. (219-20)

In *Chaos and All That* the formation of the subject starts right from kindergarten and primary schools with revolutionary models for children to follow. In addition to Dr. Bethune, a model for all the Chinese people, there are also revolutionary models like Liu Wenxue and Uncle Lei Feng.⁷ One way to judge if school children are on the right track is to compare them to these models. As the tutor from the Young Pioneers warns: "Uncle Lei Feng wrote in his revolutionary diary every day. Could your diaries be published the way his was? If not, then there may be something wrong with your political consciousness" (Liu Sola 5). From this warning we can see that children's education at the time is highly focused on conformity to the Maoist discourse. Writing a diary is associated with one's political consciousness. In this way, the panopticon makes sure that privacy has no room to thrive. From the very start, children are trained to think along the right line and acquire the vocabulary of the Maoist discourse. The aim of their education is to turn children into little rebels against their family and to win them over to the side of the revolution (11).

In addition to revolutionary models, the notion of class enemies reinforces the tensions of revolution. Children are trained to orient everything from the angle of class struggle. Trivial details in everyday life in a kindergarten are linked with the vocabulary of the Maoist discourse: "Every day the teacher would devise some new version of the

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⁷ Liu Wenxue was a pupil of grade four. It is said that he "sacrificed himself courageously" in fighting "with a landlord" to protect the interests of the People's Commune" (Lin Jing 89). Lei Feng was an ordinary soldier in the army when he died in 1962 at the age of 22 (120). He was canonized after his death by Mao who wrote a slogan for all the people in the country: "Learn from Comrade Lei Feng." Lei Feng then became a role model for people in China.

exposing-offenders game, and whoever was brave enough to denounce a classmate was a good little child” (Liu Sola 3-4). Insignificant details such as farting can be associated with big terms such as “offender,” “culprit,” and “exposure” (3-4). The following is the language that a kindergarten teacher uses about farting: “Very well then, you must all sniff each others’ bottoms. The one with the smelly bottom is the one who farted, and that way the offender will be exposed!” (3).

Once in a while, the protagonist in *Chaos and All That* hesitates about whom to believe, her parents or the party. But most of the time she is convinced by the logic of the party-state. For example, Huang Haha asks “What kind of man was Daddy?” (44). According to Mommy “he had run away from home to go to school in the city and had gone on to be a top man in the Communist Party” (44). But the Red Guards, who had dragged him off, said that “he was actually a landlord, ... the kind of landlord you saw in the cartoons and comic books, scrawny and sly in fur coat and skullcap, exploiting their tenants and squeezing their debtors, bullying the weak but cringing before the powerful!” (44). Huang Haha intends to find out the truth from her father, but he advises her to study the matter for herself (45). Yet the more she studies it, the less she believes in her parents.

I lay on the window seat inside and spied on him through the glass. I thought of all the terrible allegations the posters had made and hoped that I might see something in him that would prove them wrong. Far from finding anything that might refute the accusations, I kept seeing all sorts of reasons for believing he really was a landlord. See how pale his face was! How listless his eyes were! How he cared only about fruit trees! How he never did up the collar fastening of his cadre suit! (Liu Sola 44)

As a teenager in a confusing period of history, she does not have the means to judge a revolutionary.

In their eagerness to belong to the desired class, these teenagers are ready to give up their love of and respect for their parents, for they need to seek recognition from the party-state in order to achieve their own self-identity and self-consciousness (Belsey 56-60). They willingly adopt the subject-positions suggested by the party-state rather than that by their parents. Catherine Belsey thus explains the relationship between a subject and the Absolute power:

The subject is not only a grammatical subject, "a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions," but also a *subjected being* who submits to the authority of the social formation represented in ideology as the absolute Subject (God, the king, the boss, Man, conscience).... (62)

The supreme authority of the Mao era is the Great Leader himself. According to Maoist ideology, all subjects should prioritize him over any other kind of bond, including family bonds. Tu Wei-ming thus comments on this point:

Maoists purposefully drove a wedge into the sacred relationships (i.e. parent-child, husband-wife, siblings, and friends) as a litmus test for loyalty to the socialist cause.... Once basic human feelings, such as loving and caring for the closest kin, were strongly criticized as petty bourgeois sentimentalism and publicly denounced as incongruous with the revolutionary spirit, they lost their legitimacy in the court of appeal of the newly constituted discourse community. (Tu 167)

The Maoist logic is legitimized by the omnipresent media of the time. Teenagers try to meet what the party-state desires them to be in the same way as the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* submits to the absolute authority:

With no one else to love, he said I should love him, that he alone was the saving star of all under heaven. Without him, I would immediately go to hell. And the way to love him best was to fill my breast full of hatred: Hate became the ethical standard of the new world. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 166)

It is only after taking such a submissive attitude that he becomes a subject. According to class analysis, his mother is classified as an enemy for him to hate rather than to love. The

protagonist's conformity to the Maoist discourse is one of the examples of the formation of "the authoritarian personality" which characterized the loyalty and obedience to the Party and clear awareness of class struggle (Chan 1). Through her interviews and observations, Anita Chan concludes that "the authoritarian beliefs and emotional needs" that the young people with the authoritarian personality "held in common were not so much a product of their parents' influence but rather a product of their political socialization at school" (1-2). We can see this clearly in the above example when the protagonist is told to love the leader and hate his mother. The young people, such as the protagonist, strove hard to "live up to the Maoist credo," in order to be "officially recognized as political activists" (Chan 2).

During the Mao era, a vital step for any Chinese person to become a sound subject was the acquisition of the Maoist discourse. As Zhang Xianliang says: "Every person in China, down to the smallest baby, has been nailed with a class attribute. There is nothing in China, not one blade of grass, not one tree, that has not been painted with a political hue" (Zhang Xianliang 1991 258). It is common for any totalitarian regime to impose its ideal social order on people. In China, where the family bond has always played a central role in traditional values, the Maoist party-state superimposed the idea of class struggle on any relationship. The class categories were bound to interfere with everyday life in the private sphere, as in *Chaos and All That*, when Huang Haha and her friends suddenly find themselves no longer children of Party cadres during the Cultural Revolution. She is kicked out of the Red Guards for being a "landlord's brat" (Liu Sola 50). Confused and frustrated, she and her friends blame their parents for having made wrong political decisions long ago:

The fathers who had been communist officials had all been slung in jail; the fathers who had been officials under the nationalists were all under protection as allies in the United Front. Little Ding said her father had joined the wrong party; Wazi was mad at her mother for marrying the wrong man; and I said Daddy should have joined the nationalists first and then changed sides.... (50)

This way, politics overwhelms children's love for their parents. In the text, Huang Haha and her friends start suffering from the notion of class category only from the Cultural Revolution. Actually, right after the Communist Party took power, children from non-proletarian families suffered from discrimination. These children "had great difficulty getting admitted into student organizations, gaining positive feedback from teachers, making peer friends, and the like" (Lin Jing 113). During the Cultural Revolution, the situation worsened and "they were called 'dog's sibling,' 'the landlord's son of a bitch,' 'little crawling snake,' and many other labels. Many of them severely blamed their parents for having given birth to them" (113). The protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying* comments: "The new culture of China had sucked all emotions into the orbit of politics. He has no idea how this phenomenon had been accomplished, how human relations had been ground into mere flavorings for political use" (Zhang Xianliang 1991 66). Such occasions in the fictional works illustrate how the totalitarian regime achieved its goal in making the Maoist discourse a dominant discourse and in turning China into a discourse community. In practice, the party-state had effective ways to enforce its discourse. The acquisition of Maoist discourse began with repetition of slogans and Mao's quotations. Starting from childhood, people no longer needed to think for themselves. Zhang Xianliang comments: "For years, parrots, not humans, had been giving us our language classes. I was already unable to express my own feelings and

opinions” (258). After the party-state’s successful training, ordinary citizens in the PRC behaved like obedient children to their paternal leader.

The party-state also ensured that its subjects were always under surveillance. The surveillance included the party-state’s policies and the subjects’ self-surveillance. As the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* puts it, the surveillance is “a constant fear that lives inside Chinese” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 33). It also deprived Chinese people of the desires for freedom. The protagonist ponders over the word “freedom:” “For how many years has this one word struck terror in the hearts of some Chinese, so that even today one does not dare say it out loud” (27). Not only did some Chinese people choose to extinguish the desire for freedom, they also preferred not to look back to the past.

The surveillance of the Chinese panopticon reinforced itself by constant political movements, “continuous revolutions” as the party-state put it. These political movements stripped off what composed a human being. Moreover, they also made sure that the victims, till the last minute of their lives, would be loyal to the party and its leader. As the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* comments:

Bit by bit, they could scrape away your dignity, your love and self-respect until, tyrannized, with your head already rolling on the ground, you would actually want to thank your executioner. You would still want to wish him “Long life!” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 223-24)

This is actually what a panopticon demands from a citizen- -absolute loyalty. The Chinese panopticon went to such an extreme regarding its icon worship during the Cultural Revolution that the whole nation was filled up with Mao’s portraits, statues, and quotations. In front of them, people danced their “Loyalty Dance” and expressed their

loyalty twice a day as rituals—“asking for instructions in the morning and reporting a whole day’s deeds in the evening.”

An important part of submission to constant surveillance was to accept everything without questioning. The dominant discourse deprived people of their own judgment. After years of sufferings and persecutions under the Maoist discipline, the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* never thinks of questioning:

I knew fully well that innocence, credulity, and softness make living easier to bear. I knew it from experience. In the midst of starving and dying they allowed me to feel that both living and dying still held extraordinary interest. I never asked who might be responsible for our hunger, for the deaths of so many Chinese. It was as though hunger and death were just a regular part of life. (164)

Learning to adapt was one of many ways of survival under the Chinese panopticon. For most Chinese intellectuals, the key for surviving was to give up individual thinking and parrot the vocabulary of the Maoist discourse. After years of such practice, the protagonist has acquired “a supremely gifted tongue, drilled in the school of Chinese politics” (167). Under the Maoist discipline, citizens developed a unique way of thinking which appears foreign to the world outside, including the over-seas Chinese. “Only those who have spent their lives in China can see that one another’s thought processes are rational. Chinese who have been away too long behave almost as if they are insane” (262).

Living under the ubiquitous Chinese panopticon for several decades, the subjects under the Mao era found it impossible to get rid of the burden of the past. Even in the 1990s when the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* is about to enter a Chinese

consulate in the United States, the habitual fear comes back, as he knows that it is a Chinese organization:

He was nothing more than a document to process- -the only thing he lacked was a seal stamped on his face.... Back bowed, he performed all the necessary steps, amazed at his ability to acquiesce. Reverence for authority is a genetic disease in Chinese blood, forcing Chinese to feed on bureaucratic red tape. As soon as Chinese people enter their own institutions, they begin to shiver as though the air is cold. (65)

Chinese institutions still give him creepy feelings in the 1990s in a foreign land.

However, instead of fighting against this panopticon, most Chinese submitted to it. The protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying* finds himself shivering, but “[a]t the same time, he could adapt quickly to oppression,” regaining the “innate Chinese trait” (65). A human being is reduced to a timid and obedient subject in reality, carrying a heavy burden of terror, fear, pain, and traumatic memories.

Both in *Chaos and All That* and *Getting Used to Dying* death is closely linked with politics. In *Chaos and All That*, we can see the impact of the political movements during the Cultural Revolution on ordinary people’s lives. Again, the notion of “classes” played a key role. People’s career, lives, and death all depended on which class they belonged to. It was not uncommon at that time that wives would seek a divorce when their husbands were categorized as the enemy of the proletariat despite their decades of loyalty and devoted service to the Party. For some people, the burden of being related to someone with the status of counter-revolutionaries was too heavy to carry. “Little Ding’s mother killed herself, and Wazi’s mother followed suit” (Liu Sola 51).

Another incident in *Chaos and All That* shows how the notion of classes can not only change a person’s life drastically, but can also alter the attitude of others towards

him/her. An old ragpicker has received sympathy from children. One of Haha's friends has given her own spare change to the woman, because a ragpicker belongs to the "working masses" (36). Yet during the Cultural Revolution she is discovered to have been a landlord's wife, the enemy of the proletariat because landlords own properties. After the discovery, she is placed under guard before her deportation to "her native village" (35). After she has committed suicide, she is treated as "a pile of dog shit unfit to be called human" (43). This way of regarding enemies was very popular during the Cultural Revolution. As Lynn White analyzes, it was the labelling of people in society that induced social violence and hatred among people (8). After 1949, according to the Maoist moral system based on binary thinking, all the "bad elements" in Chinese society deserved whatever ill-treatment possible. During the Cultural Revolution, the collective title given to the enemy class as "oxen, ghosts, serpents, and devils" clearly demonstrated the Maoists' will to shift their identity from human beings to animals. The labelling conveyed a message of sanction to torture these bad elements. Lynn White comments that

[o]fficial good and bad labels for groups, such as "cadres" or "proletarians," "rightists" or "capitalists," made people acquire concrete interests in seeing these labels used in their favour and not to their harm. These labels created "status groups," which became conscious of their shared interests in official allocations of jobs, housing, services, places in schools, and rights to live in cities. The labels created new kinds of collective group consciousness. (8)

In order for their power to continue, the groups of cadres and proletarians had to crush the enemy groups. Violence was sanctioned as a consequence. The punishment of the bad elements in Chinese society was as much to give them a good lesson, as to teach the rest of the people "the right behaviour."

Worse still, life of "the criminal" in a labour camp is regarded even less than that

of the subhuman during a period of famine.⁸ Among the dead bodies in the Corpse Shed, the protagonist's life or death depends on a simple question from a worker taking care of the bodies: "Shall we bury him or not?" (Zhang Xianliang 1991 170). Moreover, Zhang's *Getting Used to Dying* deals with the concept of death in all its implications rather than a specific death of an individual case. The very notion of death is constantly questioned in *Getting Used to Dying*. To the protagonist, death does not happen necessarily after a bullet is fired into a person's body. After the experience of the execution ground, he feels that "I never again believed in life, or in memory, or in dreams, and I no longer believed in myself. A person can be shot dead without ever hearing the bullet..." (81-82). After the fake execution, he says that "everything about me had died- -my idealism, knowledge, work, and of course my love" (51). We can see here how politics can rip everything off people. The victims of certain political movements have little choice but to accept their political death. This is in conformity with what the Party expects. So, after his fake execution, the protagonist succumbs to the power of the party-state. Although spared the bullet, he executes himself when he hears the bullets shot at other convicts. The self-execution results from the experience of a chain of political movements, during each of which he endures a partial death. Often it is life rather than death that surprises him: "When I reached inside a breast pocket for my monthly pass, I secretly felt for the beating of my heart. It was still there, although I knew it had died long ago" (119).

The novel's protagonist is merely a representative of the millions of people in China who had been mesmerized by the party-state. During the Mao era, they might have

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⁸ The period denotes to the three years of famine between 1958 to 1962 during which "at least 30 million people" died of starvation (Becker xi).

seemed to be participating in some events. To the author, upon thinking back, they were no more alive than the dead:

A ferocious shout from the masses in the audience now interrupted my penitence. Swiveling my eyes toward my forehead, I saw a forest of arms spring up before us. The assembled crowds were sitting cross-legged on the field, and as a result I thought for a moment I felt my body shake with fear— not from the people’s anger, or the slogans they were now shouting, demanding our immediate execution, but from the shock of thinking that all these people had been buried alive. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 109)

In a country where people no longer think for themselves, but only parrot the ready-made slogans imposed by the party-state, they are buried alive. For them, including the protagonist, “living is a mere convention, a form of inertia” (8). The living and the dead blur. In a hospital, the protagonist feels that this is not “a hospital in which the living administered to the dying but one in which the dying tried to pull down those still alive” (80). During the chaotic period of the Mao era, not only were the notions of being alive or dead intertwined, but people’s identities were also constantly shifting—from revolutionaries to counter-revolutionaries overnight.

Moreover, after death, people’s skeletons are being “messed up.” After the Cultural Revolution, families that lost members demand to have the bones of their dead returned. In *Getting Used to Dying*, criminals in the labour camp are assigned to dig out skeletons. To the usual comment on the youth of the Mao era, as “a generation that has been messed over” (248), the protagonist adds: “It’s true, even the bones of our generation has been messed over” (249). What is important for people to realize is that “[i]t was not that others were messing over Chinese but that Chinese themselves actually enjoy being messed over. They are like children who enjoy getting tossed high in the air

before being suddenly swung down to the hip” (259). The civilians not only accept submissively to be messed over, but also participate actively in its process.

The protagonist is just one of them when he admits: “I have been messed with but I have also messed with others” (253). Even as a victim of Maoist campaigns, the protagonist, along with the authorities on each level of the state institutions, joins in messing over people. “The troop leader and I then shared in the same crime,” he admits (253). By calling him “you cowardly ghost,” “you lousy accomplice” (254), the author tries to awake the audience to an understanding that the nation’s tragedy has not been brought only by a single leader of a party, but that all the Chinese people are responsible for what has happened during the Mao era.

Carrying such a heavy burden of history on their minds, the protagonists of the novels enter the post-Mao era. Although they now can travel abroad, what they see outside China brings back the associations of the past. China’s past is also shared by the rest of the world, but in different ways. In *Getting Used to Dying*, Zhang Xianliang describes the following scene:

A group of Chinese and French people had just been talking heatedly about the Great Cultural Revolution in the brightly lit living room of a friend. The Great Cultural Revolution is probably like wine: The more years you keep it, the more you find to say about it. These people drank Bordeaux and ate cheese as they talked, and nobody but me felt the bizarreness of it, the absurdity. Before leaving, someone suggested singing a song together, one that both Chinese and French knew how to sing. In the end, everyone settled on “The East is Red.” All sang in unison of how China had produced the great Mao Zedong. (119-20)⁹

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⁹ The song goes: “The East is Red. The sun rises. China produced Mao Zedong.”

The very scene bridges the gap between the past and present, and China and the West. It is very ironic that “The East is Red” is the song that both Chinese and French scholars agree to sing together. The scene demonstrates how history has engraved people’s minds with its relics. These scholars might condemn the Mao era during conferences. But when they want to sing a song together, the only choice they have is the song praising “the great Mao Zedong.”

Despite the belatedness of traumatic events, the Chinese people have rushed into the post-Mao era. The shock of the past has not been fully recognized and absorbed, yet new cultural shocks sweep in with massive force. Dealing with this particular time in China, Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang explore such issues as the insider and outsider, and time and space.

The Insider and Outsider

A comparison between Liu Sola as a writer outside the PRC and Zhang Xianliang as a writer inside reveals many similarities. Their protagonists are all haunted by memories of the past and they try to cope with life while carrying the burden. The authors adopt an ironic tone in their descriptions of the Cultural Revolution and the Anti-Rightist campaign, which provide different perspectives of the traumatic history. They avoid direct narrative of the traumatic events, the common method employed by autobiographers and writers of documentary fiction. Liu and Zhang also abandon the traditional function of writers and therefore their works are no longer didactic and exemplary.

In spite of the similarities, differences exist between the two writers. In dealing with the local and the global, Liu Sola's heroine lives in the West, whereas Zhang Xianliang's hero tours the West. Liu privileges "the chaotic mode of narration" and confronts the "hybrid nature of the diasporic existence" (Zhang Zhen 320). Liu's characters get more involved in the city life of London, where they find that Londoners still retain the long-held fetishism towards Chinese culture. Liu Sola attempts to break this prejudiced attitude in her work. With the tendency towards globalization today, China, the slow and late partner, has entered the international arena. Yet in Western eyes, China still remains mysterious due to its long history and civilization. However, in the "Afterword to the English Edition" (127), Liu Sola suggests: "Forget about the distance between China and the rest of the world." She also dispels the mystery radiated by Chinese civilization by "hanging out the diapers": "the Chinese kill everything," "the Chinese curse and insult each other" (127). She includes Westerners by adding "just as you do," instead of proposing China as an image of the Other (127).

Yet for some people in the novels, a geographic integrity still exists. For example, in *Chaos and All That*, Londoners retain their own versions of China, even after a visit there. Often the imaginary Other will not give way to the existing one. This is shown in the following scene:

Alex's dream was shattered, or so he told Haha after he came back from a visit to China.

"So what did you expect to find there?" she asked him.

"The revolution. Socialism. But all I found was materialism."

"Why didn't you stay a bit longer? How can you understand a country in such a short time?"

Alex shrugged his shoulders. "I wanted to come home and take baths, go to concerts, eat Indian food." (Liu Sola 49-50)

We see that it is not easy for people to forget the geographical and psychological distance between countries on different continents. Paul Ricoeur describes the situation:

When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with the destruction of our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just *others*, that we ourselves are an “other” among others. All meaning and every goal having disappeared, it becomes possible to wander through civilizations as if through vestiges and ruins. (278)¹⁰

In a sense, Alex is threatened by his own discovery, which destroys his illusory China. Chinese students in London do not have a better understanding of Westerners either. Old Gu thus comments on Huang Haha’s affair with the Londoner Michael: “A foreigner ... hmm ... it’s natural to want a bit of fun. ... I suppose it’s all right as long as you don’t catch AIDS” (Liu Sola 28-29). To some Chinese such as Old Gu, “Westerners were promiscuous AIDS carriers, and Asians were little homebodies” (29). By juxtaposing the two cultures in various respects, Liu Sola questions: Can Londoners and the Chinese students in London really understand each other better by dwelling in the same city? Together with Londoners, Liu Sola reexamines Chinese tradition and culture in her novel. As Zhang Zhen says: “[b]eneath the surface of this frivolous, or ‘chaotic,’ narration, ... lies a rather conscious effort to critically re-view some major tropes in Chinese history and tradition” (320).

In dealing with the local and the global, Zhang Xianliang blurs the borders between “home” and the “world outside.” In a social environment where socialism, capitalism, and feudalism co-exist, the notion of “culture” is no longer a stable concept. As a consequence, the Chinese people have been experiencing a cultural crisis after the

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¹⁰ As quoted by Craig Owens (57-58).

Mao era. The following statement about postmodernism serves the purpose of our analysis, if we replace the phrase “Western European culture” with “Chinese culture:”

Decentered, allegorical, schizophrenic ... however we choose to diagnose its symptoms, postmodernism is usually treated, by its protagonists and antagonists alike, as a crisis of cultural authority, specifically of the authority vested in Western European culture and its institutions. (Owens 57)

Zhang Xianliang presents the world through the protagonist, who sees the following American scene depicted in newspapers as the familiar, instead of the exotic:

He chewed his toast slowly while using thumb and forefinger to open the paper- -it revealed a part of the world that was much like any other. A change in the names and you might think this was a street rag put out in China: murder, armed robbery, pilfering, car accidents, fires, prostitution ... and everyone was talking about the spread of AIDS. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 57)

Zhang Xianliang not only shows that the border between China and the West is dissolving gradually, but also demonstrates that the common social problems exist in the whole world, occidental and oriental alike.

Travelling in the West, Zhang Xianliang’s protagonist is an observer. He constantly re-lives the Maoist China, despite his actual abode in New York, Paris, San Francisco, etc. The following paragraph shows how he feels in the United States:

Jing Hui’s house was built on a hill, and he looked over half the lights of San Francisco.... He felt that the world outside was throbbing to music. The pounding of the drums made his heart beat faster, and he felt again the constant terror that lives inside Chinese.... For as he gazed out, he could not help but wonder what would happen to the world. If some calamity befell the West.... He saw his face reflected in the glass. Superimposed on it were the flickering lights of several large buildings. People were madly gyrating on his face, dancing, drinking, making love. If he were to move his face aside, all the demented people in all those buildings would collapse. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 33)

The world exists in the way one understands it. Here the protagonist makes himself the agent of the world as he projects it. The paragraph also shows that once traumatized, a person sees the world differently, because of the fear of further calamities.

As an observer, Zhang's protagonist feels a distance between himself and the Western world. Sometimes, he must rely on an interpreter in order to communicate at academic conferences. Consequently, he is not always in tune with the events happening around him. Yet sometimes, he can turn his disadvantageous situation into a beneficial one. For example, during one conference, he decides not to use the pre-prepared speech for the following day. Even though his interpreter threatens that she will not interpret a new speech, he insists on his own plan and makes a spontaneous speech. His speech turns out to be well received, despite the fact that a friend does the interpretation in place of the professional interpreter. Here is part of his speech on writers in China:

"The unending political movements in China have created wave upon wave of masters of the Chinese language. Those who were not articulate all died—who told them, after all, that they had the right to be inarticulate! It was only proper that they die!

....

Those who lived were those who could talk and could write self-criticisms, and consequently they are all professionals. All Chinese intellectuals who are alive today know how to cater to the tastes of an audience, how to tailor their speech to the mood and the time available, and how to end when it is time to end." (91)

Because the protagonist accepts his role of an outsider, he participates in the conference in a cynical way. After his speech, he concludes that "the audience had wanted to be amused and the speaker had wanted to bolster his self-esteem—neither had been disappointed" (92). Whereas Zhang's hero receives treatment of a distinguished visitor, being driven around in cities and having interpreters most of the time, Liu's heroine gets

involved in everyday life in London as an insider, going to school regularly and having an affair with her teacher, a Londoner.

In comparison with Liu's characters who live among Westerners, Zhang's hero knows that his roots are in China. The Mao government has been successful in keeping people physically fixed to one place and keeping their minds as inert as possible. After years of living in this situation, a person becomes attached to the land. In a sense, people become masochists, longing to return to the state of suffering. The protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* is such a person. He says that "[i]f I was going to die, I wanted to die on my native soil, on the soil of the country that had tormented me" (165). Sub-consciously, he is still waiting for the bullet that should have been fired on the execution ground. "I feel they owe me a bullet. Only when that debt is settled will I be at peace. I must go back to get the bullet that belongs to me!" (288). The reason why the protagonist denies the opportunity to stay in the United States is that, as he puts it: "I emerged from that place knowing that I had lost the ability to be depraved. I also know that I had lost the ability to start a new life, and that the reason was that the bullet had lodged too deeply in my brain" (288). So he shows his patriotism or masochism by returning to his motherland which has tortured him and by going back to the women who constantly bring him back to the sensation and stimulation of the execution ground.

Unlike Huang Haha, the protagonist of *Chaos and All That*, Zhang Xianliang's protagonist needs indigenous soil to produce his writing. At the end of *Getting Used to Dying*, he goes back to the village in northwest China to finish his novel, where he gets his literary inspiration from a local muse. In contrast to other women in his literary world, she has "sagged breasts and stomach" and is "covered with folds and wrinkles" (Zhang

Xianliang 1991 290-91). Not only are his muses altered, but the landscapes of Zhang Xianliang's recent novels also differ from those of his early novels. The protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* finds himself travelling in Europe and the United States, whereas the protagonists of Zhang's early novels, for example *Half Man is Woman*, are more confined to the local—the labour camps or rural areas in northeast of China.

Another difference in the two novels is their perspectives of love. Zhang's hero has an obsession with love and sex, just like his obsession with death. Actually, his love is closely linked with the bullet and the execution ground. Lovemaking becomes a way for him to revisit the past, during which he can feel again “the erotic stimulation of a gun” aiming at his head (32). Every intense love-making brings him back to the execution ground:

I smelled the raw smell of blood and felt a wave of heat slap my face. I touched the wetness, not knowing if it was blood or sweat. It might have been both, since my face was both cold and hot, and at the same time I felt a bullet worming its way to the back of my brain. Instead of plunging straight in, it twisted bit by bit toward the top of my skull. My body was enflamed, tongues of flame leapt from my throat.... This feeling comes over me after every successful lovemaking. The strange thing is that this feeling and the feeling of being executed are the same. (101)

The hero has close relationships with several women. Keeping them around remains a way to revisit death.

In contrast, the love affairs and marriage described in *Chaos and All That* all appear to be farcical, no matter whether in China or in London. In China, Wang Hua's marriage to the team leader during the Rustication is regarded by her city friends as a marriage to latrines. Huang Haha says: “We joked that Wang Hua had fallen for the team leader because of his two latrines” (Liu Sola 52). The heroine's marriage begins and ends

like a farce. Her wedding appears more like a singing party for the parents' generation than a ceremony for a married couple. This is not surprising considering that the marriage is a result of the friendship between the couple's mothers. Huang Haha says that the "groom's mother was an old friend of my mother's and they had a lot more in common with each other than I did with my husband" (115). On the wedding night, the bride and groom discuss how to go about a divorce.

The love affairs and marriages in London do not turn out better. Haha and Michael break up because Haha's past is too complicated. Michael gives Haha the reason: "I'll never understand what's on your mind, and I'll never be able to share it with you" (47). The love affair can be regarded as Michael's experience of fetishism with China, from which he learns that he prefers books on China to a real person. Liu Ding, another Chinese student in London, decides to keep a baby, "bastard or not," after getting pregnant with a married man (125). Lao Gu, who always acts as an observer, philosopher, and advisor to his Chinese friends, is going to marry a foreigner.

By presenting the farces of romance, marriages, and divorces, the author shows us the behaviour of traumatized people. They do not have clear moral values due to the nationwide catastrophe and they become more confused when they come to live in a different culture from their own.

Writers and Audience

Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang, with their postmodern self-consciousness and positioning, do not "offer us any answers in regard to cultures," but only raise "more problematic queries," as Linda Hutcheon says concerning postmodernist writings (1989

92). Chinese writers of the post-Mao era have to face not only the audience at home but also the audience abroad. Communication with the latter may appear more challenging since it involves language barriers and efforts of translation, but communication with the audience at home still remains a basic task for writers. For the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying*, he has problems in communication not only with foreigners, but also with his own countrymen:

I don't speak English, nor do I understand French, so in conversations with foreigners, I have lost my own tongue. In conversing with Chinese, however, I have begun to sense that we Chinese also do not understand each other's words. In the end, I can only tell myself what I want to say. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 123)

Therefore, he faces a dilemma of contemporary writers in post-Mao China, where they have to confront both the reality of the present and the heavy burden of the past.

After the Mao era, some Chinese people, including writers like Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang, have been trying to reexamine their long civilization, to ponder over the sources of the traumatic experience under Maoist rule, and also to brood over such universal questions as life and death. Hutcheon comments that Western intelligentsia "can never get out from under the weight of a long tradition of visual and narrative representations on the one hand and on the other hand, [they] also seem to be losing faith in both the inexhaustibility and the power of those existing representations" (Hutcheon 1989 8). In a similar fashion, Liu Sola, like her heroine Huang Haha, tries to break away from the long Chinese tradition of narrative representation and create a different one suitable for the world of today. Both of them struggle with the universal questions of "right" and "wrong" (Liu Sola 11), and the meaning of life. However, they deal with the local for their representations. Yet for Huang Haha, her past always mediates her present,

but “this does not absolve her from the responsibility of trying to describe [the past], nevertheless” (Hutcheon 1989 165). Because of the overwhelming memories of the past and the impossibility of writing in the present tense (Liu Sola 47), Huang Haha fails in her task in the end, and rips the sheets of her manuscript “to shreds one by one” (125). In contrast, Liu Sola succeeds in the literary creation.

In *Getting Used to Dying* and *Chaos and All That*, we can no longer find the usual realistic narratives that Chinese audiences were accustomed to. Instead, we see decentered places, allegorical tales, and schizophrenic characters. The heroine of *Chaos and All That* cannot gather her materials together to make a story (Liu Sola 46). We may ask whether a “sane” story is possible. After the loss of the beloved during the Cultural Revolution, after the wholesale overturning of Chinese traditional values by the Maoists during 1949-1976, followed by the efforts of restoration by the Dengists, and the confusion of socialism and capitalism, can the protagonists decide their purpose of life? As the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* comments: “When I lay dying I began to understand that everything in life can be seen as a joke. It’s just a shame that the realization came so late” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 123). Because of this experience, he wishes: “In going through another life circle, I wanted to keep my heart from being as trampled on as it is” (163). In this sense we can say that the two novels are private versions of the history of the Mao era, testimonies of disillusioned people, and representations of the cultural crisis of the Chinese people.

Both novelists problematize the role of the writer as educator. Referring to her fiction, Liu Sola offers her demure disclaimer: “And this is certainly not an autobiography, nor some historical epic. It’s just a collection of scenes and verses,

dancing hand in hand in circles large and small. When the circle is complete, the dancers laugh and call it a day” (Liu Sola 127). Her downplay of a writer’s mission here deliberately subverts the usual expectations of a writer.¹¹ As she says, this fiction is neither an autobiography nor a historical epic. But the fact that her fiction can be many things shows that its complexity deserves thorough analysis. As for Zhang Xianliang, he does not even try to live up to the image of a writer, who should be clear as to what to teach his readers. As he says: “These days, I often take the truth to be imagination and what I have imagined to be the truth” (Zhang Xianliang 1991 116). Nor does he try to fit in any specific school of writing, for example “realism:”

[A] critic wrote that I was “a writer of the school of ‘realism.’” That hurt. I alone knew how many beautiful things my “realism” had destroyed, how I had never accurately measured the enormous weight of weightless feelings. (52)

Thus in their novels, Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang resist the literary categorization. Contemporary Chinese writers are aware of the literary mission expected, the dogmatic literary theory and practice of the Mao era, and the influence of Western literature. In Maoist China, the writers’ spontaneous creativity and literary imagination were fatally impaired by Maoist dogmatic literary theory. They are also aware of their mission to produce new works by absorbing the best of Western literature. The influence of Western writers such as Joseph Heller and J.D.Salinger is manifest in Liu Sola’s early work “You Have No Other Choice.” Yet *Chaos and All That* has established Liu Sola as a mature writer with her own voice (King 133). Zhang Xianliang is also well aware of the

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¹¹ A good example is Lu Xun who in the 1910s abandoned his education in the medical science and instead, took up the literary career. He believed that the Chinese at that time were sick more in the mind than in the body. In other words, he intended to save China with his pen. He was iconized as the China Soul after his death by students in Beijing, and later was canonized by Mao Zedong after the Communist victory.

influence of Western literature, but he too is more concerned with developing his own voice, as he struggles along with words. As the protagonist of *Getting Used to Dying* says:

When I take up my pen to write, I find that the letters begin to go crooked. Where I should write “I,” I find I’ve written “O,” and I put the punctuation marks in all the wrong places. Please don’t think I’m trying to do a Joyce or a Faulkner, writing damnably long sentences that no one can understand. I am simply becoming less and less able to write novels. (Zhang Xianliang 1991 116)

His knowledge of Western literature is evident in his references to Joyce and Faulkner. Yet he also problematizes the Chinese literary tradition of a writer’s responsibility as a pedagogic figure by deviating from the orthodox literary creation and continuing writing “crooked” letters.

The works by both writers resist categorization or analysis. They also disturb the confidence of some Chinese critics and challenge their concepts in literary criticism. Armed with rigid literary analytical tools, these critics have been at a loss when facing such unconventional and complicated literary works. As a result, one critic labelled Liu Sola’s writings as “irrationalist” (King 133). In the article “Jinnian felixing zhuyi xiaoshuo de pipan” [Criticism of Recent Irrationalist Fiction], Xiao Ying categorizes Liu Sola’s fiction as irrational (14). Xiao says that Liu’s texts, such as “You Have No Other Choice” and *Blue Sky, Green Sea*, are highly repetitive. Anything new in her recent novels is increasing emptiness (14). According to Xiao Ying, the irrational writings of the avant-garde writers, including Liu Sola, results from the fact that these writers are isolated from people and separated from the time they live in (14). They deviate from the principle that literature reflects social realities. Having lost belief entirely, they hold

deep-rooted suspicion towards society (22). It is unfortunate that these writers have fallen into the darkness of irrationality (22). Similarly, Zhang Xianliang's *Getting Used to Dying* has received negative criticism: "After the events of June 1989 and the subsequent tightening of censorship, the work was banned inside China."¹² Because of this writing, Zhang Xianliang was under investigation by the Chinese government" (Avery 1991 ix). These examples show the continuation of Maoist totalitarian rule for literary creation and criticism. In spite of the constraints, a lot of recent writings have gone beyond the limitations of the local and entered international literary scenes. As a Chinese writer in self-imposed exile in the West, Liu Sola is culturally very active:

While in England, Sola worked as a writer, singer, composer, and dramatist... [S]he ... created and performed the 1990 theater piece *Memories of the Middle Kingdom*.... In 1992, she was a visiting writer at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa; she also composed a modern dance score based on the classic Chinese opera *Snow in Midsummer* for the choreographer Chiang Ching. Since moving to New York in 1992, she has finished work on a CD recorded with American musicians called *China Blues*. (King 130)

We can assume that her exile is an escape from the post-Mao suffocating cultural environment, and that she needs a postmodern audience, as well as a postmodern environment, for her cultural works.

Although living in China, Zhang Xianliang deals with issues that are both local and global and employs every literary means possible, including postmodern strategies, to convey his ideas. Merging and doubling of characters are two of these strategies in his

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¹² The ban was lifted later and *Getting Used to Dying* is sold on the Chinese market.

work. For example, several women appear in *Getting Used to Dying*,¹³ but Zhang purposely merges their identities. The author intends to emphasize this theme, not the love stories. In other words, the female characters in the novel function as a means to carry out the author's purpose.

Besides merging characters, Zhang also doubles characters. Throughout the novel, two persons exist within the protagonist- -the "I" and the "he." The novel starts with a scene with both of them:

It is no longer clear to me when I began to want to kill him. It was, of course, after the two of us had parted ways. When I first began watching him, I had no intention of killing him- -it was only later that he became intolerable.... In the end his feelings came to coincide with mine, so that as I planned his death he was gladly coming to terms with dying. This saved me considerable trouble. At the moment he died we two joined as one, and it was a coupling that transcended love-making with any woman. (3)

By giving his protagonist two identities, Zhang problematizes the concepts of life and death. Meanwhile, he also reinforces the idea that, deprived of their individuality, most Chinese intellectuals under the Mao era live a life of the living dead. The protagonist of

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¹³ In the English translation, the translator names them as A, B, and C. Moreover, the translator tries to clarify the background of each chapter by providing time, place, and characters under each chapter title, such as

Chapter 3
Interrogation
 Flying over the Pacific from China to San Francisco
 1987
 In Beijing with A
 1986 (17)

Chapter 25
Corpse-Shed 1
 Atlantic City with C
 1987
 Corpse-shed of Ningxia labor reform camp
 1960 (133)

Yet in the original, apart from "Part One" to "Part Five," there are neither chapter titles nor introduction of time, space, or characters beneath it.

Getting Used to Dying appears to be nothing short of a psychopath (Avery 1991 ix). Yet the schizophrenic character looks familiar to most Chinese readers, because even nowadays, many Chinese have two faces, one at work in the public sphere, and the other hidden in the private sphere or within himself.¹⁴

Living or travelling in the West, both protagonists of the two novels are attempting to write a novel. For them, writing is a means to negotiate with the past and to try to make sense of it. Writing may also be a means for catharsis, to let out the tension left by the trauma, which both protagonists have experienced during the Cultural Revolution. But however much writing is a personal need, it needs to communicate between the writer and the audience. The two protagonists attempt to invite future readers to the discussion of their texts. For Huang Haha in *Chaos and All That*, she often has a sudden urge to write and “a mass of material had come gushing out of her mind, a ragbag of half-told stories, half-formed ideas and half-remembered incidents. She forgot them when she was trying to write, and then they leaped out at her when she was distracted, as if determined to drag her away from her daily life in London” (Liu Sola 7-8). These “half-told stories,” “half-formed ideas,” and “half-remembered incidents” indicate how much she is still haunted by memories of the past. Her “ideas” are “half-formed” because she has not come to terms with what she experienced. The trauma of her past has not been fully recognized, and therefore still awaits to be assimilated. The usage of the word “half” is part of Liu Sola’s postmodernist approach. She deliberately tries to dilute the intensity

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¹⁴ It is very common for Chinese at work to be silent about political issues. Because of the frequency of political campaigns, most Chinese would pretend to be nonchalant to politics and speak in line with the views of official newspapers.

of formidable incidents of Huang Haha's past, for example, the suicide of her father, the death of "a reactionary" while she and her friends were watching at night. These comedic representations of tragic scenes show the writer's attempt to deal with the Chinese catastrophe in ways other than the direct descriptions in autobiographies and documentary fiction.

For the protagonist in *Getting Used to Dying* writing is highly political. Although the charges against him by various political movements during the Mao era are all linked with writing, he never stops writing. The authorities have described his crimes as follows: "In 1957, I wrote reactionary poetry, recklessly attacking the Party. Later I did labor reform twice but stubbornly refused to repent. During the Cultural Revolution I tried to reverse the verdict on my case, and so on" (Zhang Xianliang 1991 109). Literature has always been a field closely guarded by the party-state, because the Maoist authorities fully realized the power of ideology. Therefore literature and the arts functioned only as tools to serve proletarian politics. Various political campaigns kept them in line. Whenever there was a political campaign, literature was often the first to be questioned. Under these circumstances, Chinese intellectuals had to adapt in order to survive and write at the same time. At times "Chinese writers are instructed not to write about the Anti-Rightist campaign or the Cultural Revolution" (169). Critic and writer Ba Jin was furious at the criticism of exposure literature, which exposed the wounds left by the campaigns in the Mao era. He retorted:

It is only three years since the "Gang of Four" was arrested and there are already people who are unhappy about us condemning their evils and poison. How can they be so forgetful? The mountain of rubbish behind us is still exuding foul odours that are polluting the air and we are supposed to ignore it and scream out "eyes front, look to the future!" What about all the people

who are covered with wounds, can't we at least let them clean their injuries and put on bandages? (Ba 1984 175)

Together with Ba Jin, Liu Sola and Zhang Xianliang prefer to be rebels and continue writing about the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Culture Revolution. Instead of avoiding troubles, they have insisted to write politically and personally. They have explored such issues as China's relationship with the rest of the world, its culture, and its tradition. They have also tackled sensitive issues such as trauma and memory. By employing postmodern techniques, they have provided an access to recent traumatic history, which is otherwise inaccessible. This way they have contributed to the goals of Scar Literature, the cure of the wounds and trauma incurred during the Mao era.

CONCLUSION

Scar Literature is the testimony of visible and invisible scars of the tumultuous Mao era (1949-1976). It depicts a time when humanity was trampled and human bonds severed. In many instances, young people as Red Guards committed atrocities on people around them. To some extent, the historical period of the Mao era can be termed inaccessible in ways that bear comparison with the history of the Holocaust, because the events that took place challenge traditional modes of representation. Instead of acknowledging the trauma left by the Mao era, the CCP is still reluctant to totally denounce Mao, because the denunciation will undermine its legitimacy to rule. Unless the trauma of the national disaster is assimilated, the Chinese people will have to face the long-term effects of the trauma. In the process of acknowledging the trauma of the Cultural Revolution and other political campaigns preceding it, Scar Literature has played an important role.

At the beginning of the thesis, I introduced the notion of testimony, which connects such issues as witnessing, trauma, memory, and history. I explain why the theory of testimony is useful for my reading of Scar Literature. Employing the mode of testimony, the writers of Scar Literature testify from the position of witnesses. I place Scar Literature in its historical context by tracing the formation of the Maoist discourse and the Party's system of discipline and punishment. These, together with the political campaigns during the Mao era, inflicted disastrous blows on the Chinese people and left them in a traumatic state. It is in such historical circumstances that the writers of Scar Literature have taken up the task of testimony. To them, it has been imperative that they

record their memories so that the catastrophe would not repeat itself.

I have examined three genres of Scar Literature. Of these, the autobiographies claim the closest relation to unmediated truth. The three texts chosen represent different groups of people who suffered from the Cultural Revolution and other political campaigns. The first text *Life and Death in Shanghai*, by Nien Cheng, represents the generation of intellectuals who answered the country's call to return to the PRC after 1949. Her dream of contributing to her motherland was shattered by the Cultural Revolution. Nien Cheng testifies from outside the PRC, which means that she did not have to deal with state censorship and self-censorship. She could condemn Mao and the Party explicitly. The second writer, Yue Daiyun, testifies from a middle ground, because she composed the autobiography during her academic visit to the United States with the intent to return to China. In comparison with Nien Cheng, Yue was an intellectual actively involved in the Party's campaigns before she was persecuted. She continued to retain hope in the Party, which is expressed at the end of her autobiography *To the Storm*. In *Dragon Blood Tree* Chen Kaige represents the generation who went through the Red Guard Movement and Rustication movement. He testifies from within the PRC. Rather than providing personal details, he focuses on the major events of the past and reflects on their consequences for his generation. Comparing the three autobiographers, I have shown how differently the writers explore political events due to their different educational backgrounds and political points of view. Audience, state and self-censorship, and choice of language also play fundamental roles in their literary creation.

The second genre, documentary fiction, maintains its truth claim while providing writers with fictional frames. The three texts selected show major differences because of

the way timing, the different location of the writers, publication, and reception affect works in this genre. Chen Ruoxi could write explicitly about the Cultural Revolution as early as 1974, because she escaped Maoist China. Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang, by contrast, had to be aware of state censorship and the impact of politics on their own writing careers. Whereas Chen Ruoxi could lay bare the absurdity of the Mao era in her stories, Zhang Xianliang needed to invent a talking horse to be able to drive his point home in *Half of Man is Woman*, and Zhang Kangkang had to voice the truth though “a liar” in *The Invisible Companion*. As a firsthand witness, Chen Ruoxi could speak with the voice of a person who was there. Through her novels and short stories including *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories*, she disseminated the truth of the Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the West. At home, both Zhang Kangkang and Zhang Xianliang tried hard to awaken people’s apathy due to post-traumatic state. All three writers wrote from the position of eyewitnesses.

The third genre, postmodern fiction, challenges the notion of transparent truth claims. The writers of postmodern fiction employ various postmodern techniques, such as irony and farce, to present the national catastrophe. The two writers—Zhang Xianliang inside the PRC and Liu Sola outside the PRC—show differences as well as similarities but, in comparison with autobiographers and documentary fiction writers, these differences are not major. Zhang Xianliang could write almost as freely as Liu Sola, although Zhang Xianliang had to make open self-criticism due to political pressure. Despite the possibility of hostile reception, Zhang Xianliang condemned the Maoist system as openly as Liu Sola. This relative freedom resulted from years of struggle of the writers in the PRC at the cost of various kinds of persecution in the post-Mao era. In

Zhang Xianliang's *Getting Used to Dying* and Liu Sola's *Chaos and All That*, both writers explore such issues as the global and the local, the present and the past, and trauma and memory.

In my analysis of these texts, I have shown the relationship between witnessing and testifying. In China's post-traumatic age, these literary works use testimony as a point of entry into the recent history of the Mao era, which is otherwise inaccessible. They have contributed to the healing of the wounds of the "heart." Upon Ba Jin's call, they have built a virtual museum of the Cultural Revolution, where individuals can visit and share memories, commemorate those who died in the national havoc, and add to the museum's collections.

The texts discussed in this thesis are only some examples of autobiography and fiction of Scar Literature. In an appendix, I have compiled a bibliography of literary works dealing with the trauma of the Mao era. In the 1990s and the new century, texts of Scar Literature keep adding to the virtual museum of the Cultural Revolution, not only in the PRC, but also in other parts of the world. Writing in Chinese at home, writers continue to reexamine the past by producing memoirs and fiction. Zhang Kangkang's autobiographical work *Chi tong dan zhu* [The Red World] (1995) examines how detrimental Party policies have affected the life of three generations in the Mao era. As for the educated youth who went through the Red Guard movement and the Rustication movement, they still look back to the movements and try to make sense of it. Deng Xian has written two books on the movements, *Zhonggou zhiqing meng* [The Dream of the Chinese Educated Youth] and *Tiantang zhi men* [The Gate of Heaven], which deal with this particular generation both during and after the movements. Lin Wenxun's

documentary fiction *Bai meng* [White Dream] tracks back through the years of the Red Guard movement and attempts to find causes for the decade of disaster, the Cultural Revolution. Tie Ning's *Meigui men* [Rose Gate] depicts a small community during the Cultural Revolution, where atrocities are committed by neighbours on neighbours. Ji Xianlin's *Niupeng zayi* [Memoirs from the Cowshed] (1998), recalls episodes from the time when intellectuals were confined to a cowshed. Chinese writers living abroad have added their texts to this rich literature. Their texts include He Dong's *Ask the Sun* (1997) written in Chinese, translated into Norwegian and then into English, Jiang Jili's *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* (1997), and Xin Fengxia's *The Memoirs of Xin Fengxia* (2001), to name just a few among the texts published outside the PRC. Every text is a version which contributes to the whole picture of history, since truth exists only in plurality. All these texts attempt to reach the goal of healing the wounds incurred during the Mao era.

The past teaches us that healing takes time and effort. Since the countries involved in the Second World War are still trying to come to terms with the Holocaust more than fifty years after the event, it will take continuing effort of the Chinese people both inside and outside the PRC to confront trauma and come to terms with its wounds and scars. Scar Literature has performed its share of the task and continues the ongoing struggle towards healing.

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Appendix I Biography of Writers

Chen Kaige (b.1952)

Chen Kaige was born as Chen Aige in 1952 in Beijing. His father Chen Huaikai was a famous film director in China. During the Cultural Revolution when schools were closed, Chen Kaige volunteered to go to Yunan at the age of fifteen. In Yunan, the educated youths, including Chen Kaige, grew rubber trees. Later, he joined the army, then became a worker in Beijing for three years. He loves Chinese classic literature, especially poetry. In 1978, he enrolled in film studies in Beijing Film Institute. After graduation, he worked for Beijing Film Company. The film *Yellow Earth* which he directed in 1984 won the Silver Jaguar Prize of Sweden and the Best Director prize in the International Film Festival in London England. *The Grand Parade* that he directed in 1985 won the Future Film Director prize in the Lutdan Film Festival and the Third Prize in the 11th Montreal International Film Festival. He directed *Farewell My Concubine* in 1992.

List of major works

- *Long Xue Shu*. [*The Dragon Blood Tree*]. Hong Kong: Cosmos Books. Ltd, 1993.

List of major films

- *Huang Tudi* [*Yellow Earth*] (1984).
- *Da Yuebing* [*The Grand Parade*] (1986).
- *Bawang Bie Ji* [*Farewell my Concubine*] (1993).

Chen Ruoxi (b.1938)

Chen Ruoxi, also Chen Jo-hsi, is the pen name of Chen Xiu-Mei, who also has published in English under the name Lucy Chen. She was born in 1938 to a working class family in Taipei, Taiwan. In 1957, she entered National Taiwan University, where she majored in English literature. In 1962 Chen Ruoxi went to the United States for further studies in English literature and received her M.A. in 1965. Fired by patriotic zeal, she and her husband left the United States in October of 1966 to repatriate to the PRC. In 1969, Chen Ruoxi was assigned to teach English at the Hydraulic College in Nanjing.

After experiencing seven years of the Cultural Revolution, she and her family was granted permission to leave the PRC. Most of her stories about the Cultural Revolution were written between 1974-1978. In 1979, she accepted a position as a researcher for the Institute of Chinese Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. She is the chief editor of *Guangchang* [Square Quarterly], a magazine for Chinese exile literature.

(Kao, Hsin-sheng C. *Nativism Overseas: Contemporary Chinese Women Writers*. New York: State U of New York P, 1993, 21-22).

List of major works

- *Yin Xianzhang* [Mayor Yin]. Taipei Taiwan: Yuanjing chuban gonshi, 1976.
- *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (1976). Trans. Nancy Ign and Howard Goldblatt. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978.
- *Gui* [The Repatriates]. Taipei, Taiwan: Lianjing chuban gonshi, 1978.
- *Wenge Zayi* [Reminiscences of the Cultural Revolution]. Taipei, Taiwan: Hongfan shudian, 1979.
- *Ethics and Rhetorics of he Chinese Cultural Revolution*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1982.

Nien Cheng (b.1915)

Nien Chneg was born in Beijing in 1915. She studied at the London School of Economics from 1935 to 1938. After graduation, she married a Chinese diplomat and the couple lived in Canberra, Australia from 1941 to 1948. Nien Cheng and her husband came back to China and her husband became the general manager of Shell in Shanghai until his death of cancer in 1957. She then became Shell's Advisor to Management from 1957 to 1966. During the Cultural Revolution, she was put into prison on the unfounded charge of being a British spy and stayed in prison for more than six years. She was rehabilitated in 1978 and left China for good in 1980. She stayed in Canada and then settled down in the United States.

List of major works

- *Life and Death in Shanghai*. London: Grafton, 1986.

Liu Sola (b.1955)

Liu Sola was born in Beijing. She graduated from the central Conservatory of Music in 1983. As a student she also began to write fiction, and has kept up her interests in both music and literature. Her 1985 novella *You Have No Other Choice* has been called the first example of Chinese post-modernism, and "Blue Sky, Green Sea" and "In Search of the King of Singers" were also influential. Liu Sola was based in London in the late 1980s and has travelled widely in the United States and Europe. (MacDougall 1997 414)

List of major works

- *Ni biewu xuanze* [You Have No Other Choice]. Beijing: Renmin wenxue. 1993:3.

- “Blue Sky, Green Sea.” Trans., Martha Cheung. Hong Kong: Renditions, 1993.
- *Chaos and All That*. Trans. Richard King. Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1994.

Yue Daiyun (b.1931)

Yue Daiyun was born in Guizhou in 1931. In 1949, she became a member of the Communist Party. She graduated from Beijing University and joined the faculty as a teacher in Chinese literature in Beijing University. In 1958, she was declared a Rightist and sentenced to labour and in addition, her Party membership was revoked. Although her Rightist cap was removed in 1960, she still got attacked as a Rightist during the Cultural Revolution. In 1979, Yue Daiyun was rehabilitated and her Party membership restored. In the autumn of 1982, she went to the Berkeley campus of the University of California as a research linguist at the university’s Centre for Chinese Studies. *To the Storm* is one of the books she wrote during her stay at the university.

List of major works

- *Intellectuals in Chinese Fiction*. Berkeley, Institute of East Asian Studies, U. of California, 1988.
- *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman*. [Recounted by Yue Daiyun, Written by Carolyn Wakeman]. Berkeley: U of California P. 1985.

Zhang Kangkang (b.1950)

Zhang Kangkang was born in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province in 1950. During the Rustication movement, she volunteered to go to the Great Barren North. Her first work *Demarcation* was published in 1972. In 1977 she entered the Heilongjiang Art School and in 1979 she transferred to Heilongjiang Writers’ Association to take up writing professionally. She is now a Grade 1 writer, a title which is equivalent to a full professor.

Her publications include novels, prose, and more than 25 collections. She has been awarded many national prizes for her short stories and novels.

Zhang Kangkang is one of the first contemporary Chinese writers to have become known outside China. She has visited many countries, including France, Germany, Canada, and the United States, and her writings have been translated into many languages. (Leung 229-230 and *The Invisible Companion*, trans, Daniel Bryant, back cover)

List of major works

- “The Wasted Years” [Kongbai]. Trans. Shen Zhen. *Chinese Literature* 3 (1982): 5-16.
- “The Right to Love” [Ai de quanli]. Trans. R.A. Roberts and Angela Knox, in *One Half of the Sky: Selections from Contemporary Women Writers of China*. London: William Heinemann, 1987, pp.51-81.
- *The Invisible Companion*. trans, Daniel Bryant. Beijing: New World Press, 1996.
- *Chi tong dan zhu* [The Red World]. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1995.

Zhang Xianliang (b.1936)

Zhang Xianliang was born in Nanjing in 1936. He started writing as a secondary school pupil but instead of going to university when he finished in 1955, he was sent to a Party training college in Gansu. “Song of the Wind,” a poem published in 1957, landed him in a state farm for reform through labour for two decades. In 1976 he was allowed to work as a teacher on a state farm and began to write stories based on his experiences. In 1980 he was appointed to work on the staff of *Ningxia Literature*. His “Flesh and Soul,” published in 1980, made him nationally famous when it was made into the film, *The*

Herdsman's Story. Mimosa (1984) and its sequel, *Half of Man Is Woman* (1985), are his most famous works, followed by *Getting Used to Dying* (1989).

List of major works

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Appendix II Chronology

1919	May Fourth Movement.
1921	Founding of Chinese Communist Party.
1937	July 7: Lugouqiao Incident; start of Anti-Japanese war.
1942	Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, Mao Zedong delivers Introduction and Closing Remarks. Later put together and called in short "Yan'an Talks."
1945	Japan surrenders; end of WWII.
1949	Founding of the People's Republic of China. CCP declares China as a socialist country with proletarian dictatorship.
1956	Mao Zedong decrees "Let a hundred flowers bloom." The <i>Shuangbai</i> [Double Hundreds] movement begins.
1957	Beginning of Anti-Rightist campaign. The Communist Party's repressive reaction to the criticisms in the Double Hundreds movement.
1958	Great Leap Forward commences.
1959	Poor harvest and economic mismanagement cause famine.
1965	Yao Wen yuan's article attacks Wu Han and commences the Cultural Revolution. China closes its door to outside world. Classes stop at universities.
1966	May: Nie Yuanzi poster at Beijing University acclaimed by Mao Zedong. June: beginning of violence in society including universities. Aug: period of anarchy and terror; Red Guards vandalize religious sites and private houses. Aug.: First mass Red Guard parade in Tiananmen Square.
1976	Sept. 9, Mao Zedong dies. Oct. 6, Gang of Four arrested, later sentenced. Gang of Four blamed for the radical excesses of the Cultural Revolution.
1977	University entrance exams re-instituted.

- 1978   3rd plenary of 11 Central Committee confirms Deng Xiaoping and his new policies.
- 1989   Tian'anmen Square Incident. Students' demonstration for democracy. Military forces crush down students' movement.
- 1997   Deng Xiaoping dies.

Appendix III Glossary

Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization	Also called Anti Bourgeois-Liberalism campaign. In the post-Mao era, the Communist leadership in 1981 used this term to attack the writer Bai Hua's film script <i>Bitter Love</i> , and the film based on the script, <i>The Sun the Man</i> . It was also used in 1986 and early 1987 after the student demonstrations to denounce Hu Yaobang and such well-known intellectuals as Liu Binyan, Fang Lizhi, and Wang Ruowang. It was used again later following the Democratic Movement in Beijing in June 1989.
Anti-Rightist campaign	The CCP's repressive reaction, starting in June 1957, to the criticism in the Shuangbai [Double Hundreds] movement.
Anti-Spiritual Pollution campaign	In late 1983 and early 1984, conservative leaders, including Chen Yun, Deng Liqun, and Hu Qiaomu, mounted this drive against what they saw as harmful effects of Western influence. This was a means of attacking the supposed liberal leaders Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. The campaign was restricted to the urban areas, and it was aborted after one month due to its negative effect on the economy.
Cadre	Refers to almost any administrator in a state office or organization.
Four Olds	Old ideas, culture, customs, and habits. "The Destruction of Fours Olds" was a slogan widely used in the Cultural Revolution.
Five Black Categories	Landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, rightists, and bad elements (i.e., criminals). People whose parents or grandparents were of these categories were considered to be from "bad" class backgrounds. This label was hereditary until 1979.
Five Red Categories	Workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, revolutionary cadres, revolutionary army men, and revolutionary martyrs. People whose parents or grandparents were of these categories were considered

	to be from “good” class backgrounds. This label was hereditary until 1979.
Four Modernizations	The modernization of agriculture, industry, science, and technology.
Gang of Four	The Gang of Four includes Jiang Qing (Mao’s wife), Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen.
Great Leap Forward	Mao’s attempt to modernized China very rapidly using indigenous methods and resources, beginning in 1958. The People’s Communes were set up throughout the countryside, private plots were abolished, and income was distributed more on the basis of need than on the basis of work contributed. Backyard furnaces were set up to produce steel. The program’s utter irrationality led to economic disaster and famine in which millions died.
<i>Shuangbai</i> [Double Hundreds]	A period in the spring of 1957 when intellectuals responded to Mao’s call to express freely their opinions about the Party. The term “Double Hundreds” came from the party’s slogan “Let a hundred flowers bloom and let a hundred schools contend.”
Liberation	Refers to the state after the CCP took control of a region. It generally denotes the founding of the PRC in 1949, although some areas of the country gained Liberation before that date.
New China	China after the founding of the PRC in 1949. China under the GMD control before 1949 is referred to as Old China.
<i>Niugui sheshen</i>	Oxen, ghosts, serpents, and devils, or monsters and demons, or ox-ghosts and snake-demons. A derogatory phrase referring to supposedly evil and bad people. During the Cultural Revolution, it referred to landlords, rich peasants, counter revolutionaries, bad element, and rightists who were not adequately reformed.
Oxen pen	Because the enemies of the revolution were named

“oxen, ghosts, serpents, and devils,” the places where these people suffered from confinement were called “oxen pen” or “cow shed.”

Red Guards

A self-description coined by students in the Cultural Revolution. Their mandate was to guard Mao and sustain the Revolution.

Rehabilitation

A judicial term meaning to rectify a decision made improperly or incorrectly. After the fall of the Gang of Four, many wrongly accused people were rehabilitated.

Returning to the City Wind

Refers to the return of the educated youths to the cities, beginning with small numbers in 1972. After 1979 most of them returned to the cities.

United Front

Periods of cooperation between the GMD and CCP. The First United Front lasted from the Sun-Joffe Agreement of 1923 until the Shanghai Coup of 1927 and its greatest success was the Northern Expedition. The Second United Front was less tangible and was an expedient during the Anti-Japanese War. The GMD was forced into the alliance after the Xi'an Incident of 1936. The organization continued to function after 1949.

Yinyang head

A common punishment during the Cultural Revolution in which half of the hair was shaved to humiliate those under political attack.

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