

**COLD WAR IN THE HEARTLAND: TRANSPACIFIC EXCHANGE AND  
THE IOWA LITERARY PROGRAMS**

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## **Abstract**

Titled “Cold War in the Heartland,” this dissertation investigates the Iowa Writers’ Workshop (IWW) and the International Writing Program (IWP) against the backdrop of the Cold War and the ongoing Chinese Civil War. By tracking the enterprise of the IWW and the IWP through a transpacific framework, this dissertation implies that “Cold War freedom” has conditioned our ways of doing literature and imagining political futures.

Through the two Iowa literary programs, this dissertation presents a history of U.S. cultural Cold War with a focus on the exchange between the United States, the Republic of China in Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China. Having become a renowned writing program under the directorship of Paul Engle, the IWW welcomed in 1964 a female Chinese writer from the ROC, Nieh Hualing, with whom Engle co-founded the IWP in 1967. As this dissertation suggests, Engle’s close relationship with the U.S. government evidences that the achievement of the two Iowa programs was associated with U.S. cultural diplomacy, while Nieh’s transpacific movement attests to how U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis “China” from the late 1940s to the late 1970s was instrumental to the making of the IWW and the IWP. Mining English and Chinese archives that are related to the Engles and the U.S. diplomacy, this dissertation uncovers that the U.S. fought the Cold War under the banner of cultural exchange on both sides of the Pacific. The IWW and the IWP were embedded in the Sino-U.S. relationships and Cold War bipolarity.

“Cold War in the Heartland” also attends to writers to reveal that the cultural exchange conducted at and through the two Iowa literary programs involved a number of stakeholders and yielded unpredictable results. American writers such as Kurt Vonnegut and Raymond Carver responded to the social circumstances of the 1960s U.S. in their works during their time at the IWW. Vonnegut engaged himself with the antiwar movement and opposed U.S. policy in Southeast Asia, while Carver exposed the division between classes in

a supposedly equal, affluent society. Chen Yingzhen and Wang Anyi, coming respectively from the ROC and the PRC, encountered each other at the IWP. In Iowa City, they dealt with political and personal divisions as a result of the Chinese Civil War. By analyzing the actions and writings of the IWW and the IWP participants, this dissertation argues that the two Iowa literary programs were undergirded by the entanglements of the intimate and the geopolitics. Iowa City as a community of writers and a City of Literature was not only an outcome of the cultural Cold War, but also a series of wars between the nation-states, literary ideals, cultural identities, and individuals.

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## Introduction

### Iowa City: a Transpacific History

Writing is always communication but it cannot always be reduced to simple communication: the passing of messages between known persons. Writing is always in some sense self-composition and social composition, but it cannot always be reduced to its precipitate in personality or ideology, and even where it is so reduced it has still to be seen as active.<sup>1</sup>

—Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 1977

In November 2008, Iowa City was designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a City of Literature. Iowa City became a part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), joining Edinburgh and Melbourne as the world's third City of Literature.<sup>2</sup> In the application to UNESCO, the Literary Community of Iowa endorsed the city as “the most literary city on earth,” the “Athens of the Midwest,” and “a place for writers.”<sup>3</sup> Describing Iowa City as “home to several national and internationally famous writing programs,” it particularly highlights the Iowa Writers’ Workshop (IWW) and the International Writing Program (IWP).<sup>4</sup> Officially instituted in 1936, the IWW grew from a regional writing program in the Midwest into an internationally renowned creative writing workshop under the helm of its second director Paul Engle. In 1964, the IWW welcomed a female Chinese writer from the Republic of China in Taiwan (hereafter ROC), Nieh Hualing, whom Engle married in 1971. Engle and Nieh co-founded the IWP in 1967. Until 1988, the couple invited more than a thousand writers from all over the world, transforming the literary scene of Iowa City into one with a distinct international tone.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1977]), 211.

<sup>2</sup> See the website of Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature <<http://www.iowacityofliterature.org>> for more information. Up to 2017, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is consisted of 180 cities.

<sup>3</sup> See the Literary Community of Iowa City, “Application for Iowa City, Iowa, USA to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network” <[http://www.iowacityofliterature.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Iowa-City-Application-to-Unesco-CCN\\_App.pdf](http://www.iowacityofliterature.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Iowa-City-Application-to-Unesco-CCN_App.pdf)> (accessed April 1, 2019), 5. The application was submitted to the UNESCO on December 19, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



Over the past eight decades, the IWW has attracted numerous students and writers to Iowa City. In 2011, the IWW was ranked the first among one hundred and thirty-one full-residency MFA programs in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> Although some program directors questioned the “less scientific approach” of the rankings, the then seventy-five-year old IWW was undoubtedly the oldest and the most renowned creative writing degree program in the U.S.<sup>6</sup> A graduate from the creative writing program at Columbia University believed that the rankings were “a sham,” and argued that his alma mater “should be at No. 2, behind only the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa.”<sup>7</sup> Today, among its competitive rivals such as the Helen Zell Writers’ Program at University of Michigan, University of California-Irvine, and the Michener Center for Writers at University of Texas, the IWW remains one of the most prestigious graduate programs in creative writing.<sup>8</sup>

Compared to the IWW, the IWP has a more international outlook. It is often celebrated as contributing to international communication through cultural and literary exchange. In October 2007, to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the IWP, the University of Iowa Libraries presented a month-long exhibition: “East Asia in the Midwest: 40 Years of East Asian Writers at the International Writing Program.”<sup>9</sup> As the Library News affirmed, “writers from East Asia have been an integral part of the program which aims to promote world literatures as well as international understanding.”<sup>10</sup> The exhibition text celebrated how “‘Iowa’ is a privileged name in the world of modern Chinese letters,” thanks

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<sup>5</sup> See *Poets & Writers Magazine* (September/October Issue), “2012 MFA Rankings: the Top Fifty” <[https://www.pw.org/content/2012\\_mfa\\_rankings\\_the\\_top\\_fifty](https://www.pw.org/content/2012_mfa_rankings_the_top_fifty)> accessed April 1, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Minkel, “Should M.F.A. Programs Be Ranked?” *The New Yorker* (September 9, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Scott Kenemore, “Why the Poets & Writers MFA Rankings are a Sham” *Slate* (September 15, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, “25 Top MFA Degrees for 2018” (College Choice) <<https://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-master-of-fine-arts-degrees/>>, “25 Best MFA Programs in 2018” (Best Colleges) <<https://www.bestcolleges.com/features/top-mfa-programs/>>, and “The 10 Best Creative Writing Programs” (The Best Schools) <<https://thebestschools.org/features/top-creative-writing-programs/>>. All accessed on April 1, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> See the University of Iowa Libraries <<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/exhibits/previous/iwp/>> accessed March 15, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Library News. The news was released on August 29, 2007 <<https://blog.lib.uiowa.edu/news/2007/08/>> accessed March 15, 2019.

to one of the two IWP co-founders, Nieh Hualing.<sup>11</sup> Three years after the “East Asia in the Midwest” exhibition was held in Iowa City, the National Central Library of the ROC presented a month-long exhibition in Taipei: “Literature Never Grows Old: Iowa.”<sup>12</sup> The Taipei exhibition in 2011 underscored Nieh’s contribution even more than the one in Iowa City. Besides the main exhibition, a smaller exhibition was dedicated to Nieh’s life, displaying her works, scripts, and pictures; a one-day conference exclusively about her was also held in conjunction with the exhibition.<sup>13</sup>

“Literature Never Grows Old: Iowa” was not only an exhibition about literature and writers but also a part of the national narrative of a modern state: the year marked the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the ROC. The exhibition about the Iowa program was one of the events and activities organized under the supervision of the ROC Centennial Celebration Committee and the ROC Centenary Foundation.<sup>14</sup> As Nieh had become a synonym of “Iowa” in the world of Chinese literature, she was simultaneously claimed by the narrative of the ROC centennial celebration.

Reflecting on the pivotal position that “Iowa/Nieh” occupies in the literary and national history of the ROC, this dissertation examines the Cold War histories of the IWW and the IWP. It discloses the intimacy between the ROC and Iowa City in a larger context of U.S.-East Asian relations from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, so as to present a new

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Selected documents from the library exhibit <<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/wwwarchive/eac/eastasiamidwest/EastAsianintheMidwest.html>> accessed March 15, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> The original name: 文學不老。愛荷華. The exhibition was held in collaboration with the Cultural Affairs Department of Taipei City Government, the College of Liberal Arts at the National Taiwan University, the National Museum of Taiwan Literature, and the Trend Education Foundation et al. at the National Central Library from April 23 to May 22, 2011. See the website organized by the Trend Education Foundation [趨勢基金會] <<http://w3.trend.org/event/100literature/apage.html>> accessed March 15, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> The conference was held at National Taiwan University on May 16, while the exhibition from May 16 to May 22, 2011. Nieh was invited for both occasions, and she happily attended. See the website of Trend Education Foundation [趨勢基金會].

<sup>14</sup> See the websites of these two organizations, the Committee [中華民國建國一百年慶祝活動籌備委員會] <<https://web.archive.org/web/20100412172344/http://100.president.gov.tw/index.htm>> and the Foundation [財團法人中華民國建國一百年基金會] <<https://web.archive.org/web/20100418151708/http://www.taiwanroc100.org.tw/>> accessed March 15, 2019.

historical account of the two Iowa literary programs. This account clarifies how the IWW and the IWP came into being through a series of transpacific exchange. Nieh's life and the ROC's role reveal that the history of the IWW and the IWP is undergirded by histories of the Cold War and Sino-U.S. relationships. Framed by a bilingual approach, this project mines archives in Mandarin Chinese and English, as well as a wide range of literary works, translations, and memoirs of the writers once related to the IWW and the IWP. It also examines the roles of some governmental officials in order to grasp how Cold War cultural diplomacy operated through U.S. agencies across the Pacific.

Engle and Nieh were both central to the formation and histories of the IWW and the IWP. Nieh's transpacific trajectory was shaped by the making of the ROC as an ally of the U.S. and the condition of the "two Chinas" as a result of the Chinese Civil War. Her multiple crossings of the Pacific illustrate how U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis "China" from the late 1940s to the late 1970s was closely related to the making of the IWW and the IWP. At the same time, the institutional history of the two writing programs in Iowa City is also a history of the cultural Cold War, especially evidenced by Engle's relationship with the U.S. government. By analyzing his role, the following chapters demonstrate that the literary achievement of the IWW and the IWP was associated with U.S. Cold War cultural diplomacy. Through the two Iowa literary programs, this dissertation illuminates the joints between the Chinese Civil War and the Cold War, as well as the reciprocity between the creative writing institutions and U.S. cultural diplomacy.

The Engles also serve as a nodal point for this dissertation to disclose a transpacific network. Not merely focusing on the two directors, this dissertation attends to some intellectuals who had worked with them and writers who participated in the IWW and the IWP because of them. The Engles not only connected two sides of the Pacific but also generated a particular network of writers and intellectuals. This network provides some clues

to grasp the political climate of postwar East Asia and the U.S., as this dissertation analyzes how each writer or intellectual was embedded in the Cold War. The personal lives of each individual constitute some patterns to clarify U.S.-East Asian relationships in the Cold War geopolitics.

The transpacific network as illustrated by this dissertation was not merely made of personal connections. The histories of the IWW and the IWP during the Cold War, as written by the Engles, the writers, and the intellectuals, account for a narrative in which the intimate and the geopolitical cannot be distinguished. In the following chapters, “freedom” is investigated as more than a tenet of the Western Bloc during the Cold War. As vindicated by writers who visited the two writing programs, personal freedom was almost always articulated with and undergirded by political freedom, and vice versa. The language that a writer chose to write in connotes the intensity between one’s private life, literary investment, cultural identification, and political motive, as exemplified by Nieh’s attachment to Chinese. By examining the IWW and the IWP through the transpacific network of writers, this dissertation illustrates how “cultural exchange” could be interpersonal, geopolitical, and ideological at once.

In so doing, this dissertation complicates the well-known stories of the IWW and the IWP as “a haven, a destination, a proving ground, and a nursery” that only “honor[s] writers and good writing.”<sup>15</sup> The chapters that follow explicate how the U.S.’s operations to optimize its political interests facilitated the formation of the IWW and the IWP. Furthermore, this dissertation illuminates that the celebration of the IWW and the IWP as contributors to international communication was enabled by the Cold War conflicts between ideologies of the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc. The first half of this dissertation situates the IWW in the context of Cold War internationalism and Cold War modernism in the late 1950s and the

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<sup>15</sup> “Application for Iowa City, Iowa, USA to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network,” 5.

1960s. It shows how the politics of the Cold War nurtured literary aesthetics, and how the aesthetic contributed to the political. The latter half examines the IWP against the backdrop of the changing relationships among the U.S., the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC), and the ROC in the 1970s.

### **Historical Context**

Through Nieh's life, this dissertation shows how U.S.-East Asian entanglements were fundamental to the making of the IWW and the IWP. Her personal trajectory and literary status in Iowa City and the ROC, both conditioned by the "two Chinas" and U.S. foreign policy in East Asia in the 1950s, offer a vantage point for this dissertation to examine the intertwined histories of nation-states and literary programs. As early as 1949 when Nieh moved from mainland China to Taiwan due to the Chinese Civil War, the U.S. simultaneously played a decisive role in forming the Chinese Nationalist Party and supporting Chiang Kai-shek's regime, in an attempt to shape the ROC into "free China."

As evidenced by recently declassified official documents of the U.S. government and the Chinese Nationalist Party, as well as Chiang's diaries and correspondence, the relationship between the U.S. and the ROC—and the making of Taiwan as a modern state—was definitively shaped by the Korean War.<sup>16</sup> On June 25, 1950, half a year after the relocation of the Chinese Nationalist Party to the island of Taiwan, the Korean War broke out. The Chinese Communists and Nationalists were divided by the Taiwan Strait, but the Chinese Civil War never reached an official truce. The Taiwan Strait came to be instantly entangled in the Korean War due to its proximity to the Korean Peninsula. Two days after the outbreak of the Korean War, U.S. President Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan

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<sup>16</sup> See Lin Hsiao-ting, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Strait as a way to prevent belligerency across it.<sup>17</sup> With the Seventh Fleet deployed, the Chinese Civil War was suspended without an armistice, while the U.S. government was able to claim neutrality.

The neutral stance of the U.S. government changed as the PRC formed an alliance with North Korea, which led to the ROC gradually becoming a protectorate of the United States, and before long, one of its client states in East Asia. In October 1950, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army entered the battlefield and almost defeated the UN forces; as a result, the U.S. started to consider aligning with the Chinese Nationalists.<sup>18</sup> On May 1, 1951, the ROC government welcomed the arrival of U.S. military aid directed by the Military Assistance Advisory Group China (MAAG). Chiang Kai-shek, a defeated generalissimo still hoping to crush the Communists on the mainland, willingly accepted U.S. assistance. It soon became clear that the assistance came with a price.<sup>19</sup> The unequal relation between the U.S. and Chiang's regime was further solidified as the Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and the ROC was signed in December 1954. This defense treaty not only limited the Nationalist jurisdiction to Taiwan and the Pescadores, but also asserted that the Nationalist military operation could not be conducted without the approval of the U.S.<sup>20</sup> In order to secure military and economic aid, as well as the U.S. recognition of the ROC as "China" that

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<sup>17</sup> Truman, "Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea," June 27, 1950 <<https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=800&st=&st1=>> accessed September 18, 2018. The full passage: "Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done."

<sup>18</sup> See Chang Su-ya [張淑雅], *Korean War Saved Taiwan?: an Analysis of the U.S. Policy toward Taiwan* [韓戰救台灣? : 解讀美國對臺政策] (Taipei: Acropolis, 2011). Chang particularly debunks the conventional narrative that, as soon as the U.S. Seventh Fleet was ordered to protect Taiwan, the Nationalist regime was "saved" by the U.S., and the U.S.-ROC alliance was established. As she reveals, the U.S. adjusted its policies and continued evaluating the strategic values of Taiwan as the Korean War went on.

<sup>19</sup> In particular, in July 1953, as the Dongshan Island Campaign—an amphibious attack on the mainland attempted by the Nationalists—resulted in a catastrophic failure, the MAAG soon required that any Nationalist military action against the mainland must obtain an authorization from the American side, a request "grudgingly accepted" by the Nationalist regime. Lin, *Accidental State*, 218.

<sup>20</sup> For the ways in which the Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S.A. and the ROC was signed, see Lin's *Accidental State*, especially Chapter 10.

sent a clear message to the international community, Chiang Kai-shek pragmatically compromised with the U.S. government and even celebrated the signing of the U.S.-ROC defense treaty. The Eisenhower administration, likewise, found its own interests served by the treaty: the pact would be “a way to rein in Chiang and his regime,” as well as “an important legal basis for the U.S. acquisition and operation of military bases and installations on Taiwanese soil.”<sup>21</sup>

Through economic aid and the defense treaties, the U.S. was able to devise not only military but also cultural offensives in East Asia. Along with the ROC, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) constituted a network of military treaties overseen by the U.S. The Security Treaty between the U.S. and Japan was enacted along with the Peace Treaty of San Francisco in September 1951; the Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and the ROK also came into force in October 1953, two months after the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement. Through these treaties, the U.S. built a hegemony and forged its anticommunist networks in East Asia by the mid-1950s.<sup>22</sup> These networks offered a material basis for the U.S. government to institute cultural and education exchange. In addition to the Fulbright Act (1946) and the Smith-Mundt Act (1948) that launched U.S. cultural and education exchange programs, the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty created a major channel for the ROC citizens to study in and visit the U.S. during the early Cold War years.<sup>23</sup>

One of the key engines of U.S. cultural diplomacy was the United States Information Agency (USIA). Realizing the importance of cultural diplomacy, the Eisenhower administration in 1953 established the USIA with the motto, “Telling America’s story to the world.” The United States Information Service (USIS) and the Voice of America (VOA)

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 231

<sup>22</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), ix.

<sup>23</sup> See Ena Chao [趙綺娜], “U.S. Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs in Taiwan (1951-1970)” in *A Journal of European and American Studies* 31.1 (Mar. 2001): 79-127.

formed an international frontline of the USIA through means such as music and books. The use of jazz as U.S. cultural diplomacy during Eisenhower's presidency, for instance, originated with a VOA show and its broadcaster Willis Conover, who believed that jazz would change his audience's understanding of racism in the U.S.<sup>24</sup> Other styles of music such as classical, folk, and rock 'n' roll were also utilized by the Cultural Presentations program for U.S. musical diplomacy.<sup>25</sup> The USIA officers supervised not only the State Department's Cultural Presentations program but also private dance companies (for instance, the Martha Graham Dance Company and New York City Ballet) for worldwide tours.<sup>26</sup> In the USIS-conducted book programs, works of American literature that were (supposedly) in line with Cold War liberalism were selected and distributed.<sup>27</sup> For Chinese readers, due to the geopolitical and linguistic proximity to Communist China, books with anti-Communist titles and contents were specifically translated and circulated in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines.<sup>28</sup>

The IWW and the IWP contributed to "telling America's story to the world" through the means of creative writing. In the early Cold War, the IWW became an internationally renowned writing program as a result of Engle's recruitment of foreign writers to Iowa City. Foreign writers were brought to the U.S. to see America and experience the American way of life, while the IWW became a platform where American and non-American writers interacted with one another. As an American poet and the IWW director, Engle also became an agent of U.S. cultural diplomacy. His Asia trip in 1963 took place under the auspices of the USIS and

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<sup>24</sup> See Penny M. von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), Chapter One, "Ike Gets Dizzy."

<sup>25</sup> See Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015 [2007]).

<sup>26</sup> See Clare Croft, *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> See Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), Chapter Three, "Cold Warriors of the Book: American Book Programs in the 1950s."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-7.



the Rockefeller Foundation, and it was through the assistance of the USIS Taipei that he met Nieh. As for the IWP, since its inception in 1967, it was specifically meant to be a stage for cultural diplomacy. To this day, the IWP official webpage states, “Cultural diplomacy, formal and informal, has been among the core missions of the IWP since the program’s founding in 1967. The U.S. Department of State has been a supporter of this mission alongside the University of Iowa and many private arts foundations, both state-side and overseas.”<sup>29</sup>

The mission of the IWP was not always executed with success. The IWW and IWP writers sometimes rewrote the script of the U.S. cultural Cold War, just like African American jazz musicians who toured the world as U.S. cultural diplomats did not always play the tune of color-blind propaganda. This dissertation analyzes the works of writers, especially those who refused to be conscripted in the U.S. Cold War, to complicate the assessment of the IWW and the IWP as merely a Cold War home front for the U.S. Furthermore, while musicians were chosen by officials of U.S. musical diplomacy, writers chose to attend creative writing programs in Iowa City for a variety of personal or political reasons. Mizumura Minae, a Japanese IWP writer in residence in 2002, accepted the invitation because she needed “health resort therapy.”<sup>30</sup> In 1983, Chen Yingzhen, an IWP writer from the ROC, took the opportunity to meet with writers from the PRC and the Third World. He and a Filipino IWP writer in residence, Reuel Molina Águila, bonded with each other through their shared opposition to U.S. imperialism and English-language hegemony during their stay in Iowa City.<sup>31</sup> In the mid-1960s, Kurt Vonnegut accepted the offer from the IWW and taught creative writing, because he was “dead broke with a lot of kids, and completely out of print

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<sup>29</sup> International Writing Program <<https://iwp.uiowa.edu/about-iwp/cultural-diplomacy>> (accessed April 2, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> See Mizumura, *The Fall of English in the Age of English*, translated by Mari Yoshihara and Juliet Winters Carpenter (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 20-21.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter One for further details.

and scared to death.”<sup>32</sup> Even Nieh, the co-founder of the IWP, was motivated to join the IWW not because of the intent to engage with international writers for cultural and literary exchange, but for a new life.<sup>33</sup>

Yet, in 1979, amidst the quickly changing dynamics of Sino-U.S. relationships, Nieh eagerly played the role of a “cultural diplomat”—not of the U.S. government but of “Chinese literature” broadly defined. In the early 1970s, a few years after the IWP was founded, the U.S. role in East Asian geopolitics started to change. In late 1978, the official diplomatic relation between the U.S. and the PRC was declared. The U.S. started to recognize the PRC—rather than the ROC—as “China,” causing a reshuffling of geopolitical dynamics in East Asia. Nieh and Engle also responded to the major changes in the Sino-U.S. relationship through the platform of the IWP. They invited “Chinese writers” from the PRC, the ROC, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as well as those already in the U.S., to participate in the Chinese Weekend. Mainly conducted by Nieh, this IWP event enabled and witnessed the first “reunion” of writers from the two Chinas since 1949. As with many other programs of cultural diplomacy, the seemingly successful literary exchange between “Chinese writers” glossed over a series of conflicts between cultural diplomats, writers, and nation-states.<sup>34</sup>

The history of political and military struggles is rarely part of the literary history of the IWW and the IWP. Conversely, cultural programs such as the IWW and the IWP are typically not included in the political history of the U.S. or the global Cold War. By investigating Iowa in tandem with the ways that the U.S. achieved its hegemonic status in East Asia, this dissertation uncovers how East Asia featured prominently in the Midwest and, in turn, Iowa in Taiwan.

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<sup>32</sup> Vonnegut, “New World Symphony” in *A Community of Writers*, edited by Robert Dana (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 115.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Four for further discussion.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter Five for the Chinese Weekend and its aftermath.

## Literature Review

With particular attention to the site of culture, this dissertation draws largely from two fields of scholarship: Cold War studies and transpacific studies. It aims to contribute to the study of the cultural Cold War with a bilingual approach by tracing the flows of literature and writers enabled by the IWW and the IWP. The bilingual approach is also imperative to survey how the U.S. was formative to the making of the ROC and East Asia in the postwar years. This transpacific mapping of the U.S. gave rise to “the U.S. national security state” in the global Cold War.<sup>35</sup> In my project, the “transpacific” is more than a variant of a transnational framework that challenges single-nation, U.S.-centric studies. Instead, I use it as a method to recognize and investigate the ways that “transpacific entanglements” were enabled by U.S. empire and militarism in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>36</sup>

Over the past two decades, scholars have investigated how U.S. foreign policy has been executed through the site of culture. In the early 1990s, Amy Kaplan addressed the neglected relationship between American culture and U.S. imperialism, compelling her fellow scholars to take heed of “the absence of culture from the history of U.S. imperialism” and “the absence of empire from the study of American culture.”<sup>37</sup> Kaplan’s critique advanced the “cultural turn” in studies of U.S. foreign relations. Melani McAlister’s *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* and Mary A. Renda’s *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*, both published in the early 2000s, are two seminal works taking this approach. Insisting on the intimacy between culture and politics, McAlister and Renda illuminate how the making of

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted from Yen Le Espiritu, Lisa Lowe, and Lisa Yoneyama, “Transpacific Entanglements” in *Flashpoints for Asian American Studies*, edited by Cathy J. Schlund-Vials (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 175.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Amy Kaplan, “‘Left Alone with America’: the Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 11.

the Middle East and Haiti in the U.S. cultural sphere interfaced with the national and political interests of the U.S. government.<sup>38</sup> The “cultural turn” also increased scholarly attention to the politics of U.S. cultural diplomacy. The Central Intelligence Agency and the CIA-subsidized organizations such as the Asia Foundation (TAF) and the Congress of Cultural Freedom (CCF), as well as the United States Information Agency (USIA), are primary objects of research in the field of the cultural Cold War.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars of U.S. Cold War culture and literature often address the dominance of the “middlebrow” and reveal the political substance of this zeitgeist. Although the interwar years witnessed the rise of American middlebrow culture, it was not until the early 1950s that the term “middlebrow” was used in U.S. society and made into a dominant cultural form.<sup>40</sup> Engle was entering the prime of his IWW directorship at that moment, and proud to be considered a middlebrow.<sup>41</sup> Christina Klein’s *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* and Greg Barnhisel’s *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* offer a background through which to grasp Engle’s sensibility. Examining U.S. middlebrow culture in the 1950s, Klein defines it as more a formation than a category.<sup>42</sup> She characterizes it as marked by a culture of the middle class, an internationalist urge to engage with the world, and a commitment to education and moral uplift, all of which

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<sup>38</sup> Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005 [2001]), and Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> See Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000), and Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Saunders’s *The Cultural Cold War*, first published in London in 1999, mines a wide range of documents to reveal how cultural diplomacy of the U.S. was done through the CIA. Cull’s *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, although published a decade ago, has remained the most complete study of the USIA.

<sup>40</sup> See Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Russell Lynes’s “Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow” published on *Harper* in February 1949 marks the beginning of the dominance of the middlebrow culture in the U.S.

<sup>41</sup> See Loren Glass’s assessment of Paul Engle in *City of Literature: a Film about the History of Creative Writing in Iowa* (dir. Benjamin Hill, 2012). Glass is a professor in English at the University of Iowa.

<sup>42</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

contributed to the U.S. Cold War ideology of an integrated free world.<sup>43</sup> Barnhisel illuminates the larger context in which middlebrow culture emerged and thrived: Cold War modernism in the 1940s and the 1950s.<sup>44</sup> As a project of the U.S. cultural Cold War, the core of this modernist project, Barnhisel argues, were the tenets of Cold War liberalism.

This dissertation also builds on the scholarship of twentieth-century U.S. literary history, particularly that of the institutionalization of creative writing in the postwar and Cold War U.S. Mark McGurl's *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* and Eric Bennett's *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing during the Cold War* provide essential background for the IWW and the IWP.<sup>45</sup> Although greatly benefiting from both, this dissertation fills a missing page in U.S. literary history by looking at the international literary exchange between American and non-American writers. Furthermore, while McGurl and Bennett noted the influential role of the cultural Cold War to U.S. creative writing programs, this dissertation illustrates how the cultural Cold War had been waged differently in Iowa City and Taipei with uneven effects on, and distinct consequences for, American and Chinese literature. With a transpacific approach, it demonstrates how "Iowa" has shaped the literary scene in Taiwan and vice versa.

For this project, the "transpacific" is not just a geographical reference but a method emerging out of academic conversations over the past two decades. In the first half of the 1990s, two conferences about "Asia-Pacific" were held respectively at Duke University (March 1991) and East-West Center, Honolulu (September 1995): "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure" and "Politics of Remembering the Asia-Pacific War." The main organizer of the former, Arif Dirlik, and the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>44</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

<sup>45</sup> Mark McGurl, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), and Eric Bennett, *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing during the Cold War* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015).

collection of the presented papers *What Is in a Rim?* are often considered foundational to the field of transpacific studies.<sup>46</sup> The latter paid attention to wars and war memories, indicating another focus of the field. Based on this conference, *Perilous Memories: the Asia-Pacific War(s)* was published in 2001, with T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama as its co-editors. Concerned with the formation of the Pacific, *What Is in a Rim?* analyzed how the region has become “a EuroAmerican [sic] invention” through the force of capitalism,<sup>47</sup> while *Perilous Memories* investigated the politics of remembering the mid-twentieth century wars in Asia-Pacific. Both works uncovered the contradictions embedded in the ways that “Asia-Pacific” was formed historically, and how these histories were being revised according to the political stakes of capitalist endeavors or war memories.

A decade later, concerns related to “Asia-Pacific,” “Pacific,” or “Pacific Rim” started to be discussed under the framework of the “transpacific.” In addition to the growing interest in the Pacific, the “transnational turn” in the field of American Studies and the launch of the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (the precursor of the TPP) in the early 2000s gave prominence to the term “transpacific.” In 2014, the first anthology that puts forth “transpacific” as a field of study was published: *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*. Its co-editors, Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Hoskins, asserted that the field engages itself with the two sides of the Pacific, and “exists at the juncture of area studies, American studies, and Asian American studies.”<sup>48</sup> Considering itself as a sequel to *What is a Rim?*, *Transpacific Studies* similarly underscores Asia and the Pacific as a focus of investigation while addressing more the prominence of the U.S.<sup>49</sup> In other words, it replaces

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<sup>46</sup> See Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Hoskins, “Transpacific Studies: Critical Perspectives on an Emerging Field,” the Introduction to *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2014). Also see Lisa Yoneyama’s recent essay, “Towards a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific,” *American Quarterly* 69.3 (Fall 2017): 471-482.

<sup>47</sup> *What Is in a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, edited by Arif Dirlik (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*, edited by Nguyen and Hoskins, 24.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the “Rim” with “transpacific” and Euro-American influence with U.S. power, stressing more the hegemonic status of the U.S. since the Second World War to explore the flows of cultures, ideas, and peoples across the Pacific.

Some scholars have been using the term “transpacific” to describe the flows between the two shores of the Pacific,<sup>50</sup> while some build on the intervention made by *Perilous Memories* to wrestle with the ongoing colonization and militarization of the region. *Militarized Currents: toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and Pacific*, edited by Setsu Shigematsu and Keith Camacho, suggests this critical course.<sup>51</sup> In order to investigate U.S. militarism and colonialism in Asia and the Pacific Islands, Shigemastu and Camacho bring together locations such as South Korea, Hawai‘i, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, and Okinawa. Unlike studies that attend mostly to the “Rim,” *Militarized Currents* sheds more light on indigenous peoples and their critiques of empire and pinpoints new ways to decolonization.

Situating itself in the field of transpacific studies, this dissertation goes beyond illustrating the flows between the U.S. and East Asia, and responds to the appeals for decolonization and demilitarization in Asia and the Pacific Islands. Based on “a decolonial genealogy of the transpacific,” my examination of the two Iowa literary programs not only traces the movements of literature and writers but also critiques the operation of U.S. cultural imperialism and militarism during the Cold War.<sup>52</sup> In *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes*, Lisa Yoneyama explicates how the “postwar settlement” defined the act of violence and the perpetrator-victim relationship in the Asia-

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<sup>50</sup> See for example, Yunte Huang, *Transpacific Displacement: Ethnography, Translation, and Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> *Militarized Currents: toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* edited by Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Yoneyama, “Towards a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific,” *American Quarterly* 69.3 (Fall 2017): 472.

Pacific wars, and thus gave rise to the “transpacific arrangement of Cold War justice.”<sup>53</sup> Arranged through the intimacy and complicity between Japanese and U.S. empires, Cold War justice delimited the culture of transnational redress in the 1990s, as *Cold War Ruins* illuminates. My study of transpacific intellectuals/writers shows that the transpacific arrangement has also resulted in “Cold War freedom” and set the parameters of imagining political alternatives to authoritarian regimes such as Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee. As Yoneyama argues, “the still-present Cold War frame of knowledge . . . continues to stabilize international protocols, cultural assumptions, and normalized categories associated with our identities, histories, and boundaries.”<sup>54</sup> By tracking the transpacific enterprise of the IWW and the IWP, the following chapters elucidate how this “Cold War frame” has also conditioned our ways of reading, writing, and teaching literature.

Whereas Bennett’s *Workshop of Empire* is the only monograph that discuss creative writing programs in Iowa City in the context of the Cold War, “Iowa” has been subject of much scholarly attention over the past few years. In 2017, Conchitina Cruz’s “The (Mis)education of the Filipino Writers,” Richard Jean So’s “The Invention of the Global MFA,” and Chen Po-hsi’s “Wang Anyi, Taiwan, and the World” were published in succession.<sup>55</sup> Cruz makes critical sense of the intimacy between creative writing program in Iowa City and the most prestigious Filipino creative writing program, revealing the still powerful network of American colonial education in postcolonial Philippines. So and Chen explore the encounters between the Chinese writers and the literary programs in Iowa City, and how these encounters are often conditioned by the politics of the Cold War. In particular,

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<sup>53</sup> Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins*, 3; 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Jean So, “The Invention of the Global MFA: Taiwanese Writers at Iowa, 1964-1980” *American Literary History* 29.3 (2017): 499-520; Conchitina Cruz, “The (Mis)education of the Filipino Writers: the Tiempo Age and Institutionalized Creative Writing in the Philippines” *Kritika Kultura* 28 (2017): 3-34; Chen Po-hsi, “Wang Anyi, Taiwan, and the World: the 1983 International Writing Program and Biblical Allusions in Utopian Verses” *Chinese Literature Today* 6.2 (2017): 52-61.



So attends to how communication theory and the Free Indirect Discourse were implemented to teach non-Westerners creative writing; Chen focuses on the year 1983 and addresses the relationship between two IWP writers in residence from two Chinas, Chen Yingzhen and Wang Anyi. Whereas the objects of analysis differ, these three essays all heed the transpacific circuits and scrutinize the IWW and the IWP not just as a literary enterprise of the United States. Cruz's intervention especially contributes to decolonizing the ways of reading and writing literature. My project is in close conversation with this body of scholarship.<sup>56</sup>

## Sources

I trace the transpacific history of the IWW and the IWP using a variety of sources in two languages: Mandarin Chinese and English. This dissertation relies heavily on the Paul Engle Papers at the University of Iowa that includes institutional records of both the IWW and the IWP, newspaper clippings during the directorship of Engle and Nieh, photographs of both the directors and the writers, and Engle's correspondence with governmental officials, sponsors, and the writers. As fragmentary as it is, the Paul Engle Papers provides numerous details that shaped the literary scene in Iowa in the Cold War years. For the literary scene in Taipei, I have used the collection of Chinese literary periodicals and journals at Academia Sinica. In particular, the complete collection of *Free China Journal*, *Modern Literature*, and *Formosa* allowed me to trace not only a history of Chinese writing in Taiwan but also the bond between Taipei and Iowa City, as many of the contributors to these journals were also writers in residence of the IWW or the IWP.

This dissertation mines U.S. government documents to understand the U.S. Cold War. Records of U.S. foreign policy in the Office of the Historian illustrate how the U.S. dealt with

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<sup>56</sup> Chapter Four emerged out of my own essay, "The World Comes to Iowa in the Cold War: International Writing Program and the Translation of Mao Zedong," *American Quarterly* 69.3 (Fall 2017): 611-631.

the ROC and the PRC during the Cold War. A non-governmental organization, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), has been conducting interviews with American diplomats since 1986 for the Foreign Affairs Oral History Project. This dissertation takes full advantage of the ADST, to understand the politico-cultural works of the USIS officials.

In addition to archives, this dissertation analyzes the IWW and IWP writers and their works with a critical comparatism. Wang Wen-hsing and Raymond Carver, for instance, are compared to reveal how Cold War modernism worked in relation to the U.S. government, the IWW, and the writers themselves. Rather than centralizing the role of the U.S. government,<sup>57</sup> my research uncovers the oppositions that made the two writing programs in Iowa City and the U.S. cultural Cold War possible. The IWW and the IWP consisted of writers with a wide range of cultural backgrounds, linguistic capacities, and political views. Their distance from and attitude toward the U.S. government varied. From time to time, there were tensions even between the two IWP directors. Counter to stories about the IWW and the IWP that tend to gloss over conflicts, this dissertation highlights these tensions through the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated writers and histories.

## Chapter Outline

Narrating the history of the IWW and the IWP from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, this dissertation scrutinizes the “specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism,” a theoretical position proposed by Raymond Williams as “cultural materialism.”<sup>58</sup> I examine writings circulated within and through the two literary programs in Iowa City as an activity in which “the passing of messages” and the “precipitate

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<sup>57</sup> In addition to the works of Saunders and Cull, see Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), and more recently, Joel Whitney, *Finks: How the C.I.A. Tricked the World's Best Writers* (New York: OR Books, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 5.

in personality or ideology” are always closely in confrontation with one another.<sup>59</sup> The story of the IWW and the IWP in the following chapters presents conflicts, rather than leading to resolution.

Chapter One situates the two Iowa literary programs in the context of war and peace during the Cold War to question the celebratory rhetoric of peace utilized by the IWW and the IWP. It examines the politico-literary scene in Iowa City through two moments: the Vietnam War and antiwar movement in the mid-1960s when writers at the IWW did not unanimously embrace Pax Americana, and the year 1983, when IWP writers with distinct cultural sensibilities and supposedly incompatible political ideals aspired to connect with one another. By comparing Kurt Vonnegut and Thu Van’s responses to the Vietnam War and antiwar movement, this chapter shows that the “peace” espoused by the Engles did not reflect the politico-literary topography of Iowa City. Instead, peace was more “a rest between wars, a crevice between mountains,” as Wang Anyi wrote when thinking of Chen Yingzhen. By investigating the connection that often led to conflict and confusion, this chapter offers a genealogy of the IWW and the IWP to uncover the Cold War divide beneath the façade of peace.

Chapter Two traces the encounters between Paul Engle and Yu Kwang-chung who first met in the late 1950s in Iowa City and then in the early 1960s in Taipei, to argue that their encounters were enabled by the U.S. Cold War ideal of freedom and its practice of internationalism. Since the Truman administration, U.S. officials and citizens were encouraged to embrace internationalism and spread the ideal of U.S. freedom abroad. At the same time, many non-American intellectuals and students traveled from their home countries to the U.S., participating in U.S.-led programs for cultural exchange based on shared agendas between the U.S. and its Cold War allies. The anticommunist alliance between the U.S.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime was one example, and it was through such an alliance that Yu Kwang-chung crossed the Pacific to Iowa City as a Chinese overseas student. Concurrently, the IWW became a platform for Engle to fulfill his internationalist mission as a U.S. citizen. Engle's trajectory to Asia and experience as the IWW director exposed the limits and contradictions embedded in the U.S. ideal of freedom. By examining Engle's and Yu's transpacific route against the backdrop of the early Cold War, this chapter reveals how Cold War internationalism operated to shape the literary scenes in both Iowa City and Taipei. These two locations, for the years to come, would become closely connected because of the transpacific circuit set up at the early stage of the Cold War.

While Chapter Two focuses on U.S. Cold War internationalism, Chapter Three investigates the project of Cold War modernism. Focusing on Wang Wen-Hsing and Raymond Carver, both of whom enrolled in the IWW shortly after Engle's Asia tour in 1963, Chapter Three demonstrates the geo- and temporal-politics of literary modernism as embodied by Cold War creative writing programs. On the one hand, Wang's trajectory from Taipei to Iowa City, as well as his reputation as a "modernist writer," bespeaks how the ROC was incorporated in the U.S. network of cultural exchange. The traveling of modernism from the U.S. to Taipei attested to the geopolitics of the Sino-U.S. relationship in the first half of the Cold War. On the other hand, Carver's career illustrates how American creative writing programs participated in the U.S. cultural Cold War through the modernist project. The temporality of this modernism evinces the enduring effects of U.S. Cold War modernism, which endorsed a new, middlebrow, and apolitical modernism that lasted beyond the 1950s. This chapter argues that Cold War modernist literature is a form of U.S. hegemony in the long Cold War. Yet, by reading closely Wang's novella "Dragon Inn" and Carver's short story "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?," both written during the writers' stay in Iowa City, this chapter reveals that literary modernism could not contain the writers' works and mind.

Chapter Four and Chapter Five examine the IWP in the 1970s. The former focuses on its signature project, “co-translation”; the latter analyzes the success and the limitation of the Chinese Weekend held in the context of a changing Sino-U.S. relationship. Chapter Four explores how the IWP became a stage for Nieh to fulfill what she wanted to do as a Chinese female writer in the U.S. From *Free China* to the IWW and then the IWP, Nieh’s trajectory suggests how the “transpacific” was formed through a U.S. discourse of freedom that Nieh then deployed to her own ends. This chapter demonstrates how the IWP granted Nieh freedom to enact her role as a Chinese, a woman, a writer, and a translator, all of which authorized her to translate “China” into the literary scene of Iowa City. Tracing her self-positioning and connections with writers and intellectuals on both shores of the Pacific, this chapter simultaneously illustrates a network comprised of the Chinese and Americans, whose writings reveal a discursive morphology of Cold War liberalism. The politico-literary products of the IWP demonstrate that while the U.S. deployed “freedom” to win consent of others, freedom could be discursively practiced and appropriated in various ways.

Chapter Five zooms in to the year 1979, investigating the ways in which the IWP embodied not only the gradual normalization between the U.S. and the PRC but also the ongoing tension between the U.S. and the two Chinas. Not unlike the real-world politics, Chinese IWP writers in residence who were invited to attend the Chinese Weekend did not naturally bond with each other merely because they shared Chinese cultural heritage. Illuminating the undercurrents of the Chinese gathering in Iowa City, this chapter argues that the Chinese Weekend revealed an American internationalist vision that overlooked national specificities and local politics. The IWP in 1979, as well as Nieh’s appropriation of “Chinese,” offered a “Chinese literature” through the prism of the U.S.

## Chapter One Cold War Divide and Connection: War and Peace in Iowa City, 1941-1988

Peace seems like a rest between wars, a crevice between mountains.<sup>1</sup>

—Wang Anyi, IWP Writer in Residence 1983

From 1941 to 1988, Paul Engle and his wife, Nieh Hualing, whom he met in 1963 in Taipei during his first trip to Asia, dedicated themselves to shaping the literary scene of Iowa City through the Iowa Writers' Workshop (IWW) and the International Writing Program (IWP). In these five decades, a number of wars were fought militarily, culturally, ideologically, economically, and politically. The histories of these wars were intricately tied to the history of the two literary programs. Engle's long-term directorship of the IWW began during the Second World War. Engle and Nieh met each other in 1963 and co-founded the IWP in 1967 in the middle of the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the ongoing Chinese Civil War. It was against this backdrop of successive wars that the Engles built the reputation for the two literary programs as shelters for writers around the world.

In 1976, at the peak of their careers, the Engles were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. According to their nominator, W. Averell Harriman, the Engles committed themselves "to bring peace and understanding to the world by bringing writers of every country, language and culture to their Program in Iowa City."<sup>2</sup> Once the Governor of New York, Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, and Ambassador-at-Large of the U.S. State Department, Harriman highlighted that the nomination was originally proposed by an Eastern European writer, and stated, "This proves that the International Writing Program moves through all cultures, all languages and all social

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Anyi, "Utopian Verses" (1991) in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇] (Beijing: Huayi Press, 2011), 65. My translation; the original: 和平就好像是戰爭中的休憩，猶如山和山的縫隙。

<sup>2</sup> W. Averell Harriman's letter of nomination to the Nobel Institute (dated March 1, 1976). Paul Engle Papers (Box 29), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 11, 2017.

systems . . . as if it were the best future hope for peace in this century.”<sup>3</sup> Although the Norwegian Nobel Committee 1976 eventually decided that “none of the year’s nominations met the criteria as outlined in the will of Alfred Nobel,” the Engles and some IWP participants often touted the IWP as an advocate for world peace during the Cold War.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter situates the two Iowa literary programs in the context of war and peace during the Cold War to question the celebratory rhetoric of peace utilized by the IWW and the IWP. It examines the politico-literary scene in Iowa City through two moments: the Vietnam War and antiwar movement in the mid-1960s when writers at the IWW did not unanimously embrace Pax Americana, and the year 1983, when IWP writers with distinct cultural sensibilities and supposedly incompatible political ideals aspired to connect with one another. By comparing Kurt Vonnegut and Thu Van’s responses to the Vietnam War and antiwar movement, this chapter shows that the “peace” espoused by the Engles did not reflect the politico-literary topography of Iowa City. Instead, peace was more “a rest between wars, a crevice between mountains,” as Wang Anyi wrote when thinking of Chen Yingzhen, her fellow IWP participant from ROC. By investigating the connection that often led to conflict and confusion, this chapter offers a genealogy of the IWW and the IWP to uncover the Cold War divide beneath the façade of peace.

### **Vietnam War in Iowa City**

When Nieh crossed the Pacific to Iowa City in the mid-1960s, the U.S. was waging war across the Pacific in Southeast Asia. As the Vietnam War—or the American War in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See the website of The Nobel Prize <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1976/summary/>> accessed January 30, 2019.

Vietnam—escalated, the antiwar movement and civil rights movement gained momentum. In Iowa City, the thriving literary scene blended with a turbulent political climate. When Nieh and Engle were preparing to launch a new writing program, the IWW welcomed two writers that represented the opposite sides of the war: Kurt Vonnegut, who was brought to teach creative writing, and a South Vietnamese writer, Thu Van (the nom de plume of Le Thi Anh), who came to the city for a brief residency. The juxtaposition of Vonnegut and Thu Van illuminates the complicated ways in which U.S. hegemony was challenged and affirmed. Paradoxically, the American novelist was the dissident of U.S. actions in Vietnam, while the South Vietnamese writer expressed her consent to the U.S. government. Seemingly switching sides, Vonnegut and Thu Van, with their distinct stances on war, suggested the changing dynamics of Cold War politics in the mid-1960s against the backdrop of the Vietnam War.

As the Vietnam War escalated in the mid-1960s, writers in Iowa City held different attitudes toward the U.S. government. Around the same time as Lyndon B. Johnson urged an increase of U.S. military presence, Engle the IWW director was appointed by President Johnson as a member of the National Council on the Arts.<sup>5</sup> Engle accepted the offer and proposed a program to sponsor creative writers.<sup>6</sup> Some of his colleagues at the IWW, however, distanced themselves from the U.S. government and sympathized more with the antiwar activists, especially in the latter half of the 1960s. In April 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. publicly denounced the Vietnam War and encouraged “the alternative of conscientious objection.”<sup>7</sup> More and more male college students eligible for military service undertook draft resistance; by the early 1970s, refusal to induction reached a climax.<sup>8</sup> Even Secretary of

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<sup>5</sup> See National Endowment for the Arts <<https://www.arts.gov/about/national-council-arts>> accessed April 10, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See King’s speech, collected in Van Gosse, *The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2005), 114-9. The full sentence: “As we counsel young men concerning military service we must clarify for them our nation’s role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection” (117).

<sup>8</sup> For a general study of anti-Vietnam war movement, see David Cortright, *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance during the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005 [1975]). For a more domestically focused study on



Defense Robert McNamara expressed skepticism about the prospects of the war.<sup>9</sup> In Iowa City, Vonnegut recalled receiving from his fellow IWW faculty a “big red sticker” that said “STOP THE WAR IN VIET NAM!”<sup>10</sup> Without hesitation, Vonnegut put the antiwar sticker on his car.

Before his most acclaimed antiwar novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut had already demonstrated an antiwar position in his earlier works and supported antiwar activism at the peak of the Vietnam War. In the 1960s, Vonnegut’s published works all alluded to and satirized the Second World War. *Mother Night* (1961) recounts the life of Howard W. Campbell Jr., an American who has become a Nazi propagandist and perhaps unknowingly a double agent for the United States. *Cat’s Cradle* (1963) refers to the supposed end of the Second World War—the detonation of the nuclear weapons in Hiroshima—as “the day the world ended.” The protagonist of *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965), Eliot Rosewater, suffers “combat fatigue” after the Second World War and turns into a volunteer fire lieutenant and a philanthropist.

While working on *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), Vonnegut participated in the draft resistance movement. In November 1967, he wrote a letter to the Draft Board One at Hyannis, Massachusetts in support of his son’s application for conscientious objector status. He introduced himself as a Second World War veteran, and a writer whose works “express [his] disgust for people who find it easy and reasonable to kill.”<sup>11</sup> Vonnegut stated, “I thoroughly approve of what [my son] is doing. It is in keeping with the way I have raised

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draft resistance, see Michael Stewart Foley’s *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> See Robert McNamara’s memorandum to President Johnson, Johnson Library, National Security File, NSC Meetings File, Manila Conference; printed in *The Pentagon Papers: Gravel Edition*, vol. IV (348-355) <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v04/d268>> accessed February 1, 2019. Also see *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*, Dir. Errol Morris. Perf. Robert S. McNamara. Sony Pictures Classics, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Vonnegut’s letter to his wife, Jane, dated October 2, 1965. *Kurt Vonnegut: Letters* (New York: Delacore Press, 2012), 111.

<sup>11</sup> Vonnegut’s letter to Draft Board One of the Selective Service at Hyannis, Massachusetts, dated November 28, 1967. See *Kurt Vonnegut: Letters*, 140.

him. All his life he has learned hatred for killing from me.”<sup>12</sup> His position on war was stressed again in his magnum opus, *Slaughterhouse-Five*: “I have also told them not to work for companies which make massacre machinery, and to express contempt for people who think we need machinery like that.”<sup>13</sup>

Published in 1969, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, his “famous book about Dresden,” became a national bestseller, resonating with the generation of antiwar and civil rights activists.<sup>14</sup> While Vonnegut sometimes described his motivations in a self-mocking tone, attributing it to handiness (“all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen”) and prospective profit (“it would be a masterpiece or at least make me a lot of money”),<sup>15</sup> he considered the novel “the one I always thought it was my duty to write.”<sup>16</sup> Vonnegut reported what he had experienced in the actual bombing of Dresden, and in 1967, revisited the site for fact-checking. In this way, Vonnegut became a quasi-war correspondent (albeit anachronistically) and his novel a reportage undergirded with realism. At the same time, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is also a science fiction composed of extraterrestrial life and time travel, forming a nonlinear narrative. Already fragmented, the flow of the story is further disrupted by Vonnegut himself. As the narrator, Vonnegut overtly identifies himself twice when he and the protagonist are held captive in Dresden.<sup>17</sup> Through this nonlinear temporality and disruptive narrative, Vonnegut satirized the bombing of Dresden and war in general. As he made it clear at the opening of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the novel is “so short and jumbled and jangled,” since “there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (New York: Dial Press, 2009 [1969]), 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 23. Vonnegut called *Slaughterhouse-Five* “my famous book about Dresden.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Vonnegut’s letter to his lifetime friend Knox Burger (also a Second World War veteran), dated April 3, 1966. *Kurt Vonnegut: Letters*, 123.

<sup>17</sup> When the narrator introduces a fellow American prisoner suffering from diarrhea, he says, “That was I. That was me. That was the author of this book” (160). The second time that the narrator clearly identifies himself—with the same line, “That was I. That was me”—is when the American POWs arrive in Dresden before the city gets bombed (189).

<sup>18</sup> *Slaughterhouse-Five*, 24.

In contrast to Vonnegut's humanist, antiwar appeal as an American veteran who had fought in the Second World War, Thu Van aimed to help the U.S. solve the Vietnam War conundrum from her perspective as a South Vietnamese. Arriving in the U.S. first with a UNESCO grant in 1964, Thu Van enrolled in an English learning program at the University of Michigan.<sup>19</sup> In June 1965, when she read about an essay titled "Paul Engle: Poet-Grower to the World" in *Look*,<sup>20</sup> she wrote to Engle expressing how she liked his "spiritual outlook."<sup>21</sup> Just as Engle believed that the "international quality" of the IWW was capable of "breaking down the barriers of nationality and language," Thu Van wished to facilitate mutual understanding between the Americans and the Vietnamese.<sup>22</sup> Working on her novel in Iowa City to "further this understanding," Thu Van wrote a letter to President Johnson.<sup>23</sup> Once an underground fighter against French colonizers, Thu Van explained that the U.S. was losing the heart of both the Vietnamese and its citizens because of its "colonialist mentality." Condemning Johnson's Vietnam policy, she pointed to expansionism and racism inherent in the good will of colonizers:

You did not get rid of the myth of White superiority over the Colored—a resurgence of the colonialist mentality—nor the myth of you as a teacher and a giver, with everything to teach but nothing to learn. You never treated us on an equal footing. You looked down upon these Asian masses as a virgin sheet of paper on which one could write whatever he wanted; and that they were not.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The introduction of Thu Van to her essay, "The Enigma of Viet Nam," *Michigan Quarterly Review* Vol. 5.2 (Spring 1966): 131-139.

<sup>20</sup> *Look* (June 1, 1965), 95-97.

<sup>21</sup> "Viet Author Is Guest: Ex-Freedom Fighter Talks about Country's Problems" *The Daily Iowan* (June 30, 1965). In Thu Van's words, "I liked his spiritual outlook and so I wrote him. He invited me to come to Iowa."

<sup>22</sup> Paul Engle, "Introduction: the Writer and the Place" in *Midland: an Anthology of Poetry and Prose*, edited by Paul Engle (New York: Random House, 1961), xxvii.

<sup>23</sup> "Viet Author Is Guest: Ex-Freedom Fighter Talks about Country's Problems" *The Daily Iowan* (June 30, 1965).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Even though the U.S. was responsible for Thu Van's transpacific displacement and the Vietnam War, Thu Van believed in Pax Americana and sought assistance from the U.S. Having fought with the Communist Party against the French in the 1950s, Thu Van aligned with the U.S. in the mid 1960s and considered the Vietnamese Communists the enemy of her country. According to Thu Van, the Communists were too "[w]ell trained politically by the Communist International" whose greater cause would eventually exterminate the "middle-class Vietnamese intellectuals" and "their fellow fighters."<sup>25</sup> On the contrary, the "nationalist patriots had not been trained politically," so that their goal was simply national: the independence of Vietnam.<sup>26</sup> She then urged the U.S. to grasp the "National Spirit" of the Vietnamese, the "essential Vietnamese personality, their sacred fire," so that the U.S. government would be able to understand and help the Vietnamese.<sup>27</sup>

Whereas Thu Van called on the U.S. to treat her country and her people as equals to reach mutual understanding, her belief in American democracy replicated the hierarchy between the U.S. and her country. The South Vietnamese would aspire to learn from the U.S., Thu Van promised. In the same letter to President Johnson, she said, "We do realize too, that no human institution is perfect, and that it often must choose between two evils," and as if responding to the Truman Doctrine, Thu Van announced, "I would choose American democracy."<sup>28</sup> She further expressed her gratitude for the U.S.'s "eagerness to rush into these former colonies in Asia with help," and considered the colonization of the Philippines by the

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<sup>25</sup> Thu Van, "The Enigma of Viet Nam," 134.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 132. Thu Van explained the National Spirit as specifically developed throughout Vietnamese history, an "indomitable personality" that enabled Vietnam to keep its culture and nation intact from Chinese invaders and French colonizers.

<sup>28</sup> Thu Van's letter to the U.S. President (dated June 27, 1966), 26. Paul Engle Papers (Box 44), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 17, 2017.

U.S. “an enlightening example” for the U.S.’s “liberal attitude.”<sup>29</sup> Based on this reasoning, Thu Van concluded that the future of her country should be trusted to the U.S.<sup>30</sup>

Far from the position of an antiwar activist, Thu Van even exonerated the U.S. government from war responsibility. Despite her criticism of the U.S.’s “myth of White superiority over the Colored,” she declared, in a rather reductionist tone, that the “main American mistake lay in their choice of the man into whose hands they put the destiny of Viet Nam eleven years ago.”<sup>31</sup> The misery of her people was attributed to the Diem regime’s “limited patriotism, a decadent, obstructionist, medieval, and backward kind, which soon changed into chauvinism and xenophobia.”<sup>32</sup> Thu Van argued that the Diem regime must be replaced with a new leader, and the leader should be capable of reigniting the National Spirit that was “successively extinguished by the French, the Vietcong, and the Diemists.”<sup>33</sup> As she implied, had the Americans tried to understand more about the National Spirit and the non-Communist Vietnamese, the U.S. could have prevented the war and a potential Communist victory.

Not long after she wrote the letter to President Johnson, Thu Van assisted the U.S. military by teaching Vietnamese language to American soldiers. She moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina, after the UNESCO sponsorship and her short-term visit to Iowa ended.

Trying to extend her stay in the U.S., Thu Van started teaching Vietnamese language at Fort

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 2. The entire passage: “Your eagerness to rush into these former colonies in Asia with help also must be thanked. Neither in China (a semi-colony), nor in India, nor in Indo-China, have you had the intention of exploiting us. Your liberal attitude towards the Philippines is an enlightening example.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 26-27. The original passage: “I do understand that, in agreeing to the presence of American troops in Viet Nam, I am a traitor to my country, but there are loyalties that transcend national boundaries—those toward God.”

<sup>31</sup> Thu Van, “The Enigma of Viet Nam,” 134.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 133. Thu Van argued that the new leader should satisfy all the following conditions: “To have proved himself in the anti-French Resistance, and if possible, to have been deported by the French. / Not to have collaborated with either of the invaders of Viet Nam, the French and the Japanese, or with the hated Diem government. / To be non-Communist. / To be of Buddhist background, if possible. / To be from South Vietnam originally, if possible. / To have a spotless past and clearly apparent ability. / To have sufficient authority to gather around him all the disparate national elements, and to be obeyed. Not to be paternally protected by any foreign power. Such a personality is difficult to find, but not impossible” (133-4).

Bragg, the largest military installation in the U.S. In the meantime, she wanted to have her works translated into English and published for American readers.<sup>34</sup> Thanks to her connection with the IWW and Engle (who started to emphasize the need to translate in the mid-1960s), Thu Van found a PhD student in comparative literature at the University of Iowa, Peter Clothier, to translate her works. Despite that Engle often spoke of the harmonious and fruitful collaboration between writers at the IWW (and later on at the IWP, especially in its signature “co-translation” project), the one between the South Vietnamese writer and her translator did not yield a satisfactory result.<sup>35</sup> The difficulty of publishing her works in English notwithstanding, Thu Van stayed in the U.S. through language teaching at Fort Bragg. During the time when the U.S. troops continued to be deployed in Vietnam, her work served the interests of the U.S. government.

In the same year, the IWP was officially founded. After his twenty-five-year directorship at the IWW, Engle devoted himself to the multilingual output and multinational outlook of the IWP with Nieh’s assistance and companionship. In May 1971, Engle and Nieh got married. “The Engles” became a synonym for a literary program that hosted writers from all over the world in Iowa.

### **A City of Division and Connection**

From 1967 to 1988, the couple made Iowa City into an enclave of peace for writers, despite its proximity to the Vietnam War and antiwar agitation. Amidst the policy of “Vietnamization” and further decline of U.S. morale on the battlefield in Southeast Asia, international writers were invited to the IWP for literary exchange and collaboration.

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<sup>34</sup> Thu Van’s letter to Paul Engle updating her life (dated April 11, 1967). Paul Engle Papers (Box 44), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 17, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Clothier’s letter to Thu Van (dated May 31, 1967), and Thu Van’s letter to Clothier (dated June 24, 1967). Paul Engle Papers (Box 44), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 17, 2017.

The rhetoric of “making peace” has characterized the IWP since its founding moment. Celebrating how the IWP had brought “opposites” together, the Engles often spoke of how congenial bonds were established among supposedly incompatible writers:

The Arab and Hebrew writers came, met, stared, started to turn away, then turned back to shake hands. . . . The East and West Germans came, drank beer together, and joked about the “wall” between them when they entered their separate apartments. The Chinese from Taiwan and from mainland China ate together (common food, like a common language, is a great uniter of people), listened to the same cassettes (many from Hong Kong), kept their tempers over their differences, were sad when they left, knowing they could never meet again. Where else in the world could they live in the same building save in Iowa City?<sup>36</sup>

According to this narrative, IWP writers coming from countries at war with one another reconciled with one another through living together in Iowa City. Shaking hands, drinking beer, joking, and eating together united writers and appeased hostility, according to the Engles. The IWP was represented as a much smaller yet more peaceful world where a shared, common humanity could overcome the political agitations in the outside world. With such a purpose, the IWP invited “proven and published talents who have gone through revolutions, civil wars, world wars, oppression, liberation, and hunger in their many forms in many countries.”<sup>37</sup>

One of the IWP’s missions for U.S. cultural diplomacy was to facilitate peaceful connections between the U.S. and the Eastern Bloc. As manifested by how the writers from Eastern European countries including Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria,

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<sup>36</sup> Paul Engle and Nieh Hualing, “The World Comes to Iowa,” *World Literature Today* 61.3 (1987): 369.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

and Yugoslavia praised the Engles, the IWP fulfilled its mission. The Romanian writer Nicolae Breban proclaimed, “You two, Hualing and Paul, are more than excellent as novelist and poet. You are the creators of a Utopia!”<sup>38</sup> Likewise, the nomination of Engles for the Nobel Peace Prize was initially proposed by a writer from Yugoslavia, Ahmed Muhamed Imamovic. In fact, throughout two decades of Engle’s service to the IWP and among five-hundred and nineteen writers they invited to Iowa City, almost twenty percent were from Eastern Europe. The number of writers from the Eastern Bloc and Yugoslavia totaled one-hundred and one, greatly surpassing the number of writers from Latin America (eighty) and NATO countries (fifty-nine).<sup>39</sup>

The proportion of Chinese writers deserves special attention, particularly in relation to Nieh’s role in the literary enterprise of Iowa City. Although the total number was less impressive (fifty-one), unlike writers from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and NATO countries that covered many nations across large continents, “Chinese writers” came to Iowa City from only three places: Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, it was not until 1979 that writers of the People’s Republic of China were invited to the IWP. Having lived in Iowa City since 1964, Nieh has never stopped engaging closely with the development of Chinese literature and politics. Connecting Chinese writers with the IWP has always been her endeavor. Through this platform, Nieh not only connects herself with her homeland but also forges connections between Chinese writers of the divided two Chinas. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five, in the Chinese Weekend held at the IWP in 1979, Chinese writers

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<sup>38</sup> Linda Witt, “Vonnegut, Roth and Irving Found Inspiration with Paul Engle in Iowa; So Did His Wife, Hualing,” *People Magazine* (November 19, 1979) < <https://people.com/archive/vonnegut-roth-and-irving-found-inspiration-with-paul-engle-in-iowa-so-did-his-wife-hualing-vol-12-no-21/>>.

<sup>39</sup> See “Members of the International Writing Program, 1967-1986,” *The World Comes to Iowa: the Iowa International Anthology*, edited by Paul Engle, Rowena Torrevillas, and Hualing Nieh Engle (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 283-291.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



from both the ROC and the PRC gathered together for a literary event for the first time since 1949.

Whereas the platform of the IWP enabled the connection between the two Chinas, it also revealed the difficulty of reconciliation. The encounters between Wang Anyi and Chen Yingzhen in 1983 demonstrated not only the possibility of overcoming the Chinese division at the IWP, but also the repercussions of the division resulting from the Cold War and the Civil War.<sup>41</sup>

When Wang was invited to Iowa City, she was not yet thirty. Born in 1954 in Nanjing and raised in Shanghai, Wang became one of the most prestigious writers in contemporary Chinese literature in her early forties. Wang grew up with a newly established socialist country, having experienced the turbulence of a new China including the Cultural Revolution. In 1970, Wang was sent to the countryside of Anhui; two years later, she transferred to the Xuzhou Song and Dance Cultural Troupe. Wang finally returned to Shanghai in 1978, working as an editor for a literary journal. In 1980, she received training from China Writers Association and became a professional writer. Thirteen years after she visited the IWP, Wang published her most acclaimed novel, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*, and won the Mao Dun Literature Prize in 1996.

A much senior writer, Chen would have had visited Iowa City shortly after the IWP was founded had he not been arrested by the Nationalist regime in 1968. Born in 1937 in Shinchiku Prefecture (now Zhunan) during the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, Chen was the first *benshengren* (lit. “original-provincial person,” the Han Chinese who had migrated to Taiwan since the Qing dynasty or earlier) writer that Nieh intended to invite to Iowa City.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For more details about the encounter between Chen Yingzhen and Wang Anyi in Iowa City, see Chen Po-hsi, “Wang Anyi, Taiwan, and the World: the 1983 International Writing Program and Biblical Allusions in Utopian Verses” *Chinese Literature Today* 6.2 (2017): 52-61.

<sup>42</sup> The term *benshengren* is used in contrast to *waishengren* (lit. “extra-provincial person”) that refers to the Han Chinese who relocated to Taiwan from the mainland after the Second Sino-Japanese War and during the Chinese Civil War.

Under the martial law of “free China,” Chen was accused of having “read the books published by Communist China, then intended to cooperate with Communist China to overthrow the Government.”<sup>43</sup> Sentenced to a ten-year imprisonment and five-year deprivation of civil rights, Chen was granted a pardon due to Chiang Kai-shek’s death in 1975. As Chen’s case showed, an attempt to understand mainland China by reading Chinese modern literature (for instance, the works of Lu Xun) would lead to a ten-year imprisonment in Taiwan. What happened to Chen was a ramification of the Chinese Civil War that has caused mutual isolation between the mainland and Taiwan since 1949. As Wang described, “We are isolated from the island for many years; for these years, we fabricated stories about each other to make us hate each other.”<sup>44</sup>

The IWP provided an opportunity for Wang and Chen to learn about each other tête-à-tête. It was a valuable and rare occasion, as the year 1983 marked the fifth year that writers of the two Chinas were simultaneously hosted in Iowa City. Chen cherished this opportunity dearly. More than two decades later, he still wrote fondly about the meeting:

During this three-month workshop, I met, for the first time, friends from across the strait, from the other side of my fractured homeland, including Ru Zhijuan, an outstanding revolutionary. Her daughter Wang Anyi, who has become one of the best women writers in China now, and famous progressive dramatist Wu Zhuguang (although he had begun falling victim to “liberalization” by then) touched me deeply.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Judgement of the Ministry of Defense of the ROC (Reference No.: The 58<sup>th</sup> year-Fu-P-Hsam-Tze-No. 13), April 11, 1969. Paul Engle Papers (Box 22), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 11, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> Wang, “Utopian Verses” (1991) in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇] (Beijing: Huayi Press, 2011), 8. The original: 我們和那個島隔絕了多年，多年裡，我們互相編排著對方的故事，為了使彼此憎惡。

<sup>45</sup> See Chen, “What the ‘Third World’ Means to Me,” translated by Petrus Liu. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6.4 (2005): 536.

Eager to connect himself with writers across the Taiwan Strait, Chen went along with the IWP staff and Nieh to welcome the PRC writers as soon as they landed in Cedar Rapids.<sup>46</sup> He believed that when “the Strait serves as the boundary for confrontation and mutual isolation, it conveys a solemn and significant meaning to meet with the mainland writers who are also my fellow Chinese writers.”<sup>47</sup> Compared to Chen’s excitement and idealism, Wang felt “dizzy and confused” when she arrived in Iowa City. Because of the long-distance flight, her jetlag, and a “foreign scent” composed of artificial materials, cosmetics, and exhaust gas from vehicles, Wang did not share Chen’s “solemn and significant meaning.” Wang was not even sure whether it was dawn or dusk when she arrived in Iowa City. Still, she remembered Chen among the group of people meeting their plane: “He wore an orange shirt; he was tall; he had a beer belly. His eyes were ‘merciful’.”<sup>48</sup>

The gap between Wang and Chen was apparent. More than merely individual differences, the gap revealed two sets of political investments and intellectual interests at the juncture of the early 1980s. While Wang came from a post-Cultural Revolution China in the midst of “reform and opening-up,” Chen, a Taiwanese leftist critical of capitalism and imperialism, adhered to the ideal of socialist China. If the former was keen on exploring the First World, the latter was in search of an alternative for economic development and social formation. As Wang recalled, “I suppose that he did not like how I pushed the cart in a supermarket, walking high-spiritedly beneath shelves filled with commodities as if I was parading.”<sup>49</sup> The most intense conflict between them happened over a debate on the concept of individualism, as Wang vividly remembered:

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<sup>46</sup> See Chen, “Thinking of Wang Anyi” [想起王安憶] in *Season of Literature* [文季] 2.3 (1984): 101.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. The original: 做為一個中國的作家，去會見同為中國作家同事的大陸作家，在以海峽為界相對峙、相隔絕的現實情況下，有嚴肅而且重大的意義。

<sup>48</sup> Wang Anyi, “Utopian Verses” (1991) in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇], 11. The original: 在接機的人群中，有這個人，他穿一件桔黃的襯衫，他很高大，他有啤酒肚，他的眼睛很「仁慈」。

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 17. The original: 我想，他不喜歡我在超級市場推了小車，情緒昂揚地走在滿架的貨物之下，好像在作一次遊行。

At first, he patiently told me about the terrifying crisis of humanity in an industrialized, capitalized modern society, in which individualism would become the motivational basis to sustain the functioning of this society. The individual would become an instrument to be used. . . . But I was getting even angrier, and feeling that he had taken the advantage of individualism while cleverly criticizing it. I could not make myself clear, and yet I was threateningly fierce. I think, at that moment, he was truly angered.<sup>50</sup>

Twenty years later, Wang admitted that she merely appropriated “fragments of intellectual theory of the developed Western society, such as ‘individualism,’ ‘human nature,’ ‘market,’ and ‘capital’” as her critical language to argue against Chen.<sup>51</sup> In the early 1980s, Wang was just starting to familiarize herself with these phrases and theories. Chen, in contrast, had published in 1967 “The Comedy of Narcissa Tang,” a short story that satirizes how intellectuals in the 1960s Taiwan blindly followed the trend of Western theory. “What we had anticipated from each other,” as Wang lamented, “came to naught.”<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, it was precisely the gap between Wang and Chen that allowed the former “to preserve the residual of some clean, gentle, and beautiful things.”<sup>53</sup> In 2003, Wang dedicated an essay titled “The Internationale” to Chen, who had fundamentally influenced her writing and life. She looked back on the year 1983, her encounter with Chen and the First World in Iowa City:

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 25. The original full passage: 他起先耐心地告訴我，一個工業化資本化的現代社會中人性的可怕危機，個人主義是維持此種社會機能的動力基礎，個人是一種被使用的工具，個人其實已被社會限定到一無個人可言，個人只是一個假象。而我卻越發火起，覺得他享了個人主義的好處，卻來賣乖。我辭不達意，且氣勢洶洶。那一次我想他是真正地火了。

<sup>51</sup> Wang Anyi, “The Internationale” (2003), Appendix 1 in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇], 86. The original passage: 回想起來，那時候我的表現真差勁。我運用的批判的武器，就是八十年代初期，從開放的縫隙中傳進來的，西方先發展社會的一些思想理論的片斷。比如「個人主義」，「人性」，「市場」，「資本」。

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 85. The original: 我們彼此的期望都落空了。

<sup>53</sup> Wang Anyi, “Utopian Verses” (1991) in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇], 3. The original passage: 對這一個人的懷念變成了一個安慰，一個理想，似乎在我心裡，畫出了一塊淨土，供我保存著殘餘的一些純潔的、良善的、美麗的事物。

In 1983, I went to the U.S. and experienced many unusual things. Drinks in paper carton, microwave ovens, supermarkets as huge as a plaza, shopping malls, highways and gas stations on the highways, the apartment's automatic doors with buzzers, luxurious shop windows on Fifth Avenue during Christmas. . . . I behaved like a real American using free paper towels extravagantly . . . . If I had not met a particular person [i.e., Chen], I would have very likely become a materialist before the economic reform of mainland China.<sup>54</sup>

Wang wondered at—and might have been seduced by—what she perceived as the American way of life, but Chen's belief in a socialist China empowered Wang to “obtain an ability of resistance against consumer society.”<sup>55</sup> Wang's essay is also a tribute to Chen, acknowledging the senior writer's socialist internationalism that challenged her to resist conforming to materialism and consumerism.

### **The Internationale in Iowa City**

Wang's “The Internationale” captured not only her differences from a Taiwanese, leftist, senior writer, but also Chen's motivation for joining the IWP. For Chen, the IWP offered a means to connect with and learn about the Third World. Chen specifically highlighted his connection with a South African writer and a Filipino writer.<sup>56</sup> As he remembered, the “older, white-looking, and graceful woman” explained that she and her fellow writers could not “think simply in terms of literary techniques and artistic effects”;

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<sup>54</sup> Wang Anyi, “The Internationale” (2003), Appendix 1 in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇], 83. The original: 一九八三年去美國，我見識了許多稀奇的事物。紙盒包裝的飲料，微波爐，遼闊如廣場的超級市場，購物中心，高速公路以及高速公路加油站，公寓大樓的蜂鳴器自動門，紐約第五大道聖誕節的豪華櫥窗。[.....] 我像一個真正的美國人那樣揮霍免費紙巾 [.....] 假如我沒有遇到一個人，那麼，很可能，在中國大陸經濟改革之前，我就會預先成為一名物質主義者。

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. The original: 使我在一定程度上，具備了對消費社會的抵抗力。

<sup>56</sup> According to the IWP website, the South African writer who visited Iowa City was Gladys Thomas, while the Filipino Reuel Molina Águila, whom Chen referred to as “Aquino.”

rather, in South Africa where the literacy rate was less than ten percent, they must consider “how it sounds and not how it reads.”<sup>57</sup> Chen was struck by how the South African writer “wrote so closely to the pains, lives and experiences of their people and had such a different philosophy of writing.”<sup>58</sup> He was once again struck, when the writer who appeared to be “a past-middle-aged Caucasian woman” told him, “I am what the racists call a color”—at this moment, Chen realized “the horror of the fascist one-drop-rule of South African racism.”<sup>59</sup> Aquino, a writer from the Philippines, shared with Chen a commitment to ethnic literature, an interest in Third World literature, an attention to post-Cultural Revolution China, and even a contempt for the dominance of English. Taking advantage of the IWP, Chen and Aquino also tried to connect with writers from socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc.

Chen and Aquino’s attempt to forge a socialist connection across the Cold War divide yielded unexpected results. To their surprise, the Eastern European writers candidly expressed their admiration for American movies that, being “free of politics,” could show “personal emotions and desires.”<sup>60</sup> In disbelief, Chen debased the value of Hollywood movie while Aquino retorted more harshly. In Chen’s recollection:

[Aquino’s] face was red, and he started telling stories about the gruesome history of the various ethnic groups in the Philippines and current American neo-colonial rule there. “The Americans brought an anti-communist dictatorship to the Philippines. They gave us military bases as well as rape, car accidents, and sexually transmitted diseases. They turned young girls from the poor rural areas into prostitutes and quelled peasant revolts against their rule in the name of democracy and liberty.” Aquino said that Hollywood movies

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<sup>57</sup> See Chen, “What the ‘Third World’ Means to Me,” 537.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

numbed the Filipinos like opium. . . . He said, “Americans not only snatched our material goods, but also collected our souls.”<sup>61</sup>

Aquino’s accusation of U.S. colonialism, neocolonialism, and cultural imperialism in the Philippines shocked the writers from the Eastern Bloc. The Eastern European writers, however, did not alter their viewpoint, and neither did Aquino, who severely disparaged American movies (“products of Hollywood and the capitalist class”) as “empty, decadent, rotten.”<sup>62</sup> The conversation ended up in confusion and commotion.

Even though the writers of the Eastern and Western Bloc seemed to have switched sides, the conflict between capitalism and socialism remained unresolved. An Eastern European writer wondered why Chen and Aquino spoke like their political commissar of the Party, to which Aquino retorted again, “I am also wondering how come writers from the socialist countries of Eastern Europe are addicted to the decadent movies of American imperialism?”<sup>63</sup> While more and more drinks went down, the room went silent without anyone answering each writer’s question. Finally, the silence was broken by the humming of the “Internationale,” which quickly turned into a multilingual chorus with everyone crying and hugging each other. The disbelief, anger, disputes, and confusion, seemed to be all appeased through the revolutionary song. The “Internationale,” however, went off tune.<sup>64</sup>

More than two decades later, both Chen Yingzhen and Wang Anyi evoked their days at the IWP with a sense of confusion rather than celebration of the two literary programs in Iowa City. As Chen wrote, “I still haven’t figured out the meanings behind the song [the ‘Internationale’], the tears, and the hugs. Perhaps they are too complex. For a bygone Revolution? For a fairy faith that we once shared? For an awkward nostalgia for the red

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. In Chen’s words, “Others followed suit, singing the ‘Internationale’ in different languages. I did in Chinese. Aquino did first in English, and then in Tagalog, louder and louder and off tune.”

banner and internationalism?”<sup>65</sup> In “The Internationale,” dedicated to Chen, Wang described how lonely Chen was in an era during which Che Guevara became a global icon. Witnessing Chen’s loneliness in a post-revolutionary time, she shared some of Chen’s confusion: “We seem to have what we wanted, but it was not what we expected; we no longer know what we want but only what we do not want; the more we know what we do not want, the less we know what we want.”<sup>66</sup> Wang’s confusion, at the same time, was coupled with a sense of frustration that Chen brought to her:

I have always, constantly, hoped to receive some response from him [Chen], but he has never given it to me. Or, he has responded to me, but I could not hear it, and when I finally listen to it, other problems would occur. I have never caught up with him, and yet he was already abandoned by our time as a person fallen behind, just like a Utopia—we have never seen it, but we have known it so dearly that we lose passion.<sup>67</sup>

Framed by the Internationale, Chen and Wang’s confusion attests to the legacy of the Cold War divide in the twenty-first century, a century that has already witnessed the crisis of capitalism and numerous wars, both old and new. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the supposed end of the Cold War did not solve the confusion.

The IWP constantly played up the peaceful tune among international writers, but the Cold War divide often conditioned the exchange and connection that took place through the program. The Engles’ long-term directorship of the writing programs in Iowa City

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Wang Anyi, “The Internationale” (2003), Appendix 1 in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇], 91. The original: 我們想要的東西似乎有了，卻不是原先以為的東西；我們都不知道要什麼了，只知道不要什麼；我們越知道不要什麼，就越不知道要什麼。

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. The original: 我總是，一直，希望能在他那裡得到回應，可他總不給我。或是說他給了我，而我聽不見，等到聽見，就又成了下一個問題。我從來沒有趕上過他，而他已經被時代拋在身後，成了落伍者，就好像理想國烏托邦，我們從來沒有看見過它，卻已經熟極而膩。



overlapped with the *longue durée* of the Cold War. Far from a period of “long peace,” many civil and proxy wars broke out. Wars were fought and people were mobilized for national independence, for decolonization, for sovereignty, for resources, or for consolidating power. In this context of constant wars, “Iowa” was made into and talked about as a war-free utopia. In Iowa City, writers were able to live in peace, even just temporarily. For Thu Van, Kurt Vonnegut, Wang Anyi, and Chen Yingzhen, as well as those in the following chapters, the IWW and the IWP provided for their various needs, be it financial support, fame, a diploma, a sanctuary from wars, a chance to see and stay in the U.S., a platform to meet writers from other countries, or a destination for one’s exile. Every writer came to Iowa City with their own motive, and the Engles tried their best to present them with a hospitable environment. Both the Engles and writers formed a variety of connections that were at once deeply personal and highly political. Looking into “Iowa” as neither a utopia nor a dystopia, the following chapters tease out not only *what* “Iowa” has come to mean in our time but also *how*.

**Chapter Two**  
**Roundtrips between Iowa City and Taipei:**  
**Cold War Internationalism, Paul Engle, and Yu Kwang-chung**

Let this, her land, be always such a place  
Where having freedom is like having bread,  
Where the clean landscape of a child's face  
Is seldom by the boast of blood defiled,  
Where on its streets and alleys without dread  
Plays all day long the proud spontaneous child.<sup>1</sup>

—Paul Engle, 1956

Even on the good earth of Iowa,  
I cannot forage for a  
fern on the Shouyang Mountain. Neither can I replant  
laterally, nor uproot everything  
from shadows of your lashes, riverbank of your eyes.<sup>2</sup>

—Yu Kwang-chung, 1959

Since Paul Engle assumed the director position of the Iowa Writers' Workshop (IWW) in 1941, his promotion of the writing program was coupled with an emphasis on the location of Iowa and the U.S. Midwest. In *Midland*, a collection of writings from IWW students, Engle explained the significance of "Iowa" for writers in the United States: "In a country with so ranging a landscape, with its concentration of culture so widely diffused . . . [t]here must be an alternative between Hollywood and New York, between those places psychically as well as geographically."<sup>3</sup> Located in the middle of the U.S., Engle strived to nurture the IWW into a hub of cultural and literary activities for those who were distant from the metropolitan areas on the West and East Coast. Thanks to Engle's effort, the IWW would attract not only writers from all over the U.S. but also foreign students worldwide to devote themselves to creative writing. In 1958, Yu Kwang-chung, a renowned Chinese poet and

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Engle, *American Child: Sonnets for My Daughters* (New York: Dial Press, 1956), 102.

<sup>2</sup> Yu Kwang-chung, "My Tree Rings" [我的年輪], in *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1 (Tianjin: Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House, 2003), 308. My translation; the original: 即使在愛奧華的沃土上／也無法覓食一朵／首陽山之薇。我無法作橫的移植，／無法連根拔起／自你的睫陰，眼堤。

<sup>3</sup> Paul Engle, "Introduction: the Writer and the Place" in *Midland: an Anthology of Poetry and Prose*, edited by Paul Engle (New York: Random House, 1961), xxv.

translator, traveled to Iowa City from Taipei and enrolled in Engle's Workshop. Unlike Engle who celebrated the location of Iowa, Yu apparently was not impressed by the midland of the U.S. While Engle believed that his daughters would grow up happily and safely in the heartland of the U.S. where "having freedom is like having bread," Yu expressed a sense of alienation from the good earth of Iowa and yearned for his homeland across the Pacific. Yu received his degree in August 1959 and left Iowa City. Four years later, Yu and Engle met again—this time in Yu's home country, the Republic of China in Taiwan.

The encounters between the two poets in the late 1950s Iowa City and the early 1960s Taipei were enabled by how the U.S. consolidated its power through the ideal of freedom and practice of internationalism in the early Cold War. Since the Truman administration, U.S. officials and citizens were encouraged to embrace internationalism and spread the ideal of U.S. freedom abroad. At the same time, many non-American intellectuals and students traveled from their home countries to the U.S., participating in U.S.-led programs for cultural exchange based on shared agendas between the U.S. and its Cold War allies. The anticommunist alliance between the U.S. government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime was one example, and it was through such an alliance that Yu Kwang-chung crossed the Pacific to Iowa City as a Chinese overseas student. Concurrently, the IWW became a platform for Engle to fulfill his internationalist mission as a U.S. citizen. Engle's travel to Asia and experience as the IWW director exposed the limits and contradictions embedded in the U.S. ideal of freedom. By examining Engle's and Yu's transpacific route against the backdrop of the early Cold War, this chapter reveals how Cold War internationalism operated to shape the literary scenes in both Iowa City and Taipei. These two locations, for the years to come, would become closely connected because of the transpacific circuit set up at the early stage of the Cold War.

## **An American Way of Person-To-Person Communication**

Historians of U.S. empire have examined the relationships between imperialism and freedom, critiquing how the “empire of liberty” has defined U.S. foreign policy and rationalized the U.S. as a war-waging nation-state. As illuminated by historian Michael Hunt, the key to grasping the U.S. as a modern nation, as well as how its foreign policy has come into being, is to understand the U.S.’s “active quest for national greatness closely coupled to the promotion of liberty.”<sup>4</sup> Since the late nineteenth century, the ideal of freedom has been deployed as the rationale for the U.S. to launch its overseas expansion. Illustrating the formation of the U.S. as a liberal empire, Mimi Nguyen reveals how liberalism operated vis-à-vis twentieth century U.S. imperialism: “In the first half of the twentieth century, the freedom-loving peoples of the world determined that their own self-interest and security were best served by distant others’ having the benefit of freedom.”<sup>5</sup> Underscoring the significance of “freedom” in shaping the U.S. in relation to the world, Nguyen contends that the American “freedom-loving peoples” believed that disseminating the ideal of freedom would be beneficial for those distant (unfree) others.

The rationale based on the empire of liberty carried over into the mid-twentieth century, as freedom was highlighted in direct opposition to communism throughout the Cold War. In President Truman’s address to the Congress in 1947, later known as the Truman Doctrine, the ideal of freedom was tightly stitched into the U.S. agenda to fight the Cold War. In this address, calling for financial support for Greece and Turkey to combat “totalitarian regimes,” Truman stated:

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One

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<sup>4</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009 [1987]), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Mimi Nguyen, *Gift of Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 36.

way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. . . . The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedoms. . . . I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.<sup>6</sup>

In Truman's talk, an opposition between two political forms was formulated into that between two "ways of life." Although Truman acknowledged the political context of a Cold War structure in which the "choice is too often not a free one," he as the president of the U.S. did not hesitate to claim that if given a choice, every sensible people and nation would choose the free way of life, namely, the American way of life. Moreover, those who fail to conform to the American way would be deemed as "armed minorities" and "outside pressures." Emphatically reiterated by Truman, "freedom" was made essential to the self-image of the U.S., through which it defined and assessed its relations with others in the world. "The free peoples of the world," as Truman declared by the end of his speech, "look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms."<sup>7</sup>

Truman's address laid bare the twofold strategy of the U.S.: "support free peoples" by competing with "the suppression of personal freedoms." As the Truman Doctrine indicated, by either assisting or combating "distant others," the U.S. asserted itself as the leader of the

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<sup>6</sup> Truman, "Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey" (Washington, March 12, 1947).  
<[https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/doctrine/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-03-12&documentid=5-9&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-03-12&documentid=5-9&pagenumber=1)>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

free world, a reasoning that gave rise to a “containment/integration model.” Such a model, explained by the cultural historian Christina Klein, constituted “the dominant form of postwar internationalism” that satisfied both “the left-liberal ideal of international integration” and “the right’s fierce opposition to communism.”<sup>8</sup> Catering at once to anticommunism and liberalism, the containment/integration model became the basis of U.S. internationalism. Simultaneously, against the backdrop of Cold War polarity, the U.S. defined its relationship with the others as enmity or alliance as determined through an anticommunist lens. The enemy-others of the U.S. would be contained within the communist bloc; at the same time, the non-communist, allied-others would be integrated into the free world in which all countries were collaboratively interdependent and by implication unanimously led by the U.S. This form of internationalism ultimately generated what Klein calls “a people-to-people narrative,” through which the “cultural expression of the principle of international integration” was made into a dominant structure of feeling in the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

In 1953, the establishment of the United States Information Agency (USIA) during President Eisenhower’s term evidenced how the U.S. government employed and underscored the “people-to-people narrative.”<sup>10</sup> Even though Eisenhower once accused his predecessor Truman of being too soft on the communist enemies of the U.S., these two administrations demonstrated a lineage of liberal-anticommunist internationalism based on which they devised the U.S. Cold War stratagems.<sup>11</sup> Both following the model of containment/integration, the Eisenhower administration slightly modified the Truman

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<sup>8</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 32.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>10</sup> For more details about the USIA and its overseas posts, the USISs, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> See Elizabeth Edwards Spalding’s *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), and Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006).

Doctrine with a further emphasis on cultural diplomacy and propaganda tactics.<sup>12</sup> In particular, under President Eisenhower, the USIA was established to promote an integrated free world. He specified, the mission of the USIA was “[t]o submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the U.S. are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace.”<sup>13</sup> For one thing, the development of media technologies and communication techniques paved the way for extensive transmission of U.S. propaganda both at home and abroad.<sup>14</sup> For another, if Truman formulated Cold War agitation as struggles between two ways of life, Eisenhower, by frequently employing the word “people,” put a human face on the ways that the U.S. fought its communist others.

Eisenhower’s stress on the peoples of the world, nevertheless, only intensified the opposition between the two blocs. For instance, in his remarks at the People-to-People Conference, the U.S. president stated that “all people want peace” while immediately differentiating “the communist way” and “our way.”<sup>15</sup> Identical to Truman’s formulation of two ways of life, Eisenhower believed that the communist way would “subject everything to the control of the state and to start out with a very great propaganda program all laid out in its details—and everybody conforms.”<sup>16</sup> While he acknowledged that both the communist bloc and the U.S. were utilizing propaganda programs for peace, Eisenhower maintained that the American way, unlike the totalitarian communist regimes, would value the individuality of

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<sup>12</sup> For a foundational study of the U.S. cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000). Penny von Eschen’s *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) offers an account for how the Eisenhower administration engaged with cultural diplomacy during the Cold War.

<sup>13</sup> Mission of the United States Information Agency 1954, March 13, 1954. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Records as President, Official File, Box 748, OF 247 United States Information Agency 1954 (2); NAID #12648972.

<sup>14</sup> See Osgood, *Total Cold War* for how the USIA and the Eisenhower administration benefited from and were related to development of communication technologies in the twentieth century.

<sup>15</sup> President Eisenhower’s remarks in Washington, D.C., September 11, 1956. Public Papers of the President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956. Government Printing Office.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

each person more: “[w]e marshal the forces of initiative, independent action, and independent thinking of 168 million people.”<sup>17</sup> According to him, the U.S. government respected the independent thinking of the peoples of the world, even though “the forces of initiative” would be marshalled precisely by the U.S. government.

Undergirded by internationalist appeal for an integrated free world, the USIA-derived People-to-People Program was initiated in 1956. It beseeched American citizens to engage with the world and hence contribute to the U.S. In June 1956, a group of “distinguished American leaders” were invited to meet with President Eisenhower at the White House to “explore the possibilities of a program for better people-to-people contacts and partnerships throughout the world.”<sup>18</sup> These leaders included George Brett (President of the Macmillan Company), Harry Bullis (Chairman of Board at General Mills, Inc.), A. C. Jacobs (President of Trinity College), David Finley (former Director of National Art Gallery), Y. Frank Freeman (Chairman of the Association of Motion Picture Producers), Eugene Ormandy (Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra), and William Barclay Parsons (Vice President of the National Council of Women), etc.<sup>19</sup> In the president’s address, Eisenhower appealed to them for their participation to fight the Cold War:

[I]f our American ideology is eventually to win out in the great struggle being waged between the two opposing ways of life, it must have the active support of thousands of independent private groups and institutions and of millions of individual Americans acting through person-to-person communication in foreign lands.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Press Release regarding June 12 White House Conference on People-to-People Partnership, May 31, 1956. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Records as President, Official File, Box 764, OF 325 People-to-People Program (2); NAID #12649394. Also attached in this document is a complete list of the invited American citizens.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



Facing inward and outward, the People-to-People Program endowed U.S. citizens with a sense of responsibility for their country, based on which they were assigned an internationalist task, also for their country. As Eisenhower proclaimed, “[T]here will never be enough diplomats and information officers at work in the world to get the job done without help from the rest of us,” earnestly calling for American civic engagement with the world for the sake of the U.S.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the appeal for international communication at a non-governmental level, Eisenhower clarified that the contacts between U.S. citizens and non-Americans via the People-to-People Program would be supervised by the U.S. government. In the concluding remarks to the People-to-People Conference, the U.S. president reminded citizens who were about to start their works that “you have before you the government officials who will be the ones cooperating with you.”<sup>22</sup> When the Americans traveled abroad and launched their internationalist works of facilitating communication with non-Americans, they were to be guided by officials of the U.S. government stationed abroad. The overseas post of the USIA, the United States Information Service (USIS), played a pivotal role in endorsing the people-to-people contact. The USIS served as a bridge between not only the U.S. and the locals but also the American citizens and the peoples of a foreign country.

### **From Iowa City to Asia: Paul Engle and the USIS**

Engle involved himself with the people-to-people communication while institutionalizing creative writing in Iowa City as the director of the IWW. According to writer and literary critic Eric Bennet, the “greatest shift [in Engle’s career] was from writing poetry to promoting literature as an institutionalized vocation” through his IWW

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> President Eisenhower's remarks in Washington, D.C., September 11, 1956. Public Papers of the President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956. Government Printing Office.

directorship.<sup>23</sup> Born in Cedar Rapids in 1908 and graduating from the University of Iowa with his first poetry collection as his MA thesis, Engle was immediately awarded a fellowship to Columbia University (1932) and then a scholarship to Merton College at Oxford University (1933). His first two collections, *Worn Earth* (1932) and *American Song* (1934), both received critical acclaim; the third, *Break the Heart's Anger* (1936), however, was harshly reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Partisan Review*, the *Nation*, and by the renowned poet and critic, Malcolm Cowley.<sup>24</sup> Still, Engle published three more collections of poems and one novel by the end of 1941, after which his energy for literary creation apparently declined.

In 1963, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation (one of what Eisenhower called “independent private groups”), Engle took the opportunity to promote international exchange and advance his vision of creative writing. He traveled to Asia, with an intention to understand local literatures as well as facilitate communication between Asian writers and Americans. As early as August 1961, before he set out to Asia, the University of Iowa released the news about Engle’s ten-thousand-dollar Rockefeller grant, announcing that Engle would be on leave for at least a year to “study ‘developments in contemporary Asian literature’.”<sup>25</sup> With this grant, Engle would visit Asian countries including the Philippines, Japan, India, Pakistan, and others. The purpose of this long trip, as stated by Engle and the news release, was to “find out what means are available in Asia for discovering young talent and how they compare to the methods used in the United States.”<sup>26</sup> In addition to the generous Rockefeller grant, the USIS provided significant assistance for Engle’s trip in Asia, not only arranging his accommodations as he traveled from country to country, but also

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<sup>23</sup> Bennett, *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing during the Cold War* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 73.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>25</sup> State University of Iowa, News and Information Service (August 17, 1961). Paul Engle Papers (Box 4), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 11, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

introducing to Engle the local writers, many of whom would attend the IWW in the first half of the 1960s.<sup>27</sup>

The Rockefeller sponsorship and USIS support for Engle's Asia trip attested to how the U.S. government targeted Asian countries as the primary site of propaganda wars from the mid-1950s onward. In East Asia, for instance, the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, and the intensifying situation on the Korean Peninsula since the end of the Second World War, shored up the anxiety of the U.S. about communist infiltration. The Chinese Civil War and the Korean Civil War that culminated in the "fall" of mainland China and North Korea to communism warned the U.S. of a strong socialist sentiment intertwined with anticolonial and anti-imperialist movements. From the perspective of the U.S., the region of East Asia in the early 1950s was on the verge of falling to communism. Hence, when the Eisenhower administration devised cultural offensives, those directed at Asia were imbued with "expressly anticommunist themes," as Cold War historian Kenneth Osgood has demonstrated.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, transmitted via relatively modernized mass communication equipment such as projectors, tape recorders, record players, screen, cables, and films, these cultural offensives operated by the USIS were often welcomed in the then less developed Asian countries.<sup>29</sup> Based on its economic and military capabilities, the U.S. government employed the rhetoric of "development" to intervene in the Third World, while "[a]t the core of American Third World involvement stood the Cold War anti-Communist agenda," as Odd Arne Westad puts.<sup>30</sup>

In accordance with U.S. cultural diplomacy and propaganda wars, creative writing programs in the postwar U.S. (among which Engle's Workshop was the most prominent)

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<sup>27</sup> See below for further discussion.

<sup>28</sup> See Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 115.

<sup>29</sup> Osgood also discusses the mass communication revolution vis-à-vis the U.S. cultural offensives in the 1950s.

<sup>30</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 110.

were characterized by an anticommunist theme. In *Workshops of Empire*, Eric Bennett traces how the aesthetic mode of literary conventions in the postwar U.S. were genealogically informed by the anxieties about totalitarianism that originated from fascist regimes in the late 1930s and the fear of communism reinforced in the early 1950s. During the era and aftermath of McCarthyism, Engle shaped the IWW to be consistent with “a liberal democratic capitalist American order” and hence capable of instigating financial supports from various foundations.<sup>31</sup> As Bennett shows, Engle’s ways of institutionalizing creative writing, his fund-raising capability, and his conceptualization of literary exchange, all contributed to turning the IWW into “a bastion of anti-Communism.”<sup>32</sup>

This anticommunist feature of the IWW, similar to that of other U.S. cultural endeavors, was expressed through the ideal of freedom. Two years before Engle embarked for Asia, he advocated the ideal of freedom while promoting “American way of doing . . . education and literature” at the IWW:

The curious and extraordinary devices which made this writing program possible in a state university are a part of the lavish variety of the American way of doing everything, including education and literature. It is proper, then, to express our thanks to a country which has given freedom of voice to its own young talent and to that of many other nations.<sup>33</sup>

As if paraphrasing Truman’s “American way of life,” Engle explained that the rationale for teaching creative writing at the IWW was an “American way of doing everything.” In line with the U.S. President’s framing of freedom as exceptionally American, Engle urged writers to be grateful for the U.S. that “has given freedom of voice” to them. Engle’s framing of American way, moreover, was in tandem with anticommunist stratagem of the U.S. foreign

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<sup>31</sup> Bennett, *Workshops of Empire*, 61.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Engle, “Introduction: the Writer and the Place” in *Midland*, xxxvii.

policy at the height of the Cold War. By espousing “lavish variety,” Engle associated the American way of the IWW with how the U.S. distributed aids and devised development projects in Asia. Deployed to help Asian countries deal with poverty and starvation, these aids and projects were also designed to combat communist governments.<sup>34</sup> As the then Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated, “Wherever communism goes, hunger follows.”<sup>35</sup>

However, when Engle aspired to expand his Workshop based on a Cold War internationalist rhetoric to Asia, the “American way of doing everything” was challenged even by the U.S.’s steadfast ally nations such as Japan and the Republic of China in Taiwan. Both close to mainland China and constitutive of the East Asian island arc, Japan and Taiwan were valued highly by the U.S. for their strategic importance. The latter was even praised as “an unsinkable aircraft carrier and submarine tender” by Douglas MacArthur, the de facto ruler of Japan from 1945 to 1952.<sup>36</sup> Through mutual defense treaties with both Japan (1951) and the ROC (1954), the U.S. obtained a legal basis to contain communist countries nearby. Yet, the blatant U.S. militarism in Japan and Taiwan was severely resisted by the locals around the mid 1950s.

While Japan has been under the U.S. nuclear umbrella since the postwar years, opposition to American military bases in Japan peaked in the mid-1950s. In 1955, the U.S. Air Force base in Tachikawa announced a project of expansion, and thus required one-hundred and forty families in Sunagawa (a town north of the city center of Tachikawa) to be evicted. Farmers of Sunagawa organized a series of protests against both the U.S. and the Japanese government, chanting “You can take our land but you can’t stake our spirits.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: American’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Dean Rusk’s speech (1961) quoted in Cullather, *The Hungry World*.

<sup>36</sup> Draft Memorandum, “General MacArthur’s Message on Formosa” (August 17, 1950), Acheson Papers Secretary of State File, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Dustin Wright, “‘Sunagawa Struggle’ ignited anti-U.S. base resistance across Japan” in *The Japan Times*, May 3, 2015 < [https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2015/05/03/issues/sunagawa-struggle-ignited-anti-u-s-base-resistance-across-japan/#.Wf\\_bBLaB3Vp](https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2015/05/03/issues/sunagawa-struggle-ignited-anti-u-s-base-resistance-across-japan/#.Wf_bBLaB3Vp) > accessed November 17, 2017. For a thorough study

From May 1955 onward, students from Tokyo joined the Sunagawa farmers in the suburbs; many unions also supported the demonstrations against the expansion of the airfield.<sup>38</sup> Resisting not only U.S. military bases in Japan but also the military treaty between the U.S. and Japan, the Sunagawa Struggle was the precursor of the 1960 Anpo Struggle. Both struggles called out the unequal power relation between Japan and the U.S., and exposed that the end of U.S. occupation in 1952 did not terminate the actual neo-colonization. More significantly, these demonstrations mobilized by Japanese citizens implied a rejection and interruption of the U.S. strategic mapping in East Asia during the Cold War. Although the Anpo Struggle did not stop the amendment and continuation of the treaty, the large-scale demonstrations resulted in the cancellation of President Eisenhower's visit to Japan, as well as the resignation of the Japanese Prime Minister, Kishi Nobusuke. These struggles also informed later protests against the Japanese government's contribution to the U.S.'s war in Vietnam.<sup>39</sup>

While the Sunagawa Struggle went on, Engle traveled to Asia following the footsteps of a great number of Americans contributed to U.S. internationalism through "moments of personal exchange."<sup>40</sup> As the IWW director, Engle visited Japan in May 1963. Not only did Engle miss the intense activism against U.S. militarism, he arrived in Japan one year before the 1964 Summer Olympics held in Tokyo. Most likely, Engle witnessed an economically thriving country in preparation for a grand international event. Devoting himself to people-to-people contact for the betterment of the IWW and the U.S., Engle also found time for

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about the Sunagawa Struggle, see Wright's dissertation, "The Sunagawa Struggle: A Century of Anti-Base Protest in a Tokyo Suburb" (University of California Santa Cruz, 2015).

<sup>38</sup> In December 1968, the U.S. military eventually withdrew the project. Dustin Wright, "From Tokyo to Wounded Knee: Two Afterlives of the Sunagawa Struggle," *The Sixties: a Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 10.2 (October, 2017): 1-17.

<sup>39</sup> See Tsurumi Shunsuke, *A Cultural History of Postwar Japan 1954-1980* (New York: Routledge, 2011 [1987]), especially chapter seven, "Ordinary Citizens and Citizens' Movement."

<sup>40</sup> See Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 103. In Chapter Three, "How to be an American Abroad," Klein explains how Americans traveled overseas amidst the mixed feelings from the locals toward them in the 1950s, and how tourism became an instrument of U.S. foreign policy during the Eisenhower administration.

tourism. In addition to Tokyo, Engle spent five days in Kansai area including Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, and Kobe. During those five days, he attended two tea ceremonies, two Noh performances, and one flower arrangement presentation; he visited around ten temples, two castles, and one university. On his last day in Kyoto, before giving a two-hour lecture titled “New Poets of America” at Doshisha University, he went shopping and visited factories of lacquerware, porcelain, and weaving.<sup>41</sup> Through both U.S. cultural diplomacy and tourism, Engle cultivated a sense of liberal, internationalist “overseasmanship” [sic] to avoid being labeled as an “ugly American.”<sup>42</sup>

When he was in Tokyo, Engle stayed at the International House, and was again under the auspices of the Rockefellers and the U.S. government.<sup>43</sup> Known as the I-House, the organization was initially a proposition made by John D. Rockefeller III in 1951. A financially much more capable internationalist than Engle, Rockefeller was serving as John Foster Dulles’s cultural consultant, negotiating the peace treaty with the Japanese government on behalf of the Truman administration. Rockefeller believed in the significance of cultural communication, and hence advocated for a culture center both in the U.S. and Japan as a way to improve mutual understanding.<sup>44</sup> In August 1952, the I-House was officially established.<sup>45</sup> Located in Tokyo’s Minato Ward, an area famous for its international ambience, the I-House boasted a devotion to cultural communication and intellectual

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Engle’s itinerary (untitled). Paul Engle Papers (Box 4), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 11, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> As Klein demonstrates, Francis Wilcox employed liberal internationalist sentiment and requested all Americans to take “education for overseasmanship” to “cultivate the quality of empathy” (Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 22-23).

<sup>43</sup> Indicated by the letter of Patricia Hogan (the assistant cultural affairs officer of the United States Information Service at Lahore, Pakistan) to Paul Engle (dated April 23, 1963). Paul Engle Papers (Box 4), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 11, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> For more details about the International House in the early Cold War, see Fumiko Fujita, *U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and Japan in the Cold War Era* [アメリカ文化外交と日本：冷戦期の文化と人の交流] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2015), 201-36.

<sup>45</sup> *The International House*, accessed November 7, 2017 < <https://www.i-house.or.jp/eng/history/index.html>>.

exchange between Japan and the U.S. Taking advantage of the I-House, Engle also became instrumental to the U.S.-Japan exchange as an ardent Cold War internationalist.

The rise in the exchange between Americans and Asians notwithstanding, the U.S. foreign policy in Asia continued to cause conflicts with the locals. Before his tour in Japan, Engle spent three days in Taipei, where short-lived yet intense anti-U.S. activism took place a few years before his arrival.<sup>46</sup> When the struggle against the U.S. military was going on in Sunagawa, a demonstration against the U.S. military occurred in Taipei in May 1957. Termed as Liu Zi-ran Incident, the demonstration was initiated by Liu Zi-ran's widow, whose husband was shot to death on March 20, 1957, by U.S. military personnel Robert G. Reynolds outside of the Yangmingshan American Military Housing. As a personnel of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAGG) stationed in Taiwan, Reynolds was able to enjoy immunity from Chinese jurisdiction. Even though the Chinese Procurator's Office intervened and maintained that the killing was not a self-defense act, Reynolds was tried by General Court Martial under the procedures of the U.S. Military Code. He was acquitted on May 23, 1957.<sup>47</sup> The outcome of the trial stimulated a demonstration the next day. Slogans such as "U.S. Military Must Go!" and "We Demand Justice!" were chanted; furthermore, the star-spangled flag outside of the Embassy was torn down and replaced with a ROC one.<sup>48</sup> Even though the demonstration was soon suppressed by the ROC troops in order not to jeopardize the relation between the U.S. government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime, the U.S. Embassy in Taipei was severely wrecked. The office of the USIS was relocated to a

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<sup>46</sup> Indicated in Nieh Hualing's autobiography, *Three Lives* [三輩子] (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 2011), 282.

<sup>47</sup> See "Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (McConaughy) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)," Department of State, Central Files, 711.551-Reynolds, Robert G./5-2457. Drafted in CA by Comiskey <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v03/d252>> accessed September 29, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> For the demonstration details, see a report of the entire incident on *United Daily News* (May 25, 1957). The journalist, Chen-ting Lin [林振霆], was imprisoned by the Nationalist government for twenty-five years precisely because of this report.



“dilapidated private residence” and the staff was “a bit demoralized” in the recollections of the then director Richard M. McCarthy.<sup>49</sup>

McCarthy was an avid agent of the U.S.’s cultural Cold War. He received Engle warmly, and ensured that the IWW director could make the most of his stay in Taipei. In fact, Engle and McCarthy were both from Iowa; moreover, the latter was once a student of the IWW when the former was teaching there. After graduation, McCarthy began his career in the U.S. Foreign Service in 1947. He became an USIS official in 1948 when the director of the USIS in China, Brad Connors, offered him the job.<sup>50</sup> After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the USIS in China was closed in the Spring of 1950, and McCarthy moved to Hong Kong. There, he directed projects on book translation such as the China Reporting Program and the publication of *World Today* magazine.<sup>51</sup> After briefly being stationed in Bangkok, McCarthy moved to Taipei. One of his missions in his new appointment at the USIS in Taipei was to sponsor and work with Chinese writers and artists, given that “we were particularly anxious to get to know the younger generation in Taiwan”—a mission perfectly corresponding to Engle’s internationalist task.<sup>52</sup> As an information officer, McCarthy was rather candid about how their sponsorship of the “young talents” in

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Richard M. McCarthy conducted by Jack O’Brien, December 28, 1998 (Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Arlington, VA) <<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/McCarthy,%20Richard%20M.toc.pdf>>, accessed September 20, 2017. Notable as the Liu Zi-ran Incident was, McCarthy failed to remember details of the demonstration after four decades, falsely summarizing the anti-U.S. demonstration as a minor dispute between the U.S. and the Nationalist government. In his words, “I’m sitting here desperately trying to remember the cause of the riot (laughs). We had obviously done something that the Chinese Nationalists did not like, because students invaded the place and damaged it so severely. . . .”

<sup>50</sup> Most of the biographical notes of McCarthy are drawn from his interview with Jack O’Brien, December 28, 1998. Also see *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣] edited by Pai Hsien-Yung (Taipei: Linking, 2016), in which Chinese young writers recall their inspiration and assistance from the USIS and particularly McCarthy.

<sup>51</sup> For details about *World Today* magazine and how *World Today* and the USIS in Hong Kong had shaped and transformed Chinese literature, see Te-hsing Shan, “Translating American Literature into Chinese in the Cold War Era: The Cultural Politics and Significance of World Today Press’s Literary Translation” [冷戰時代的美國文學中譯——今日世界出版社之文學翻譯與文化政治], in *Translations and Contexts* [翻譯與脈絡] (Taipei: Bookman, 2009), 117-57; and Chun-hsiu Lin [林純秀]’s MA thesis, “Cold War Modernity, Nationality and Sexual Politics in World Today (1952-1980)” [冷戰現代性的國族/性別政治:《今日世界》分析] (Taipei: Shih Hsin University, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Interview with McCarthy conducted by Jack O’Brien.

Taiwan was a Cold War strategy of the U.S.: “One reason for doing this was competition with the outpouring of works in English translation, art work from the Foreign Languages Press in Peiping [Beijing].”<sup>53</sup> The USIS publication of the works of Taiwanese younger writers and artists were, as he continued to explain, meant to be distributed through commercial channels and USIS posts worldwide to compete with those disseminating from Beijing (see Chapter Three).

Consequently, McCarthy’s effort brought about not only a young generation of modernist writers in Taiwan but also a circuit of literary communication between Iowa City and Taipei. Based on the economic and military aids provided by the U.S. government, and reciprocally, the ROC’s political and economic dependence on the U.S., U.S. cultural hegemony was endorsed and welcomed. Simultaneously, in the postwar U.S. context, a variety of U.S. governmental and non-governmental institutions had appropriated once innovative, avant-garde modernist literature and art as a vehicle to advocate Western values, particularly freedom and individualism, the core of Cold War liberalism.<sup>54</sup> A kind of Cold War modernism promoted by the USIS and backed by the cultural hegemony of the U.S. permeated through all cultural activities in Taiwan (see Chapter Three). An artist or a writer in 1960s Taiwan had to grapple with the idea of “modernism.” At the same time, encouraged and arranged by McCarthy, many young Chinese writers in Taiwan went to the U.S. to study creative writing, and many enrolled in the University of Iowa and worked with Engle. As McCarthy later recalled, “I would argue that the interest of the University of Iowa, of which I happen to be a graduate, in Taiwan writers was one of the main reasons for starting the very successful International Writing Program.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, although Engle stayed in Taipei only

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with McCarthy conducted by Jack O’Brien.

fleetingly, the USIS under the directorship of McCarthy secured the literary connection between Taipei and Iowa City.

### **From the Republic of China to the United States**

Before McCarthy urged young Chinese writers of the Republic of China to visit Iowa City and enroll in the IWW, a slightly senior poet, Yu Kwang-chung, had already received an MFA from the University of Iowa in 1959. Yu's trajectory from Taipei to Iowa City, a transpacific route in reverse to Engle's Asia trip, reveals the intimacy between the U.S. government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime. His Iowa experience, however, illustrates fractures in the Cold War internationalism on which the IWW was based.

Yu's career illustrates the literary scene during the early years of the ROC in Taiwan. Already a young poet in the midst of the Chinese Civil War, Yu moved from Nanjing to Xiamen first, and then to Hong Kong with his parents in 1949. In 1950, the Yus moved again and settled in Taiwan, where the young poet resumed his study in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Taiwan University. In 1952, Yu published his first poetry collection; at the same time, he was admitted to an interpreter-training program of the Combined Service Forces, a division of the ROC Ministry of Defense. After a four-month training, Yu worked as a translator in the Office of the President for three years with a rank of second lieutenant.<sup>56</sup> During his military service, he translated Irving Stone's *Lust of Life*, and co-founded the Blue Star Poetry Society, one of the three major societies of postwar Chinese poetry in Taiwan.<sup>57</sup> A poet and a translator, Yu was also a young lecturer teaching English at Soochow University and National Taiwan Normal University. Not contented with being just

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<sup>56</sup> The length of the compulsory military service at that time was two years, but Yu voluntarily stayed for another year. Te-hsing Shan, "Interviewing Professor Yu Kwang-chung: Every Aspect of Translation" [余光中教授訪談：翻譯面面觀] *Compilation and Translation Review* [編譯論叢] 6.2 (September, 2013): 165-205.

<sup>57</sup> The other two are Modernist Poetry Society [現代詩社] and the Genesis Poetry Society [創世紀詩社].

a lecturer, Yu aspired to higher achievement. Due to the global Cold War agitation and the martial law in Taiwan, studying in the U.S. for a degree seemed to be the most feasible option for Yu.

When the U.S. started facilitating a network of education exchange as a part of its Cold War logistics, the ROC was included from the outset due to the island's geopolitical significance. On the one hand, the passage of the Fulbright Act in 1946 and that of the United States Information and Education Exchange Act (commonly known as the Smith-Mundt Act) in 1948 exemplified the U.S. investment in propaganda campaigns against the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> In 1961, the two Acts would be merged into the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act (the Fulbright-Hays Act) as education exchange yielded desirable results. Embedded in these Acts was a constant anxiety about communist infiltration. For instance, the Smith-Mundt Act required all information officials to undergo an FBI loyalty investigation, while foreign nationals who were sent to the U.S. would be deported should any activity of political subversion be alleged.<sup>59</sup> Various institutions and foundations, governmental or private, were also organized in accordance with this agenda by providing generous funding for the exchange.<sup>60</sup> These funds supplemented the official policies of the U.S. that were designed to combat communism and consolidate liberalism through cultural and education exchange. On the other hand, also in the late 1940s, the Chinese Nationalist Party confronted a series of defeats by the Chinese Communist Party and prepared for a relocation to Taiwan. In May 1949, the Act for the Control and Punishment of Rebellion was enacted in addition to martial law, both forming a legal basis for the White Terror in Taiwan.

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<sup>58</sup> See Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (2008). Specifically about Taiwan-U.S. exchange, see Ena Chao [趙綺娜], "U.S. Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs in Taiwan (1951-1970)" in *A Journal of European and American Studies* 31.1 (Mar. 2001): 79-127.

<sup>59</sup> Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 32.

<sup>60</sup> In a broader postwar U.S. context, see Eric Bennet, *Workshop of Empire* (2015), in which he takes the Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation as two instances to argue that a culture of foundation was formed in the postwar U.S. through a philanthropic liberalism and Cold War internationalism.

While the White Terror generally connotes the time period when the Nationalist Party violently suppressed political dissidents, the White Terror of the 1950s was an anticommunist campaign instigated by and resulting from the Chinese Civil War.<sup>61</sup> As the Chiang Kai-shek regime officially moved to Taiwan in December 1949, the ROC government further intensified the practice of the White Terror in the early 1950s when the “communist bandits and spies,” and any persons who were supposedly related to and sympathetic with them, were persecuted, imprisoned, and murdered.

A shared ideology of anticommunism and the “two Chinas” geopolitics strengthened the flows of education exchange between the U.S. and the Republic of China. For its own strategic concerns and interests in containing the spread of communism, the U.S. welcomed foreign students and intellectuals. Concurrently, the Chinese Civil War followed by the ROC government’s prolonged struggle against the PRC had made the “free world”—noncommunist countries spearheaded by the U.S.—the only destination toward which the Taiwanese could move. As Taiwanese writers lived in a society where what one read,

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<sup>61</sup> While the February 28 Incident, the first suppression of Taiwanese carried out by the Nationalist government in 1947, has been considered as (or made into) the beginning of the White Terror, the relation between the two is better grasped as genealogical rather than linear. While both groups of the suppressed of the February 28 Incident and the 1950s White Terror were similarly anti-Nationalist, the Incident resulted from a resentment at the corrupted Nationalist officials who worsened the already harsh economic circumstance, and the White Terror was predicated upon the Nationalist Party’s aim at decimating any communist links in Taiwan. Given that some underground communist activities led by Xie Xuehong [謝雪紅] (the founder of the Taiwanese Communist Party in Shanghai, 1928), albeit not in a large scale, were already in place during the February 28 Incident, the Incident and the purge of the communists in the White Terror are indeed genealogically related. Considering the Incident as the very beginning of the White Terror executed by the Nationalist Party, in a linear sense, would risk simplifying the political complexity as unanimously anti-Kuomintang and further anti-China; however, in fact, many Taiwanese after the February 28 Incident, disillusioned by the Nationalist government, realized the existence of the Chinese Communist Party, and then turned “leftist.” Such a turn enabled the underground Communist Party in Taiwan to recruit more members, while with the relocation of the Nationalist government to Taipei, the underground Communist Party in Taiwan was entirely decimated by the mid-1950s under the White Terror. For an alternative historiography of the February 28 Incident and the White Terror, see *Testimonies 2.28* [證言二二八] edited by Yeh Yun-yun [葉芸芸] (Taipei: Renjian, 1993); *The White Terror in the 1950s: Investigation and Research of Cases in Taipei* [五零年代白色恐怖：台北地區案件調查與研究] edited and published by Taipei City Archives Committee [臺北市文獻委員會] (1998); Chen Minzhong [陳明忠], *No Regret* [無悔] (Taipei: Renjian, 2014); Lan Bozhou [藍博洲], *Song of the Covered Wagon* [幌馬車之歌] (Taipei: Times Publishing, 2016 [1991]), and *Elegy of Taiwanese Communists* [台共黨人的悲歌] (Taipei: Ink, 2012); *A City of Sadness* [悲情城市] (1989) and *Good Men, Good Women* [好男好女] (1995), both films were directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien [侯孝賢].

listened to, spoke, and wrote about was surveilled by an anticommunist regime, the U.S., a more affluent, an allegedly freer, and a larger country, was imagined as a window to the outside world.<sup>62</sup> As a result, most Taiwanese college graduates who wanted to obtain a higher degree chose to enroll in U.S. universities. The financial support by American foundations augmented this trend of studying in the U.S. Yu was one of the intellectuals who graduated from the top-ranking university of Taiwan, National Taiwan University, and then became a Chinese overseas student in the U.S.

With funding provided by another U.S. cultural Cold War agency, the Asia Foundation (TAF), Yu began his study at the University of Iowa in October 1958, focusing on Creative Writing, American Literature, and Modern Arts. Established in 1954 as a non-governmental organization, TAF is still in operation today. It was also one of the many sources from which Paul Engle successfully raised money for the IWW and later on, the International Writing Program. Much as TAF claimed to be a private institute unrelated to the U.S. government, its devotion “to promoting democracy, rule of law, and market-based development in post-war Asia” served the U.S. Cold War ideology and practice.<sup>63</sup> In fact, in a 1966 U.S. government national security policy document, TAF was directly termed as “a Central Intelligence Agency proprietary” that “under[took] cultural and educational activities on behalf of the United States Government in ways not open to official U.S. agencies.”<sup>64</sup> Praising TAF for completing “its assigned mission with increasing effectiveness,” the CIA nonetheless worried that its connections with TAF would be disclosed and thus would

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<sup>62</sup> A view expressed by Fu Yueh-an [傅月庵] when describing how Taiwanese intellectuals at that time considered *World Today*. According to Fu, while scholarship of postcolonialism often criticizes *World Today* as an ideological vehicle of the U.S., many Taiwanese during the martial law era were able to imagine “democracy” and “freedom” thanks to the *World Today* press. Fu, however, failed to recognize that such an imagination about democracy and freedom was limited by the U.S. Cold War ideology. Fu’s view, as Shan Te-hsing indicates, is representative of Taiwanese intellectuals both in the martial law years and as of now. Quoted in Shan Te-hsing, *Translations and Contexts* [翻譯與脈絡] (Taipei: Bookman, 2009), 130.

<sup>63</sup> The Asia Foundation, accessed September 11, 2017 <<http://asiafoundation.org/our-people/founders/>>.

<sup>64</sup> “132. Memorandum from the Central Intelligence Agency to the 303 Committee,” accessed September 11, 2017 <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v10/d132>>.

backfire.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the CIA proposed “relieving [TAF] of its total dependence upon covert funding support from this Agency [the CIA],” while keeping TAF contributing to the U.S. national interests in Asia.<sup>66</sup>

For Yu and many other Chinese writers in Taiwan, what mattered was the financial sponsorship and the degree from a U.S. university that would smooth their career paths in academia or literary circles. The TAF grant motivated Yu to leave home and go to the U.S.; however, for personal and intellectual reasons, Yu was unsure if traveling to the U.S. would be beneficial to him. For one thing, his first daughter was born in June, while his mother passed away in July 1958; for another, upon accepting the TAF grant, Yu would be required to serve at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) to teach English, a position not so different from his original one.<sup>67</sup> Yu’s father and his wife nonetheless urged him to take the offer, so did Liang Shih-chiu, Yu’s teacher and the then chair of the English department at NTNU. As a well-known essayist, translator, and leading intellectual in English literature in postwar Taiwan, Liang frankly told Yu, “What can Iowa teach you? It’d be just for fun, just to widen your horizon.”<sup>68</sup> Liang’s remarks indicated that the destination of studying abroad did not have to be the IWW. Rather, the point was to “widen your horizon” across the Pacific in the U.S., a trip unavailable to most of the Taiwanese who could only hold an ordinary passport. Before the ROC government lifted its ban on overseas travel in 1979,<sup>69</sup> those who

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See Fu Meng-Li [傅孟麗], *Cornel’s Child: Biography of Yu Kwang-chung* [茱萸的孩子：余光中傳], with a foreword by Yu himself (Taipei: Commonwealth Publishing, 1998).

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in *Cornel’s Child*, 69. The original: 愛荷華有什麼可教你的？不過是去玩玩，開開眼界也好。

<sup>69</sup> Tourism Bureau, Republic of China (Taiwan), *White Papers on Transportation and Communications: Tourism* [交通政策白皮書：觀光] (Taipei: Ministry of Transportation and Communications of the Republic of China, 2002). It is worth mentioning that not until 1987 did the ROC government relax the ban on cross-strait travel.

would want to “widen their horizon” could only do so with either a business visa or a student visa.<sup>70</sup>

Yu’s experience proved that learning from Americans was indeed secondary. As the Chinese poet recalled, while the MFA program at the University of Iowa required students to take courses of sixty credits, Engle waived half of the credits for Yu considering that Yu was already a lecturer as well as an established poet and translator back home.<sup>71</sup> Thanks to Engle, his supervisor at the IWW, Yu was able to receive his degree in less than one year.

Furthermore, unlike his classmates from other countries, Yu was allowed to turn in translated works rather than original ones written in English.<sup>72</sup> His master’s thesis, “Translations from Modern Chinese Poetry,” is also a collection of his translated works (two of his own poems were included). Much as Yu in the acknowledgements expressed his gratitude for Engle “under whose inspiring guidance this anthology [i.e., the thesis] was conducted,” the “guidance” was more emotional support than intellectual instruction.<sup>73</sup> Despite Yu’s short stay, his thesis contributed to Engle’s Workshop and the literary scene of Iowa with the most updated, well-translated modern Chinese poems.

Yu’s translation of contemporary Chinese poetry was not only groundbreaking for the literary scene of the U.S. but also fitting for the political commitment to people-to-people communication. In the 1910s and the 1920s, classic Chinese poetry was translated for American readers by modernist poets such as Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell to break

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<sup>70</sup> As the Taiwanese writer and publisher Yin Di [隱地] recalled, for those who did not hold a business visa or a student visa, they could only “look up to the sky seeing airplanes passing by”; even though they (including Yin Di himself) wanted to board the plane and go abroad, “there was no way to find the gate.” Yin Di, *Back to the 1950s* [回到五〇年代] (Taipei: Elite Books, 2016), 21-22. The original: 五〇年代，沒有觀光護照，想出國，只有少數人執「商業考察」護照或留學生才有機會，其他人想坐飛機，就朝天空看看飛過的飛機吧，想登機，真是門都沒有。

<sup>71</sup> Shan Te-hsing, “Interviewing Professor Yu Kwang-chung: Every Aspect of Translation” [余光中教授訪談：翻譯面面觀], 175.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 173. According to Yu, every student, American or international, was required to turn in their works in English for Paul Engle. He was an exception.

<sup>73</sup> Yu’s thesis, “Translations from Modern Chinese Poetry” (August, 1959), ii. Paul Engle Papers (Box 46), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.



conventions.<sup>74</sup> Unlike American modernist poets in the early twentieth century, Yu highlighted the authenticity of his translation and introduction of modern Chinese poems. Thanks to his bilingualism as well as his cultural, ethnic Chineseness, Yu's translation was considered more "authentic" than the works of American modernist poets. Furthermore, what Yu introduced and translated were contemporary poems that remained unexplored by most Americans at that time. In particular, his explication of the three poetry societies—the Blue Star, the Modernist, and the Genesis—demonstrates not only the formation of modernist poetry in Cold War Taiwan that was highly influenced by Western literary conventions, but also the nuances of how each society negotiated with Cold War modernism through Chinese language and culture. Referring to Chinese poetry as "a dark continent to foreigners," Yu believed that "[i]t is undoubtedly difficult for a Western scholar to explore such a vast field because Chinese poetry has inherited a living tradition of more than two thousand years."<sup>75</sup> However, he also admitted that he may not have been a perfect guide: "What I have translated is not necessarily the best in contemporary Chinese poetry because I have only picked up what seems to me more readily translatable."<sup>76</sup> Still, his master's thesis was a guidebook for American readers to grasp modern Chinese literature in the ROC, participating in the kind of people-to-people communication based on which the free world would be more integrated.

The ways that Yu selectively translated some poems and not others made him a model foreign student for the U.S. government. In the Introduction of Yu's thesis, the poet presented a historical narrative of modern China in which anything "red" or "left" was relegated to a

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<sup>74</sup> For the ways in which the early twentieth-century American modernists translated Chinese poetry, see Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), and Amie Elizabeth Parry, *Interventions into Modernist Cultures: Poetry from Beyond the Empty Screen* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Yoshihara and Parry illuminate their modernist endeavors also evidenced practices of American literary orientalism and U.S. expansionist imperialism.

<sup>75</sup> Yu's thesis, "Translations from Modern Chinese Poetry" (August, 1959), 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

diminished role. Attributing the origin of Chinese modern poetry to the May Fourth Movement in 1919, Yu explained that the Movement was launched by “Dr. Hu Shih and his followers.”<sup>77</sup> While Hu Shih was a leader of the May Fourth Movement and especially the New Culture Movement that largely modernized written Chinese, Hu Shih was only one of the leaders among others. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, founders of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, went unmentioned in Yu’s account. The May Fourth Movement, indicatively, was redefined as a purely cultural reform, regardless of its open resistance against imperial powers such as Britain, France, the U.S., and Japan. Moreover, in Yu’s assessment, the left-wing came to the fore of the Chinese literary scene only because the Second Sino-Japanese War happened. According to him, “In time of national crisis, it was handy for them [the left-wing writers and critics] to propagandize a theory of utilitarian realism which better served the politics than the Muse. Works of more aesthetic values were fiercely and nastily condemned as either aristocratic, bourgeois, reactionary, or decadent.”<sup>78</sup> As Yu indicated, without a national crisis, left-wing literature—imbued with realism to serve politics, according to him—would not have gained its ground. After his evaluation of left-wing literature as lacking aesthetic values, Yu divided Chinese writers into those relocated to Taiwan and those who stayed in the mainland, believing that “[t]he majority of poets remained on the Mainland, either having exhausted their originality or being silenced by the Red Regime.”<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Yu described a thriving literary scene on the island of Taiwan and detailed the most important three groups of modernist poetry. The Blue Star Poetry Society that he co-founded was praised the most highly as it, according to Yu, “manifested a greater possibility of future development.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Although Yu utilized his Chineseness to assume his authority to translate and introduce Chinese modern poetry, his rhetoric about China (the “fall” of China and the “free China”) and review of Chinese literature after 1949 were in line with the U.S.’s Cold War narrative of containment/integration. Yu’s erasure of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, as well as his disparagement of the left-wing writers, were to be expected, considering his apprehension about the Nationalist suppression at home. As he belittled left-wing literature, Yu’s historical narrative and literary assessment conformed and contributed to the anticommunist discourse upheld by the Nationalist Party and the U.S., and by extension, the legitimacy of the Chiang Kai-shek regime and its alliance with the U.S. government.

### **Warm China and Cold Iowa**

Yu’s thesis, his poems, and his trajectory illustrate how he was always closely related with the United States. Yet, while Yu’s evaluation of left-wing literature was in line with the U.S. Cold War narrative, he did not share Engle’s celebration of the U.S. during his study at the IWW. Some of Yu’s poems reveal that regardless of Engle’s effort, the supposedly “integrated free world” did not work well in Iowa City. Nevertheless, the U.S. and Yu’s Iowa experience left an impact on his poems, especially how he appropriated “China” through the lens of U.S. as his own imagination of “Chinese tradition.”

Yu’s first time visit to the U.S. in 1958 was undergirded by his longing for a “China” across the Pacific. The collection of his poems written in Iowa City, titled *Halloween*, is not even a travelogue but largely a portrait of the poet as a homesick Chinese in the U.S. Published in 1960, *Halloween* includes Yu’s poems from October 1958 to July 1959, covering nearly the entire period of his stay in Iowa City. The collection opens with “A Dust” that describes how Yu felt as a Chinese overseas student having just arrived in a strange and materially modernized country:

Walking alone under the shadows of skyscrapers,  
 I stamp and again I stamp, without stamping off  
 the dust coming from across the Pacific. Without stamping off  
 the dust, attaching to my worn shoes,  
 kissing my tiring feet. Without stamping off  
 the dust, mixed with and cemented by  
 the tears of this stranger and the ashes of his mother.<sup>81</sup>

With a first-person pronoun, the poem reveals Yu's attachment to his homeland across the Pacific, and at the same time, his alienation from where he is. A place with modernized landscape, the United States only intensified Yu's alienation: "And the bolt upright skyscrapers do not recognize me / Red lights all over the street, glaring with anger, do not recognize me."<sup>82</sup> Even on the peaceful campus of the University of Iowa, Yu described a sense of estrangement: "And beside the quiet path on campus, a little squirrel with a waggly tail scurried by / too, with its suspicious little eyes / measuring me."<sup>83</sup> Thinking of his mother who passed away just a few weeks before he left for Iowa, Yu could not help but feel isolated in the grand prairie of the Midwest. In the afterword of *Halloween*, Yu wrote about his homesickness as indeed a sickness, declaring first that "in this strange country, my homesickness entered the severe state of the third stage," and became before long, "irremediable."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Yu Kwang-chung, "The Dust" [塵埃] (October, 14, 1958), *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 258. While Yu has been an earnest translator of his own poems from Chinese to English, it is intriguing that Yu has not self-translated a poem from *Halloween*. The translation of Yu's poems below, if not indicated otherwise, therefore are mine. The original: 獨行於摩天大廈的陰影裡，／我頓足復頓足，頓不掉太平洋對岸／帶來的塵埃。頓不掉／那透過破履吻著我倦足的／塵埃。頓不掉／那凝著異鄉人的淚和母親的骨灰的／塵埃。

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. The original: 而昂首的摩天大廈們不識我，／滿街怒目的紅燈不識我……。

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. The original: 而校園幽徑旁，曳尾竄過的小松鼠／亦以疑惑的小眼睛／打量我。

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. The original: 在異國，我的懷鄉症進入第三期的嚴重狀態。……我的懷鄉症已告不治。

Yu's depression and loneliness were further worsened by the cold weather in Iowa, a coldness that was fundamental to his representation of the U.S. as a foreign land. One month after his arrival, Yu already longed for the moment when he could leave the U.S. and return home:

Thinking, the early autumn of 1959,  
out of San Francisco Bay,  
an iron anchor will lift off for me.  
As it dives again underwater and it will see  
inside the Keelung Harbor, Chinese fish.<sup>85</sup>

Titled "Morning of the New World," Yu ended this poem by greeting his homesickness:

"Good morning, Depression! Good morning, Loneliness! / Good morning, my homesickness at the third stage! / Good morning, ladies with dark circles, Good morning, Good morning!"<sup>86</sup>

The coldness remained the same for Yu even when spring approached to Iowa City. In "My Solidification," a poem written on the midnight of March 10, 1959, Yu illustrated a coldness of the foreign land that resulted in his isolation:

In this land, within this international cocktail  
I am, still, an ice cube refusing to melt—  
maintaining the coldness below zero  
and the hardness of solidity.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 265-6. The original: 我在想，一九五九的初秋，／舊金山的海灣裡，／有一只鐵錨將為我升起，／當它再潛水時，它會看見／基隆港裡的中國魚。

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 266. The original: 早安，憂鬱！早安，寂寞！／早安，第三期的懷鄉病！／早安，黑眼圈的夫人們，早安，早安！

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 297. The original: 在此地，在國際的雞尾酒裡，／我仍是一塊拒絕融化的冰——／常保持零下的冷／和固體的堅度。

Both bodily and culturally, the coldness that Yu felt was not merely brought by the weather of Iowa, but by the “international cocktail” in which he endured—and consequently embodied—the coldness.

Yu’s metaphor of the “international cocktail” suggests how Engle aspired to promote an environment at the IWW in line with his internationalist task. Singing the praises of the “international quality” of the IWW, Engle reported, “The Workshops have heard voices of poets and fiction writers speaking English (and writing it) in a charming and original way, which varied according to whether the speakers were from Japan, Formosa, South Korea, the Philippines, Ireland, England, Canada, Sweden, India.”<sup>88</sup> As a voice from Formosa, Yu was certainly an international constituent of the IWW in addition to his classmates including “Filipinos, the Japanese, Australians, the Irish, and of course, many Yankees of the United States.”<sup>89</sup> It is worth noting that these “voices” were not a variety of languages, but a variety of accents of English.

In this setting, the international quality of the IWW was enabled through and predicated upon monolingualism of English. Such a monolingual setting illustrated a hierarchy among languages, one that distinguishes a universal language, a national language, and a local language as analyzed by Minae Mizumura, a Japanese writer and a participant in the IWP in 2003. Considering English as “an accidentally universal language,” Mizumura recognizes the function of universal languages through which knowledge is to be pursued and shared by all human beings.<sup>90</sup> However, unlike Engle, she cautions against the dominance of English and the attempt to make it even more dominant, insisting on the importance of national languages in expressively conveying specific knowledge and literature. As

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., xxvii.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 297. The original: 同班的有菲律賓人，日本人，澳大利亞人，愛爾蘭人，當然，還有許多美國的北佬們。

<sup>90</sup> Minae Mizumura, *The Fall of Language in the Age of English*, translated by Mari Yoshihara and Juliet Winters Carpenter (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 202.

Mizumura argues, even though some knowledge can be circulated via the universal language, some—and especially those in written form—can only be communicated and expressed through national languages. When Engle took his privilege as a native speaker in English for granted, the monolingual setting was falsely celebrated as the “international quality” of the Workshop, an example that Mizumura calls the “general blindness of those whose mother tongue is English.”<sup>91</sup> As a native speaker of English unaware of his privilege, Engle’s internationalist vision was ultimately confined by his mother tongue.

Only through national languages and literatures would “creative imagination” flourish via what Engle called the “international quality,” as demonstrated by Mizumura and her fellow writers in Iowa City. A variety of English accents were not simply “charming and original” as Engle marveled, but by all means national. In fact, while the foreign writers were required to speak and write in English at the IWW, some still held on to (or at least did not renounce) their national languages. Nieh Hualing’s insistence on Mandarin Chinese, a language that she claims as her roots and through the exclusive use of which she writes her novels and memoir, served as a telling example (see Chapter Four). Yu, likewise, was an instance of clinging dearly to one’s national language, to the extent that he was reluctant to engage with the international community. As Yu bemoaned in Chinese in a monolingually English environment, “the sun of China is too distant from me,” and as a result, “I crystalized, transparent and hard, / no way to reflexively return.”<sup>92</sup>

Not until Yu left Iowa City did his being as “an ice cube refusing to melt” start to dissolve. When Yu was about to return to Taiwan, he became more positive about his experience of dealing with U.S. coldness. As he confidently indicated, the coldness would enhance his credentials and his career as a Chinese poet and translator. Toward the end of his

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>92</sup> Yu, *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 297. The original stanza: 但中國的太陽距我太遠，／我結晶了，透明且硬，／且無法自動還原。

study in Iowa City, Yu learned that his fellow poets in Taiwan engaged in a series of heated debates about Chinese modernist poetry, and hence wrote, “In the motherland, how lively bustling you are!”<sup>93</sup> Although Yu seemed to express a sense of envy given that his journey to the cold Iowa City isolated him from his warm homeland, he quickly transformed his bitterness to confidence and showcased how he was acquiring an original creativity. It would be a creativity that only he—the one who had suffered the loneliness and survived the coldness—could obtain:

But I have been constantly locked  
inside the fridge of Iowa,  
windows and door are shut tightly, to create my car  
I do not rely on any rules, since my 1959  
is meant for a sixth-sense ride  
without running into traffic lights, not for any road.<sup>94</sup>

As the first Chinese writer who would soon receive an MFA from a U.S. university, Yu indeed was gaining more ground. At the point of the late 1950s and early 1960s Taipei, Yu’s forthcoming U.S. degree was icing on the cake to his literary career and intellectual credibility.

Having returned to Taipei, Yu remained a prolific poet and an energetic debater about Chinese literary modernism, featuring prominently in the literary scene of Taipei in the 1960s. In May 1961, in the eighth issue of *Modern Literature*, he published his longest poem, “Sirius.”<sup>95</sup> A critique of “Sirius” written by Lo Fu (one of the seminal figures of the Genesis Poetry Society whose poems were also included and translated in Yu’s thesis) was published

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 294. The original: 在祖國，你們是多麼熱鬧啊！

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 294-5. The original: 而我，一直被反鎖在／愛奧華的冰箱裡，／正緊閉著窗，緊閉著門在造車，／也不依任何標準。因我的一九五九／只為去無紅燈的第六感兜風，／並不想開上公路。

<sup>95</sup> See Chapter Three for the significance of *Modern Literature* in the literary scene of 1960s Taiwan.



in the next issue of the same literary journal. Yet another debate about Chinese modernist poetry was launched, revealing how intellectuals and writers in Taiwan wrestled with the idea of modernism. The debate solicited two essays titled “The Childish Modernist Disease” and “Goodbye, Nihilism!” from Yu, who argued against Lo Fu’s textual analysis of “Sirius” by criticizing Lo Fu as a poet imbued with Western surrealism and existentialism.<sup>96</sup> Fifteen years later, “Sirius” became the title of Yu’s eleventh poetry collection; the original poem and a revised “Sirius” were both included. In the postscript, Yu identified “Sirius” as a product of the early 1960s Taiwan, a modernist poem that did not “fully correspond to some basic rules of modernism.”<sup>97</sup> Unlike his acid remarks against Lo Fu in 1961, Yu agreed with Lo Fu’s characterization of “Sirius” as “a precocious failure.”<sup>98</sup> Such a transformation signals not merely Yu’s personal reconciliation with Lo Fu, but more importantly, the devaluation of modernism in the literary scene of 1970s Taipei partly because of the political challenges faced by the ROC (see Chapter Five).

Yu’s negotiation with modernism from the late 1950s onward was also an engagement with what he called in his thesis “a living tradition of more than two thousand years,” a tradition formed through the long history of Chinese culture and literary conventions.<sup>99</sup> As Yu explained, the younger writers (including himself) in early 1960s Taiwan, when “the society was stifled and cultural forms were awkwardly immobile,” took the road of “Westernization” as a way to oppose orthodox tradition.<sup>100</sup> With hindsight, Yu

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<sup>96</sup> Both of Yu’s essays are collected in *Rain on the Cactus* [掌上雨] (Taipei: Book World Co., 1964). Yu’s “Childish ‘Modernist Disease’” [幼稚的「現代病」] and “Goodbye, Nihilism!” [再見，虛無！] were respectively published in October and December, 1961, while Lo Fu’s “On ‘Sirius’” [天狼星論] was published on *Modern Literature* in July, 1961. For more details about the Sirius debate, see Chen Cheng-Yan [陳政彥], “A Study on ‘Modern Poetry Polemics’ in Postwar Taiwan” [戰後臺灣現代詩論戰史研究], dissertation (National Central University, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> Yu, *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 476. The original: 現代主義的一些基本條件，它都未能充分符合。

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 477. The original: 早熟的失敗之作。

<sup>99</sup> Yu’s thesis, “Translations from Modern Chinese Poetry” (August, 1959), 1.

<sup>100</sup> Yu, *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 476. The original full passage: 一九六一，那正是台灣現代詩反傳統的高潮。那時台灣時局沈悶，社會滯塞，文化的形態越趨不前，所謂傳統，在若干

described their way as “absolutely unfortunate.”<sup>101</sup> Yet, in a defensive manner, he also affirmed his and his fellow poets’ contribution:

Westernization in the early 1960s, as reviewed from today [the mid-1970s], was not entirely unfortunate. The modernist poets in Taiwan, especially those who are now middle-aged, fought against the tradition first and then against Westernization. Undergoing revision twice, the poets have developed a fairly objective, safe distance not only from the former [tradition] but also from the latter [Westernization].<sup>102</sup>

In the late 1980s, Yu again recalled the “Sirius” polemic with Lo Fu, saying that the debate had urged him to “bid modernism farewell, shortening my days of loitering in the West”; furthermore, his resentment at Lo Fu turned into a gratitude, as he considered his farewell “a reward with which no fee could be compared.”<sup>103</sup>

His “farewell” to modernism and Westernization notwithstanding, Yu did not turn away from the U.S. Rather, because of Cold War geopolitics and the anticommunist alliance between the U.S. and the Nationalist regime, Yu constantly faced toward the U.S. while reworking the Chinese tradition. In this sense, Yu’s nostalgic imagination of a warm China was solely refracted through the prism of the cold U.S. Even though he refuted the rosy picture of the U.S. painted by Engle, Yu’s poems painted another eminent picture of the cold U.S. that did not negate the significance of his Iowa experience to his poetry and, by

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舊派人士的株守之下，只求因襲，不是發揚，反而使年輕的一代望而卻步。年輕的一代呢，自然要求新的表現方式和較大的活動空間。傳統的面目既不可親，五四的新文學又無緣親近，結果只剩下西化的一條「生路」或竟是「死路」了……。

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 476. The original: 這誠然是十分不幸的。

<sup>102</sup> Yu, *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 476. The original: 六十年代早期的西化，今日回顧，也並非絕對的不幸，因為台灣的現代詩人，尤其是中年的一代，既反傳統於先，又反西化於後，身歷了兩次的修正，無論對前者或後者，都有了比較客觀的安全距離……。

<sup>103</sup> See Yu’s “A Great Deal of Heroes Then: Modern Lit. and I in a Few Words” (1988) [一時多少豪傑——淺述我與《現文》之緣] in *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣] edited by Pai Hsien-Yung (Taipei: Linking, 2016), 50. The original: 也因此促使我告別了現代主義，縮短了我西遊浪蕩的歲月。這收穫，卻是任何稿酬無法相比的。

extension, Chinese modernist poetry. As a result, the cold U.S. constituted the warm China and became a fundamental source for Yu to “open up new opportunities for our [Chinese] tradition.”<sup>104</sup> Such a “tradition,” as demonstrated by his employment of Chinese geographical features and historical figures as imagery and symbols in *Halloween* and “Sirius,” refers to either a historical China or the Republic of China in Taiwan. His “China” and Chinese tradition, therefore, were apparently historical but substantially detached from contemporary history and the present reality of the “two Chinas.” As Yu crystalized “China” and disregarded a Communist China in order to formulate his Chinese tradition, he justified—and was justified by—the ideology and legitimacy of the Nationalist Party in Taiwan.

While his experience in Iowa City was dispiriting, Yu still devoted himself to the transpacific exchange conducted between the Nationalist regime and the U.S. government. From 1964 to 1966, he was invited by the U.S. Department of State as a visiting professor to teach at Gettysburg College; from 1969 to 1971, he was hired by the U.S. Department of Education as an advisor of international curriculum at the Colorado Department of Education.<sup>105</sup> Consequently, with the U.S. as his only reference point, Yu failed to address “China” for what it was: a divided nation whose division was prolonged partly because of the U.S. intervention since the beginning of the Cold War. The issue of the “two Chinas” coupled with U.S. intervention would endure throughout the Cold War and until today, a geopolitical and historical condition in which Chinese writers have been inevitably engaged to argue against or form alliance with one another (see Chapter Five).

Undergirded by Cold War internationalism, the U.S. government set the stage for its cultural Cold War in which the IWW played a significant role. The director of the IWW Paul

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<sup>104</sup> Yu, *Yu Kwang-chung: Collected Works* [余光中集], Vol. 1, 476. The original: 開出傳統的新機。

<sup>105</sup> See Fu Meng-Li, *Cornel's Child: Biography of Yu Kwang-chung*.

Engle, compared to the Chinese foreign student Yu Kwang-chung, was interpellated much more by the internationalist calling, to the extent that the IWW was made into a home front of the U.S.'s Cold War. At the same time, Yu's poems written during his stay at the IWW show that the recruited writers may have refused to be consolidated into that home front. Yu's refusal, however, could be easily overturned by the anticommunist alliance between the U.S. government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime. Such an alliance endured into the 1960s, when younger Chinese writers in Taiwan traveled to Iowa City from Taipei via the transpacific route first taken by Yu in the late 1950s. Similar to Yu, these aspiring writers would reveal what was politically at stake for the IWW and for themselves—even though many of them believed in the creed of Cold War modernism that literature should be dissociated from politics. Chapter Three investigates the ways in which the project of Cold War modernism willfully depoliticized the once radical edge of modernist art and literature, and how writers at the IWW responded to this Cold War modernist project.

**Chapter Three**  
**Layovers in Iowa City:**  
**Cold War Modernism, Raymond Carver, and Wang Wen-Hsing**

All the components of a novel, themes, characters, thoughts, texture, are all expressed through words. *Period*. A writer's success or failure is dependent on words. *PERIOD*.<sup>1</sup>

—Wang Wen-Hsing, 1978

That's all we have, finally, the words, and they had better be the right ones, with the punctuation in the right places so that they can best say what they are meant to say.<sup>2</sup>

—Raymond Carver, 1981

In the summer of 1963, shortly after Paul Engle toured Asia searching for young talents for the Iowa Writers' Workshop (IWW), two would-be highly successful writers enrolled in the IWW: Raymond Carver and Wang Wen-Hsing, both in their mid-twenties. The young Carver did not impress the more established writers at the IWW, nor was he impressed by the literary scene of Iowa City.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Wang later recollected, "Strictly speaking, the IWW was a wonderful experience, but it did not influence much on my writing."<sup>4</sup> Carver left Iowa City before he completed his study, while Wang earned his MFA degree in 1965 as planned. Not until the 1970s did the two writers achieve their breakthroughs, with the publication of Carver's *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* (1976) and Wang's *Family Catastrophe* (1973). Carver established his reputation as a short story writer, while Wang received both enthusiastic praise and harsh criticism for his modernist manipulation of Chinese characters. Although Carver and Wang enrolled in the same creative

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<sup>1</sup> Wang, Preface to the 1978 edition of *Family Catastrophe* [家變] (Taipei: Hong Fan Books, 2002 [1978]), iv. The original: 小說所有的零件 (components), 主題, 人物, 思想, 肌理 (texture), 一概由文字表達。Period。一個作家的成功與失敗盡在文字。PERIOD。

<sup>2</sup> Carver, "On Writing," collected in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, edited by William Stull and Maureen Carroll (New York: Library of America, 2009), 730. The essay was originally published as "A Storyteller's Shoptalk" in *The New York Times Book Review* (February 15, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> See Carol Sklenicka, *Raymond Carver: a Writer's Life* (New York: Scribner, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> See Lin Jing-jie [林靖傑], "The Man behind the Book," *Literature of the Saline Land* Vol. 33 (May 12, 2011). Lin is also the director of Wang's same-titled biographical film, *The Man behind the Book* [尋找背海的人] (Taipei: Fisfisa Media, 2011). Wang's original words: 嚴格來說, 愛荷華寫作班是個美好的經驗, 但對我的寫作沒多大影響。

writing program in the same term and must have attended some classes together, they were hardly connected with one another. However, their insistence on the precision of words and punctuation indicates how they were once trained by, or at least associated with, the aesthetic conventions of Western modernism in U.S. creative writing programs during the Cold War.

Focusing on Wang Wen-Hsing and Raymond Carver, both of whom enrolled in the IWW shortly after Engle's Asia tour in 1963, this chapter demonstrates the geo- and temporal-politics of literary modernism during the Cold War. On the one hand, Wang's trajectory from Taipei to Iowa City, as well as his reputation as a "modernist writer," indicates how the ROC was incorporated into the U.S. network of cultural exchange. The traveling of modernism from the U.S. to Taipei attested to the geopolitics of the Sino-U.S. relationship in the first half of the Cold War. On the other hand, Carver's career illustrates how American creative writing programs participated in the U.S. cultural Cold War through the modernist project. The temporality of this modernism evinces the enduring effects of U.S. Cold War modernism, which endorsed a new, middlebrow, and apolitical modernism that lasted beyond the 1950s. This chapter argues that Cold War modernist literature is a form of U.S. hegemony in the long Cold War. Yet, by reading closely Wang's novella "Dragon Inn" and Carver's short story "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?," both written during the writers' stay in Iowa City, this chapter also reveals that literary modernism could hardly contain the writers' works and minds.

### **Modernism Reworked in the Cold War**

Western literary modernism is often considered as a movement from the early 1900s to the late 1930s, when European and American writers strived for new, innovative ways to challenge Western cultural tradition. In the Anglo-American context, modernist poets such as Ezra Pound, for example, appropriated "exotic" texts as a means of innovation and rebellion

against the order of English language. Modernist novelists highlighted subjective experiences and presented a narrative loyal to internal psychological processes. Termed as the “stream of consciousness,” this modernist technique broke with traditional narrative development. T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) are often regarded as the canon of Western literary modernism. Whereas the 1920s and the 1930s witnessed the dominance of high modernism in Anglo-American modernist literature, this trend came to an end with the Second World War.

In the postwar years, the term “modernism” was revived, reworked, and became a dominant cultural form in the U.S. cultural Cold War. The “Cold War modernism,” a coinage by literary critic and cultural historian Greg Barnhisel, was “a phenomenon defined largely *negatively* in terms of what it was not: socialist realism, totalitarianism, communism, communalism.”<sup>5</sup> Corresponding to U.S. Cold War ideology, it was a “rhetorical device created for the promotion of a particular kind of Cold War liberalism that valorized Lockean freedom and individualism, intellectual inquiry, and moderately challenging art.”<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the Cold War modernism is less a discipline of art and literature than a “created” project that served the U.S. cultural Cold War. The project’s agents, the Cold War modernists, were informed by liberal anticommunism and celebrated U.S. cultural achievement while debasing the art and literature of the USSR and its satellite countries. Particularly in the late 1940s and the 1950s, the Cold War modernist project was implemented to showcase the liberating, individualistic trait of American modernist culture. This project ended in the early 1960s, according to Barnhisel’s periodization, after having completed its mission and achieved its success in the early 1960s. The end was simultaneously a result of the U.S. shifting its strategic focus from Europe to the Third

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<sup>5</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

World. The imperative to affirm American cultural achievement to European intellectuals was lessened.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, even after the early 1960s, the project of Cold War modernism continued to be carried out via classrooms of creative writing programs especially through two writers: Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. As Barnhisel shows, in the mid-1950s Hemingway and Faulkner were touted as masters of American literature in the Cold War modernist project. After Hemingway became a Nobel laureate in literature in 1954, his works started to be valued by and circulated through the USIA Books in Translation program.<sup>8</sup> Faulkner received his Nobel Prize earlier in 1949; in the 1950s, he engaged closely with U.S. cultural diplomacy in Latin Americas and Asia. These two Nobel laureates formed what literary historian Mark McGurl calls the “Hemingway/Faulkner dialectic,” a pedagogy of creative writing practiced to this day.<sup>9</sup>

The pedagogical significance of Hemingway was evident in the postwar creative writing programs such as Engle’s IWW and Wallace Stegner’s program at Stanford University. As literary critic Eric Bennett explains, unlike some of Hemingway’s modernist contemporaries who favored an excessive use of symbolism and allusions, the Nobel laureate’s style is relatively easy to imitate, even just formally. Hemingway’s formal techniques such as “the restrained use of modifiers, the intense commitment to metonymical precision and continuity, and the conservative selection of metaphor” were especially applicable for discussion among creative writing teachers and students.<sup>10</sup> Because of his

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<sup>7</sup> Take a Cold War modernist Clement Greenberg for example. In 1948, Greenberg stated that young American artists represented the “emergence of new talents so full of energy and content,” and that “the main premises of Western art have at last migrated to the United States, along with the center of gravity of industrial production and political power.” See “The Decline of Cubism,” *Partisan Review* (March 1948).

<sup>8</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 119.

<sup>9</sup> McGurl, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 377.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Bennett, *Workshops of Empire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 150.



formal imitability and applicability, the “avant-garde impulse” of Hemingway’s works was modified and thus incorporated (or, contained) into creative writing classrooms.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the classrooms, Hemingway was simultaneously made accessible to—and in some ways, domesticated for—the middlebrow, general public of postwar U.S. In September 1952, *Life* published a part of *The Old Man and the Sea*, with Hemingway’s headshot as the volume’s cover. In the editorial titled “A Great American Storyteller,” Hemingway was admired as a durable writer who had surpassed his fellows such as John Doss Passos and Scott Fitzgerald.<sup>12</sup> Celebrating *The Old Man and the Sea* as a tragedy that “tells the nobility of man,” the following editorial concluded with a brief analysis in line with the Cold War modernist project:

It is often highbrow practice to find symbolism in Hemingway’s work. *The Old Man and the Sea* seems perfect to us as it stands; but for those who like a little symbolism, we have tried to deduce some. Perhaps the old man is Hemingway himself, the great fish is this great story and the sharks are the critics. Symbolism won’t match up to real life here though: there is absolutely nothing the sharks can do to this marlin.<sup>13</sup>

Fashioning Hemingway as a writer free of constraints and reader-friendly, the *Life* editorial evinces how the Cold War modernist project was carried out: “[b]reaking down the barriers between the highbrow and the middlebrow, relieving modernism of its radical identity, and recasting modernism as a celebration of the free individual subject.”<sup>14</sup> From a middlebrow standpoint, *Life* offered a simplistic symbolic reading of *The Old Man and the Sea*, expediently equating the author with the fictional protagonist. In opposition to the “proud isolation” of the highbrows, especially the New York intellectuals, middlebrow culture

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>12</sup> Editorials, “A Great American Storyteller,” *Life* (September 1, 1952), 20.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 24.

gained its momentum with the aid of widely circulated magazines such as *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, and *The Saturday Review*.<sup>15</sup> As the editorial further sang the praises of the great fish/great story that would not be caught by the sharks/critics, it not only downplayed the “highbrow practice” of literary criticism but also affirmed the notion of aesthetic autonomy.

The prominence of Hemingway in the sphere of postwar U.S. culture and creative writing programs shows how Cold War modernism carried on into the 1980s. The creative writing programs in the postwar U.S. played a vital role in facilitating the durability of Hemingway as a writer and Cold War modernism as a project. The “long shadow thrown by Hemingway across the Program Era,” as described by McGurl, reveals how “postwar literary modernism” was modified from “interwar literary modernism.”<sup>16</sup> This modernism, traced in McGurl’s magisterial *The Program Era*, is not unlike what Barnhisel calls Cold War modernism. Yet, as demonstrated by the history of creative writing, “modernism” was not replaced by postmodernism around the early 1960s. According to McGurl, American fictions of the long Program Era were heavily influenced by a Hemingway-esque modernism.<sup>17</sup> In particular, Hemingway’s autobiographical, first-person narrative had substantially affected the “self-referential tendency” found in two archetypal genres throughout the Program Era: the “campus novel” and the “portrait of the artist.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted from Irving Howe, “This Age of Conformity,” first published on *Partisan Review* 21 (January-February, 1954). For more discussion about the middlebrow as the mainstream culture in the postwar U.S. society, see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), particularly Klein’s analysis of *Reader's Digest* and *Saturday Review* in Chapter Two. For the development of the New York intellectuals before, during, and after the Second World War, see Michael Kimmage’s examination of Lionel Trilling’s life in *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> McGurl, *The Program Era*, 244.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 32. McGurl categorizes American fictions into three aesthetic formations: technomodernism, high cultural pluralism, and lower-middle-class modernism. The coinage of “technomodernism” is “a tweaking of the term ‘postmodernism.’ By using “high cultural pluralism” and “lower-middle-class modernism,” rather than more “casual” terms of “ethnic literature” and “minimalism,” McGurl highlights modernist tradition and more importantly, demonstrates how that tradition endures into the 1970s when multi-ethnic literature thrived and the 1980s when the alleged American short story renaissance happened.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

Similar to Hemingway, Faulkner featured remarkably in the Cold War modernist project since the 1950s. Although Faulkner may not have overshadowed the Program Era as much as Hemingway did, the latter's literary minimalism was constantly accompanied by the former's maximalism.<sup>19</sup> Even though Carver is often considered one of the most eminent successors of Hemingway,<sup>20</sup> his debut short story, "The Furious Seasons," resembles more Faulkner's narrative complexity and grotesque components including adultery, incest, and murder. The prominence of Faulkner was especially conspicuous in the offshore front of the Cold War modernist project. As Barnhisel traces the works of USIA related to Faulkner, he demonstrates that the Nobel laureate was "almost certainly the most significant figure in the exportation of American modernism to the rest of the world and likely had more direct influence on foreign writers—in particular Latin Americans—than any American writer since Poe."<sup>21</sup> Although usually drunk, Faulkner proved to be a successful cultural ambassador for the U.S. government.

Among Faulkner's ambassadorial trips assisted by the overseas posts of the USIA, his tour in Japan in July 1955 particularly satisfied the State Department, and left an enduring imprint on the cultural sphere and literary scene of Japan. Staying at the International House in Tokyo, where Engle would stay in 1963 during his Asia trip, Faulkner was assigned to be the moderator of the Nagano Seminar, a conference about American literature involving thirty-two selected Japanese professors of English.<sup>22</sup> Due to Faulkner's alcoholism, however, the famous writer was almost sent back to his country under the order of the U.S.

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<sup>19</sup> McGurl, *The Program Era*.

<sup>20</sup> Literary critics consider Carver's short-story format and economic use of words as an influence from Hemingway, but Carver himself denied such an "influence" in "Fires" (1982). As he explained, "On occasion it's been said that my writing is 'like' Hemingway's writing. But I can't say his writing influenced mine. Hemingway is one of the many writers whose work, like Durrell's, I first read and admired when I was in my twenties." See "Fires" in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, edited by William Stull and Maureen Carroll, (New York: Library of America, 2009), 734.

<sup>21</sup> Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 125.

<sup>22</sup> G. Lewis Schmidt, interviewed by Allen Hansen on February 8, 1988 (Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Arlington, VA) <<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Schmidt,%20Lewis.toc.pdf>>, accessed November 10, 2017.

ambassador, who requested an explanation from G. Lewis Schmidt, the director of the USIS Tokyo, asking “what idiot in USIA or the Department of State ever thought of sending this lush, this drunk over here to participate in a nationally advertised seminar.”<sup>23</sup> In response, Schmidt insisted that Faulkner would be kept under control as “a perfectly sober Nobel Prize winner.” This task was eventually accomplished by another USIS official, Leon Picon. As the officer of the Book Translation Program and the Book Development Program of the USIS Tokyo, Picon recalled later that he was with Faulkner twenty-four days—and added, “I think it’s taken twenty-four years off my life”—to keep the Nobel laureate functional.<sup>24</sup> Tactics such as providing the Nobel laureate with a gin-soaked glass of “a little, tiny bit of gin and lots of tonic,” and arranging “a very lovely Japanese teacher” whom Faulkner had his eye on to sit closer to the front, were employed.<sup>25</sup>

In the end, however, not only did the Nagano Seminar turn out to be a “rip-roaring success,” as Picon described, Faulkner the cultural ambassador did keep his promise of not letting the USIS down. Better yet, his two short pieces written during his stay, “Impressions of Japan” and “To the Youth of Japan,” had perfectly served as propaganda materials for the USIS and the State Department. While the former was made into a USIA film introducing Japanese culture in an Orientalist light, the latter demonstrated that the Nobel laureate from the American South espoused the ideology of freedom and democracy in accordance with the U.S. government. Starting with the defeat of the South in the American Civil War and tinted with a slight resentment against the North, “To the Youth of Japan” quickly turns to affirm the unity and strength of the postbellum United States. Based on his own Southerner experience of becoming a world-renown writer, Faulkner encouraged his audience that “out

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Leon Picon, interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on October 30, 1989 (Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Arlington, VA) <<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Picon,%20Leon.toc.pdf>>, accessed November 10, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

of your disaster and despair will come a group of Japanese writers whom all the world will want to listen to.”<sup>26</sup> Reassuring the Japanese that hope remained despite the destruction of their country, Faulkner insisted that “man’s hope is in man’s freedom” and that, as if reciting the Truman Doctrine, “[w]e must choose simply between being slave and being free.”<sup>27</sup> In line with the U.S.’s Cold War narrative, he continued to highlight Cold War polarity, and further declared that the American way, albeit not perfect, should be preferred and chosen:

We think of the world today as being a helpless battleground in which two mighty forces face each other in the form of two irreconcilable ideologies. I do not believe they are two ideologies. I believe that only one of them is an ideology because the other is simply a human belief that no government shall exist immune to the check of the consent of the governed; that only one of them is a political state or ideology, because the other one is simply a mutual state of man mutually believing in mutual liberty . . . .<sup>28</sup>

Not unlike Eisenhower’s people-to-people rhetoric, Faulkner endowed the Cold War politics with a human face, claiming that, no matter how “clumsy” the U.S. democracy was, it was at the moment the best way of life and of government.<sup>29</sup> More than three decades later, Faulkner’s escort and the officer of the USIS book programs in Tokyo, Picon, insisted that these two essays are “things that everyone ought to read.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Cold War Modernism Traveled across the Pacific**

Faulkner’s visit to Japan bespoke a political and cultural network implemented by the U.S. in Asia. Through the USIS, the same network shaped the literary scene in Taiwan with a

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<sup>26</sup> Faulkner, “To the Youth of Japan” (1956), collected in *Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters* edited by James B. Meriwether (New York: Random House, 2004), 83.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Leon Picon, interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on October 30, 1989.

strong modernist tone in the 1960s. As evidenced by the launch and traveling of *Modern Literature*, a representative journal of literary modernism in Taiwan, it was not a mere accident that young modernist writers including Wang Wen-Hsing came of age in the early 1960s and took the transpacific route to Iowa City to study creative writing.

The Nagano Seminar led to the birth of the first Chinese PhD in American literature, Chu Limin. In preparation for the Nagano Seminar, the USIS Tokyo contacted its Taipei counterpart, asking if any Chinese scholar specializing in American literature would be suitable for participation. The USIS Taipei, however, was unable to recommend anyone given that American literature, either as an academic field or a general subject, was rarely developed in the 1950s Taiwan. Because of this incident, perhaps an embarrassing one for the USIS Taipei, Chu Limin was given a chance to study at Duke University. He would later be acclaimed and remembered as the “sower of American literature” in Taiwan.<sup>31</sup>

Chu’s education was sponsored by the USIS Taipei and the Asia Foundation (TAF). He received his MA (1958) and PhD degree (1965) in American literature from Duke University. During his pursuit of higher education in the U.S., he chaired in Taipei a TAF seminar on American literature at National Taiwan Normal University for two years (1959-1961); upon the request of the USIS, Chu also published a Chinese textbook titled *American Literature: from the Old Colonial Days to Civil War* (1962).<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Chu became an associate professor of American literature in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Taiwan University (hereafter NTU), one of the leading departments of the humanities in Taiwan, particularly of literature studies. In 1966, he assumed the chair of

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<sup>31</sup> See Tien Wei-Hsin, “The Sower of American Literature” [美國文學的播種者] in *Disappearing at the End of the Corridor: In Memory of Professor Chu Limin* [消失在長廊盡處——追憶朱立民教授] (Taipei: Jiuge, 1999), 93-99.

<sup>32</sup> *Interview with Mr. Chu Limin* [朱立民先生訪問記錄] (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of Modern History, 1996), 95-113; Chu Limin, “Studying for a PhD—Had To” [念博士，不得已也] in *Forcing Drafts into Essays* [逼稿成篇] (Taipei: Jiuge, 1980), 43-51.

the same department, and made “American Literature” into a required course rather than an elective. It was from this department that Wang Wen-Hsing received his bachelor’s degree in 1961.

Before Wang’s graduation, in March 1960, he and his classmates founded *Modern Literature*, a journal widely acknowledged as symbolic of the literary scene of 1960s Taiwan. As stated in its Mission Statement, the literary journal “intends to systematically translate and introduce in each volume the artistic schools and trends, as well as criticism and ideas, of the modern West, and tries to select the representative works [of the modern West] as much as possible.”<sup>33</sup> Their effort contributed considerably to the “Modernist literary movement” in Taiwan, as termed by Taiwanese literature scholar Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang. During this 1960s movement, young Chinese writers actively appropriated Western literary modernism in order to transform the literary scene at home.<sup>34</sup> Much as it underscored the significance of Western modernism, *Modern Literature* maintained itself as a journal for Chinese writers and intellectuals, claiming that “[the introduction and translation of Western modern literature] does not mean our preference for foreign art, but just a principle of improvement based on ‘the stones of other hills’.”<sup>35</sup> The “principle of improvement,” however, indicated a timetable in which “we” must catch up with the modern West. As made clear by the Mission Statement: “We must admit our backwardness, [given that] in the field of new literature, we are not necessarily in a total blank but at least on a barren land.”<sup>36</sup> Similar to Yu Kwang-chung and many Chinese intellectuals in early Cold War Taiwan, the founders of *Modern*

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<sup>33</sup> *Modern Literature* Vol.1 (March 1960), 2. The original: 我們打算分期有系統地翻譯介紹西方近代藝術學派和潮流，批評和思想，並盡可能選擇其代表作品。

<sup>34</sup> See Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), vii.

<sup>35</sup> *Modern Literature* Vol.1, 2. The “stones of other hills” are a metaphor originally indicating the mistakes of others that can be referred to or learned from; more recently, the phrase has a general connotation of the advice from others. The original: 我們如此做並不表示我們對外國藝術的偏愛，僅為依據「他山之石」之進步原則。

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* The original: 我們得承認落後，在新文學的界道上，我們雖不至一片空白，但至少是荒涼的。

*Literature* had to engage—or confront—Western literary modernism as it traveled to Taiwan during the Cold War.

Founded by a younger generation of students in 1960, *Modern Literature* expressed a more reconciled view toward the supposedly oppositional relationship between traditional China and the modern West. At this point, Taiwan had been a part of the U.S. Cold War stratagem for a decade. The structure of feeling of the young intellectuals at the NTU was not the same as Yu's generation. According to Pai Hsien-yung, the founder of and contributor to *Modern Literature*, the publication of *Modern Literature* was an “accident” enabled by his classmates. These young writers, including Wang, were all of the same age, and they happened to “have a fervor, a passion, and a conviction for literature, and talent.”<sup>37</sup> As Pai recounted, as a generation growing up after the Second World War, this group of NTU students

. . . [came] out of the ruins. The old society in the past had entirely collapsed; those old social structures and social values were completely shattered because of wars and revolutions. We were the new seedlings growing out of the ruins. The advantage of our background was that we had no tradition. Since the May Fourth Movement had already turned down the tradition, we needed not to destroy the tradition like the May Fourth had insisted—no need! We had an opportunity to start anew.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See “Renaissance Out of the Ruins: Pai Hsien-yung on the Origin of *Modern Literature* Journal” [來自廢墟中的文藝復興：白先勇談《現代文學》雜誌的起源], an interview with Pai by Michael Berry, collected in *Modernism Revisited: Pai Hsien-yung, Modern Literature, and Modernism* [重返現代：白先勇、《現代文學》與現代主義] (eds. Michael Berry and Tsai Chien-hsin; Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 2016), 23. The original: 《現代文學》的創刊在某方面是個 accident (意外)。……那個時候我們班上剛好有一群年齡相仿的學生，對文學有一種熱情、passion、有理想，還有才華。

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* The original: 我們等於是 out of the ruins (來自於廢墟之中)。過去的舊社會全都垮了，舊的社會的架構、社會的價值，因為戰爭、因為革命，統統給打散了。我們是廢墟裡長出來的新的苗子。我們的背景的好處是沒有傳統。因為五四已經把傳統打垮了，所以我們不需要像五四那樣一定要打倒傳統，用不著！我們有一個機會重新開始。



Unlike Yu's literary spectrum that situated Chinese tradition and Western modernism at the two extremes, Pai's self-portrait of his generation revealed not only a detachment from "tradition" but also an impulse to innovate. For Yu, the modern West was a resource to revitalize the Chinese tradition, but for Pai, the literary status quo that they intended to revitalize was already deprived of any basis of tradition thanks to the May Fourth Movement.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, when Pai explained the fundamental principle of *Modern Literature*, he showed that he was not ignorant of the "tradition" of Chinese literature. According to Pai, their literary journal adhered to Western modernism while simultaneously separating itself from the May Fourth Movement. Rather than inheriting May Fourth literature, Pai and his generation took Western modernism as their intellectual resource, partly because of the cross-strait socio-political chaos that they had gone through:

Modernism expresses a kind of suspicion, pessimism toward life and tradition; such a dark vision seems to be ubiquitous [in Western modernist literature]. It seems to be deprived of a religious support, of a faith in human beings. The reason why [modernism] had a great influence on us was because China was in a similar circumstance. After the Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War, all of our social values were in fact entirely shattered, all collapsed. So we were able to identify ourselves with those works that are relatively darker and gloomier.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The deprivation, in fact, had less to do with the May Fourth Movement than with the imposition of Taiwan martial law, through which the publication of newspapers, magazines, and books were to be censored and, if need be, rendered invisible. Modern Chinese literature written in the early twentieth century prior to the Chinese Civil War, especially the works of Lu Xun, Ba Jin, Mao Dun, and Lao She, was entirely erased from the literary scene of the "Free China." Such an erasure, in many ways, led to Pai's understanding of the May Fourth Movement and the "tradition" of modern Chinese literature.

<sup>40</sup> Pai's interview with Michael Berry, collected in *Modernism Revisited: Pai Hsien-yung, Modern Literature, and Modernism* [重返現代：白先勇、《現代文學》與現代主義] (Taipei: Rye Field Publications, 2016), 32. The original: 現代主義對人生、對傳統有種懷疑、悲觀，這種 dark vision（黑暗的視角）好像無所不在。它好像失去了宗教的支撐，失去對人的信仰。所以為什麼對我們的影響那麼大，那是因為中國也有

Even though Pai recognized that “the social background of Taiwan at that time was very different from the West,” he believed that between the intellectuals of his generation and the literature of Western modernism existed a psychological intimacy.<sup>41</sup> In Pai’s recount, *Modern Literature* fellows, seeking solace in the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner, “asked above all else for the form of literature, as well as the art and aesthetic of writing novels and poems.”<sup>42</sup> “What you’ve written was not of our interest; it’s useless to talk about revolution,” said Pai, “this was something very different from the May Fourth.”<sup>43</sup>

Pai’s account indicated that it was the May Fourth tradition that *Modern Literature* challenged. The literary ideal of *Modern Literature* according to Pai was set in opposition to the literature of revolution produced from the May Fourth Movement:

During the May Fourth, it didn’t matter if you wrote well or not; what mattered was whether your works could be provocative, whether they could instigate revolutions. But all this [kind of literature] was only for the moment. When I read Mao Dun’s *Ziye* again today, I couldn’t stand it, I couldn’t stand it! . . . Mao Dun’s writing sometimes is very good, but sometimes it gets so bad because of his ideology and slogans!<sup>44</sup>

The May Fourth tradition, in this sense, was taken as a negative example through which the standard of *Modern Literature* was affirmed. By upholding the principle of “how well you wrote,” Pai and his fellow writers rebelled against the ways that the Nationalist regime

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類似的情況。經過中日戰爭，經過內戰，其實我們整個社會價值統統被打散了，全部崩潰掉了。所以我們對那種比較黑暗，陰暗的作品都能夠認同。

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. The original: 台灣當時的社會背景跟西方非常不一樣，但對西方現代主義的某些想法感同身受。

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 33. The original: 我想我們從一開始的時候就對文學的形式，對寫小說和詩的藝術和 aesthetics (美學) 有高於一切的要求。

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. The original: 你寫什麼東西我們興趣不大，你講什麼革命都沒用，所以這是跟五四很不同的一點。

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. The original: 五四時不管你寫得好不好，只在乎你的東西能不能煽動，能不能引起革命，而這些都是一時的。我現在再看茅盾的《子夜》，I couldn’t stand it，不能忍受！……茅盾的文筆有時候很好，但不少時候被他的 ideology (意識形態) 和口號弄得很壞！

politicized literature based on the ideology of anticommunism. *Modern Literature* intended to write against the grain of the Nationalist propaganda. Yet, as Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang puts, even though the modernist writers of 1960s Taiwan tried to resist the political propaganda of anticommunist literature, their effort was “directed more toward the politicization of literature than to the government’s political stance itself.”<sup>45</sup> The modernist objection to the authoritative regime could well correspond to the regime’s anticommunist ideology, as implied by Pai’s view toward the May Fourth. In fact, Pai shared an anticommunist stance similar to that of the Nationalist Party. Calling communism “the cult of the Western civilization,” he believed that Chinese culture was expelled at the moment when communism was introduced to China after the May Fourth.<sup>46</sup> Pai continued, “The worst of the Chinese Communist Party is that it has led people astray, and also educated China in a very wicked way; this is the most unforgivable.”<sup>47</sup>

The formation of *Modern Literature* and Pai’s anticommunist stance suggest the political closeness between the literary scene in Taipei and the U.S. cultural Cold War in the 1960s. As modernism in Taiwan intended to “depoliticize” literature, it demonstrated a kind of politics similar to the apolitical politics embodied by the U.S. Cold War modernist project. Pai’s explanation of how *Modern Literature* evaluated writers through the criteria of “writing well,” “creativity,” and “ways of literary expressions,” resonates with Paul Engle’s promotion of creative writing programs.<sup>48</sup> *Modern Literature*’s insistence on “form” and “aesthetics,” likewise, bespoke the resemblance between the two kinds of modernism at the two shores of the Pacific. As Pai mentioned that *Modern Literature* happened to “catch up

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<sup>45</sup> See Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan*, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Pai’s interview with Michael Berry in *Modernism Revisited*, 45. The original: 共產主義就是西方文明的邪教！……共產主義把中國文化給革掉……。

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* The original: 共產黨最糟糕的是把人給教壞了，把中國也教得那麼壞，這是最不可以原諒的。

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 33. The original: 我們非常注重字寫得好不好，我們注重創意，以及優秀的文學表現方式，那才符合我們的標準。

with the trend of high modernism of Western literature,” it was also the case that the trend of high modernism in Taiwan overlapped with the era of high Cold War.<sup>49</sup>

The traveling of *Modern Literature* further indicates that modernist literature in 1960s Taiwan was a literary form of the U.S. politico-cultural network in Asia. The USIS Taipei had contributed to endorsing the intimacy among high modernism in Taiwan, the high Cold War, and *Modern Literature*. Its correspondence with the USIS Singapore evidenced that *Modern Literature* was incorporated within and circulated through the network of the U.S. cultural Cold War.<sup>50</sup> As revealed by Wang Mei-hsiang’s research on the files of the NARA (National Archives and Records Administration), in June 1961, the USIS Taipei informed its counterpart in Singapore that it had subscribed to several Chinese periodicals for designated readers in Singapore.<sup>51</sup> Among those periodicals, four copies of *Modern Literature* were included. *Modern Literature* turned out to be well received and perhaps politically effective. In December 1961, the USIS Singapore requested five hundred copies of the tenth and the eleventh issue of the journal from the USIS Taipei.<sup>52</sup>

Highly informed by Anglo-American literary modernism, modernist literature in 1960s Taiwan revealed U.S. intervention in East Asia with projects of both modernism and neocolonialism. As scholars of Chinese literature show, the complexity of modern Chinese literature in the first half of the twentieth century was refashioned largely in line with U.S. Cold War modernism in 1960s Taiwan.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, since the early 1950s when the Chinese

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 32. The original: 那時候我們創刊趕上了西方文學 high modernism 的潮流。

<sup>50</sup> See Wang Mei-hsiang [王梅香], “*Literary Review and Modern Literature* under the U.S. Aid Literary Institution” [美援文藝體制下的《文學雜誌》與《現代文學》] *Bulletin of Taiwanese Literature* [台灣文學學報] Vol. 25 (December 2014), 69-100.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>53</sup> As David Der-wei Wang traces, since the 1920s post-May Fourth Movement, modern Chinese literature started to flourish. In the 1930s, the “neo-sensationalists” in Shanghai, as well as Taiwanese writers employing European modernism via and under the Japanese colonization, all contributed to the literary scene of modern Chinese literature, so did the writers during the War of Resistance against Japan in the early 1940s and the poets of the “Nine Leaves School” in the late 1940s. See his “Hometown Shore Calling: Modernist Sentiment from the NTU to Iowa” [應答的鄉岸：從台大到愛荷華的現代情], a conference transcript collected in *Modernism Revisited: Pai Hsien-yung, Modern Literature, and Modernism* (91-92). Wang Xiaojue’s examination of

division was consolidated via the Korean War, the U.S. carried out in East Asia its neocolonialist project through economic and military aids. The Republic of Korea and the Republic of China, two anticommunist U.S. allies born of the division on the Korean Peninsula and that across the Taiwan Strait, took advantage of the U.S. aids to construct and renovate their public infrastructures. As roads, dams, bridges, and power plants were completed and modernized, an American way of imagining “modern”—both in material and cultural sense—also became the dominant. The role of the USIS in East Asia was also instrumental. As argued by scholar of contemporary Taiwanese literature, Chen Chien-chung, it is imperative to “‘write’ about the ‘USIS’ as a representative of the Cold War memory ‘into’ the history of Taiwan literature, so that the experience of such an alternative colonial modernity can be inscribed.”<sup>54</sup>

The *Modern Literature* fellows, however, with a faith in literary aesthetics and form, as well as an ideal that separated literature and politics, often denied their association with the USIS. Recalled by Ouyang Tzu (Pai Hsien-yung and Wang Wen-Hsing’s classmate; one of the co-founders of *Modern Literature*), the director of the USIS Taipei Richard McCarthy purchased six hundred copies of the tenth and eleventh issues and thus eased their financial difficulty.<sup>55</sup> She immediately affirmed the autonomy of *Modern Literature* and explained, “[McCarthy] was only interested in our literary works; he had never spoken a word about our

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Chinese literary modernity also suggests how the first half of the twentieth century—particularly the time around the 1949 cross-strait division—was constitutive of “ambivalent moments when different orders of modern imagination were in competition or complementation.” See her *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 17.

<sup>54</sup> Chen Chien-chung [陳建忠], “‘USIS’ and the Re-Writing History of Taiwan Literature: A Study on the Publication of Taiwan and Hong Kong’s Magazines on U.S. Aids under the Literary & Artistic Institutions” [「美新處」(USIS)台灣文學史重寫：以美援文藝體制下的台、港雜誌出版為考察中心], *Bulletin of Chinese* [國文學報] Vol. 52 (2012), 211-242. The original: 筆者最重要的企圖，便是把「美新處」作為冷戰記憶的代表「寫入」台灣文學史，以便銘刻此種另類的殖民現代性經驗……。 (216)

<sup>55</sup> Ouyang Tzu [歐陽子], “About the Finance and General Affairs of *Modern Literature* at the Founding Stage” [關於《現代文學》創辦時期的財務及總務], collected in *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣] edited by Pai Hsien-yung (Taipei: Linking, 2016), 294-5. As Wang Mei-hsiang shows, among those twelve hundred copies, ten thousand were shipped to Singapore.

choices of translating and introducing Western modernist literature, or about our editorial principle.”<sup>56</sup> Likewise, Pai acknowledged their contact with McCarthy, but insisted that the officer of the USIS Taipei “had never intended to influence our principle of running the journal.”<sup>57</sup>

However, praising McCarthy highly for his contribution to cultivating the literary scene in Taiwan, Pai revealed the political mission of the USIS and how the agency conducted it through literature and translation:

McCarthy himself had a love for literature. He was once a student of the “Writers’ Workshop” at the University of Iowa, and at first, he had an ambition of becoming a writer, so he was particularly friendly to writers . . . . When he assumed the position of the director of the USIS Hong Kong and Taipei, he had done quite a few works for cultural exchange. With his support, the USIS published a great number of translations from canonical American literature. Representative works of important American writers such as Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Melville, and Edith Wharton were all chosen into this series of translation . . . .<sup>58</sup>

Whereas Pai believed in the separation between literature and politics, his compliment to the USIS-conducted publication indicated how the Cold War modernist project was instituted through cultural exchange and literary translation. Pai was fully aware that “the USIS was an intelligence agency from the outset,” and that “the United States established [posts of] the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. The original: 他也只對我們的文學創作品感興趣，根本不會對我們譯介西洋現代主義文學的選擇或編輯方針說過一句話。

<sup>57</sup> See Pai, “Reminiscing *Modern Lit*: Financial Resource of *Modern Literature*” [《現文》憶往——《現代文學》的資金來源], collected *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣], 288. The original: 麥加錫雖然跟《現文》同仁有來往，但從來沒有企圖影響我們辦雜誌的方針……。

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. The original: 麥加錫本人熱愛文學，自己曾在愛荷華大學「作家工作坊」讀過書，本來有志寫作的，因此他對於作家特別友善……。他在港、台擔任美新處處長期間，的確作了不少文化交流的工作。在他支持下，美新處出版了大批美國文學經典譯著，舉凡美國重要作家如海明威、福克納、費茲傑羅、梅爾維爾、華頓夫人等的代表作都選入這套譯叢……。

Information Service all over the world, mainly for the purpose of collecting information and practicing ‘cultural aggression.’”<sup>59</sup> His awareness notwithstanding, Pai instantly asserted the distinction between the intelligence agency and the personnel working for the agency. He again admired McCarthy as a passionate, positive “American intelligence officer with such profound cultural accomplishment.”<sup>60</sup>

The director of the USIS Taipei, however, never disavowed the correlation between literature and politics. McCarthy stated, in order to compete with the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, the USIS Taipei “sponsored and, indeed, worked upon a large number of English-language translations of the work of young Chinese writers,” including the works of Ouyang Tzu, Pai Hsien-yung, and Wang Wen-Hsing.<sup>61</sup> Originally published in *Modern Literature*, their writings were chosen, translated, and published in *New Voices*,<sup>62</sup> an anthology sponsored by the USIS and “designed for distribution to the rest of the world.”<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, thanks to McCarthy’s recommendation, Pai Hsien-yung, Ouyang Tzu, and Wang Wen-Hsing were all awarded a scholarship to attend the IWW.<sup>64</sup> It is also worth noting that a few weeks before Engle’s USIS-assisted visit to Taipei in April 1963, the sixteenth issue of *Modern Literature* (March 15, 1963) published Engle’s poems (with Yu Kwang-chung’s translation). Moreover, from this issue onward, Nieh Hualing had become a long-term editorial consultant for the journal.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 289. The original: 美國新聞處本來就是一個情報機構，美國在全世界設立新聞處，主要負責蒐集情報，實行「文化侵略」。

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. The original: 但是像麥加錫這樣一位美國情報官員，本身的文化素養卻如此深厚，為人又熱情正派，實在難得。

<sup>61</sup> McCarthy’s interview with Jack O’Brien, December 28, 1998.

<sup>62</sup> See Pai, “Reminiscing *Modern Lit*: Financial Resource of *Modern Literature*” [《現文》憶往——《現代文學》的資金來源], collected in *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣], 288.

<sup>63</sup> McCarthy’s interview with Jack O’Brien, December 28, 1998.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. Also see Chen Ruoxi’s autobiography, *Persistent, Regretless: Self-Narrative of Chen Ruoxi at Seventy* [堅持無悔：陳若曦七十自述] (Taipei: Jiuge, 2011), 106. A co-founder of *Modern Literature* and classmate of Pai, Wang, and Ouyang Tzu, Chen Ruoxi [陳若曦] was also recommended by McCarthy to study in the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. She however chose not to go to Iowa but Mount Holyoke College instead, and then transferred again to the Johns Hopkins University.

Growing in the martial law of “free China” that was a client state of the U.S., *Modern Literature* was not just an imitation of Anglo-American modernism or a direct outcome of the Cold War modernist project. In order to justify its appeal for creative autonomy, the literary journal relied heavily on “the West.” Despite the USIS support, however, *Modern Literature* fellows also needed to deal with challenges from both the conservative writers and the Nationalist authority. Only one year after its initial publication, the seventh issue of *Modern Literature* had to respond to the harsh questioning of their appropriation of Western literary modernism:

. . . If some say that the effort of China’s attempt at modernist form is a servile mindset to the West, we cannot tolerate [this accusation]. Can’t the Chinese create new forms? . . . According to their viewpoint, the Chinese cannot write psychological novel, symbolic novel, or fantasy; the Chinese cannot try surrealism or accept the ideas of existentialism. They are akin to a father limiting his son’s activity. No playing ball, no running, no singing, no riding, no listening to the radio—all for one reason: these are all Western stuff. Dear readers, if you see such a father, you had better advise him [otherwise].<sup>65</sup>

Young and ambitious, the *Modern Literature* fellows rebelled against their opponents. The journal defended itself by allegorizing the conflict between the older and younger generation as that between the father and the son, whose viewpoints about Chinese literature were anything but harmonious. Besides the almost xenophobic conservative Chinese, the father figure was associated with the authoritarian regime of the Nationalist Party in the context of martial law. *Modern Literature* thus successfully fashioned itself as an avant-garde literary

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<sup>65</sup> *Modern Literature* Vol.7 (March 1961), 6. The original: 如果有人說，中國在形式上嚐試現代主義的努力，是一種崇洋心理，我們是無法忍受的。中國人不許創造新形式嗎？……依照他們的看法，中國人不得寫心理小說，不得寫象徵小說，不得寫幻想小說，不得嘗試超現實主義，不得接受存在主義的思想。他們像一個父親，限制兒子的活動，不得打球，不得賽跑，不得唱歌，不得騎車，不得聽收音機——皆為了一個理由：這些都是洋玩意兒。親愛的讀者，假如您看到這樣一位父親，最好勸一勸他。



journal resisting the “father” who interfered in the creation of new literature. At the same time, the “Western stuff” as transmitted through the USIS Taipei was recognized as an essential contribution to the literary ideal of *Modern Literature*. Due to the political and cultural repression at home, *Modern Literature* identified the West—in this case, the U.S.—as a new and free father. The readers were also requested to participate in the process of modernizing the latter.

In the genealogy of modern Chinese literature, literary modernism in 1960s Taiwan as represented by *Modern Literature* demonstrates a specific engagement with Western literary modernism through U.S. cultural diplomacy. As if echoing the American modernist poet Ezra Pound’s maxim, “make it new,” founders and contributors of *Modern Literature* devoted themselves to making Chinese literature new. In particular, these young Chinese writers attempted to challenge the politicization of literature as Nationalist propaganda. The relationship between *Modern Literature* and the USIS displays that this “new” literature was scripted through and conditioned by the palpable presence of the U.S. in Asia. Some of the most enthusiast founders such as Pai Hsien-yung, moreover, shared with the Nationalist regime the same anticommunist stance.

### **Chinese Civil War in “Dragon Inn”**

Unlike Pai, Wang Wen-Hsing’s relationship with both *Modern Literature* and the IWW was ambivalent. Wang was a founder and significant contributor to the literary journal (Pai described him as “our mastermind”), but his assessment of the acclaimed journal was much more modest than his peers.<sup>66</sup> Three decades after the journal’s first publication, he wrote frankly that “I have never understood why this journal [*Modern Literature*] has been

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<sup>66</sup> Pai’s remarks, a conference transcript collected in *Modernism Revisited: Pai Hsien-yung, Modern Literature, and Modernism* [重返現代：白先勇、《現代文學》與現代主義], 238. The original: 王文興是我們的智多星。

respected so highly by the literary circle, as if it has been elevated to the status of myth.”<sup>67</sup>

While acknowledging the tribute paid to their journal, Wang further downplayed the significance of *Modern Literature*: “It seems that after a while, even if it was nothing at that time, once it has become an antique, it more or less would obtain some values of being an antique.”<sup>68</sup> Despite this ambivalent relationship with the journal, Wang faithfully served *Modern Literature* with his works. From the first issue (March 1960) to the seventeenth (June 1963) after which he left for Iowa City, Wang contributed twelve short stories and two poems. During his study at the IWW, Wang was still listed on the editorial board with “The United States” in parenthesis after his name. His two major works composed in Iowa City, “The Black Gown” and “Dragon Inn,” were also published in *Modern Literature* between 1964 and 1966.

Whether it was because of the IWW or not, Wang’s high-modernist style of writing became more narrative-based. Compared to his earlier works in his college days, “The Black Gown” and “Dragon Inn” display a relatively conventional narrative framework. Wang explained:

As I re-read my earlier works, I had another lament: to a certain extent, I admire my literary courage at that moment, while I feel rather ashamed [of my works] as of now. Today, my “literary conscience” is not as intact and upright as before. “Mother” and “Midsummer on the Prairie”—especially “Midsummer on the Prairie”—are those that can make me smile lightly. I could write whatever I feel like writing without heeding others. Narrative, character, psychology—to hell with them. Now I regret that after these two

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<sup>67</sup> See Wang, “Remembering the Bygone Modern Lit.” [現文憶舊] (1991), collected in collected in *Strings of Modern Lit* [現文因緣], 84. The original: 我一直不明白為什麼文學界將這本刊物推崇得那麼高，好像快把它抬到神話的地位上了。

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. The original: 我漸漸也能接受別人對《現代文學》的致意了，好像時間久了嘛，就算當年是沒什麼，但一但成了古董，多少也有了點古董的價值。

works, my integrity was not solid enough; I constantly worry about if others understand and agree with [my works]. I have more or less sold myself out.<sup>69</sup>

In an almost confessional manner, Wang admitted that his latter works had “a heavier element of narrative.”<sup>70</sup> Whereas he declared that he sold himself out, Wang’s emphasis on a full development of narrative and characters indicated his ambition of becoming a professional writer. This ambition was especially manifested in “Dragon Inn.” Distinct from Wang’s earlier works that often employ the technique of interior monologue to illustrate a single moment, “Dragon Inn” is a novella structured through a frame story set in Taiwan in 1962, with at least four sub-narratives set in Shanxi during the Chinese Civil War.<sup>71</sup>

Framed by a complex narrative, “Dragon Inn” reveals Wang’s attention to the relationship between the present and the past of 1960s Taiwan. The main narrative tells the reunion of ten former Nationalist officers in 1962, who meet in Taichung to celebrate Commander Tian’s seventieth birthday. As the banquet starts, the Commander requests to learn more about how his subordinates escaped from the communist forces and retreated to Taiwan. In sequence, General Guan, Colonel Lu, Colonel Qin, and General Zha recount their experiences in the Chinese Civil War. The storytelling ends abruptly with Staff Officer Duan’s aphasia, which is attributed by other Nationalist officers to his three-year stay in “Communist prisons.”<sup>72</sup> As these officers describe the hardship that they have gone through,

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<sup>69</sup> The first preface (written in October 1980) to Wang’s short story collection, *Fifteen Stories*, the eighth edition (Taipei: Hongfan, 2001 [1979]). The original: 我重讀舊作的另一個感歎是，我有幾分欽佩我當時的文學勇氣，我現在感覺頗為慚愧，我今天的「文學良心」大不如前，不及從前正直。「母親」，「草原底盛夏」——尤其「草原底盛夏」——是可以使我掛幾許微笑的篇作，管別人怎麼想，愛怎麼寫怎麼寫。凡故事，人物，心理，全部去牠的。我如今後悔自這兩篇以後，志節不堅，常顧慮到別人懂不懂，同不同意。我多多少少出賣了自己。

<sup>70</sup> “Mother” was published on the second issue, while “Midsummer on the Prairie” on the eighth.

<sup>71</sup> In terms of structure, Wang acknowledged the similarity between “Dragon Inn” and the fourteenth-century literature of realism, *The Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*. See “Wang Wenxing on Wang Wenxing,” an interview with Wang by Shan Te-hsing in 1983, collected in *Reading Wang Wenxing: Critical Essays* (eds. Shu-ning Sciban and Ihor Pidhainy; Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2015), 277-8.

<sup>72</sup> If not cited otherwise, I follow Steven L. Riep’s translation of “Dragon Inn” for quotations. Riep’s work is collected in *Endless War: Fiction and Essays by Wang Wen-Hsing* (eds. Shu-ning Sciban and Fred Edwards; Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2011), 279-349.

“Dragon Inn” seems to follow the prototype of anticommunist literature that demonizes its maltreatment of both the Nationalist soldiers and Chinese civilians. Take General Zha’s account for example. After he returns to his village to bring his wife and daughter with him, he realizes that all his family is dead. General Zha soon learns that the Communist Liberation Army soldiers shot his sons, raped and then shot his daughter; his wife, after witnessing the brutality imposed upon her children, committed suicide. Likewise, in General Guan’s testimony, the Communist Party is illustrated as frenetic and inhuman. In the Temple of Lofty Goodness, the Communist executioners hunt down the Nationalist prisoners of war to kill them. A prisoner “clung into desperation to a statue of Buddha,” but the executioner chasing him “plunged his knife into the man’s lower back” and “poured out his repressed anger by quickly stabbing the statue [of Buddha] in the abdomen”; another executioner “had cut through the prisoner’s throat and then, without any reason, cut open the man’s chest and abdomen.”<sup>73</sup> Represented through sacrilege and inhumanity, the Communist Party eventually castrated General Guan.

Nevertheless, as all *Modern Literature* fellows intended to write against the grains of Nationalist propaganda, Wang did not produce simply a work of “politicized,” anticommunist literature. Instead, through allusions and parodies of the typical plot of anticommunist literature, “Dragon Inn” reworks both the anticommunist literature of the 1950s and the modernist literature of the 1960s Taiwan. The novella questions the opposition between the two, and hence challenges the conventional historiography of Taiwanese literature that distinctly separates the two. Through General Zha’s account, Wang displayed the brutality of Communist soldiers and the humanity of a heart-stricken Nationalist general; he however created a brief moment in which the contrast between the two is dissolved. As General Zha tries to reach the Temple of Lofty Goodness by boat, he and the boatman witness two corpses

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 296.

floating by, one wearing an Eighth Route Army uniform, the other a Nationalist Army uniform. These two corpses, described by Wang, float on the river “not even a yard apart.”<sup>74</sup> Based on Wang’s own assessment of “Dragon Inn” as “a symbolic work,” the proximity of the two corpses indicates that the two incompatible armies are much alike.<sup>75</sup> Through this brief moment, Wang might have proposed a reconciliatory end to the Chinese Civil War.

In the narrative of “Dragon Inn,” the Chinese Civil War “ends” with a return to the setting of 1960s Taiwan. Shifting the narrative back to the present, Wang disrupts the flow of storytelling that accounts for the miseries inflicted by the Chinese Communist Party. The disruption is done through Staff Officer Duan’s aphasia. Unlike other Nationalist officers articulating their anticommunist sentiment as they fluently recount their Civil War experience, Staff Officer Duan “had not said a single word, yet he had never ceased to smile.”<sup>76</sup> Although his aphasia is believed to be an outcome of Communist persecution, Staff Officer Duan’s inability to narrativize his past, in Wang’s arrangement, ends the sequence of anticommunist narratives. Perhaps, symbolically, the aphasia is a critique of the steadfast anticommunist Nationalist regime in the real-time 1960s Taiwan. Under martial law, the critique could only be unspoken.

Although modernist literature in 1960s Taiwan is characterized by its heavy use of symbolism, “Dragon Inn” demonstrates a synthesis of symbolism and realism. In the early 1980s, Wang himself also modified his assessment of the novella from “a symbolic work” to an inclination for “symbolic realism.”<sup>77</sup> In this sense, “Dragon Inn” is not a story reminiscing about a “China” lost to communism; it touches on the circumstance in which Wang lived and wrote, that is, an U.S.-allied island under martial law against the backdrop of the Cold War.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>75</sup> Postscript to “Dragon Inn,” in Wang’s short story collection, *Dragon Inn* [龍天樓] (Taipei: Dalin, 1978), 181. The original: 「龍天樓」是篇象徵性作品，不能以寫實主義的立場去衡量它。

<sup>76</sup> Wang, “Dragon Inn” (trans. Steven L. Riep), *Endless War: Fiction and Essays by Wang Wen-Hsing*, 340.

<sup>77</sup> See “Wang Wenxing on Wang Wenxing,” an interview with Wang by Te-hsing Shan in 1983, collected in *Reading Wang Wenxing: Critical Essays*, 278.

In particular, Wang depicts a resemblance between the Nationalist regime and Colonel Qin, addressing the reality of 1960s Taiwan under martial law, and an unequal, neocolonial relationship between the U.S. and the Republic of China. In the setting of Taiwan in 1962, General Guan and Colonel Lu run a soymilk stall together; General Zha devotes himself to agriculture; Colonel Qin, with some reluctance, admits that he works as a doorman at an American minister's church. While his comrades express an envy for Colonel Qin's salary in U.S. dollars, which have a higher value than Taiwan dollars, he retorts that he is paid with only three hundred Taiwan dollars while the American minister covers his clothing, food, and lodging. Such a patronage by an American church of a former Nationalist officer in 1960s Taiwan calls attention to the economic and military aids provided by the U.S. government to the Nationalist regime. Chiang's government was not only a recipient of the U.S. aid but also a de facto protectorate of the former. Symbolically and realistically, Colonel Qin's discontent, embarrassment, and resentment, can be read to reflect Chiang Kai-shek regime's reluctant subservience to the U.S. The analogy between Colonel Qin and the Nationalist regime is further represented through the former's testimony of his fierce anticommunist suppression in Shanxi during the Chinese Civil War. As Wang wrote in the first-person viewpoint of Colonel Qin:

First I rounded up all of the Communist spies who were operating in the area, hauled them to the city market in trucks and had them shot. Then I imprisoned all of those people whose backgrounds seemed even remotely in doubt, including rounding up the three closest friends of each Communist spy. I shot a lot of them, too. I closed the two secondary schools in the country seat and locked up all of the teaching staff. I had most of these teachers, many of whom

were women, killed. Naturally, there were some innocent people but I would rather have killed ten innocent people than let one enemy spy go free.<sup>78</sup>

Having lived through the White Terror of the 1950s Taiwan, Wang must have been familiar with the anxiety about communist infiltration, the violence carried out by the Nationalist regime, and the fear of being imprisoned, persecuted, and murdered if one could be vaguely associated with “communist bandits and spies.” In the above passage, Colonel Qin not only embodies the Nationalist Party during the Civil War, but also symbolizes the anticommunist White Terror in early Cold War Taiwan. As Colonel Qin defends his killing of people claiming that “[s]ome say I governed too harshly, but in times of disaster extraordinary measures are called for,” Wang reminded his readers of the legal basis of the White Terror, the Act for the Control and Punishment of Rebellion enacted in May 1949, underlying Colonel Qin’s rationale.<sup>79</sup>

“Dragon Inn” was often considered as Wang’s preparatory work for his magnum opus, *Family Catastrophe*. Its unique style—modernist or not—resulted in a mixed evaluation of Wang’s works: some praised his innovative uses of language and form, while others criticized the excessive complexity and opacity that rendered the story incomprehensible. In response to both positive and negative reviews, Wang stated, “[M]y present writing style will definitely continue,” for “this is a battle about being honest in the use of language.”<sup>80</sup> Insisting on writing with honesty, Wang asked a rhetorical question, “If you cannot be honest with the words you write, what kind of literature is that? What kind of pleasure could come from writing without honesty?”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Wang, “Dragon Inn” (trans. Steven L. Riep), *Endless War: Fiction and Essays by Wang Wen-Hsing*, 310-11.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>80</sup> See Wang, “Endless War” (trans. Martin Sulev), originally published in Chinese in 1987; later collected in *Endless War: Fiction and Essays by Wang Wen-Hsing*, 384.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

## U.S. Social Fractures in “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?”

Both Carver and Wang resonated with the fastidious writer Hemingway, believing that the refinement of writing would result in satisfaction and pleasure. In his frequently cited essay “On Writing” (1981), Carver made a statement that was almost identical with Wang’s: “But if the writing can’t be made as good as it is within us to make it, then why do it? In the end, the satisfaction of having done our best, and the proof of that labor, is the one thing we can take into the grave.”<sup>82</sup> Regardless of this shared conviction of the unfailing precision of word choice and literary form, the trajectories of Wang and Carver to Iowa, as well as the subject matters of their short stories written during their studies at the IWW, are distinctively different.

Carver was first a student and then a teacher of creative writing. His career from the late 1950s onward was closely intertwined with the institutionalization of creative writing. After graduating from high school, Carver worked at a drugstore and continued his study at Chico State College. He enrolled in John Gardner’s Creative Writing 101 in Fall 1959, and published his debut short story “The Furious Seasons” the next year. Credited by Carver as his most significant mentor, Gardner was an IWW graduate who taught creative writing in fiction for his entire career.<sup>83</sup> In the early 1970s, Carver became a teacher of creative writing and had taught at University of California, Santa Cruz, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of California, Santa Barbara. In 1972, he became a student of creative writing again at Stanford University; next year, he returned to the IWW, this time as a lecturer.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Carver, “On Writing” (1981) collected in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, edited by William Stull and Maureen Carroll (New York: Library of America, 2009), 731.

<sup>83</sup> Carver, “Fires,” collected in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, 745. The essay was firstly published in autumn, 1982. In Carver’s original words, “Influences. John Gardner and Gordon Lish. They hold irredeemable notes. But my children are it.”

<sup>84</sup> See the chronology in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, and Carol Sklenicka, *Raymond Carver: a Writer’s Life*.



After Carver established his status as a writer in the late 1970s, he revealed how much he was influenced by the discipline of creative writing programs. Shortly after his recovery from alcoholism and his literary breakthrough, Carver's status as a short story author enabled him to give some lessons about what it took to be a writer. In "On Writing," he mentioned ambition, some luck, and talent ("I don't know any writers who are without it"), but emphasized more "a unique and exact way of looking at things, and finding the right context for expressing that way of looking."<sup>85</sup> He explained further: "*The World According to Garp* is, of course, the marvelous world according to John Irving. There is another world according to Flannery O'Connor, and others according to William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway."<sup>86</sup> Carver did not name these writers randomly. Flannery O'Connor, who received her MFA from the University of Iowa in 1947, is perhaps the most renowned female writer in the IWW history. The prolific John Irving, who enrolled in the IWW in 1965 and studied with Kurt Vonnegut, has mentioned Iowa and the IWW in nearly all his novels. In addition to these two, Carver evoked Faulkner and Hemingway, two American Nobel laureates in literature whose significance to the creative writing discipline and to literary Cold War modernism could not be overstated.

In contrast to Wang's "Dragon Inn," Carver's short stories composed in Iowa City, "The Student's Wife" and "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" have a narrower scope and a simpler narrative framework. Set in American nuclear families, Carver's stories deal with problems that supposedly belong to the private sphere such as insomnia or adultery, presenting in detail a portrait of troubled individuals or frustrated married couples in postwar U.S. society. The most noted among his earlier works, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" tells the story of Ralph Wyman and how he deals with his wife's one-time betrayal. The

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<sup>85</sup> "On Writing" in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, 728.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

narrative begins with Ralph's leaving his original family for college, and then describes how the college student enters his "lowest ebb" and suffers from alcoholism.<sup>87</sup> After Ralph meets his teacher Dr. Maxwell and his future wife Marian, he recovers from alcoholism and changes his life. Ralph and Marian get married and become school teachers. They buy a house, settle down, and form their family with one daughter and one son. This image of an ordinary, middle-class American nuclear family, however, has "a single injury to their marriage" that "they had never talked about since."<sup>88</sup> The narrative soon turns to Marian's confession of her infidelity and Ralph's departure from their home, after which the setting changes to Second Street, a quasi-slum area, where Ralph gets drunk, gambles on cards, loses money, and gets mugged by a "small Negro in a leather jacket."<sup>89</sup> Wounded and dejected, Ralph catches sight of the cars of mill workers passing by on an early Monday morning; precisely at this moment, he feels a sense of coldness that quickens his pace to home.

Simple as it is, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" presents a complete story with fully developed characters and plot. Following the footsteps of a distressed husband, Carver delineates a narrative in which the protagonist leaves his middle-class home to the working-class streets, and then returns. The story provides Ralph's background as the exposition, the conflict between him and Marian as the rising action, what has happened in Second Street as the climax, his way home as the falling action, and finally, his arrival at home as the resolution. Well-structured and concise, Carver's short stories have become required reading for creative writing curriculum in the U.S.<sup>90</sup>

Although Carver focuses on the micro in his stories, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" illustrates a U.S. society and its contradictions as Carver experienced them. Born into a working-class family, Carver lived through financial difficulties for years before his

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<sup>87</sup> Carver, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" (1966) in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, 171.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>90</sup> Mark McGurl, *The Program Era*, 29.

rise to fame. After a year at the IWW, Carver left without receiving a degree. Although he had been working a few jobs, his family filed for bankruptcy in April 1967. After a few months, Carver returned to the University of Iowa, with an intention to become a librarian, a plan that he had to abandon because of his father's death. Before long, Carver was hired as a textbook editor at the educational publishing firm of Science Research Associates (SRA) in Palo Alto, California, his "first white-collar job" that relieved some of the family's financial burden.<sup>91</sup> However, in September 1970, Carver lost the job. A year later, he was finally hired by the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he started his teaching career in creative writing. Throughout the first half of the 1970s, Carver shuttled between universities and residences to get by and support his family. Their economic hardship remained, and Carver's dependence on alcohol increased. Years of socio-economic instability and Carver's deteriorating health finally came to a stop, when *Will You Please Be Quite, Please?* was published in 1976 and positively reviewed.

Because of the self-referential tendency in Carver's works, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" reveals how the writer viewed a U.S. society fractured by race, gender, and class. In addition to highlighting racial conflict through the "small Negro" and the mugging, Carver showcased the class division between Ralph's home and Second Street. Written around the mid-1960s, the short story also alludes to the rise of second-wave feminism via the figure of Marian.

Although Marian is positively portrayed, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" demonstrates a male viewpoint (of Carver and Ralph) that sidelines female presence. In 1963, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was published and became a national bestseller. Often credited as prompting Women's Liberation Movement in this period, *The Feminine Mystique* urges women to seek for personal fulfillment and meaningful profession, instead of

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<sup>91</sup> See *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, 964.

being confined by marriage and housewifery.<sup>92</sup> As if following Friedan's appeal, Marian is not only a housewife-mother but also a high school teacher soon to be offered a post as a college instructor. In contrast, her husband, Ralph, in order to be on par with his wife, transforms from an alcoholic, aimless college student to a married school teacher with two children. Moving upward from his "lowest ebb" to a middle-class house, Ralph has come "a long way in his life."<sup>93</sup> Marian's capability leads to Ralph's insecurity. The woman is portrayed as going against the feminine mystique, while the man is confronting a crisis of masculinity. As Carver described, when staring at Marian, Ralph is reminded of "something from a film, an intensely dramatic moment into which Marian could be fitted but he could not."<sup>94</sup> Yet, as "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" suggests, it was not the accomplishment of a capable woman but the insecurity of a vulnerable man about which Carver cared.<sup>95</sup> As the narrative unfolds, the portrayal of Marian as a liberal woman yields to Ralph's short travelogue to the rundown area.

Through Ralph's leaving and returning home, Carver indicates that in order to obtain upward social mobility in U.S. society, one has to dis-identify with the working class and affirms the ideal image of American family. Ralph's journey ends with his disidentification with the working-class mill workers. Triggered by a sudden feeling of coldness, the moment of his disidentification occurs right before he returns home and resolves his conflict with Marian. "It was cold," as Carver wrote, "He walked as fast as he could . . . He came at last to his house."<sup>96</sup> Without specifying who it is that feels cold, Carver allows readers to feel Ralph's coldness, and evokes the presence of the narrator, Carver himself. As if verbalizing

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<sup>92</sup> See Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> Carver, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" (1966), collected in *Raymond Carver: Collected Stories*, 172.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> For Raymond Carver's focus on the pains of white middle-class Americans in the neoliberal context, see Yohei Sekiguchi, "Father Nurtures Best: Neoliberal Melodrama of Beset Nurturing Fatherhood in the Late Twentieth Century" (PhD dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2018).

<sup>96</sup> Carver, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?," 186.

his own coldness as a working-class writer, Carver sheds light on his socio-economic status that, unlike Ralph's, seemed unable to move upward at that time. Ralph's middle-class identity and marriage are restored in the story, but Carver himself was still struggling at this time. For Carver, Ralph could be both an object of resentment and a subject of becoming. "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" reveals Carver's discontent with and desire for social mobility, but as it leaves the division between classes as it is, the short story also indicates the difficulty of moving upward around the mid-1960s, despite the fact that liberalism was at its peak.

In the early 1980s, Carver came to be recognized as a representative writer of the renaissance of American short stories. Throughout the Cold War, he continued to engage with the institution of creative writing, and write about the lives of the lower- to middle-class American white males with a Hemingway-esque, self-referential tendency. Carver's works lived under the shadows of not only Hemingway but also the Cold War modernist project, even though he denied that Hemingway was his primary influence.

The crisscross of Carver's socio-economic hardship and Wang's proximity to war evidences how the U.S. tactically dealt with and gained from the divisions at home and abroad. In East Asia, the U.S. strategically perpetuated the status quo of a divided China for its national interests and homeland security. The Nationalist-Communist reconciliation as proposed in Wang's "Dragon Inn," albeit symbolic and brief, hints at the writer's proximity to a probable civil war, and possibly his critique of the U.S. intervention. Compared to Wang, Carver was relatively safe from war in the continental U.S., as all the hot wars that the U.S. was involved in during the Cold War were waged elsewhere. Predicated on the divisions and unsafety of others, the homeland of the U.S. remained intact in the Cold War. "Our country is

one,” proudly proclaimed by Faulkner.<sup>97</sup> However, supposedly unified under the Cold War consensus, the U.S. was in fact divided by class, race, and gender, as allegorized in “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?.” The national unity and security of the U.S. did not provide Carver—and American citizens with lower socio-economic status—a safe environment to live. In contrast to Carver, Wang enjoyed a higher socio-economic status enabled by the network of the U.S.-Taiwan education exchange, despite his geographical proximity to war. After his graduation from the IWW, Wang worked briefly as a part-timer at a Chinese restaurant in Washington D.C. With his newly earned degree from an U.S. university, Wang was soon offered a teaching position by his alma mater, National Taiwan University. After teaching for four years, he was invited as a research fellow at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he stayed for a year. Never has Wang’s path crossed again with Carver’s.

“Dragon Inn” and “Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?” demonstrate how Cold War modernism might have been only effective as a literary form. Whereas the Cold War modernist project was successfully implemented in the U.S. creative writing programs and transmitted across the Pacific, it could not contain the divisions and conflicts through which the writers lived and about which they had written. Carver and Wang were connected through the U.S. Cold War modernist project, but they engaged themselves with “modernism” in their own ways. Carver was informed by the tradition of modernism through the institution of creative writing, and Wang was engaged with the modernist literary scene in 1960s Taiwan through *Modern Literature*. Each of their “modernism” was grounded in a distinct time and place, while the ways that the U.S. designed and fought the Cold War connected Carver and Wang. Between these two writers is a set of geopolitical entanglements that exposed the illusion of the U.S. as a democratic, harmoniously unified nation.

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<sup>97</sup> Faulkner, “To the Youth of Japan” (1956), 82.

**Chapter Four**  
**Freedom Translated in Iowa City:**  
**Nieh Hualing and the International Writing Program**

I walked on while eating, without any scruples. All etiquettes of the world are meant to constrain humanities. I felt incredibly free in front of Uncle Yinzhi. Freedom, yes, that was the pleasure that I felt in front of him.<sup>1</sup>

—Nieh Hualing, 1960

Six months after the first issue of *Modern Literature* was published, an incident struck intellectuals all over Taiwan: on September 4, 1960, the editor of *Free China*, Lei Chen, and some members of its editorial board including Ma Zhisu and Fu Zheng, were arrested. *Free China*, a liberal, anticommunist periodical published since November 1949, was simultaneously forced to an end. The editor of its literary supplement, Nieh Hualing, experienced an aggressive search of her house without warrant, because Fu Zheng was at that time her tenant. “Thoroughly powerless, I sat on the chair without moving a bit,” Nieh recalled, “they deal with [us] one by one; first Fu Zheng, and then Nieh Hualing. They are coming soon. I shall sit here and wait.”<sup>2</sup> The Nationalist regime, for some reason, did not come after Nieh, but Nieh’s household came under surveillance after that point.<sup>3</sup> It was during this difficult time that Nieh wrote her first novel, *The Lost Golden Bell*, a quasi-autobiographical bildungsroman about her carefree teenage days in the mainland China that, perhaps, indicates her longing for freedom in martial-law Taiwan. Four years later, Nieh escaped surveillance by joining the Iowa Writers’ Workshop (IWW). In 1967, she founded the International Writing Program (IWP) with Paul Engle.

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<sup>1</sup> See Nieh, *The Lost Golden Bell* [失去的金玲子] (Taipei: Darling, 1969). The novel was first published in 1960 and serialized on the literary supplement of *United Daily News* (or, *Lianhe fukan* 聯合副刊) in 1961. The original: 我邊走邊吃，毫無顧忌。天下的禮儀，都是束縛人性的。我在尹之舅舅面前感到非常自由。自由，對了，那正是我在他面前感到的樂趣。

<sup>2</sup> See Nieh, *Three Lives* [三輩子] (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 2011), 189. The original: 我渾身無力，坐在椅子上，一動也不動。他們是一個個下手。先擒傅正，再拿聶華苓。他們就要來了。我就坐在那兒等吧。

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 222. Nieh remembered that the Taiwan Garrison Command not only arranged plainclothes personnel around Nieh’s house but also investigated the family at night with an excuse of conducting census.

With the Pacific in between, Nieh enjoyed her freedom while continuing to concern herself with Chinese literature and the changes in the “two Chinas” situation. Chinese writers from Taiwan and Hong Kong were invited to the IWP every year from 1967 to 1974, when the signification of “China” and “Chinese” shifted. Richard Nixon’s 1972 visit to the People’s Republic of China marked the fundamental change, though the Baodiao (lit. “protecting the Diaoyutai Islands”) Movement from 1970 onward had already prompted a large group of Chinese overseas students in the U.S. to identify themselves with the PRC rather than with the ROC, the “free china.”<sup>4</sup> Wan Kin-lau, a Hong Kong poet who joined the IWP in 1968, was one telling instance. After his involvement in the Baodiao Movement, not only did his writing style turn to a left-leaning realism that celebrated workers and the forthcoming revolution,<sup>5</sup> Wan appreciated Nixon’s visit to the PRC and urged the U.S. government to recognize Taiwan as a part of China.<sup>6</sup> Similarly considering Nixon’s visit as a “very good idea,” Nieh spoke more cautiously about the “two Chinas” situation, suggesting that the Taiwanese “should decide for themselves the future of the island.”<sup>7</sup>

The contrast between Nieh and Wan indicates how Nieh carefully associated herself with not only the U.S. and “China” but also with American and Chinese intellectuals on both sides of the Pacific. This chapter explores how the IWP became a stage for Nieh to fulfill what she wanted to do as a Chinese female writer in the U.S. From *Free China* to the IWW and then the IWP, Nieh’s trajectory suggests how the “transpacific” was formed through a

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<sup>4</sup> More below.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, “Witness the ‘release’ of Zheng Zaolin with Happiness” [喜看鄭灶林「被釋」], originally written in June 1974. One of the stanzas: I want to live again / With further excitement to see / Such a force of yours / Rendering the colonizers and capitalists / All “exploiters exploited” / I want to witness with my own eyes / You’ve earned the city built with your own sweat and blood / Savoring the fruit born out of your own toil (in *A Collection of Bitter Green* [苦綠集] (Taipei: Asian Culture [允晨文化], 1989, 321). My translation; the original: 我要再活一次 / 要更興奮地看到 / 你們這股力量 / 使殖民者和資本家 / 這一切「剝奪者被剝奪」 / 我要親眼看到 / 你們取得了用自己血汗建造起來的城市 / 享用你們自己勞動的果實

<sup>6</sup> See Steve Moore, “Chinese Here React Favorably to Nixon Trip” *The Daily Iowan* (February 28, 1972) <<http://dailyiowan.lib.uiowa.edu/DI/1972/di1972-02-28.pdf>>, page 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



U.S. discourse of freedom that Nieh then deployed to her own ends. This chapter demonstrates how the IWP granted Nieh freedom to enact her role as a Chinese, a woman, a writer, and a translator, all of which authorized her to translate “China” into the literary scene of Iowa City. Tracing her self-positioning and connections with writers and intellectuals on both shores of the Pacific, this chapter simultaneously illustrates a network comprised of Chinese and Americans, whose writings reveal a discursive morphology of Cold War liberalism. The politico-literary products of the IWP demonstrate that while the U.S. deployed “freedom” to win the consent of others, freedom could be discursively practiced and appropriated in various ways.

### **Freedom Found: From *Free China* to the IWP**

Nieh’s life in mainland China from 1925 to 1949 is also a history of modern China before the division between “free China” and Communist China. Born in 1925 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, Nieh grew up with a newly founded, turbulent Republic of China (ROC) in the mainland. The invasion of Chinese territory and sovereignty by Western and Japanese empires was intertwined with the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists. On July 7, 1937, when the Marco Polo Bridge Incident instigated the full-fledged Japanese invasion in China, the Nationalist Army and the Red Army were formed into the Second United Front to fight. Concurrently, Nieh began her first year of middle school, but her education was soon interrupted and she was forced to leave for Sandouping, a highland small town in Hubei Province next to the Yangtzu River. The small town would become the setting for *The Lost Golden Bell*. Along with thousands of “students in exile,” Nieh received her education in the midst of war. Whereas the War against Japan ended with the victory of the Allied forces, the conflict between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party intensified.

The Chinese Civil War escalated, and Nieh was compelled to choose whether to stay on the mainland with the Communist Party or cross over the Taiwan Strait with the Nationalist Party. In the meantime, Nieh graduated in 1948 with a bachelor's degree in English from National Central University in Nanjing. In January 1949, the People's Liberation Army triumphantly entered the city of Beijing. Nieh and her family were relocated from Guangzhou and arrived in Taipei in June 1949. Similar to her exile on the mainland, Nieh's migration to Taiwan was not merely an individual, exceptional experience. By the end of 1949, Nieh became one of the more than a million migrants crossing the Taiwan Strait to the island. The relocation of Chiang Kai-shek's regime to Taiwan, along with Nationalist officials, soldiers, and commoners from the Chinese mainland, substantially changed the demography of the island. As Nieh self-consciously described her newcomer identity, "When arriving in Taiwan, I am of course a *waishengren*."<sup>8</sup> Literally meaning "extra-provincial person," *waishengren* mainly refers to the Han Chinese who relocated to Taiwan from the mainland after the Second Sino-Japanese War and during the Chinese Civil War.<sup>9</sup>

Thanks to her connection with *waishengren* Chinese liberal intellectuals, Nieh soon started working for the *Free China* journal after having settled down in Taipei. As the editor of *Free China*'s literary supplement throughout its eleven-year publication, Nieh characterized it as "a weird combination, a journal situated between the open-minded Nationalists and the liberal intellectuals."<sup>10</sup> Instigated by Hu Shih, one of the most significant Chinese liberal intellectuals since the May Fourth Movement, *Free China* defined itself as a periodical of liberalism independent of any political influence. However, in preparing for the

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<sup>8</sup> Nieh, Prologue to *Three Lives*, 12. The original: 到了台灣，我當然是外省人。

<sup>9</sup> The term *waishengren* is used in contrast to *benshengren* (lit. "original-provincial person"), the Han Chinese who had migrated to and lived in Taiwan since the Qing dynasty or earlier.

<sup>10</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, 181. The original: 《自由中國》創辦時就是這麼一個奇怪的組合，是介乎國民黨的開明人士和自由主義知識分子之間的一個刊物。

publication of *Free China*, the Chinese liberal intellectuals including Hu Shih unanimously undertook the mission of “saving China” from the Chinese Communist Party and hence aligned themselves politically closer to the Chinese Nationalist Party. The editor Lei Chen recalled their preparatory work in the midst of the Chinese Civil War, “As half of China still remained and existed [in March 1949], we citizens of China met frequently [to discuss] how to devote ourselves to saving our country . . . the result was to publish a journal to promote freedom and democracy.”<sup>11</sup> This anticommunist patriotism combined with a liberal stance was explicitly manifested in Hu Shih’s essay for the first issue of *Free China*:

Today, as we have seen, any place over which the military force of the Communist Party had trampled was immediately wrapped by an extremely solid iron curtain. Under that iron curtain, there is neither news on papers nor freedom of speech. Other basic kinds of freedom for the people, indeed, cannot be in existence. This is the most fundamental obscurantism that even despots of the ancient time dared not to practice, and this is exactly the terror of the iron curtain systematically set by international communism. We cannot sit by and let such a horrendous iron curtain spread throughout entire China. Therefore, we commenced this group as a starting point for the “Free China” movement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See Lei Chen’s memoir [雷震回憶錄：我的母親續篇] (Hong Kong: The Seventies Press, 1978), 59. The original: 我們經常見面，對於時局應該如何來盡國民一分子之力量來圖挽救，因為中國還有半壁江山存在也。我們集談結果，主張辦個刊物，宣傳自由與民主。

<sup>12</sup> See *Free China* 1.1 (November 20, 1949), 2. The original: 我們在今天，眼看共產黨的武力踏到的地方，立刻就罩下了一層十分嚴密的鐵幕。在那鐵幕底下，報紙完全沒有新聞，言論完全失去自由，其他的人民基本自由更無法存在。這是古代專制帝王不敢行的最徹底的愚民政治，這正是國際共產主義有計劃的鐵幕恐怖。我們實在不能坐視這種可怕的鐵幕普遍到全中國。因此，我們發起這個結合，作為『自由中國』運動的一個起點。

Expressing a strong anxiety about the spread of communism in not only China but the whole world, Hu Shih considered *Free China* not merely a periodical but a “movement” to defend freedom.

The shared objective of combating communism united the Nationalist Party and *Free China* together, but the “honeymoon” between an authoritative regime and a liberal journal soon came to an end.<sup>13</sup> Only when the stance of *Free China* “did not cause serious conflicts with the actual authority [i.e., the Nationalist regime]” would the ROC government tolerate the journal’s “reformist proposition about freedom and democracy,” as Nieh accurately observed from her participation in the editorial meetings.<sup>14</sup> Her *Free China* colleagues, likewise, would be supportive of the Nationalist regime, as long as the government could be democratic and free to a certain degree. However, the journal did not shy away from its disagreement with the Nationalist Party; before long it started to directly criticize the Party’s authoritarian control of citizens and shortly after, the de-facto single-party system.<sup>15</sup> *Free China* would soon be accused of violating the Act for the Control and Punishment of Rebellion, the Act for the Prosecution of Espionage, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Law of the Armed Forces, and the Measures to Regulate Newspapers, Magazines, and Book Publication.<sup>16</sup> In December 1954, Lei Chen was expelled from the Nationalist Party, after which he devoted himself even more to what Hu Shih called the “‘Free China’ movement.”

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<sup>13</sup> Taiwanese historians of the early martial law period often use “honeymoon” to describe the initial relationship between *Free China* and the Chiang Kai-shek regime. See, for example, Yang Hsiu-chin [楊秀菁], “Evaluating the Ten Years’ Sentence to Imprisonment Passed by the KMT: the Lei Chen’s Case and Freedom of Speech in Taiwan” [權衡下的 10 年罪責：雷震案與 1950 年代的言論自由問題] *Bulletin of Academia Historica* [國史館館刊] 40 (June 2014), 103-138; and a more canonical monograph of *Free China* and Lei Chen, Hsueh Hua-yuan [薛化元], *Free China and Democratic Constitution* [自由中國與民主憲政] (Taipei: Daw Shiang Publishing, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, 181. The original: 《自由中國》對於自由民主的改革主張，也應該是國民黨政所能容忍的，與現實權利應該不會有嚴重的衝突。

<sup>15</sup> During the martial law years, the Chinese Youth Party and the China Democratic Socialist Party were the de-jure opposition parties in the Republic of China in Taiwan. Much as they were recognized by the Nationalist government as “legal,” these two “parties” were too weak to be effectively oppositional to the Chinese Nationalist Party.

<sup>16</sup> See Chen Shih-hung [陳世宏], et al., *Archival Collection of the Lei Chen Case: Selected Documents of the Ministry of Defense* [雷震案史料彙編：國防部檔案選輯] (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2002).

The next major clash occurred in October 1956, after the journal published several essays criticizing Chiang Kai-shek's second presidential term in a special issue that nominally celebrated the Generalissimo's birthday. This special issue of *Free China* was immediately censored and prohibited from circulation.

Under this circumstance, Nieh neither resigned from the politically sensitive journal nor did she fully participate in *Free China*'s political movement. She continued to serve on the editorial board and enjoyed "auditing" how *Free China* intellectuals discussed and debated the political situation.<sup>17</sup> Friendly with all her colleagues, Nieh described herself as an auditor, indicating the distance between her position and others. As she recalled, after the editorial meeting, Lei Chen would treat everyone to a meal at a restaurant, "and they just talked about how to form a party, when to hold meetings, without evading me. They knew that the actual politics were not of my concern, and knew that I would not spoil their works, so they had nothing to worry about."<sup>18</sup> The youngest and the only female on the editorial board, Nieh was trusted by her colleagues despite her indifference to the political movement of *Free China*—or, was trusted precisely because of her disinterest in politics, perhaps. Nieh kept her apolitical position while essays about forming an opposition party occasionally appeared in the journal.

In addition to activism discursively practiced in *Free China*, Lei Chen started to delineate actual steps for the idea of forming a new party. In particular, when Chiang Kai-shek was unconstitutionally re-elected as the president in March 1960, Lei Chen actively devoted himself to this effort. A series of editorial notes openly critical of the Nationalist regime were published, culminating in Lei Chen's "Why We Desperately Need a Powerful

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<sup>17</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, 181. "Audit" (旁聽) was the exact word that Nieh used.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 188. The original: 他們就在那兒談論如何組黨，何時開會，也不避諱我。他們知道實際政治不是我的事，也知道我不會壞他們的事，用不著他們擔心。

Opposition Party.”<sup>19</sup> Lei Chen, a *waishengren* (Han Chinese mainlander), explained to his colleagues two important commitments: “First, avoid separating the Taiwanese and the mainlanders [into two groups]; second, fundraising.”<sup>20</sup> Besides the Taiwanese (*benshengren*), Lei Chen knew well that it would be helpful—and safer—to obtain support from the U.S. In contact with several American journalists including *Life* and the *Washington Post*,<sup>21</sup> Lei Chen even tried to meet with the U.S. President Eisenhower during his one-day Taipei visit en route to Tokyo, to no avail.<sup>22</sup> That said, the U.S. Embassy in Taipei did support Lei Chen’s idea, at least up to May 22, as Lei Chen recorded in his diary, “[Everett] Drumright and [David] Osborn,” the ambassador and the political counselor of the Embassy, “both praised the establishing of a new party.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, the support from the U.S. had begun as early as in January 1953, when the Asia Foundation (TAF) started to fund *Free China* for their shared anticommunist, liberal objective.

Yet, the TAF-*Free China* collaboration based on Cold War liberalism and realpolitik indicated the shaping of the anticommunist alliance between the U.S. government and the Chiang Kai-shek regime, as well as the limitation of the sponsorship from U.S. agencies to the local agents. Similar to the ways in which *Modern Literature* was sponsored by and circulated through the USISs, TAF had subscribed to *Free China*: a thousand copies per issue

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<sup>19</sup> See *Free China*, “How Do President Chiang Account for [his re-election] to History?” [蔣總統如何向歷史交待?] (22.7 [April 1, 1960]), “How Could the Nationalist Party Repeat Its Old Trick of Convening an Illegal Campaign?” [國民黨豈可重演違法競選的故技?] (22.8 [April, 16, 1960]), “Is Such a Regional Election ‘Fair and Legal’?” [這樣的地方選舉能算「公平合法」嗎?] (22.9 [May 1, 1960]), and “Why We Desperately Need a Powerful Opposition Party” [為什麼我們迫切需要一個強有力的反對黨] (22.10 [May 16, 1960]).

<sup>20</sup> See Lei Chen’s diary (May 21, 1960) in *Complete Works of Lei Chen Vol. 40: the First Decade* [雷震全集 40：第一個十年（八）], edited by Fu Zheng (Taipei: Laureate Books, 1990), 313. The original: 第一、要力避台灣人與大陸人的分開；第二、要想法籌款。

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Lei Chen’s diary (July 8, 1960), 344.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Lei Chen’s diary (July 10, 1960), 347.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Lei Chen’s diary (May 22, 1960), 314. The original: 莊萊德和奧斯本均稱讚新黨之成立。

that would be sent to overseas Chinese in Asia.<sup>24</sup> The manager of the journal at that time, Ma Zhisu, explained the rationale behind the collaboration between *Free China* and TAF:

Because *Free China* was meant to promote anticommunism and espouse freedom and democracy, it corresponded exactly with the principle of “the Asia Foundation,” which utilized the anticommunist culture of the local to actively fight against communism and hence achieved the objective of containing the spread of communism in Asia, without directly offending the communist party. They obviously put a lot of effort into this.<sup>25</sup>

The collaboration, however, was not always smooth. During the *Free China*-Chiang honeymoon, Lei Chen was hesitant about being funded by TAF, given that the Foundation also sponsored some Chinese intellectuals in Hong Kong who were both anticommunist and anti-Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>26</sup> In the latter half of the 1950s, when the relationship between *Free China* and the Nationalist regime deteriorated and that between the ROC and the U.S. solidified, it was TAF that became hesitant about its association with the journal. In April 1960, the TAF personnel even asked the *Free China* editors to be “less provocative” about the Nationalist Party.<sup>27</sup>

The Cold War liberalism of the U.S. government demonstrated its contradictions further after Lei Chen was arrested by Chiang’s regime. The U.S. news media such as *The New York Times* and *Time* were critical of the Chiang Kai-shek regime and sympathetic with *Free China*; the government front, however, chose not to sabotage the relationship with the

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<sup>24</sup> See Ma Zhisu [馬之驢], *Lei Chen and Chiang Kai-shek* [雷震與蔣介石] (Taipei: Independence Evening Post Cultural Press, 1993), 115-124.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. The original: 因《自由中國》的言論是宣傳反共倡言自由民主。正符合「亞洲協會」的宗旨，他們是利用駐在國的反共文化積極反共，以達防堵共產主義在亞洲蔓延之目的，但不正面得罪共產黨，可見其用心良苦。

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>27</sup> See Lei Chen’s diary (April 21, 1960) in *Complete Works of Lei Chen Vol. 40: the First Decade* [雷震全集 40：第一個十年（八）], edited by Fu Zheng (Taipei: Laureate Books, 1990), 294.

Nationalist government.<sup>28</sup> In other words, the U.S. preferred maintaining the geopolitical status quo of the Cold War over intervening in a case of human rights violation. While the U.S. ambassador to the ROC, Drumright, initially acknowledged Lei Chen's idea of forming an opposition party, he later briefed the State Department that "it would be risky on our part to rebuke Chiang for checkmating Lei."<sup>29</sup> Valuing U.S. geopolitical interests higher than liberal ideals, Drumright concluded, "In my judgment, we really have no alternative in terms of our own security but to continue policy of past decade which is to work with Chiang and KMT. Neither world situation nor objective conditions here permit luxury of free organized political opposition."<sup>30</sup> Even though Lei Chen's daughter managed to meet with the Deputy of Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs John M. Steeves two days after her father's arrest, Steeves and other U.S. officials of the Far Eastern Affairs only agreed that the case was an act of political repression but did not come to the Leis' aid.<sup>31</sup> "Because the Communist China has usurped the mainland and hence claimed a position oppositional to the U.S.," explained Lei Chen's daughter, "the U.S. would still support Taiwan [i.e., the ROC ruled by the Chiang Kai-shek regime], but gave permission [for us] to protest privately."<sup>32</sup> The stance of the U.S. government was clear: as long as the protest remained "private," the U.S. would be supportive of the Leis.

Shortly after, due to the geopolitical situation in East Asia, the U.S. stopped supporting the *Free China* intellectuals. The U.S.'s evaluation of the regional circumstance, however, was made without fully grasping the complexity in each country. In response to

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<sup>28</sup> See *Complete Works of Lei Chen Vol. 6: the Shock of the Lei Chen Case at Home and Abroad* [雷震全集 6 : 雷案震驚海內外], edited by Fu Zheng (Taipei: Laureate Books, 1990), 406-13.

<sup>29</sup> See Drumright, "Telegram from the Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State" (Department of State, Central Files, 795B.00/10-760.) <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v19/d354>> accessed March 27, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> See Lei Te-chuang [雷德全], *My Mother Sung Yin* [我的母親——宋英] (Taipei: Laureate Books, 1996), 174.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 175. The original: 史蒂芬先生及其他國務院有關主管東亞事務的官員也表示對台灣不滿意，但因中共竊據大陸而與美國站在敵對的立場上，美國還是支持台灣，但同意私底下去抗議。



Drumright's telegram, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, J. Graham Parsons, associated the Lei Chen case with the April 19 Revolution in the Republic of Korea and hence agreed with the ambassador's judgement.<sup>33</sup> In April 1960, protesting against the fraudulence in the presidential election, Korean students and workers organized a nationwide movement that eventually compelled the ROK president Syngman Rhee to resign. The forced resignation of Syngman Rhee—who was “deposited” in Seoul by the U.S.—surely raised the alarm about the U.S.'s Cold War mapping in East Asia.<sup>34</sup> Parsons, nevertheless, misunderstood the ambivalent relationship between *Free China* intellectuals and the ROC government that Nieh accurately noted. Although highly critical of the Nationalist Party, the liberal intellectuals of *Free China*, unlike Koreans mobilizing themselves from the bottom up, did not intend to overthrow the Chiang Kai-shek regime. Instead, party politics and representative democracy were what they demanded—namely, a political form of liberalism embodied by the “free world.”<sup>35</sup> In this way, even if the *Free China* fellows had successfully intervened in the Nationalist single-party system, they would have embraced the discourse of Cold War liberalism and sustained the U.S. Cold War order in East Asia. Still, three months after Lei Chen's arrest, the U.S. government officials defined organizing a new opposition party in Taiwan as “‘untrammeled’ political activity that might lead to chaos and disaster.”<sup>36</sup>

Juxtaposed with the April 19 Revolution, the Lei Chen case revealed its conservatism firmly predicated on anticommunism; both, however, were similarly conditioned by the ways that the ROC and the ROK were two steadfast allies of the U.S. in the “free Asia.” On the one hand, as if seeking the U.S. government's permission for social changes at home, the

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<sup>33</sup> See Parsons, “Letter from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Ambassador to the Republic of China (Drumright)” (Department of State, CA Files: Lot 67 D 579, 1960—Chinese Nationalist Internal Affairs) <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v19/d361>> accessed March 27, 2018.

<sup>34</sup> See Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: a History* (New York: Random House, 2010), 58.

<sup>35</sup> See the editorial note of the last issue of *Free China*, “River of No Return!” [大江東流擋不住！], *Free China* 23.5 (September 1, 1960), 132-4.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted from Parsons's telegram to Drumright.

*Free China* intellectuals not only affirmed the role of the U.S. as the world police but also consented to the status of the ROC as a U.S. protectorate, or worse, a neo-colony. On the other hand, as the Korean sociologist and activist Kim Dong-Choon points out, although the 1960s witnessed the rise of South Korean student activism that intended to rework the political status quo perpetuated by the Cold War and the Korean Civil War, the “steps for political transformation could proceed only within the limitation of the Cold War ‘liberal consensus’.”<sup>37</sup> These South Korean student-activists, educated under and growing up with “the extreme anti-communist atmosphere,” could hardly imagine a political alternative other than “an ideal liberal democracy.”<sup>38</sup> As Kim critiques, some leaders of the movements aspired for an “American-type liberal democracy” without questioning the neocolonial relationship between the ROK and the U.S., “the legitimacy of the stationing of American troops at the heart of Seoul and U.S. control over South Korea military forces.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Kim’s critique is applicable to the ways in which the *Free China* intellectuals attentively asked for U.S. support and, after Lei Chen was arrested, desperately sought for U.S. intervention.

Whereas *Free China* as a liberal journal demonstrated an intimacy with anticommunism, Nieh’s literary supplement strived to go against the grain of literary anticommunism espoused by the Nationalist propaganda. Her opposition to anticommunism, nevertheless, was greatly informed by the “Cold War ‘liberal consensus’” that valued highly the freedom to compose literary works unaffected by any political regime. In the literary scene of the 1950s Taiwan, as Nieh recalled, “it was hard to see any work of pure literature outside of the anticommunist framework, and some people who were famous for [their]

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<sup>37</sup> Kim Dong-Choon, “The Great Upsurge of South Korea’s Social Movements in the 1960s” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7.4 (2006): 619-633, 624.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 627.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 626.

anticommunist works dominated the literary field in Taiwan.”<sup>40</sup> Appreciating “pure literature” much more than the anticommunist literature, Nieh was always thrilled to receive some “refreshing and gratifying” works that, as she believed, had little to do with the Nationalist propaganda.<sup>41</sup> In reminiscing on her days working for the *Free China* literary supplement, Nieh expressed her gratitude for her colleagues, because of whom “[her] interest in creative writing was able to be unleashed.”<sup>42</sup> Under the auspices of *Free China*, Nieh was granted the freedom to write and edit as she saw fit. When *Free China* was terminated along with the Lei Chen case, Nieh came under the surveillance of the Nationalist regime that took away her creative writing ground. “The white fear, Mother’s death, the incurability of marriage cancer,” as Nieh thought of her days in the early 1960s, “Living is only for the sake of my two children.”<sup>43</sup>

Nieh’s life turned around and began anew in Iowa City thanks to Paul Engle’s three-day visit to Taipei in 1963. At first, however, Nieh firmly declined Engle’s invitation to Iowa City, explaining that she might have already been restricted from traveling outbound due to her connections with *Free China*. In spite of that, Engle beseeched Nieh even more diligently, as she “looked very depressed” in Engle’s eyes.<sup>44</sup> Assisted by the USIS Taipei, the State Department, and the Rockefeller Foundation, Engle successfully practiced his chivalry by saving Nieh from a failed marriage and the authoritative Nationalist regime.<sup>45</sup> Nieh left Taipei for Iowa City in 1964, divorced her husband shortly after, and had her two daughters join her in 1965. In many ways, Nieh regained her freedom in Iowa City to write, to live, and

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<sup>40</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, 180. The original: 那時台灣文壇幾乎是清一色的反共八股，很難看到反共框框以外的純文學作品。有些以反共作品出名的人把持台灣文壇。

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. The original: 有時收到清新可喜的作品，我就和作者一再通信討論，一銅將稿子修改潤是登出。

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 182. The original: 我的個性受到尊重，我的創作興趣得以發揮。

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 282. The original: 白色恐懼，母親亡故，婚姻癌症無救。活著，只是為了兩個孩子。

<sup>44</sup> See Nieh’s recount of her encounter with Engle, *Three Lives*, 282-9. This part of Nieh’s memoir is mixed with Engle’s notes and letters that were very likely translated by Nieh. The original: 妳看起來很憂鬱的樣子。

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter Two for more information about the assistance Engle received from the USIS, the State Department, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Eric Bennett’s *Workshops of Empire*, especially his Paul Engle chapter, also provides a detailed study about how Engle’s 1963 Asia trip was supported and sponsored (71-116).

to love. The romance between Nieh and Engle continued, without which—according to the Engles’ reminiscence—the IWP would not have been born.

The Engles often described the IWP as an unintended yet lovely outcome of their romance. In Nieh’s account, the serendipity of the IWP happened as an event in their “wonderful life” on Iowa River:

. . . After swimming, Paul would get on the boat, have a sip of gin, and say to me, “What a wonderful life!”

Holding a glass in hand, we talked about everything. The boat was our Xanadu; it was also the humanity of the real world.

Precisely on that small boat, I said to Paul on a whim, “Why not establish an international writing program?”<sup>46</sup>

Likewise, in a co-authored essay celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the IWP, Nieh and Engle presented again this romantic episode. Employing the same aesthetic tone to highlight their leisure and intimacy against the tranquil scenery of the Iowa River, the Engles inserted more dialogue to make the story more vivid:

“I’ve been visiting and watching workshops,” she said softly. “You have a program for young Americans. Why don’t you make one for writers from other countries?”

It was then that Paul, his mouth full of one of the world’s greatest combination—gin, steak, and sweet corn—yelled, “Crazy. No way. It can’t be done.”

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<sup>46</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, 371. The original: ……他游完上船。喝一口杜松子酒，對我說：多好的生活！／我們一杯在手，無所不談。那條小船是我們的世外桃源，也有現世人景。／也就是在那條小船上，我突發奇想，對 Paul 說：何不創辦一個國際性的寫作計畫？

Hualing looked at him with a certain affection (to put it boldly) but with a greater pity: “But you built up the Writers Workshops from one little class. Do you call that crazy?”

Not yet having learned that small Chinese women are undefeatable, Paul foolishly went on: “How do we find those people? Take a flashlight and go down strange alleys at night where we can’t speak a word of the language? How do we get them here? How do we find money for them? Can they eat Iowa food? How will we know they don’t have criminal records? Will they get along with us and with each other? Will the University think they’re weird? What about . . .”

“Stop,” Hualing urged, in what was for her a loud voice (meaning it could be heard ten feet away). “I’ve never heard you so negative. You always liked new things. Why don’t you *try*? . . .”<sup>47</sup>

The dialogues portrayed a soft-voiced, “undefeatable” Nieh who embodied a femininity that was both stereotypically Asian and intellectually unconstrained, a portrayal that enchanted Engle and earned Nieh almost the entire credit for the establishment of the IWP.

Be it Nieh’s or Engle’s, the proposal of a new program for non-Americans might have been a solution to Engle’s worsening relationship with the English Department at the University of Iowa and its faculty.<sup>48</sup> In the mid-1960s, before Engle’s official resignation, George Starbuck had already been offered the position as the new director. Upon accepting the offer, Starbuck sent a long letter to Engle, the chair of the English Department John C. Gerber, and the dean of the Graduate College Dean Spriestersbach, identifying problems of the IWW that, as Starbuck implied, were the result of Engle’s long-term directorship. At first,

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Engle and Nieh Hualing, “The World Comes to Iowa,” *World Literature Today* 61.3 (1987): 368.

<sup>48</sup> *City of Literature: a Film about the History of Creative Writing in Iowa* (dir. Benjamin Hill, 2012).

the new, equally ambitious director acknowledged his predecessor's fundraising capability, and attributed the difficult situation of the IWW partly to how the world had changed. As Starbuck explained, many a creative writing program was established and provided financial support much more generously to attract students who would have chosen to attend the IWW—in short, the once unique Iowa Writers' Workshop had lost its niche.<sup>49</sup> Starbuck, then, took issue with how Engle allocated the money to their students:

Still it must be noted that all Paul Engle's tireless efforts have so far been adequate only to provide fellowship support for certain foreign students in the Workshop (out of funds given specifically for that purpose) and to provide nothing more for the native American students than tuition payments for a small minority of them, and cash grants in the hundreds (not thousands) of dollars to a still smaller fraction.<sup>50</sup>

Believing that American students had not been treated fairly in terms of financial support, Starbuck illustrated his idea of how to run a creative writing program in the U.S. that was different from Engle's.

In the face of these challenging remarks, Engle—who was about to (or forced to) step down—insisted even more on keeping the “international quality” of the IWW. In a bitter response to Starbuck,<sup>51</sup> Engle defended himself, insisting that he constantly “argued against the Workshop being ‘regional’” and hence devoted himself to “bringing writers from every State and from foreign countries,” after which he acidly added, “[writers from foreign countries] are now forbidden to register for Workshops, an astonishing rejection of the 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Starbuck's letter to Engle, Gerber, and Spriestersbach (dated November 10, 1966). Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Engle wrote a six-page memorandum titled “General Remarks on ‘the Engle Workshop’” in response to Starbuck's letter. Engle used the second-person pronoun referring to Starbuck and argued against his questioning defensively, but the exact date and to where the letter would be delivered were unspecified. It is uncertain whether Engle's memorandum was sent out to Starbuck or not. Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

century.”<sup>52</sup> Engle insisted that the IWW should aspire “for excellence, not localism.”<sup>53</sup> In this vein, founding a writing program for foreign writers, rather than a wonderful idea out of the blue, was a result of the conflict between Engle and Starbuck. As Starbuck had already been offered the post of the IWW director, it was likely that Engle attributed the initiation of the IWP to Nieh in order to, perhaps, leave and start anew gracefully.<sup>54</sup> At the moment when the IWP was founded, the two programs were divided into one for U.S. students and the other for established international writers. The IWP would not invite “young Americans yearning to be writers”—a qualification added by Engle perhaps, with a tinge of bitterness.<sup>55</sup>

The IWP bore a grander, more internationalist mission than the IWW. In addition to creative writing, it promoted literary exchange among writers while affirmatively upholding the freedom of speech. For one of its co-founders, Nieh, the memory of being under the surveillance of the Nationalist regime must have still been vivid. As Iowa City enabled her to reclaim her creative writing ground that she once had when serving on the *Free China* editorial board, Nieh further expanded such a ground to writers from around the world. The IWP was made into a community where every writer could communicate freely, in both spoken and written words. In January 1971, visited by Ssu-Ma Sang-Tun in Iowa City, Nieh passionately invited the Chinese journalist to participate in the IWP’s evening seminar. As Ssu-Ma recorded, Nieh explained to him how the seminar worked: “Emotionally, these people hold no grudge against each other, and there’s no distance between them; it’s a kind of free communication of ideas that they enjoy.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Bennett similarly suggests that Engle’s story about the inception of the IWP sounds “face-saving”; see *Workshops of Empire*, 114. The documentary *City of Literature: a Film about the History of Creative Writing in Iowa* (dir. Benjamin Hill, 2012) also mentions the conflict between Paul Engle and the English Department.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Engle and Nieh Hualing, “The World Comes to Iowa,” *World Literature Today* 61.3 (1987): 371.

<sup>56</sup> Ssu-Ma Sang-Tun [司馬桑敦], “Nieh Hualing at Iowa” [聶華苓在愛荷華], *Ming Pao Monthly* [明報] 66 (June 1971), 71. The original: 這些人情感上沒有芥蒂、沒有距離，真正的在享受一種自由的意見交流。

Yet, not every writer could enjoy the “free communication of ideas,” as the spread of freedom sometimes resulted in unintended oppression. Certainly, the Engles’ emphasis on freedom was well-intentioned; as they pointed out, “the writer is an endangered species, often punished with prison, internal exile, or harsh labor for writing views—or even styles—resented by the ruling party.”<sup>57</sup> Having experienced state violence in Taiwan under martial law, Nieh knew how it felt to lose one’s freedom due to surveillance and censorship. While being sensitive to potential violation of freedom, Nieh, however, might have imposed her ideal too forcefully on some IWP participants. Take the following episode narrated by the Engles for instance:

One day an East European was discussing the situation of writers in his country when he said, proudly but foolishly, “We have no office of censorship.” A long silence followed while our other foreign writers looked nervously at each other, and several nodded their heads vigorously as if to say, “You answer that.” Finally a novelist, also from Eastern Europe, replied, biting the words with his teeth: “You don’t need an office for censorship, because in your mind there sits a little censor watching what you intend to write and often saying, ‘Don’t put that down on paper. It could get you into big trouble.’” It was one of the most intense seminars the program has ever had, as everyone began yelling, waving arms, attacking the unhappy person who had denied the existence of censorship. When he left the room, as pale as if he had been poisoned, he staggered out the door. No one spoke to him. A few days later he had a heart attack and almost died.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Paul Engle and Nieh Hualing, “The World Comes to Iowa,” *World Literature Today* 61.3 (1987): 371.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*



The community of the IWP, in this case, turned into an office of censorship. The Eastern European writer was silenced, while the IWP directors, as if playing the role of observant censors, described the unhappy writer as speaking “proudly but foolishly.” Even when the writer appeared “as pale as if he had been poisoned” and “almost died” because of a heart attack, the Engles concluded this episode with a tribute to freedom in a rather triumphant tone: “In Iowa City, at least, they were free to speak, write, and sing about any subject.”<sup>59</sup> Only with one proviso could this statement stand: the subject should not counter the consensus shared by the majority of writers.

As a matter of fact, the writers were selected and invited to Iowa City in accordance with how the IWP undertook the task of defending the freedom of speech. Whereas writers were undoubtedly chosen because of their literary accomplishments, those who were believed to be in danger due to political situations at home would be favored if not prioritized. As the Engles explained, “If one nation suddenly refused to let its writers travel, we could bring one from the (unhappily) large number of their talented people living abroad out of fear or necessity.”<sup>60</sup> Reminiscent of how Engle “saved” Nieh from the Nationalist regime, the IWP intended to help writers who were considered “unhappy” in their countries. Most likely, these countries were those assumed by the U.S. government as lacking democracy, freedom, and human rights. In addition to having Eastern Europe showcase how censorship worked, the Engles particularly mentioned “socialist countries,” Africa, and Asia, whose writers benefited the most from the IWP and their sponsors.<sup>61</sup> The IWP surely took advantage of their sponsors—including the USIA, U.S. embassies, as well as private corporations and foundations—to facilitate communication amidst a variety of political divisions; nevertheless,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 371-2.

by rescuing the supposedly unfree to Iowa City, the IWP inadvertently became a poster program for the “free world.”

Because of its internationalist outlook and liberal mission, the IWP was financially supported by the U.S. government since its founding years. Although the State Department was not keen on the new program at the beginning,<sup>62</sup> the IWP has assumed the task of U.S. cultural diplomacy from the early 1970s onward, especially under the auspices of the United States Information Agency.<sup>63</sup> In 1973, a documentary about the IWP was commissioned by the USIA. Titled *Community of the Imagination*, it introduces the IWP as a sanctuary in which writers were able to enjoy freedom of living and writing.<sup>64</sup> With a tranquil voice, the male narrator speaks to the audience, “They take part in the program that makes no formal demand of its participants, save to write, to think, to interact with their environment and each other as they please.” After a nearly one-minute shot of the vast fields characteristic of a midwestern landscape, the camera captures “writers of all sorts” stepping out of an airplane, arriving at Iowa. With brisk background music, this scene of arrival is set for these foreign writers—and the audience—a promising engagement with the IWP. As soon as the shooting and production were completed, *Community of the Imagination* was shipped to US embassies for international viewers.

### **Translate with Freedom: Co-Translators and their Tasks**

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<sup>62</sup> See correspondence between Paul Engle and Roger L. Stevens, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1967. In November 1967, Stevens apologized on behalf of the State Department, which was “being difficult as usual,” and suggested that he would introduce Engle to other foundations to raise money for the IWP. Stevens’s letter was dated November 22, 1967. See Paul Engle Papers (Box 24), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 15, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> As stated on the IWP’s current website, “Cultural diplomacy, formal and informal, has been among the core missions of the IWP since the program’s establishment in 1967. The U.S Department of State has been a supporter of this mission alongside the University of Iowa and many private arts foundations, both state-side and overseas.” International Writing Program < <https://iwp.uiowa.edu/about-iwp/cultural-diplomacy> > accessed March 31, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> *Community of the Imagination* (dir. Gerald Krell, 1973).

Similar to the documentary whose target audience was non-Americans, the IWP distinguished itself from the IWW by intensively stressing its international quality. If the IWW highlighted the creativity of each writer and the end result of an individual MFA degree, the IWP shored up the collaboration between writers and endowed such a collaborative creativity with a literary form: translation.

At the point when the IWP was founded, the U.S. government had already taken translation as its means to fight the Cold War for at least a decade. In 1958, the passage of the National Defense Education Act underscored the imperative of translation for the purpose of national defense. Since then, the NDEA had funded programs of area studies, whose primary teaching objective was the acquisition of and proficiency in foreign languages.<sup>65</sup> In the same decade, as illustrated by literary historian and critic Andrew Rubin, Britain and U.S. imperial powers strived to make literary reproduction, transmission, and translation instantaneous; this instantaneity generated a new kind of “world literature” that would concurrently be reproduced, transmitted, and translated on a global stage.<sup>66</sup> During the Cold War, the translation and transmission of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* tellingly exemplified the operation of U.S. imperial power, while Anglophone literary journals published in Africa such as *Black Orpheus* and *Transition* (both were subsidized by the CCF) served to “regulate, sanitize, and co-opt the literature of decolonization.”<sup>67</sup>

Engle also emphasized translation even before the establishment of the IWP, with an intention to elevate the aesthetic value of translated works. If the U.S. government employed the means of translation to achieve its politico-cultural dominance, Engle urged writers to

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<sup>65</sup> Vicente L. Rafael, “Translation, American English, and the National Insecurities of Empire,” in *Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2012), 451-468.

<sup>66</sup> Andrew N. Rubin, *Archives of Authority: Empire, Culture, and the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). Rubin particularly designates some institutions of authority that financially enabled and supported this instantaneity: the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), the Information Research Department, the British Council and the BBC, and the CIA

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 60.

assume the role of translator while retaining their “imagination” and “creativity,” as in line with his vision about “creative writing.” Unsatisfied with how translation was done in his day, Engle stated in 1965:

Too often, in the translation of a poem from one language to another, the text suffers an actual death. The commonest cause of the fatality is linguistic competence without *creative talent*. Mere accuracy to the words in which a poem is written is not accuracy to the poem. Since the verse was not written as a linguistic or scholarly exercise, but as an imaginative response of a living man to his lived life, expressing his shock or delight, his suspicion or praise, *some imagination must be mixed with a translation if it is to be true.*<sup>68</sup>

In accordance with what he had stated earlier in his heyday at the IWW, Engle maintained his conviction that “the creative imagination in all of the arts is as important, as congenial, and as necessary, as the historical study of all the arts.”<sup>69</sup> Accentuating more works of translation, Engle remained faithful to the idea of creativity and imagination, based on which he had molded the discipline of creative writing in the postwar U.S. With an attempt to blur the boundary between creative writing and translation, Engle insisted that imagination should be considered as equally important as accuracy. In this sense, Engle redefined the task of a translator who should be accurate but more importantly, be imaginative, in order to capture the “shock or delight,” “suspicion or praise” of the translated. With an intent to shorten the distance between the translator and the translated, Engle believed that a “true” translation could be achieved, but only if the translator were at once a creative writer.

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<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Ivar Ivask, “The Ex-centuries of World Literature: Oklahoma’s *World Literature Today* Salutes Iowa’s International Writing Program upon Turning Twenty,” *World Literature Today* 61.3 (1987): 365; emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup> See Engle, “Introduction: the Writer and the Place” in *Midland: an Anthology of Poetry and Prose*, edited by Paul Engle (New York: Random House, 1961), xxi.

Engle's approach to translation was further developed and refined together with Nieh into the signature project of the IWP: "co-translation," a process that requires co-translators to talk, write, and imagine together. In this translation practice, the Engles would arrange "a young gifted American from the Writers' Workshop" to work with a writer whose first language was not English, and the former would "keep the English fluent, lively, idiomatic."<sup>70</sup> The Engles insisted that the "co-translation" was better than the conventional one, both linguistically and aesthetically, given that the latter lacking imagination was merely "a parody" of the source text.<sup>71</sup> They then took themselves as an example to explain how to do a co-translation that would be unconfined by literal meaning and linguistic sense. With three languages—Nieh's Mandarin Chinese, Nieh's English, and Engle's English—in use, their co-translation process exhibited a long dialogue in which Nieh and Engle argued against and compromised with each other.<sup>72</sup>

It became "a lesson in and an example of communication" that compelled the IWP co-translators to "learn not only to respect the other, but also to inhabit the worldview of each," as noted by scholar in U.S. culture and literature, Richard Jean So.<sup>73</sup> When Nieh and Engle translated, they simultaneously practiced their pedagogical design of co-translation. Through their design, both Americans and non-Americans learn to communicate and fundamentally, as So argues, to be "empathetic."<sup>74</sup> Building on Christina Klein's analysis of the U.S. Cold War rhetoric of integration through which Americans were educated to empathize with Asians, So demonstrates how the IWP, with non-Americans as its participants, reversed the process to "teach non-Western people simply how to be

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<sup>70</sup> Engle and Nieh, "Why Translation in Iowa," *Iowa Review* 7.2 (1976): 2.

<sup>71</sup> See Paul Engle and Hualing Nieh, "Co-Translation: the Writer's View," 6. Paul Engle Papers (Box 27), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-20.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Jean So, "The Invention of the Global MFA: Taiwanese Writers at Iowa, 1964-1980" *American Literary History* 29.3 (2017): 499-520.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 511.

empathetic.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the “co” effort of the IWP co-translation was more than a literary collaboration and a textual output; instead, it demanded co-translators to be imaginatively—and affectively—engaged with one another. As the Engles laid bare the affect in the co-translation process, “we feel that ‘co-imagination’ is crucial.”<sup>76</sup>

While the IWP did undertake the mission of educating non-Americans to be more empathetic, the dialogue between Nieh and Engle reveals how the American poet was educated to empathize with non-Americans. In their long dialogue of co-translating a Chinese poem, Nieh thoroughly performed her literary proficiency and cultural sensitivity, and took over the mission of the American internationalists to give lessons in empathy. Indeed, the source language (i.e., Mandarin Chinese) strengthened and justified Nieh’s enactment of her Chinese subjectivity, based on which she was able to assume the role of the teacher. A fervent American internationalist like Engle, more often than not, was allocated to the position as a student:

Nieh: . . . Now, let’s compromise by trying to be clear to this century, but remain loyal to the poet in his century.

Engle: As always, I lose. Are the rouged tears the flowers?

Nieh: Of course. What else? Anyone knows that.

Engle: Any Chinese knows that, but not any American. Cultural civil war! The worst kind.

Nieh: But that is precisely our problem—you *must try to understand our Chinese mind, not look at our poetry only as an American.*<sup>77</sup>

The dialogue served as a pedagogical example for co-translators at the IWP, showcasing how Nieh and Engle reached a “compromise” through back-and-forth discussion and ultimately,

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Engle and Hualing Nieh, “Co-Translation: the Writer’s View,” 7. Paul Engle Papers (Box 27), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 15; emphasis added.

Engle's acceptance of defeat. Yet, Nieh's rhetorical question ("What else?") and provocative statement ("Anyone knows that") rendered the newly achieved compromise into a division between Chinese and American, a conflict termed by Engle as a "cultural civil war." Even though he considered the war as the worst, Engle described it as a "civil" war, endorsing his belief that Americans and Chinese, regardless of their distinct ethnic and cultural backgrounds, were to be integrated in one country, that is, the community of the IWP. Such a Cold War internationalist, people-to-people discourse that upheld the principle of global integration, however, did not win Nieh over. Instead, she didactically specified the line between Chinese and American, and compelled Engle to "understand our Chinese mind." In this way, although Nieh acknowledged that the impediment of the co-translational communication was resulted from both sides ("this is precisely our problem"), Engle was the one to be blamed for looking at the Chinese poem "only as an American." Nieh's designation of "our problem," on the one hand, referred to the lack of empathy between one co-translator and another; it is a problem that all the IWP translators must try to deal with by devoting themselves to the "co" process. And yet, on the other hand, Nieh implied that it was in fact Engle's problem of not trying enough to understand "our Chinese mind."

The dialogue between Engle and Nieh continues to show the contest between two co-translators whose views on languages, cultures, and the "Chinese mind" varied. Responding to Nieh's reproach, Engle reminded her that the translation was not meant for the Chinese but for those who read in English. Nieh, however, adhered to her notion of English language and Chinese culture, refusing to compromise with her co-translator:

Engle: Yet we are not translating for the Chinese, but for westerners who know English. It goes back to our earlier remarks when we said that in poetry we do not translate merely language, but ideas, feelings, the culture.

Nieh: That's what I mean; this is a cultural concept, not a language matter.

Engle: OK. As usual, I give up to the Chinese. . . .<sup>78</sup>

Engle, in a way, was trying to educate Nieh to be more empathetic to the Americans (including himself). As he pointed out, their target readers very likely knew little about what Nieh called the “Chinese mind.” English hence was an imperative medium for their readers to make sense of the “Chinese mind,” and Engle believed that English would be capable of translating “ideas, feelings, the culture.” Nieh, on the contrary, implied that every language is formed through and characterized by “a cultural concept”—Chinese language with “our Chinese mind,” while American English with “your American English mind,” as Nieh might have assumed. For her, without understanding Chinese culture, Engle could hardly translate the Chinese poem into an American English one. Engle’s confidence in English language, in Nieh’s viewpoint, perhaps, only revealed his lack of knowledge about Chinese culture. Engle once again accepted his defeat.

With her capability to navigate freely between Chinese and English as well as her mastery of Chinese culture, Nieh in her own right undertook a task that was heavier than that of her co-translator. Both culturally and linguistically, she assumed more authority than Engle, whose English could have been merely a supplement to Nieh’s Mandarin Chinese and English. In a larger co-translation project, Nieh gained even more authority as she worked with at least seven IWP writers—four Chinese and three Americans—to translate pieces of Chinese intellectual writing produced from within the Hundred Flowers Movement from 1956 to 1957.<sup>79</sup> The end result was two volumes of *Literature of the Hundred Flowers* that covers a wide range of genres including poetry, criticism, and fiction. In line with the pedagogy demonstrated by the Nieh-Engle co-translation example, Nieh explained that these

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> These IWP co-translators are Y. W. Wong, Domonic Cheung, John Hsu, Stewart Yuen, Dennis Johnson, Daniel Webb, and Peter Nazareth, as mentioned in Nieh’s Acknowledgments. See *Literature of the Hundred Flowers Volume I Criticism and Polemics* edited by Hualing Nieh (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), vi-vii.



two volumes are “a product of co-translation” that requires “co-imagination,” while these co-translators “are poets or fiction writers, either in Chinese or English” who exchanged each other’s languages and sensibilities “in an act of literary cooperation.”<sup>80</sup>

The cooperation, at the same time, was entirely overseen by Nieh. As she illustrated, the process started with a first draft done by the Chinese and American writer, and then the American was in charge of polishing the first draft into clear and idiomatic American English. The second draft was to be turned in to Nieh, who checked the entire piece with the original Chinese and discussed together with the two co-translators. In the 1973 USIA-commissioned documentary *Community of the Imagination*, Nieh spoke of a similar process,

We work as a team. Usually, one person who knows the native language translates from the original. It would be read and checked by the person who knows both languages, or who is in charge of the project, and has some knowledge of English. *This person would find out what’s wrong in translation.* Then the second person would discuss all these problems with the American writer, who would put the translation into a publishable version.<sup>81</sup>

Although the sequence of the drafting and Nieh’s checking were slightly different from what she described in *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*, Nieh, in spoken words, made it more explicit how the two IWP co-translators were both under her supervision. She was the person who would “find out what’s wrong in translation.” Once again, Nieh assumed the role of teacher, not only educating students on empathy but also correcting their literary works. Although Nieh did not gloss over the conflicts and frankly described how she and the other two co-translators all “fought a cultural war, or a literary war, or an ideological war, or a nationalistic war,” the three warrior-translators were not placed on an equal footing.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Nieh, “A Note on Translation” in *Literature of the Hundred Flowers Volume I Criticism and Polemics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), li.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted from *Community of the Imagination* (dir. Gerald Krell, 1973); emphasis added.

<sup>82</sup> Nieh, “A Note on Translation” in *Literature of the Hundred Flowers Volume I Criticism and Polemics*, liii.

Because of Nieh's ability and freedom to move between two languages and two cultures, she became the most powerful woman warrior entitled to decide "what's wrong in translation." Ultimately, even though Nieh might not have won every war, she would be the person determining who conquered whom, and what was to be eliminated in the battles of co-translation.

Nieh's authority was far from omnipotent, especially when the IWP strived for facilitating multilingual communication between writers and translators on a world scale. While projects of co-translation from Mandarin Chinese to American English were tinged with Nieh's authoritative instruction, most of these projects were operating smoothly and productively in Nieh's able hands. Other projects, however, brought about not only debates and communication but also doubts and controversy. Indeed, not everyone was as capable as Nieh, nor did every IWP writer possess the freedom of moving between two languages with ease. Even if one was already bilingual like Nieh, her or his linguistic, cultural competence might have been downplayed to concur with the rationale of the IWP co-translation. Take a Japanese poet visiting the IWP in 1972, Kijima Hajime, for instance.

From the outset, Kijima was skeptical about the IWP co-translation that valued writers' imagination and creativity, and hence the IWP pedagogy of literary cooperation and rhetoric of empathetic communication. As an established and bilingual poet, Kijima was invited to be in charge of preparing an anthology of Japanese poetry that would be published as one of the Iowa Translations Series in 1975. *The Poetry of Postwar Japan* consists of poems of thirty-one Japanese poets, whose writings were rendered into English by twenty-one translators including American students of Japanese literature, Japanese professors of English, and Japanese students studying at the University of Iowa in the early 1970s.<sup>83</sup> Given

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<sup>83</sup> James R. Morita, "31 Japanese Poets" *The Asian Student* (February 14, 1976). Morita's book review of the anthology was kept in Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

that the anthology would be published as an IWP co-translation project, the IWP arranged for Kijima an American poet John Bean, despite that Kijima was already bilingual in English and Japanese. The two did discuss the translation, but Kijima did not take Bean as his “co-translator” precisely because Bean could not read poems in Japanese. In a straightforward letter, Kijima said to the American poet, “I think the first thing about the literary activity is to read the books in the original without any preoccupation. You didn’t start like that. Whether I am reasonable, or you, can be judged by any critic in any country.”<sup>84</sup> The IWP director, Paul Engle, intervened in the communication between Kijima and Bean to keep the anthology as a work of “co-translation.” In response to Kijima’s qualm about having Bean’s name on the title page along with his, Engle ascertained that Kijima’s name would surely appear as the single editor; yet, he also reminded Kijima that “you could not really have completed such a wide-ranging manuscript without John’s [Bean] help.”<sup>85</sup> Taking Engle’s defense of Bean—and by extension, the IWP co-translation—into account, Kijima continued to work with Bean to refine the manuscript.

After having conformed to the co-translation pedagogy, Kijima, who was as capable and bilingual as Nieh, still could not assume the status of an editor. By the end of July 1973, after some “cultural wars” (“In these points, you’re speaking completely from Western point of view,” as Kijima replied to one of Bean’s suggestions), the anthology gradually came into a publishable shape.<sup>86</sup> Pleased to learn about their “co” effort, Engle wrote a letter to Kijima congratulating him on the anthology ready for publication. In this letter, perhaps in defense of the IWP translation, Engle again reminded Kijima of Bean’s continuous hard work,

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<sup>84</sup> Kijima’s letter to Bean was undated, but possibly sent out in July 1973, as it was in response to Bean’s letter dated July 3, 1973. Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

<sup>85</sup> Engle’s letter to Kijima (dated July 2, 1973). Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

<sup>86</sup> Kijima’s letter to Bean; it was sent out on July 19, 1973. Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

mentioning how Bean and other co-translators “made 200 changes in the [translated] poems . . . including mistranslated words, omitted lines and awkward phrasings.”<sup>87</sup> These changes, as it turned out, were made without informing Kijima. Unlike Nieh who was entitled to decide “what’s wrong,” Kijima, albeit the editor of the anthology, was not even notified when the revision to the manuscript was made. To make matters worse, Engle, deliberately or nonchalantly, asserted that Bean’s effort “is really work which can be defined as ‘editing’.”<sup>88</sup> Confused and upset, Kijima explained to Engle that he was not informed about the revision and asked for the new manuscript to check. For some reason, Bean (and Engle) did not send it to him. More than a month later, Kijima wrote a harsher letter to Engle:

I have not yet received any paper from John. It is quite clear that he did not keep his word . . . If anyone is told about his mistakes without being shown any evidence, how would he feel? As I told you in my preceding letter, if I am not given the changes and their reasons, I can not allow the publication. It is so very simple. I have never heard about the editor who can not have the right to be shown the changed manuscript.<sup>89</sup>

To conclude his letter, Kijima urged Engle to consider his case “seriously” and humbly asked for his “right as the editor.”<sup>90</sup>

The process of editing and publishing *The Poetry of Postwar Japan* revealed vividly the tension between two ideals of “translation.” In 1975, with Kijima Hajime’s name as the single editor, the anthology was finally published after being postponed for more than a year. The conflicts between Kijima and Bean (and Engle) circled back to the former’s belief in “read[ing] the books in the original without any preoccupation.” Whereas Bean and Engle

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<sup>87</sup> Engle’s letter to Kijima, dated August 14, 1973. Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Kijima’s letter to Engle, dated September 26, 1973. Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

believed that “writing is itself translation, and that translation is a creative act,”<sup>91</sup> Kijima maintained that comprehending the source language to a certain extent would be the first step to translate.<sup>92</sup> In other words, the IWP model focused relatively more on the target language and Kijima the source text. The rationale of the IWP model was to question the conventional practice of translation that, according to Engle and Nieh, undermined the imagination and creativity of both the source text and the target text.

The IWP ideal of translation has contributed to what seminal scholar in translation studies Lawrence Venuti calls “belletrism,” a pedagogy of and approach to translation that considers works of translation not unlike those of creative writing.<sup>93</sup> Also a translator himself, Venuti explains how belletrism was institutionalized in the form of “translation workshop,” whose origin overlapped with the expansion of creative writing programs in the U.S. Although not until the 1980s did “belletrism” dominate the U.S. universities, the very first translation workshop was organized as early as in 1963 by Paul Engle. With a belletristic pedagogy underscoring the autonomy of creativity, Engle’s workshop considered the translation as “an independent literary text.”<sup>94</sup> Cautioning against belletrism, Venuti designates how a belletristic approach has resulted in “an unreflective impressionism” and “an aggressive anti-intellectualism,” and further led to cultural marginalization of translation and translators.<sup>95</sup> Venuti thus argues to rework the dominance of belletrism that overemphasizes the target text and practice, while neglecting the source text and theory.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Engle and Hualing Nieh, “Co-Translation: the Writer’s View,” 5. Paul Engle Papers (Box 27), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> In Kijima’s letter to Engle (undated; possibly sent out in June 1973) that expressed his doubt about John Bean’s name on the title page, he explained to Engle that “I know John is a fine poet, but also I know he can not read poems in Japanese.” Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> Lawrence Venuti, “Towards a Translation Culture,” first published in 2011 in an online project called “Translation Forum” run by *The Iowa Review*. All the forum essays were now archived at *M-Dash* <<https://mdash-ahb.org/the-translation-forum/>> accessed April 11, 2018.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Other essays were published as a part of the “Translation Forum,” most of which arguing against Venuti’s critique of belletrism by defensively asserting themselves as “belletrists” (see Tim Parks, “Mysteries of the

Overall, he urges translators to take heed of the nuanced relationship between the source text and the target text—nuances that could have been erased were translation to be equated with creative writing.

Venuti's critique may not apply to the case of Nieh. Because of Nieh's adherence to the "Chinese mind" and her competence in American English, she did not easily fall into the trap of impressionism as many belletristic translators did. In addition to Venuti's insightful critique of the translation workshops (among which the IWP has remained one of the most prominent), he also designates how a capable translator like Nieh in a workshop of translation "inexorably and often unwittingly imposes his or her own aesthetics on student translators."<sup>97</sup> Nieh did assume an authoritative position when conducting the Chinese-English co-translation. Based on her cultural-linguistic capability and subjective literary aesthetics, she determined the final version for the entire team. Yet, unlike Engle who conflated translation and creative writing with an emphasis on the target language, Nieh intended to keep a balance between the source text and the target text. As she explained, "I tried to arrive at a compromise between the Chinese who insists on keeping the 'exotic' line, because it is close to the original, and the American who may be too free in his use of English and is careless with the original."<sup>98</sup> In other words, while Nieh might have arbitrarily imposed her literary aesthetics on her student co-translators, her task was to contain the IWP-endorsed freedom in the process of translation. This freedom, during Engle's heyday at the IWW, was upheld and practiced under the banner of individual imagination and autonomous creativity.

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Meta-Task") who "love translating" (see Luise von Flotow, "Upgrading the Downgraded"), underlining their effort as workshop translators and editors (see Russell Scott Valentino's "On Three Cultures: Workshop, Review, Translation"), as well as repeating the discourse of belletrism that "translation is art" (see Sidney Wade, "Translation Art, Translation Theory"). In short, these essays demonstrate further how dominant the discourse of belletrism has become. See the archives at *M-Dash* <<https://mdash-ahb.org/the-translation-forum/>> if need be.

<sup>97</sup> Lawrence Venuti, "Towards a Translation Culture" <<https://mdash-ahb.org/the-translation-forum/1-towards-a-translation-culture/>> accessed April 11, 2018.

<sup>98</sup> Nieh, "A Note on Translation" in *Literature of the Hundred Flowers Volume I Criticism and Polemics*, lii-liii.

Nieh's embodiment of a cultural China consequently reworked Engle's literary vision that ran the risk of translating too creatively and too imaginatively. Compared to Engle, Nieh seemed to put more effort in the act of "co" as far as she could when translating the Chinese text into American English. Although she highlighted the "creative imagination" as Engle did, Nieh described the co-translation process as "an intense and lively confrontation of languages, cultures, imaginations, and egos" that led to a translation "with half the life of the original in English."<sup>99</sup> Unlike Engle who optimistically claimed that "creative imagination is wonderfully alert in breaking down the barriers of nationality and language,"<sup>100</sup> Nieh remained skeptical about breaking down the "barriers" between the Chinese original and the English rendition. As she suggested, once the original was translated, it would be only half-alive at best. At worst, in the telling instance of the Kijima-Bean conflict, the original might have lost all its life, especially when the third party (i.e., Paul Engle) was not as culturally and linguistically capable as Nieh. Regardless of Kijima's insistence on the Japanese source text, Engle prioritized the English target text and advised the Japanese poet, "There is only one concern about a manuscript of translations from any language—how good are the poems in English."<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, in front of Nieh, Engle's emphasis on the target text and the English language was not as strong. Instead, Engle usually accepted his defeat when Nieh acted out her Chinese subjectivity to fight the cultural war, not just because Engle indulged Nieh but because he lacked cultural-linguistic competence to argue with her. Without Nieh, Engle would not have been able to undertake the task of translating Mandarin Chinese into American English. As a "translator" who could hardly comprehend the source text, Engle had to be fully dependent on his co-translator whose cultural capital overpowered his.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., liii.

<sup>100</sup> Paul Engle, "Introduction: the Writer and the Place" in *Midland*, xxvii.

<sup>101</sup> Engle's letter to Kijima, dated August 14, 1973. Paul Engle Papers (Box 23), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August 14, 2017.

Engle's reliance on Nieh's cultural capital at the same time revealed how he was anxious about his precarious identity as a translator. This anxiety was well revealed by the ways that Engle promoted their book-length co-translation, *Poems of Mao Tse-tung*. First printed in 1972 and purposefully fashioned as an IWP co-translation work, *Poems of Mao Tse-tung* bore the signatures of Nieh and Engle as the two co-translators. As one of the most renowned IWP literary achievements, it was claimed by Engle as a credential in addition to being a poet, a lecturer, and a long-term director of the two writing programs. Yet, when he recommended himself to give lectures on Mao Zedong's poems, Engle called for Nieh's cultural and linguistic authority for his own credibility. As he presented, "My wife, *who is Chinese*, and I have published . . . the complete poems of Mao Tse-Tung in English translation."<sup>102</sup> Engle then mentioned (or even exhibited) Nieh's Chinese presence and voice to solicit further interest and more importantly, to authenticate the translation: "At times my wife, Hualing Nieh, accompanies me and reads Chinese originals."<sup>103</sup> Apparently, Nieh's Chinese subjectivity was made into a selling point. It was repetitively underlined by Engle, possibly to justify himself as one of the two translators of a source text in Mandarin Chinese. Indeed, although Engle unfailingly prioritized translators' imagination and creative autonomy, he knew well that "Engle the translator" would have been questioned without his Chinese wife, precisely because he could not read the source language.

As it turned out, the core value of the IWP co-translation proved to be more porous. In practice, not every translator was able to translate freely in the name of creativity and imagination. A piece of translation work could hardly rid itself of the cultural and linguistic basis of the source text. Translation with freedom, in the end, displayed a variety of unfreedom as demonstrated by the IWP co-translators. The Engles, furthermore, exemplified

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<sup>102</sup> See Engle's letter that tried to solicit interests in having him as a visiting lecturer, dated August 1, 1974. It was very likely sent out to a variety of U.S. universities and writing programs. Paul Engle Papers (Box 26), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 17, 2017. Emphasis added.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.



how such a freedom could be either justified or negated by one's power and affect. Although the setup of the IWP worked in tandem with Cold War internationalism and U.S. cultural diplomacy, the literary activities at the IWP proved to be more unpredictable. The co-translation—as a process and a product—sometimes contributed to the Cold War freedom, but sometimes went against its grain.

### **A Baodiao Interlude: Free China Translated**

In Engle's promotion of *Poems of Mao Tse-tung*, he described he and Nieh's co-translation effort as "very unusual and timely treatment," suggesting how the IWP was more than aware of the changes in U.S. foreign policy.<sup>104</sup> It was indeed timely. In July 1971, U.S. president Richard Nixon announced his plan to visit the People's Republic of China. Four months later, the PRC was seated as the representative of China in the United Nations (the Republic of China was concurrently expelled). Another three months later, Nixon traveled to the PRC, visiting Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing where he met with the Chairman Mao Zedong. At this juncture, the Engles' translation of Mao Zedong's poems responded to the changing circumstance of the global Cold War in which the U.S. government attempted to normalize its relationship with the PRC. Engle even proposed to the National Security Council as well as to an aide to the President, Leonard Garment, that Nixon could present the translation as a gift to the Great Helmsman himself.<sup>105</sup>

Chinese writers at the IWP responded to the changes of the Sino-U.S. relationship as well. In August 1971, a month after Nixon's announcement of his China trip, an essay titled "There's Only One China!" was published in *Diaoyutai Bulletin*. The editors of the journal were two IWP writers in residence from Hong Kong, Gu Cangwu (the nom de plume of Koo

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Eric Bennett, *Workshops of Empire*, 175.

Siu-Sun) and Wan Kin-lau. “There’s Only One China!” as an editorial revealed how Gu and Wan evaluated the entanglement between the U.S., the PRC, and the ROC in the early 1970s. As the editorial argues, the “two Chinas” proposal was “an international conspiracy” originated from and formed through the “Taiwan problem”; due to Taiwan’s “special situation,” the “foreign powers” interfered in the problem of Taiwan rather than leaving it as “domestic affairs of China.”<sup>106</sup> Defining the design of the “two Chinas” as a conspiracy, the editorial explains why the foreign powers would not wish for the reunification of China and Taiwan precisely because of Taiwan’s geopolitical value. In particular, it singles out the U.S. and Japan: “[The U.S.] basically would not give up such an ‘anticommunist’ frontline like Taiwan, and the advocacy of ‘two Chinas’ allows itself, on the one hand, to retain its power in Taiwan, and on the other hand, to cunningly let Japan be its agent if necessary.”<sup>107</sup> Moreover, as the editorial points out, what motivated Nixon to make peace with the PRC was to save the U.S. from the increasingly futile wars that it had waged in Southeast Asia. In sum, “There’s Only One China!” argues that only those “with a questionable intent” would favor the ongoing Chinese division.<sup>108</sup> After Nixon’s actual visit to China in February 1972, Wan Kin-lau affirmed again the reasoning of “There’s Only One China!,” demanding the U.S. government to delegitimize the Nationalist regime and recognize Taiwan as a part of China.

In fact, before Nixon’s visit, the appeal for “one China” was ignited because of the Baodiao Movement. Spurred by a 1970 U.S.-Japan agreement based on which the U.S. would “return” Okinawa along with the Diaoyutai Islands to Japan, the Baodiao Movement asserted

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<sup>106</sup> “There’s Only One China!” [中國只有一個！] in *Diaoyutai Bulletin* [釣魚台快訊] 9 (August 19, 1971): 1. The journal was edited by the Baodiao Iowa chapter organized mainly by Gu and Wan. Very likely, either Gu or Wan, or both of them, wrote the editorial. The original: 「兩個中國」論調的形成，主要是台灣問題引起的。台灣問題，本來是中國的內政問題，絕不容許別的國家加以干涉；但由於台灣本身的特殊處境，使外國勢力有插手的機會，於是「兩個中國」的論調，便漸漸從理論拉展成一項國際陰謀……。

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. The original: 美國的居心……基本上不願放棄台灣這個「防共」的前線，「兩個中國」的政策鼓吹，一方面可使它在台灣保持原有的勢力，一方面也〔可〕以使它在必要時來一個移花接木的妙手，利用日本做它的代理人。

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. The original: ……現在高唱「兩個中國」政策的國家，都是有其不良的居心的。

Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands. It had mobilized students in Taiwan and Hong Kong and a great number of Chinese overseas students in the U.S. to become Baodiao activists. The movement in the U.S. reached its climax in Washington D.C. on April 10, 1971, when thousands of Chinese, mostly overseas students, marched to the U.S. State Department, the ROC consulate, and the Japanese Embassy.<sup>109</sup> The participants came from all over North America, congregating in Washington D.C. by planes, cars, or buses arranged by local chapters of the Baodiao Movement. The two Hong Kong writers at the IWP, Wan and Gu, devoted themselves to the Iowa chapter and arranged transportation for the participants to join the Washington D.C. demonstration. “We rented three buses,” as Gu recalled, “from Iowa to Chicago, picking up students in the Midwest along the way to Washington D.C.”<sup>110</sup> Despite their effort, in June 1971, Japan and the U.S. signed the Treaty Between Japan and the United States of America Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Diaoyutai Islands (commonly known as the Okinawa Reversion Treaty).

The Baodiao activists were soon divided in accordance with three political stances based on a specific understanding of “China.” The major groups included the leftists who advocated the unification of China and Taiwan, the reformists who were backed by and supported the ROC and the Chinese Nationalist Party, and the pro-Taiwanese independence activists.<sup>111</sup> In December 1971, the “China Reunification Action Committee” was founded by the pro-unification leftists in New York City; the pro-ROC reformists quickly responded with

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<sup>109</sup> For a brief history of the Baodiao Movement in the U.S., see Chih-Ming Wang, *Transpacific Articulation: Student Migration and the Remaking of Asian America* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013), 73-78. For a more complete collection of documents and archives concerning the Baodiao Movement between 1970 and 1971 in the U.S., see *Sounds of Spring Thunder: Selected Documents of the Baodiao Movement at the Thirty Anniversary* [春雷聲聲：保釣運動三十週年文獻選輯], edited by Gong Zhongwu [龔忠武] and Chen Yingzhen [陳映真] et al. (Taipei: Renjian, 2001).

<sup>110</sup> See Hung Chi-kum [熊志琴] and Lo Wai-luen [盧葦鑾], *Two-way Road: Experience and Thought about Chinese and Western Culture 1963-2003, an Interview of Koo Siu-Sun* [雙程路：中西文化的體驗與思考 1963-2003 古兆申訪談錄] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010), 127. The original: 我們中西部的交通安排由愛荷華負責，租了三輛旅遊巴，從愛荷華到芝加哥，沿路接中西部的同學到華盛頓。

<sup>111</sup> Wang, *Transpacific Articulation*, 77-78.

the establishment of the “Chinese Student Association of Patriotism and Anticommunism.”<sup>112</sup> Wan and Gu, without doubt, aligned themselves with the former.

Alongside the global movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the Baodiao Movement triggered “a moment of discovery” for many Chinese to learn more about a leftist “new” China while disidentifying with the “free China.”<sup>113</sup> Such a structure of feeling was well demonstrated by Wan and Gu’s editorial, “There’s Only One China!” Disappointed in the ROC, the two IWP writers wrote up a new historiography of modern China:

The modern history of China is a history about being invaded, exploited, and humiliated. . . . For more than a hundred years, China has become a destitute country with thousands of boils and holes. [But] over the past twenty years, imperialism was driven out of the mainland China. Not until then has China got a chance to remedy its impoverishment and injuries. Now China has gradually recovered.<sup>114</sup>

Not only is this historiography a leftist one, the editorial openly acknowledges the achievement of the Chinese Communist Party that liberated China of imperialist aggression. As it continues, the editorial sheds light on the impotence of the Chinese Nationalist Party that had allowed the imperialist powers to exploit the Chinese: “The forces of imperialism have not completely gone yet. They remain in Taiwan, absorbing the blood of the Chinese through their huge amount of capitals. They use their fleet and missiles that have been

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<sup>112</sup> The names in the original are 中國統一行動委員會 and 全美中國反共愛國會議. See Hsiao A-chin [蕭阿勤], “Remembering Diaoyutai Islands: Territorial Dispute, Nationalism, and Generational Memory of Nostalgic Intellectuals in Taiwan” [記住釣魚台：領土爭端、民族主義、知識分子與懷舊的世代記憶] *Taiwan Historical Research* [台灣史研究] 24.3 (September 2017): 147-214. Also see Gong and Chen et al., *Sounds of Spring Thunder* [春雷聲聲] (Taipei: Renjian, 2001), and *Anniversary After Spring Thunder: Selected Documents of the Baodiao Movement at the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary vol. 1* [春雷之後：保釣運動三十五週年文獻選輯壹] (Taipei: Renjian, 2006).

<sup>113</sup> Wang, *Transpacific Articulation*, 77.

<sup>114</sup> “There’s Only One China!” [中國只有一個！] in *Diaoyutai Bulletin* [釣魚台快訊] 9 (August 19, 1971), 3. The original: 台北的這種做法，毋寧是叫人失望頂透的……中國的近代史，是一頁受帝國主義侵略、剝削、凌辱的歷史……百多年來，中國成了一個千穿百孔 (sic)、一貧如洗的國家。最近二十年，帝國主義給趕出了中國大陸，中國才有機會去醫療它的貧窮、它的創傷，現在已慢慢復甦起來了。

deployed on the territory of China to invade the territory of China.”<sup>115</sup> Provocative as these remarks were, Wan and Gu were free from political oppression imposed by the Nationalist regime, partly because of their identity as Hong Kong students in the U.S.

However, they were by no means free from the Nationalist surveillance in Iowa City, especially at the point when the IWP had become a productive hub for the Baodiao activism.<sup>116</sup> Among the Chinese residing in Iowa City in the early 1970s, several “professional students” arranged by the Nationalist Party continued to keep an eye on political activities of the overseas Chinese students. The actual surveillance started as soon as the news of the Baodiao Movement reached Iowa City. In spite of it, a Baodiao chapter in Iowa City was soon coordinated by the three IWP writers including Gu, Wan, and Shang Qin, along with Huang Jinming (a Macao teacher at the Chinese Department) and Cai Fuchang (a Hong Kong student at the Physics Department).<sup>117</sup> Zheng Chou-yu, a Chinese poet from the ROC joining the IWP in 1968 and a more senior poet compared to Gu and Wan, was invited to be the president of the chapter. Before long, Zheng was on the blacklist of the Nationalist regime, with his ROC passport revoked.<sup>118</sup> Gu also recalled how the “professional students” would employ techniques such as threat and anonymous calls to sabotage the Baodiao Iowa chapter.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. The original: 可是帝國主義的勢力仍沒有完全撤醜，他們任然賴在台灣，仍然以他們的大資本吸食中國人的血，以他的們艦隊、飛彈設置在中國的領土上去侵略中國的領土。

<sup>116</sup> In addition to Gu and Wan, Zheng Chou-yu [鄭愁予], Lo Yen (Shang Qin 商禽), and Lin Hwai-min were all at the University of Iowa, either studying or teaching. Nieh Hualing was there as well.

<sup>117</sup> See Gu Cangwu, “Birds Hailing to the Sun Lost Vocal Cords: In Memory of Shang Qin” [呼喚太陽的鳥失去了聲帶——憶商禽], *Apple Daily Hong Kong* (August 1, 2010) <<https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/daily/article/20100801/14299492>>.

<sup>118</sup> After his participation at the IWP, Zheng Chou-yu continued to stay at the University of Iowa teaching in the Department of Chinese. He had been the president of the Baodiao Iowa chapter for two years. See Zheng’s interview with Ifeng Culture [鳳凰文化] on November 8, 2016 <[http://culture.ifeng.com/a/20161103/50200718\\_0.shtml](http://culture.ifeng.com/a/20161103/50200718_0.shtml)>, as well as *Port of Mists* [如霧起時], a documentary of Zheng’s writing career directed by Chen Chuan-xing [陳傳興] (Taipei: Fisafisa Media, 2011).

<sup>119</sup> See Hung Chi-kum and Lo Wai-luen, *Two-way Road*, 131.

In addition to the Nationalist Party, the U.S. government similarly went after the Baodiao activists in Iowa City. In March 1972, Wan and Cai Fuchang were investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for their activities, particularly about their associations with communism.<sup>120</sup> Gu was spared since he had already returned to Hong Kong in the autumn of 1971. The INS official inquired how the Baodiao Iowa chapter was funded and what journals it had published, and asked, “Do you think that the Diaoyutai Islands should belong to ‘Red China’ or China?,” forcing Wan and Cai to acknowledge whether the Baodiao Iowa chapter was a communist organization or not.<sup>121</sup> Questions evocative of McCarthyism and the House Un-American Activities Committee such as “Do you believe in communism?,” “Do you instill communist thinking?,” and “Are the following people communists?,” were also asked.<sup>122</sup> Under this severe circumstance, Cai, Wan, and Gu would not have been able to conduct their Baodiao works had the IWP not provided a sanctuary for them.

Interestingly, the Engles, perhaps for political and safety concerns, rarely discussed what happened during the Baodiao Movement in their prolific writings about the IWP. Although the IWP often celebrated its mission of defending the freedom of speech, the Engles for some reason did not take credit for sheltering the Baodiao activists from the twofold surveillance by the Nationalist Party and the U.S. government. Only once in her autobiography, Nieh briefly mentioned that “Gu and Wan ‘occupied’ an office of the IWP as the Baodiao Movement office.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> “The INS Investigation in Iowa City” [移民局調查在艾城] was recorded by the Council for the Promotion of National Unification at the University of Iowa [愛荷華大學中國統一促進會], published on *Diaoyutai Monthly* [釣魚台月刊] in April 1972. See *After Spring Thunder: Selected Documents of the Baodiao Movement at the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary vol. 1* [春雷之後：保釣運動三十五週年文獻選輯壹], 319-20.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>123</sup> See Nieh, *Three Lives*, 354. The original: 小古和小溫將「國際寫作計畫」的一間辦公室「霸占」成保釣運動辦公室。

Nieh obviously was not as dedicated to the Baodiao Movement as other Chinese writers at IWP; still, the Baodiao Iowa chapter would not have been as vigorous without the consent of the Engles. As Gu acknowledged, “Paul Engle and others did not interfere at all; I have plenty of time to do works related to the Baodiao Movement in Iowa.”<sup>124</sup> In fact, during Gu and Wan’s stay in Iowa City, Nieh and the two Hong Kong poets planned to institute a literary prize named the “May Fourth Literature Award.”<sup>125</sup> Highlighting the May Fourth Movement, Gu, Wan, and Nieh might have been informed by the ways in which the Baodiao activists “discovered” the Chinese leftist tradition. Nieh’s IWP co-translation projects conceived in the early 1970s, *Poems of Mao Tse-tung* and *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*, also revealed traces of a new China in Iowa City. Her selection of Mao Zedong’s poems and literary works of the 1950s mainland Chinese writers had long been censored by the Nationalist Party, the “free China.” Whether because of the Baodiao or not, Nieh’s ROC passport was revoked in 1974. Indeed, in the eye of the Nationalist regime, her associations with liberal intellectuals of *Free China* was lesser a matter than her interest in a leftist, Communist China.

Without her ROC passport but with a new identity as an American in charge of a world-famous literary program in Iowa City, Nieh fulfilled her homecoming back to mainland China in 1978. Her return in 1978 was supported by an apt timing: the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976 introduced to the world a “reform and opening-up” China, with the U.S.-PRC diplomatic relation fully normalized at the beginning of 1979. On May 20, 1978, along with her two daughters and Paul Engle, Nieh crossed the Pacific from San Francisco to Hong Kong, from where she moved to Guangzhou and returned to mainland

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<sup>124</sup> See Hung Chi-kum and Lo Wai-luen, *Two-way Road*, 132-3. The original: 但 Paul Engle 他們完全不干涉我，我在愛荷華有相當多時間參加保釣運動和相關的工作。

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 249. The original: 我就和當時在愛荷華的溫健騮、古蒼梧擬了一個計畫……稱之為「五四文學獎」。

China.<sup>126</sup> Until June 18, she first visited Wuhan and then Beijing. In Wuhan, Nieh's authentic "Wuhan dialect" surprised the locals, to whom Nieh introduced herself as "a Wuhan local coming from the U.S."<sup>127</sup> In Beijing, she met with "one of the most important poets of modern China," Ai Qing, who would soon participate in the 1980 Fall Residency of the IWP.<sup>128</sup> In the spring of 1980, Nieh and Engle traveled to China for the second time. Nieh not only met with Ba Jing and Shen Congwen whom she greatly admired, but also brought mainland Chinese writers including Wang Meng, Ding Ling, and Liu Binyan to Iowa City in the early 1980s.<sup>129</sup>

Since Nieh Hualing left Taipei for Iowa City in 1964, she has settled in the U.S. and considered Iowa her home; yet, as a female Chinese writer and translator, Nieh has always moved deftly between two languages and two cultures. Along her transpacific trajectory, Nieh encountered intellectuals with a variety of linguistic capacities, cultural backgrounds, and political ideals. Although politics was not her concern according to her self-portrayal, Nieh interacted with and responded to the political ideals embodied by the *Free China* intellectuals, Cold War internationalists in the U.S., and anti-imperialist leftists during the Baodiao Movement. She had become a nodal point that connected intellectuals who might not have met one another due to contextual and political divisions. In this sense, Nieh could hardly be unconcerned with politics, even though these political connections were facilitated via Nieh's seemingly apolitical literary ideal. Her emphasis on freedom, after all, largely originated from her disapproval of the Nationalist regime, while her selection of the texts to be translated indicated her attention to the political changes of the Cold War agitation and the

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<sup>126</sup> See Nieh, *After Thirty Years* [三十年後] (Taipei: Hann Colour Culture Co., 1988 [1980]).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. The original: 他們聽見我說武漢話，臉一亮[.....]「我是從美國來的武漢人。」

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-40.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.



Sino-U.S. relationship. In the second half of the 1970s as the China-U.S.-Taiwan wrestling continued, Nieh carried on her work at the IWP, maneuvering among Chinese writers coming from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China to the U.S. Her maneuver not only painted the literary scene of Iowa City with a Chinese color, but also offered an important page to understand the Sino-U.S. relationship—written by writers at the IWP.

**Chapter Five**  
**“Two Chinas” Come to Iowa City in 1979:**  
**Reunion and Division of Chinese Literature**

The United States of America recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. Within this context, the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.

—The Second China-U.S. Joint Communiqué,  
January 1, 1979

The absence of diplomatic relations or recognition shall not affect the applications of the laws of the United States with respect to Taiwan, and the laws of the United States shall apply with respect to Taiwan in the manner that the laws of the United States applied with respect to Taiwan prior to January 1, 1979.

—U.S. Public Law 96-8 (Taiwan Relations Act),  
April 10, 1979

[A]t this moment, we are together, coming from many parts of the world, from Peking, Taipei, Hong Kong, all over the United States, even from Singapore and the Philippines. This fact tells us that we really do have something in common—we are all Chinese, we are happy to be Chinese, we are all concerned for the future of Chinese writing.

—Nieh Hualing, Chinese Weekend in Iowa  
September 15, 1979

In 1976, three years after the publication of Nieh Hualing and Paul Engle's co-translation of Mao Zedong's poems, the Great Helmsman Mao died at the age of eighty-two. The Cultural Revolution came to an end. Before long, the Chinese Communist Party assessed the Cultural Revolution as “responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state and the people”; the CCP, however, absolved Mao of criticism, believing that the “erroneous ‘Left’ theses” in the Cultural Revolution were “obviously inconsistent with the system of Mao Zedong Thought.”<sup>1</sup> The specter of Mao

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<sup>1</sup> See “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China” in *Resolution on Communist Party of China History* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981) <<https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/history/01.htm>> accessed July 3, 2018. The Resolution was adopted by the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP on June 27, 1981.

continues to be with the CCP and China in domestic policies and international affairs. One of the most significant legacies of Mao is his meeting with U.S. President Nixon in 1972, a historic moment that would undergird Sino-U.S. relationships for decades to come.<sup>2</sup>

Commonly regarded as Mao's successor, the then vice premier but the de facto leader of the People's Republic of China, Deng Xiaoping, visited the U.S. from January 29 to February 4, 1979, shortly after the PRC and the U.S. established official diplomatic relation. By the end of 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter had already announced the recognition of the PRC as "the sole legal Government of China."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Carter declared that the "extensive, close, and friendly relations" with the "people of Taiwan" would be preserved.<sup>4</sup> Carter's intention was ratified as the Taiwan Relations Act to "authoriz[e] the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan"; the Act, at the same time, asserted the "absence of diplomatic relations or recognition" between the U.S. and the ROC.<sup>5</sup>

The year 1979 marked a new page in the history of Sino-U.S. relationship, and in the International Writing Program (IWP) as well. After the U.S. government received Deng Xiaoping as the first PRC leader stepping on its homeland, the IWP welcomed the first group of Chinese writers from the PRC to Iowa City in September 1979. "Chinese writers" as a signifier was reworked to be inclusive of those from Hong Kong, the mainland China, and Taiwan, and Iowa City became a point of convergence for the Chinese to meet and write with one another. To celebrate this landmark encounter, Nieh hosted a two-day event called the

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<sup>2</sup> For a thorough study of Mao Zedong's practices and legacies in China, see Qian Liqun [錢理群], *The Mao Zedong Era and Post-Mao Era: an Alternative Writing of History 1949-2009 vol.2* [毛澤東時代和後毛澤東時代 1949-2009 (下)] (Taipei: Linking Books, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> See "Address by President Carter to the Nation (December 15, 1978; Washington)" <<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v01/d104>> accessed July 3, 2018. In his address, Carter read the full Joint Communiqué and specified that the two countries would exchange ambassadors and establish embassies on March 1, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. The original full passage: "But I wish also tonight to convey a special message to the people of Taiwan—I have already communicated with the leaders in Taiwan—with whom the American people have had and will have extensive, close, and friendly relations. This is important between our two peoples."

<sup>5</sup> Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8 96<sup>th</sup> Congress (April 10, 1979).

Chinese Weekend. She passionately asserted that “we are all Chinese, we are happy to be Chinese,” and her passion was fully dedicated to “the future of Chinese writing.”<sup>6</sup> Iowa City in 1979, for Nieh, was a perfect platform to imagine a future for Chinese literature by hosting all “Chinese writers” who wrote in Mandarin Chinese and shared the Han Chinese ancestry regardless of where they came from. Soon after 1979, however, the IWP’s usage and definition of “Chinese writers” would be challenged by an emergent political climate that emphasized more the particularity of Taiwan.

This chapter zooms in to the year 1979, investigating the ways in which the IWP embodied not only the gradual normalization between the U.S. and the PRC but also the ongoing tension between the U.S. and the two Chinas. Not unlike real-world politics, Chinese IWP writers in residence who were invited to attend the Chinese Weekend did not naturally bond with each other merely because they shared Chinese cultural heritage. This chapter illuminates the undercurrents of the Chinese gathering in Iowa City and argues that the Chinese Weekend revealed an American internationalist vision that overlooked national specificities and local politics. The IWP in 1979, as well as Nieh’s appropriation of “Chinese,” offered a “Chinese literature” through the prism of the U.S.

### **Chinese Weekend in the U.S.**

Iowa City and the IWP Chinese Weekend were spotlighted nationwide in the summer of 1979 in the context of newly set Sino-U.S. relationships. A month before the Chinese Weekend took place, the *New York Times* announced that “Chinese writers from China, from Taiwan and from the United States” would gather in Iowa City for “a weekend of literary discussions.”<sup>7</sup> Against the backdrop of a newly formulated Sino-U.S. relationship, the *New*

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<sup>6</sup> Nieh Hualing, “The Future of Chinese Writing,” Opening Remarks to the Chinese Weekend (September 15, 1979). Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> See Herbert Mitgang, “Publishing: Chinese Weekend in Iowa,” *New York Times* (August 17, 1979).

*York Times* paid less attention to the literary ambience than the political conditions of the two Chinas. After the Chinese Weekend, a follow-up essay titled “Iowa Literati Narrow China-Taiwan Gap” highlights the contrast between writers from the PRC and the ROC as “a strong reminder of the sudden shift in each faction’s fortunes in the United States.”<sup>8</sup> According to the *New York Times*, as the U.S. government severed formal diplomatic relations with the ROC, the poet from Taiwan was quiet and reserved while the writers from the mainland China more energetic and cheerful. The newspaper suggested that the U.S. foreign policy influenced Chinese writers affectively, revealing a U.S.-centric viewpoint that considered the U.S. the sole factor in the two Chinas condition.

The *New York Times* exaggerated the U.S. influence or projected its belief in the U.S. national greatness onto Chinese writers, but changes in Sino-U.S. relationship did determine who could participate in the Chinese Weekend and who could not.<sup>9</sup> Among the twenty-two Chinese writers visiting Iowa City, sixteen were already in the U.S., two came from mainland China, two from Hong Kong, one from Singapore, and one from Taiwan.<sup>10</sup> In other words, seventy percent of the Chinese writers attending the Chinese Weekend in Iowa City were those who had already been living in the U.S. for a while.

At this politically sensitive moment, the Nationalist regime of the ROC was trying with all its might to avoid further damaging its legitimacy as “China.” The ROC government knew well that any contact with the PRC (be it governmental or not) might be interpreted as a recognition of its counterpart as the other “China.” Especially after the PRC had gained the upper hand in the international community, the ROC government strengthened the stance of

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<sup>8</sup> See Iver Peterson, “Iowa Literati Narrow China-Taiwan Gap,” *New York Times* (September 20, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> By “national greatness,” I follow Michael H. Hunt’s definition of three ideologies that, as he argues, had formed by the early twentieth century and guided the U.S. foreign policy up to the 1980s: first, an “active quest for national greatness closely coupled to the promotion of liberty”; second, a set of “attitudes toward other peoples in terms of a racial hierarchy”; and third, an ideology determining “the limits of acceptable political and social change overseas” (17-18). See Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009 [1987]).

<sup>10</sup> The full report of the Chinese Weekend, Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

“no contact, no negotiation, and no compromise.”<sup>11</sup> Consequently, on the ROC side, only Kao Chun made it to Iowa City from Taiwan; the other two invited writers, Ya Hsuen, a modernist poet who had joined the IWP in the late 1960s from the ROC and was invited again for the Chinese Weekend, and a relatively younger novelist Wang Tuo (who would eventually visit the IWP in 1986; see below), were both restricted from leaving the island.<sup>12</sup> In fact, three days before the Chinese Weekend began, the official newspaper of the Nationalist regime, the *Central Daily News*, cautioned against the Chinese Communist Party scheme carried out through the means of literature and art.<sup>13</sup> As reported by the *Central Daily*, while the Chinese Writers’ and Artists’ Association (CWAA) of the ROC acknowledged Nieh Hualing’s effort for the future of Chinese creative writing, the CWAA accused the Communist Party of “distorting and exaggerating” such a convention with “a strong political color” advantageous to the PRC and unfavorable to the ROC.<sup>14</sup> Based on this reasoning, the ROC government tightened its control on the cross-strait communication that directly influenced the writers invited to the IWP Chinese Weekend.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, the CCP showed more confidence in being a legitimate nation-state in the international community. Two senior writers, Xiao Qian and Bi Shuowang (sixty-nine and sixty-one years old respectively), were permitted to travel abroad. The approval for Xiao and Bi, as granted shortly after the political turbulence of the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong’s passing, evidenced both a new set of policies (i.e., the “reform and opening-up”) and official support for the Chinese Weekend from the CCP. As Xiao made

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<sup>11</sup> The policy of “Three Noes” [三不] was proposed by the Nationalist regime in April 1979, in response to the PRC’s proposal of “Three Links” [三通] that intended to initiate the cross-strait links including postal service, transportation, and trade between the two Chinas.

<sup>12</sup> Iver Peterson, “Iowa Literati Narrow China-Taiwan Gap,” *New York Times* (September 20, 1979).

<sup>13</sup> *The Central Daily News*, “The CWAA calls out to writers and artists to be careful about the Communist bandits’ scheme of unification” [文協籲文藝界人士 慎防共匪統戰陰謀] (September 12, 1979). Paul Engle Papers (Box 26), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* The report particularly singles out Hong Kong’s *Wen Wei Po* as the CCP’s “fellow travelers.” The original passage: 中共及其同路人的蓄意歪曲與誇張，勢將使這個「純文學性」的集會，染上濃厚政治色彩，以圖有助於中共造謠。

it clear, his and Bi's presence in Iowa City would have been impossible a few years ago. During the symposium, he further declared that "our coming indicates a change of perspective, that is, we shall no longer be self-confined."<sup>15</sup>

In this vein, the Chinese Weekend was framed by the political changes of the Sino-U.S. relationship and the ongoing agitation between the two Chinas. Precisely because it was highly charged with politics, the host Nieh Hualing strategically depoliticized the Chinese Weekend to ensure that the convention would be held as scheduled. In her opening remarks, Nieh described the event as "beyond all governments" who "may like this meeting or not," downplaying the political factor that enabled the visit of the mainland Chinese writers.<sup>16</sup> She knew that the Chinese Weekend might not have been favored by some state governments, highly aware of the political sensitivity of bringing Chinese writers from the mainland and Taiwan together. Nonetheless, Nieh believed that what mattered was their shared identity as Chinese writers. As she said, "We are writers, we are friends, we want to get together, we want to talk, face to face, heart to heart."<sup>17</sup>

It was also the message that Nieh tried to send to the ROC government before the convention. Three weeks before the Chinese Weekend, when interviewed by Ya Hsuen, Nieh emphasized that she and Paul Engle "didn't have any particular purpose in mind. . . . there will be one symposium; the rest of the time will be devoted to talking and drinking together like old friends."<sup>18</sup> To Ya Hsuen's inquiry, "this will be a literary meeting and not a political one," Nieh confirmed, "Yes, it will be purely a literary event."<sup>19</sup> While Nieh's formulation of the Chinese Weekend conformed to the tenet of the U.S. Cold War in which literature and art

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<sup>15</sup> Xiao Qian's remarks in the full report of the Chinese Weekend. Paul Engle Papers (Box 25).

<sup>16</sup> Nieh, "The Future of Chinese Writing," Opening Remarks to the Chinese Weekend. Paul Engle Papers (Box 25).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "An Interview with Nieh Hualing by Ya Hsuen" on August 20, 1979 (translator unidentified), Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017. The original interview is in Mandarin Chinese, published on *The United Daily* (August 22, 1979, Taipei).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

were substantially depoliticized, her downplaying of the political aspect was meant to protect writers coming from two countries whose governments had yet to agree to a truce. The conversation between Ya Hsuen and Nieh, between the invited and the host, perhaps, was a staged performance intended to assuage the anxiety of the Nationalist regime, but to no avail. Ya Hsuen was still restricted from traveling abroad to attend a supposedly purely literary occasion in which both Chinas were to be represented.

After the realization of the Chinese Weekend, Nieh celebrated the convention as a “conclusion,” but some Chinese writers at the symposium regarded it as a mere start.<sup>20</sup> The success of the Chinese Weekend was largely a result of Nieh’s negotiation with writers and state governments. Perhaps afraid of jeopardizing the achieved compromise, Nieh called out to all the writers, “We are here not to fight, not to argue about the past, but to communicate, to understand, to know each other.”<sup>21</sup> Qin Song, a poet and a painter who moved to Taipei from mainland China in 1949 and moved again to the U.S. in 1969, Qin Song took the gathering as an opportunity to argue with one another and confront “solid questions”:

Hualing said, “We are here not to argue but to communicate.” Yes, I agree. However, if we argued during our communication, this would be a genuine explosion of our feelings. During the argument we may also touch upon some solid questions. I believe that argument won’t lead to bloodshed. We Chinese people come from the same blood; the way our blood sheds tells us to flow together.<sup>22</sup>

While Qin acknowledged Nieh’s emphasis on communication, he highlighted more the “argument” that would lead to “a genuine explosion of our feelings” and more importantly, “some solid questions.” As Nieh encouraged the writers “not to argue about the past,” Qin

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<sup>20</sup> Nieh, “The Future of Chinese Writing,” Opening Remarks to the Chinese Weekend. The emphasis is original.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Qin, “Not in Heaven, but Not on Earth,” speech delivered at the symposium of the Chinese Weekend.



indicated that only through arguing with each another could the Chinese people face the questions that were not yet solved. Qin's reference to "bloodshed" for the Chinese writers would have easily evoked the Chinese Civil War and the consequence of Chinese division. The "solid questions," hence, were not merely literary, but historical and political.

Kao Chun's speech at the Chinese Weekend shows his intent to engage with some "solid questions" as a result of the Chinese division. An editor of the journal *The Tide of Poetry* and a poet himself, as well as the only participant from the ROC, Kao offered his observation of modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan and mainland China up to the 1970s. To start with, Kao underscored the significance of confronting the past in order to discuss the future of Chinese literature. The problem of the Chinese division became a framework for Kao to explain current difficulties in which every Chinese writer was caught.<sup>23</sup> Delivering his speech after the mainland Chinese writer Xiao Qian who attributed the oppression of Chinese writers mainly to the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution, Kao argued that, for more than three decades since the late 1940s, "the extreme leftist practice of idol-worship" and what he called "sloganism" in mainland China had silenced the "true literary talents."<sup>24</sup> Taking the poet Ai Qing as an instance, Kao traced the oppression further back to the early 1940s, when the work of art and literature was obliged to be associated with that of revolution and politics, an association believed to be contributing to the nation-building process of a Communist China.<sup>25</sup> In a similarly prescriptive manner, he identified the major problem of the Chinese writing in Taiwan as the domination of modernism from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. As Kao frankly criticized, "the poets in Taiwan created quite a bit of

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<sup>23</sup> Kao, "The Future of Chinese Writing," speech delivered at the symposium of the Chinese Weekend. In Kao's own words, "For thirty years China has been divided into two parts; each isolating itself from the other in every way. Due to different social circumstances that emerged in both mainland China and Taiwan, literature has suffered a great deal."

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> This principle was established mainly by Mao Zedong at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art on May 2, 1942. See Mao, "Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art" <[https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_08.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm)>.

garbage under the influence of modernism” that resulted in a kind of Chinese literature imbued with unnecessary Westernization, wordplay, and surrealism.<sup>26</sup> Overall, in Kao’s diagnosis, writers in mainland China must rid themselves of the dogma established by the extreme leftists, whereas those in Taiwan must rework the tenets of modernism transplanted from the West. Kao concluded that both groups must strive for writing about the real lives of the people in society. Above all else, Kao advocated for the importance of democracy, believing that Chinese poets in both the mainland and Taiwan should write with a spirit of democracy.

To explain what he meant by “democracy,” Kao quoted Walt Whitman’s “For You O Democracy” at length. As Kao interpreted Whitman’s poem, “democracy” was transformed from a rhetoric of American patriotism to a means of writing that should be employed by all Chinese poets on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. While Kao’s choice of an American poet attested to his critique of the excessive Western influence on Chinese writers in Taiwan, his choice was intended to “show [his] gratitude toward [the] host and hostess and the American people,” as the symposium after all took place on American soil. In addition to this gesture of courtesy, Kao might have intentionally employed “For You O Democracy” in response to the politico-historical problem of the Chinese division.<sup>27</sup> Composed around the outbreak of the American Civil War, Whitman’s “For You O Democracy” eulogizes the “love of comrades,” among whom the first-person narrator strives to keep America intact as a way to pay tribute to democracy. Resonant with Whitman’s notion that comradeship would bring a nation and all its people together for the sake of democracy, Kao acknowledged democracy as “the mutual hope for Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits”; for him, “The common goal for all Chinese poets is to develop a democratic spirit in poetry.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kao, “The Future of Chinese Writing.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

At the symposium, “democracy” was also evaluated by whether writers could express their viewpoints freely. Kao was not the only writer espousing democracy for a better literary and political future for the Chinese. Lee Yee, an essayist from Hong Kong, affirmed the reciprocal relationship between democracy and literature, believing that the “prospects of literary renaissance in China will be a vital force in stimulating the democratization and modernization of the nation.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Chen Ruoxi, a novelist originally from Taiwan who moved to mainland China (1966), Hong Kong (1973), and Canada (1974), before settling down in the U.S. in 1979, underscored democracy when offering her opinions specifically “in regard to the literature of Mainland China.”<sup>30</sup> Criticizing the censorship imposed on Chinese writers by the PRC government, Chen stated, “Democracy should start from the leadership. The people must have the freedom of speech, which is a basic human right and not just a privilege for the party.”<sup>31</sup> For Chen, a writer who experienced the martial law period in Taiwan and the early years of Cultural Revolution in the mainland, a relatively democratic leadership implied one that would allow more space for her to speak and write. Thus, equating democracy with the freedom of speech, Chen advocated that “literature must be freed from political control” and, similar to Lee, endowed Chinese literature with a mission to “help change the political situation [in mainland China].”<sup>32</sup>

How democratic (politically and literarily) the PRC could become, and to what extent writers could express themselves freely in mainland China, continued to be the keynote of the post-symposium discussion at Nieh and Engle’s house. When imagining a future network through which Chinese writings could be circulated, writers were highly concerned with the impediment to cross-strait communication due to the ongoing Chinese Civil War and the

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<sup>29</sup> Lee Yee, “Literary Writing and the Democratization and Modernization of China,” speech delivered at the symposium of the Chinese Weekend.

<sup>30</sup> Chen Jo-hsi (Chen Ruoxi), “Some Recommendations,” speech delivered at the symposium of the Chinese Weekend.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Cold War. Even though both Chinese governments were responsible for creating and consolidating barriers, Nieh focused on the situation in the PRC and asked “friends coming from Beijing”—namely, Xiao Qian and Bi Shuowang—if they could introduce back home the “criticism and suggestions” offered during the symposium.<sup>33</sup> Nieh in some ways sounded out Xiao and Bi about how outspoken a writer could be under the political circumstance of a newly opening-up PRC. As the very first two writers coming out of mainland China, Xiao and Bi were naturally entitled to inform the others about the current situation in the PRC. As they described what the literary field was like in the contemporary China after the fall of the Gang of Four, other Chinese writers simply listened to Xiao and Bi who assumed the role of insiders providing others with the knowledge that they could not access.

However, when it came to the freedom of the press in mainland China, their authority as insiders started to be challenged. When Bi detailed the rate of an author’s payment, the works recently done by the China Writers Association, as well as realism and romanticism in the most current mainland Chinese writing, hardly any writer questioned his report. But the non-PRC Chinese writers seemed to feel stronger urgency to interrogate Bi on the discursive and political condition of mainland China. Even as Bi affirmed that writers in the late 1970s China were able to express themselves more freely and publicly in journals and newspapers, Hsu Kai-yu, a writer born in China in 1922 who immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1940s and stayed there since, suddenly interjected, “Are the journals and newspapers in those places able to be exported?”<sup>34</sup> A back-and-forth conversation thus followed:

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<sup>33</sup> A hand-written document titled “The Forum in the Midnight” [午夜的座談], recording the content of the Chinese writers’ discussion at Nieh and Engle’s house after the symposium (recorder unidentified). Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017. The original: 我有一個問題想問北京來的朋友，對於下午各位發表的許多批評和意見，是不是能帶回去表達？

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. The original: 這些地方的刊物和報紙，都可以外銷吧？

Bi: I am not certain about this. Some regulations still remain. But now the number of [journals and newspaper] is increasing. Some can be exported, but some cannot.

Hsu: And who gets to decide this? Is it determined by institutions in each local place, or by Beijing only?

Bi: An organization in charge of exportation in Beijing gets to decide this.<sup>35</sup>

Following Chen Ruoxi's train of thought, Hsu revealed a concern as to what extent Chinese writings (i.e., journals and magazines) could be free from political control. Eager to learn of the freedom of the press in mainland China, Hsu asked Bi three questions in succession, and his last inquiry, "or by Beijing only?," demonstrates how he already cast doubt on the PRC government. As Bi's answer catered to Hsu's presupposition about the authoritarian role of the PRC, the question about the freedom of the press was redefined as the problem of the unfreedom of the press in mainland China.

Under the banner of the freedom of speech at the IWP, the non-PRC writers seemed to feel qualified to investigate the unfreedom of the press in mainland China. Building on Hsu's inquiry, the remarks of Chen Youshi further excited the debate. A feminist writer born in mainland China in 1935, Chen received her bachelor's degree from National Taiwan University and began her study in the U.S. in 1957. After receiving her PhD in East Asian Languages and Literatures at Yale University in 1967, she became a lecturer of Chinese literature and stayed primarily in New York afterward. For Chen, a Chinese expatriate in the U.S., the press was definitely a significant source to learn about the ROC and the PRC; yet, like Hsu, she doubted that newspapers and journals in mainland China could satisfy her need:

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. The original: 畢朔望：這個情況我不是很清楚。好像還是有一些規定的。不過現在數量比較增加，有些可以外銷，有一些還是不能出口。／許芥昱打破砂鍋地問著：這又由誰來決定呢？是由每地方的負責機構決定呢？還是由北京決定？／畢朔望：不，這是由北京一個負責出口的單位負責。

If newspapers and journals in mainland China revealed the domestic reality or chose to describe the life abroad truthfully, and hence made us feel that [the press] can really illustrate the life abroad, only at that moment would we truly speak what we want. Otherwise, all the talks about looking forward and backward, about how the politics no longer dominates art and literature—it sounds nice, but nobody buys into it.<sup>36</sup>

Assuming that politics reigned over art and literature in mainland China, Chen believed that writers still could not or were reluctant to speak up. Her provocative remarks caused both commotion and applause, after which Lee Yee, Chen Ruoxi, and Nieh all made a brief comment on facilitating the cross-strait communication, and, once again, speculated as to what extent the PRC authority would allow such exchanges.

Xiao, finally, intervened in their speculation, offering three points as “a person from the [PRC’s] publishing industry.”<sup>37</sup> First, to the suggestion that the PRC should emulate Taiwan in releasing a national bibliography to keep all publications and libraries more systematic and organized, Xiao clarified that the PRC has already been doing this every year since its establishment, only with a few years of suspension due to the Cultural Revolution.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, in response to the communication between the mainland China and Taiwan, Xiao affirmed that he certainly would love to introduce more Chinese literary works from abroad to the mainland. In fact, he had already made his proposal to the publishing circles in the PRC. Lastly, Xiao responded to the anxiety about the PRC’s political control that

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. The original: 陳幼石：……假如國內的報章雜誌，真能反映國內現實或選擇描寫國外生活，能讓我們大家覺得是真正反映國外生活，那時，我們大家真的可以言語大放。要不然，說什麼往前看，往後看，政治現在不駕馭文藝了，說得很好聽，可是沒有人相信。

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. The original: 我是出版界的人，不得不說幾句話。

<sup>38</sup> As a matter of fact, the publication of the PRC national bibliography stopped from 1966 to 1970. In 1971, the publication resumed.

undergirded the entire debate. As the sixty-nine-year-old writer explained the recent opening-up to other Chinese writers:

Readers and writers in the mainland are all in a mood to know about and learn from the foreign. . . . It is as if the overseas literary works have infused new blood into the country; new inspiration and influence will definitely happen. During the period of the Gang of Four, literary works abroad were very much shut out [in the mainland China]. Now, [China] is in a mood yearning for and welcoming peoples and works overseas.<sup>39</sup>

Xiao ended his remarks with a plea, “I hope everyone would not look at the [mainland China] through the old almanac of the Yellow Emperor.”<sup>40</sup>

Before Xiao’s intervention, the restrictions on the freedom of the press in the PRC remained at the center of debate, even though this kind of restrictions also existed in the ROC under martial law. Given that the Chinese Weekend offered an opportunity for most non-PRC writers to learn about mainland China from the two PRC writers, the preoccupation with the PRC and its “unfreedom” was to be expected. Yet, hosted by the IWP that upheld the freedom of speech, the Chinese Weekend at the same time authorized its participants to openly criticize the perceived unfreedom of the PRC. Had Xiao and Bi’s testimonies to the PRC’s actual socio-political circumstance been absent, the forum about mainland Chinese writings, perhaps, would likely ended up as an exercise in finding fault with how the Communist Party authoritatively manipulated the press and by extension, literature and art. Along the same grain, writers at the Chinese Weekend would likely have reinforced their belief in how the CCP violated the freedom of the press.

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<sup>39</sup> “The Forum in the Midnight.” The original: 國內的讀者和作家，都帶著向海外觀摩學習的心情。……海外作品好像給國內注入新血液，一定有新的啟發和影響。在四人幫的時候，對海外作品非常排斥。如今是以渴望的心情，來歡迎海外的人及作品。

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. The original: 希望大家不要以老黃曆來看國內。

Yet, even with Xiao and Bi's presence, insider identity, and credibility, a consensus about the lack of freedom of the press in the PRC was formed. This consensus not only circulated among Chinese writers over the post-symposium discussion, but also corresponded with the U.S. Cold War consensus. In line with the ideology of the Cold War divide, Xiao and Bi were differentiated from the majority of the Chinese writers who visited Iowa City from "free" areas such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States. By treating Xiao and Bi as Others, the Chinese Weekend and the Chinese writers at the IWP had affirmed the division between the U.S. and the communist countries, capitalism and socialism, as well as freedom and unfreedom.

This discord and dispute did not diminish the enthusiasm for Chinese literature shared by all Chinese writers. As Nieh Hualing recalled the first day of the Chinese Weekend, "Nobody wanted to sleep and [we] just talked on and on and our conversations simply wouldn't end."<sup>41</sup> The post-symposium gathering at Nieh and Engle's house continued past midnight until two o'clock. Nieh successfully played the role of a capable host, whereas the other host at the IWP, Paul Engle, was barely present in the main symposium and the later discussion. Since Mandarin Chinese was the primary language in use, Engle the American poet could not help but leave the conversation.

Engle's presence, however, was crucial when negotiating with the Chinese officials about the Chinese Weekend. Even though Nieh was the director of the IWP since Engle had to retire in 1977 per the organization's by-law, the seventy-year-old American poet remained a "consultant" for the IWP. In January 1979, when preparing for the Chinese Weekend, Engle and Nieh sent a letter to Huang Chen at the Ministry of Culture of the PRC. Explaining the rationale and operation of the IWP, they requested two writers to be sent to Iowa City for the

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<sup>41</sup> He Da's interview with Nieh, *New Evening Post* (September 20, 1979). Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017. The original: 誰也不肯睡覺……談啊談啊，就是談不完。



forthcoming term. The letter showcases the significance of the IWP, with an aim to convince Huang that being a part of the IWP would only do China good. The Engles stated, “We want the presence of the People’s Republic of China in this program. If they [the two writers] come, this will be reported back to all the countries represented here. This would benefit China.”<sup>42</sup> While the letter was signed by “Paul Engle, Consultant” and “Hualing Nieh, Director,” the use of the English language underscored more the role of the American poet. Otherwise, Nieh could have just used her mother tongue—that would also be Huang’s—to ease the communication. The Engles, perhaps, strategically chose English to have a conversation with the Chinese official, knowing that the PRC government would want to keep the newly formed diplomatic relation with the U.S. in a fine condition. As if reminding the minister of the PRC’s most updated foreign policy, the Engles concluded the letter: “We are delighted with the normalization of relations between China and the United States.”<sup>43</sup> In this sense, even though Nieh might have been the key person to communicate with the Chinese officials and writers, the presence of an American poet did matter.

Engle was also crucial in justifying holding a “Chinese” event on the soil of the U.S., as he emphasized how the IWP would fulfill U.S. cultural diplomacy by showing “America” to the Chinese writers. When asked by the *New York Times*, “And how do they [the Engles] hope to show the United States to the Chinese writers?,” Paul Engle replied:

We plan a boatripe [sic] on the Mississippi . . . Mark Twain’s river entertaining the Marxist Chinese and the anti-Marxist Chinese. Food, bar, music and dancing—in addition to literary discussions between visits to Iowa’s farm country. It will be an event unprecedented in the history of the United States and China’s literary relations.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Paul Engle and Nieh Hualing’s letter to Huang Chen (January 17, 1979). Paul Engle Papers (Box 25), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 15, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See Herbert Mitgang, “Publishing: Chinese Weekend in Iowa,” *New York Times* (August 17, 1979).

The *New York Times* assumed that the IWP would showcase the U.S. to the Chinese writers who in turn would be excited to see the country. As if reporting back to one of the most prominent newspapers in the U.S. society, Engle offered an itinerary with which the Chinese would be able to see the U.S. The Chinese foreigners were to see the American icons such as Mark Twain and the Mississippi, and the Iowa scenery characterized by the local color of the Midwest. Without doubt, the ways that Engle and the *New York Times* envisioned the Chinese Weekend had less to do with “the future of Chinese writing” than exhibiting America. To the contrary, the Chinese writers, including Nieh the director of the IWP, devoted themselves intensively to Chinese literature. For them, seeing America was secondary to their purpose of attending the program to meet with each other and talk about Chinese writing. For the Americans, however, what made more sense to them—to the general public, the *New York Times*, and even to Engle himself—would be a tourist package featuring Mark Twain. As Engle was possibly familiar with the gap between the American public and Chinese writers, when interviewed by the *New York Times* he did not touch too much upon the specific subject of the event (i.e., a group of Chinese talking about “their” literature). Instead, the IWP consultant underlined the American setting of the event for the American public, hence ensuring that the newspaper would make room for nationwide coverage of the IWP’s Chinese Weekend. Engle succeeded. When the Chinese writers visited the headquarters of John Deere—a long-term sponsor of the IWP—at Moline, Illinois, on September 17, the *New York Times* arranged a reporter to cover the tour.<sup>45</sup>

The American poet himself was well aware of his oddity to the gathering of Chinese writers. His awareness notwithstanding, Engle justified and further neutralized his oddity via

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<sup>45</sup> See the record of the Chinese Weekend in Mandarin Chinese, and He Da’s interview with Nieh, *New Evening Post* (September 20, 1979). Both were in Paul Engle Papers (Box 25). The original in the record: 今日參觀「國際寫作計畫」贊助人狄爾公司，設於伊利諾州木林市的總廠。The original in Nieh’s interview: 我們去莊·狄爾那一天，紐約時報派了記者來專訪。

the setting of Iowa City. For the convention, Engle prepared a speech that at the very beginning identified himself as “an outsider,” a local Iowan “with a superficial knowledge of their [the Chinese] poetry.”<sup>46</sup> In addition to quoting Nieh and summarizing some speakers’ talks, Engle shed light on Iowa as he had always done in promoting both the IWW and the IWP. “For the first time in history such a variety of writers in Chinese met in a beautiful room at the Art Museum of the University of Iowa, with paintings and sculpture surrounding them, and Iowa City surrounded by the most fertile soil in America,” said Engle. Although the Chinese Weekend was the subject, Engle clearly paid more attention to the backdrop, such as “a beautiful room,” the paintings and sculptures, and the soil—the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and the U.S. For a brief moment, he empathized with the Chinese who were often caught in “a disaster area of wars, international and civil, revolution, martial law,” and hence admired the courage of the Chinese to imagine a future both for themselves and for their literature. But Engle soon shifted the focus back to Iowa City and the U.S., acknowledging how the Chinese writers “were reaffirming their Chineseness in the most typically American state in the USA.” Throughout his speech, the backdrop of a Midwestern city in the U.S. was rendered into the main subject, with which Engle turned from an outsider to the host. In the vision of Engle as an American internationalist, the subject of the Chinese Weekend was not the Chinese writers gathering together, but “the most typically American state in the USA.”

Engle’s framing of Iowa City reflected the ways in which the U.S. government positioned itself to gain political leverage from the two Chinas condition. A genuinely well-intentioned host, Engle happily offered Iowa City as “a pleasant University town in the Midwest of the United States” where Chinese writers of the PRC and the ROC could “meet

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<sup>46</sup> Engle’s speech to the Chinese Weekend, “Chinese Weekend—Chinese Eternity” (September 15, 1979). The subsequent remarks of Engle were from the same transcript. Paul Engle Papers (Box 25).

in neutral ground.”<sup>47</sup> However, for some Chinese writers, meeting in the U.S. was more an expedient solution than a desirable means to engage with each other. Qin Song, for instance, straightforwardly stated, “My hope—perhaps also, the hopes of others in this symposium, is to hold another meeting like this one in the future, either in Peking or Taipei.”<sup>48</sup> Such a hope was difficult to realize in the late 1970s and the early 1980s because of the tense situation between the two Chinas and the U.S. Engle was right when he celebrated Iowa City as “neutral.” Amidst the wrestling of the two Chinas, Iowa City and indeed the U.S. assumed a “neutral” position, especially after the relationship between the U.S. and the PRC was normalized. Since the early 1970s, the U.S. showed attempts to neutralize its stance as not merely intimately associated with the ROC but also officially related to the PRC. From 1979 onward, its “neutral stance” was legally supported by the consecutive enactment of the Second China-U.S. Joint Communiqué and the Taiwan Relations Act. In order to maintain its interest in East Asia, a “neutral” country like the U.S. would not hope for an end to the Chinese Civil War.

The neutral status of the IWP asserted by Engle is also questionable. Throughout the Chinese Weekend, the majority of the invited Chinese writers who had already lived in the U.S. built a consensus faithfully corresponding to the politics of the Western Bloc. As this consensus was predicated on the supposed opposition between the freedom of speech in the Western Bloc and the lack thereof in the Eastern Bloc, the two mainland Chinese writers from the PRC, even as they were there to represent a newly “reform and opening-up” China to their fellow writers, were made into the other. In this vein, the Chinese Weekend held in Iowa City in 1979 was inevitably orchestrated through the U.S.-centered vision and Cold War politics. Had the venue been in Beijing, the discussion would have changed dramatically.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Qin Song’s remarks at the symposium of the Chinese Weekend.

However, the “strange conduct of Taiwan”—as Engle correctly pinpointed—would have remained the same. No matter where the Chinese Weekend was held, the ROC writers would have very likely been restricted from traveling out of the island.

### **The Taiwan Issue: an Absent Presence**

The “strange conduct,” however, was far from strange. The tightening of social control was the ROC’s response to a series of political crises in the 1970s. At home, the Nationalist regime lost its strongman in April 1975 when Chiang Kai-shek the Generalissimo died. Abroad, within five years, the ROC lost its seat in the United Nations and confronted the U.S.’s new foreign policy that favored the PRC. As the two U.S. presidents Nixon and Ford visited China respectively in 1972 and 1975, the ROC government must have been prepared for further changes of Sino-U.S. relationship. However, on December 16, 1978, the ROC President Chiang Ching-kuo and the Nationalist officials were exasperated.<sup>49</sup> As the last U.S. ambassador Leonard Unger in Taiwan remembered, the “Chinese on Taiwan were deeply distressed.”<sup>50</sup> Since the U.S. was pivotal in formulating the Chinese Nationalist Party into the Republic of China in Taiwan, losing the support of the U.S. could lead to losing the whole world for the ROC government.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, even though the U.S. government was aware of the ROC’s distress, the American officials were caught off guard by the public hostility to them in

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<sup>49</sup> See Wang Hao [汪浩], *Accidental Founding Fathers: Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo, Lee Teng-hui, and the Modern Taiwan* [意外的國父：蔣介石、蔣經國、李登輝與現代台灣] (Taipei: Gusa Publishing, 2017), especially Chapter Four, “Chiang Ching-kuo’s Claim: the ‘ROC’ is ‘Taiwan Government’” [蔣經國主張「中華民國」就是「台灣政府」].

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Leonard Unger by Charles Stuart Kennedy (May 10, 1989), Frontline Diplomacy, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <<https://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib001204>>. In his original remarks: “It was naturally a traumatic situation; the Chinese on Taiwan were deeply distressed and not much disposed to talk about it, yet they knew they had to in order to avoid a chaotic situation once regular diplomatic relations with the U.S. were broken. . . . So they had no choice but to work something out with us, angry and distressed as they were.”

<sup>51</sup> Lin Hsiao-ting, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Taipei. On December 27, 1978, the arrival of the then U.S. Secretary of the State Warren Christopher was welcomed by “a wild protest demonstration,” as recalled by the ambassador Unger, who suspected that behind the scene was the Nationalist regime.<sup>52</sup> The protesters against the U.S. officials chanted “Long Live the Republic of China!” and “Long Live President Chiang!” chanted; several signs written in English read “Free China is the Only China,” “R.O.C. Never Fall,” and “We Follow Him Always”—the last one with Chiang Ching-kuo’s photo on it.<sup>53</sup> While a number of policemen stood in front of the crowd to separate them from the limousine that carried Unger and Christopher, the control of the “mob” was relatively loose: the police were on the spot without shields, helmets, or nightsticks.<sup>54</sup> By the time the crowd was stopped from doing further damages, the limousine was covered completely with eggs thrown at it, next to which an English sign read “Carter Sells Peanut, also Friends.”<sup>55</sup>

Whereas the anti-American energy did not go against the grain of the ROC government, the loss of U.S. recognition brought the underground anti-Nationalist resistance to the fore. One of the resistant forces was the Tangwai (lit. “outside the party”) movement that blossomed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Trying to gain political power and challenge the Nationalist authority through election system, the Tangwai movement resumed the task of *Free China*, which was interrupted in September 1960 due to Lei Chen’s arrest. Both aspiring to form an opposition party to realize party politics and representative democracy, *Free China* and the Tangwai movement devoted themselves to advocating the political form of liberalism, or, as it would be celebrated a few decades later, the

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Leonard Unger by Charles Stuart Kennedy (May 10, 1989).

<sup>53</sup> A news clip about the demonstration on December 27, 1978. The Chinese Television System 中華電視公司 (CTS 華視) <<http://news.cts.com.tw/cts/politics/197812/197812281832725.html#.W5UAOS2B3Vo>> accessed September 9, 2018. The original: 中華民國萬歲！蔣總統萬歲！

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> “The ROC-U.S. Severance [中美斷交],” a brief introduction of the historical event and collection of photographs at the National Repository of Cultural Heritage database [國家文化資料庫], “Photo Narrative [老照片說故事],” <<http://cna.moc.gov.tw/Myphoto/gallery.asp?categoryid=43>> accessed September 20, 2018.

“democratization” of Taiwan. Similar to how Lei Chen and the *Free China* intellectuals took the literary journal as a platform to discursively practice and disseminate their political ideas, the Tangwai activists initiated a short-lived journal titled *Formosa* (“*Melidao*,” lit. “a beautiful island”). In 1986 at long last, the mission of establishing an opposition party was completed. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was founded one year prior to the lifting of martial law.<sup>56</sup>

The genealogy of seeking liberalism as a political form in Taiwan from *Free China* to *Formosa* reveals a Taiwanese subject formation in the making. Three decades after the launch of *Free China*, *Formosa* employed the former name of Taiwan as its title and published its first issue in August 1979. The Mission Statement opened with an urgent request that compelled the readers to join in a political movement for the new generation—“History is giving us a trial!”<sup>57</sup> The “trial,” as it explained, came from a time of social and political turbulence. *Formosa* highlighted the changes of the U.S.-ROC relationship: “The severance of the U.S.-ROC relation asserted that the foreign policy of the Nationalist regime over the past thirty years has gone into bankruptcy; it has urged the government of the Nationalist Party to confront the greatest political crisis over the past thirty years of ruling Taiwan.”<sup>58</sup> As the Mission Statement put, once without the recognition of the U.S., the Nationalist regime lost not only the credibility of its policy-making but also its legitimacy of governing Taiwan. Accusing the Nationalist Party of “covering numerous problems of our nation and society with taboos and myths,” it called for “emancipation from those taboos and

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<sup>56</sup> With hindsight, the Tangwai movement had successfully reformulated the one-party system of the ROC into a two-party one. Until today, the Nationalist Party and the DPP have been the two dominant parties in Taiwan. The history of the Tangwai movement from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s is much more complicated than the above narrative, which intentionally follows a standardized account based on which the DPP recounts and affirms its contribution to the democratization of Taiwan. See the website of the DPP <<https://www.dpp.org.tw/about>> accessed September 23, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Huang Hsin-chieh [黃信介], “Mission Statement” [發刊詞], *Formosa* vol. 1.1 (August 1979). The original: 歷史在試煉著我們！

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* The original: 中美斷交宣告國民黨政府三十年來外交政策的全面破產，它使國民黨政府面臨統治台灣三十年來最大的政治危機。

myths” in order to review national and social issues.<sup>59</sup> *Formosa* concluded by appealing to the readers to “deeply unearth our own land and hope for a bountiful harvest in the near future—a beautiful island in the blossom of freedom and democracy!”<sup>60</sup> Unlike *Free China*, *Formosa* underscored more the island of Taiwan and at the same time broke the Nationalist myth that still claimed the mainland as its territory.

*Formosa* was terminated due to the Kaohsiung Incident (also known as the Melidao Incident) in December 1979. More than fifty Tangwai activists and those who were on the *Formosa* editorial board were arrested and tried—including Wang Tuo, the same Wang Tuo invited by Nieh Hualing to Iowa City for the Chinese Weekend but restricted from traveling by the ROC government.<sup>61</sup> As the conflict between the Tangwai movement and the Nationalist Party explicitly intensified, the *Formosa* community tried to pull together a meeting on December 10 to commemorate the International Human Rights Day and express their discontent with the Nationalist regime.<sup>62</sup> The Tangwai activists mobilized the gathering in front of the *Formosa* Magazine office in Kaohsiung without authorized permission from the government. A number of politicians and intellectuals joined and delivered speeches against the Nationalist oppression.<sup>63</sup> As expected, the gathering resulted in violent clashes

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. The original passage: 國民黨以禁忌、神話隱蔽我們國家社會的許許多多問題……我們必須徹底從禁忌、神話中解脫出來，深入、廣泛地反省、挖掘、思考我們國家社會的種種問題……。

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. The original: 讓我們共同來深深挖掘我們自己的土地，期待一個豐收的明天——自由民主的花朵開遍美麗島！

<sup>61</sup> See the Melidao Incident Database, supervised by the National Archives Administration, R.O.C. <<https://atc.archives.gov.tw/formosa/formosaonline/>> accessed September 25, 2018. A great number of documents including indictment, verdict, official report, and overseas petition and so on, have been digitalized and displayed online at this Database.

<sup>62</sup> For the background of and details about how the Kaohsiung Incident happened, see Tang Chih-Chieh, “An Unavoidable Conflict: an Explanation of the Kaohsiung Incident in Terms of the Dialectic of Structure and Process” *Taiwanese Sociology* No. 13 (June 2007): 71-128.

<sup>63</sup> For more details and photographs of the gathering on December 10, 1979, see *The Will to Resist: Melidao Democratization Movement in Pictures 1977-1979* (Taipei: China Times Publishing Co., 2014). Based on the interview records collected by the Shih Ming-Te Foundation, the book was re-edited and published on the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kaohsiung Incident. While *The Will to Resist* commemorates the *Formosa* magazine and the Tangwai movement in a rather celebratory tone, the photographs and the oral histories provided by those who have participated in the movement are worth a read.



between the crowd and the military police. Wang Tuo was sentenced to a six-year imprisonment.

Paroled in 1984, Wang Tuo finally joined the IWP in the autumn of 1986, as both a writer in residence and a former political prisoner attesting to the most updated situation of Taiwan. Nieh was on leave during Wang's three-month residency, while Wang's visit to the U.S. was not merely meant for the IWP.<sup>64</sup> Wang was invited to give a number of talks at Columbia University, University of Chicago, Stanford University, University of California Los Angeles, University of Minnesota, and the Taiwanese Association of Minnesota.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps because of his tight schedule, Wang only delivered two speeches at the IWP titled "World Literature, or National Literature?" (September 25) and "Images of America" (November 21).<sup>66</sup> He also conducted one "mini-course" (October 13) under the title "International Writing Today: China Session" with three writers from mainland China—Shao Yanxiang, Wure Ertu, and Ah Cheng.<sup>67</sup>

Whereas Wang enjoyed spending time with his Chinese brothers, he indicated that he was more a Taiwanese than a Chinese.<sup>68</sup> In his talk at the "Images of America" mini-conference, Wang began with how learning from a different culture would enable a deeper grasp of one's own society, and then talked about his impression of the U.S. in comparison to

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<sup>64</sup> The 1986 IWP was directed by Daniel J. Weissbort, a professor in charge of the Translation Workshop and teaching at the English and Comparative Literature department at the University of Iowa. "The IWP 1986 Annual Report," 1. Paul Engle Papers (Box 22), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 11, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> "The IWP 1986 Annual Report," 15.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* The mini-course was for the upper-level undergraduates at the University of Iowa.

<sup>68</sup> In his speech at the mini-conference "Images of America," he referred to the writers invited from the PRC as "my fellow Chinese brothers," expressing his appreciation for their sense of humor and their talks (Paul Engle Papers [Box 40], Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 14, 2017). Nieh Hualing's autobiography also shows a picture of Wang, Shao, Wure, and Cheng sitting intimately with one another, smiling at the camera; see *Three Lives* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 2011), 395. In one of his interviews, Wang also told his interviewers that, since his English was not good, he spent most of his time at the IWP with Chinese writers from the PRC (*Renjian Thought Review* 15 [Spring 2017], 35-36).

Taiwan's social circumstance. Before he evaluated the U.S. society and culture, Wang offered a definition of "Taiwan":

Basically speaking, Taiwan culture originated from mainland China. We have a lot of similarities in our cultures and we share a lot of common problems too. . . . Beginning in 1895, it has been 91 years since Taiwan is separated from China. Certain characteristics of the society of Taiwan is somewhat different from those of mainland China. I am looking at the American society through the eyes of a Taiwanese.<sup>69</sup>

In line with the Mission Statement of *Formosa* that shifts the focus from mainland China to Taiwan, Wang's remarks shed light on the island's own history and society. Despite sharing a similar cultural origin, the society of Taiwan, according to Wang, had developed its characteristics due to ninety-one-year separation, half a century of Japanese colonization and forty-one years of the Nationalist rule.

Wang's definition of "Taiwan" challenged the label of "Chinese writer" at the IWP since its foundation. Had Nieh been present at Wang's talk, she would have had to revise her formulation of "Chinese writer" back in 1979. Two days after the 1979 Chinese Weekend symposium, when being interviewed by the *New York Times*, Nieh corrected Engle's appellation of Kao Chun as "the Taiwanese poet." As she explained, "Don't say 'the Taiwanese poet.' Say 'the poet from Taiwan', or 'from mainland.' Otherwise it sounds like two different countries, and the Chinese believe Taiwan is just a province. On both sides, they believe that."<sup>70</sup> According to Nieh, the use of "Taiwanese poet" should be avoided, since all the Chinese "on both sides" of the Taiwan Strait would maintain that the two places belonged to one country. Although Wang Tuo did not express what China meant to him in

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<sup>69</sup> Wang Tuo's speech at one of the mini-conferences titled "Images of America" on November 21, 1986; the speech was translated and transcribed by Katherine Lin. Paul Engle Papers (Box 40), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 14, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Iver Peterson, "Iowa Literati Narrow China-Taiwan Gap," *New York Times* (September 20, 1979).

jurisdiction and sovereignty (whether “Taiwan is just a province” or not), his talk during his IWP residency in 1986 indicated that Taiwanese culture and society should not be equated with the mainland ones. Even in 1979, if Wang had ever heard of Nieh’s correction of “Taiwanese poet,” perhaps he would have begged to differ.

Since the late 1970s, Wang demonstrated that his understanding of Taiwanese literature was based on the distinctive history and society of Taiwan. In April 1977, Wang published an essay titled “It’s ‘Realist’ Literature, Not ‘Nativist’ Literature.”<sup>71</sup> Commonly regarded as “the first shot” fired in the debate over “nativist literature,” Wang’s essay underlines the political crises in the early 1970s that, as he argued, had enabled the development of the so-called “nativist literature.”<sup>72</sup> In his narrative, the Baodiao movement and losing the seat in the UN, along with Nixon’s visit to China and Japan’s establishing official diplomatic relation with the PRC, had taught the Taiwanese a valuable lesson.<sup>73</sup> Such a lesson especially strengthened the national consciousness of the Taiwanese: “We realized that in order to resist the imperialist aggression, to fight for our right to survive in the international society, it is first and foremost dependent on a thorough reform of our political and social circumstance at home!”<sup>74</sup> As Wang outlined, a series of political frustrations compelled the Taiwanese to confront the local problems in their own “home soil.” Some young intellectuals researched on the living conditions of Taiwanese workers, and revealed how Philco Taiwan Corporation (October 1972), Funai Electric Corporation (April 1973),

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<sup>71</sup> See Wang Tuo, “It’s Realist Literature, Not Nativist Literature: an Analysis about the History of ‘Nativist Literature’” [是「現實主義」文學，不是「鄉土文學」——有關「鄉土文學」的史的分析], originally published on *Cactus* [仙人掌] No. 2 (April 1, 1977), and later collected in *Home Soil Literature Polemic Collection* [鄉土文學討論集] (edited by Yu Tien-tsung [尉天驄]; Taipei: Vista Publishing [遠景], 1978), 100-119.

<sup>72</sup> See an interview with Wang Tuo by Chen Kuan-Hsing and Lin Li-Yun, in *Renjian Thought Review* 15 (Spring 2017), 27.

<sup>73</sup> See Wang, “It’s Realist Literature, Not Nativist Literature” [是「現實主義」文學，不是「鄉土文學」], collected in *Home Soil Literature Polemic Collection*, 105.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* The original: ……使我們認清：要抵抗帝國主義的侵略、要爭取國際的生存權，首先還是在於自己國內政治和社會的徹底革新！

and Mitsui Mining Company (May 1973) had exploited Taiwanese and caused serious pollution. Wang explained further, as the exposed iniquities of these foreign corporations (one American, two Japanese) combined with an international status of the ROC in jeopardy, the Taiwanese embraced a national consciousness grounded in Taiwan and fought against the economic structure founded upon imperialism and colonialism.<sup>75</sup> Because of this background, “nativist literature” thrived; or, as Wang argued, it was less “nativist” than “realist.” Unlike the 1960s modernist writers who evidenced “an imitation of Western literature that is whiningly pretentious and that spreads doubt, paleness, and loss,” realist writers in the 1970s attended to and wrote about the “home soil” of Taiwan.<sup>76</sup>

Amidst the debate over “nativist literature,” Chen Yingzhen came to Wang Tuo’s aid. Relatively senior to Wang in Taiwan’s cultural-intellectual circles, Chen at that time was paroled after serving seven years of his ten-year sentence since 1968. Arrested for reading books related to socialism and mainland China, Chen would have still been in prison had Chiang Kai-shek stayed alive a few years longer.<sup>77</sup> Paroled and yet under surveillance in the late 1970s, Chen was aware that every piece of his writing would very likely turn him into a political prisoner again. Yet, at such a critical moment when a new structure of feeling emerged within Taiwan’s cultural-intellectual circles, Chen did not relinquish writing. On October 3, 1979, he was arrested again for being a “radical communist.”<sup>78</sup>

Published in July 1977, Chen’s essay “Literature Originates from Society and Displays Society” substantiated Wang’s with more historical facts and his own experiences

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 112. Wang’s criticism of modernist literature in Taiwan in original: ……到處散發出迷茫、蒼白、失落等等無病呻吟、扭捏作態的西方文學的仿製品。

<sup>77</sup> Judgement of the Ministry of Defense of the ROC (Reference No.: The 58<sup>th</sup> year-Fu-P-Hsam-Tze-No. 13), April 11, 1969. Paul Engle Papers (Box 22), Special Collections, The University of Iowa Libraries. Accessed August, 11, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> This time, Chen was released within two days. See Chen’s own account, “About ‘10.3 Incident’” [關於「十·三」事件], originally published on *Formosa* vol. 1.3 (October 1979), 47-49. The piece is later collected in *The Complete Writings of Chen Yingzhen* Vol. 4 [陳映真全集] (Taipei: Renjian, 2017), 13-21. The original term: 狂熱的共產主義份子。

engaging with writers and literary journals since the 1960s.<sup>79</sup> As Chen succinctly summed up, literature in the 1970s Taiwan revealed a transformation “from an absolute dependence on the West to a national identity in literature; from escapism, modernism, ‘internationalism’ and subjective realism, to literature’s national belongingness, social function, and realism.”<sup>80</sup>

Chen also acknowledged the effort of literary critics in the early 1970s Taiwan who unearthed and introduced a literature of resistance produced in Taiwan during the Japanese colonization. As these national and anticolonial works were being discovered and studied, Chen believed that contemporary writers in Taiwan would carry on the tradition of resistance and realism. Optimistically, Chen concluded that newer generations of writers would “open up and create a whole new stage of literature that takes Taiwan’s Chinese life as its materials, with Chinese nationality and realism as its form, and then bring about a greater, fruitful harvest in the new stage of Chinese new literature!”<sup>81</sup>

Supporting of Wang’s stance on realism and underscoring Taiwan’s society as Wang did, Chen simultaneously illuminated the historical and national articulations between Taiwan and China. Wang and Chen, albeit on the same side in the debate, interpreted “Taiwanese literature” differently because of their respective attachment to and understanding of China and Chinese literature. Decades later, Wang briefly mentioned this issue when he recalled what had motivated him to write “It’s ‘Realist’ Literature, Not ‘Nativist’ Literature”:

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<sup>79</sup> Chen Yingzhen, “Literature Originates from Society and Displays Society” [文學來自社會反映社會], originally published on *Cactus* [仙人掌] No. 5 (July, 1977), and later collected in *Home Soil Literature Polemic Collection* [鄉土文學討論集] (edited by Yu Tien-tsung; Taipei: Vista Publishing, 1978), 53-68. The edition cited here is in *The Complete Writings of Chen Yingzhen* Vol. 3 [陳映真全集] (Taipei: Renjian, 2017), 54-71.

<sup>80</sup> Chen Yingzhen, “Literature Originates from Society and Displays Society” [文學來自社會反映社會], in *The Complete Writings of Chen Yingzhen* Vol. 3 [陳映真全集] (Taipei: Renjian, 2017), 71. The original: [七〇年代以後] 從文學長期向西方一面倒到文學的民族認同；從逃避主義、現代主義、「國際主義」和主觀現實主義，到文學的民族歸屬，到文學的社會功能，到文學的現實主義……是一條漫長的發展過程。

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-71. The original passage (on page 71): 新一代青年，將……開發一種以台灣的中國生活為材料，以中國民族風格和現實主義為形式，創造全新的文學發展階段，帶來中國新文學在新階段中的一次更大的豐收！

Before [my essay], there were already some discussion about nativist literature on magazines and newspapers. When they talked about nativist literature, I felt that they tended to constrain and diminish Taiwanese literature. At that time, I considered nativist literature precisely as Taiwanese literature, but Chen Yingzhen would correct [the term “Taiwanese literature”] into “Taiwan’s Chinese literature.” I thought about it and felt that he’s right, so I just called it “Taiwan’s Chinese literature.” I didn’t contradict him. I accepted his advice and used “Chinese literature in Taiwan” when I delivered speeches [afterward] in some other places. But a more proper saying is “Taiwanese literature.”

Chen Yingzhen’s work is “Taiwanese literature” as well.<sup>82</sup>

Insistent on literary realism that he advocated as a means to resist the economic structure dominated by the U.S. and Japanese capital, Wang agreed with Chen’s formulation of Taiwan’s realist literature as a part of Chinese anticolonial, anti-imperialist literature. Yet, more than three decades later, Wang restated that “Taiwanese literature” would be a more accurate term.

How Wang and Chen grasped Taiwanese literature—and simultaneously, Chinese literature—had challenged their intellectual comradeship and friendship. The relationship between Wang and Chen deteriorated especially after the mid-1990s, when the government-led “Taiwanization” gained massive momentum.<sup>83</sup> As Wang highlighted the uniqueness of

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<sup>82</sup> An interview with Wang Tuo in *Renjian Thought Review* 15 (Spring 2017), 27. The original: 因為這之前雜誌、報紙已經有一些關於鄉土文學的討論，那時候我覺得他們在談鄉土文學的時候，有把台灣文學窄化、矮化的現象。我那時候認為鄉土文學就是台灣文學，陳映真就會指正說是「台灣的中國文學」，後來想想覺得也對，就叫作「台灣的中國文學」吧。我沒有反駁，接受了陳映真的這種指教，我去別的地方演講的時候會說「在台灣的中國文學」。可是更適當的講法就是「台灣文學」，包括陳映真的東西也是「台灣文學」。

<sup>83</sup> While tracing this movement and its aftermath is beyond the scope of this chapter, the cultural and political force of the government-led “Taiwanization” (or “localization”) movement has greatly shaped the Taiwanese society in the post-martial law era. One instance is the institutionalization of “Taiwan” in the education system. In 1994, the Ministry of Education amended the “Regulations for Junior High School Curriculum,” arranging a new subject entitled “Understanding Taiwan,” a course that was further divided into “History of Taiwan,” “Geography of Taiwan,” and “Society of Taiwan.” Three years later, the textbooks of “Understanding Taiwan”

Taiwan more, Chen criticized Wang's stance as "a reactionary turn" away from the Chinese anti-imperialist literature.<sup>84</sup> For Chen, the critical edge that Wang brought to the debate over nativist literature (particularly his opposition to the U.S. and Japanese neo-colonization of Taiwan) was gone. For Wang, describing himself as "a person who acts rather than thinks" and hence "there's always a distance between me and Chen," he could not understand why Chen harshly opposed his accentuation of Taiwan.<sup>85</sup> Wang believed that those who disagreed with one another in terms of China-Taiwan issue could still be friends. In his 1986 U.S. tour, Wang in his several talks argued against his pro-Taiwanese independence hosts, who took issue with not only Wang's association with Chen but also Chen's pro-unification (between Taiwan and China) stance. As Wang retorted to defend Chen, "If you think your contribution to Taiwan is greater than Chen Yingzhen, you can stand up [for yourselves]; if not, you're not qualified to speak ill of him."<sup>86</sup> Yet, after Chen's criticism of Wang in the late 1990s, they had never seen each other again.<sup>87</sup> In August 2016, Wang passed away in Taipei; three months later, Chen passed away in Beijing.

The gap between Chen and Wang was by no means simply personal. Rather, it was based on and enabled by the division between the mainland and Taiwan, a historically

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were standardized and published for junior schools. On the higher education front, the National Cheng Kung University firstly proposed to the Ministry of Education to found an institute of Taiwanese literature; in 2000, the first Department of Taiwanese Literature in Taiwan came into being. In the early 2000s, six prestigious universities had followed suit: the Institute of Taiwan Literature at National Tsing Hua University (2002), the Graduate Institute of Taiwanese Literature at National Chengchi University (proposed in 2001 and founded in 2003), the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature in National Chung Hsing University (2004), the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature at National Taiwan University (2004), and the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Culture, Languages, and Literature in National Taiwan Normal University (proposed in 2002 and founded in 2003).

<sup>84</sup> See Chen, "Regression and Reaction of an Epochal Thought: Unfolding from a Criticism of Wang Tuo's 'Debates over Nativist Literature and Taiwan's Localization Movement'" [一時代思想的倒退與反動：從王拓〈鄉土文學論戰與台灣本土化運動〉的批判展開], originally published in December 1998, and collected in *The Complete Writings of Chen Yingzhen* Vol. 16 [陳映真全集] (Taipei: Renjian, 2017), 362-395.

<sup>85</sup> Wang Tuo's interview in *Renjian Thought Review* 15 (Spring 2017), 51. The original passage: 也許是我思想上的懶惰，我本來就不是思想型的而是行動型的人，所以跟他一直有距離。

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 35. The original: 你們認為對台灣的貢獻比陳映真更大的，可以站出來，如果沒有的話你沒資格講陳映真。

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

formed, unsolved national conflict leading to ruptures that are intellectual, political, and emotional at once. Through these ruptures, Chinese writers demonstrated divergent approaches to “Chinese literature” and “Taiwanese literature.”

Nieh’s formulation of “Chinese” was certainly yet another approach. In line with the IWP mission of peacemaking, Nieh’s effort of bringing writers of the two Chinas together in Iowa City was also based on her adherence to her identity as a Han Chinese. As she announced in her memoir of returning to mainland China in 1978: “No matter where I am, I identify myself with Chinese culture, Chinese landscape, Chinese history, and Yan Huang Zisun (i.e., descendants of Han Chinese).”<sup>88</sup> Unlike Wang Tuo who highlighted the Taiwanese specificity, Nieh envisioned the future of “Chinese writing” as facilitated by writers of Han Chinese descent reunited in Iowa City. Predicated on both a Cold War internationalist imagery of integration and a New Confucianist discourse of cultural China, Nieh’s approach was not akin to Chen’s illumination of Chinese literature as an anticolonial, anti-imperialist literature of resistance, either.<sup>89</sup> Insisting on the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of the Han Chinese, Nieh perhaps could not fully grasp the nuances of “Chinese literature” vis-à-vis “Taiwanese literature,” and the ways that each term might have taken its toll on the writers because of its political connotations each term carried for the writers. While Nieh fashioned—and tried to depoliticize—the Chinese Weekend in 1979 as a reunion of Chinese writers, the absence of Taiwan suggested not only the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War but also a divided future of Chinese literature.

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<sup>88</sup> *After Thirty Years* [三十年後] (Taipei: Hann Colour Culture Co., 1988 [1980]), 321. The original: 不論我在哪兒，我所認同的，是中華文化、中華山河、中華歷史、炎黃子孫。

<sup>89</sup> The term “cultural China” was often considered as a term best elaborated by Tu Wei-ming, an ethicist and a New Confucianist affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University and the Asia Center at Harvard University. Although the term has been challenged and revised since the late 1980s (including by Tu himself), the term “cultural China,” intuitively in use today, maintains its discursive power. For the term’s initial conception, see Tu’s “Cultural China: the Periphery as the Center,” *Daedalus* 120.2 *The Living Tree: the Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Spring 1991), 1-32.



Enabled by the Sino-U.S. relational changes, the Chinese Weekend held in Iowa City in 1979 provided the Chinese writers in the U.S. with a chance to imagine the future of Chinese literature. Nevertheless, by stressing a particular understanding of the lack of freedom of the People's Republic of China and overlooking the China-Taiwan entanglements, the Chinese Weekend, at its worst, became an American literary event with Chinese writers as curious objects of spectacle. Even as it was circumscribed by a variety of limitations, the event was a significant achievement of the IWP. Yet, the "Chinese writing" passionately imagined was simultaneously confined. Nieh was the mastermind behind scripting such a Chinese literature into Iowa. Although she retired from the IWP in 1988, she remains on the Advisory Committee to this day. Nieh has become indispensable to the literary scene in Iowa.

At the same time, although having lived in Iowa City for more than half a century, Nieh cherishes her twenty-five years spent in mainland China and fifteen in Taiwan. Dividing her life into three, Nieh describes, "I am a tree, with roots in the mainland, trunk in Taiwan, and leaves in Iowa."<sup>90</sup> Nieh was awarded by the National Association of Governors for her "distinguished service for arts" (1982) and inducted into Iowa Women's Hall of Fame (2008); however, she does not "feel" as an American. In a city where she has lived for more than half of her life, she has constantly been reminded of her "foreignness":

Now I should feel that I am an American at last. Not really. Americans still call me "Chinese writer." Chinese language is a kind of sign that they find "interesting." They do not understand what on earth I have written. Recently, in Iowa where I have inhabited for forty-seven years, a postman delivered a

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<sup>90</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives*, back cover. The original: 我是一棵樹。根在大陸。幹在台灣。枝葉在愛荷華。

registered letter to my house. He asked me, “Are you from Vietnam?” I am not even Chinese.<sup>91</sup>

Currently in her nineties, she clings more firmly to her cultural-ethnic identity as a Han Chinese in Iowa. Living by herself, Nieh is always thrilled to be visited by IWP writers in residence from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. Whenever she becomes host to a group of Chinese writers, Nieh tries to keep her guests as long as possible, talking about what they have written and what they are writing about.<sup>92</sup> Chatting with these young writers who all write in Chinese, Nieh gets to glimpse the future of Chinese literature with her own eyes.

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. The original: 我應該感到自己是美國人了吧。也不是。美國人仍然叫我「中國作家」。中文是他們覺得「有趣的」符號。他們不知道我到底寫了些什麼。在我居住了四十七年的愛荷華，前不久，有個郵差送掛號信到家，問我：「你從越南來的嗎？」我甚至連中國人也不是了。

<sup>92</sup> My conversation with Dorothy Hiu Hung Tse [謝曉虹], a Hong Kong fiction writer in residence at the IWP in 2011.

## Conclusion A City of Many Tales

On March 22, 1991, Paul Engle passed away at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago en route to Poland where he was about to receive the Order of Merit from the Polish government. Nieh Hualing described his sudden passing: "Paul's life was a nonstop, uninterrupted journey . . . without waving his farewell, he just left."<sup>1</sup> More than half of Engle's life was spent on the IWW and the IWP. At Engle's memorial service, Kurt Vonnegut acknowledged his contribution to the writing programs and Iowa: "Before I came to Iowa City to teach in 1965 and '66, I could name only three things I knew for sure about your state: corn, pigs, and the Writers' Workshop. There was only one such world-famous workshop then. Now there are two, the newer one for authors from other nations, the International Writing Program."<sup>2</sup>

The Engles became a synonym for the two writing programs in Iowa City. For almost five decades, Engle provided infrastructure for the programs through his fundraising skills as well as his connections to the U.S. government. After Nieh came to Iowa City in 1964 and co-founded the IWP with Engle, her cultural sensitivity and linguistic capability infused an international tone into the literary scene of Iowa City. Without Nieh, Engle might not have been able to build the programs to have much impact beyond the U.S. Without Engle, Nieh would not have been able to connect with Chinese writers from both the ROC and the PRC. Thanks to the IWP, Engle carried on his vision about creative writing after confrontation with his colleagues at the IWW, and Nieh realized her ideal about "Chinese literature" amidst the ongoing Cold War and Chinese Civil War. Working collaboratively, Engle and Nieh not only

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<sup>1</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives* [三輩子] (Taipei: Linking Publishing Company, 2011), 592. The original: Paul 的一生就是永不休止的旅行……沒有揮手，沒有告別，說走就走了。

<sup>2</sup> Kurt Vonnegut, "New World Symphony," collected in *A Community of Writers* edited by Robert Dana (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 114.

shaped Iowa City into a destination for international writers, but also fulfilled their own personal, intellectual, and artistic visions.

This dissertation investigated their contribution in the context of the Cold War, with a particular focus on how writers of the two Chinas engaged with the Engles and their literary enterprise in Iowa. Tracing the exchange between the two sides of the Pacific, this dissertation has presented a different narrative of these famed creative writing programs, with attention to the transpacific flows of literary exchange. Informed by the field of transpacific studies, especially the appeals to decolonizing knowledge production, I have illustrated how the IWW and the IWP were enabled by U.S. neocolonial intervention in East Asia. The analysis of the IWW and the IWP has allowed me to question the understanding of the U.S. as “empire for liberty” and the ROC as “free China.” By looking at literatures and writers once affiliated with the two writing programs in Iowa City, I have revealed various tensions inherent in the “free world” spearheaded by the U.S. in the Cold War.

This dissertation has also shown that writers came to Iowa City with a variety of political ideals and cultural backgrounds. When engaging with these writers, the Engles demonstrated how their roles were conditioned by their own political opinions and cultural sensitivity. Whereas Nieh treated the writers with care and tactfully connected them with each other, Engle did not hide his patriotism for the U.S. As Ding Ling—the first female writer from the PRC to attend the IWP in 1981—recounted, when Engle heard someone use the phrase “American imperialist aggressor,” he could not help snapping back.<sup>3</sup> Ding illustrated:

This American person [Engle] could not listen to it anymore. He said that the U.S. is a country that upholds democracy, that she [the U.S.] has never been

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<sup>3</sup> Ding Ling, *Autobiography of Ding Ling* [丁玲自傳] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Phoenix Art Publishing House, 1996), 357. The term in the original: 美帝國主義侵略者。

an aggressor. My comrade forgot that the discussant was an American, and hence straightforwardly replied, “How come the U.S. is not an aggressor? Knowing how many Chinese and Koreans were slaughtered in the Korean War...” Immediately I felt that an unpleasant quarrel was about to happen. At this point, Nieh Hualing said, “Paul, I think we shouldn’t talk about this. Can’t we change topic?” Engle disconcertedly looked out of the window at a loss, and then seemed to suddenly realize what happened. He laughed, and spoke in English to Nieh a few sentences that we could not understand, and then he talked composedly about other things.<sup>4</sup>

Having engaged with writers around the world for decades, Engle did not alter his belief in U.S. freedom and democracy. When the “empire for liberty” and its values were under attack, he defended his country. Nieh, at this point, intervened and steered the conversation away from the Cold War divide.

Perhaps because of Nieh, Engle’s relationship with most Chinese writers was never hostile; nevertheless, it was after all one between the host and the guest. Hardly any Chinese writer spoke ill of him. Throughout his life, Engle was a generous host for Chinese writers visiting Iowa City, but usually, Nieh occupied a much more significant place in Chinese writers’ memories about their days in Iowa. Engle’s absence was partly a result of the language barrier. The lack of interaction, however, could also have been political. As Wang Tuo, a writer from the ROC who attended IWP in 1984 frankly said, he did not intend to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. The original: 這位美國人聽不下去了，便說美國是一個崇尚民主的國家，她從來不是侵略者。這位同志也忘記了是同一個美國人說話，很直率地說：「怎麼不是侵略者，朝鮮戰爭不知殺害了多少中國人、朝鮮人……」我馬上感到一場不愉快的爭論要發生了。這時聶華苓卻說：「保羅，我想我們不應該談這些，我們不能換一個題目嗎？」安格爾惘然若失地望著樓外的景色，然後恍然若有所悟，笑了一笑，對聶華苓說了幾句我們聽不懂的英語，便坦然的談別的事情去了。

interact with Engle, given that “Paul Engle had some connections with the CIA.”<sup>5</sup> Wang’s impression was not baseless. Engle’s political stance was often in line with the U.S. government, and it was partly his connection with the U.S. government that facilitated the smooth operation of the IWW and the IWP.

As the previous chapters illustrate, the two writing programs were closely related with U.S. foreign policy. Particularly in the changing Sino-U.S. relationships in the 1970s, the Engles’ literary enterprise in Iowa City responded to the political dynamics through literary exchange and cultural diplomacy. Nieh’s and Engle’s responses to the political situation were different, and the difference between them bespoke their distinct backgrounds and trajectories. In contrast to Nieh who situated her roots in China, its literature and language, and China, for Engle China was a foreign country. China was Nieh’s homeland, whereas it was an object of U.S. foreign policy for Engle. In his last poetry collection, *Images of China*, Engle recorded what he saw during his China trip with Nieh in 1980. In “Dog,” Engle depicted a “Chinese dog” barking at him:

I smile. We stand still, glaring at each other.  
He’s not my enemy, nor I his brother.  
I take one step toward him, he slinks away.  
I call. He runs, and suddenly the day  
Turns evil as I see its implications:  
I failed American-Chinese relations.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to his laudatory affirmation of peaceful exchange in his literary enterprise, this poem captured the tension between the American poet and a Chinese dog. Rather than

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<sup>5</sup> An interview with Wang Tuo by Chen Kuan-Hsing and Lin Li-Yun, in *Renjian Thought Review* 15 (Spring 2017), 36. The original: 可是在台灣受的影響，讓我一直覺得保羅·安格爾跟 CIA 有關係，所以比較不會想要主動跟他接觸。

<sup>6</sup> Engle, “Dog,” *Images of China: Poems Written in China, April-June 1980* (Beijing: New World Press, 1981), 67.

celebrating a friendly communication between the U.S. and China, he defined the relation as hostile and indifferent. “[G]laring at each other,” Engle and the dog were neither enemies nor brothers. The dog ran away as the American poet moved forward. As if assuming the position of a U.S. diplomat, Engle said, “I failed American-Chinese relations.”

Still, the Engles’ contribution to mitigate the Cold War divide was acknowledged by many; however, as this dissertation reveals, divisions were much present among IWP writers in Iowa City. Wang Anyi, an IWP writer from the PRC in 1983, vividly recalled a moment involving her fellow writer, an East German who had moved to the other side of the Berlin Wall:

I also thought of the cold, miserable night. When most of us gathered together for an evening party, she [the West German female writer] jumped into the icy-cold, bone-chilling river. This was how it happened. At the IWP, a meeting would be held every week, and [the writers] would be divided into small groups according to geography and administrative government. She did not wish to join the group of Western Europe, while the Eastern Europe group did not want her in. She then bore a feeling of being abandoned, and strayed into the pitch-dark woods, walking downward to the riverbank.<sup>7</sup>

Wang’s account debunks a common celebratory rhetoric of the IWP: “Before the Berlin Wall was removed, the Wall has already been demolished in Iowa.”<sup>8</sup> The virtual Berlin Wall was much present in the IWP. The gathering of the IWP writers often replicated the political and

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<sup>7</sup> Wang Anyi, “Utopian Verses” (1991) in *Utopian Verses* [烏托邦詩篇] (Beijing: Huayi Press, 2011), 21. The original: 我還想起那個寒冷的悲慘的夜晚，當我們大多數人聚在一處舉行晚會的時候，她跳進了冰冷徹骨的河水。事情是這樣發生的。在「國際寫作計畫」期間，每個星期要舉行一次報告會，根據地理和行政分成小組。她不願參加西歐組，而東歐組不要他參加。她是懷了被拋棄的心情蹣跚進黑壓壓的樹叢，走下河岸。

<sup>8</sup> See Lin Hwai-min’s interview in Angel Chen, *One Tree Three Lives* [三生三世轟華苓] (Hong Kong and Taiwan: Scorpio Films, 2012), DVD. Lin was also the founder of the internationally renowned Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. The original line in Mandarin Chinese: 在柏林圍牆被挖下來之前，那座牆其實早就在愛荷華先被拆除了。

ideological divisions between Western and Eastern Europe. By exploring various writers and moments in Iowa City, this dissertation has shown that the aspiration of the IWP for a world less divided was conditioned by the reality of the Cold War.

Shortly after the Engles retired from the IWP in 1988, the Berlin Wall began to crumble. A few months before the complete demolition of the Berlin Wall in November 1991, Engle passed away in the U.S. en route to Eastern Europe. Nieh is still an advisory committee member of the IWP to this day. Without Engle, however, she felt that her life was not the same. Two decades after Engle's passing, Nieh forlornly wrote, "My life seems to be the same; very lively and very rich. However, [when I recalled] those days without Paul, everything is a total blank. I might as well just stop writing."<sup>9</sup> Despite Nieh's loneliness, the IWW and the IWP keep attracting writers to Iowa City in the supposed "post-Cold War" era, thanks to Engle who had "put a system in place."<sup>10</sup>

Just as the Engles did, the IWW and the IWP have traveled the world and remained active beyond Iowa City. The two writing programs based in Iowa City have inspired the establishment of creative writing workshops and programs elsewhere. In the Philippines, the most prestigious creative writing program, the Silliman University National Writers Workshop, was founded in 1962. Its founders, Edilberto and Edith Tiempo, both graduated from the IWW and revered Engle.<sup>11</sup> In 1968, a Hong Kong poet Dai Tian brought home from Iowa City the pedagogy of creative writing, and established the Poetry Writing Workshop, the first creative writing course in Hong Kong.<sup>12</sup> Much later in 2004 at Hong Kong Baptist

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<sup>9</sup> Nieh, *Three Lives* [三輩子], 596. The original: 生活似乎是老樣子，很生動，很豐富。但是，沒有 Paul 的日子，回想起來，只是一片空白。不寫也罷。

<sup>10</sup> Loren Glass on Paul Engle's literary achievement and contribution to Iowa City. *City of Literature: a Film about the History of Creative Writing in Iowa* (dir. Benjamin Hill, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> See Conchitina Cruz, "The (Mis)education of the Filipino Writers: the Tiempo Age and Institutionalized Creative Writing in the Philippines" *Kritika Kultura* 28 (2017): 3-34.

<sup>12</sup> See James Shea, "From Iowa City to Kowloon Tong: on the Cold War Origins of Creative Writing Pedagogy in Hong Kong" *Writing in Practice* Vol. 5 (April 2019) <<https://www.nawe.co.uk/DB/wip-editions/articles/from-iowa-city-to-kowloon-tong-on-the-cold-war-origins-of-creative-writing-pedagogy-in-hong-kong.html>>.



University, the International Writers' Workshop (also abbreviated as the IWW) was established. The first director, Chung Ling, explained that the IWW at HKBU consulted with the IWP at University of Iowa; the current IWP director, Christopher Merrill, is listed on its Board of Honorary Advisors.<sup>13</sup> The Engles have left a legacy worldwide.

This dissertation has examined this legacy of the IWW and the IWP to uncover and critique cultural imperialism and militarism, not just during the Cold War but also to this day. It has revealed that underneath the rhetoric of peace and cultural exchange, writers were more divided than connected. Three decades after the Engles retired, however, the same rhetoric is still employed. In April 2019, the IWP director Merrill stated, "The interesting thing is that for all of our differences—in terms of culture, geography, age, whatever it might be—much more unites writers than divides them."<sup>14</sup> As if repeating what the Engles said in the late 1980s, Merrill described the operation of the IWP today:

We almost always have an Israeli and Palestinian writer in residence together . . . In the last few years, we've had Russian and Ukrainian writers in residence together. We've had writers from mainland China and Taiwan and Hong Kong. So writers from all different parts of the world engaging in what we hope is a productive and stimulating and literary conversation.<sup>15</sup>

Merrill was right that the IWP has provided and continue to facilitate a platform for writers to connect with each other. These connections, however, are often coupled with and made through political divisions. It is precisely because of military operations and ongoing wars

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<sup>13</sup> See the website of the International Writers' Workshop at HKBU <<http://iww.hkbu.edu.hk>> accessed April 18, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Venessa Miller, "How Christopher Merrill created University of Iowa's 'United Nations of writers'," *The Gazette* (May 4, 2019) <<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/education/how-christopher-merrill-created-university-of-iowas-united-nations-of-writers-20190504?fbclid=IwAR1iv99E19BuO-7vDSQEqofHgxdps0eI7ECn1X0e2QtsMGmFXmPWBKSIbgk>>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

that Merrill was able to celebrate the IWP as a community of peaceful connections. This dissertation has offered a narrative to reevaluate such a militarized peace.

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