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Make Love and War: Chinese Popular Romance in Greater East Asia, 1937-1945

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Make Love and War: Chinese Popular Romance in “Greater East Asia,” 1937-1945
by
Chun-yu Lu

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Make Love and War: Chinese Popular Romance in "Greater East Asia"

Chun-yu Lu

Abstract

My dissertation examines Chinese popular romances produced and consumed in the Japanese colonized and occupied regions, including Taiwan, Manchukuo, and Shanghai, during the Second Sino-Japanese War. I investigate the complex relationships between emotion, representation, and consumption vis-à-vis wartime discourses and sociopolitical turmoil. Through extensive archival research in Taiwan, China and Japan, I (re)discovered and reevaluated five important wartime popular romance writers and their works. In addition to fiction, sequels, film and stage play adaptations, Japanese translation and readers/viewers' responses all together create the cultural phenomena of the popular romance genre. In this dissertation I ask the following questions: How is emotion and love articulated vis-à-vis wartime politics? How does the popular romance genre engage with its environment? How could this genre demarcate, blur, cross or reinforce the boundaries between eroticism and patriotism, the individual and the state, and the private and the public? I argue that even though the wartime politics dictate that private emotions be devoted to the public needs (i.e., the War) and hence individual interests should be subjugated to the collective, Chinese writers and readers pursued individuality through the discourses of romantic love and the devotion to the opposite sex rather than to the nation or to the colonizer. Thus, paradoxically, popular romance, even though a mass production, is a collective channel for reaffirming individual existence under political pressure.

Introduction: Make Love and War: Chinese Popular Romance in “Greater East Asia”

I. Research Scope, Questions and Main Argument

This dissertation examines Chinese popular romances produced and consumed in the Japanese colonized and occupied regions, including Taiwan, Manchukuo, and Shanghai, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945. In this dissertation I investigate the complex relationships between emotion, representation, and consumption vis-à-vis wartime discourses and sociopolitical turmoil. Through investigating popular romance—a popular literary genre that specializes in emotions, feeling, love and human relationships—in the War, I ask the following questions: How are emotions and love articulated vis-à-vis wartime politics? How could the popular romance genre demarcate, blur, cross or reinforce the boundaries between eroticism and patriotism, the individual and the state, and the private and the public? Could popular literature be able to mobilize the public while in the meantime entertaining the readers? How did the writers and readers in Shanghai, Taiwan and Manchuria respond to similar yet different colonial conditions emotionally? Through comparative studies I argue that while the wartime regime dictates that private emotions and love are to be devoted to the ultimate public needs—the war, and hence the individual would merge with the collective and eventually disappear, through writing and consuming popular romances writers and readers reaffirm their individual existence when they struggle between the tensions of patriotic love and romantic love. Thus paradoxically, wartime popular romance is a collective channel for confirming individual existence.

1. Contextualizing “Greater East Asia” and the War

The spatio-temporal context of “Greater East Asia” is a term and an issue of much controversy. In this research “Greater East Asia” refers to the areas that were colonized or occupied by Japan under the “Greater East Asia” ideology; specifically it refers to the Chinese-speaking communities under the influence of Great Empire of Japan. Historically the term “Greater East Asia” often reminds us of “Greater East Asian War” (*Daitôa sensô* 大東亜戦争), a term used by the Japanese militarists to refer to the Asian Pacific Theater of Second World War after the Pearl Harbor Incident in December 1941. It was in fact the culmination of a series of war launched by Japan in early twentieth century. However, the discourses of “Greater East Asia” did not surge suddenly in the 1940s; during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the conception of “Greater East Asia” had already began in the late Meiji period. The quintessential example of this intellectual trend is Okakura Tensin’s evocation of “Asia is One” in his 1903 book, *The Ideals of the East*, which advocates the solidarity of Asian nations.¹ His seemingly peaceful intentions, however, were transformed into a discourse that claimed the superiority of Japan in East Asia. The logic is simple and yet imperialistic: East Asian nations had been oppressed by the Western super powers; only Japan, the earliest modernized country in East Asia, could lead the rest of the East Asian nations to fight against white supremacy. This imperialist ideology culminated in the “Greater East Asian War;” it was also referred as “Holy War” (*seisen* 聖戦) in militarist rhetoric. In fact, the term “Holy War” may best describe the Japanese religious fervor of considering itself as the savior of East Asia and the war as the crusade to expel the oppressive Western powers.² In order to defeat the evildoers, that is, the

¹ Kakasu Okakura, *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Second Edition, 1903), 5.

² The term “Holy War” (*seisen* 聖戦) only occurred frequently in official documents and popular publications after December 1941, but the sentiments of crusade appeared in official propaganda and popular writings much earlier than 1941.

Western powers, Japan should combat both in battlefield as well as in the realms of mind and heart. Therefore, the war of the “Greater East Asia” demanded literature and media to support it. In this case, Japan not only sought to establish a “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” in economic, political and military spheres; it also sought to establish a “Co-Prosperity Sphere” in literature and culture as well.

Several Chinese-speaking communities were ruled under the wartime ideology of “Greater East Asia” not only during the “Greater East Asian War” but also during the entire wartime period from 1937-1945. These Chinese-speaking communities include Taiwan, Manchukuo and Shanghai; each of them is different in terms of colonial governance and its responses to the wartime ideology. Taiwan was a Japanese colony when the Qing government lost the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895. During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) Taiwan had already been one part of the Great Empire of Japan for almost four decades. Taiwanese writers and readers were subjects of Japanese Emperor and were a mandatory member of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” of literature and culture. They had the least freedom of speech, as shown in Chapters 1 and 2.

Manchukuo, on the other hand, is a puppet state set up in 1932 by Japanese militarists and ruled by the nominal Manchu emperor. Writers in Manchukuo should have enjoyed relatively freedom of speech in the state technically ruled by “Chinese;”³ however, during the wartime writers seemed to avoid writing in direct, blatant language if the topic is about nation or

³ Here “Chinese” in quotation mark because of its complex connotation. Ethnically the Manchu emperor is not “Chinese” if “Chinese” only refers to Han people. However, if we define “Chinese” in its inclusive and expansive capacity, the Manchu emperor would still qualify for being “Chinese” because they still use the “Chinese language,” i.e. Mandarin and shares the cultural and political heritage. Sometimes they refers to themselves as *Zhongguo ren* 中國人 (“Chinese”) (and other times as *Manzhou ren* 滿洲人, or Manchu people). Examples see Chapter 3.

identity. Thus the writers in Manchukuo would write in ambiguous, ambivalent ways, as Chapter 3 demonstrates.

Shanghai has yet a different story of colonial rule. A semi-colonial city since the late nineteenth century, Shanghai was a commercial center, which was divided into Chinese section and foreign concessions before 1937. In foreign concessions including International Settlement and French Concessions, writers and readers received tremendous amount of influences from Western literature and culture. When Japanese troops occupied the Chinese section of the city in November 1937, the foreign concessions remained intact and were called “Orphan Island” because its surrounding areas were all occupied by Japan. Writers in Orphan Island had the highest level of freedom of speech among all the three regions studied in this dissertation. However, the Orphan Island’s status ended and the city was completely occupied by Japan in December 1941. Many writers fled Shanghai to the hinterland such as Guilin and Chongqing; those remained in Shanghai were certainly aware of the regulations and censorship imposed on their creative minds. Nevertheless, to some degree, it still maintained its identity as a city of cosmopolitanism and commercialism, as exemplified by Chapters 4 and 5. In sum, writers and readers in Taiwan, Manchukuo and Shanghai faced similar yet different challenges from the wartime regimes under the wartime ideology of “Greater East Asia.” Thus the relationships between war and literature in each region deserve a comparative study.

2. War and Literature: Scholarship Review

In western academia, studies on the relationships between war and literature focus on postwar traumatic memory; the victim narrative of the Jews after the Second World War especially

heralds the most important studies on the complex relationship between history and memory.⁴ However, this project will not treat *war* itself as the theme and trope of literature; rather, it proposes to consider war as an institution, a machinery, and most importantly, a discourse that *could* determine or *intends* to control the collective mentality of a time period. In other words, this project does not study the literature *about* war, but the narratives written, published and consumed *during* the wartime.

Regarding the scholarship on literature during the Second Sino-Japanese War, previous scholarship often focuses on a single region, such as Liu Shuqin's research on the *Kôminka* literature in Taiwan and Poshek Fu's study of the moral choices made by intellectuals in Shanghai.⁵ Other examples include Norman Smith's monograph on the women writers in Manchukuo and Edward Gunn's book on the marginal writers of occupied Shanghai and Beijing.⁶ Li Wen-ching's *Gongrong de xiangxiang: Diguo zhimin di yu da Dongya wenxue quan* 共榮的想像: 帝國殖民地與大東亞文學圈 (The Imagination of Co-prosperity: Empire, Colony and Greater East Asian Literature) is the first scholarly work to treat the literature in Greater East Asia as a whole and to scrutinize the similarities and differences of literary movements and cultural policy in different regions of "Greater East Asia." Li's study provides this project a cultural and historical context in which popular literature is produced and consumed. In contrast to Li's treatment of the elite literature in the literary establishments of war, this project focuses on the popular literature from *outside* the literary establishment. It aims to answer the following

⁴ For example, Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer ed., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999).

⁵ Liu Shuqin, *Jingji zhi dao: Taiwan li Ri qingnian de wenxue huodong yu wenhua kangzheng* (Taipei: Lianjing, 2009) ; Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

⁶ Edward Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking, 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

questions: How did writers write emotion and feeling outside the official, orthodoxy literary establishment? How did unorthodox popular literature respond to the official war discourse?

3. *Wartime Popular Romance*

By writing about emotion, feelings and desire, popular romance produced and consumed during the wartime reveals the wartime collective mentality and helps us understand what “love” is in a period of tremendous crisis. Is war and love contradictory to each other, or do they complement one another? Is war in Chinese popular romance, as Lutz Koepnick suggested when studying Nazi melodramatic film, the “very condition that makes great love possible,”⁷ or a hindrance to the happy ending of a love story? Does the commerciality of the popular romance contradict or fortify the war discourse?

Popular romance has a long history in Chinese literature and literary studies. In the twentieth century, it became one of the most welcomed popular literary genres when the modern print culture emerged. The study of popular literature, focusing on Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies school (*yuanyang hudie pai*, 鴛鴦蝴蝶派) and Saturday school (*libai liu pai*, 禮拜六派) in early Republican China, has already become an important sub-field in modern Chinese literary study, such as Perry Link’s *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* or Fan Boqun’s *Mingguo tongsu xiaoshuo yuanyang hudie pai* 民國通俗小說鴛鴦蝴蝶派 (Mandarin Duck and Butterfly Fiction in Republican China), which provide us with the literary history preceding wartime popular literature.⁸ However, situating

⁷ Lutz Koepnick, *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood* (Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press, 2002), 80.

⁸ Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Fan Boqun, *Mingguo tongsu xiaoshuo yuanyang hudie pai* (Taipei: Guowen tiandi, 1990).

such research of popular romance during the wartime is still rare.⁹ There are a few informative essays regarding popular romance in wartime Taiwan; nonetheless they provide little critical engagement and do not situate their studies vis-à-vis other Chinese writing regions.¹⁰ This research compares popular romance produced and consumed in different Chinese writing regions through the lenses of theories on emotion, affect and feeling.

4. Emotion, Affect, and Feeling

The definition of emotion, affect, and feeling is complicated and has caused enormous debates in Western and Asian scholarships. Haiyan Lee, when studying the genealogy of love in modern China, reminds us that emotion could refer to psychological and interpretative experience whereas affect may be psychological manifestation of emotion. Feeling, according to Lee, is “a more capacious term in that it encompasses both affects and emotions.”¹¹ Along the same line, “love” could be a kind of feeling referring to psychological experience and/or bodily sensation, depending on context. The Chinese name of the popular romance genre, *yanqing xiaoshuo* 言情小說, fiction of articulating *qing* 情, makes the definition of emotion, feeling, and affect even more complicated. As scholars have demonstrated, *qing* can’t find an essay English translation. *Qing* develops various connotations in history. It could mean basic instincts, emotions, feelings,

⁹ One of the exceptions is Kong Qingdong, *Chaoyue yasu: Kangzhan shiqi de tongsu xiaoshuo* (Beijing: Beijing University, 1998).

¹⁰ These are Chen Jianzhong, “Da tongya liming qian de luoman shi: Wu Mansha xiaoshuo zhong de aiqing yu zhanzheng xiuci,” *Taiwan wenxue xuebao* 3 (December, 2002) and Lin Fangmei, “Qimeng lunshu yu huayu xushi: yi Xu Kuanquan, Wu Mansha wei li,” in *Di si jie wenxue yu zixun xueshu yantao hui huiqian lunwen ji* (Taipei: Department of Chinese Literature, National Taipei University, 2008).

¹¹ Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 21.

love, and sensitivity, among others.¹² In this research I probe the complexity and ambiguity of *qing* and its capacity of being psychological and physical experiences in wartime romance fiction from the perspectives including cultural history on the issues of morality and passion, psychoanalysis on trauma and melancholia, affective theories on tears and intimacy.

5. “Chinese”

The last question to be considered in this dissertation is the written language used in the popular literature, that is, Chinese. Writers in all of these regions, including Taiwan, Manchukuo and Shanghai used “Chinese” as their written language while experienced political pressure from wartime regimes. Not only the political ideology of the enemy country—Japan—permeated these Chinese writing regions; the enemy’s language also pervaded in their daily life. In these regions, Chinese as the native writing language became minoritized or subordinated.¹³ It is necessary to compare the literary practices in these regions under similar yet different colonial domination. Each of the Chinese writing regions under Japanese political and military control has its distinct way of writing Chinese stories.

These Chinese stories represent various ways of responding to the issues arisen from the wartime conditions, such the questions of emotional responses to the changing human relationships and ethics. Here ethics does not concern the moral choices of intellectuals as Poshek Fu or John Treat suggest¹⁴; instead this project is more interested in how people respond

¹² The definition of *qing* see Chapter 3.

¹³ Although the writers in these regions all wrote in Chinese, they might speak different mother tongues. For example while the Taiwan writers might speak Taiwanese (Minnan) or Hakka, the Shanghai writers might speak Shanghai dialect or Mandarin, hence the importance of pointing out that Chinese as their native writing language.

¹⁴ See Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration, 1937-1945*; John Treat, “Collaboration and Colonial Modernity: On Jang Hyeokju’s *Poem In the Strom*,” in *Teikoku*

to the circumstances and how they reposition interpersonal relationship during wartime, as well as how people understand ethics and morality in a cultural and political crisis like this. Because popular romance is about emotion that derives from one's circumstances, mood and relationship with other, it provides a great lens to look into these questions.

6. *About Primary Materials*

In order to study the Chinese love story in the discourse of “Greater East Asia” and construct the wartime collective mentality, we need to revisit texts and contexts of that time period. Because many of the popular romances during the wartime no longer circulate as book form—perhaps due to its low social status as opposed to elite literature and perhaps due to postwar taboo of the writers in occupied regions—most of the primary materials could only be found in literary periodicals and popular magazines, newspapers and in a very few cases in book form in archives. For example, *Fengyue bao* 風月報 (Wind and Moon) and its successor *Nanfang* 南方 (The South) was among the few popular magazines that were permitted to publish in Chinese in Taiwan after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out and the Japanese colonial government banned Chinese publication. It was dedicated to being “entertainment during leisure time” and “the playground of the literati.”¹⁵ Xu Kunquan 徐坤泉 (1907-1954) and Wu Mansha 吳漫沙 (1912-2005) were both editors and contributors to the two popular magazines, such as “Xin Mengmu 新孟母” (New Mencius's Mother) by Xu and “Taohua jiang 桃花江” (Peach Blossom River) by Wu. In Manchuria, *Qilin* (麒麟, Unicorn), a publication owned by Japanese and managed under the joint guidance of Chinese and Japanese editors, was most popular in the

shugi to bungaku: shokuminchi Taiwan, Chūgoku senkyōku, Manshūkoku hōkokusha ronbun shū, 130-141.

¹⁵ This is the slogan on the cover of *Fengyue bao*.

puppet state.¹⁶ Mu Rugai 穆儒丐(1884-1961) published “Xinhun bei 新婚別” (Farewell at a Wedding) in this popular magazine. In Shanghai, popular *Ziluo lan* 紫羅蘭 (Violet) was among one of the popular literary periodicals that published huge amount of popular romances, while newspapers such as *Shenbao* 申報 (Shanghai News) also offered readers serialized romance novels. Qin Shou’ou 秦瘦鷗(1908-1993)’s “Qiuhaitang 秋海棠” (Begonia) in *Shenbao* and Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing 張愛玲, 1920-1995)’s “Chenxiang xie: diyi luxiang 沉香屑:第一爐香” (Aloeswood Incense: First Brazier) in *Violet* are among the most welcome popular romances in wartime Shanghai.

Beyond texts that appeared in popular magazines or newspapers, some popular romances enjoyed such tremendous popularity that they were either translated into Japanese or adapted to stage plays and movies. Examples are the Japanese translation of Xu Kuquan’s *Ke’ai de chouren* 可愛的仇人 (Lovable Foe), stage play and film adaptations of Qin Shou’ou’s *Begonia*, and spoken drama adaptation of Eileen Chang’s “Qingcheng zhi lian 傾城之戀” (Love in a Fallen City). In addition, readers and audiences responses published in newspapers and magazines also participate in constructing the popular romance as a cultural industry. In these cases, popular romances became cultural phenomena that indicate wartime generation’s collective consumption of romantic love.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 examines Xu Kunquan, his novel *Lovable Foe* (1936-1938) and its Japanese translation by Zhang Wenhuan 張文環 (1909-1978) in colonial Taiwan. This chapter discusses

¹⁶ Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 52.

how romantic love story is used to channel the emotions during negotiating between morality and decadence, tradition and modern, as well as East and West, and to seek spiritual transcendence under political pressure in a ultranationalist state.

Chapter 2 discusses Wu Mansha, a controversial and self-contradictory literary figure in Taiwan. Living as “Chinese alien” in colonial Taiwan throughout the wartime years, Wu wrote popular romances and plays that propagated the Great Empire of Japan and the Greater East Asia ideology in vernacular Chinese and sometimes in Minnan dialect. This chapter explores how the entertainment genre written in Sinitic languages crosses or reifies the boundaries between love for the opposite sex and love for the nation, as well as how the author used this genre as a tactic to survive wartime politics.

Drawing on theories of memory studies and psychoanalysis, in Chapter 3 I analyze Mu Rugai, a writer from Manchukuo and his popular romance novella “Farewell at a Wedding” (1942). While the ideologues claimed Manchukuo as a Confucian utopia, Mu Rugai found that it is not a utopia for authentic emotion and love. Instead, it is a site of acting out the trauma of the emotional devastation from the Republican Revolution of 1911. The impossibility of finding authentic love in Manchukuo, in Mu’s case, deconstructs the official propaganda of Manchukuo as utopia.

Chapter 4 analyzes the melodramatic imagination of victimhood in wartime Shanghai. The victimization and feminization of the male protagonist in Qin Shouou’s novel *Begonia* and its film and stage play adaptations is on the one hand an allegory of China’s wartime status. On the other hand, the excessive, sensational depiction of victimhood in a tragic love story releases the repressed energy of the audience in wartime Shanghai.

Chapter 5 discusses Eileen Chang and the production of intimacy in the cultural industry of popular romance in Occupied Shanghai. The imaginary intimate relationship between the writer and the readers were constructed by two personae based on the model of romantic love: movie star (and fan) from the writer's perspective and courtesan (and patron) from readers' perspective. Both personae indicate different social groups' coping mechanism in the psychological and spiritual crisis caused by the war. While the courtesan persona suggests that male readers, by consuming femininity, reconstruct the masculinity that is damaged by political frustration, the movie star persona indicates that the female writer uses visibility and materiality to emphasize the individual existence in the times of existential crisis.

Chapter 1:

Lovable Foe: Re-negotiating the Morality of Love in Wartime Taiwan

Introduction

This chapter examines the interconnected discourses of love (as an emotional phenomenon), marriage, sexuality, gender politics, and morality amidst the turmoil of total war in Taiwan. The case in point is the cultural phenomenon of *Ke'ai de chouren* 可愛的仇人 (Lovable Foe), a full-length novel originally published in Chinese before the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1936.¹ It was so popular that not only the author Xu Kunquan 徐坤泉 (1907-1954) wrote a prequel to it,² a Japanese translation entitled *Aisubeki adabito* 可愛的仇人 was also published during wartime in 1938 in preparation for a film adaptation, albeit later the production of the film was aborted.³ Through the Chinese and Japanese textual manifestations as well as the author Xu Kunquan's wartime popular romance "Xin Mengmu 新孟母" (New Mencius's Mother) that transforms the discourses of love in the *Lovable Foe* texts, this chapter scrutinizes the impact of wartime mentality on the formulation and reception of love stories. Love stories, in this case, are not only narratives of romantic sentiment, but also a means to channel the emotions during negotiating between the contested relationships of tradition and modern, morality and decadence, war and peace, the East and the West, as well as various forms of spiritual transcendence.

¹ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren* (Taipei: Taiwan xin minbao she, First edition: February 24, 1936; Second edition: March 26, 1936).

² Xu Kunquan is better known by his pseudonym Ah Q zhi di 阿 Q 之弟 (Ah Q's Brother). The prequel was entitled *Anjiao* 暗礁 (Reef). Ah Q zhi di, *Anjiao*, Third edition (Taipei: Kōnan shinbun sha, 1937 first edition, 1943).

³ Ah Q zhi di, *Aisubeki adabito*, trans. Zhang Wenhuan (Taipei: Taiwan Dacheng yinghua gongsi, 1938; Tokyo: Yumani shubō, 2001 reprint).

Lovable Foe tells the heartbroken love story of the male protagonist Zhizhong 志中 and female protagonist Qiuqin 秋琴. The two had fallen in love when they were studying in a private school of traditional Chinese learning but weren't able to get married because Qiuqin's father intervened and married her off to a wealthy family in order to clear his debt. In despair Zhizhong married another girl student in their traditional Chinese school. The narrative of the novel begins when the female and male protagonists are both middle-aged, lost their respective spouses and become widowed. The romance between a widow and a widower was deemed scandalous because women were required to remain faithful to her one and only husband in her lifetime, even after her husband died, in traditional culture. How did the author conceptualize the love between a widowed couple to be morally acceptable in prewar Taiwan? How did the author use the sentimental genre to convey the anxiety about the impending war and to envisage the morality vis-à-vis the war institution?

When translating *Loveable Foe* during wartime, the Japanese translator Zhang Wenhuan 張文環 (1909-1978) changed the form of 160 installments into six chapters, abridged, rewrote and omitted some of the narratives in the Chinese original. By comparing the Chinese original and the Japanese translation, I scrutinize the following questions: How did the translator, as a reader and a re-creator, receive and alter the moral message of the original text? What are the differences between the discourses of love vis-à-vis morality contemplated by the author and by the translator before and after the War broke out? How does the wartime mentality interfere in the Chinese and Japanese articulations of love?

In a similar context of the tensions between morality and love, the author of *Lovable Foe* published yet another a novella entitled "New Mencius's Mother" to stimulate the sale of *Fengyue bao* 風月報 (Wind and Moon), a rare Chinese-language popular magazine during

wartime. This wartime popular romance is about an unfortunate love story of a morally excellent woman and asks the questions about how the author redefined the morality of love vis-à-vis the ultranationalist ideology when the War progressed to a later stage. Through investigating the Chinese original and Japanese translation of *Lovable Foe* as well as “New Mencius’s Mother,” this chapter examines how the private and seemingly mundane emotions such as romantic love are presented and articulated in wartime Taiwan when people were forced to demonstrate “selfless devotion” to the greater good. In this context, the love stories in these texts demonstrate a tendency of oxymoron: on the one hand, the romances are desexualized and desensualized; on the other hand, the characters, especially female characters, often self-indulge in selflessness. At the end the love of the mundane world including the passion for an opposite sex would be sublimated into, not the love of the nation as many wartime popular romances would suggest, but a Christian love.

I. Desexualizing Love

While marriage based on romantic love is a convention in modern society, in fact, love, sex and marriage do not always go together. The desire for physical intimacy brings erotic interests to social relations,⁴ and the discourses of love, sex and marriage inevitably involves issues of ethics and morality. Xu Kunquan in *Lovable Foe* intended to construct a new morality of love in a transitional era, in which human relations underwent tremendous changes.

1. Enlightening Romantic Feeling

⁴ William Jankowiak and Thomas Taladino, “Desiring Sex, Longing for Love: A Tripartite Conundrum,” in *Intimacies: Love and Sex Across Culture*, ed. William R Jankowiak (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 12.

The need for constructing a new morality of love is because, as Xu Kunquan indicated in the novel, the traditional morality has already been collapsed and a new morality has yet to be born in the transitional era. First of all, Xu Kunquan was not a die-hard traditionalist. He actually considered the traditional “feudalism” flawed because marriage in the “feudal family system” was not based on love but based on monetary, materialist, and instrumental values. The narrator in *Lovable Foe* condemns that the female protagonist Qiuqin’s father for marrying off his daughters to rich families like “selling pigs.”⁵ Marriage that is not based on mutual affection between husband and wife but on monetary value is, as the narrator put it, “the sin of the old family.”⁶

How to liberate people from materialistic, instrumental marriage and to be capable of feeling, emotion, and love, Xu Kunquan suggested a revolution was needed. Only through revolution could people be emancipated from traditional shackles and be able to love. In the novel Qiuqin and Zhizhong persist in refraining from consummating their unsatisfied love even after their respective spouses died, despite that they still secretly admire each other. Only in dreams could they express their romantic feeling. In one of the dreams Zhizhong tells Qiuqin that there is no need to be afraid of being together because a revolution has occurred in Heaven (*Tianguo keming* 天國革命), which will overthrow the malicious marriage god, The Old Man of Moonlight (*yuexia laoren* 月下老人) who has caused the “misfortune of misfortunes” for young men and women because he was bought off by money and arranged marriage improperly. The system of gods, Zhizhong in the dream argues, must be democratized; the Heaven should not be ruled merely by the Jade Emperor (*Yuhuang dadi* 玉皇大帝), but should be governed by a

⁵ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 38.

⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

“committee” (*weiyuanhui* 委員會).⁷ What’s more, the term of the marriage god should be three years rather than eternity. After overturning the materialistic marriage god and democratizing the system of governance in Heaven, love would eventually be the only thing to care about in marriage, not social status, class, or money.⁸

The revolution in Heaven that could liberate people from the shackles of feudalism and materialism is, according to Zhizhong in the dream, led by two major leaders: Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the East and Jesus Christ in the West. Dr. Sun not only “mobilizes ghosts and spirits to participate in the revolution” but also “forms united front” (*lianhe zhanxian* 聯合戰線) with Jesus Christ, because both of them advocate “fraternity” (*boai* 博愛, literally means indiscriminate love). Zhizhong in the dream is optimistic about this revolution in Heaven, predicting that the revolution “may concur with the World War” and tells Qiuqin “our wedding will become possible soon!”⁹ The political and war rhetoric in public domain such as “revolution,” “committee,” “united front,” and “World War” in this episode are used to help rationalize individual, private love. It seems only through the political and war intervention could men and women in colonial Taiwan become enlightened to love.

In his formulation of the “enlightenment of love,” the author specifies the need to liberate women first. Only when women are liberated from traditional male chauvinism and become equal subjects would they be able to love, and love men. When lamenting her miserable life, for example, Qiuqin bewails, “Being woman is misfortune. Being Taiwanese woman is the most misfortune of all” because she is the one to be blamed for everything. No matter it is her husband’s losing in gambling, her father’s business failure, or her family member’s death, she is

⁷ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren* 113.

⁸ Ibid, 113.

⁹ Ibid, 113.

the one to be scolded and beaten in order to vent their anger and frustration.¹⁰ Taiwanese women are unable to “live a real ‘human’ life.”¹¹ In order to become real “human,” women should be enlightened from emotional ignorance. As such, Taiwanese women, first transforming to be real “human,” would become capable of genuine love. The revolution in Heaven and liberation of women thus will make a marriage based on emotion and love possible. While women need to be enlightened in order to love, men’s capacity for emotion and genuine love is never questioned in this novel, which is contrary to common conception that considers women as the “gender of emotionality.”¹²

Women appear to be a weaker sex in *Lovable Foe* who needs not only to be enlightened but also to be morally disciplined because not every woman is enlightened in the right way. The author suggests that some women claim they are “modern” but in fact are merely slaves of modern materialism. He criticizes these “modern” women by the words of police officer Cai in *Lovable Foe*. Cai comments that in the modern era when “morality is gradually falling apart and women are degrading themselves day after day,” those modern new women live “extravagant lives” may even “shamelessly” commit adultery.¹³ In other words, “modern” women in the transitional era were merely materially liberated; they didn’t know what is meant by real love (thus they sleep with men other than their spouses) and ignore spirituality and morality.¹⁴ Only

¹⁰ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 39.

¹¹ Ibid, 40.

¹² Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 13.

¹³ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 61.

¹⁴ Xu Kunquan was not the first to criticize the materialism of modern girl. In Japan, even contemporary female writers criticized “moga” (*modan garu*, modern girl) for their hedonism and corporeality. See Muda Kazue, “Atarashii onna, moga, ryôsaikenbo—kindai Nihon no joseizô no konfigyureishon” in *Modan garu to shokuminchiteki kindai: higashi Ajia niokeru teikoku, shihon, jendaa*, ed. Idô Ruri, Sakamoto Hiroko, Tani Barlow (Tokyo: Iwaha shoden, 2010), 160-162. Chinese modern girl was also criticized as “seeking sexual gratification” by

women like Qiuqin who has the morality of being a chaste widow is the best example of maintaining marriage and family in the moral chaos.¹⁵ Thus, when the liberation of women seems to advocate gender equality, there is a misogynic implication in this call to arms. Women are emancipated from “old feudalism” only for her “new” role in marriage and family.

2. *Displaced Libido*

Xu Kunquan recognized there is a need to regulate and modulate the newly liberated emotions and love in order to maintain marriage by positive traditional moral values. The most valuable traditional morality that could guarantee genuine love, according to Xu, is chastity, which means no physical intimacy outside the institution of marriage. Not only women have to be chaste, modern men have to be equally chaste, too. Therefore in the novel, although despising her when they were married, Zhizhong vows at his wife gravesite that he will definitely remain chaste (*zhencao* 貞操) to her in his lifetime; no women in the world could possess even a hair of his.¹⁶ The declaration of male chastity is sensational in the narrative, because while traditionally women were required to be chaste and men could theoretically have as many women and as much sex as they wanted, Zhizhong chooses a completely different moral value to follow. No wonder Zhizhong’s mother-in-law, after hearing his vow of chastity, thinks, “This is something never heard of from antiquity till today. ... Taiwanese, no, even people throughout the whole world, should feel this is phenomenal and interesting.”¹⁷

contemporary male and female writers alike. See Egami Sachiko, “Chûgoku no kensai ryôbo shizô to “modangaaru”—1930 nendai chûki no “onna wa ie ni kaere” ronsô kara” in *Higashi Ajia no Kokumin kokka keisei to gender*, ed. Hayakawa Noriyo et al. (Tokyo: Aoki shoden, 2007), 289.

¹⁵ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 35.

After his vow to abandon physical desire altogether, Zhizhong decides to devote himself to a greater cause and pursue the welfare of the nation and the society by promoting the solidarity of “Asian nations” (*Yaxiya minzu* 亞細亞民族).¹⁸ Even though the notion of “nation” is a modern invention in East Asia,¹⁹ in his vow of chastity and devotion to the society and Asian nations, Zhizhong in fact turns to traditional Chinese learning to be the backbone of his ideology. In so doing, he not only implies that traditional Chinese moral values passed down by traditional Chinese learning could help construct a new morality of love, he also explicitly claims that traditional Chinese culture and language are the origins of Asian cultures. This is seemingly an echo of the discourse of Greater East Asia, which claims that Asia is one and all Asian nations should unite. This discourse has two ramifications: while in Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s formulation China and Japan should cooperate to fight the Western imperial powers, the Japanese militarists manipulated this discourse to emphasize Japan’s leadership in Asia. Xu in *Lovable Foe*, instead of the political unification of East Asian countries, emphasizes the cultural affinity of China and Japan and considers Chinese culture as the pivot of Asian culture. What makes Zhizhong’s statement somehow ambiguous is that, he, to some extent, tries to position himself as a member of an “Asian Nation” (as a singular proper noun) instead of belonging to either Chinese or Japanese nations. In a similar vein, Qiuqin’s son Ah Guo complains about being mistreated in a shop run by Japanese owners. The Japanese repeat calling him “Chink” (*chankoro* 清國奴);

¹⁸ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 35.

¹⁹ For example, “nation” (*minzoku* 民族) was translated and introduced into Japan in the 1890s. See Chen Pei-feng, “*Tonghua*” *de tongchuang yimeng: Rizhi shiqi Taiwan de yuyan, zhengce, jindaihua yu rentong* (Taipei: Maitian, 2006), 43. Also see Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 292.

enraged, he insists he is not a “Chink” but a member of “Asian Nation.” He wants to thrive for the Asian Nation and promote Asian Culture in the whole world.²⁰

This “Asian Nation” conception further prescribes the anti-war sentiment in the narrative, which manifests in the episode when Qiuqin’s daughter Liru and youngest son Ah Sheng arrive in Tokyo to study with Ping-er, Liru’s sweetheart and, not surprisingly, Zhizhong’s only son. They observe that Tokyo is a city of militarism: “The Army and the Marine are on maneuvers everywhere. ... Everything indicates it is on the eve of the war. ... , human beings are smart, but why do they want to slaughter each other? ... A prosperous Tokyo will become wasteland if the war breaks out.”²¹ What is actually implied here is the propagation of peace between Japan and China. Japan in the early 1930s when the novel was written and published had already launched a series of invasions in China, including Manchurian Incident in 1931 and the First Shanghai Incident in 1932; the latter was one of the predicaments in Zhizhong’s life in the prequel to *Lovable Foe*, *Anjiao* 暗礁 (Reef). In *Reef*, Zhizhong, about twenty years before the story in *Lovable Foe*, went to Shanghai to attend university; unfortunately his study came to a permanent halt due to “the flame, smoke, tanks and the sound of the firing of cannons everywhere” in Shanghai because “the Nineteenth Route Army [of the Nationalist government] and the Japanese Army are fighting viciously in Zhabei 閘北.”²² The descriptions of “Tokyo on the eve of war” in *Lovable Foe* and “Shanghai at war” in *Reef* are similar, and the images of the prewar and wartime periods could be stitched together to create an image that wars in both Japan and China should cease fire. In so doing, the author Xu Kunquan promoted an anti-war message in his prewar novels.

²⁰ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 178.

²¹ *Ibid*, 257.

²² Ah Q zhi di, *Anjiao*, 82-83.

While man could declare his chastity by displacing his libidinal energies to society and nation like Zhizhong did, the only way for the woman to displace her libido is to become a mother. Xiuhui, as a widowed mother, raises her three children on her own, although receives a pack of cash each month from a mysterious “Night Walker” (*yexing ren* 夜行人), who turns out to be none other than her childhood sweetheart Zhizhong in disguise. Being a chaste widow and a good mother, Qiuqin acquires several traits of traditional women of morality, such as sacrificing her individual self and enduring all suffering only for the benefit of her children. Her selflessness and self-sacrifice are repeated again and again in her lengthy and repetitive internal monologues, in her neighbors’ conversations, in police officer Cai’s affirmation and so on and so forth. In an episode, for example, when Qiuqin for the first time receives her son Ah Guo’s salary, “she looks up to [her late husband] Jianhua’s portrait, and cannot help but bursts into tears. Her tears are on the one hand for appreciating Zhizhong’s respectable character; on the other hand, her tears are also for resenting Jianhua’s untimely death. Because Jianhua died so early, over ten odd years she and their children had been encountering hardships and misery. ... Only until today did her widowed life see a beam of light.”²³ Police officer Cai comments on Qiuqin’s greatness, “How pitiful she is! She holds fast to the belief, ‘All men are muddy, I alone am clean.’ ... Enduring hardship and avoid enjoyment, she sacrifices everything for her children. She is indeed the model of Taiwanese woman!”²⁴ Similar paragraphs appear numerous times in the novel. The traditional image of women’s endurance and sacrifice for family, primarily for children, in fact foretells the wartime ideology that requires citizens to give up their individual

²³ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 192.

²⁴ Ibid, 61. Translation of “All men are muddy, I alone am clean” is revised from David Hawkes, *Ch'u tz'u : the Songs of the South, an Ancient Chinese Anthology* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1959 Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1959), 206

selves and to endure and sacrifice for a greater cause: for the mother it is for her family, for the soldier it is for his nation. Furthermore, the wartime ideology also demands that the notions of family and nation become indistinguishable because family is the basic unit of the nation and it only exists for the good of the nation. In other words, no individual family life or private “self” should exist independently outside the nation. Therefore, police officer Cai concludes his praise of Qiuqin that even though asking women to be chaste after her husband died seems to be a “barbaric act” in twentieth century, “It is probably not so. Qiuqin educates talents [*rencai* 人材] for the nation and sacrifice for the society. She endures extreme hardships in order to raise Ah Guo, Ah Sheng and Liru—they belong to the society and the nation.”²⁵ Being a chaste woman and widowed mother therefore require high morality for extinguishing her “self” and making herself “useful” in the society and the nation.

The redundancy of over-emphasizing Qiuqin’s sacrifice indicates an excessive and obsessive self-indulgence of selflessness, to the extent that the narrative almost risks sensationalizing the traditional virtues of chastity and motherhood. The traditional virtues of the “good woman” such as self-restraint and self-sacrifice are represented through tears, sorrow, and resentment that always accompany the repetitive narratives of Qiuqin’s virtues, which make the novel read more like a stimulus that provokes readers’ sentimentalism and emotional excitation, rather than passing didactic messages as the author may have intended to do. The virtues of Qiuqin’s chastity and motherly love become, not as moral teachings, but a means to grab readers’ attention and exploit readers’ tender emotion.

The tendency toward oxymoron such as self-indulgence of selflessness, furthermore, appears in the final union of the two protagonists, in which they unite spiritually without

²⁵ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 61.

corporality, thereby living a desexualized love story. When observing Qiuqin's funeral progression, Zhizhong says to himself, "Although we didn't speak to each other after we both got married, ... our hearts and spirits are always in union. ... Your body belongs to your husband Jianhua, but your spirit completely belongs to me. ... Our relationship is sacred!"²⁶ A real romance, in *Lovable Foe*, could only be accomplished when the hero's and the heroine's love sublimate to moral latitude where physical desire is completely absent. This abstract kind of love will be developed to an extreme extent in the author's wartime popular romance "New Mencius's Mother," which induces the contemplation of spirituality vis-à-vis wartime politics. (See below)

3. *Smuggling desire*

Even though corporeality is absent in the love story of Zhizhong and Qiuqin, there is no lack of physical desire in the narrative. The female body is under voyeuristic gaze by a public display of the sexuality of "improper women" such as prostitutes and dancehall girls showing off their sexual attraction. In an episode in which Zhizhong brings little Ping-er and Ah Guo to a beach, they saw "many Japanese and Taiwanese prostitutes. ... Their fair-complexioned and full bodies are covered by coin-thick white powder from necks to chests. Their breasts and butts are wrapping tightly in swimsuits to arouse people's desire. They are giggling and smiling at the waves with their messy hair, trembling red slippers, and bloody eyes."²⁷ While proper women's bodies such as Qiuqin's are invisible in the narrative, improper women's bodies are exposed under male gaze. Under this voyeuristic gaze the nationality of improper women does not make any difference; no matter they are Japanese or Taiwanese, what does matter is their sexuality

²⁶ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 299.

²⁷ Ibid, 78.

alone. While the male protagonists may claim their nationality as neither Japanese nor Chinese but instead they belong to the “Asian Nation,” women in this case belong neither to Japan nor to China but to the category that is the object of male gaze.

What’s more, the improper woman’s body is not merely an object to be seen, but also to be physically penetrated. Kimiko is a dancehall girl whose body was savored first by the grown-up Ping-er’s voyeuristic gaze and later by his lips, hands and finally through sexual intercourse.²⁸ A young man living in the splendid metropolis Tokyo without parental guidance, Ping-er is unable to resist the sexual temptations of the femme fatale Kimiko. Her body is penetrated by Ping-er’s (as well as the male narrator’s) gaze when Ping-er saw her nude shadow through windows at night, witnessed her taking off clothes and wanted to “immediately rush into her window, hold her, show the wildness of human nature, kiss her feverishly, imagine her voluptuous breasts, wavy hair, medium build, rosy fair-complexioned skin, cherry-like lips, and the mysterious XX [read: private part].”²⁹ Obviously the lecherous Kimiko is the contrast to Ping-er’s childhood sweetheart Li-ru, who is as “pure” as the driven snow. Through penetrating the improper woman’s sexuality, the author on the one hand maintains the possibility of a morally acceptable desexualized romance (of Ping-er and Liru) and at the same time feeds the desire of sexual fantasy to the readers.

The author even manages to smuggle descriptions of physical intimacy in the “sacred” relationship of Zhizhong and Qiuqin via their dreams. Zhizhong confesses at his wife’s gravesite and says, “Qiuqin is my foe! My spirit and my soul have fornicated with her several times in my dreams.”³⁰ In one of his dreams the two of them hold each other tightly. When Zhizhong hears

²⁸ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 264, 268.

²⁹ Ibid, 264.

³⁰ Ibid, 16.

Qiuqin cries, “My love! My love!” he feels “an unspeakable ‘mysterious’ feeling of happiness and physical excitement. ... He snuggled under her breasts, like a baby sucking mother’s breasts. ... Their bodies and souls became one! They reached the supreme paradise of love!”³¹ Unlike the blatant detailed description of improper woman’s body such as Kimiko’s, Qiuqin’s body is only described in minimal detail. Nevertheless, the minimal mentioning of Qiuqin’s body (i.e. breasts) has already transgressed the boundary of the morality of love and perhaps even brought secret pleasures to the reader. On the other hand, Qiuqin’s body, even when being treated as an object of sexual desire, is still the body of a mother; more precisely, a breast-feeding mother.

II. The Seduction of Maternal Love

1. *De-sensationalizing Romance*

While love, sex and marriage are inevitably social and involve moral issues, we should further situate the discourses of love, sex and marriage in a wartime context. When people were asked to demonstrate “selfless devotion to the public [i.e. the country]” (*messhi hôkô* 滅私奉公)” during wartime,³² the private emotion, feeling and love may develop complex relations with the “greater good.” The dialectic of moral teachings and erotic desire in the Chinese original of *Lovable Foe* is redirected to a similar yet different morality of love in the Japanese translation by Zhang Wenhuan in 1938. While acknowledging there is indeed a need to regulate and modulate the overflow of emotion and sentiment, what has been regulated and modulated in the Japanese translation is actually not physical desire or love as that in the Chinese original, but rather the excessive self-indulgence of selflessness. This is done through omitting most of the lengthy and repetitive descriptions, including the protagonists’ internal monologues, neighbors’

³¹ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 22.

³² A slogan widely propagated in the *kôminka* movement.

conversations, etc., over Qiuqin's sacrifice and endurance. While the Chinese original reminds the readers of Qiuqin's virtuous sacrifice as a mother in every few pages, the Japanese translation underplays this theme. In other words, the sentimentalism constructed by Qiuqin's tearful story in the Chinese original was toned down in the Japanese translation. The modulating and regulating in Japanese translation, in this case, happens in the extradiegetic level, while those in Chinese original happens in diegetic level.

Modulating and regulating in extradiegetic level has two effects. First of all, if the narratives of Qiuqin's sensational story of self-sacrifice and endurance appear less frequently and less redundantly in the Japanese translation, could the author's messages be correctly interpreted? When discussing authoritarian novels, a genre that aims to "persuade their readers of the 'correctedness' of a particular way of interpreting the world,"³³ Susan Suleiman suggested that authors might use redundancy to "reduce the 'openings' that might make plural reading possible."³⁴ Even though *Lovable Foe* may not be a perfect example of authoritarian fiction, by repeating the virtues of self-sacrifice and endurance of a mother again and again in the Chinese original, the moral teachings of Qiuqin's story should be "correctly" received by the readers. Otherwise in one of the prefaces to the Japanese translation, Xu Yanting 許炎亭 (1909-?) wouldn't comment on the Chinese original as a novel about "recovering the degraded morality of Asian women." The intensity and assertiveness of propagating the "Asian woman's" virtues such as motherly devotion may be undermined in the Japanese translation due to the reduction of redundancy.

³³ Susan Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel As a Literary Genre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 55.

Another possible effect of the extradiegetical modulation is, while reducing the frequency of the use of literary devices, such as internal monologue in the Japanese translation, may successfully regulate the excessive self-indulgence of selflessness as that in the Chinese original, it also limits all opportunities for narrating the love story between Zhizhong and Qiuqin. In the Chinese original, the majority of their love story was laid out in the two protagonists' remembrance when talking to themselves, while in the Japanese translation there is no such space for the description of romance. Therefore the romance of the male and female protagonists is not only desexualized as that in the Chinese original, but it almost becomes invisible in the Japanese translation. In addition, due to the reduction of internal monologues and such, smuggling desire via dreams as that in the Chinese original also vanishes in the Japanese translation. Zhizhong and Qiuqiu's only "sex scene," if that in the dream counts, is eliminated in the Japanese rendition. The readers would only know Zhizhong cries out "Ah! My Qiuqin!" and what happened next is the two have already "crossed the boundaries of love and taboo."³⁵ The descriptions of Qiuqin's body as an object of sexual pleasure are removed from the Japanese translation. In a similar vein, the descriptions of improper women's bodies are also less sensual and sensational in Japanese translation. Take Kimiko for example. When describing Kimiko's figure, the Japanese translation reads, "Ping-er is infatuated with the dancer who is like a red peony blossom." The only description of her body in the Japanese translation lacks the excitement of the "mysterious XX" as that in the Chinese original: "Her body is voluptuous, her waistline is soft; she has plump breasts, red lips, and fair-complexioned skin."³⁶ That's all for the beauty and sexual attraction of Kimiko.

³⁵ *Aisubeki adabito*, 35-36.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 345.

The Japanese translator in fact made an intriguing change in the characterization of Kimiko. Instead of a femme fatale of an unknown nationality as that in Chinese original,³⁷ Kimiko, in Zhang Wenhuan's translation, is from Korea and used to work in Tsukiji Little Theater (Tsukiji shô gekijô 築地小劇場). Scholar Zhang Wenxun considered the change of Kimiko's background bespoke the translator Zhang Wenhuan's ideological leaning,³⁸ since New Tsukiji Theater, formed and developed from Tsukiji Little Theater, took an active part in the proletarian movement in late 1920s Tokyo.³⁹ Furthermore, Korea was, not unlike Taiwan, a colony of the Japanese Empire from 1910 to 1945. In other words, Kimiko in the Japanese translation is no longer the embodiment of sexual desire, but rather a fellow sufferer who could sympathize with the oppressed and the colonized, i.e., the colonial Taiwan. In sum, the Japanese translator Zhang Wenhuan lessened the sensational effects of *Lovable Foe*, on the one hand, by diminishing the emotional overflow in extradiegetic level and may suffer not conveying the messages of the Chinese original "correctly"; on the other hand, he also minimized the erotic fantasy of sexuality in the romance.

Curiously, the only scene blatantly about sex in Japanese translation of *Lovabale Foe* is in fact a public display of genitals, when the young couples, Liru and Ping-er as well as Ah Guo and Huiying, Liru's best friend, visited a "Hygiene Exhibit" in a city. In the "Hygiene Exhibit" both young couples saw wax models of male and female genitals, including models of STD infected penis. The girls were too shy to see the embarrassing exhibit, while the boys left the

³⁷ Although some scholars such as Zhang Wenxun automatically assumed that Kimiko is Japanese given the fact that she lives in Tokyo and her father's business in Southeast Asia failed because the Southeast Asian people's "anti-Japanese sentiment," the author of the Chinese original actually didn't specify her nationality throughout the novel. See Zhang Wenxun, "'Aisubeki adabito' to Zhang Wenhuan," *Tenri Taiwan Gakkai Nenpô* 12 (2003), 68.

³⁸ Zhang Wenxun, "'Aisubeki adabito' to Zhang Wenhuan," 68.

³⁹ Ryotaro Kato, "Modern Japanese Literature," *Books Abroad* 28: 3 (Summer, 1954), 293.

exhibit with red faces.⁴⁰ The “Hygiene Exhibit” episode indeed appears in the Chinese original as well, but in a slightly different fashion. While in Chinese original the young couples felt the subtle feeling of mutual attraction before this scene, in Japanese translation it was only until they saw the public exhibit of sexual organs were the young couples enlightened about love—“their love buds” at the exhibit.⁴¹ Before this episode, Liru in Japanese translation only treated Ping-er as a big brother. Obviously the “Hygiene Exhibit” was a tool and epitome of colonial modernity;⁴² therefore, it seems that the young couples came to their emotional awakening via first the revelation of sexuality, and second the modernity brought by Japanese colonization. In this case, the romance of the young couples emerged from the state apparatus’ intervention rather than spontaneity that is regarded as the essence of romantic love.⁴³

2. *The Allure of Motherly Love*

While the sensational description of physical desire was toned down in the Japanese translation, the only sexuality of women in the Japanese translation is the function of procreation, and the motherly quality is the sole criteria of women’s virtue and beauty. A couple of comparisons between the Chinese original and the Japanese translation will exemplify this tendency. At his wife’s gravesite vowing chastity to her, Zhizhong in the Chinese original thinks, “Life is full of contradiction. When she’s alive I always wanted her to die. But when she really died, I suddenly have the urge to love her, to take care of her.”⁴⁴ In Chinese “lian xiang xi yu 憐

⁴⁰ *Aisubeki adabito*, 235.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 235.

⁴² See Fan Yanqiu, “‘Weisheng’ kande jian: 1910 niandai de Taiwan weisheng zhanlan hui,” *Keji, yiliao, yu shehui* 7 (October 2008), 65-124.

⁴³ Meena Khandelwal, “Arranging Love: Interrogating the Vantage Point in Cross-Border Feminism,” *Signs*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Spring, 2009), 603.

⁴⁴ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 31.

香惜玉” (to love and to take care of a woman) literally means to treasure the fragrance and jade, while fragrance and jade are metaphors of female physical beauty. In the Japanese translation Zhizhong also finds the urge to love his deceased wife; nevertheless, it is not because he appreciates the feminine beauty of her, but rather because he “succumbs to her motherly love [bosei ai 母性愛].”⁴⁵ Even the young Liru in the Japanese translation is praised as beautiful for having a motherly quality, which is absent in the Chinese original. After arrived at Tokyo, in Japanese translation Ping-er has a close look at Liru and appreciates her: “She is different from other modern girls. She is not arrogant about her beauty. ... She is totally of a mother’s quality. It is the motherly sentiment makes her beauty even more radiant.”⁴⁶ Maternal love is therefore the virtue of women that could lure the opposite sex. Scholars have pointed out that sex was mobilized in Taiwan during the Second Sino-Japanese War through two ways: the comfort woman and the mother.⁴⁷ While the comfort woman was to provide sexual satisfaction for soldiers in the battlefield, the mother was to provide human resources for both the battlefield and the homefront. The lure of female sexuality, in light of the war demand, is not of sexual excitement but rather of reproduction. Only women who are able to reproduce and cultivate human resources for the nation are entitled to be really beautiful. In terms of the morality of love, sex and marriage in the wartime Japanese translation, the maternal love was elevated and ready to be mobilized.

3. “Changing Direction”: From Left to Right

⁴⁵ *Aisubeki adabito*, 49.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 352.

⁴⁷ Yang Yahui, “Zhanshi tizhi xia de Taiwan funü (1937-1945)—Ribei zhimin zhengfu de jiaohua yu dongyuan,” Master Thesis, National Tsinghua University, 1994), 40-68; Hong Yuru, *Kindai Taiwan Josei shi*, 12.

The wartime mentality influences the conception of morality of love in yet another dimension. In the Japanese translation the need to construct a new morality of love has nothing to do with the moral crisis induced by the conflicts of old and new, tradition and modern. The evils of traditional feudalism and “the old family system” as that in the Chinese original are not the cause of emotional ignorance anymore. Therefore there is no need for “revolution” as that in Chinese original to liberate women and to make the marriage based on genuine love possible; only “change [idô 異動]” in Heaven should suffice to enable Zhingzhong and Qiuqin to “re-marry under the flag of fraternity,” while “idô” often refers to change of personnel in an organization.⁴⁸ In such case, Zhang Wenhuan inclined to attenuate the political radicalness implied in the Chinese original. Another example is Huiying’s story of being coerced to marry her stepmother’s nephew, a good-for-nothing fellow. In the Chinese original, Huiying asks Qiuqing’s advice and expresses her wish to “rebel [*panbian* 叛變],” to fight against her stepmother’s will and to marry Ah Guo. Qiuqin, though unwillingly, says, “if it is your last resort, then you could rebel. But you shouldn’t do extreme things to your parents.”⁴⁹ In the Japanese translation, however, Qiuqin’s advice is, “You should talk with your father with patience. ... Don’t be anxious, you should fight little by little and continue talking with your father.”⁵⁰ The progressiveness of rebellion as that in the Chinese original has weakened in the Japanese translation, which counters scholar Zhang Wenxun’s observation in which she asserts that Qiuqin in Japanese translation is a strong modern character, in contrast to her image in the Chinese original as a unenlightened woman who only laments the traditional shackles on women. In fact, perhaps due to wartime censorship, fewer politically radical and progressive messages

⁴⁸ *Aisubeki adabito*, 193.

⁴⁹ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke'ai de chouren*, 182.

⁵⁰ *Aisubeki adabito*, 284.

could be explicitly expressed in the Japanese translation; strong and provocative usages such as “revolution” and “rebellion” had to be omitted. Interestingly, the translator Zhang Wenhuan was once a progressive youth who participated in socialist movement when he studied at Tôyô University in Tokyo; he was imprisoned twice for engaging in socialist activities. The wartime censorship muted the progressive expression of the former leftist activist and made him appear to be more conservative than the semi-traditional and semi-modern author Xu Kunquan. Zhang Wenhuan’s “conservative” alternation in the Japanese translation could be observed in the “changing direction” (*tenkô* 転向) of his generation of leftist intellectuals in Japan. The majority of leftist intellectuals like Zhang had to “change direction” from leftist, socialist ideology to a less politically radical one after the Japanese government oppressed their movements in the 1930s. Many of the Japanese intellectuals even switched to a diametrical opposite direction—nationalism, and support the Emperor and the military invasions in China, both of which they once protested and resisted.⁵¹ Zhang did not adopt nationalism as his new ideology; instead, he turned to nativism and explored “indigenous” culture during wartime. That is probably why an elite writer like him would accept the job and translate a popular romance of “native colors” like *Lovable Foe*. Thus, the seemingly conservative change in Japanese translation is in fact Zhang’s efforts to evade censorship and to refrain from speaking in the ultranationalist language.

Nevertheless, the translation still could not be exempt from conveying Japanese nationalist messages. In the Chinese original, Taiwanese people could be a mediator of Japan and China during wartime because they are members of “Asian nations”; “Japaneseness” of Taiwanese people is never stated in the Chinese text. While Ah Guo in the Chinese original lays bare his identity as a member of “Asian Nation” during the quarrel with the Japanese shop

⁵¹ Tsurumi Shunsuke, *Zhazheng shiqi Riben jingshen shi, 1931-1945*, trans. Chou Zhenrui (Taipei: Xinren, 2008), 13-31.

owners, in Japanese translation he is enraged by the derogatory term “Chink” because, as he says, “I am a citizen of the Great Empire of Japan and I am a Japanese, too.”⁵² In other words, the Chinese heritage of Taiwanese people like Ah Guo was of no importance in the Japanese translation.⁵³ If they are first and foremost imperial subjects of Japanese Empire, the Taiwanese people should support the War and not have any anti-war sentiment as that in Chinese original. Therefore, while in Chinese original, Tokyo, as abovementioned, is a city full of “militarism” and “Navy and Army’s maneuvers are everywhere,” and the narrator regrets that “a prosperous city like Tokyo would become wasteland if the war breaks out,”⁵⁴ this militarist city was transformed to a “beautiful city of the essences of modern culture”⁵⁵ in the Japanese translation. Scholar Zhang Wenxun suggested that the transformation was made because the translator might consider the militarist Tokyo unreal and wanted to represent his real life experience during his sojourn in Tokyo, where no military maneuvers were actually held.⁵⁶ In other words, the translator made this change based on his personal aesthetic predilection of realist principles. By historicizing the condition of the translation, I would rather argue that because the anti-war sentiment in the Chinese original, which was represented by the narrator’s regretting the militaristic atmosphere of Tokyo, was not suitable for the Japanese translation, since the Second Sino-Japanese War had already broken out at the time when Zhang Wenhuan was translating the

⁵² *Aisubeki adabito*, 278.

⁵³ In a similar vein, while the Chinese original made allusions to Chinese literature and May Fourth literature’s reception of world literature, Zhang Wenhuan completely omitted these allusions in the Japanese translation. The examples of allusions to Chinese literature include Qiuqin’s considered herself as Nora, the housewife in Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. See Ah Q zhi di, *Ke’ai de chouren*, 21.

⁵⁴ Ah Q zhi di, *Ke’ai de chouren*, 257.

⁵⁵ *Aisubeki adabito*, 348.

⁵⁶ Zhang Wenxun, “‘*Aisubeki adabito*’ to Zhang Wenhuan,” 65.

novel and no citizen should oppose the war. Paradoxically the prewar novel described a city of wartime atmosphere while the wartime translation avoided mentioning the war altogether.

In sum, the changes made by the Japanese translation demonstrate that the wartime mentality had made an impact on the ways the translator transmitted the messages of the Chinese original. The wartime translation is a de-sensationalized text in which physical desire and emotional excess were vanquished from the imperial subject of Great Empire of Japan. Maternal love became the only legitimate form of romantic love. This tendency in fact prevails in the Chinese author Xu Kunquan's wartime novels as well. His only popular romance serialized during the wartime was, not surprisingly, entitled "New Mencius's Mother" (1937, 1939). Mother became the object of sublimed love when the world was fighting a merciless war.

III. Love for "Asian" Mother

Xu Kunquan's "New Mencius's Mother" was first serialized in *Wind and Moon* in October 1937, a few months after the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out. This novella is a much simpler story. The female protagonist Ye Xiuhui 葉秀慧 was a high school graduate and married to Ma Qinde 馬清德, a country doctor. The editor of *Wind and Moon* promised this would be a story of "a modern educated woman in an old family ... who suffers from her mother-in-law's abuse, sister-in-law's contempt and slander, her husband's misunderstanding, and her neighbor's rumors etc. ... But the wise Ms. Ye will eventually win and the whole family will be enlightened by her great character. ... She will leave the dark hell of family for a bright paradise!"⁵⁷ Unfortunately the readers would never know how Ms. Ye leaves for the paradise because the serialization of "New Mencius's Mother" was interrupted after installment 26 on

⁵⁷ [Advertisement of *New Mencius's Mother*], *Fengyue bao* 50 (October 16, 1937), insert page.

January 15th, 1939, resumed in *The South (Nanfang)* on May 15th, 1942, and discontinued forever after installment 34, published on January 1st, 1943.⁵⁸ During the first interruption between January 1939 and May 1942, Xu Kunquan was, according to his essays published in *Wind and Moon*, busy traveling in China meeting politicians, including Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883-1944), the leader of Peace Movement that advocated the collaboration between China and Japan and later the head of state for the Japanese puppet government from 1940 to 1944.⁵⁹ Xu considered Wang “truly patriotic” and a real successor of Nationalist Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (as opposed to Chiang Kai-shk’s Nationalist government). He appreciated Wang’s devotion to “the collaboration and friendship between Japan and China” and hoped Wang’s government could “establish a real new Republic of China” and thus “the Greater East Asian nations will be blissful” and the peace of Greater East Asia will eventually come true.⁶⁰ Thus far we have very few clues about how much Xu was involved in wartime politics; the records about his meeting with Wang Jingwei should suffice to demonstrate that he must have supported Japanese government’s wartime ideology of “Greater East Asia” to a certain extent. In reading “New Mencius’s Mother,” we should ask the following questions: What exactly did Xu re-conceptualize the love between men and women in a wartime popular romance? Did Xu re-fashion his morality of love in accordance with the wartime ideology? Could there be fissure between the manifest and latent contents of his wartime morality of love?

⁵⁸ *Fengyue bao* (Wind and the Moon) changed its name to *Nanfang* (the South) on July 1st, 1941, in order to “be compliance with the national policy” that propagates South Advance (*nanshin* 南進) in Southeast Asia.

⁵⁹ Xu recorded the meeting with Wang Jingwei on August 23, 1939 in Shanghai, in which Wang told him “Mr. Xu, I escaped Chongqing only to die for the country, because this revolution is more significant than Xinhai Revolution.” See Lao Xu, “Canghai sangtian (1),” *Nanfang* 152 (May 15, 1942), 15.

⁶⁰ Lao Xu, “Canghai sangtian (1),” *Nanfang* 152, 15.

1. *Mothering Asia*

While in *Lovable Foe* Xu Kunquan suggested the causes of moral degradation and hence the need to establish a new morality of love is due to the conflicts of tradition versus modern, the causes of moral chaos in “New Mencius’s Mother” were not only due to the conflicts between old and new, but specifically the confrontation between the East and the West, even though the “West” is a vague term in the narrative of the novella. Being a “wise wife, conscientious mother” (*xianqi lianmu* 賢妻良母), the female protagonist Xiuhui is regarded as the guardian of “Asian” Confucian morality, which is in sharp contrast with the (undefined) West.⁶¹ Even Xiuhui’s mother-in-law who abused her is praised by Xiuhui as a virtuous woman because, regardless of beating and scolding Xiuhui, “She, a widowed mother, endured hardship and avoided enjoyment to raise [her sons] until [they] succeed. ... The most valuable virtue in Asia, especially the virtue of a woman, is being widowed mother in a poor family. [The Asian widowed mother who] raises her son until he succeeds is what it means to be good woman; no European women could be her match.”⁶² It seems that a woman could be called virtuous if she could be a chaste wife and good mother, no matter how evil she is in other realms of life. Furthermore, only those adhere to “Asian” tradition of chastity and motherhood are qualified to be “virtuous,” as opposed to the lack of morality in “European” women. Similar call to becoming “wise wife, conscientious mother” in order to “recover the Asian indigenous morality” was also heard in the Japanese-occupied Beijing and Manchkuo.⁶³ It is almost a common sense, whether in the author’s times or today, that the ideal woman of “wise wife, conscientious mother” represents Confucian tradition;

⁶¹ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (29),” *Nanfang* 155 (July 1, 1942), 35.

⁶² Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (28),” *Nanfang* 153 (June 1, 1942), 33.

⁶³ Egami Sachiko, “Chûgoku no kensai ryôbo shizô to ‘modangâru’—1930 nendai chûki no ‘onna wa ie ni kaere’ ronsô kara,” in *Higashi Ajia no Kokumin kokka keisei to jendâ*, Hayakawa Noriyo et al. ed. (Tokyo: Aoki shoden, 2007), 293. Also see chapter three on Manchukou popular romance.

nevertheless, scholars have proven that it was actually, not unlike the concepts such as “nation,” a modern invention.

The discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother” arose with the spread of modern nationalism, industrialization and urbanization; in other words, it was part and parcel of the modernity project in East Asia. After meticulous studies of the etymology of *xianqi lianmu* in Chinese context and *ryôsai kenbo* 良妻賢母 (conscientious wife, wise mother) in Japanese context, Jin Jungwon and Muda Kazue, respectively, argued that the four-character idioms of the same meaning were coined around 1895 in Japan and imported to China around 1905.⁶⁴ In both Chinese and Japanese contexts, *xianqi lianmu* or *ryôsai kenbo* were primarily used in female education, although the discourse appeared in wider spheres in Chinese context.⁶⁵ The promise of the “wise wife, conscientious mother” discourse is that, because women are also citizens of the country, they too have the responsibility to contribute to the development and modernization of the country.

The most conspicuous difference between the modern discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother” and the traditional Confucian ideas of woman’s role, Jin Jungwon suggested, is, first of all, the conception of woman’s status. While traditional Confucian idea treated woman as inferior and man as superior, an outdated convention criticized in *Lovable Foe*, the modern discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother” considers man and woman as equal and therefore both of them could and should contribute to the development of the country. Man and woman contribute to the society and the country in different ways, however. Men should

⁶⁴ Jin Jungwon, *Higashi Ajia no ryôsai kenbo ron—tsukurareru dentô* (Tokyo: Keisô shobô, 2006), 20-21; Muda Kazue, “Atarashii onna, moga, ryôsaikenbo—kindai Nihon no joseizô no konfigyureishon” in *Modan garu to shokuminchiteki kindai: higashi Ajia niokeru teikoku, shihon, jendâ*, ed. by Idô Ruri, Sakamoto Hiroko, Tani Barlow (Tokyo: Iwaha shoden, 2010), 164.

⁶⁵ Jin Jungwon, *Higashi Ajia no ryôsai kenbo ron—tsukurareru dentô*, 49.

serve the society and participate in public activities, whereas women should serve the family in private domain to support their husband. In short, the traditionalist Confucian idea is based on gender difference, while the modern discourse is based on gender division of labor.⁶⁶ The second difference is the conception of family. While in Confucian tradition family is consisted of extended families based on vertical relationship—i.e. parents and children, and hence filial piety was an important value. On the other hand, the modern discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother” was conceptualized alongside the horizontal relationship—i.e. husband and wife, and consisted of nuclear family.⁶⁷ Egami Sachiko suggested that traditional Confucian family was “father’s family,” whereas the modern nuclear family was “husband’s family.”⁶⁸ In sum, “wise wife, conscientious mother” was a modern invention to stabilize the production and reproduction of labor in industrialized urban society by assuring the gender division of public/society/husband versus private/family/wife.⁶⁹

This discourse was brought into Taiwan at the beginning of colonization and was a trope in many popular works.⁷⁰ In Xu Kuanquan’s case, it is in the wartime popular romance “New Mencius’s Mother” that he most explicitly advocated an ideal mother and wife. It seems after the War broke out, the need to propagate woman’s “worth” not only for the society but more importantly for the nation via the “wise wife, conscientious woman” discourse became more urgent than ever. The school principal of Xiuhui’s high school, for example, encourages the girl students at the commencement ceremony by saying, “Dear future wise wives and conscientious

⁶⁶ Jin Jungwon, *Higashi Ajia no ryōsai kenbo ron—tsukurareru dentō*, 24-25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

⁶⁸ Egami Sachiko, “Chūgoku no kensai ryōbo shizō to ‘modangāru’—1930 nendai chūki no ‘onna wa ie ni kaere’ ronsō kara,” 283.

⁶⁹ Muda Kazue, “Atarashii onna, moga, ryōsaikenbo—kindai Nihon no joseizō no konfigyureishon,” 165.

⁷⁰ See Yu Chien-ming, “Nihon tōchi ki niokeru Taiwan shin josei no koroniaru modaniti nitsuite” in *Higashi Ajia no Kokumin kokka keisei to jendā*, ed. Hayakawa Noriyo et al, 368.

mothers of our nation! ... Women in this urgent times [*feichang shi, hijôji* 非常時] must understand that the service to your family is your great contribution to the nation and the society. ... Girl school education is not only responsible for teaching you how to read; the most important mission is to teach you how to be wise wives, conscientious mothers who are useful for the nation and the society. ... Today's 'wise wife, conscientious mother' is different from the old ones; 'three obediences and four virtues' are not sufficient. ... You must know household hygiene, household art, infant care, child psychology, cooking, sewing and so on."⁷¹ During wartime the only way to become model woman is to become model mother, as suggested by the title "New 's Mother;" Mencius's mother was a legendary figure representing the greatest mother in Chinese history.

Interestingly, even though the title and the opening of the narrative designate the "model mother" as probably the most important characteristic of the female protagonist, the novel was actually only about how she becomes "wise wife;" the role of "conscientious mother" wasn't explicitly described in the narrative of her story. The author's intention of propagating the reproduction of human resources, which was much needed in the "national crisis,"⁷² failed to be completed in the fiction narrative. In comparison, motherhood cannot be fulfilled in Mu Rugai's popular romance in wartime Manchukuo, either. (See Chapter 3) The reasons for the failure of motherhood are different in Xu and Mu's popular romances, however. Whereas in Mu's "Farewell at a Wedding," it is the melancholia of traumatic memory that prevents the female protagonist from producing future generation and hence makes her incapable of becoming a

⁷¹ Ah-Q zhidi, "Xin Mengmu (2)," *Fengyue bao* 51 (November 1, 1937), 37.

⁷² Similarly the editor of *The South* suggested that marriage is one way to "strengthen the military;" "marriage is the citizens' obligation" which can "serve the country by reproduction." The editor even suggested that each couple should be required to give birth to five sons. See "Jiankang yundon yu xin jiehun de linian," *Nanfang* 152, cover page.

mother, in Xu's "New Mencius's Mother" the spiritual transcendence of love vis-à-vis wartime politics sublimates the mundane responsibility of motherhood.

2. Transcending Love in the War

If Xiuhui in "New Mencius's Mother" is more a model wife than a model mother, what kind of wife is she? What comprises a "wise wife"? The image of "wise wife" in the novel is actually not about how Xiuhui supports her husband; instead, Xiuhui could be regarded as "wise wife" because how she treats her mother-in-law makes her incredibly noble. In other words, Xiuhui is a model wife/woman because she is a model daughter-in-law. On the other hand, her self-sacrifice that makes her a filial daughter-in-law is in fact out of the love for her husband, although this love may or may not be romantic love and deserves more discussion.

Xiuhui indeed embodies the most valuable "traditional" virtues of a wife/daughter-in-law: endurance, patience, and obedience. All of these virtues derive from a supreme more: filial piety. Xiuhui's mother-in-law is not at all a lovable character. When Xiuhui and Qingde are traveling in China and Japan for their honeymoon, Qingde's widowed mother sends a telegram to them, pretending to be sick and dying, and asks them to return to Taiwan immediately. After they return home, Xiuhui, Qingde and Qingde's mother live together. Qingde's mother beats and scolds her frequently; even their neighbors feel sorry for Xiuhui. She used to be a pretty young lady from a well-to-do family; after marrying Qingde only for three years, however, she is so busy doing household chores such as feeding pigs that she has no time for dressing herself and looks already like an ugly old woman. But she is still content about her life because she thinks her mother-in-law isn't a bad woman; if she can "endure and be obedient, the peace shall fall

upon the family.”⁷³ One day a maid from her parents’ family comes to visit her and is shocked and saddened by her miserable appearance. Meanwhile Qingde finds out that he lost a fair amount of cash and asks his mother if she saw the money or not. Qingde’s mother is enraged by the question and accuses the maid from Xiuhui’s parents’ family of having stolen it. Xiuhui is ousted and sent back to her parents’ home by Qingde’s mother even after explaining she or the maid didn’t steal the money. Xiuhui asks Qingde not to object his mother’s will. Qingde is unwilling to separate from his wife and sons, but he is “enlightened” by Xiuhui and determines to exercise the “Asian morality” of filial piety by reluctantly obeying his mother’s unreasonable request.⁷⁴

In short, Xiuhui is a “wise wife” for two reasons: first, she is able to exercise extreme filial piety to her mother-in-law by obeying and enduring; second, she is able to transform her husband to become a filial and obedient child like her. This may be different from what Jin Jungwon found in the modern discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother,” for the discourse in Japan and China did not value filial piety in extended family but rather emphasized the subjectivity of both husband and wife in nuclear family. On the other hand, anything that promotes “independence and autonomy” was impossible, as Yu Chien-ming points out, in advocating female education and the discourse of “wise wife, conscientious mother” in colonial Taiwan.⁷⁵ Men and women in the colony should be educated to modernize, but independence, autonomy and subjectivity were excluded from the colonial modernity. Thus obedience was emphasized in female education in colonial Taiwan. This tendency was further fortified during the wartime *Kôminka* movement, which demanded Taiwanese to become imperial subjects who

⁷³ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (21),” *Fengyue bao* 72 (September 15, 1938), 15.

⁷⁴ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (29),” *Nanfang* 155 (July 1, 1942), 33-35.

⁷⁵ Yu Chien-ming, “Nihon tôchi ki niokeru Taiwan shin josei no koroniaru modaniti nitsuite,” 369.

had no autonomy at all. In addition, the wartime Great East Asian discourse that emphasized the dichotomy of East and West fueled the trend of advocating “Asian” (i.e., “traditional,” “Confucian”) morality such as filial piety that requires children to respect their parents by, for example, obeying them; likewise, the Japanese Emperor’s “children” should also submit to His Majesty. Scholars have demonstrated that in wartime ideology the Japanese state was conceptualized as a household. Emperor, assuming the father’s role, exercises patriarchal authority over the state, and the subjects should practice filial piety and loyalty and be obedient to the patriarch.⁷⁶ The colonial modernity and wartime ideology therefore prescribe the young couple in “New Mencius’s Mother” to become first and foremost filial son and daughter-in-law.

Can the couple of filial son and daughter-in-law, separated out of filial piety, live a love story? Do they really love each other, given the fact that they seem to love their Mother more than anyone else? In the editor’s notes to *Wind and Moon*, No. 74, Xu Kunquan, when commenting on “New Mencius’s Mother”, first argues that Taiwanese family in the transitional era has a predicament that younger generation wants nuclear family while the older generation still wants extended family and thus the conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law become severe. It seems in the transitional era, according to Xu, it is impossible to “fulfill filial piety [*jinxiao* 盡孝]” at the same time also “fulfill romantic love [*jin'ai* 盡愛].”⁷⁷ The most ideal of all must be Xiuhui: because she loves Qingde so much that she cultivates his morality—especially the virtue of filial piety— and would rather sacrifice the romantic love between husband and wife for the love between mother and son. Romantic love is sublimated into (and succumbs to) the love for parent(-in-law). Interestingly, Xu Kunquan’s discourse of the

⁷⁶ See Walter A. Skya, *Japan’s Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintô Ultrationalism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 63-65.

⁷⁷ Lao Xu, “Jundou yu: guxi zhijian,” *Fengyue bao* 74 (October 17, 1938), 2.

incongruence of “fulfilling filial piety” and “fulfilling romantic love” actually derives from the old Chinese saying about the disparity between being loyal and being filial [*zhongxiao buneng liangchuan* 忠孝不能兩全], for being loyal one must leave home and fight for the Emperor and cannot exercise filial piety at home. Although he used “jin’ ai” (to fulfill romantic love) instead of “jinzhong” (to be loyal) as opposed to “jinxiao” (to fulfill filial piety) in the editor’s notes, Xu in fact made a slip of the tongue in the narrative of “New Mencius’s Mother.” In an episode Qingde’s troubled mind thinks, “I have to sacrifice the love between husband and wife to fulfill filial piety,” and laments “why Mother cannot understand the old saying, ‘If one wants to be loyal he cannot fulfill filial piety; if one wants to fulfill filial piety he cannot be loyal.’”⁷⁸ In this instance the author, voluntarily or not, switches back to the original form of the old sayings and implies that filial piety and loyalty are incompatible and mutually exclusive. When situating this in Japanese wartime ideology, however, filial piety and loyalty should not conflict with each other because everyone in the state is the Emperor’s child and being loyal is being filial. The slip of the tongue thus unwittingly divulges the incongruence of loyalty and filial piety in the wartime ideology.

The author of “New Mencius’s Mother” in fact defines what is meant to be real love via Xiuhui and other characters’ speech. Real love between man and woman is not physical desire but rather a poetic transcendence. After being ousted and returning to her parents’ home, Xiuhui thinks, the relationship between man and woman must be “poetic” (*shiyang* 詩樣), “aesthetic” (*shiyi* 詩意) and “intangible/spiritual and mystical” (*kongling shenmi* 空靈神祕), which is

⁷⁸ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (29),” 34.

different from “physical love in the pleasure quarter.”⁷⁹ In short, real love must be purely spiritual without any corporeality involved. The author even considers the purely spiritual love to the extreme and suggested that lesbian relationship, because without any sexual intercourse, is sacred, even though ironically this ideal of sacred love is spelled out by a prostitute. The prostitute, answering to Qingde’s question about the sacredness of love, says, “Only the love without lust deserves to be called ‘sacred.’”⁸⁰ Thus, paradoxically, romantic love as poetic transcendence doesn’t occur in the “sacred union” of Qiuqin and Zhizhong in *Lovable Foe*, in which the widow and widower couldn’t marry each other in real life but still manage to smuggle desire in dreams. Rather, the spiritual transcendence occurs in the married couple of Qingde and Xiuhui whose physical pleasure should be legitimate. While in *Lovable Foe* as mentioned above, the most valuable traditional morality that could guarantee genuine love is chastity, which means no physical intimacy outside the institution of marriage, Xu in “New Mencius’s Mother” pushes it one step further and claims that even within the institution of marriage, physical intimacy is not permitted; otherwise it may ruin the “sacredness” of marriage. In other words, physical intimacy is completely absent even in a legitimate love; only spiritual union is allowed. “New Mencius’s Mother” therefore is a romance novel which propagates the spiritual transcendental of love.

Conclusion

Through scrutinizing the Chinese original and Japanese translation of *Lovable Foe* and the author’s wartime novella “New Mencius’s Mother,” we found a tendency of desexualization, desensualization and spiritualization in re-negotiating the morality of love in prewar and wartime

⁷⁹ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (31),” *Nanfang* 157 (August 1, 1942), 27.

⁸⁰ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (33),” *Nanfang* 164 (November 15, 1942), 30.

popular romance. While physical desire is canceled and spirit is elevated, it seems all of the personal, the individual, the private and the mundane are ready to be diminished for the greater, superior cause: the public, the mass, and the soul. This spiritual transcendence reminds us the pursuit of spirituality in Japan's Holy War discourse, in which an Imperial Subject should purify his spirit, return to the "pure and cloudless heart" and devote to the Emperor like religious followers' worshiping the Buddha.⁸¹ In fact the Emperor was regarded as "god manifest as man" (*Arabitogami* 現人神) whose spiritual existence enables the war launched under his name to be a Holy War that demands a religious fervor from Imperial Subjects to participate. Thus the transcendence of love in "New Mencius's Mother" may also be viewed as a spiritual preparation for the Holy War and the absolute obedience a virtue of good Imperial Subject.

The religious implication of Xiuhui's transcendence, however, may be read not only in the historical context but also in conjunction with the author Xu Kuanquan's other texts. I argue that Christianity may be another possible explanation of the spiritual transcendence of love and obedience in "New Mencius's Mother." Before discussing the Christian implication in "New Mencius's Mother," however, a couple of examples from Xu's prewar popular romances should help elucidate the possibility of deciphering Christianity in the seemingly Confucian traditionalist text. In two of his bestsellers, *Lingrou zhidao* 靈肉之道 (The Way to Soul and Desire, 1937) as well as *Lovable Foe*, Xu Kuanquan incorporated Christianity in the plot and character design. In *The Way of Soul and Desire*, for example, one of the male protagonists is named John (Yuehan 約翰); his sister is named Mary (Mali 瑪利) and his father is a pastor. John married a girl he met in a Christian Youth Association in Singapore.⁸² In *Lovable Foe*, Qiuqin, as

⁸¹ See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in The Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 225; Skya, *Japan's Holy War*, 200-202.

⁸² Ah Q zhi di, *Lingrou zhi dao* (Taipei: Qianwei, 1998).

mentioned above, receives a pack of cash from a mysterious man in disguise whose true identity is her childhood sweetheart Zhizhong. Zhizhong always leaves a note stating that the money is “a gift from God (*Shangdi* 上帝).” He later arranges a religious sister as his representative (albeit their relationship is veiled) to help Qiuqin and her family in finance and education. Qiuqin goes to church, reads the Bible and is especially fond of Genesis; she appreciates the teachings of God. From these examples we discover a penchant for using Christian reference in Xu Kuanquan’s popular romances, a unique phenomenon in literary works in colonial Taiwan. Even though his own religious background remains obscure, Xu’s popular romances do exhibit a distinct connection with Christianity.

In light of this observation, we could now explore the fissure between analyzing the spiritual transcendence in historical context and in the author’s spiritual world. In “New Mencius’s Mother,” instead of a spiritual preparation for the Holy War, the the seemingly irrational vows of celibacy even in marriage may be related to the resolution to purify oneself in order to be admitted to God’s kingdom—or a supreme power of the universe. Furthermore, instead of the Japanese Emperor, the supreme power who demands the almost unenlightened obedience from the female protagonist may be God. To push it one step further, the female protagonist in “New Mencius’s Mother” is analogous to a missionary, or even to Jesus, who endures, self-sacrifices, is mistreated and has a mission of showing the paths to enlightenment and to the purification of sins. Thus, her obedience is in fact not to her abusive mother-in-law, but rather to the supreme power of God; her mother-in-law is only a test. Even though the author hardly mentioned Christianity explicitly in “New Mencius’s Mother,” religious references are abundant in Xu’s *The Way to Soul and Desire*. The only example where Christianity is mentioned in the narrative of “The New Mencius’s Mother” is when the narrator condemns an

adulterous woman and says, “Just like the teachings in the Bible, Adam committed crime because of Eve’s seduction. Therefore all of the women in the world are the seeds of sin.”⁸³ It seems that the female protagonist Xiuhui’s function is to cleanse the sin of humankind and especially the original sin of women.

If the spiritual transcendence of love is a Christian one, then why did the author hardly mention Christianity in “New Mencius’s Mother,” while there are ample descriptions of it in his prewar popular romances? The reason could be that because after the Pacific War broke out in 1941 the Greater East Asian discourse strictly dictates that the “West” is the enemy of Asian nations. In this case, Christianity as the core of Western culture should be eliminated from the East. This is probably why the only mentioning of Christianity in “New Mencius’s Mother” was published before the Pacific War. However, Christianity still plays an oblique yet important role in refashioning the morality of love in Xu’s wartime popular romances. With recourse to Christianity, the New Mencius’s Mother in the turmoil of total war transcends the confines of ultranationalism in the name of sacred love.

⁸³ Ah-Q zhidi, “Xin Mengmu (10),” *Nanfang* 60 (March 15, 1938), 24.

Chapter 2:

Propagating Love in Enemy's Tongues: Wu Mansha (1912-2005) and Sinophone Popular Romance in Wartime Taiwan

Introduction: An Ambiguous “Chinese Alien” in Wartime Taiwan

Wu Mansha 吳漫沙 (1912-2005) is a controversial and self-contradictory literary figure in Taiwan during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Born in Fujian, China and relocated to Taiwan in 1935, Wu lived as “Chinese alien” in the Japanese colony throughout the wartime years but had never been naturalized as Japanese national. Wu’s works and life are full of irony and ambivalence.¹ A post-war recollection could help underline these characteristics of this controversial writer.² Zhong Zhaozheng 鍾肇政 (b. 1925), a Taiwanese writer who grew up in the Japanese colonial period and learned to write Chinese only after the Nationalist government from mainland China took over Taiwan in 1945 after fifty years of colonization, remembered that immediately after the war ended he bought a “vernacular” (*baihuawen* 白話文) book, which was no other than Wu Mansha’s *Dadi zhi chun* 大地之春 (The Spring of the Earth) published in 1943. It was his very first “primer” of “Huawen 華文 (Chinese)”, Zhong recalled, when he and his peers were still dreaming the now illusory “dream of the fatherland [*zuguo meng* 祖國夢].”³ It must be the language it used, i.e., the vernacular Chinese, that made the young Zhong Zhaozheng thought that he could pursue the “*zuguo meng*” by reading this novel, since most of the intellectuals and young students in Taiwan immediately after the war only wrote in Japanese

¹ Wu Mansha is the most famous pseudonym of Wu Bingding 吳丙丁. His other pseudonyms include Sha 沙, Shading 沙丁, Xiaofeng 曉風, Lin Jingzi 林靜子, among others.

² Wu Mansha, *Zhuixi ji* (Taipei: Taipei xian wenhua ju, 2000), n.p.

³ Zhong Zhaozheng, “Wu Mansha xiansheng yu wo,” in *Koshu lishi: Wu Mansha de feng yu yue*, ed. Li Zongci (Taipei: Taipei xian wenhua ju, 2001), 4.

and were eager to learn the new “national language,” i.e. Mandarin Chinese, of the new Nationalist government from the fatherland.

As I will demonstrate later, *The Spring of the Earth* is actually a problematic “primer” for the youth harboring “dreams of the fatherland” in the immediate postwar era. The story of *The Spring of the Earth*, put it simply, is about a group of Chinese students in Hangzhou, China, who campaign to strike down the malicious local gentry and end up supporting the Japanese wartime ideology of “friendship between Japan and China.” Thus, from hindsight, this text (and Wu’s other stories) should not be an ideal text for helping youth to pursue “the dream of the fatherland,” since it advocated the ideology of the “fatherland’s” enemy. What implied in the postwar remembrance episode is that the “Chineseness” of “vernacular Chinese” may allow different cultural, political, and ideological implications in different eras, and wartime activities and postwar remembrance may contradict each other when nationalisms underlie ambiguity and ambivalence.

The enigma of Wu is largely due to his “overseas Chinese” [*huaqiao* 華僑] identity in the Japanese colony when his “fatherland” was at war with Japan. While Wu came from Fujian Province, like the majority of Han Taiwanese’s ancestors, he was legally a “Chinese alien” during the Japanese colonial period due to the law which only recognized those who resided in Taiwan *before* May 8, 1895 as “the subject of Great Empire of Japan” at the transition when Qing government ceded Taiwan to Japan after the Qing government lost the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894.⁴ Chinese people who moved to Taiwan after this specific day were “*Shina jin* 支那人” (Chinese nationals) and were regarded as aliens. Even though Wu Mansha’s grandfather had already started his business in Taiwan during the Qing dynasty and brought Wu’s father and

⁴ Wu Wen-hsing, *Riju shiqi zai Tai huaqiao yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng shuju, 1991), 1.

uncles with him and hence all of them acquired Japanese nationality, Wu himself, since he was born and raised in Quanzhou, Fujian until 1929, had never been naturalized as a Japanese national. According to his postwar memoir (which we should read it with caution since the representation of wartime experience is often filtered by postwar ideology), when attending high school in his hometown, Wu was an active leader in local anti-Japanese campaigns, regardless of the fact that his family were Japanese nationals and made their fortune in the Japanese colony.⁵

Wu permanently moved to Taiwan in 1935 when his father's business began to fail. Knowing no Japanese, Wu was unable to find a job to support his family and eventually tried his hand at writing and submitting Chinese-language prose essays, poetry and vernacular fiction to the literary column of *Taiwan xinmin bao* 臺灣新民報(Taiwan New People's News), edited by Xu Kuanquan (discussed in Chapter 1), in order to help with his family's finances. Soon the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred on July 7, 1937; China and Japan were immediately at war. Wu's Chinese nationality became a menace to both his own security and that of his family members' who were Japanese nationals. Many Chinese aliens in Taiwan were arrested and tortured on the suspicion of spying for Chinese government.⁶ Wu, anxious about the impending persecution, bought a ticket and was about to take a steamship back to Fujian, but eventually stayed in Taiwan because the British steamship wasn't able to make it to the harbor.⁷ He then edited the abovementioned *Wind and Moon*, wrote and published at least five full-length novels and numerous prose essays, editorial notes and poems in vernacular Chinese, joined the Starlight

⁵ In Fujian Wu organized Red Leaf Theater Company (*Hongye jutuan* 紅葉劇團) whose repertoire included "Regret of the Fall of the Nation" (*Wanguo hen* 亡國恨), a play, according to his postwar recollection, about "the groans of Taiwanese compatriots under the oppression of Japanese." Wu Mansha, *Zhuixi ji* (Taipei: Taipei xian wenhua ju, 2000), 37, 40-42.

⁶ Hsu Hsueh-chi, "Rizhi shiqi de 'Taiwan huaqiao' (1937-1945)," *Zhongguo haiyang fazhan shi lunwen ji* 6, ed. Zhang Yanxian (Taipei: Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences of Academia Sinica, 1997), 500-501.

⁷ Wu Mansha, *Zhuixi ji*, 58-59.

Theater Company (*Xingguang jutuan* 星光劇團) and wrote plays in Minnan dialect, or Taiwanese. Unlike his self-proclaimed anti-Japanese activities in prewar Fujian, however, Wu's wartime literary works in Taiwan were replete with pro-Japanese, pro-War rhetoric, such as "same ethnicity, same language (*tongwen tongzhong* 同文同種)," "cooperating the Advancing South policy (*xieli nanfang guoce* 協力南方國策)," etc.⁸ During the wartime, *Kôminka* 皇民化 (imperialization) policies were implemented in every sector of Taiwanese society and intended to transform Taiwanese to become Japanese by means such as changing names to Japanese. Even though the Chinese aliens were not the targets of *Kôminka* policies, Wu and other "overseas Chinese" still could not avoid "devoting" themselves to Japan's war effort against their "fatherland."⁹ Thus Chen Jianzhong, among the first to study Wu Mansha's popular romances, suggests that Wu's literary works were "doubly marginal" in postwar scholarship: on the one hand, they were popular literature and was looked down on by elite-minded scholars; on the other hand, they were labeled as *Kôminka* literature which, use Sung-sheng Chang's words, "promptly elicited a knee-jerk response to the politically sensitive 'traitor' issue."¹⁰ In fact, one of the most contested issues of studying Wu Mansha's wartime popular romances has always been the question of whether or not he was a *Kôminka* writer, such as in the researches by Chen

⁸ In fact Wu was not the only Chinese alien in Taiwan who supported the colonial government's war policy and war discourse. Hsu Hsueh-chi in her research suggests that while there were about 20,000 Chinese aliens left Taiwan after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident broke out, still around 45,000 Chinese aliens stayed. What they could do to survive was to cooperate with the government, such as organizing meetings in which they shouted slogans like "Banzai Great Empire of Japan," visiting Shinto shrine, collecting donation to Japanese Army, etc. See Hsu Hsueh-chi, "Rizhi shiqi de 'Taiwan huaqiao' (1937-1945)," 506-507.

⁹ Yasui Sankichi, *Teikoku Nihon to kakyô: Nihon, Taiwan, Chôsen* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2005), 240.

¹⁰ See Chen Jianzhong, "Da Dongya liming qian de luoman shi: Wu Mansha xiaoshuo zhong de aiqing yu zhanzheng xiuci," *Taiwan wenxue xuebao* 3 (December, 2002), 109; Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, "Beyond Cultural and National Identities: Current Re-evaluation of the *Kominka* Literature from Taiwan's Japanese Period," in *Modern Chinese Literature and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory*, ed. Rey Chow (Durham: Duke University Pres, 2000), 106-107.

Jianzhong, Lin Fang-mei and Wu Yingzhen, respectively.¹¹ Regardless of how he strives to explain his “anti-Japanese” and “pro-fatherland” stands in his postwar remembrance, Wu is still a controversial and sometimes self-contradictory literary figure. In this study I will *not* take the moralistic approach to designate if he is a *Kôminka* writer or a traitor. Instead, what is more important in reading his wartime writings is a historicized cultural approach such as that proposed by Sung-sheng Chang in her discussion of *Kôminka* literature in wartime Taiwan.¹² Reading Wu’s popular romance in wartime context, we should scrutinize how the author internalized and negotiated with the dominant political discourses and how the dominant political discourses affect/manifest/complicate the ambiguity and ambivalence of Wu Mansha’s articulation of love vis-à-vis wartime politics.

Love and politics are inevitably intertwined in Wu Mansha’s wartime popular romances. On the one hand, political discourses and events such as modernization, reform, nation building, and wartime ideology may be the momentum for a great love story in some cases and in other cases may be the effect of free love. On the other hand, Wu’s wartime popular romances reveal

¹¹ Chen Jianzhong claims that because he demonstrates a “leap of faith” from Chinese identity to Japanese identity, Wu’s works are “huangmin hua xiaoshuo” (皇民化小說, *Kôminka* fiction). On the other hand, Lin Fangmei maintains that because first he was legally a Chinese national and secondly he didn’t identify himself with the Japanese but only with the Chinese, Wu’s *The Spring of the Earth* was “a peculiar *Kôminka* literature.” Wu Yingzhen asserts that he was, unlike Taiwanese, a Chinese national rather than Japanese national, therefore Wu Mansha couldn’t produce *Kôminka* literature because only the Imperial Subject could write it. Wu Yingzhen’s assertion is particularly problematic because *Kôminka* movement is a transformation project to make Taiwanese become useful for the Great Empire of Japan, and given the fact that Wu Mansha did promote the Great Empire of Japan explicitly in his texts, as I will discuss later, it is difficult to deny that his works contained *Kôminka* messages. See Chen Jianzhong, “Da tongya liming qian de luoman shi,” 134; Lin Fangmei, “Qimeng lunshu yu huayu xushi: yi Xu Kuanquan, Wu Mansha wei li,” in *Di si jie wenxue yu zixun xueshu yantao hui huiqian lunwen ji*. (Taipei: Department of Chinese Literature, National Taipei University, 2008), 15-21; Wu Yingzhen, “Wu Mansha shengping ji qi Rizhi shiqi dazhong xiaoshuo yanjiu,” (Master Thesis of Nanhua University, 2002), 142-143.

¹² Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, “Beyond Cultural and National Identities,” 109.

that romantic love is fabricated and consumed within the grasp of the state's power struggles. Wu's literary works beg an intricate question: Why did he choose to write popular romance, a sentimental genre about feelings—especially the tender feeling of love, and the interconnected relationship between love, sexuality, and marriage – to promote the political discourse of nation, revolution and war? What exactly is “nation” in Wu's narratives, especially when the author wrote in his fatherland's language in his fatherland's enemy's territory? Or, to look at this issue from the opposite perspective: How did Wu articulate love in Japan's enemy's tongues—i.e., the Sinitic languages such as vernacular Chinese and Minnan dialect—to propagate Japan's Holy War in wartime Taiwan? What “nation” should the characters in Wu's works love – is it the fatherland, China, the colonizer, Japan, or the colonized, Taiwan, or even the imaginary Greater East Asia? How did Wu conceive of the triangular relationship of China, Japan, and Taiwan, while sometimes Greater East Asia is also involved?

I. Constructing Utopia, with Love: *Peach Blossom River*

Wu Mansha's *Taohua jiang* 桃花江 (Peach Blossom River) was first serialized in *Wind and Moon* beginning November 1937, immediately after Wu Mansha took charge of the magazine; the last instalment was published on July 7th, 1939.¹³ The novel seemed to have been well received and was adapted into “new drama (*xinju/shingeki* 新劇),” or spoken drama, and

¹³ The serialization of *Peach Blossom River* was interrupted between August 1, 1938 and January 1st, 1939. During the serialization of this novel, readers expressed their admiration by, for example, classical poetry. Lin Xiya 林錫牙, a classical poet, composed two seven-syllable quatrains (*jueju* 絕句) on the beauty and fate of the female protagonist Meihen in *Peach Blossom River*. See Lin Xiya, “Ti Taohua jiang Meihen,” *Fengyue bao* 60 (March 15, 1938), 20.

performed in Taipei in late 1940 and early 1941.¹⁴ The book form was printed in December 1941; unfortunately it didn't pass the censorship and some three thousand copies were confiscated.¹⁵

Peach Blossom River highlights how the urge for building an ideal society and the impulses of romantic love are intermingled. The love between man and woman not only binds couples together and stimulates in the male protagonist aspirations to develop the rural village on Peach Blossom River into a modern society. In this case, romantic love is the *raison d'être* of the construction of an ideal society and economic reform as the novel unfolds. .

In the novel, Peach Blossom River was originally a fishing village where people used to live a peaceful life in the tranquil, picturesque rural area until “steamboats sailed into the River and caught fish in enormous numbers.”¹⁶ The village fishermen are unable to compete with the Western, modern steamboats and to make ends meet; they can only send their daughters to the city and become dancehall hostesses, bargirls, and waitresses—occupations despised by “proper women.” The clash of traditional and modern, Western (foreign) and indigenous, as well as rural and urban values may cause unsettling ideas that would eventually lead to revolution in leftist fiction such as that in Mao Dun 茅盾’s “Spring Silkworms” (*Chuncan* 春蠶, 1932).¹⁷ In *Peach Blossom River*, indeed, the villagers suffer poverty and the female protagonist, Liu Meihen 劉梅痕, rises up and calls for reform. Meihen believes only through modernization could the villagers

¹⁴ Tang Wu, “Tantan Wujun de zuopin yu ‘Taohua jiang’ shangyan,” *Fengyue bao* 121 (January 1st, 1941), 18-19. Tang Wu, according to his post-war memoir, is one of Wu’s many pseudonyms. See Li Zongci ed., *Koshu lishi: Wu Mansha de feng yu yue*, 194.

¹⁵ “Quandao duzhe daiwang de Wu Mansha zhu changpian xiaoshuo Taohua jiang,” *Nanfang* 143 (December 12, 1941), 17; “Bianji shi tanhua,” *Nanfang* 145 (January 1st, 1942), 36; Wu Mansha, *Zhuixi ji*, n.p.

¹⁶ Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 53 (November 15, 1937), 13.

¹⁷ The steamboat is a frequently used symbol to represent the Western and modern intrusion that changes the traditional livelihood in modern Chinese literature, such as that in “Spring Silkworm.”

in Peach Blossom River survive the western/foreign/modern/capitalist invasion and further build an ideal society for the generations to come.

Although she is determined to reform her hometown, being a poor bargirl working in the city, Meihen doesn't know how to actualize and finance her dream. Fortunately in the bar where she works she meets Xu Dongning 許東寧, a young man from a well-to-do family from the city who sympathizes with the poor. Dongning soon falls in love with Meihen because of her "character and ability," not because of her beauty.¹⁸ Out of his love of Meihen, Dongning decides to invest in developing her hometown. They are later joined by Xiaohong 小紅, another bargirl from Meihen's hometown, and Xiaohong's patron Zhuang Mengzhou 莊夢周 who is yet another rich young man from the city and an editor of a literary magazine. The young activists orchestrate a well-thought modernization plan: they set up a modern fishing company, buy several steamboats, hire the villagers to fish for the company, build a clinic to take care of the workers' health and establish a "fishing school."¹⁹ During the process of constructing the ideal place, the private emotion in this novel yields to the public good. From the day when they decided to develop Peach Blossom River together, Meihen and Dongning's story becomes a story of utopian planning rather than that of romantic love. In other words, the narrative is more about the development of the infrastructure of Peach Blossom River than about the progress of Meihen and Dongning's love story. It seems that the love between the two protagonists is self-evident and it blooms without the process of seeding, growing, and flowering.

However, their love (and the development of an ideal society) does encounter an obstacle in the course of time. The obstacle doesn't come from parents' disapproval of free love, as that in

¹⁸ Shading, "Taohua jiang," *Fengyue bao* 59 (March 1, 1938), 20.

¹⁹ Shading, "Taohua jiang," *Fengyue bao* 66 (June 15, 1938), 12.

many modern fictions and news stories²⁰; nor does it come from societal pressure and “old feudalism,” as in Xu Kunquan’s *Lovable Foe*. Instead, their love story is interrupted when Meihen’s mother falls and gets hurt in the fishery and is rushed to the hospital. In order to save her mother, Meihen donates too much blood and becomes sick herself. When she is hospitalized due to her self-sacrifice, Dongning, on the other hand, is bored by her absence and becomes bewitched by a prostitute Qianlixiang 千里香. He not only forgets his lover Meihen altogether but also abandons the development of Peach Blossom River, only to spend day and night with the alluring woman.²¹ *Femme fatale* in this story, unlike in most cases of modern fictions, does not challenge the social norms;²² instead, the damage she causes is that she impedes the progress of the construction of an ideal society. Developing an ideal society, to Dongning, is nothing more than an end product of the drive of romantic love. When there is no love for the opposite sex, there is no devotion to the public good. Knowing Dongning’s abandonment, Meihen in despair also becomes a dancehall hostess and ceases participating in constructing Peach Blossom River. Xiaohong, another bargirl-turned-activist, comes to the city and tries to persuade Meihen: “You must come back to Peach Blossom River and continue your work so that you can move him and make him regret his mistake.”²³ Meihen is enlightened; she moves back and re-engages in developing her hometown. Constructing an ideal society now becomes an escape for the heartbroken, frustrated girl. Meanwhile, Dongning comes to realize his error when Qianlixiang

²⁰ For example, Wu Mansha’s short story “Hua fei hua 花非花.” See Wu Mansha, “Hua fei hua,” *Fengyue bao* 90, 91.92, 93 (July 24 and August 15, 1939).

²¹ Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 78 (January 15, 1939), 12-14; 79 (February 1, 1939), 19-21; 80 (February 15, 1939), 17-18.

²² Dynamics between *femme fatale* and social norms, see William Jankowiak and Thomas Taladino, “Desiring Sex, Longing for Love: A Tripartite Conundrum,” in William R Jankowiak ed., *Intimacies: Love and Sex Across Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 17-18.

²³ Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 82.83 (March 31, 1939), 17.

steals his precious jewelry and runs away with an outlaw. He regrets abandoning both Meihen and the development of Peach Blossom River and returns to the site of development immediately.²⁴ In Dongning's case, dedication to the public good does not come from his selfless devotion but rather from his personal attachment to a woman. Thus, the lure that distracts him from the public good must be the love (or lust) for a female figure who doesn't participate in the development of an ideal society. Only when the distraction disappears could he love and devote himself to the public good again.

If romantic love makes the development of Peach Blossom River possible, then where exactly is Peach Blossom River? According to Wu's postwar memoir, the book form of the novel was banned because the authorities considered Peach Blossom River, a lovely place constructed by a group of young couples in the fiction, implies no other than Taiwan; this fiction "suggests that China will re-construct Taiwan" and "agitates Taiwanese to resist Japan."²⁵ We have to wonder if the authorities' charge against this novel was justified, and if Peach Blossom River really suggests Taiwan for, as modern scholar Huang Mei-e claims, is Peach Blossom River in reality a village in Hunan Province, China.²⁶ I would argue, upon close reading, that Peach Blossom River is a non-existent place; it should be neither Taiwan nor a village in Hunan, China. First, it should not suggest Taiwan because in the narrative it snows heavily on the night when Dongning rides a taxi to see Meihen. Given the fact that it rarely snows in Taiwan, the story could not happen there. Secondly, it should not suggest China since in the narrative Dongning once dreams that if they construct Peach Blossom River well, "it will be no less than the West

²⁴ Shading, "Taohua jiang," *Fengyue bao* 85.86 (May 14, 1939), 15-19.

²⁵ Wu Mansha, *Zhuixi ji*, n.p.

²⁶ Huang Mei-e considers *Peach Blossom River* referred to Li Jinhui 黎錦暉 (1981-1967)'s popular song "Taohua jiang shi meiren huo 桃花江是美人窩," which was inspired by a place in Hunan. Therefore, the "Taohua jiang" in Wu's fiction should also refer to the same place as Li's song. See Huang, Mei-e, "Cong 'richang shenghuo'dao 'xingya shengzhan'," 19.

Lake in Hangzhou, China [*Zhongguo de Hangzhou Xizi hu* 中國的杭州西子湖].”²⁷ If this were set in China, “Zhongguo” (China) seems redundant and would not be mentioned in the conversation. Another proof is that the male characters in the narrative frequent “yiji 藝妓” (*geigi*, or geisha) and “nüji 女給” (*jokyû*, or waitress²⁸), neither of which were titles of women’s occupations in Chinese contexts but were seen in colonial Taiwan.²⁹ Perhaps most obvious to Chinese readers, however, is the fact that Peach Blossom River in Wu’s novel resembles Peach Blossom Stream in Tao Qian (365-427)’s prose essay “Taohua yuan ji 桃花源記” (On Peach Blossom Stream), the quintessential image of utopia in the Chinese literary tradition. In short, the story of *Peach Blossom River* is set neither in Taiwan nor in China; it must be a utopian dream. The utopia may indicate an urge of nation building by modernization project, as many May Fourth intellectuals pursued, while where exactly and which *nation* in Wu’s case is remains ambiguous.

II. Propagating Love in War: *Dawn of East Asia/The Spring of the Earth*

1. *Revolution, War, and Love*

While *Peach Blossom River* tells a story of love and reform in a non-existent place, *Dawn of East Asia* (*Liming le Dongya* 黎明了東亞) fabricates a revolution-plus-love narrative that occurs in a specific place, i.e., China. In this novel, on the one hand, revolution may become the obstacle of romantic love; on the other hand, the culmination of revolution, that is, the Second Sino-Japanese War, could complete love. How does the author justify the peculiar formulation of

²⁷ Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 66 (June 15, 1938), 11.

²⁸ Waitress (*jokyû*) was considered to expose body to the public and hence not a proper job for women in colonial Taiwan.

²⁹ For example, see Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 84 (April 24, 1939), 12.

considering the Second Sino-Japanese War as completing the Chinese revolution? What is the entangled relationship between revolution, war and love?

Dawn of East Asia is a full-length novel serialized in *The South* starting on July 1st, 1941 when *Wind and Moon* changes its name to *The South* in order to “conform with national policy” of “Advancing South.” *Dawn of East Asia* ended its serialization on June 15th, 1942.³⁰ The draft was completed, according to the author, in December 1939, originally entitled *The Song of Peace* (*Heping zhi ge* 和平之歌) and won a prize in the competition held by *Osaka Daily Chinese Version* (*Kabun Osaka mainichi/Huawen daban meiri* 華文大阪每日), a bi-monthly Chinese journal that propagated Japanese wartime policy and cultural mobilization.³¹ The title of the novel changed from *Dawn of East Asia* to *The Spring of the Earth* when publishing as book form in March 1943. Wu Mansha did not explain the reason of changing the title from a more politically loaded one to a seemingly more neutral one. Nevertheless, we should be aware that the less political title still implies that the hope brought by the warmth and brightness of “spring” is similar to the sentiment brought by “dawn” and “sunrise,” while “spring,” “dawn” and “sun” are a few of Wu’s favorite (political) symbols, as we shall discuss below.³² The novel begins when Huang Yiping 黃一平, a college student who, with his fellow male and female students, leads a campaign to overthrow the “local tyranny and malicious gentry” (*tuhao lieshen* 土豪劣紳) in Hangzhou, China. Their campaign, as defined by themselves, is a continuation of the

³⁰ See Chen Qizhen et al, “Zuci yu ganyan,” *Nanfang* 133 (July 1, 1941), 4

³¹ Wu Yingzhen, “Wu Mansha shengping ji qi Rizhi shiqi dazhong xiaoshuo yanjiu,” 135.

³² For example, in *Peach Blossom River* the development of the utopia is near complete when “It is spring again. The peach blossoms blooms gorgeously in Peach Blossom River.” See Shading, “Taohua jiang,” *Fengyue bao* 89 (July 7, 1939), 19. Another example is one of Wu’s novels is entitled *The Song of the Dawn* (*Liming zhi ge* 黎明之歌).

nationalist revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen.³³ Huang Yiming 黃一鳴, Yiping's younger brother, once comments on Wang Jianguang 王劍光's misfortune, one of Yiping's fellow activists who was shot by a henchman of the malicious gentry, and cries out, "President Sun [*Sun zongli* 孫總理] had strived for the revolution for forty odd years ... It is regretful that the warlords nowadays use [the revolution's] name and yet betray the spirit of it and oppress ordinary citizens. ... Wang Jianguang sacrifices for this!"³⁴ In another episode Zeng Jie 曾傑, another of Yiping's fellow activist, tells Jianguang that, "We will never concede... If we must shed our blood, we shall let our blood spill all over the nation and enlighten four hundred million compatriots [*si wanwan tongbao* 四萬萬同胞] by following President Sun's will. ... Hope we

³³ If we push it one step further, it might also remind us of Wang Jingwei's "Peace Movement," which advocated stopping the war against Japan while Wang self-identified his political movement as the continuation of Dr. Sun's revolution and Pan-Asianism, similar to the protagonist Huang Yiping and his peers' political belief. Scholar Huang Mei-e asserts that *The Spring of the Earth* could be linked to "Peace Literature" during Shanghai's "Isolated Island" (*gudao* 孤島) period because it shows similar ideology such as "Friendship between Japan and China" and "East Asian New Order" as that in Wang Jingwei's political ideals. Huang's reasoning may not be convincing because she didn't provide detailed discussion about what "Peace Literature" is and what kinds of connection, such as writers' personal or intellectual connection, between Wu and Shanghai literary scene. In addition, both "Friendship between Japan and China" and "East Asian New Order" were not the product of Wang's idealization, but rather common rhetoric in any of Japan's colony and occupied regions. While Wu's novel may contain certain wartime rhetoric that are also propagated in other East Asian regions such as in Wang's political statements, there still lacks direct evidence about the connection between Wu and Shanghai's Peace Literature. However, it may be safe to assume that Wu should at least recognize Wang Jingwei's political ideals. During serializing *Dawn of East Asia*, Wu published an essay in which he stated that, "Chairman Wang [Wang Zhuxi 汪主席] also said our National Father Dr. Sun Yat-sen advocated Pan-Asianism. We have to establish East Asian New Order according to this ideal." Nevertheless, recognizing Wang's ideals doesn't necessarily mean Wu had connection with Shanghai "Peace Literature," since "Peace Literature" did have organized theme, topic and literary association. See Wu Mansha, "Nanfang wenhua de xin jianshe," *Nanfang* 133 (July 1, 1941), 8. About Huang Mei-e's assumption, see Huang, Mei-E, "Cong 'richang shenghuo' dao 'xingya shengzhan'," *Taiwan wenxue yanjiu jikan* Vol. 10 (August 2011) 30. About Wang Jingwei and Peace Movement and "Peace Literature" in Shanghai, see Li Wen-ching, Li Wen-ching's *Gongrong de xiangxiang: Diguo zhimin di yu da Dongya wenxue quan* (Taipei: Daoxiang, 2010), 437-456.

³⁴ Wu Mansha, "Liming le Dongya," *Nanfang* 140.141 (November 1, 1941), 36.

will save hundreds and thousands of ordinary citizens from deep waters and hot flames [*suishen huore* 水深火熱]. Look, Jiangguang, the sun is welcoming us to create a new society!”³⁵ In addition to consolidate the connection between their “revolution” and Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s nationalist revolution, the quotations here implies that the student-activists treat the “local tyranny and malicious gentry” as the synonym of warlords, who were the cause of China’s weakness.

While the reactive local gentry and warlords are denounced as target of the student-activists’ revolution, the real culprit is in fact someone more ferocious than them. When Yiping and fellow activists organize a student association to resist the evildoers, the other camp instigated by the sly Bai Ou 白歐 splits with them and forms another student organization. Yiping resents that, “Bai Ou...oppresses students and brags his prowess.” Yiping “thinks about the social organization in China and almost bursts into tears and wonders, ‘Who wants to defend East Asia? ... Twentieth century new youth, all of East Asia youth should unite, save China, and establish East Asian New Order!’”³⁶ The implied author here obviously uses the characters’ names as symbols to indicate the conflict between East Asia and the West: while Huang Yiping literally refers to “yellow race” (*huang*) and “peace” (*ping*), Bai Ou represents “white” (*bai*) and “Europe” (*ou*). Thus, the narrative implicitly suggests the real enemy of Huang Yiping’s camp, i.e., (yellow) Asian nations, is not local tyranny, but actually the West. The revolution of Huang Yiping and his peers, therefore, it is in fact about solidifying East Asian nations to resist the Western imperialism. This formulation is undoubtedly related to the Greater East Asian discourse that promotes uniting East Asian countries to fight against the West. Moreover, the Chinese nationalist revolutionary cliché that advocates saving “four hundred million compatriots

³⁵ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 142 (November 15, 1941), 27.

³⁶ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 134 (July 15, 1941), 30.

from the deep waters and hot flames,” followed by “the sun is welcoming us to create a new society,” is used to justify Japan’s wartime ideology which considers Japan as the leader of East Asian nations to build an East Asian New Order since the sun is a symbol of Japan, the Land of Rising Sun. Thus through the symbolism, the readers might unconsciously interpret that Japan will help Chinese people fulfill Dr. Sun’s will and accomplish Chinese revolution.

However, the students’ campaign doesn’t succeed; soon the Second Sino-Japanese War breaks out and all of the young activists flee from Hangzhou to Fujian. The War is a horrible one, but in a short while all of the students who fled to Fujian come back to Hangzhou again. They see the city “is filled with the ambience of peace and restoration” under the new government that collaborates with Japan.³⁷ The student activists think only peace can save the “ordinary citizens” from “the deep waters and hot flames” and only “peace can save China, save East Asia!”³⁸ After seeing the peaceful and prosperous new Hangzhou, they ask a rhetorical question, “Maybe this is the final victory over the local tyranny and malicious gentry?”³⁹ In this case, the implied author explicitly suggests that Yiping and his fellow activists’ revolution is eventually, and ironically from the hindsight, completed by the War launched by Japan.⁴⁰

The narrative of revolution and war in *Dawn of East Asia* is interwoven with the love stories of the young activists. Revolution/war and love could contradict with each other in some cases; in other cases, however, revolution/war could be the ultimate force that brings those comrade-cum-lovers together. In the following paragraphs, I examine how national crisis and the urge of national salvation shape the conception and articulation of romantic love via the love

³⁷ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 153 (June 1, 1942), 36.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 36.

⁴⁰ About how to justify war, peace and Japan, please see below.

stories of Yiping and his sweetheart Xiangyun 湘雲 as well as Jiangguang and his sweetheart Chunman 春曼.

Xiangyun, Yiping's cousin, is the most beautiful of all girls in the novel, yet is sick and weak all the time. She can barely walk and needs someone to support her in order to move from her bed to sofa when Yiping and his sister Xiujuan 秀鵑 visit her at home. Her sickness, according to Xiujuan, is due to Yiping's ignorance.⁴¹ Because she is so sentimental and sensitive that she needs Yiping's love to comfort her. Yet Yiping cannot love her because first, she is "under the poisonous legacy of five thousand years of feudalism" and "restrained by rites and propriety [*lijiao* 禮教]."⁴² In this case Yiping blames Xiangyun as a traditional woman who is not yet "liberated" and modernized and hence not a match of a new youth like him.⁴³ Furthermore, Yiping is determined not to love her because "love is the fetters that young men and women find to shackle themselves. We are not leisure class and not qualified to love. ... Our mission is momentous. It is not a time for love! The youth in our times need to be resolved to reform and construct [a new society] and work hard to create peace. This is the responsibility of East Asian youth!"⁴⁴ In Yiping's mind, romantic love is selfish and an obstacle to a greater cause, i.e., the stability of society and the peace of East Asia; love and revolution cannot coexist. On the other hand, however, the undertone of Yiping's words is that young men and women will be allowed to pursue romantic love when the national crisis is solved and peace falls upon the

⁴¹ Wu Mansha, "Liming le Dongya," *Nanfang* 135 (August 1, 1941), 25; *Nanfang* 134, 32.

⁴² Wu Mansha, "Liming le Dongya," *Nanfang* 133, 63; *Nanfang* 134, 32.

⁴³ Yiping thinks, "Yes, she loves me and I might love her. But we are different in personalities and thoughts, therefore we are almost impossible to be together." The "personalities and thoughts" here, considering Yiping's revolution, should be the discrepancy of modernity vs. tradition. Yet, the author did not offer a better explanation of relationship between Xiangyun's sentimentalism, sickness, and "the poisonous legacy of feudalism." Wu Mansha, "Liming le Dongya," *Nanfang* 133, 62.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 63.

society; romantic love is indeed not something unattainable. Thus Yiping tells his siblings, “I think Chinese youth in our times shouldn’t be in love. . . . In this chaotic China we don’t even know where fate will lead us. . . . We should try our best to get rid of the fetters of love. . . . It shouldn’t be too late to sing the tune of love when the nation becomes peaceful and the society becomes stable.”⁴⁵ In other words, when the revolution succeeds, romantic love will naturally become possible; the success of revolution is the prerequisite for romantic love.

While Xiangyun and Yiping’s love story seems hopeless because the revolution encounters impediments from Bai Ou’s camp, Jianguang and Chunman manage to let their love come to fruition when the Second Sino-Japanese War breaks out. Jianguang fled to Fujian after having been shot by Bai Ou’s henchman and later joined Chinese Army to fight against Japan. He was severely hurt, lost his consciousness and was sent to a field hospital where Chunman happens to be a nurse. Although Jianguang and Chunman admired each other when they were busy striking down the local tyranny in Hangzhou back then, they were not able to lay bare their love perhaps due to shyness and the fear of moral judgment of free love. Chunman is surprised to see Jianguang again after they parted several months ago, but unfortunately Jianguang is now unconscious. Looking at his face Chunman talks to herself, “Perhaps we are destined to be a couple of love birds on the battlefield in the chaotic times. Perhaps our marriage could only be possible in the tears and blood. We are destined to accomplish our love in the hails of bullets and guns. No matter we are live or dead, we are a couple in the garden of love, no, in the battlefield of love!”⁴⁶ Jianguang soon comes to conscious and exclaims, “Oh! Chunman, my love! Let’s pray the peace of East Asia will come soon.”⁴⁷ Only during the most critical moment of life and

⁴⁵ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 144 (January 1, 1942), 35.

⁴⁶ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 151 (May 1, 1942), 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

death caused by the war could the shy young man and woman lay bare their hearts. The war is, in this case, ironically not only the completion of the revolution but also completion of a great love story; love and revolution can be accomplished in this single event—war.

Wu's treatment of revolution/war and love reminds us of the revolution-plus-love formula in the 1920s and 1930s China as well as the complex relationship between romantic love and the nation.⁴⁸ In *The Monster That Is History*, David Der-wei Wang discusses Mao Dun's criticism of three formulas of revolution-plus-love fiction: in the first formula the conflict between revolution and love is foregrounded in the fiction, while in the second formula revolution, instead of being an impediment, "served to bring forth the true romantic feelings between the revolutionaries."⁴⁹ The last formula saw love emanating from the comradeship and compassion of revolutionaries; revolution no longer was the hindrance to love but it *was* love.⁵⁰ The hopeless story of Yiping and Xiangyun in *Dawn of East Asia* fits into the first formula when Yiping prioritizes the revolution and the love of the nation while subordinates the personal, individual romantic love. This also resembles many Chinese writers in late 1920s and 1930s, who condemned free love/free sex and called for a "total commitment to the nation by subordinating the romantic imperative to that of revolution," as suggested by Haiyan Lee.⁵¹ Jianguang and Chunman's story, on the other hand, may be closer to the second and third formulas of revolution plus love fiction in which love emanating from comradeship and the

⁴⁸ While we still don't have any evidence to prove that the author was influenced by the 1920s and 1930s revolution-plus-love fiction, Wu Mansha's popular romance shows similar symptoms of revolution-plus-love formula. Wu Yingzhen also points out that *The Spring of the Earth* is an "alternative revolution-plus-love fiction." See Wu Yingzhen, "Wu Mansha shengping ji qi Rizhi shiqi dazhong xiaoshuo yanjiu," 138.

⁴⁹ David Der-wei Wang, *The Monster That is History: History, Violence and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 2004), 89.

⁵⁰ Wang, *The Monster That is History*, 89.

⁵¹ Haiyan Lee, *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 5.

passion for revolution merges into one and finally revolution equals love.⁵² What is different from the revolution-plus-love formula in *Dawn of East Asia* is that the romantic love does not complete in the course of revolution; instead, war, the culmination of revolution, enables the lovers to fulfill the drive of romantic love *and* at the same time the urge of loving the nation. In this case, war equals both patriotic love and romantic love.

2. Propaganda and Wartime Popular Romance

Interweaving the themes of politics and love, Wu Mansha's wartime popular romance is understandably regarded as propaganda literature by literary scholars. Are there intended effects by interweaving romantic love and the messages of wartime ideology in the fictional narrative? Before approaching this question, we should investigate how propaganda engages target audiences emotively, especially through the power of love in popular romance genre.

Propaganda, when indoctrinating ideology, would not only instruct the tenets straightforwardly; a more effective way may be to appeal to emotions of the target audiences and hence manipulate and mobilize the hearts of them. The propagandist may "exploit[t] the habits of fantasy and desire"⁵³ so that the audience would not only *know* but also *feel* and internalize the tenets of the ideology. Through utilizing fantasy and desire, propaganda would be able to conduct "psychological manipulations."⁵⁴ Popular romance, by writing human emotions, especially romantic love, and fabricating fantasy of human desire, may be one of the most effective means to propagating a certain ideology. Wartime propaganda literature, furthermore,

⁵² Wang, *The Monster That is History*, 89.

⁵³ See Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: The Political Image in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 103.

⁵⁴ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 21.

aims to propagate the love beyond romantic relationship—in other words, the purpose is to instill the love of the nation in its citizens. The main goal of wartime propaganda, i.e. patriotic love, thus, may be advocated via consuming popular romance that specializes in emotions, especially romantic love, by comparing or analogizing the two realms of love. Patriotic love and romantic love may be, as mentioned above, contradictory to each other; in other cases, they may enhance or even elevate each other. In the first example, popular romance could be used to inculcate the audiences with patriotism by prescribing that a good citizen (or imperial subject) should prioritize patriotic love instead of romantic love, while the second example would deliberately intermingle patriotic love with romantic love. Nation in the latter case could become the sentimental object of human desire.

The love stories in *Dawn of East Asia*, as we've discussed, demonstrate both of the two ways of treating the relationship between romantic love and patriotic love. While Yiping and Xiangyun's story may demonstrate the conflict between the two, Jianguang and Chunman's story manifest that romantic love and patriotic love could coexist. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that Yiping and Xiangyun's story actually shows no contradiction in the two categories of love. Rather, the patriotic love can ensure the romantic love because the completion of national salvation/revolution is the foundation of romantic love. Thus they must first pursue patriotism and then romantic love.

While there is no tension or conflict between patriotic love and romantic love, the intensity of the two realms of love is in fact different. In many cases of Wu's popular romance, patriotic love is more passionate and emotional than the love of the opposite sex. Behaviors usually seen in romantic love such as focused attention, obsessive thinking, heightened energy, and intense emotion are mostly seen when Yiping and his fellow students are thinking of their

“revolution” and the “Peace of East Asia.”⁵⁵ When Jianguang is shot by Bai Ou’s henchman and sent to hospital, for instance, Chunman stays and takes care of him at his sickbed. “When her hands touch his forehead gently, he smiles and grasps her hands.” Nevertheless Chunman is too shy to let him hold her hands any longer and withdraws her hands immediately. Then Jianguang suddenly passionately cries, “The blood of my heart is soaring at this moment, I can’t even sleep well! Chunman! China, How many young people are bleeding like me in China! We must strike down the malicious power and save hundreds of thousands of citizens! Only our blood can exchange for our freedom!”⁵⁶ In the presumably romantic moment of the two, Jianguang yet fervently exclaims his love, not of Chunman, but of the nation. The obsessive love of the nation and of the peace of East Asia dominates the narrative of *Dawn of East Asia*, while the romantic love between young couples is less intensively described. Thus, when normally lovers concern for one another’s welfare and take actions to express their regards for each other, the lovers in Wu’s popular romance would rather promote the welfare of the community, of the society, of the nation, and eventually of East Asia. Similarly, in *Peach Blossom River* Meihen seems to think about the construction of her hometown more often than thinking of her lover, Dongning.⁵⁷

In these cases, the relationship between romantic love and patriotic love is in some cases one of analogy, in which patriotic love is *like* romantic love; in other cases, the author tends to romanticize the patriotic love. In Wu’s popular romance, just as love can bond two people together to form a conjugal unity, it can also bond couples to form a national unity. In addition,

⁵⁵ Helen Fisher, “The Drive to Love: The Neural Mechanism for Mate Selection,” in *The New Psychology of Love*, ed. Robert J Sternberg and Karin Weis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 97.

⁵⁶ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 139 (October 1, 1941), 27.

⁵⁷ Ellen Berscheid, “Searching for the Meaning of ‘Love’,” in *The New Psychology of Love*, 176.

just as romantic love “demand[s] each other’s total commitment and loyalty,”⁵⁸ patriotic love in Wu’s literary works similarly demands total commitment of a citizen (or imperial subject) to his nation, although the signified of the signifier “nation” remains ambiguous.

3. *Loving the “Nation”*

Wu’s wartime popular romance ineluctably deals with love—both of the lover and of the nation. What “nation,” then, should the characters in Wu’s works love, since he wrote in his “fatherland’s” language for his fatherland’s enemy’s war efforts? Should they love the “fatherland,” the colonizer, or the colonized, or even the imaginary Greater East Asia? Wu’s conception of nation in his popular romance could be summarized in the discourses of “same ethnicity, same language,” “friendship between Japan and China,” and “Greater East Asian solidarity (under the leadership of Japan);” all of them indisputably correspond to the dominant culture—Japan’s wartime ideology. What distinguishes Wu’s formulations of these propagandist slogans from writers in other regions such as that in Japan proper or in Manchukuo is that his conceptions of these discourses intrinsically derived from the concern of Taiwan’s position vis-à-vis the Great Empire of Japan.

In Wu’s formulations, because China and Japan are of same ethnicity (*tongzhong* 同種), they must have similar language and culture (*tongwen* 同文).⁵⁹ The potential friendship between Japan and China, therefore, could be realized because they share same ethnicity and language; as a result, China’s Resistance War against Japan is unnecessary and unwise. In this formulation Taiwan plays an essential role because Taiwan is the living evidence of “same ethnicity, same

⁵⁸ Charles Lindholm, *Culture Identity: The History, Theory and Practice of Psychological Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 343.

⁵⁹ Here “wen” could refer to both language and culture, while in most cases it is language, i.e., the Sinograph (*hanwen* 漢文, *hanzi* 漢字) that defines “wen.”

language” of China and Japan, and thus the guarantee of peace between the two nations at war. In the later stage of Japan’s Holy War, furthermore, the friendship between Japan and China was enlarged to include all East Asian and Southeast Asian nations, and hence the “Advancing South” policy targeted at both Southern China and Southeast Asia. Again Taiwan also plays an irreplaceable role due to its capability of connecting Chinese in Southern China and Southeast Asia.

In *Dawn of East Asia*, Yiping’s sister Xiujuan and their cousin Huang Xiuzi 黃秀子 materialize the ideas of same ethnicity and same language of Japan and China. Xiuzi is Yiping’s uncle’s daughter; she was born and raised in Taiwan and naturally acquired Japanese nationality. Xiuzi and her father moved to Hangzhou before the War broke out. Yiming once told Xiujuan, who had never met Xiuzi before, how Xiuzi looks like: “You and her look almost identical. Not only your faces and bodily shapes are similar, your demeanor, speech, and laughter are all the same. ... Everyone who sees the two of you would wonder... if both of you were a pair of flowers given birth by the same parents!”⁶⁰ While Xiujuan is of Chinese nationality and Xiuzi is of Japanese nationality, the two of them are like identical twins. This implies that China and Japan, regardless of sovereignties, are almost “given birth by the same parents.” Thus Xiuzi, when the War broke out, declared, “Even though we are enemies on the battlefield, aren’t Japan and China just like our family [*women yijia* 我們一家]?”⁶¹ By allegorizing Japan and China as the Huangs (read: yellow race) in Wu’s conception, even though people may have different nationalities, they could be from the same family and thus of same ethnicity. However, while indeed Taiwanese—the Japanese nationals—and Chinese could be regarded as of same ethnicity because the ancestors of the majority of Taiwanese were from Chinese mainland, the Japanese

⁶⁰ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 137 (September 1, 1941), 28.

⁶¹ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 151, 29.

whose ancestors were from Japan proper should hardly share the same bloodline with Chinese as Taiwanese did. Thus, the effectiveness of justifying “same ethnicity, same language” of China and Japan via Taiwanese may be questionable. Nonetheless, Wu Mansha would never recognize the fallacy; his texts such as *Dawn of East Asia* remain obscure in terms of the relationship between nationality and ethnicity.

In a similar vein, the slogan “friendship between Japan and China,” which gained its legitimacy from the discourse of “same ethnicity, same language,” was also ambiguous in Wu’s popular romances. In *Dawn of East Asia*, China’s War against Japan was indeed dreadful and horrifying. In a letter to Yiping, Xiujuan, who is now a nurse in battlefield, wrote about her life in Hangzhou after the War broke out: “We live in a world filled with the ambience of horror. I can hear the sound of Japanese battleplanes bombing railways and the firing of cannon in Shanghai. We jittered all day long and were afraid that bombs would fall in our house.”⁶² She then continued to describe the battlefield in which “bullets and shells were flying above our tents... Many soldiers were wound and sent to our hospital.”⁶³ Zeng Jie, one of Yiping’s comrades, unfortunately died in a battle against Japan; before his death he shouted, “*Banzai* East Asian nations!”⁶⁴ If China and Japan are, as claimed by the Japanese ideologues, of same ethnicity and same language and hence a friendship between the two is natural, the horrible War shouldn’t have occurred. The novel, thus, has to offer sayings that could justify the War. In other words, this wartime popular romance did not repudiate the dreadfulness of the War; rather, it found ways to explain away the incongruity of the propagandist slogan and the descriptions of the brutality of war.

⁶² Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 150 (April 15, 1942), 37.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 38.

⁶⁴ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 151, 24.

The sayings to justify the dreadfulness of the war are, in hindsight, weak and problematic. Yiping explained why he joined the Chinese Army to combat with the Japanese: “I volunteered to join the army for the peace of East Asia. I consider the fierce battles between China and Japan can shake the White people’s heart and horrify their spirit; they will never hold contempt of the spirit and power of we East Asian nations anymore.”⁶⁵ In short, Yiping considers the war between Japan and China is to display the prowess of East Asia to the West; the real purpose of the War of the two East Asian nations is to create peace in this region by scaring away the Western powers. Xiuzi, as if she is the spokesperson of Japan, further makes it clear that the War “is predestined fate [*jiesu* 劫數] of East Asia. ... Japan launched the War not to treat China as its enemy, not to treat Chinese people as its enemy, but rather treat the anti-Japanese troops as its enemy. In order to establish and restore the Greater East Asia and solidify East Asian nations, Japan sacrifices tremendously and comes to China to fight the anti-Japanese troops.” When taking care of Yiping who was wound in a battle against Japan, Xiuzi in the Japanese field hospital tells him, “You are now lying in the enemy’s hospital and getting treatment from the enemy’s hands. Your enemy sister is protecting you here. Big Brother, don’t you think the enemy is lovable? ... You should abandon your gun and hold the flag of establishment and move toward the road to renovating Asia (*xingya* 興亞).”⁶⁶ Via the words of Yiping and Xiuzi the author, in fact, utilizes the discourse of “peace of East Asia” to bridge the gap between the causality of war and the Japanese self-proclaimed “friendship between Japan and China.” Xiuzi

⁶⁵ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 150, 38.

⁶⁶ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 151, 29.

finally cries, “We found peace in the War!”⁶⁷ The paradoxical tendency of their justification only intensifies the incongruity of war and peace, love and hatred, as well as China and Japan.⁶⁸

III. Imperial Subject, Love, and War: *The Song of Dawn* and “Father’s Diary”

Even though the wartime discourses such as “same ethnicity, same language” and “friendship between Japan and China” are proven to be fallacious in hindsight, Wu Mansha still imagined the Second Sino-Japanese War and the “Greater East Asian Holy War” that occurred after Pearl Harbor Incident to officially fight against the Western powers as a *deus ex machina* which can solve any insoluble problems of the Imperial Subject and Imperial New Woman, including the aporia in their love life. The appearance of war in the narrative may be abrupt, however, the effectiveness of its intervention is magic.

The Song of Dawn (*Liming zhi ge* 黎明之歌), first serialized in *Wind and Moon* from September 1939 to February 1941, is about the miserable life of female protagonist Sufen’s 素芬 poor family. In the latter part of the novel Sufen was saved from being drowned in a flood by a rich couple in the city. The rich couple only has an unintelligent boy, Yuanming 元明, who is a couple of years older than Sufen yet doesn’t even know how to write. The rich couple fostered Sufen and supported her to pursue higher education, only for the hope that after graduation the intelligent Sufen will marry Yuanming and help the family. After graduating from girls’ high school, however, Sufen resents her fate and secretly objects the idea of marrying the dumb Yuanming. She thinks to herself, “If I comply with their [foster parents’] wish and marry

⁶⁷ Wu Mansha, “Liming le Dongya,” *Nanfang* 154 (June 15, 1942), 31.

⁶⁸ While most scholars of Wu Mansha’s wartime popular romance pointed out that his works were replete with the dominate ideology of “friendship between Japan and China,” they failed to identify the fact that Wu did write about the negative aspect of the War. Scholars’ examples see Huang Mei-e, “Cong ‘richang shenghuo’dao ‘xingya shengzhan’.”

Yuanming, we will become puppet husband and wife. How can I marry him and sacrifice my happiness?”⁶⁹ On the other hand, she still wants to practice filial piety to her foster parents by fulfilling their wish and marrying this “good-natured and innocent fiancé;” otherwise she could be punished by Heaven for ungratefulness.⁷⁰ The narrative of the novel in the last installment of serialization ends somewhat abruptly at the moment when Sufen was baffled, lying in bed and hoped to dream her little sister who was sold to a rich family for paying Sufen’s medical bills when they were both young.

The dilemma of free love and filial piety is solved when the serialized novel was published in book form in July 1942. The author added a new finale to the novel by “using the color of contemporary era to satisfy the needs of wartime entertainment.”⁷¹ In the new finale the responsibility of the nation is superior to the obligation in family. Continuing the baffled situation in the original ending, Sufen in the new finale laments: even though woman is obligated to “produce second generation little citizens,” marriage should still be based on husband and wife who have comparable ability.⁷² She then incidentally saw a news article about volunteer soldiers and nurses and has an epiphany that she must volunteer to be nurse in the battlefield in this “Greater East Asian War of establishing [new society], an era when Taiwanese youth should rise to devote to the nation.”⁷³ Her foster father, originally insisted on Sufen’s marrying Yuanming, after hearing her patriotic resolution, agrees and says, “Sufen! Father is very happy that you are patriotic. I cannot frustrate your patriotic passion in today’s national mobilization. I

⁶⁹ Wu Mansha, “Liming zhi ge,” *Fengyue bao* 122 (January 19, 1941), 20.

⁷⁰ Wu Mansha, “Liming zhi ge,” *Fengyue bao* 123 (February 1, 1941), 24.

⁷¹ Wu Mansha, *Liming zhi ge* (Taipei: Qianwei, 1998), 14.

⁷² *Ibid*, 241.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 242.

agree with you! You must go.”⁷⁴ The war comes to her rescue and Sufen thus is temporarily relieved from the pressure of marrying someone who is neither her choice nor her match, while she could still maintain to be a filial (foster) daughter. It seems the only way to solve one’s personal problem is to voluntarily participate in the grand narrative of the nation.

In comparison, while war brings Sufen epiphany and solves her dilemma, the cause of her problem, Yuanming, is also enlightened and transformed by an almost supernatural power, that is, love. In other words, *war* is a *deus ex machina* that solves all the impasses of the female protagonist Sufen, while in comparison *love* plays a similar role in the male character Yuanming’s 元明 story. At the end of the new finale, the originally illiterate Yuanming becomes able to write letters and read books such as *Introduction to World Literature*, *A Night in China*, and *Wheat and Soldiers*, because he “ferently loves” Sufen and wants to be her match.⁷⁵ Romantic love, in this case, can cure any congenital defect and enlighten the retarded. Moreover, love in fact enlightens Yuanming about nothing but Japanese nationalism and the urgency of war, given the fact that his reading list includes *Wheat and Soldiers* (*Mai yu bingdui* 麥與兵隊, or *Mugi to heitai* 麦と兵隊, 1938), one of the quintessential war literature about the war in China written by Hino Ashihei 火野葦平 (1907-1960). Interestingly, Yuanming supports Sufen’s decision of volunteering to be nurse in battlefield, while he seems to remain at home. In this case, woman seems to engage in the war machine more actively because, perhaps, her problem could only be solved by the supreme public good—i.e., the holy war.

Another example of the War as the *deus ex machina* that changes the imperial subjects’ love life is Wu Mansha’s play entitled “Father’s Diary” (*Fuqin de riji* 父親的日記), written in

⁷⁴ Wu Mansha, *Liming zhi ge*, 245.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 247.

Minnan dialect and was published in *The South* from May 15 to July 15, 1943. In this play, Xiuhua 秀華, an eighteen-year-old girl, considers herself “a modern Japanese woman” who is capable of anything her elder brother Zhinan 志南 can do.⁷⁶ She is in love with Yixin 一新, Zhinan’s best friend who has already signed up for Volunteer Soldier. Zhinan and Xiuhua’s abusive mother Ah-kuai 阿快 is anything but a wise wife and conscientious mother: she despises her husband because he fails his business; she adheres to “old feudalism” and requests Zhinan to have a concubine. However, Zhinan claims that “we are imperial subjects of Great Empire of Japan and we practice monogamy” and refuses his mother’s inappropriate request.⁷⁷ Unable to change her son’s mind, Ah-kuai then decides to ruin Xiuhua’s love life by disapproving Yixin’s marriage proposal. She taunts her adult children, “I am your mother, I have a mother’s right...I gave birth to Xiuhua and I’d rather marry her off to become a concubine!”⁷⁸ Knowing her mother is too stubborn to change, Xiuhua painfully separates with Yixin. Meanwhile, Zhinan found his father’s diary after he died and reveals the reason of his father’s failure. In the diary the father detailed how he was cheated and oppressed by the malicious British when doing business in Malay, one of British colonies. The father not only asked Zhinan and Yixin to conform with national policy of advancing South and be aware of the cunning British; what’s more important is that all “East Asian nations” must “unite and revenge” to “cleanse the shame of we Greater East Asian nations.”⁷⁹ After hearing Zhinan reads her husband’s diary, Ah-kuai unexpectedly comes to realize her fault of despising her husband and regret what she has done to Xiuhua. She

⁷⁶ Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 176 (June 1, 1943), 25.

⁷⁷ While indeed *Kôminka* movement aimed to transform Taiwanese to become Japanese imperial subjects, monogamy was certainly not a policy of the movement. Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 176, 28.

⁷⁸ Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 178 (July 1, 1943), 28.

⁷⁹ Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 179 (July 15, 1943), 30.

vows to “become a new person from today” and asks Yixin to marry Xiuhua.⁸⁰ The wartime ideology in this case mysteriously transforms an old feudalistic mind that is the obstacle of free love. The happy ending of the love story of Yixin, a good imperial subject who volunteers to join the Army, and Xiuhua, a modern imperial woman, is bestowed by the Greater East Asian discourse and the War.

Beyond romantic love, the love of nation is played out in “Father’s Diary” by placing everyone in the play as a cog in the Great Empire of Japan who devotes himself to help the Great Empire build the Greater East Asian Prosperity Sphere. Zhinan even has to declare his identity as “an imperial subject of Great Empire of Japan” in order to refuse the “feudalistic” idea of having a concubine. When his feudalistic mother was transformed mysteriously by the call to arm of Greater East Asian nations’ solidarity, Zhinan at the end of the play also decided to leave his wife, go to “the South” and become a useful cog of the Empire.⁸¹ The trajectory of national identity of the characters in Wu’s wartime literary works thus changes from a utopia (that is, non-China and non-Taiwan) in *Peach Blossom River*, to a Chinese national’s collaboration with Japan to save East Asia in *Dawn of East Asia*, and eventually to a definite imperial subject of the Great Empire of Japan in the later work “Father’s Diary.” The change of the object of patriotic passion in different works, furthermore, demonstrates the “linguistic power struggle” of Sinophone writing in the Japanese colony, Taiwan.

Conclusion: Sinophone Popular Romance in Wartime Taiwan

⁸⁰ Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 179, 31.

⁸¹ Interestingly, Zhinan’s mother’s transformation is more like enlightenment in modernization project via the wartime ideology. Wu Mansha, “Fuqin de riji,” *Nanfang* 179, 32.

When discussing Chinese literatures and cultures in various parts of the world, Shu-mei Shih proposes the concept of “Sinophone” and suggests that, “Sinictic-language cultures and communities outside China as well as those ethnic communities in China where Sinitic languages are either forcefully imposed or willingly adopted.” Shih primarily considers the Sinophone in terms of “linguistic power struggle” and claims the Sinophone locates at the site “wherever various Sinitic languages are spoken on the margins of China and Chineseness.”⁸² Wu Mansha’s Sinophone writing was indeed written on the margin of Chineseness given the fact that he produced his Chinese works outside China proper; what’s more, it was also written from the margin of the Japanese Empire, for his writing an marginal, “outdated” and dubious language of the enemy in the Japanese Empire during wartime. Wu and the Sinophone community who engaged in writing Chinese, be it classical or vernacular, in *Wind and Moon* as well as in *The South*, therefore, needed to prove that writing Chinese during the *Kôminka* movement, which demands all Sinitic languages vanish from public as well as domestic domains, was justifiable. The linguistic power struggle of *Hanwen* 漢文/*Hanyu* 漢語/*Huawen* 華文/*Huayu* 華語 in the midst of “purifying national language movement” (*Kokugo junsei undô* 国語純正運動) asks the question: Are Sinitic languages a reliable means to propagate Japanese wartime ideology?⁸³

The problematics of writing in Sinitic languages during the wartime should be understood by the language policy in the colony that considered Japanese language as the spiritual blood of Japanese people and the essence of Japanese national polity (*kokutai* 国体). Thus one of the main

⁸² Shu-mei Shih, “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production,” in *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 36-40.

⁸³ The Sinitic languages (including classical Chinese and vernacular Chinese) were called by various names during the wartime: *Hanwen*/*Hanyu* /*Huawen*/*Huayu*. Although each may contain slightly different connotations, they all referred to the language originated from the China proper. For example, see Jian Hesheng, “Juantou yu,” *Fengyue bao* 82.83 (March 31, 1939), 2.

goals of *Kôminka* movement is to transform Taiwanese people to becoming Japanese imperial subject by banning Sinitic languages and implanting the “national language” in order to “transfuse” the Japanese spiritual blood to Taiwanese people.⁸⁴ Thus writers such as Wu Mansha who wrote in Sinitic languages rather than Japanese language may not possess the “essence of Japanese national polity” and hence were not qualified to propagate the Great Empire of Japan and its wartime ideology. How did they change this situation?

This question should be approached by the politics of various languages in prewar Taiwan. In fact, a language did not automatically contain the ideology or nationalism of its country of origin. When studying Japanese education in colonial Taiwan, Chen Pei-feng summarizes that there were two purposes of learning Japanese at school: assimilation of civilization (*bunmei* 文明) and assimilation of nation (*minzoku* 民族). Chen argues that some Taiwanese people studied Japanese language in order to assimilate with the Japanese nation, while others did it for acquiring civilization—in this case, Western modernization, brought by the Japanese colonial governance. The latter group of Taiwanese people aimed at the equality between Taiwanese and Japanese because the Japanese colonial government refused to abolish the laws that considered Taiwanese people as inferior due to the lack of modernization. Some of them even harbored anti-Japanese sentiment.⁸⁵ On the other hand, while Sinitic languages sound like a plausible candidate that could be used for anti-Japanese purpose since the language of the “fatherland” should contain Chinese nationalism, it was not true in colonial Taiwan. There were still two groups of Sinitic writing intellectuals in prewar Taiwan: one wrote modern vernacular literature such as fiction, “new poetry,” and prose essays, while the other wrote classical

⁸⁴ Chen Pei-feng “*Tonghua*” *de tongchuang yimeng: Rizhi shiqi Taiwan de yuyan zhengce, jindaihua yu rentong*, translated by Wang Xingan and Fugeshi Junpei (Taipei: Maitian, 2006), 48-49.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 42-64.

literature such as classical poetry. The modern vernacular Chinese writers in the 1920s and the 1930s intended to use this modernized written language as a vehicle for acquiring and promoting modernity, just as the second group of Japanese writers used the colonizer's language. Similarly, this group of Chinese writers was more inclined to resist the colonial government. The classical Chinese writers, on the contrary, were actually often collaborators of the colonial government since the beginning of colonization, such as the famous traditional poet Xie Ruchuan 謝汝銓 (studio name Xueyu 雪漁, 1871-1953) who was an official in the Governor-General Office and the editor of classical poetry section of *Wind and Moon*.⁸⁶ In sum, while the intellectuals who wrote in Japanese were not necessarily collaborator of the colonial government, the Sinitic-language writers, especially writers of classical poetry, were more easily to mobilize for Japan's national policy.

Wu Mansha's wartime literature was even more intricate. He actually wrote vernacular Chinese for the purpose of modernization project, as shown in *Peach Blossom River*. However, unlike his 1920s and early 1930s predecessors in Taiwan, he did not write vernacular literature for elite readers but rather he wrote popular romance for average readers' consumption. What's more, his vernacular literature propagated the wartime ideology of the Japanese Empire. It almost seems that only by overemphasizing the propagandist messages such as "friendship between Japan and China" as well as "Greater East Asian solidarity" in his vernacular Chinese and Minnan dialect works could a Chinese alien like him survive and further gain cultural and political capitals in an literary field where Sinitic-languages were marginalized and under the threat of being demonized as the enemy's language. Probably in an attempt to secure the survival

⁸⁶ See Chen Pei-feng "Tonghua" *de tongchuang yimeng*, 370-372; Weng Sheng-feng, *Riju shiqi Taiwan xinjiu wenxue lunzheng xintan* (Taipei: Wunan, 2007), 202-217; Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang, "Introduction: Global Chinese Literature," in *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, 5.

of the Sinitic-writing (not Chinese nationalism), Wu and his colleagues in *Wind and Moon* strived to present the usefulness of the Sinitic languages and culture to the Great Empire of Japan. Similar to Taiwanese people's role in the wartime ideology as described in *Dawn of East Asia*, the Sinitic writing is designated to be a tool of Japanese Empire's "advance" in China. The reasoning is that since language is the tool of communication, Sinophone literature could be used to "communicate" (read: propagate) Japan's goodwill of China to Chinese people.⁸⁷ Taiwanese writers, being Chinese (in terms of ancestry) and Japanese (in terms of nationality) simultaneously, are most capable of this job. What is implied in this thinking is that, the target audience of the Sinophone writings from wartime Taiwan should be the readers in mainland China. Wu, being educated in China proper (thus acquired the most "authentic" Chinese) and now resided in Taiwan, presumably was the most qualified Sinophone writer to conduct the task of "communicating" Japan's goodwill of China. In this case Wu may be used as a "converted enemy" who speaks on behalf of Japanese Empire, *Dawn of East Asia* being the perfect example of this purpose.⁸⁸ Yet the imaginary readership in China proper might be merely too ideal to be true. Thus far we have very little, if any, clues about the impact of Wu's Sinophone propaganda popular romance in the imaginary target audiences of Chinese people. The ideal of using Sinitic languages as a tool of "communicating" Japanese wartime ideology to Chinese people was nothing but a collective self-hypnosis and self-deception in hindsight. What might best work for the author's propagandist intention would be the play "Father's Diary" written in Minnan dialect, since the majority of Taiwanese people, while some of them may be able to read vernacular

⁸⁷ Jian Hesheng, "Juantou yu," *Fengyue bao* 82.83, 2. The real author of this editorial note was in fact Wu Mansha according to his postwar biography. Wu claimed that almost all editorial notes signed by Jian Hesheng were actually ghostwritten by Wu himself. See Li Zongci ed., *Koshu lishi: Wu Mansha de feng yu yue*, 189.

⁸⁸ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, 11-12.

Chinese, could not comprehend the spoken vernacular that is based on Beijing dialect. The messages were only comprehensible when they were spoken and heard in local Sinophone communities, rather than written for and read in China proper. The incongruity of sound and graph in his Sinophone popular romance is another paradox of Wu's literature.

Through reading Wu Mansha's wartime popular romance and a play meticulously, we should conclude that the "dreams of the fatherland" mentioned in postwar remembrance is misleading. By utilizing romantic love stories, Wu's Sinitic writings in fact propagate the patriotism of the Great Empire of Japan. The ambivalent, ambiguous and paradoxical nature of his personal life story and writings may become the best tactics to survive either in the wartime colonial Taiwan or in the postwar Republic of China.

Chapter 3:

The Utopia of *Qing?*: Mu Rugai (1885-1961), Loyalism and Popular Romance in Wartime

Manchukuo

Introduction: A Loyalist in Manchukuo

The Republic of China and I are enemies.¹ 余與民國乃敵國也。

(Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥, *Zheng Xiaoxu Dairy*)

When Manchukuo was established in 1932 and the last Qing Emperor, Henry Aixin-Gioro Puyi (1908-67), was restored to the throne and became the Emperor of Great Manchukuo in 1934, some Qing *yimin* 遺民 (loyalists) were elated and felt empowered; their dream of resurrecting the perished Manchu dynasty which collapsed in 1911/1912 seemed to finally come true. Among them were Zheng Xiaoxu (1859-1938), the first Prime Minister of Manchukuo and an eminent supporter of Puyi, and Mu Rugai 穆儒丐, a less studied journalist and novelist in Manchuria.² These *yimin* celebrated the official ideology of *wangdao letu* 王道樂土 (*ôdô rakudô*, paradise of the kingly way) and believed that the establishment of Manchukuo and the restoration of Puyi were a rebirth of an ideal Confucian state.

Yimin, translated as “remnant subjects” and “loyalists,” are who “refuse to serve two dynasties” during dynastic transition. They are widely recognized as honorable for their loyalty

¹ Zheng Xiaoxu’s diary entry for January 18, 1918. Zheng Xiaoxu, *Zheng Xiaoxu riji*, ed. Lao Zude (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 1705. Lin Chih-hung’s book on Qing loyalists, *Mingguo nai diguo ye*, is entitled by quoting this diary entry from Zheng Xiaoxu. Lin Chih-hung, *Mingguo nai diguo ye: zhengzhi wenhua zhuanxing xia de Qing yimin* (Taipei: Lianjing, 2009).

² About Zheng Xiaoxu, his relationship with Puyi and his political activities in Manchukuo, see Lin Chih-hung, *Mingguo nai diguo ye*, 330-340.

and political integrity, especially the Song and Ming loyalists.³ The Qing loyalists who celebrated Manchukuo, however, were deemed to be traitorous for several reasons. First, and most obviously, Manchukuo was forged by Japanese militarists whose ambition of invading China had been proven to be treacherous; therefore, those who supported the “bogus” Manchukuo (*wei Manzhouguo* 偽滿洲國) were condemned as traitors. Secondly, Manchukuo was regarded by Qing loyalists as the revival of the Qing dynasty, while the Qing had been denounced as the epitome and source of China’s backwardness and weakness since the nineteenth century. A modern revolution was launched to rejuvenate and strengthen the Chinese nation by overturning the Qing.⁴ Manchukuo as the resurrection of the perished Qing, therefore, was denounced as a serious setback of China’s modernization and self-strengthening. What is more, as David Der-wei Wang points out, nationalism since its rise in the late nineteenth century began to challenge the loyalist’s idea of loyalty to one reign;⁵ instead of being loyal to one reign, modern Chinese citizens should be loyal to the Chinese nation-state en masse. Qing loyalists’ celebration of Manchukuo thus is traitorous not only because it supported the Japanese military invasion in China, but also because it opposed the modern concept of nationalism.

The literary productions in Manchukuo, consequently, were also criticized as traitorous. Even though not all writers in Manchukuo identified themselves as Qing loyalists, the charge of being traitorous is applied to Manchukuo literature as a whole. Modern scholars often explicitly

³ Wai-ye Li, “Introduction” to *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, ed. Wilt L. Idema, Wai-ye Li, and Ellen Widmer (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 5-6.

⁴ See Carles Prado-Fonts, “Beneath Two Red Banners: Lao She as a Manchu Writer in Modern China,” in Shu-mei Shih, Chien-Hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards ed., *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 356; Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 216.

⁵ David Der-wei Wang, *Hou yimin xiezuo: shijian yu jiyi de zhengzhi xue* (Taipei: Maitian, 2007), 33.

or implicitly adopt the Chinese nationalist ideology and endeavor to discern if a writer is a “traitor” or not. The paradigm of moral choices such as resistance and collaboration is often applied to the study of Manchukuo literature, similar to the study of Manchukuo history, as Prasenjit Duara pointed out.⁶ Because of the predetermined ideological leaning, most of the study on Manchukuo literature focuses on the resistant element (or the lack of it) in writers and writings. In order to pinpoint what is resistant and what is not, cultural policies of the “puppet state” are frequently foregrounded in pioneering researches, such as the treatises by Okada Hideki,⁷ Norman Smith,⁸ and Liu Xiaoli,⁹ respectively. Assuming a nationalistic (and sometimes moralistic) perspective, studying Manchukuo literature thus often furthers oversimplification. In order to study the psychological complexity and the intricate wartime mentality rather than assigning a certain political stand to a writer and his writings, this chapter goes beyond moral choices and instead scrutinizes the emotional landscape of the “puppet state” via popular romance, a genre specializing in *qing* 情 (translated as emotion, feeling, or love). By examining the articulation of love in political, psychological, and moral crisis during wartime, and discussing how private feeling is imagined, restructured, and positioned vis-à-vis politics, this chapter probes the interplay between the articulation of *qing* and the articulation (or the inability of articulation) of the war and wartime politics. The entangled relationships of private emotion and public politics suggest that the conception of nation is not monolithic as the studies from nationalistic (and moralistic) perspective would argue; instead, the meanings of “China” are

⁶ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 59.

⁷ Okada Hideki, *Bungaku ni miu “Manshūkoku” no isō* (Tokyo: Kenbun, 2000).

⁸ Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

⁹ Liu Xiaoli, *Yitai shikong zhong de jingsheng shijie: wei Manzhouguo wenxue yanjiu* (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008).

complex and sometimes contradictory. The case in point is Mu Rugai and his wartime popular romance.

Born into a middle class Manchu Plain Blue Banner (*Zhenglan qi* 正藍旗) family in Beijing in 1885, Mu Rugai was named Mu Duli (穆都哩、穆篤里). He later took Rugai or Gai 丐 as his penname and Liutian 六田 as his studio name. Mu's acquaintances also called him Chengong 辰公 because "Duli" means "Chen 辰" in Manchurian language.¹⁰ At the age of fifteen, Mu witnessed the disastrous Boxer Rebellion and the consequent foreign military intervention in Beijing in 1900. This incident alerted the weakened Qing government the necessity of reform and launched a Western-style high school for Manchu students, which Mu attended in 1903. He was later sent to Japan by the Qing government and studied History, Geography, Economics and Politics at Waseda University in Tokyo from 1905 to 1911. Through his study in Japan, Mu entertained the idea that constitutional monarchy such as Japan's Meiji Restoration would save China from doom.

Unfortunately, Mu's dream of strengthening the wretched Qing Empire did not last long. He earned his college degree from Waseda University in March and returned to China in April

¹⁰ Although Mu was quite famous from the 1920s to 1940s in Manchuria, his life and works draw little attention to scholars until 1989 when Japanese scholar Nagai Yûko (née Murata) published one of the first—and so far the most comprehensive—research on Mu. The reconstruction of Mu Rugai's life and works is based on the following essays: Nagai Yûko, "Manzu zuojia Mu Rugai de wenxue shengya," trans. by Sha Rina, *Minzu wenxue yanjiu* 2006/2, 163-170; Murata Yûko, "Hitotsu Manshû bunjin no kiseki—Mu Rugai to Shengjing shibao bungeiran," *Tôhō gakuhô* 61 (1989), 453-487; Zhang Juling, "Qingmo minchu qiren de jinghua xiaoshuo," *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 23 (Spring 1999), 100-106; Zhang Juling, "Xiangshan jianrui ying yu jingcheng bada hutong—Mu Rugai bixia minguo chunian Beijing qiren de beiqing," in *Beijing: Dushi xiangxiang yu wenhua jiyi* ed. David Der-wei Wang and Chen Pingyuan (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2005), 170-184; Zhang Juling, "Fengyun bianhuan shidai de qiji zhuojia Mu Rugai," *Manzu yanjiu* 2006/4, 103-116; Zhang Juling, "Quzu dalu zhihou—tantan minguo wentan sanda Manzu xiaoshuo jia," *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* (January 2009), 54-64; Guan Jixin, "Fengyu ruhui shu qizu—ye tan Rugai xiaoshuo Beijing," *Manzu yanjiu* 2007/2, 103-111.

1911. He was taking an examination and getting ready to take office in the Qing court when the Xinhai Revolution broke out in October 1911. The Qing Empire collapsed soon and the new Republic of China was established in January 1912. All of a sudden Mu not only lost his chance to serve the Qing court but also his “country” and his Manchu identity. He later referred to the Chinese Republican Revolution as “terrifying news” and “extremely strange events.”¹¹

Losing his planned career and not wanting to identify with the Republican government, Mu, implicitly assuming the loyalist identity, left Beijing for good and moved to Manchuria in 1916. He undoubtedly enjoyed a flourishing career as a journalist and novelist in Manchuria, which later became Manchukuo, the nominal Manchu state of his “fatherland.” In July 1941, Manchu Writer’s Association (*Manzhou wenyijia xiehui* 滿洲文藝家協會) was organized by Manchukuo’s General Affairs State Council (*Guowu yuan* 國務院); Mu was among the committee members of this Association, which “provides the government with opinion and consultation regarding literary policy.” Okada suggests that this Association was “mobilized to help the Holy War and national defense.”¹² In sum, Mu was not only a well-known journalist and novelist in Manchuria; he was also an influential figure in literary politics during the Second Sino-Japanese War.¹³ One would assume his wartime writings reflect the official ideology of Manchukuo. However, upon closer inspection, one would find that not all of his writings demonstrate the same ideological leaning. The popular romance, a genre of *qing*, in fact speaks a

¹¹ Mu Rugai, “Xusheng zizhuan,” *Shengjing shibao*, September 13, 1922.

¹² Okada, *Bungaku ni miu “Manshûkoku” no isô*, 36-37.

¹³ Mu’s popularity as a journalist and novelist could be observed by his continuous publication of essays, translations and novels in *Shengjing shibao* 盛京時報 (Shengjing News) from 1920s to 1944, where he worked as editor-in-chief of literary column. He was mocked by Gu Ding, another leading figure of Manchukuo literary scene, as “Super great writer;” this also confirmed his power in the literary productions in Manchukuo. See Shizhizi, “Xianhua wentan,” *Mingming* 1:3 (May 1937), 28-29.

different language from the propagandist language in Mu's other genres of writings such as his editorials.¹⁴

Mu's wartime popular romance in fact prompts questions about how popular romance deals with private emotion, feeling, and sentiment under a "militarist fascist" regime.¹⁵ How does the author's cultural and political identity as a Qing loyalist inform his conception of the Chinese term *qing*? Does Mu's treatment of *qing* comply with or contradict the official ideology of Manchukuo? Could he find Manchukuo a utopia, as the official propaganda would claim, of feeling, emotion and love? By focusing on Mu's wartime novella "Xinhun bei 新婚别" (Farewell at a Wedding, 1942) with reference to relevant texts such as Mu's other wartime novels, translations, and essays, this chapter probes the mentality of a Qing loyalist in wartime Manchukuo.

I. Paradise Broken: Post-Apocalyptic Republican Revolution

In most of his popular romances produced and published during the Second Sino-Japanese War, Mu exhibited a conspicuous interest in writing about *qing* in chaotic and apocalyptic times in Chinese history, although excluding the current war. The narratives about *qing* in chaotic times include, for example, the love story of Emperor Ai of Han and his homosexual love interest Dong Xian during the political turmoil in Western Han in "Qing kuang

¹⁴ For example, Mu penned an editorial entitled "Ri Man Hua sanguo zhi zheren fendan" (On the mutual responsibility of Japan, Manchukuo and China), *Shengjing shibao*, November 9, 1940. In this editorial Mu demanded that Japan, Manchukuo and China (the pro-Japan government in Nanjing) should collaborate in economy and other affairs in order to establish a new world order.

¹⁵ The militarist and fascist characteristics of Manchukuo and its literature are pointed out by Prasenjit Duara and Shi Shu, respectively. See Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 60; Shi Shu, " 'Da Dongya wenxue' zai 'Manzhougou'," *Wenxue, Wenhua yu shibian: disanjie guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji wenxue zu*, ed. Lee Fong-Mao (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhesou, 2002), 589-631.

ji 情狂記” (The Story of Obsession, 1939) and Zhao Wuniang’s trek of *qing* in the great famine in Eastern Han in “Pipa ji 琵琶記” (The Story of the Lute, 1940). The most turbulent of all times in Mu’s narratives of *qing*, however, is the Xinhai Revolution (1911) and the consequent civil wars fought by warlords in the Republican era, which Mu would bracket as “Republican Revolution.” The Republican Revolution in “Farewell at a Wedding,” captioned as *aiqing xiaoshuo* 哀情小說 (fiction of tragic love) and serialized in one of the most well-circulated popular magazines in Manchukuo, *Qilin* 麒麟 (Unicorn), signifies the beginning of a series of meaningless wars that separate lovers and send young men on the road to fight for illegitimate warlords. The Republican Revolution was regarded by Mu as the quintessential war of destruction, chaos and crisis of unprecedented magnitude.

1. Nostalgia and Resentment of a Qing Loyalist

Mu’s perception of the Republican Revolution in his popular romance is seen through the lens of loyalism that prescribes a nostalgic look at the past and a resentful attitude towards the Revolution. In order to magnify the destruction, chaos and crisis caused by the Revolution, Mu first of all constructs a contrasting image of a perfect past, i.e., a flawless Qing dynasty, with nostalgic coloring. In the Qing dynasty, especially the late Qing period that the author himself had lived through, the mountains were greener, streets were cleaner, the weather was nicer and crops grew better. In this harmonious universe, people’s lives were steadier, moral codes were observed like people’s innate nature, and people loved each other properly. The narrator in “Farewell at a Wedding” claims that back then, “it was almost like living in heaven” where

“adultery, robbery, evil-doing and prurience did not exist in people’s dictionary.”¹⁶ In another wartime novel by Mu, the narrator even asserts that the Guangxu and Xuantong reigns of the last two emperors of Qing dynasty before its fall were comparable to the legendary (and mythical) golden age of ancient sage kings Yao and Shun.¹⁷ Late Qing in Mu’s formulation, as opposed to common criticism that treats it as the source of China’s impotence, was the perfect age in Chinese history in which ideal morality and politics were in practice; modernization on Qing terms had already begun in areas such as planning on a constitutional monarchy and modernizing education and military systems based on Western and Japanese models. In short, it was an age of the culmination of Chinese civilization. Late Qing in Mu’s wartime writings is in fact the “High Qing.”¹⁸

The “terrifying” and “extremely strange” Republican Revolution, unexpectedly and unfortunately, ruined that perfect universe. The mountains become scorched, garbage is seen everywhere on the streets and people lost their means of living. All kinds of crime—from burglary to adultery—are committed because people are poverty-stricken and no longer know how to love each other properly and behave morally. The male protagonist Zhao Wenying 趙文英 in “Farewell at a Wedding,” who was originally a proud member of Royal Guards of the Qing court and now merely a lower rank soldier in warlord Feng Guozhang’s army, laments, “It is a time of destruction now.”¹⁹ “Even though the morality used to be as firm as iron walls,” after the Revolution, Zhao thinks, “it couldn’t prevent erosion by hunger.”²⁰ Mu in an essay characterizes

¹⁶ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:6 (June 1942), 61.

¹⁷ Rugai, “Fuzhao chuangye ji,” (33) *Shengjing shibao*, August 23, 1937.

¹⁸ Zhang Juling suggests that because Mu lived and was educated during the reform of Guangxu reign, he considered the late Qing as a golden age of Chinese politics when China was about to modernize and rise. See Zhang Juling, “Fengyun bianhuan shidai de qiji zhuojia Mu Rugai,” 104.

¹⁹ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 1:8 (January 1942), 42.

²⁰ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:6, 61.

the Republican Revolution to his date in the late 1930s as “thirty years of turmoil and dispersion” (*luanli sanshinian* 亂離三十年).²¹ Republican Revolution, in Mu’s perspective, did not modernize and strengthen China as the revolutionaries would claim; instead, it causes political, psychological, and moral crisis. It turns the once paradisiacal late Qing into a “new” China of havoc, exile, disillusion and moral decadence. Human hearts are disturbed and deviate from normality in this post-apocalyptic time, thus a redefinition of *qing* is needed. This is in sharp contrast with the paradise-like Qing dynasty, when the social and moral order was unimpaired, *qing* was intact, and the universe operated smoothly.

The sharp contrast between the post-apocalyptic Republican era and the paradise-like late Qing is induced by loyalist nostalgia. Nostalgia, as Mieke Bal reminds us, is a form of memory that is tainted by specific coloring of the past. The past remembered through the lens of nostalgia is romanticized.²² Indeed, the rosy picture of late Qing remembered in Mu’s wartime writings seems to be ultra-idealized and therefore unrealistic. It is only through the ultra-idealization that Mu and his characters could vent their resentment and rebuke for the events that destroyed the perfect past, a “picturesque,” “idyllic past that never was.”²³ The rosier the late Qing was, the more dismal the Republican Revolution is. What is unspoken in Mu’s writings is an urge of returning to the past, returning to the High Qing tradition that is the epitome and pinnacle of Confucianism and Chinese civilization. This urge to return is a nostalgic regression that defies the unilinear progression of time, which is regarded as “modern” since the evolutionist temporal

²¹ Gai, “Suigan lu” (48), *Shengjing shibao*, April 27, 1939.

²² Mieke Bal, “Introduction” to *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Mieke Bal ed. (Hanover and London: Dartmouth College, 1999), xi.

²³ *Ibid*, xi.

perception introduced to China in the late nineteenth century.²⁴ The issue of time and the urge to return to the past had always obsessed loyalists in Chinese history.²⁵ What makes Mu's case more problematic is that when the modernization project in the Republican era disregards the temporal perception of treating time as cyclic as that in the imperial past,²⁶ his wish to regress is not only untimely but also goes against the conception of time in the newly minted democratic nation-state—that is, the Republic of China, and consequently resists the now widely-accepted progress of modernity.²⁷

2. *From Anti-Anti-Manchu to Anti-Revolution*

The loyalist nostalgia and resentment in Mu's wartime writings are informed by his personal experience and the historical context in which he was situated. On the personal level, Mu's Manchu identity as well as the anxiety of and aversion to anti-Manchu movement in the late Qing contribute to his pro-Qing and anti-Revolution sentiment. The Manchu identity was partly constructed by the bannerman system, or Eight Banners, a military organization that sustained the Qing Empire from the late seventeenth to early twentieth century. This system required all Manchus, including men and women, adults and children, to be placed in one of the

²⁴ Bal points out that “regressive” is another characteristic of nostalgia. Mieke Bal, “Introduction” to *Acts of Memory*, xi.

²⁵ Zhao Yuan, *Ming Qing zhiji shidafu yanjiu* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 373-401.

²⁶ Lin Chih-hung maintains that the Qing loyalists' problem with time has to do with the end of the concept of “dynastic cycle.” See Lin Chih-hung, *Mingguo nai diguo ye*, 369.

²⁷ While “modernity” is often treated as a Western product that is imported to China to save China from itself, Mu had complex relationships with both the West and the modern. On the one hand, he admitted that Western ideas such as constitutional monarchy could strengthen the Qing Empire, and the Guanxu Emperor who attempted to implement constitutional monarchy was one of the sage kings in his mind. On the other hand, he opposed to the “modernized” republic or democratic polities.

Eight Banners, serving in the military, being a “slave” (*nucai* 奴才) to the court,²⁸ and live in garrisons separated from civilians.²⁹ Pamela Kyle Crossley argues that, it was through bannerman system and garrisons “each individual Manchu located himself within the socio-natural world, and through which he linked himself to his present as well as his past.”³⁰ The bannermen, suggested by Crossley, “enjoyed, until the middle nineteenth century, the privilege of being the perceived foundation upon which the state was built.”³¹ The privilege and pride of Manchus constitute the ethnic conscious of the bannerman Mu and his characters in “Farewell at a Wedding.” Because the Manchu ethnicity is overtly linked with the Qing court within and beyond the garrisons, both Manchu and non-Manchu (Han Chinese in most cases) would utilize the Manchuness as a means to conceptualize and package their political ideologies such as pro-Qing sentiment or the anti-Qing movement. In the revolutionary camp during the late Qing, for example, anti-Qing sentiment was often articulated by anti-Manchu slogans.

Mu’s encounter with anti-Manchu sentiments was beyond verbal assaults, however. During his sojourn in Tokyo when studying at Waseda University, Mu underwent not only psychological pressure but also physical threats from Han Chinese revolutionaries who advocated the slogan “Expel Manchus, Restore (Han) Chinese.” According to one of his autobiographical novels *Xusheng zizhuan* 徐生自傳 (Autobiography of Mr. Xu, 1922), the Chinese revolutionaries in Tokyo felt like the Manchus had “stolen” their nation and caused the crisis in China. In order to save China, as they would argue, these young revolutionaries have to kill the Manchus. Some three or four hundred Manchu students in Tokyo became the targets of

²⁸ Manchu officials considered themselves as the “slave” or “obedient servant” to the emperor, who was the “master” of the Manchu people, a legacy of tribal history of the Manchus.

²⁹ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990)

³⁰ Ibid, 34.

³¹ Ibid, 16.

assassination and assault; they had to evacuate to countryside around late 1905 to early 1906. Although at the end none of the Manchu students were physically hurt, the conflicts between Han Chinese and Manchus had already made an immense impact on Mu's perception of the (Han Chinese) Republican Revolution. He mocked these revolutionary youth in Tokyo in this way, "It seems that they could be masterminds of revolution only by cursing 'Manchu Slave!'"³² The horror of being violently attacked by the young Han Chinese revolutionaries was, for Mu, transferred to distrust and apprehension of Republican Revolution at large.

In addition to the ethnic identity shared among the minority of the Manchus, Mu's anti-Revolution sentiment could also be understood within the context of a generation of Qing loyalists. Sharing similar thoughts with Mu, many Han Chinese literati in fact considered that the fall of Qing was not only the fall of a dynasty, but, more importantly, the collapse of moral traditions, political system and cultural world which were based on Confucianism. They argued that the Republican polity's adopting democracy and renouncing the monarchy disturbs the Confucian moral hierarchy that is structured by the Three Normative Relationships (*sangang* 三綱) of ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife. Because the relationship of ruler (in imperial China it was the emperor) and subject is the basis for the moral authority of all interpersonal relationships, the collapse of ruler-subject moral principle (due to the Revolution and democracy) led to the degeneration of all moral principles. Worse still, the civilization built on these Confucian moral principles was also in jeopardy.³³ Thus Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (Ku Hung-ming, 1857-1928) asserts that he is loyal to the Qing because the imperial monarchy, even though with all its shortcomings and abuses, could still maintain the moral standards for the masses; his loyalty is in fact "not merely a loyalty to the Imperial House under whose beneficent

³² Mu Rugai, "Xusheng zizhuan," *Shengjing shibao*, September 13, 1922.

³³ Lin Chih-hung, *Mingguo nai diguo ye*, 183-190.

rule” his father and forefathers have lived, his loyalty in this case is a loyalty “to the cause of the civilisation of the Chinese race.”³⁴

Mu’s concerns that Confucian civilization was in jeopardy, combined with his ultra-idealization of Qing, resonate with Gu Hongming and like-minded loyalists’ cultural conservatism. This is largely due to their reluctance and inability to shift their political identity from being subject of an empire to citizen of a modern nation-state.³⁵ In order to redress the moral decadence in post-apocalyptic Republican Revolution, Mu, instead of suggesting a restoration of imperial monarchy, prescribes that the moral impetus of genuine *qing* could be the remedy for social and moral disorder.

II. Genuine *Qing*: the Remedy for Chaos

In order to understand how Mu constructed the idea that genuine *qing* could straighten out the post-apocalyptic disorder in Republican Revolution, we should ask the following questions: How did Mu construct the meaning of *qing*? Why could genuine *qing* resolve the social and moral crisis in the chaotic Republican Revolution? How can one position private *qing* vis-à-vis public needs?

Before examining the articulation of *qing* in Mu’s wartime popular romances, a preliminary explanation of the term *qing* should help disclose its complexity. First, *qing* could

³⁴ In “Jacobin China,” Gu Hongming suggested that in Europe, “the State and the Church are two separate institutions, whereas in China they are one. The Church in Europe is the institution that is responsible for the maintenance of order. But in China the State is responsible for both, for the morality of the people as well as for the maintenance of order. The source and fountainhead from which the Church in Europe derives its authority to make the people moral is—God. But in China the source and fountainhead from which the State derives its authority to make the people moral is—the Emperor.” Ku Hung-ming, *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1912), xxiii-xxvii.

³⁵ Lin Chih-hung, *Mingguo nai diguo ye*, 4.

not find an easy English translation because it is highly ambiguous, as Halvor Eifring suggests, “much more than the English term *emotion*.”³⁶ In various historical moments *qing* develops different meanings, and “old and new senses of *qing* often co-occur in the same historical periods and even in the very same texts.”³⁷ Up until the late Ming, most of the meanings of *qing* had been formed and explored; the late imperial discourses of *qing* such as cult of *qing* and Neo-Confucian debates on *qing* still inform modern popular romance writers like Mu. *Qing*, in various contexts, could mean basic instincts, emotions, feelings, passions, love, romantic sentiments and sensitivity, among others.³⁸ Because *qing* is never clearly defined nor is it confined to one meaning, Mu has ample space to formulate his brand of *qing*.³⁹

1. *Qing: From Passion for Humanity to Conjugal Love*

In various occasions, Mu conceptualizes *qing* both in a general and in more specific senses. To begin with, Mu, in a general sense, treats *qing* as positive feelings towards humanity as a whole. In many of Mu’s writings, *qing* is what makes human beings capable of doing good deeds because *qing* as the passion for humanity would enlighten people to care about other people, become compassionate, and take action to make the world better. *Qing*, in sum, is the

³⁶ Halvor Eifring, “Introduction” to *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁸ Eifring, “Introduction” to *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, 11; Halvor Eifring, “The Psychology of Love in *The Story of the Stone*,” in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, 276; Martin Huang, “Sentiments of Desire: Thought on the Cult of Qing in Ming-Qing Literature,” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 20 (Dec., 1998), 153.

³⁹ Martin W. Huang suggests that because Chinese concepts such as *qing* and *yu* 欲 were never clearly defined, “everyone in late imperial China appears to have had a sense of what these terms meant in daily discourse.” So is the case of Mu who must have been immersed in the various discourses of *qing* from late imperial literature. See Martin W. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 2.

origin of morality. On the other hand, people who lack *qing* do not have empathy for others, could never do good to care for and benefit other people and thus are impossible to be regarded as virtuous. In Mu's "The Story of the Lute," for example, the narrator chastises Cai Yong, the male character who abandons his wife Zhao Wuniang and his parents in order to marry the daughter of a highest rank official in the capital for the advantage of his personal political career. Cai Yong is criticized for his selfishness and lack of passion for humanity. His heartlessness is manifested not only in abandoning his family but also in that he does not sympathize with the people in his hometown who suffer great famine that causes heavy casualties. The narrator states, "Human beings do not maintain their lives only by eating. Indeed there are people who wait for the night to fall after being fed, who care about no one but themselves. ... It is because they have no passion (*reqing* 熱情). ... They think everyone is selfish because they themselves are selfish. ... Even animals could die for *qing*, let alone human beings who have the most abundant feelings/passion/love (*qinggan* 情感). The most sincere, most intense love is a mother's missing her son and a wife's missing her husband."⁴⁰ In this case, *qing* is altruistic, compassionate, and benevolent love; it encompasses the love of parent and child, husband and wife, as well as of all human beings. From this compassionate and altruistic love people can cultivate themselves to become morally good. In "The Story of Obsession," the narrator contends, "[The space between heaven and earth is a field of passion (*qingchang* 情場) and [the time from] ancient to modern is a history of passion (*qingshi* 情史). Human beings who have no passion (*wuqing* 無情) cannot find a place in this world. Therefore loyal ministers and righteous men, filial sons and chaste wives could live eternal life."⁴¹ In other words, all the virtues such as loyalty, righteousness,

⁴⁰ Rugai, "Pipaji" (89), *Shengjing shibao*, July 26, 1940.

⁴¹ Gai, "Qing kuang ji" (1), *Shengjing shibao*, January 12, 1939.

filial piety and chastity are derived from the passion for humanity. *Qing* in this regard is not only concerns for others' wellbeing; more importantly, it is an intense feeling that motivates men and women enthusiastically to transform the world by passion and love.

This formulation, in fact, is not entirely Mu's invention. His idea of *qing* as passion for humanity and thus the moral impetus for all virtues resonates with late imperial literati who considered that *qing* could generate moral behavior. Martin W. Huang in his study on the discourses of *qing* in the late Ming points out that Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646), one of the most important thinkers in the cult of *qing*, claimed that *qing* is a supreme human value; "a person of *qing* is capable of heroic actions." Feng worshiped *qing* "with a fervor that was almost religious."⁴² The late Qing writer Wu Jianren's 吳趸人 (1866-1910) *Henhai* 恨海 (Sea of Regret, 1906), one of the precedents of modern popular romance, is less enthusiastic about *qing*. Nevertheless, in his study on *Sea of Regret*, Patrick Hanan suggests that *qing* in this novel means all kinds of emotions or passion; "[w]hen properly applied, it functions as moral passion, the psychological stimulus for virtuous action in a Confucian sense."⁴³ Mu's conception of *qing* is similar and yet different from the late imperial literati in several ways.

First of all, Mu may agree with Wu Jianren about the moral agency of *qing*; nevertheless, unlike Wu who saw *qing* as possibly negative and hence a need to "properly apply" it, Mu's *qing* only refers to positive feelings. Comparisons with the Neo-Confucian discourses of *qing* could further foreground the moral positiveness of Mu's genuine *qing*. Neo-Confucian conceptions of *qing* treats it as "basic instinct" that is morally suspect and hence emphasizes its negative

⁴² Huang, "Sentiments of Desire," 160-163.

⁴³ Patrick Hanan, *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 191.

connotations due to possible consequences of desire, lust, and excess.⁴⁴ While it may be at odds with *li* 禮 (ritual property) and *li* 理 (cosmic and moral order) because *qing* was regarded as spontaneous and thus may “overflow” the moral and ritual boundaries in Neo-Confucian and Wu’s conceptions,⁴⁵ in Mu’s formulation genuine *qing* is the passion/feelings/love that corresponds to morality; or better, it is intrinsically moral. Secondly, and more importantly, in a more general sense his *qing* may function like Feng Menglong’s conception—that is, the origin from which all virtues derive, Mu in fact would narrow down to a specific kind of *qing* that is the most genuine and thus most powerful in cultivating people’s morality. The love between husband and wife sanctioned by marriage, Mu would argue, is the most influential in straightening out the moral decadence in post-apocalyptic times. Passion (in the general sense) thus provides moral foundation for conjugal love (in the specific sense) to become the driving force of remedying moral decadence for humanity.

In “Farewell at a Wedding,” Mu specifically singles out conjugal love from all kinds of *qing* as the archetypal moral impetus. Indeed, *qing* might be something human beings are born with, but it needs the legitimacy of marriage to initiate the natural flow of feelings/passion/love and endorse its properness. In “Farewell at a Wedding,” only the love between husband and wife in a morally sanctioned marriage could be considered as the most sincere form of love and hence the most powerful moral passion. By morally sanctioned marriage Mu refers to a marriage arranged by the elder members in the society who have higher moral hierarchy, as opposed to “free marriage” in which man and woman choose their spouse at their own free will, a concept

⁴⁴ Eifring, “Introduction” to *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, 27; Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China*, 26-32.

⁴⁵ Eifring, “Introduction” to *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, 5; Eifring, “The Psychology of Love in *The Story of the Stone*,” 276.

imported from the West into China in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁶ For example, the marriage of Zhao Wenying and Fenggu 鳳姑 in “Farewell at a Wedding” is arranged by an old man who has good reputation in their village; therefore their love for each other is most genuine and morally excellent. In a similar vein, Mu argues in a note to his translation of a French detective story that, even though Western young people have freedom in choosing their own spouse, parents still have rights to approve or disapprove it. Mu says, “People who don’t follow their parents’ advice and marry recklessly would end up with failing their marriage.”⁴⁷ Thus, in Mu’s view, whether in the East or in the West, the moral hierarchy plays an important role in sanctioning marriage and approving the conjugal love derived from it.

The idea of the artificial institution of (arranged) marriage having the authority to grant the existence of (supposedly spontaneous) love may sound somewhat questionable; nevertheless, many people in the late Qing and early Republican period still accepted it as common in Chinese tradition. Even Hu Shih 胡適(1891-1962), one of the leaders in New Culture Movement in the 1910s and 1920s, was once among them. Hu wrote about the difference of the relationships between love and marriage in the West and in China: “Love in Western marriage is ‘self-made’; love in Chinese marriage is ‘duty-made.’ After engagement, a woman has a particular tenderness toward her betrothed. ... It is the same with a man’s attitude toward his fiancée. By the time they get married, husband and wife both know that they have a duty to love each other, and therefore they can frequently be considerate and caring to one another, in order to find love for one

⁴⁶ Hanan, *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, 183-198.

⁴⁷ This is quoted from Mu’s translation of Gaston Leroux’s *Le mystère de la chambre jaune* (The mystery of the yellow room); the translation is entitled “Gucheng qingmo ji 古城情魔記” (The Monster of Love in an Old Castle). See Gai, “Guanyu ‘Gucheng qingmo ji’” (4), *Shengjing shibao*, January 29, 1939.

another.”⁴⁸ Both of them acknowledged that arranged marriage could generate love; however, Mu’s focus is different from Hu Shih’s in the attitudes about morality. While Hu Shih did not recognize the *moral* authority of the institution of marriage but simply suggested that love could come from arranged marriage due to the sense of duty, Mu emphasized the legitimacy of marriage as the *moral* authority, which generates and guarantees the *moral* impetus of *qing* that could remedy the *moral* crisis.

Even though this sounds extremely moralistically Confucian, Mu’s formulation of *qing* actually does not exclude the pleasure of sex. In “Farewell at a Wedding,” Zhao Wenying and Fenggu in fact enjoy a “happiest, most euphoric, most mysterious” moment of life at the first night of their marriage.⁴⁹ It almost likes the Jade Emperor (*Yuhuang dadi* 玉皇大帝) in Heaven permits their euphoria, because their marriage is a union of two “pure” (*chunjie* 純潔) people who get married in accordance with “human feelings and heavenly principles.” (*renqing tianli* 人情天理)⁵⁰ It seems that only the purest people who don’t think of (morally decayed) personal and physical desire could be rewarded by Heaven to enjoy the supreme joy between man and woman. To think it the other way around, it seems that an arranged marriage, as long as it is based on morality and not on desire, could generate passionate love—and this is the only legitimate and genuine form of love between a man and a woman. In this case, the “ethical love” (*lunchang zhi ai* 倫常之愛) intermingles with passionate love, and the gratification is sensual, emotional and moral at the same time.

⁴⁸ Hu Shih’s diary entry for January 27, 1914 about giving a speech on Chinese marriage during his study at Cornell University. Hu Shih, *Hu Shi riji chuanbian 1*, ed. Cao Boyan (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 223-224. English translation in R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee, trans. and ed., *Land without Ghosts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 109.

⁴⁹ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:4 (April 1942), 106.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

2. *New Ethics of Qing and Social (Dis)order*

Genuine “ethical love” derived from legitimate marriage, as Mu claims in “Farewell at a Wedding,” could beget the foremost virtuous man and woman who are capable of rescuing the moribund morality in the disordered society. The most illustrious example is Fenggu’s story of “new chastity” in the post-apocalyptic Republican Revolution. After their “happiest, most euphoric” consummation, Zhao Wenying and Fenggu reluctantly have to part on the third day of their wedding because Zhao has to return to the warlord Feng Guozhang’s army to fight the (illegitimate) civil wars. After Zhao leaves home, Fenggu and her mother-in-law receive no salary from him for a long while. At first Fenggu strives to eke out a living to support her mother-in-law and herself by sewing, laboring, gleaning grains from a deserted field and so on. When three years pass and there is no sign that the civil wars would cease, Fenggu could barely sustain their livelihood. The chaotic times simply make it impossible for her to make a living by ordinary means such as sewing or domestic help because after the Republican Revolution, even those families in her village who used to be affluent no longer have the luxury to afford asking others to sew or help. In order to keep her promise with her husband that she will take good care of her mother-in-law, Fenggu, without any resources, could only “sacrifice her honor and sell out her youth.”⁵¹ Fenggu moves from suburb Beijing to the city and becomes a famous prostitute in the pleasure quarters. Her patrons not only love Fenggu because of her beauty; many respect her “character” for “sacrificing her body to fulfill filial piety and take care of her mother-in-law.”⁵² Another three years pass, Zhao finally returns home after fighting all over China, from Jiangsu to Shandong, from Nanjing to Mongolia; he is now wretched, weary and penniless. Knowing what

⁵¹ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:7 (July 1942), 109.

⁵² Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:8 (August 1942), 38.

Fenggu did for him and his mother, Zhao not only “forgives” her immediately but also “appreciates” what she had done “from the bottom of his heart.”⁵³

Fenggu’s being “forgiven” and even “appreciated” by her husband for being a prostitute is a telling gesture of reshuffling the ethics of *qing* in regard to sex. While Neo-Confucian moralists might assert that “Starving to death is of minor consequence, losing chastity is of great consequence,” the new morality in “Farewell at a Wedding” has been redefined and seems to claim that losing chastity is of minor importance if it could help the elders not to suffer and not to starve to death. By so doing, Mu blames the stubborn Neo-Confucianism for demanding absolute chastity. In a note to “Gucheng qingmo ji 古城情魔記” (The Monster of Love in an Old Castle), the French detective story mentioned above, Mu complains that the Southern Song Neo-Confucian literati stubbornly asserted absolute chastity that could only apply to people of higher social status, because only women in the well-to-do families could afford to commit suicide without worrying about their responsibility to take care of elder family members when they “lost chastity.” Mu derides the Neo-Confucian idea in this way: “If everyone in ordinary families starves to death in order to preserve chastity, then hundreds of thousands of women would become female martyrs (*liefu* 烈婦) in a day. Which is not true in reality.”⁵⁴ In this case, the old notion of absolute chastity is but a superficial, unrealistic persistence. If a wife loves her husband enough she would sacrifice everything, including her chastity, to help her husband to fulfill the obligation of filial piety as in the case of Fenggu. Fenggu’s being a prostitute was praised as “an honorable sacrifice for her husband because she loves him.”⁵⁵ In the modern chaotic times in

⁵³ Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:8, 43.

⁵⁴ Gai, “Guanyu ‘Gucheng qingmo ji’” (3), *Shengjing shibao*, January 28, 1939.

⁵⁵ It is unclear if this praise comes from Mu or the editor of *Qilin* because this sentence appears at the very end of this installment and looks somewhat like an editorial note to the reader. Rugai, “Xinhun bei,” *Qilin* 2:6 (June 1942), 62.

which human lives are fragile and the old morality is challenged, a new standard of chastity should be established. If this is for a righteous cause, a woman's body and sexuality could be enlisted to serve the purpose and be used outside marriage. Love, or emotional rather than physical loyalty, becomes the only standard of chastity; physical "contamination" no longer matters. Because she does it out of a genuine love (*qing*) for her husband, Fenggu is a chaste wife whose behavior is not only moral but, most importantly, exemplary in an age when human hearts are disturbed and people find no moral rules to adhere to.

The function of conjugal love as the moral impetus, which generates all the virtues such as chastity that could right the wrong and resume the moral order of society, is reaffirmed by Zhao Wuniang's "speech" in Mu's "The Story of the Lute." Zhao Wuniang, after a long journey to find her husband Cai Yong in the capital where he remarried, declares that, "Human beings are the synthesis of man and woman.... It takes the mutual collaboration of man and woman to make the world better.... If a man wants to marry a woman, he has to vow that he will not remarry another woman. If a woman wants to marry a man, she has to vow that she will not remarry another man, either. If everyone has this belief and holds it like believing in deities, any immorality and injustice in the world would be cleansed by the Way of husband and wife (*fufu zhidao* 夫婦之道) and there will be nothing to worry about."⁵⁶ Through Zhao Wuniang's words, Mu seemed to confirm that the love and (emotional) loyalty between husband and wife as displayed in Fenggu's case have a nearly mythical moral power. If everyone acts like Fenggu and practices the "Way of husband and wife," moral order will resume and society will become peaceful and harmonious, like the perfect Confucian world in the late Qing.

⁵⁶ Rugai, "Pipa ji" (145), *Shengjing shibao*, October 4, 1940.

Geunine *qing*, in Mu's conception, thus is not only an individual's emotional needs; it is in fact defined vis-à-vis the public interests. The private, individual feelings/passion/love only exist for the sake of the public and the collective. Therefore, how the newlywed Fenggu and Zhao Wenying miss each other after being forced to part on the third day after their wedding is not important in "Farewell at wedding;" what is relevant is Fenggu's contribution to the public by transforming her genuine love into virtues that not only sustain her mother-in-law's life in the text but also provide a moral example for the reading public to act morally and make the society better in the author's didactic intention.⁵⁷ This may sound familiar in late imperial discourses of *qing*, such as Feng Menglong's "using private feelings to transform society (*siqing huagong* 私情化公)" and *qing*'s function in the maintenance of social order in Yuan Huang (袁黃, 1533-1606)'s discourses.⁵⁸ On the other hand, it reminds us of the revolution-plus-love formula in the 1920s and 1930s which also deals with the relationship between private emotions and public interests. This modern genre often prescribes a harmonious relationship between love and revolution,⁵⁹ i.e., the union of the love for an individual and the love for the Chinese nation-state. Mu's formulation is different from revolution-plus-love formula in two ways. First of all, the *love* in revolution-plus-love formula is sometimes translated as sexual liberation and the individuality of the subject is foregrounded, and Mu's *qing* in fact underlines individual's relation to the collective and forgoes individuality. What is more, while revolution-plus-love formula may demand the union of the individual and the Chinese nation-state via love, Mu

⁵⁷ Mu Rugai is famous for his didacticism in his novels, which are characterized as "changing customs and transforming habits (*yifeng yisu* 移風易俗)." See He Sizhang, "Shou Mu Liutian dage," *Yiwen zhi* 12 (October 1944), 4.

⁵⁸ See Martin W. Huang, *Desire and Fictional Narrative in Late Imperial China*, 47, 170-171.

⁵⁹ Liu Jianmei, *Revolution Plus Love: Literary History, Women's Bodies, and Thematic Repetition in Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 17-18.

would replace the “Chinese nation-state” with “Chinese civilization/Confucian tradition.” The ultimate goal of promoting genuine *qing* and the virtues derived from it, in Mu’s perspective, is to restore Chinese civilization/Confucian tradition. In other words, the overarching public interests in Mu’s view are the continuity of the essence of Chinese civilization that is in jeopardy due to Republican Revolution, rather than the modern Chinese nation-state in the revolution-plus-love formula.

III. Paradise Reconstructed?: Finding *Qing* in Manchukuo?

Mu’s popular romance, on the textual level, conveys a painful remembrance of the fall of a perfect Qing and the attempt to restore the Confucian tradition/Chinese civilization by enlisting the moral impetus of genuine *qing*. Reading in the wartime Manchukuo context, several questions emerge: If the Qing loyalists celebrated Manchukuo as not only the resurrection of Qing dynasty but also a return to Chinese civilization—here civilization refers to the civilization that is structured by Confucianism, then could Mu find Manchukuo a (reconstructed) paradise of *qing*? Why did he continue writing the gloomy Republican Revolution and (hence the urge of mending it) in the supposedly *new* utopia of Confucian tradition/Chinese civilization? What is *qing*’s relation to the wartime “utopian” state, if the overarching public interests in Mu’s fiction is not the modern nation-state, but Confucian tradition/Chinese civilization?

1. *Melancholia in Utopia*

The utopian image of Manchukuo was fabricated from two perspectives that contradict each other. While the Japanese intellectuals primarily constructed Manchukuo as a “modernist utopia” where modern infrastructures such as high technology, heavy industry, railways, and

urban planning were installed,⁶⁰ the Chinese (and some Japanese) ideologues in Manchukuo imagined it as a “cultural conservative utopia” where the ideal of the “kingly way” (*wangdao*, *ôdô* 王道), a “Confucian” ideology, is the principle of (re)establishing the state. How was the discourse of “the paradise of kingly way” constructed? Could Mu’s wartime popular romance also find Manchukuo a utopia, as did his other genres of writing ?

“The kingly way,” the *raison d’être* for nation-building in Manchukuo, is “the way of the ethical monarchs and peaceful rulership,”⁶¹ originally a classical Confucian concept of “sage statesmanship,” “which legitimated imperial rule by positioning the ruler as the mediator between heaven and earth—an intermediary between god and the people.”⁶² The sage-king ruled by virtuous example, as opposed to *badao* (*hadô* 霸道), the “hegemonic way” in which ruler led by military, violent and unethical ways.⁶³ The Japanese appropriated and implanted “the kingly way” as Manchukuo official ideology in order to legitimize it as a modern moral Confucian state and promote the restoration of Puyi as a modern sage-king’s return to the throne.⁶⁴ The Japanese and Manchukuo ideologues such as Zheng Xiaoxu deployed this ideology to propound their opposition to various “hegemonic ways” present in China (including Manchuria) at the time, such as the Western imperial powers and the warlord government of Zhang Xueliang.⁶⁵ It also

⁶⁰ Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 241-242.

⁶¹ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 102.

⁶² Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 285.

⁶³ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 102; Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 285.

⁶⁴ The “Confucian” ideology of “kingly way” in Manchukuo is in fact not as “Chinese” as it appears to be. Li Wenching demonstrates that “kingly way” ideology in Manchukuo inherited Japanese Confucianism developed after Meiji period which asserted that the pivot of the *wangdao* ideology is not “heaven and people” and denied the legitimacy of revolution, while revolution is legitimate in ancient Confucianism. The Japanese Confucianism instead claimed that the emperor is the pivot of the state. See Li Wenching, *Gongrong de xiangxiang: diguo, zhimingdi yu Da Dongya wenxue quan* (Taipei: Daoxiang, 2010), 327-328.

⁶⁵ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 102; Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 286.

claimed to be an alternative to the “imported” ideologies of “nationalism and republicanism,” and “was especially targeted against the Republic of China’s ‘Three People’s Principles’.”⁶⁶ Given his anti-Republican Revolution sentiments—including his resentments of the modern concept of nation-state and the civil wars between warlords as well as his reverence for Confucian morality, Mu’s recognition of Manchukuo as a “paradise of the kingly way” seemed inevitable.⁶⁷ Because Manchukuo is the reincarnation of Confucian values, it should be regarded as the real “China.” Here “China” is no longer a name of a modern nation-state, but a concept of an utopian civilization.

Moreover, Mu’s considering Manchukuo as utopia was fueled by the identification of Manchuria as spiritual homeland among the Manchus. In addition to the bannerman system mentioned above, the Qing court yet constructed the Manchu ethnic identity by distinguishing Manchuria from the “China proper” and made it “a preserve of Manchu heritage unspoiled by Chinese or other foreign immigration.”⁶⁸ The Manchu emperors enshrined their ancestral home as holy land and Manchuria as a land of Manchu pride. On a side note, this is probably why the literary column of *Shengjing shibao* 盛京時報 (The Capital Times) of which Mu was an editor-in-chief from 1918 to 1944 was named “*Shengao zazu* 神臬雜俎”, which means “Holy Land

⁶⁶ Three People’s Principles (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義) refer to a political philosophy proposed by Sun Yat-sen, the “father of the Republic.” The Principles were nationalism, democracy, and people’s welfare. See Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 25.

⁶⁷ Even though he might appreciate the counter-republicanism and counter-warlord elements in the ideology of “the kingly way,” Mu in fact did not consider the “West” as completely evil. On the one hand, he supported the Japanese militarist “Greater East Asia” propaganda of expelling Western imperial powers. On the other hand, he acknowledged that Western civilization does have something good to offer to the development of humanity, such as monogamy. See Gai, “Suigan lu” (8), *Shengjing shibao*, March 17, 1939; Gai, “Suigan lu” (35), *Shengjing shibao*, April 16, 1939.

⁶⁸ In Qing official ideology, Manchuria was regarded as Holy Land “unspoiled by outsiders; in reality the Qing government had encouraged Han farmers to populate Liaoning and other provinces; the Japanese encouraged Asian and European immigration as well to work in their new industrial developments. See Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 41.

Miscellany.”⁶⁹ Mu’s motivation of relocating from the old capital Beijing to Manchuria in 1916 was thus regarded as “returning” to his fatherland and spiritual homeland, although, like many Manchus who moved to Manchuria after 1912, he had never lived in Manchuria before.⁷⁰ What makes this spiritual homeland even more perfect is that it became a Manchu state once again when Manchukuo was established, an even better, a reincarnation of the bygone Qing dynasty. To celebrate Manchukuo and create a founding myth of the Manchu Empire, Mu serialized a full length historical novel entitled *Fuzhao chuangye ji* 福昭創業記 (The Establishment of the Qing, 1937), representing the unification of Manchu tribes and the creation of Qing Empire by Nurhaci 努爾哈赤 and Huang Taiji 皇太極 in the seventeenth century. This novel won the 1939 Manchukuo Ministry of Welfare Literary Prize. The editor of *Shengjing ribao* which serialized Mu’s novel declares his motivation of writing this novel thus: “Today we live in this paradise of the kingly way (*wangdao letu* 王道樂土), we should know that three hundred years ago there were heroes fighting for several decades in order to create the cradle for us.”⁷¹ At some point in this novel, the narrator, perhaps due to a Freudian slip, anachronically calls the Qing under the first Emperor Huang Taiji’s reign as “Manzhouguo 滿洲國” (Manchukuo) and praises it as “the most ideal utopia (*utuobang* 烏託邦).”⁷² Mixing the images of Manchukuo, Qing dynasty and utopia together, Mu created the trinity of a Manchu paradise.

⁶⁹ *Shengjing shibao* was the most influential newspaper in Manchuria from 1906 to 1945. It was established as an organ of Japanese “management” in Manchuria. The purpose of it was to educate citizens in order to “enrich and strengthen the country,” and journalism is one of the means of education. See Zhang Juling, “Fengyun bianhuan shidai de qiji zhuojia Mu Rugai,” 108.

⁷⁰ Nagai Yûko, “Manzu zuojia Mu Rugai de wenxue shengya,” 166.

⁷¹ Given the fact that Mu was the editor of “Shengao zhazu” where this editorial note is published, it is likely that he at least agreed with the editor’s note. “Yugao,” *Shengjing shibao*, July 20, 1937.

⁷² Rugai, “Fuzhao chuangye ji,” (35) *Shengjing shibao*, August 25, 1937.

If this is the case, Mu and the characters in his novels must have lived in the paradisaical Manchukuo happily ever after. Nevertheless, none of his popular romances is set in the particular here and now of Manchukuo, in contrast to Zhao Xunjiu 趙恂九 (1905-1968), another famous writer of popular romance in Manchukuo whose novels are mostly about modern girls and playboys in contemporary Manchukuo cities.⁷³ Mu's wartime popular romances, as mentioned above, are all set in chaotic historical times; the story of "Farewell at a Wedding" that happens in Beijing during the Republican Revolution is the most disturbing of all. In fact, Beijing, Mu's old, ruined hometown, under the Republican Revolution is not only a background of his writings; it is a trope in many of Mu's novels produced in the (new) spiritual homeland of Manchuria. He even published an autobiographical novel entitled *Beijing* 北京 (1924) to record his life as a journalist observing the corruption of Republican politics when the new Republic was just established.⁷⁴ This trope continued to thrive in his wartime writings such as in "Farewell at a Wedding." It seems that Mu's mind was still fixated on Beijing while his body already moved on to the "new paradise." The sense of spatial dislocation seems to disable him from writing the presumably happy life in Manchukuo.

Furthermore, temporal confusion is more complicated than the spatial dislocation in "Farewell at a Wedding," in which the past, present and future are convoluted. When writing the chaotic past of the apocalyptic Republican Revolution in the paradisiac Manchukuo, Mu seemed to narrate the story of the past in present tense. In other words, the "now" and "today" in the

⁷³ Zhao Xunjiu was a popular romance writer based in Dalian. His popular romances were serialized in *Taidong ribao* 泰東日報 where he worked as a journalist and editor. Although his writings were quite popular in Manchukuo, he received very little, if any, attention in both Chinese and Western academia.

⁷⁴ Mu Chengong, *Beijing* (Fengtian: Mu Chengong, 1924).

narrative are in fact the resentful chaotic *past* in Mu's real life when he published the story.⁷⁵ For example, when recalling Zhao Wenyong's days of being a proud member of Royal Guard in late Qing when beautiful, astonishing buildings were seen everywhere in Beijing, the narrator (or the character Zhao Wenyong) comments, "But *now* (*xianzai* 現在) both the city and the suburbs have all become ruins. This symbolizes that the post-Revolution China gets bogged down in misery day after day."⁷⁶ (italics added) In another occasion, after Zhao sees the scorched mountains of the Beijing suburbs, the narrator tells what is in Zhao's mind: "The trees become fewer and fewer and people move away year after year. He doubts that in the evolution of *today* (*jinhua de jinri* 進化的今日), why people are not as happy and rich as they were in Emperor Qianlong's reign?"⁷⁷ (italics added) Zhao later tells his mother what a hill in suburban Beijing looks like now: "It used to be peaceful and prosperous before. But *now* (*xianzai* 現在) it is desolate and deserted. I feel like everything is wrong now, Mom!"⁷⁸ The sense of desolation and desperation of "now" and "today" permeates the narrative of "Farewell at a Wedding." A contemporary reader in Mu's times should notice the incongruence between treating the chaotic, desolate past of Republican Revolution as *present* and the "real" present of Manchukuo. The celebratory mood of the (re)establishment of Manchukuo as seen in Zheng Xiaoxu's and Mu's other writings seemed to be diminished by narrating the desolation and desperation in present tense. What is more, the gloomy image of "now" and "today" in the narratives would further

⁷⁵ In comparison, Mu's other wartime popular romances do not take this approach. For example, the protagonists Zhao Wuniang in "The Story of the Lute" and Dong Xian in "The Story of Obsession" never refer to "now" and "today" in the dialogues, nor does the narrator refer to "now" and "today" in narration.

⁷⁶ This could be stated by either the narrator or the character Zhao Wenyin because there are sometimes no clear distinctions between direct speech and indirect speech of the character and the third-person narrator in Mu's narratives and hence it is difficult to distinguish if this is stated by the narrator or the character Zhao. Rugai, "Xinhun bei," *Qilin* 1:8, 38.

⁷⁷ Rugai, "Xinhun bei," *Qilin* 1:8, 44.

⁷⁸ Rugai, "Xinhun bei," *Qilin* 2:3 (March 1942), 94.

unsettle contemporary readers' sense of the present reality of Manchukuo when Mu intermingled Manchukuo propagandist rhetoric such as "one mind, one heart (*yide yixin* 一德一心), "Home of Honor (*mingyu zhi jia* 名譽之家)" and "Home of a Soldier at the Front (*chuzheng junren zhi jia* 出征軍人之家)" when narrating the story of Republican Revolution.⁷⁹ Because Mu the author *cum* narrator often explicitly speaks in his own voice when narrating story (and giving didactic instruction), sometimes it is impossible to distinguish whether the story is narrated by the voice of the third-person narrator, the character or the author. Thus the images of "now and "today" of the Republican Revolution may be overlapped with the "real" present time of the author's Manchukuo. In this case, the "real" (presumably ideal) present of Manchukuo is read in the traumatic "present" tense of the Republican Revolution.

In sum, in the narrative of "Farewell at a Wedding" the (imaginary) glorious late Qing is treated as the past, the chaotic Republican Revolution as the present, and the paradisiac present of Manchukuo as non-existent. Thus, in a previous section I mentioned that loyalism prescribes "Farewell at a Wedding" a nostalgic look at the past and a resentful attitude not towards the present (of Manchukuo), but towards another past, i.e., the Republican Revolution.⁸⁰ While lamenting the loss of the past, wishing to cling to it and refusing to move forward to the present were common in loyalist literature such as in Ming loyalists' writings,⁸¹ Mu's gesture as a Qing loyalist who glorifies the (ideal) past, mourns the (traumatic) past and obliterates the (presumably ideal) present seems problematic. Unlike the Ming loyalists who wished to recover their lost dynasty but failed, Mu actually managed to live in a theoretically better reincarnation of

⁷⁹ See Rugai, "Xinhun bei," *Qilin* 1:8, 39; *Qilin* 2:6, 61.

⁸⁰ In many of loyalist literature, the authors often cast a nostalgic look at the past and have resentful attitudes towards the present, which is not the case in Mu's popular romance.

⁸¹ See, for example, Robert E. Hegel, "Dreaming the Past: Memory and Continuity Beyond the Ming Fall," in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, 345-371.

the lost Confucian and Manchu paradise. If Manchukuo were really a better reincarnation of the lost (glorious) past, then why did he cling to the traumatic past, disregard the present and maintain his loyalist sentiments and resentment?

Regarding the reason why Mu's popular romances are set exclusively outside Manchukuo, scholars provide some clues in the cultural policy of the wartime state. Liu Xiaoli suggests that the social background in popular romances in the magazine *Unicorn* where "Farewell at a Wedding" was serialized is often vague and lacks a specific social reference; if the story is about a specific social background, it must be somewhere outside Manchukuo. It is probably because, according to Liu, the Manchukuo government did not welcome stories about the dark side of the nation; it required writers to write about the bright side and the development of the nation, as dictated in the notorious "Eight Abstentions (*babu* 八不)," a literary policy proclaimed by State Propaganda Office on February 21, 1941, to restrict the themes in literary representation.⁸² This may explain why Mu chose to write about the ruined Beijing in the "paradise of the kingly way," for writing the "dark reality" of the utopia could entail censorship and punishment. But this explanation presupposes that there is a "dark reality" that writers, even though acknowledging and wanting to expose it, could not explicitly write about. This assumption seems essentialist and overlooks the psychological complexity of individual writers. I would rather argue that due to the melancholia that prescribes a compulsive repetition of traumatic experience, Mu continued to write the ruined homeland in the newly found paradise.

⁸² The "Eight Abstentions" discourage literary themes include "rebellious tendencies toward the current political situation," "criticism of the national policy without sincerity, or of a non-constructive nature," "exclusive use of darkness to depict life before and after the establishment of the nation," etc. Liu Xiaoli, *Yitai shikong zhong de jingsheng shijie*, 54, 139; Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 50.

Sigmund Freud maintains that melancholia and its correlate, mourning, are reactions to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction such as losing one's country, an ideal and so on.⁸³ Mourning is "an experience of grief and a process of working through which the mourner relinquishes emotional ties to the lost object," and eventually "[reattaches] the free libido to a new object," whereas melancholia is a compulsive repetition of acting out which the melancholic "refuses to break the attachment to the lost object when in reality it is gone."⁸⁴ While mourning is a productive healing process, melancholia is a pathological symptom of trauma. Mu's compulsive repetitive writing of the old ruined hometown of Beijing and treating the post-apocalyptic Republican Revolution as the present seem to be a pathological act of melancholia. At first glance, it seems that Mu the author *cum* narrator of "Farewell at a Wedding" couldn't let go the (glorious) past of Qing, nor could he find a substitute, a new object to reattach to; even Manchukuo, the supposedly better reincarnation of the Qing, could not be the new loved object. Therefore, he had to revisit the traumatic origin of what makes the loved object gone, i.e., the Republican Revolution, again and again. In this formulation the lost loved object seems undoubtedly to be the Confucian paradise of late Qing. However, by returning to the Republican Revolution repeatedly, the traumatic past rather than the glorious past actually occupies most parts of the narrative and seems to become the lost object the author *cum* narrator actually wanted to retrieve. At the end the author *cum* narrator reinforces his connection with the Republican Revolution and treats it as the present. The melancholic, in Freudian theory, would consolidate the connection with the lost object through "an identification of the ego with the

⁸³ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916)*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1974), 243.

⁸⁴ Tammy Clewell, "Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud's Psychoanalysis of Loss," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 52.1 (2004), 44, 59.

abandoned object.” Through this identification, “the melancholic creates a figure for the lost other and withdraws this figure into ego, a means by which a trace of the lost one becomes internalized as a living part of the self.”⁸⁵ As such, the traumatic past, rather than the glorious past, becomes the permanent present internalized in the author *cum* narrator’s self.

Dominick LaCapra reminds us that while in mourning people recognize the difference between the past and the present, in acting-out “the past is performatively regenerated or relieved as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed.”⁸⁶ In Mu’s case, the origin of trauma rather than the glorious past is regenerated as if it were fully present in memory as well as became *the* present in narratives. Confusing the past and the present, Mu’s writing of Beijing during the Republican Revolution couldn’t be regarded as an elegy that mourns the bygone glorious Qing and eventually works through (read: forgets) the past. Rather, it is a melancholic acting-out of returning to the aporia and impasse.⁸⁷ The inability of reconciling the past, the present and the future indicates an epistemological crisis often seen in traumatic memory. Susan J. Brison argues that a person could self-identify as the same person over time when he possesses the ability to envision a future and remember a past. When these abilities are lost due to traumatic experience, the ability of self-identification is lost, too. This epistemological crisis “leaves the survivor with virtually no bearing to navigate by” and induces the feeling of losing control over oneself.⁸⁸ One’s emotional capacity is also fundamentally altered in trauma because the former emotional repertoire of how

⁸⁵ Tammy Clewell, “Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud’s Psychoanalysis of Loss,” 59-60.

⁸⁶ Dominick LaCapra, “Trauma, Absence, Loss,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 25 No. 4 (Summer, 1999), 713, 716.

⁸⁷ See *Ibid*, 699.

⁸⁸ Susan J. Brison, “Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self,” in *Acts of Memory*, 44, 45.

an individual responds to the outside world could be obliterated by trauma,⁸⁹ and consequently changes the way he feels and articulates his feeling when positioning himself in relation to the outside world. Thus, the traumatic Republican Revolution not only destroyed the author *cum* narrator Mu's ability to (properly) remember the past, envision the future and position himself in the present, it also damaged the emotional capacity of him (and the society) for self-identification. Emotion, or *qing*, is the site where the trauma is inflicted, where the wound is located, and where Mu compulsively returned to act out his resentment and melancholia.

2. *Finding Qing in Wartime State?*

Mu's popular romances are different from his other genres of writing during wartime because it is a genre of *qing*, the site where the violence of Republican Revolution was inflicted and thus the site of melancholic repetition. *Qing* is repeatedly summoned not because it is the driving force of morality that could remedy the chaos and crisis, as the narrative of "Farewell at a Wedding" and Mu's other popular romances would expect. To the contrary, because *qing* had been devastated so gravely that through repetitive articulation of it, the author *cum* narrator acts out its loss and inscribes the moment of permanent loss in the self. Even if Manchukuo was fabricated as the Confucian utopia which was said to constitute of the perfect morality of *qing*, Mu still could not find recovery or redemption of the loss of *qing* in it, nor could he heal the wound inflicted by the Republican Revolution. The trauma of Republican Revolution and the wound of the loss of *qing* haunted Mu even when he was in the self-proclaimed (resurrected) utopia. Consequently, he unwittingly disregarded the idea of treating Manchukuo as the paradise of Confucian tradition/Chinese civilization in his popular romance.

⁸⁹ Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self," 44.

Reading *qing* within the wartime context, we should further ask: Does the articulation of *qing* in Mu's wartime popular romance comply with or contract the current wartime ideology in Manchukuo? What is *qing*'s relation to the state, if, as mentioned above, Mu did not formulate his ethics of *qing* in conjunction with the modern concept of nation-state? Does the genuine *qing* serve the wartime state Manchukuo in the fashion of contributing to the maintenance of social order? How to position Mu's conception of *qing* vis-à-vis the wartime ideology? In fact, it is woman's body that channels the articulation of *qing* in response to the wartime politics in Manchukuo, because woman (like Fenggu in "Farewell at a Wedding") is the embodiment of genuine *qing* and her body the agent of acting out the virtues derived from *qing*. In Manchukuo's wartime ideology, there were two ways of enlisting a woman's body to serve the wartime state: first, a woman's sexless chaste body is treated as "cornerstone" of the Confucian nation-state; secondly, a woman's sexualized body is utilized to reproduce human resources for the war demands. Does Mu's formulation of the new ethnics of *qing* conform to or challenge these official ideologies? Could *qing* be mobilized to serve the war effort?

In their respective studies on Manchukuo literature and history, Norman Smith indicates that chastity is regarded as the "cornerstone" of female virtue in the Confucian state while Prasenjit Duara points out that women were regarded as the "bedrock of Confucian society and national essence" in Manchukuo's official ideology.⁹⁰ Women's chastity is used as a conduit of installing orthodox Confucian ideology into every family as well as the whole society, because, first, women are responsible for family education and, secondly, the chaste body had been given the symbolic values of supreme Confucian morality since the late imperial periods. As a result,

⁹⁰ Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 98; Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 33. Also see Maetsugu Reiko, "'Ôdô rakudô' no jendâ kôsô," in *Higashi Ajia no kokumin kokka keisei to jendâ*, ed. Hayakawa Noriyo et al (Tokyo: Aoki shoden, 2007), 299-302.

chastity was elevated as the foundation of Manchukuo, which was built on the self-proclaimed Confucian principles. By promoting women's chastity as foundation for the (new) Confucian state, the (old) Confucian moral codes, which had been attacked by modern intellectuals, were reestablished. On the other hand, it seems to weaken Qing loyalists such as Gu Hongming's claim that the foundation for all morality was the ruler-subject relationship, as mentioned above, by concentrating on chaste women's moral authority. The Manchukuo government in central and local levels each year pursued various programs to honor virtuous men and women, particularly chaste women (*jiefu* 節婦).⁹¹ In addition to promoting chastity by granting prizes to chaste women, the government also intended to prevent promiscuous behavior by punishing those who promote "abnormal sexual desire" and "[denigrate] chastity" in literary productions.⁹² All of these measures were taken with the intention of "containing and deploying [women] in the public in a way that would serve state and regime interests," rather than confining them to the home, as Duara suggests.⁹³ All in all, chastity was utilized to ensure the stability and legitimacy of the Confucian state of Manchukuo. Mu would agree with the official ideology that chastity is one of the most crucial virtues to stabilize the society, and that is probably the reason he chose to highlight Fenggu's new chastity in "Farewell at a Wedding." However, the new chastity in Mu's formulation, which focuses on emotional loyalty and disregards physical contamination, may challenge the orthodox Confucian ideal of the chaste women. Indeed, in Manchukuo's ideology the chaste woman's body was meant to be "used" to serve the wartime state; nevertheless, it

⁹¹ For example, The Ministry of Cultural and Education (*Wenjaobu* 文教部) honors "filial children, virtuous wives, and chaste widows" in various programs. Longjing Province Government asked each city and county in the Province to nominate filial sons and chaste women "who are over thirty years old." Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 146; "Xiaozi jiefu biao Zhang," *Shengjing shibao*, June 22, 1940.

⁹² The regulations are seen in the "Eight Abstentions." Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 50.

⁹³ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 147.

should be “used” in a metaphorical sense rather than in a literal sense, while Fenggu’s body is actually “used” to make a living and sustain her mother-in-law’s life. The new chastity in Mu’s formulation, therefore, is not as “pure” as the orthodox chastity, which dictates the purity of woman’s body, and couldn’t become the foundation of the Confucian state of Manchukuo. On the contextual level, the new ethnics of *qing* only serves to demonstrate the grave devastation of *qing* caused by the trauma of Republican Revolution, rather than become the moral impetus of the wartime Confucian state.

In addition to the sexless chaste body, woman’s body has yet another function in wartime Manchukuo: reproduction of human resources, as it was in wartime Taiwan. Women’s body could generate two types of reproduction of human resources: procreation as well as education; both were a mother’s duty. Smith’s study indicates that during the war marriage for men and women “is not at all for pleasure or sex, but for the development and extension of the race.”⁹⁴ In order to “extend” the race and provide capable warriors for the nation to fight against the enemy, a woman should give birth to as many sons as she can and educate them properly. A woman’s role, therefore, should be both “good wife” and “conscientious mother” (*xianqi liangmu* 賢妻良母), a concept utilized to legitimize Manchukuo’s discourses of morality and mobilize women to contribute to the war effort.⁹⁵ While mother’s role is widely called upon in wartime regimes such as in Vichy France and colonial Taiwan as shown in Xu Kunquan’s wartime popular romance in Chapter 1, maternity finds little place in Mu’s wartime writings.⁹⁶ Mu’s model woman could only be regarded as “good wife” but never a “conscientious mother;” model female characters like Fenggu are mostly created in relation to her husband—her love for and duty to him such as

⁹⁴ Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 37.

⁹⁵ Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 15, 37; Li Naitao, “Lun ‘wangdao zhengzhi’ xia Dongbei de funü jiaohua,” *Wenhua xuekan* 11 (March 2008), 78-82.

⁹⁶ See Chapter One on Xu Kunquan and his popular romance in Taiwan..

taking care of his parents. The maternal role, which is directly relevant to national revival by providing human resources to the military and to the state, did not draw Mu's female characters' attention. In such, she only fulfills half of the state's dictated responsibility of an ideal woman of "kingly way."⁹⁷ This is perhaps because *qing* had been devastated to the extent that it is impossible to work through the trauma inflicted on it, transcend the permanent loss inscribed in the self, and generate anything for the future, including the future generation of human resources.

The idea of self-sacrifice out of genuine *qing* and the consequent uses of a woman's body and sexuality outside marriage for the public interest in "Farewell at a Wedding" further complicates the relation of *qing* and the wartime state. We may assume that in general war demands people to self-sacrifice out of a different form of love—patriotism, and for the quintessential "public interest," that is, the survival of the nation. Along this line, if woman's body can be used outside marriage as long as it is out of a genuine *qing* of conjugal love, it must be able to be mobilized by the state and war institutions as long as it is from a genuine love of her nation. In this case, woman's body could be mobilized to serve the war in the name of love. This idea may be ideal for wartime propagandists, at least for those who implemented "comfort women" policy; however, Mu in his wartime popular romance never developed similar thoughts. On the diegetic level, the female protagonists such as Fenggu never express any concerns about the "nation" or the "state," let alone the love for it. On the contextual level, the readers are only given didacticism about the morality of the society, Chinese civilization and Confucian tradition, all of which cannot be equated to the modern concept of state and nation. In sum, *qing* is less useful in wartime state mobilization than in restructuring social order and restoring civilization because the "state," perhaps just like *qing*, is a highly ambiguous and almost inexplicable term in

⁹⁷ Liu Jinghui, *Minzu, xingbei, yu jiecheng—wei Man shiqi de "wangdao zhengzhi"* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2004), 20-37.

Mu's popular romances. Therefore, instead of complying with Manchukuo's state ideology, Mu's formulation of *qing* is more compatible and has more interaction with late imperial discourses of *qing* in Confucian tradition than contemporary conception of love vis-à-vis the modern nation-state. In the final analysis, Manchukuo, even though self-proclaimed as a Confucian state, was not a utopia of *qing*, nor could Mu's formulation of *qing* be mobilized for war efforts. Wartime Manchukuo, sadly, was absent in a Qing loyalist's melancholic articulation of emotion, feeling and love.

Chapter 4:

A Hysterical Romance: *Begonia* and Melodramatic Articulation of Victimhood in Wartime

Shanghai

Introduction

A few months before *Haibao* 海報(Shanghai Herald), a Shanghai-based tabloid, proclaimed that 1944 would be “a year of decisive battles in the total war” to “liberate East Asia,”¹ a journalist declared in the same tabloid that 1943 is “the year of *Qiuhaitang* 秋海棠 (*Begonia*).”² Indeed, the novel *Begonia*, a “romantic tragedy” written by Qin Shouou 秦瘦鷗 (1908-1993), was an immediate success when it was first serialized in *Shenbao* 申報 (Shanghai News) in 1941 and published in book form in 1942.³ Within one year it had been adapted into *tanci* 彈詞, *Shenqu* 申曲 opera, *Yueju* 越劇 opera, and spoken drama (*huaaju* 話劇); film and even comedy adaptations were under way in 1943.⁴ Three million copies of this novel were sold and more than 180,000 spectators attended the spoken drama productions, which made it *the* most popular spoken drama during wartime.⁵ A cigarette brand was named after it and the advertisement boasts that its smell

¹ “Sanshisan nian shi zongli juezhan nian,” *Haibao*, January 1, 1944.

² Nina, “Wuhua bamen, jingyan Qiuhaitang,” *Haibao*, May 27, 1943.

³ “Romantic tragedy” was a common label to describe *Qiuhaitang*. See “Juping Qiuhaitang,” *Taiping* 6 (1943), 10. *Qiuhaitang* was serialized in *Shenbao* from January 6, 1941 to February 13, 1942. The first edition of the book form was published by Shanghai jincheng tushu gongsi in July 1942.

⁴ Nina, “Wuhua bamen, jingyan Qiuhaitang.”

⁵ Mau-Sang Ng, “Popular Fiction and the Culture of Everyday Life: A Cultural Analysis of Qin Shouou’s *Qiuhaitang*,” *Modern China* Vol. 20, No. 2 (April 1994): 131 Shao Yingjian; “Qiuhaitang: Lunxian shiqi Shanghai de xiangzheng biaozi,” in *Zhixing yu chuangzhao*, ed. Zhi Zhong renwen shehui kexue xuehui (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007), 119.

is as aromatic as the male protagonist Begonia. In addition, a sequel by the veteran Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies writer Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑 (1895-1968) was published in 1944.⁶

This tremendously popular story is about a clandestine love affair of the hero Begonia, a famous Beijing opera actor, and the heroine Luo Xiangqi 羅湘綺, a concubine of a warlord. Their affair is, unfortunately, discovered by the tyrannical warlord after Xiangqi gives birth to Begonia's child. Out of rage, the warlord commands a cunning guard (who discloses their relationship to the warlord in exchange for promotion) to punish Begonia by cutting a cross onto his beautiful face with a sword. Wounded, Begonia is forced to separate from his lover, escapes the city, changes his name, becomes a farmer and raises their daughter alone in a rural village. The story sounds much like a perfect example of melodramatic narrative: hyperbolic figures, lurid events, star-crossed lovers, masked relationships, misplaced love, disguised identity, bodily torture, self-sacrifice, etc.—these are narrative conventions of the genre categorized by Peter Brooks, Thomas Elsaesser and Elaine Hadley, respectively.⁷ Thus Tsuji Hisakazu, a film critic

⁶ *Qiu Haitang* continues to fascinate the populace in the next several decades. Yu Junzhi adapted the story into a stage play script to propagate anti-Communist ideology in Taiwan in 1957, while Qin Shouou himself wrote a sequel to it in the 1980s. The spoken drama of *Begonia* is continued to perform in the postwar era. Two television drama adaptations were produced and aired in 1986 and 2006, respectively. In addition, the story also was adapted by Japanese playwright Gôda Toku (1905-1966) to become *Hanagiri Iroha*, a Kabuki play, and was performed at Osaka Kabuki Theater in June 1943. See “Qiu Haitang,” *Shenbao*, February 24, 1944; Zhou Shoujuan, *Xin Qiu Haitang* (Shanghai: Chenzhong chubanshe, 1944); Yu Junzhi, *Chungui hechu* (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chuban, 1957); Qin Shouou, *Meibao* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1984); Qin Shouou, “Sanyan liangyu,” *Xin Yingtan* (1943, 2, 2), 20; Gotô Noriko, “Eizô sakka Ma-Xu Weibang to Shûkaidô nikansuru ichi kôsatsumi,” *Ochanomizu joshi daigaku Chûgoku bungaku kaihô* 29 (April 2010): 20; Hangzhou huaju tuan, *Qiu Haitang* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985).

⁷ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and The Mode of Excess* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 3; Thomas Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama,” in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 45; Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 3.

who worked in a Japanese film distribution company in wartime Shanghai, commented that the spoken drama adaptation of *Begonia* is indeed no more than a melodrama; in contrast, the film version, he claimed, is successful because it “depicts the typical fate of Chinese people.”⁸ A Chinese critic did not agree with Tsuji’s high opinion, however. Qu Shanzhao, editor-in-chief of the film magazine *Xin Yingtan* 新影壇 (New Cinema), published by a semi-official film production company during wartime, deprecated the film as merely stimulus for “cheap tears” that “bear the hallmark of humanitarianism” to promote “individualistic liberalism,” which is in opposition to the “national policy” of “constructing Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere by blood and flesh.”⁹

Both of the critics might speak some truth about the production and consumption of *Begonia* in its sociopolitical context, even though not without irony. First of all, the constellation of *Begonias*—including narratives in all kinds of media—is no doubt presented in a melodramatic mode of expression that aims at eliciting tears from readers and audiences.¹⁰ Second, the wartime ideology of collectivism, from both Japanese and Chinese perspectives, plays an important role in reading and perceiving the melodramatic *Begonia* in wartime Shanghai. A semi-colonial city since the mid-nineteenth century, Shanghai was partly occupied by Japan in November 1937—only the International Settlement and French Concession remained uninfluenced by the wartime regime, and hence the term “Orphan Island” used to describe them.¹¹ Coincident with the attack on Pearl Harbor, Shanghai completely fell into Japan’s hands

⁸ Tsuji Hisakaku, “Maxu Weibang yu Qiuhaitang,” trans. Diyia, *Xin Yingtan* (1944, 2, 4), 28.

⁹ Qu Shanzhao, “Duanyan ‘Qiuhaitang,’” *Xin Yingtan* (1943, 5), 15.

¹⁰ About the concept of “constellation,” see below.

¹¹ Shanghai was regarded as a semi-colonial city in the first half of twentieth century. The British and American set up International Settlements while French established French Concessions in Shanghai in late nineteenth century; the International Settlements and French Concessions enjoyed extraterritorial rights. Thus before 1937 Shanghai was primarily divided into two sections: the

in December 1941. During wartime, while the collectivism for promoting the Japanese ideology of “Greater East Asia” dictated the elimination of individuality and devotion of the personal for the war, as Qu Shanzhao’s criticism suggests, the Chinese concept of the collective emphasizes common ground of Chineseness for cultural identity in the war. Therefore, Tsuji, even though a Japanese, paradoxically read it from Chinese perspective of collectivism and considered the male protagonist Begonia as the epitome of the Chinese folk.¹²

In light of the two contemporary commentaries, we should approach the constellation of *Begonia* by scrutinizing the following questions: How are emotions, such as love, sadness, regret and hatred, articulated in this melodramatic mode of expression? How does this mode of expression engage with wartime politics and articulate the latent content of wartime mentality? Could the “cheap tears” in this highly stylized mode of expression gain positive meaning and establish agency for the populace in Occupied Shanghai? Geoffrey Nowell-Smith reminds us that melodramatic mode of expression does not “reflect” or “describe” social and psychic determinations. “Rather, it *signifies* them.”¹³ Thus, through analyzing the social and psychic significations in *Begonia*, we would be able to understand how the “cheap tears” in the melodramatic articulations release the repressed energy of the readers and audiences under political repression in wartime Shanghai.

Foreign Concessions and the Chinese section. However, Japanese military occupied the Chinese section of Shanghai in 1937 and thus left the Foreign Concessions as the only part of the city remained “autonomous” from Japanese rule.

¹² However, Tsuji’s standpoint was to analyze the Chinese mentality in order to provide Japan with better understanding of the land they dominated.

¹³ Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, “Minnelli and Melodrama,” in *Home is Where the Heart Is*, 70.

This chapter focuses on three renditions of the *Begonia* constellation: the serialized novel, the spoken drama directed by Fei Mu 費穆 (1906-1951),¹⁴ the film adapted and directed by Maxu Weibang 馬徐維邦 (1901-1961),¹⁵ as well as readers' and audiences' responses to this tragic romance. These renditions of *Begonia* tell the story of Begonia, his lover and his daughter in three different media with slight differences and alterations. Regardless of the differences, however, these texts not only use the same tropes and consist of similar narrative elements; the contemporaneous existence of the three renditions (from 1941 to 1945) expands the discursive space of each text, and the literary, theatrical and cinematic forms were often consumed by readers and spectators simultaneously and intertextually. Enthusiastic readers would read the novel, see the spoken drama and film time and again,¹⁶ thus perceive three texts as a cluster of narratives. Therefore I consider the different renditions of *Begonia* as a constellation in order to

¹⁴ The script of the spoken drama of *Begonia* is allegedly adapted by Qin Shouou, Gu Zhongyi 顧仲彝, Huang Zuoling 黃佐臨 and Fei Mu, whereas Liu Kangmin 劉康民 claimed that he co-wrote the preliminary adaptation with Qin. The directors are Fei Mu and Huang Zuoling 黃佐臨 (1906-1994). Nevertheless, because Fei Mu directed the majority of the play (four out of five acts) as well as designated the overarching atmosphere and tone of the performance, scholars tend to consider Fei Mu is the primary director of *Begonia*. So far we are able to reconstruct the spoken drama by photography, actor's interview and notes about the performance and audience's responses published in wartime magazines and newspapers, as well as a script "written" by Qin Shouou after he fled Shanghai to the hinterland of Chongqing in February 1945. The script was originally published before the war ended and reprinted after the Japanese defeat in Shanghai. Even though this version of script might not be completely faithful to the the performance of *Begonia* in occupied Shanghai and may be altered in the hinterland, it does reflect the structure of and the most famous lines in the Shanghai production by comparing this version with actor's notes and contemporary audiences' comments. See Shao Yingjian, *Shanghai kanzhan shiqi de huaju* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2012); Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben* (Shanghai: Baixin shudian, 1946); Shi Hui, "Qiuhaitang yanchu shouji zhi yi," *Zhazhi* (1943, 10, 5), 157-161; Kangmin, "Cong xiaoshuo gaibian huaju tandao 'Qiuhaitang,'" *Huaju jie* (1942, 8), n.p.

¹⁵ The film version of *Qiuhaitang*, directed by Maxu Weibang, is originally released in 1943 by Zhonghua dianyan lianhe gongsi (China Film United) in Shanghai. DVD is released by Fujiansheng yinxiang chubanshe, 2006.

¹⁶ For example, Zhixiang confesses that he was a big fan of *Begonia* when it was serialized in *Shenbao*. He saw the stage play and film many times, and considers the stage play is better than the film. Zhixiang, "Ping: Weida de *Qiuhaitang*," *Haibao*, December 39, 1942; Zhixiang, "Qiuhaitang nian beizi," *Haibao*, January 10, 1944.

examine how these texts are presented vis-à-vis wartime politics. In this constellation, romantic love is articulated via the depictions of victimhood in melodramatic, excessive, and hysteric modes of expression, which is in sharp contrast to the “toning-down” language in elite literature in wartime Shanghai (see below). The emotions of the victimized in the story are so vehement that the heart could no longer contain them; these emotions hysterically burst into bodily performance of scar and tears of the feminized body in the narrative, and are further embodied in the physical representations of spoken drama and film. At the end, the hysterical articulation mode, however unconsciously, protests against the masculine and patriarchal war institution in the imaginary solidarity of shared victimhood that is formed by the tears of pathos against the terror of war.

I. Melodramatic Mode of Articulation

In their pioneering studies of melodrama in literature and film, Brooks and Elsaesser, respectively, assert that melodrama, rather than a genre, is an “imaginative mode” of representation that articulates the “cultural and psychological context” of the form.¹⁷ Linda Williams considers this system of expression as a “broad aesthetic mode existing across many media,” including literature, theater and cinema, instead of a single medium.¹⁸ Hadley further expands this argument and maintains that beyond aesthetic representation, in fact, melodramatic mode encompasses nonlinguistic forms such as physical gestures, political actions, visual cues of clothing and other objects, and is the quintessential means to produce ideological meaning of

¹⁷ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, viii; Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury,” 43.

¹⁸ Linda Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White From Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 12.

modern society— in her case, nineteenth century England.¹⁹ This mode of articulation is excessive, expressionist and expressive; life in melodramatic text “has seen through highly colored lenses.”²⁰ In melodramatic representation, the action of a character is depicted in hyperbolic and heightened gestures and words; the feelings and thoughts are spoken out loud; the *mise-en-scène* of a film is filled with symbolism such as dramatic lighting that codes the inner states of the characters and the ideological meaning. All in all, the melodramatic expression speaks “a language of presence and immediacy” in order to externalize emotions and exteriorize the interior self.²¹

The excessive articulation of inner self is utilized to accomplish a goal: to purge the moral and social order and to locate the “moral occult” in intense sociopolitical, ideological and spiritual crisis.²² Sociopolitical upheaval, in Brooks’s study of the French Revolution and its aftermath, causes the collapse of moral standards, ideological underpinnings and spiritual foundations and the loss of “traditional sacred;” the moral occult is the domain of spiritual forces, values and imperatives that is “both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality” in the post-sacred society. In order to locate and articulate the hidden moral occult, writers and filmmakers utilize the hyperbolic mode of melodrama to embody the latent content in the collective consciousness.²³ The war and the occupation of Shanghai, similar to the French Revolution, also triggered moral and spiritual turbulence, which I will explore in more detail

¹⁹ Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics*, 4.

²⁰ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 4.

²¹ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*; Ira Bhaskar, “Emotion Subjectivity and the Limits of Desire: Melodrama and Modernity in Bombay Cinema, 1940s-‘50s,” in *Gender Meets Genre in Postwar Cinemas*, ed. Christine Gledhill (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 163.

²² See Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury,” 45.

²³ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 4, 20; Christine Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation,” in *Home is Where the Heart Is*, 29.

later; at this moment I would point out that, it was the urgent need to uncover and articulate moral occult in wartime Shanghai that propelled the creators of *Begonia* constellation to employ the excessive mode of representation.

The melodramatic articulation indicates a Manichaeian polarization in moral and spiritual domains. The contrasts between good and evil, light and darkness, salvation and damnation are maximized; “there is no ambiguous moral middle ground” in melodrama, Paul Pickowicz suggested.²⁴ The melodramatists refuse to tone this contrast down because, in order to redress the moral confusions, they need to take extreme measures to differentiate what is virtue and what is villainy, to expose the disparity of good and evil to the populace, and to indicate the right direction in the chaotic world. Furthermore, morality and emotion are inseparable—strong emotions such as love could be the imperative to motivate good deeds, whereas good and evil are considered moral feelings.²⁵ In other words, emotional intensity is the indicator *and* at the same time the impetus of moral extremes. Thus melodramatists often approach moral occult by exhibiting the innermost emotions in exaggerated polarization.

This tendency in the popular culture of melodrama is in contrast with the elite literature in wartime Shanghai, even though writers from both sides faced the same national crisis and were under similar political repression. According to Poshek Fu and Li Wen-ching, respectively, the elite writers such as a group of essayists in the collaborationist magazine *Gujin* 古今 (Reminisces) wrote in a restrained, ambivalent, obscure and “toning-down” style that typified the

²⁴ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, xiii; Paul G Pickowicz, “Melodramatic Representation and the ‘May Fourth’ Tradition of Chinese Cinema,” in *From May Fourth to June Fourth: Fiction and Film in Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Ellen Widmer and David Der-wei Wang (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 303.

²⁵ Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field,” 34; Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury,” 61; Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 28.

“ ‘grey zone’ of moral ambiguity involved in surviving dark days of Occupation.”²⁶ Whereas the elite writers strived to conceal, the melodramatists endeavored to expose the emotional and psychic dimensions of Occupied Shanghai.

II. A Romance of Victimhood

The story of *Begonia* is, in fact, somewhat convoluted. After their love affair is discovered by the warlord, reluctantly separating from his lover and moving to countryside with his daughter, Begonia encounters tremendous hardships, including betrayal, sickness, poverty, the abduction of his daughter, national/natural disasters and finally, death. The film version is so long (running time: 3 hours 22 minutes) that it was divided into two parts when screening: the first part is about Begonia and Luo Xiangqi’s love story and the second part starts when Begonia is forced to leave Xiangqi for good to raise their daughter Meibao 梅寶 singlehandedly. This division is, from hindsight, accurate in terms of genre conventions: when the first part is a romantic melodrama which is articulated via the depictions of victimhood, the second part could be regarded as a domestic melodrama focusing on father and daughter’s love and their sufferings.²⁷ How is a romantic story told by interweaving the narrative of victimhood? How are the discourses of love, articulated in melodramatic mode, formulated to locate the moral occult in the war?

²⁶ Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), xvi; Li, Wenching, *Gongrong de xiangxiang: diguo, zhimingdi yu Da Dongya wenxue quan* (Taipei: Daoxiang, 2010), 455.

²⁷ While she did point out that the second part of *Begonia* is a “family melodrama” (ファミリーメロドラマ), Gotô Noriko failed to define what “family melodrama” means and how this mode engages with the wartime environment. Gotô Noriko, “Eizô sakka Ma-Xu Weibang to Shûkaidô nikansuru ichi kôsatsumu,” 24.

1. *Love in Victimhood*

(1) Moralizing Victimhood

The moral messages in the melodramatic mode are, as mentioned above, exemplified by Manichaeian polarization of good versus evil. Virtue and villainy inevitably clash in the narrative so as to emphasize and elevate the moral altitude of the good. The confrontation of virtue and villainy is often personified in the triad of hero, heroine and villain in melodramatic narrative. While the virtuous, innocent hero and heroine are portrayed as powerless victims and often “belong to a democratic universe,” the villains are frequently “tyrants and oppressors, those that have power and use it to hurt” and from a “noble” or higher social status.²⁸ The victims in melodrama are endowed with the most moral authority because of their sufferings.²⁹ Christine Gledhill, when studying the history of European melodrama, claims that melodrama, which emerged in the post-Revolution society, has a nostalgic structure. Instead of looking forward to a revolutionary future, it seeks to return to a “golden past;” instead of sympathizing with struggles of bourgeois ascendancy, it pities the victims of its success.³⁰ The powerless thus regain moral power in the sociopolitical chaos and moral confusion. Despite the sociopolitical differences between post-Revolution Europe and wartime Shanghai, such is also the case in the story of *Begonia*, in which morality is devastated by national crisis. The hero, Begonia, and the heroine, Xiangqi, are obviously the incarnation of virtue because of their sufferings, whereas Warlord Yuan, Xiangqi’s tyrannical, oppressive and powerful husband, is the embodiment of evil. The villainy of Warlord Yuan is demonstrated by his lascivious behavior of lusting after both the heroine *and* the hero.

²⁸ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 44; Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field,” 17.

²⁹ Linda Williams, “Melodrama Revised,” in *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory*, ed. Nick Browne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 43.

³⁰ Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field,” 21.

Xiangqi's is a story of forced and love-less marriage. When she is delivering a speech at the commencement ceremony at Girls' Normal School in Tianjin, Warlord Yuan, who attends this event only for "seeing girl students," immediately becomes infatuated with her. With some help from the matchmaker, the principal of the Girls' Normal School, he deceives Xiangqi and takes her as his third concubine. The go-between convinces Xiangqi that Warlord Yuan is in his early 30s, still single, and has a decent appearance (by showing his nephew's photo to Xiangqi), even though none of these is true. Desperate for cash in order to save her sick brother, Xiangqi reluctantly marries him. After realizing the Warlord's true identity, she regrets that her body is "defiled" by him, but her heart remains as "pure" as ever.³¹ Xiangqi's story of forced marriage between warlord and concubine is quite typical in the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies genre, such as the story of the singsong girl Fengxi and General Liu in Zhang Henshui's 張恨水 (1897-1967) *Tixiao yinyuan* 啼笑因緣 (Fate in tears and laughter, 1930). Republican women, the symbol of powerlessness, are often victims of political and economic power, while the power is personified by warlords and manifested in sexual aggression.³² What is unusual (and hence more despicable) in Warlord Yuan's lasciviousness, however, is his lust for Begonia, a female impersonator in Beijing opera.³³

Begonia is described as a timid, delicate, and extremely beautiful boy who was sent to the theater troupe by his mother due to poverty. Because of his beauty and refined demeanor, he was assigned to learn the female part in an all-male troupe and was given the stage name Wu Yuqin 吳玉琴, a feminine name literally means jade zither. (He later changes his stage name to

³¹ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, March 27, 1941.

³² About the villain's social and political power and sexual aggression, see Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury," 45.

³³ Male homosexual desire seem to be a conventional way to depict the villainy in warlords and upper-class men in the stories about republican era. Recent examples see the novel and film adaptation of *Bawang beiji* (*Farewell My Concubine*, 1991).

Begonia. See below.) When seeing him singing a female role on stage, Warlord Yuan, from balcony in the film version, looks at Yuqin with a lecherous gleam in his eye and an unruly grin. The voyeuristic gaze makes our timid hero extremely uncomfortable, yet he has to endure more humiliations in the following years. Warlord Yuan notifies the boss of the troupe that he would like to “make friends” with Yuqin and give every student in the troupe a luxury fur hat as a gift (in order to get the chance to touch his new prey). When Warlord Yuan is finally approaching him with the hat, Yuqin’s body trembles and his hands are as cold as ice. He lowers his head in order to avoid “the eyes more poisonous than serpent” but to no avail. Warlord Yuan eventually uses his fat and coarse “cactus-like” hands to hold Yuqin’s icy hands, lifts his chin and laughs wildly, “You are such a shy boy!”³⁴ Enraged, Liu Yuhua 劉玉華, one of Yuqin’s sworn brothers, attacks Warlord Yuan with bare hands. The situation goes from bad to worse: Warlord Yuan furiously takes out his handgun and aims at Yuhua. Yuqin can no longer endure the shock and suddenly passes out. In the film version, Warlord Yuan then forgets the confrontation; the camera zooms in to his salacious eyes leering at Yuqin’s helpless body lying on the floor unconsciously with a wicked smile. (Figure 4.1, 4.2) The homosexual erotic gaze threatens Yuqin’s masculinity—in other words, the Warlord’s facial expression implies his desire toward Yuqin and let female impersonator feels he is sexually offended but couldn’t resist; it is an imaginary rape. While rape is a common form of victimization (of the female characters) in melodrama, sexual assault is *not* a usual means to inflict harm on the hero. Thus a contemporary critic comments that *Begonia* is a drama of perversion and social problems, in which not only “real” women are humiliated; men whose occupation are impersonating woman are also subject

³⁴ Qin Shouou, “Qiuhaitang,” *Shenbao*, January 15, 1941.

to humiliation.³⁵ In light of this observation, the villainy personified by Warlord Yuan is not merely lust on personal level; it is indeed a social evil of injustice in terms of power structure and gender inequality.³⁶

To add one more layer of the social evil, the spoken drama version of *Begonia* emphasizes yet another sin of Warlord Yuan: unpatriotic behavior. While Warlord Yuan in the novel is primarily depicted as lustful and unlawful (he even considers that he himself *is* the law),³⁷ in the spoken drama he is both lascivious *and* ignorant of his duty as a military leader: he indulges in personal desire and cares nothing about the nation, the politics and the public. When being reminded that there will be a meeting in the Presidential Office, he insists on staying in Begonia's dressing room in the backstage of the Beijing opera house and complains, "Those damn official duties! They give me no freedom at all!"³⁸ He does not realize that he (and other warlords) have the political responsibility to save China from crisis. Gôto Noriko contends that the character Warlord Yuan symbolizes the Japanese Army, because the uniform of warlords in China was similar to that of the Japanese Army whose presence was everywhere in wartime Shanghai.³⁹ However, considering the fact that warlord is a common trope in Republican popular literature and not merely a wartime phenomenon, I would rather suggest that the image of warlord does not represent specifically the Japanese invasion, but more generally the political chaos caused by unpatriotic action. The national crisis which causes the collapse of morality and the sufferings of the virtuous hero and heroine in *Begonia*, thus, is the factional warfare and

³⁵ "Juping Qiuhaitang," *Taiping* 6 (1943), 10.

³⁶ Huang Wangli considers that Begonia's ill fate is not really about fate but about the oppression by social injustice represented by Warlord Yuan and his henchmen. See Huang Wangli, "Bianrong, fenglie, shengsi: Ma-Xu Weibang yingpian de xushi tesi—chongdu *Qiu Haitang*," *Dangdai tianying* (2006 vol. 1): 87.

³⁷ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, January 16, 1941.

³⁸ Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben*, 27.

³⁹ Gotô Noriko, "Eizô sakka Ma-Xu Weibang to Shûkaidô nikansuru ichi kôsatsumu," 25.

corruption in domestic political sphere, while, not explicitly mentioned in the literary, theatrical and film narratives but contemporary readers and spectators would detect that the domestic political chaos further incites foreign invasion. In sum, Begonia and Xiangqi are both victims of the political repression signified as sexual victimization especially in the spoken drama rendition of the story.

(2) Romantic Love in Victimhood

The victimhood in *Begonia* in fact instigates the romantic love between the hero and the heroine, albeit it is formulated somewhat differently in the novel, film and spoken drama renditions respectively. In the original novel, it is sympathy between victims that generates the feeling of romantic love. The hero and the heroine had never met until another of Begonia's sworn brothers Zhao Yukun 趙玉昆 beats an opera house manager almost to death because the manager implies that Begonia and Warlord Yuan's nephew have an homosexual affair. Yukun is arrested by police and Begonia rushes to Warlord Yuan's residence for help, only to find that the third concubine, Xiangqi, is as beautiful, solemn and pure as "a lotus bud dedicated to the Buddha."⁴⁰ Begonia soon knows every detail about Xiangqi's forced marriage and feels "pity and rage" about the Warlord's deception and humiliation of her.⁴¹ Xiangqi feels the same way when Begonia confesses that being a female impersonator is like a puppet, even though it makes him famous and rich.⁴² They feel like they share the same fate and soon fall in love. In other words, sympathy generates the sense of intimacy from the hearts of the two victims. In the film version romantic love is derived from sympathy, too, but with a slight twist. Begonia first meets

⁴⁰ Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, February 12, 1941.

⁴¹ Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, March 27, 1941.

⁴² Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, March 12, 1941.

Xiangqi not in Warlord Yuan's residence, but in the commencement ceremony at Girls' Normal School. In the film Begonia accompanies Warlord Yuan to the ceremony and witnesses how the Warlord casts licentious gaze at Xiangqi when she speaks about the importance of cultivating independence in order to serve the society, the nation and the country. The film cross-cuts between Warlord Yuan's salacious eyes, Begonia's worrying face, and a point-of-view shot of the Warlord tilting from Xiangqi's feet up to her face when she is standing on the podium delivering speech. Begonia feels affection for Xiangqi because on the one hand he sympathizes with Xiangqi's impending victimhood; on the other hand, he also admires the courage and determination demonstrated in her speech. Thus in the film version Begonia falls in love with Xiangqi not only because they share similar victimhood, but more importantly because he sees in her something lacking in his personality. Their union is morally innocent in that they unite through the romantic emotion of love based on the feelings of pity and admiration of character, rather than through sexuality or vanity.⁴³ Even though they do consummate their love and give birth to a daughter, and some contemporary critics did consider that the love story is adulterous,⁴⁴ Begonia and Xiangqi's love still qualifies as virtuous in the conventions of melodramatic narrative.

The spoken drama has yet a different way to legitimize the romantic love and to conceptualize the gender dynamics between them. The hero and heroine first meet when Warlord Yuan coerces Xiangqi, who is already his concubine, to talk with Begonia in his dressing room backstage. Xiangqi at first despises Begonia because a female impersonator is one of the lowest of the low in Chinese social and moral hierarchy, even though the concubine is another (both due

⁴³ About union through love instead of sexuality, see Steve Neale, "Melodrama and Tears," *Screen* 27/6 (November-December 1986):13.

⁴⁴ For example, Shimada Masao, "Shûkaidô," *Tairiku shinpo*, January 5, 1944.

to their “improper” sexuality that cannot be properly situated in Confucian family structure). Warlord Yuan intends to tease both the heroine and the hero by asking him to explain why his stage name is Begonia, because “Xiangqi wants to know.”⁴⁵ Inasmuch as the leaf of begonia resembles the shape of China’s map, Begonia answers, he would like to use it as a symbol, first, to remind the actors in traditional Chinese theater that they are also citizens of Republic of China and have a responsibility to the country and the nation, and second, to let the populace know that even though they are the lowest of the low, the traditional theater actors do not forget their nation and deserve to be treated equally.⁴⁶ The outburst of patriotism and nationalism in his speech, while derided by the Warlord, inspires Xiangqi to reflect on the injustice in Chinese society, especially women’s sufferings. They find *zhiji* 知己 (intimate friends with mutual understanding) in each other and soon fall in love. In other words, their mutual affection is derived from both the sympathy of sufferings on personal level as well as the resentment of the injustice on social and national levels.

In the script of the spoken drama written in Chongqing after Qin Shouou fled Occupied Shanghai, the author even maintains that Begonia and Xiangqi’s love is less about romantic passion but more about “anger against the common enemy” (*tongchou dikai* 同仇敵愾) and their union is to join forces in order to resist the evil.⁴⁷ The sentiments of cooperation, resistance and revolt do not exist in the novel and film versions of *Begonia*, however. These remarks in spoken drama script, may thus be regarded as Qin Shouou’s re-interpretation of the story in the hinterland. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the potential to read the love story in this way in wartime Shanghai. In short, the union of Begonia and Xiangqi in the spoken drama version is

⁴⁵ Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben*, 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 35.

based on kindred spirit and patriotic passion rather than on sexuality and thus is also morally good, similarly to that in the original novel and film adaptation.

(3) Union of Motherly Love

The penchant for depicting the union of couple through love (instead of sex) in melodrama is further considered as a “nostalgic fantasy of childhood characterized by union with the mother: a state of total love, satisfaction, and dyadic fusion.”⁴⁸ To elaborate on this observation, romantic love in melodrama could be regarded as originating from a regressive desire to return to the pure, unconditional and complete union of mother and child in the pre-Oedipal stage when the infant’s pleasure derives from the intimacy of sucking mother’s breasts in total dependence. In light of this, we should further analyze the love between Begonia and Xiangqi vis-à-vis the trope of the Mother. Before investigating their relationship with regard to the motherly figure, however, we should probe into the mother-son complex from Begonia’s perspective.

First, Begonia’s changing his stage name is related to his longing for his mother. Begonia changes the feminine Wu Yuqin to the more gender neutral Begonia, as many scholars point out, because of the patriotic association of the plant and the country.⁴⁹ The catalyst of the name change, on the surface, is because he wants to diminish the femininity implied in the original stage name in order to resume his manliness and to symbolically protest Warlord Yuan’s

⁴⁸ Neale, “Melodrama and Tears,” 17.

⁴⁹ See Gotô Noriko, “Eizô sakka Ma-Xu Weibang to Shûkaidô nikansuru ichi kôsetsu,” 24. Gotô’s target of research is the film version of *Begonia*. She claims that the metaphor of begonia leaf in Maxu Weibang’s film inherits the symbolism of begonia in Fei Mu’s short feature *An Interrupted Dream in a Spring Chamber* (Chungui mengduan 春閨夢斷), one of the eight episodes of the omnibus work *Symphony of Lianhua* (Lianhua jiaoxiang qu 聯華交響曲, 1937). I would rather suggest that the begonia leaf as symbol of China is a common trope in Republican China, as the fiction narrative of *Begonia* demonstrates.

sexual aggression, as Mau-Sang Ng maintains in his study on the novel of *Begonia*.⁵⁰ Upon closer investigation, however, the correlation between his name change and his mother's death seems to suggest a different interpretation. In the novel, Begonia is portrayed as a filial son who becomes a female impersonator solely because it is the only means to make money and support his poverty-stricken widowed mother. He often misses his mother who lives in the countryside when learning and performing in the troupe in Beijing and has an infantile dependence on the image of Mother who is always absent from his real life. Whenever he is mentally beaten up by the humiliation of being feminized by patrons and other students in the troupe, he thinks of his mother and feels like he regains courage and can endure the hardships again. When his mother finally died, Begonia could not stand the sorrow and asks Warlord Yuan's nephew Yuan Shaowen 袁紹文, the only good and intelligent guy in the Warlord's circle, to come to talk with him, not about his beloved late mother, but rather, with an interesting twist, about the national crisis in China. After listening to Shaowen's analogy of China as begonia leaf and the foreign invaders as the leaf-eating worms, he decides to switch his stage name.⁵¹ In other words, his enlightenment to patriotism is in fact triggered by his mother's death. The infantile dependence on mother makes him turn to the nation as a substitute when the real mother no longer exists. "China" becomes the motherly figure that he attaches his innermost feelings to. Loving the nation, in this case, is the continuation of loving a mother. He then draws a picture of begonia leaf and the leaf-eating worms and hangs it in his room when he mourns for his mother.⁵² The picture, therefore, is to inscribe the newly found love for nation *and* the endless love for mother

⁵⁰ Ng, "Popular Fiction and the Culture of Everyday Life," 136.

⁵¹ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, January 20, 1941.

⁵² Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, January 21, 1941.

in his identity. Begonia's infantile wish to unite with mother is replaced by the union between China and himself.⁵³

The love for both mother and nation finds a new incarnation when Begonia meets Xiangqi. David Der-wei Wang, in his analysis of the gender politics and national identity in *Begonia*, points out that Xiangqi is not only Begonia's romantic lover but also his spiritual mother, because "she encouraged the female impersonator to recognize his gender," and "to become a 'born-again' man" through consummation of their love.⁵⁴ The role of spiritual mother, however, may be constructed beyond Begonia's reborn gender identity. In fact, Begonia grows an infantile dependence on Xiangqi in the novel, which is manifested in the episode when Xiangqi urges Begonia to run away from Warlord Yuan's repression together. Begonia at first hesitates because he has no idea about how to realize the dream. Xiangqi then designs an concrete escape plan for both of them and advises him to purchase real estate in the countryside of Begonia's hometown where they will be hiding; in so doing they will be well prepared and "will not need to depend on others" when their escape takes place.⁵⁵ Begonia's role in the escape plan is passive and naïve; he mentally depends on Xiangqi's instructions for every new step of their future. This infantile dependence turns the romantic relationship between Begonia and

⁵³ While scholars may notice Begonia could be regarded a symbol of China, mother earth and Mother, they solely discussed this point from the superficial analogies of begonia leaf and China's map, China and motherland, as well as Begonia's taking up the mother's role in the latter part of the narrative. Scholars failed to recognize the complex psychology of Begonia's identification with Mother figure from his infantile wish of reuniting with his real mother by uniting with the nation. For example, see Shao Yingjian, *Shanghai kangzhan shiqi de huaju*, 239-241.

⁵⁴ David Der-wei Wang, "Popular Literature and National Representation: The Gender and Genre Politics of *Begonia*," in *Rethinking Chinese Popular Culture: Cannibalizations of the Canon*, Carlos Rojas and Eileen Cheng-yin Chow ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 221.

⁵⁵ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, April 8, 1941.

Xiangqi into child's reliance on spiritual mother of the complete intimacy in the pre-Oedipal stage.⁵⁶

In addition, Begonia not only finds motherly love in Xiangqi but also connects his love for Xiangqi with his love for the nation. As mentioned above, in the script of spoken drama Begonia loves Xiangqi not only because of romantic passion but also because of patriotic compassion. Through "anger against the common enemy," Begonia's passionate feelings about Xiangqi lead him to the sentiment of resisting the evil (read: domestic political upheavals in the text as well as Japan's invasion in context) and reconnect him with the nation. Loving Xiangqi, his comrade in fighting "evil," is also an act of loving the nation. The love for mother, nation and romantic lover, therefore, all link together and form a circle; Begonia is at the center of this circle of motherly love. It is noteworthy that even though in the novel version (serialized in the "Orphan Island" before Japan's complete occupation) and the script of spoken drama (presumably partly written in the hinterland) Begonia may have anti-Japanese sentiments and hence connect the love of mother/nation/lover, it is impossible to propagate this sentiment in explicit language due to censorship; the effectiveness of the resistance is thus not without question.

The connection between mother, China and romantic love is completely eliminated from the film adaptation. In film narrative Begonia does not explain the reason for his name change; nor is Xiangqi as assertive as she is in the novel version of *Begonia* and may not be able to be Begonia's spiritual mother. Probably because the film was produced by the semi-official film

⁵⁶ This dimension of the relationship between Begonia and Xiangqi does not exist in the stage play and film adaptations. In the spoken drama the gender dynamics between the hero and the heroine is different from that in the novel. In the spoken drama Begonia initiates the escape while Xiangqi hesitates; Begonia is active and assertive while Xiangqi is passive and submissive. On the other hand, in the film version both of them take an active role in the escape plan.

production company Zhonghua dianying lianhe gongsi 中華電影聯合公司 (China Film United) and shot in Shanghai under total occupation, it was subject to inspection of Nanjing Film Censorship Commission under Wang Jingwei's pro-Japanese government.⁵⁷ The censorship on film was in fact the strictest among all cultural productions including literature and theater under Japanese dominance. Therefore patriotic messages were not allowed to slip into the film narratives. In sum, the ideal romantic love, from Begonia's perspective, is to return to the complete union before evil (manifested as sexual aggression) disturbed the perfect dyadic fusion.

2. *Scar: Feminized Victimhood*

(1) Suffering Mother, Hysterical Femininity

Begonia's infantile wish of reuniting with motherly love will soon be obstructed; he has to lose his "mother" again. After Warlord Yuan discovers their affair and commands the cunning guard to cut a cross onto his face, Begonia is forced to leave his spiritual mother Xiangqi for good. (Figure 4.3) The mother figure is permanently lost; both his daughter Meibao and Begonia are motherless now. To amend the loss, he becomes a mother himself by providing Meibao with everything a father *and* a mother can do.⁵⁸ While Meibao is dressed by her father to look like a girl from upper class family, Begonia has no new clothes for several years, regardless of her protest.⁵⁹ In one episode Meibao is studying at school when it rains heavily. Begonia, worrying the rain might make his lovely daughter wet and uncomfortable, rushes to school to pick her up and carries the twelve-year-old Meibao on his back all the way home so that her feet would not

⁵⁷ Poshek Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 100.

⁵⁸ David Der-wei Wang, in analyzing the gender politics, proposes that Begonia takes up the role of mother "as if he were determined to act out the mother figure as a way to redeem his incomplete womanhood on stage." Wang, "Popular Literature and National Representation," 221.

⁵⁹ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, June 28, 1941.

touch the puddles of water.⁶⁰ The more he sacrifices for Meibao, the happier he is. In domestic melodrama, motherly qualities such as love, care, and self-sacrifice are endowed with highest morality; male characters may achieve moral altitude by assuming a feminine mother's role.⁶¹ In contrast, the father in domestic melodrama is often an oppressive and dominating figure who reduces his children to tortured victims.⁶² Begonia's self-sacrifice not only exempts him from being a victimizer as most of father's role in domestic melodrama; more importantly, he is his own victimizer who inflicts harm to himself in order to fulfill the mother's role of highest morality.

In the latter half of the story, after living tranquilly in a rural village for a few years, Begonia and Meibao flee from the north to Shanghai in order to escape disaster—in the novel and spoken drama it is the national disaster of the Second Sino-Japanese War, while in the film adaptation it is the natural disaster of flood. After arriving in Shanghai, the father and daughter immediately encounter the most serious problem: their savings are running out and yet neither of them can find a decent job. Begonia tries to ask for help from his previous patrons who admired him some eighteen years before when he travelled to perform in Shanghai, only to be rejected due to the horrible scar on his face.⁶³ Meibao, who is seventeen years old now, goes to interview for a "tour guide" company which turns out to be an escort agency; Meibao immediately leaves.⁶⁴ In order to protect Meibao's purity and support their livings, Begonia's last resort is to become an acrobatic actor to somersault on Beijing opera's stage, because this role wears heavy

⁶⁰ Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, July 10, 1941.

⁶¹ Neale, "Melodrama and Tears," 17; E. Ann Kaplan, "Mothering, Feminism and Representation: The Maternal in Melodrama and the Women's Film 1910-40," in *Home is Where the Heart Is*, 119.

⁶² John Mercer and Martin Shingler, *Melodrama: Genre, Style, Sensibility* (London ; New York : Wallflower, 2004), 13.

⁶³ Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, October 21, 1941.

⁶⁴ Qin Shouou, "Qiu Haitang," *Shenbao*, November 8, 1941.

makeup that could obscure his ugly scar. Being trained as female impersonator whose movement is required to be delicate and gentle, Begonia is incapable of keeping up with the pace of the intense, vigorous somersault performance. He tumbles on the stage several times, soon becomes sick and starts to cough up blood. He refuses Meibao when she begs him to quit the physically exhausted job and go to see a doctor for his illness. He is determined to devote himself for Meibao's good at all costs, even if it means that he has to get hurt, bleed, and faint on the stage. (In the spoken drama version, Begonia eventually dies in the backstage after a failed attempt to rush to do his last somersault.)⁶⁵ Thus Wang describes Begonia's extreme self-inflicted sufferings and sacrifice for his daughter as "act[ing] out the mother's figure."⁶⁶ Begonia's acting out resembles the hysterical symptoms such as loss of mobility, feeding others while starving oneself, and whittling down the space one's body takes up.⁶⁷ In this case, Begonia is not only a caring and self-sacrificing mother, but also a hysterical mother.

Hysteria has often been related to the feminine body—more accurately, a feminine body that suffers. The female body in patriarchal dominance becomes a "docile body" that is habituated to external regulation, subjection and discipline and suffers from repression and trauma. Through this suffering body the ideological construction of femininity is inscribed in hyperbolic terms.⁶⁸ In Freudian theory, the submissive feminine body may transform repression and traumas into corporeal symptoms, "so that the body becomes the discursive field upon which

⁶⁵ Even though Begonia dies in the serialized novel, spoken drama and film adaptations, the plots and causes leading to his death are different. Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben*, 219-220.

⁶⁶ Wang, "Popular Literature and National Representation," 221.

⁶⁷ Susan Bordo, "From *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*," in *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism: A Norton Reader*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 748.

⁶⁸ Susan Bordo, "From *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*," 745-748.

unconscious traumas find their displaced expression.”⁶⁹ In other words, the psychic affect is transcribed into somatic meaning.⁷⁰ Therefore, emotions of a suffering, feminine mother like Begonia would fully act out in hysterical bodily sensations. Begonia’s hyperbolic gestures of self-sacrifice and self-inflicted sufferings are not only manifested in actions such as coughing up blood and fainting on the Beijing opera stage; excessive crying is another embodiment of the feminine/feminized body’s hysterical response to repression and traumas. In the film version, Begonia often breaks down and sheds heart-wrenching tears when Meibao “confronts” him. In one episode Meibao brings home a mirror from school and is delighted to see her pretty face in it. Spotting the mirror, Begonia is enraged and asks Meibao to throw it away. Meibao objects; Begonia gets more furious and snatches the mirror from her hands violently. All of a sudden he sees the ugly scar on his face in the mirror, shocked, breaks down and starts to sob. Meibao now realizes why her father is angry and cries, too, and says regretfully that she shouldn’t have brought the mirror home in the first place. Begonia cries even more vehemently and blames himself as a “selfish” father who wouldn’t allow his child to keep something she wants. The two then reconcile, holding hands, and cry together in the dim light of their shabby home. The physical sensations of trembling, convulsing, panting, collapsing and sobbing exteriorize the conflicts and psychic structure of Begonia.⁷¹ However, what are the conflicts and repressed

⁶⁹ David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 173.

⁷⁰ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, xi.

⁷¹ About exteriorizing psychic structure, see Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 35. On a side note, in the spoken drama Begonia seldom cries before separating from Xiangqi (but does cry in the latter half of the story) whereas Xiangqi breaks down and cries a lot. In contrast, in the original novel Begonia cries a lot whereas Xiangqi almost never cries. In the film adaptation both Begonia and Xiangqi cries a lot. The gender dynamics and the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity in different renditions of *Begonia* dictate the differences.

“psychic structure” that need to be hysterically externalized in bodily performance? As a man, why does Begonia act out the feminine, hysterical symptoms?

(2) Scar: Symbol of Castration or Virtue?

Begonia’s feminine, hysterical symptoms, in first glance, seem to suggest that he suffers because he would like to compensate Meibao for her motherless life. Indeed at some point in the fiction narrative Begonia thinks to himself that he would rather “suffer a little” in exchange for Meibao’s wellbeing, because “if she lived with her mother she could have been living a better life.”⁷² Another possible reason is that through self-sacrifice for Meibao, Begonia could continue his unfulfilled romance with his beloved Xiangqi; Meibao looks exactly like her mother—in the film version both the daughter and the mother are played by the same actress Li Lihua 李麗華 (b.1924). (Figure 4.4, 4.5) The intimacy between father and daughter is even more intense than that between lovers. In the script of spoken drama, Meibao presses up her cheek against Begonia’s and in turn he caresses her hair gently when they reconcile with each other after the quarrel over mirror. Begonia passionately says to Meibao, “Please stay with me. Daddy needs you.”⁷³ Similar displays of physical intimacy occur several times in all renditions of *Begonia* story. In contrast, Begonia and Xiangqi’s interactions are primarily limited to verbal communications in the literary, theatrical and cinematic narratives. Therefore, Begonia’s hysterical body seems to further suggest an incestuous impulse between father and daughter. The daughter somehow replaces her mother in the romantic relationship between the hero and the absent heroine and carries on the truncated love story.

⁷² Qin Shouou, “Qiuhaitang,” *Shenbao*, July 12, 1941.

⁷³ Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juban*, 147.

However, the mental and psychological trauma implied in the scar on Begonia's face indicates yet another interpretation: the cross-shaped scar embodies the metaphorical and psychological castration caused by Warlord Yuan that incapacitates Begonia from developing his romantic relationship after the physical injury. In a psychoanalytical interpretation, the cross cut onto his face by the Warlord's henchman symbolizes the patriarchy's (personified by the Warlord) corporeal punishment of Begonia on his sexual feelings toward his spiritual mother, Xiangqi. The physical injury on his face is later internalized and turns into psychic impairment, depriving him of the symbolic phallus and causes psychopathological impotence; the wounded psychic in turn is exteriorized by Begonia obsessively acting out the hysterical mother's role. In addition, the scar perpetually destroys Begonia's manliness and disables him from engaging in the heterosexual dyadic fusion of the masculine and the feminine. A sense of lack and inferiority prevents Begonia from fulfilling his romantic impulse and prevents him from seeing Xiangqi again. Throughout the course of the story, Xiangqi actually tries several times to find Begonia and Meibao after Warlord Yuan dies and she is "liberated" from the Warlord's confines. Even though he often laments and cries when holding her photo in hands and misses her to a great extent after they part, Begonia, upon hearing the news that Xiangqi is coming to the village to find him, immediately moves away almost like "escaping from a foe," as he tells Meibao the reason of their moving in the film narrative. When alone, Begonia thinks to himself, "I don't want to see you again because I care about you too much. Xiangqi, look at my face, my ugly face! ... How could a woman as beautiful as you live with this ugly face day and night? ... Really, I avoid you because I don't want you to be distressed by seeing this ugly face!"⁷⁴ Thus, while Ng asserts that the scar mutilates Begonia's beautiful feminine face and prompts "a tragic

⁷⁴ Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben*, 131.

fulfillment of his search for manliness,”⁷⁵ I agree with Wang’s observation that the ugly cicatrix in fact emasculates him and devastates Begonia’s masculine pride all together.⁷⁶ Scholars have contended that the cross-shaped scar is a “sacred medal” of “resisting violence” and an icon of virtue;⁷⁷ nevertheless, given the fact that Begonia rarely confronts the violence done to him and his loved ones, I would instead suggest that the scar is *not* a recognition of Begonia’s active deeds of resistance, but rather a symbol of psychological deformity, castration, and impotence and indicates Begonia’s obsession with his lack of phallus.⁷⁸

The emasculated victim’s hysterical body, however, implies an alternative kind of hero: a victim-hero who achieves recognition of his virtue, not through resistance, but through passive deeds such as suffering and self-sacrifice, while suffering and powerlessness are coded feminine. In contrast, masculinity and patriarchy are often coded morally weak in the melodramatic mode of expression.⁷⁹ Begonia’s suffering feminized body, on the one hand, is threatened by the masculine and patriarchal repression in the form of the Warlord’s sexual aggression, physical

⁷⁵ Ng, “Popular Fiction and the Culture of Everyday Life,” 137.

⁷⁶ David Wang suggests it is a “spiritual castration.” Wang, “Popular Literature and National Representation,” 219.

⁷⁷ Such as Gotô Noriko, “Eizô sakka Ma-Xu Weibang to Shûkaidô nikansuru ichi kôsetsu,” 15, 19. Yomi Braester, when analyzing *Song at Midnight* (Yeban gesheng 夜半歌聲, 1937), an horror film directed by *Begonia*’s director Maxu Weibang, considers the scar on the hero’s face, a similar trope as that in *Begonia*, as an “icon of ideological virtue.” Yomi Braester, “Revolution and Revulsion: Ideology, Monstrosity, and Phantasmagoria in Ma-Xu Weibang’s Film *Song at Midnight*,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 12:1 (Spring 2000), 85.

⁷⁸ Shao Yingjian asserts that the cross-shaped scar on Begonia’s face symbolizes the division of China’s territory during wartime. She claims that Begonia’s face represents the map of China, and the “map” is divided into four sections by the cross-shaped scar, which represents the Occupied areas, KMT-ruled as well as CCP-ruled area during wartime. This interpretation reads from the outer appearance of Begonia rather than the psychological depth of this tortured figure. Furthermore, the allegorical reading lacks detailed explanation of how the allegory is constructed. Shao Yingjian, “Qiu Haitang: Lunxian shiqi Shanghai de xiangzheng biaozi,” 122-145.

⁷⁹ Williams, *Playing the Race Card*, 25, 26; Kaplan, “Mothering, Feminism and Representation,” 119; Pickowicz, “Melodramatic Representation and the ‘May Fourth’ Tradition of Chinese Cinema,” 322.

violence and symbolic castration. On the other hand, the exaggerative, obsessive and hysterical acting-out of this feminized body is also used to accentuate what is morally good and what is not and to locate the moral occult—the hidden operative values that were repressed in wartime politics. Why Begonia could be regarded as morally exemplary, given that he is a weak, feminized and hysterical figure? In passing, the author of the original serialized novel of *Begonia* gave a hint of how to understand the moral altitude of the victim-hero. In sharp contrast to his occupation of performing and counterfeiting emotions as a female impersonator, Qin Shouou claims that Begonia when off stage is truly capable of authentic love. Genuine love is a moral feeling and the momentum to compel a man to sacrifice for his beloved, be it romantic lover, children, parents, or the nation, including Begonia's sacrifice for Xiangqi that is manifested in the cross-shaped scar.⁸⁰ Thus, one of the latent moral meanings in the melodramatic story of Begonia may imply that the patriotic act of sacrificing for the nation out of passion, similar to the sacrifice for lover and family, is considered as the one of the noblest forms of authentic love. This also resonates with the accusation of Warlord Yuan's villainy in the spoken drama version. The villain's incapability of genuine love is to be blamed for his unpatriotic behavior—the Warlord only cares about his own personal desires, is selfish and both unwilling to and incapable of sacrifice. In short, authentic love propels the individual to eliminate the self for the greater good, which is exemplified in Begonia's extreme self-sacrifice for his lover and daughter. The excessive and expressive description of Begonia's victimhood of passive suffering and sacrifice thus heightens his moral altitude in the moral chaos of wartime. Interestingly, unlike the signified of the "nation" in the popular romances in wartime Taiwan and Manchukuo which were often

⁸⁰ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, March 10, 1941; May 10, 1941.

ambiguous and ambivalent, it is clear, albeit implicitly, that the “nation” worthy for the morally good to sacrifice for out of intensive love in *Begonia* is China, as suggested by the title itself.

III. Hysterical Protest

The moral altitude of a “victim as hero,” as suggested by Linda Williams, in melodramatic texts is beyond doubt, but *Begonia* has been criticized as lacking positive power and agency.⁸¹ Pickowicz’s study on “May Fourth” melodrama and its legacy in the 1980s suggests that the victim, even though a moral model, does not have a hand in his own salvation.⁸² Jay Leyda, one of the first film critics of Chinese cinema in the West, criticized the “undercurrent of self-pity” in *Begonia* and its contemporary literary and film productions were “finally being exploited as an anti-Chinese weapon.”⁸³ Leyda’s criticism seems to target the passivity of suffering and self-sacrifice in *Begonia* and neglect the moral teaching of “sacrificing for the nation out of genuine love,” perhaps due to his lack of access to the fictional and theatrical renditions of the story. Nevertheless, can passive victimhood gain positive meaning and endow the populace with agency to act against wartime politics? Is there any possibility of active resistance in the story of a feminized and hysterical hero?

1. Somatizing Melodrama

The feminized hero’s melodramatic expression of suffering indicates two layers of hysteria and melodramatic theatricality. On the diegetic level, the hysterical, feminized body of

⁸¹ Williams, *Playing the Race Card*, 25.

⁸² Pickowicz, “Melodramatic Representation and the ‘May Fourth’ Tradition of Chinese Cinema,” 322.

⁸³ Jay Leyda, *Dianying: An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China* (Cambridge, M.A.: The MIT Press, 1972), 147.

the victim-hero exteriorizes the repression and trauma through corporeal symptoms of tears and a scar in expressionist and theatrical manners. On the transtextual level, the intense emotions of the victimized, no longer constrained by the words on paper, burst into bodily performances in the physical theater of spoken drama and film. The melodramatic theatricality of the physical representations is not only utilized to “get its meaning across,” but, more importantly, the hysterical performances of excess demonstrate that patriarchal sociopolitical orders fail to discipline, regulate, and coerce the female/feminized body and repress the psychic energies incompatible with patriarchy in wartime Shanghai.⁸⁴

How do spoken drama and film, two bodily enactments of the *Begonia* narrative, perform the melodramatic somatic excess? What are the theatrical and cinematic devices to exteriorize the interiority of the victim-hero and make the repressed psychic intelligible? The spoken drama of *Begonia*, first of all, like many melodramatic performances, incorporates music to vocalize the latent content of collective mentality; both Beijing opera and western music contribute to the theatrical effects in *Begonia*. The primary director of the spoken drama production of *Begonia* is the prestigious film director Fei Mu, who switched from cinema to theater after the Japanese militarists limited the import and caused the shortage of film stock from 1941 to the end of the War.⁸⁵ Fei Mu introduced cinematic elements including Western music to spoken drama, a modern Westernized theatrical form that emerged in the early twentieth century; originally it used only dialogue in order to oppose the “outdated” traditional operatic theater which utilizes both dialogue and singing. For example, the first scene of the second act in which Begonia and

⁸⁴ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, 13; Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 39; Eng, *Racial Castration*, 177.

⁸⁵ Li Tao, *Dazhong wenhua yujing xia de Shanghai zhiye huaju: 1937-1945* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shiji chuban), 141.

Xiangqi secretly meet in her parents' home was accompanied by a melodious waltz tune, which made the leading actor feel this scene is almost like “*ballet and poetry*.”⁸⁶ (italics original in English) However, what interested the general audience was in fact the traditional Beijing opera sung by Begonia and other characters in the modern theatrical representation. Eileen Chang 張愛玲 (1920-1995) once commented that the most touching moment in *Begonia* is when Begonia, after all the sufferings and became an acrobatic actor, sings the famous Beijing opera lyric, “For a congenial friend a thousand toasts are too few; in a disagreeable conversation one word more is too many [*Jiu feng zhiji qianbei shao, hua bu tuoji banju duo* 酒逢知己千杯少，話不投機半句多],” a line originally sung by the beautiful female protagonist Su San in “Yutangchun 玉堂春” which Begonia often performed back in his glorious days as a female impersonator. Begonia’s (or more precisely, the actor’s) sorrowful singing created an atmosphere of “indefinite desolation.”⁸⁷ The incorporation and foregrounding of the “traditional” Beijing opera songs, ironically, transformed the “modern” Westernized spoken drama to become a commercial theatrical form. Spoken dramas before *Begonia* only attracted elite and intellectual audiences and were performed by amateur actors; the traditional theatrical elements, especially the singing, in *Begonia* appealed to spectators from all walks of life and the profits further supported professional troupes.⁸⁸ The combination of traditional and modern, Chinese and Western theatrical forms materializes the acoustic elements in the original novel and creates emotive effects which resonate with the cultural memory of the Occupied populace. As Eileen Chang reflected, “These invisible tissues [i.e. traditions like Beijing opera] constitute our living past

⁸⁶ Shihui, “Qiuhaitang yanchu shouji zhi er,” *Zhazhi*, 1943, 10(6), 175.

⁸⁷ Zhang Ailing, “Yangren kan Jingxi ji qita,” *Liuyan* (Shanghai: Zhang Ailing, 1944), 110. Also see Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juben*, 217.

⁸⁸ See Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*, 98; Li Tao, *Dazhong wenhua yujing xia de Shanghai zhiye huaju*, 58, 71.

[*huoshengsheng de guoqu* 活生生的過去].”⁸⁹ Thus, the acoustic presentation in spoken drama of *Begonia* not only aroused the audience’s sympathy for the victim-hero but also connected individual spectators to the collective unconsciousness of Chinese society, which passively avoided Japan’s aggressive propaganda of wartime ideology such as “both nations sharing the same culture.”

On the other hand, the cinematic style of the film adaptation of *Begonia* directed by Maxu Weibang, compared with his expressionist horror film *Song at Midnight* (*Yeban gesheng* 夜半歌聲, 1937), appears to be more realistic. The lighting is less dramatic, the *mise-en-scène* such as the décor in Xiangqi’s parents’ home and in the rural village where Begonia and Meibao live lacks the disproportional and surreal furnishings of *Song at Midnight*. However, the hyperbolic style of acting—large gestures, declamatory style of speech, and histrionic overacting—in *Begonia* is more dramatic than those in *Song at Midnight*. When Begonia and Xiangqi talk to each other, the speed of speech is significantly slow and they accentuate almost every word. Accompanied by exaggerated body movements, hand gestures and facial expressions, the declamatory style of performance looks like the actors are delivering a public speech in a public hall rather than chatting with lovers in private space, like performing on stage rather than in front of camera.⁹⁰ Similar performative skills were employed in representation of the domestic melodrama between Begonia and Meibao, too. The actors indeed *overact* the emotions and unconscious minds of the characters; this overacting intensifies the hysterical effect of *Begonia*. In sum, through physical representations in theatrical and cinematic forms the

⁸⁹ Zhang Ailing, “Yangren kan jingxi ji qita,” 110.

⁹⁰ This may be a legacy from *wenming xi* 文明戲 (modernized play) popular in the 1910s and 1920s. In *wenming xi* actors usually use exaggerated movement to accentuate emotions. The spoken drama production of *Begonia* thus could be regarded as the combination of the elite dramatic form of spoken drama and the popular form of *wenming xi*.

repressed is externalized as corporeal symptoms of hysteria. Then, how does the hysterical melodrama protest against the patriarchal wartime politics?

2. *Tears and Imaginary Solidarity*

Before scrutinizing the mechanism of the hysterical melodramatic mode of expression as protest against wartime politics, however, I would like to discuss the premise of this argument first. The collective act of consuming and responding to the constellation of *Begonia* in fact forms a sense of solidarity among the spectators, and this imaginary solidarity further endows the act of creating and consuming this “tragic romance” a collective act of protest. How is the imaginary solidarity formed? In fact, audience’s “visceral physical sensation” of weeping,⁹¹ i.e., the strong bodily response to the protagonists’ sufferings, is a manifestation of pity. The tears of pathos unite the audience and the fictional characters, consolidate the tie between the audience and the actors of these pitiable roles, and connect the individual spectators with each other.

The creators of the *Begonia* constellation indeed deliberately designed the story to elicit tears of pathos. Shi Hui 石揮 (1915-1957), the actor who played *Begonia* in spoken drama, claimed that “*Begonia* must make people cry,” because it is a tragedy about the male protagonist’s fame and fortune, humiliation, romantic love, sadness and death.⁹² Tens of thousands of spectators cried in the theater when *Begonia* sacrifices himself for Meibao in Act Four and when Meibao, after a series of delays, eventually meets Xiangqi in Act Five.⁹³ Pathos requires the audience’s identification with the victim and pity “is a form of conviction that

⁹¹ Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 45.

⁹² Shi Hui, “Qiu Haitang yanchu shouji zhi yi,” *Zhazhi* 1943, 10 (5), 160.

⁹³ Qin Shouou, “Wo ping Qiu Haitang,” *Zhazhi* 1943, 10 (5), 168; “Qiu Haitang wo jian,” *Sanliujiu huabao* 1943, 23(10), 20.

someone else is in pain.”⁹⁴ By extension, “pity often (or always?) involves an element of self-pity.”⁹⁵ Thus an episode about Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961) weeping during the dress rehearsal of *Begonia*’s spoken drama production is especially interesting. A few wartime tabloids gossiped that Mei Lanfang, arguably the most famous female impersonator in Beijing opera, was so moved by Begonia’s predicaments (especially when he became an acrobatic actor) that “Dr. Mei” cried in the theater and used his handkerchief to gently wipe his tearful eyes.⁹⁶ This gossip implies that Dr. Mei, as a famous female impersonator himself, may especially sympathize with the plight of the fictional character Begonia. The spectators like Mei, even though they know that they are not in danger now, can imagine what it is like to suffer. The spectators can share this with others who suffered the same, which give them a sense of universal connectedness through tears.⁹⁷

Tears not only connect the spectators and the characters through pity and self-pity over the sad plot elements, but also create a shared sense of powerlessness and victimhood among spectators via the mechanism of narration. The viewers have privileged knowledge of the “true” situations that are inaccessible to the *dramatis personae*; they are anxious about the protagonists’ being in danger, sick and heartbroken and yet are unable to intervene.⁹⁸ The powerlessness of the protagonists in the narrative thus translates into a similar sense of powerlessness in audience and hence the pitiful tears. The climax of weeping occurs when Begonia dies. In fact Begonia has three ways to die in the serialized novel, spoken drama and film adaptations. Before discussing

⁹⁴ Dana Lacourse Munteanu, *Tragic Pathos: Pity and Fear in Greek Philosophy and Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.

⁹⁵ Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 45.

⁹⁶ For example Xinmin, “Mei Lanfang wei Qiuhaitang liulei,” *Haibao*, December 26, 1942; “Haishang chuanlai Mei xiaoxi: Mei Lanfang kule yichu ‘Qiuhaitang,’” *Sanliujiu huabao* 1943, 19 (4), 20.

⁹⁷ See Munteanu, *Tragic Pathos*, 130-131.

⁹⁸ Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field,” 30; Mercer and Shingler, *Melodrama*, 80-81.

Begonia's death scenes, however, we should rewind the narrative a little bit. In all renditions of *Beognia* Meibao sings in various restaurants in Shanghai in order to support her father who was severely sick due to the physically exhausting somersaults in a Beijing opera house. One of Meibao's admirers is a young man from a well-to-do family, who, without knowing her true identity, falls in love with her. He introduces his aunt, a motherly figure of his, to Meibao, and hopes she will agree his financial support to Meibao's sick father. The young man's aunt turns out to be none other than Xiangqi! After listening to Meibao's heart-rending story, Xiangqi realizes that the singing girl is her own daughter whom she has lost contact for some seventeen years. They recognize each other and rush to see Begonia. In the serialized novel, Begonia has died in bed quietly before Xiangqi and Meibao arrive the tiny apartment in a shabby area of Shanghai.⁹⁹ In the spoken drama version, the mother and daughter rush to the Beijing opera house where Begonia insists on being an acrobatic actor regardless of his deadly illness; he dies in front of his lover and daughter after his failed attempt to do the last somersault, as mentioned above.¹⁰⁰ In the film adaptation, in comparison, Xiangqi and Meibao, too, rush to the shabby apartment, only to see a large blood stain on the ground in front of the building and hear people yelling that Begonia jumped from the window; they see an ambulance going away, in which Begonia's corpse is carried. Although the death scenes are formulated differently, the sentiments of "delay" and "too late" is the same in all three renditions of the story. The reunion of Begonia and Xiangqi is postponed several times: in the spoken drama Xiangqi, after Begonia avoiding seeing her for several years, manages to see and talk to him again a few minutes before his death, whereas in the film adaptation it is too late and Xiangqi could only "reunite" with the trace of Begonia's life (and death)—not even with his corpse. Steve Neale maintains that time and timing

⁹⁹ Qin Shouou, "Qiuhaitang," *Shenbao*, February 13, 1942.

¹⁰⁰ Qin Shouou, *Qiuhaitang juban*, 217-220.

are crucial in eliciting tears in melodramatic mode of expression. The spectators do not only cry because of the sorrowful inability of the protagonists to reunite due to an untimely death. What is more, even though eager to know what will happen to the characters, the spectators “are dependent on the time of the narrative and its narration.” The longer there is delay in disclosing the outcome of the story, the more the spectators are likely to cry, because the powerlessness of the spectators’ position will be intensified.¹⁰¹ In other words, spectators in the spoken drama and film adaptations of *Begonia* cried because, even though they were aware of the “true” situations, were unable to determine the course events will take; all they can do is to “wait and see.”¹⁰² Thus tears shed for the victimized could also be the tears shed for the spectators themselves.

The sympathetic, self-pitying and powerless tears indeed reflected the wartime mentality and resonated with the populace in Shanghai. A journalist mocked the tears of the spectators attending spoken drama productions in the Carlton Theater, one of the best theaters in Shanghai, which flooded it with a “River of Begonia.”¹⁰³ The popular appeal of *Begonia*, suggested by an enthusiastic consumer of the novel and spoken drama, is that because “Shanghai people have been gloomy for a long while and need a stimulus to laugh heartily or cry hard;” the story of *Begonia* is so sad that it could stimulate the much-needed tears.¹⁰⁴ Another critic analyzes why many male audiences cried when seeing the spoken drama productions: “What kind of world is it now? Men with intellect are mostly disfranchised. They eulogize Begonia because they “pour other’s wine to irrigate the rough and rugged terrain in their hearts” [*jie taren zhi jiubei, jiao ziji zhi kuilei* 借他人之酒杯，澆自己之塊壘], meaning using other’s story to dispel their own

¹⁰¹ Neale, “Melodrama and Tears,” 12.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰³ Qiuweng, “Haitang lei,” *Haibao*, February 24, 1943.

¹⁰⁴ Tihong, “You niwei Qiuhaitang tianzhu zhe,” *Haibao*, March 9, 1943.

indignation.¹⁰⁵ In other words, Begonia and his misfortunes are an excuse for the wartime populace to release their repressed disgruntlement over living in the Occupied area. They cried not only because of Begonia's sad story but, more importantly, because of their own (unspeakable) sense of sacrifice and victimhood. In Freudian theory, primitive societies, through mourning the joint loss of the sacrifice to the deity, developed a communality originated from the ritualistic repetition of the scene of victimhood and victimization.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, through reading and seeing Begonia's self-sacrifice, wartime spectators collectively went through the ritual of (self-)sacrificial victim, and thus constructed a social belonging. In short, this is an imagined emotive community forged in the pathos of shared victimhood. Crying, unlike Franco Moretti's claims that it is an infantile reaction to distress and "enables us *not to see*," is endowed with collective agency, for it disrupts the veneer of peace and prosperity, a false promise which Wang Jingwei's government asserted that could be achieved by collaborating with Japan.¹⁰⁷ Tears remind the spectators of sufferings and consolidate the contemporary spectators among each other. The weakness of victimhood, therefore, generates the power of *Begonia*.

3. *Hysterical Protest*

The power of tears endows the constellation of *Begonia* versions with a collective agency to protest during wartime. This is a hysterical protest, not against the Chinese patriarchal society, but against the repressive wartime politics that comprise masculine and patriarchal rhetorics by

¹⁰⁵ Jiongfeng, "Qiuhaitang de yishi," *Haibao*, January 30, 1943. Translation modified from Liu Yiqin, *A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard B. Mather (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007), 587.

¹⁰⁶ Fatima Naqvi, *The Literary and Cultural Rhetoric of Victimhood: Western Europe, 1970-2005* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 12-14.

¹⁰⁷ See "Wang zhuxi jiejian Ri jizhe, changlun Da Dongya gongrong quan," *Shenbao*, June 28, 1943.

hysterical bodily performance in melodrama. The wartime regime endeavored to produce a masculine and grandiose image of the War by propagandist rhetoric, such as the slogan of Greater East Asia and the depiction of a brave Japanese Navy in *Shenbao*, where *Begonia* was serialized.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Japan's image from the perspective of wartime Shanghai populace was constructed as patriarchal and masculine, too, as seen in Fei Mu's short feature *Interrupted Dream in a Spring Chamber* (*Chungui mengduan* 春閨夢斷, 1937).¹⁰⁹ This film, like German expressionist features, uses highly stylized cinematic languages such as distorted set design to portray two girls' (sisters?) nightmare of a demonic man who seizes them by force. This middle-aged man is characterized by wearing toothbrush mustache, a suit, a cape and two horns, which resembles the stereotypes of both devil and the Japanese man in wartime. Before the scene when he seizes the girls who wear cheongsam and forces them to bed, the man first spins a globe crazily in a room on fire; he throws a begonia leaf into the fire with a mischievous grin. The allegorical reading of the devilish man as Japan and two young, innocent and weak girls as China is inevitable.¹¹⁰ The middle-aged man's sexual aggression thus renders Japan's invasion as patriarchal and masculine oppression of the young, feminine China. In real life, the freedom of speech was suppressed; Shanghai municipal governments prohibited open discussion of political violence and the Japanese invasion.¹¹¹ Political dissents were persecuted and censorship "led to the frequent closing down of theaters and arresting of intellectuals."¹¹² All in

¹⁰⁸ For example, Ôshita Utaru, "Ribei haijun yiwen lü," *Shenbao*, June 1, 1943.

¹⁰⁹ This short feature is one of the eight episodes of the omnibus work, *Symphony of Lianhua* (*Lianhua jiaoxiang qu* 聯華交響曲, 1937). See David Der-wei Wang, "Fei Mu, Mei Lanfang, and the Polemics of Screening China," in *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, Carols Rojas and Eileen Chow ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 64.

¹¹⁰ Chen Mo, *Liuying chunmeng: Fei Mu dianying lungao* (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2000), 147.

¹¹¹ Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong*, 22.

¹¹² Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration*, 104.

all, the Occupied populace was repressed by an atmosphere of terror. It is in this suffocating environment that the melodramatic expression of *Begonia* and its hysterical bodily performances burst into a hysterical protest.

The melodramatic mode of expression is regarded as a hysterical text that breaks the unity of realism and serves as a “victory over repression.” Hélène Cixous contends that hysteria, by actions such as raising hell and throwing fits, dismantles structures and disturbs arrangements.¹¹³ It is a protest, albeit feeble, against patriarchy; thus the hysteric is a hero, not a victim.¹¹⁴ In light of this argument, the hysterical melodrama of *Begonia*, through bodily performances, collectively agitates the patriarchal and masculine order of the wartime regime. The excessive articulation and sentimental consumption of victimhood, therefore, unconsciously protests wartime political repression. *Begonia*, even though a story of sufferings, self-sacrifice and victimhood, possesses the positive power of resistance, not through the plot, but rather, through the melodramatic mode of expression.

¹¹³ Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 156-157.

¹¹⁴ In contrast, Catherine Clément considers the protest of the hysteric is too feeble to be regarded as hero. See Eng, *Racial Castration*, 174-176.



Figure 4.1 Yuqin passes out in *Begonia*



Figure 4.2 Warlord Yuan's homoerotic gaze at Yuqin's body in *Begonia*



Figure 4.3 Cross-shaped scar on Begonia's face in *Begonia*



Figure 4.4 Xiangqi in the later half of *Begonia* when she has been separated with Begonia and Meibo for 17 years. Xiangqi and Meibao are played by the same actress, Li Lihua.



Figure 4.5 The 17-year-old Meibao. Xiangqi and Meibao are played by the same actress, Li Lihua.

Chapter 5:

Courtesan or Movie Star?: Eileen Chang and the Production of Intimacy in Occupied

Shanghai

Introduction

One of the most sensational news items in Shanghai in February 1945 was that Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing, 張愛玲), the most popular woman writer who rose to fame during the Japanese occupation (1941-1945), was going to play the female lead in the spoken drama, *Qiu Haitang* 秋海棠 (Begonia). *Begonia*, arguably the bestselling popular romance in wartime Shanghai, was adapted into numerous dramatic forms including spoken drama and film, as discussed in Chapter 4: it is a tragic love story of a Beijing opera actor and a warlord's concubine. The spoken drama version of *Begonia* was especially successful and made the actors instant stars.¹ At the time when the sensational news about her acting career was published in tabloid newspapers, Chang's own romantic novel *Qingcheng zhi lian* 傾城之戀 (Love in a Fallen City), following in the footsteps of *Begonia*, was adapted into spoken drama and played in theater for some fifty days.² One of the news articles in the tabloid *Libao* 力報 (Power News) claims that "the literary circle (*wenyi jie* 文藝界)" will unite and collaborate to produce *Begonia*, the "artistic" play, to "raise funds for writers and artists." Fei Mu will direct the stage play, the news article goes on, while Eileen Chang will play the warlord's concubine, Luo Xiangqi. "Those who are eager for seeing the true

¹ About the publication, adaptation and consumption of *Qiu Haitang* by Qin Shou'ou, please see Chapter 4.

² *Qingcheng zhi lian* was first published in literary journal *Zazhi* in the issues from September to October 1943. It was adapted into spoken drama and performed from December 16, 1944 to February 7, 1945. See "Qingcheng zhilian Jintian xianyan," *Shenbao* (December 16, 1944); "Xinguang Qingcheng zhilian zuihou yitian," *Haibao* (February 7, 1945).

face of the writers will have a chance to satisfy your appetite,” the news suggests.³ It turned out that this was only a rumor—or more precisely, a satire of Chang’s popularity in Occupied Shanghai. Of course Eileen Chang never played the warlord’s concubine in *Begonia*, and of course she never became an actress. The “news” was fabricated because of the tabloid journalists’ attempt to entertain, to promote sales, and, more importantly, to vent their frustration and anxiety over the rise of “women writers.”

This episode bespeaks the stardom and fandom of a popular romance writer in Occupied Shanghai. Indeed the past scholarship, from the perspective of fandom studies, has considered Eileen Chang a literary star or even a cult heroine in postwar Sinophone communities including Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China since the 1980s—a time when she published relatively few works. For example, in passing, Leo Ou-fan Lee mentions that in her last years Chang was worshiped like a retired movie star when she lived a reclusive life in the United States.⁴ Tien Wei-ning discusses the fan culture of Chang in postwar Taiwan while Liu Chuan’er analyzes “the rage for Eileen Chang” in mainland China in the 1990s.⁵ However, little has been studied about her wartime stardom in the 1940s. In this chapter I concentrate on Chang’s popularity—including stardom and fandom—at the time when she first rose to fame during her most prolific years in Occupied Shanghai. In particular, I study her stardom and fandom in the context of the culture industry—in this case, the industry of popular romance, and suggest that her popularity is constructed in two tropes from two perspectives: movie star and courtesan. While Chang built

³ Huaxin, “Wenyijie yiyuan Qiu Haitang,” *Libao* (February 7, 1945).

⁴ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 267.

⁵ Tien Wei-ning, “Taiwan ‘Zhang Ailing xianxiang’ zhong de wenhua changyü hudong,” Master thesis, National Chengchi University, 2008; Liu Chuan’er, “Xiaofei zhuyi wenhua yujing zhong de Zhang Ailing xianxiang,” in *Zhang Ailing: Wenxue, Dianying, Wutai*, ed. by Lin Xingqian (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2007), 267-279.

her self-image by conceptualizing herself as a movie star, the tabloid journalists who invented the rumor of her acting in the spoken drama of *Begonia* fabricated her image as a courtesan.

It makes perfect sense to understand Eileen Chang's popularity by situating the personae of movie star and courtesan in the culture industry of popular romance, because all of the three share several things in common. Popular romances, movie stars and courtesans are all forms of entertainment, and all sell the commodities of emotions, love, and sex by articulation and production of intimacy. Intimacy is a sense of closeness based on shared intimate feelings, particularly love; it forms the bonding of individuals emotionally and/or physically. It could generate a sense of community—smaller communities such as a coterie of courtesan and patrons or larger communities such as patriotic sentiments. In short, intimacy is an affect that through which people “conduct themselves and conduct others.”⁶

In this chapter I ask these questions: how are emotions, particularly love, articulated in Chang's wartime popular romance texts, especially when her wartime stories are often considered “loveless love” or “anti-romantic” by postwar writers and scholars such as Ping Lu 平路, Meng Yue 孟悦, Dai Jinhua 戴锦华 and Edward Gunn?⁷ How was intimacy produced and consumed in the writer-reader relationship based on the model of romance? How do the double dyads of movie star-fan and courtesan-patron reveal different social groups' self-positioning in the times of political chaos and moral crisis? By examining the techniques and technologies of

⁶ Analiese Richard and Darموir Rudnyckyj, “Economies of Affect,” *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009), 61.

⁷ In a panel discussion on Eileen Chang's work, Ping Lu suggests that Eileen Chang's romance stories are “loveless love.” See “Yongbu xiaoshi de huali: Gaobei Zhang Ailing zuotan hui,” in *Zuobei Zhang Ailing*, ed. Chen Zishan (Shanghai: Wenhui, 1996), 166. Meng Yue and Dai Jinhua contend that Chang's love stories do not write about “qing” (feelings, love). See Meng Yue and Dai Jinhua, *Fuchu lishi dibiao* (Taipei: Shibao, 1993), 295. Edward Gunn considers Chang's writings are “anti-romantic.” See Edward Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse: Chinese Literature in Shanghai and Peking 1937-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 198.

producing intimacy in the culture industry of popular romance, as I will demonstrate later, I argue that the tabloid journalists and Eileen Chang reacted to the wartime crisis in different affective terms. On the one hand, the (male) tabloid journalists, through their fabrication of imaginary intimacy with a courtesan image of Chang, *collectively* rebuilt the masculinity of an otherwise emasculated mentality which was thwarted by a century of frustration in politics. On the other hand, Chang, when constructing a distant intimacy with her fans, demonstrates an *individualistic*, feminine coping mechanism in response to the apocalypse caused by the war. The popular romance genre is thus a contesting field for the collective and the individual as well as the masculine and the feminine.

Nicole Huang, when studying women's print culture in wartime Shanghai, claims that women writers including Chang, by writing private life, "used domesticity as a crucial tool for political intervention."⁸ Women writers' focus on the domestic, Huang contends, "should be viewed as a means of subverting the system of political control and engaging the crucial political dialogues of the time."⁹ Rey Chow, on the other hand, argues that Chang resists the lure of "monumental moments" in political history by femininity, which is manifested in writing about details.¹⁰ While I agree with Huang and Chow that Chang did write extensively of the details of domestic life—which is often considered feminine—and she did resist the temptation of "monumental moments," I do not consider the core concern of Chang's writings as a manifestation of domesticity or femininity nor a subversion of political control. Rather, through comparing and contrasting Chang's self-image with tabloid journalists' production of her image,

⁸ Nicole Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

¹⁰ Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading Between West and East* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1991), 85.

I argue that it is the focus of *individuality* in times of collective crisis that sets the agenda of the culture industry *about* and *as controlled by* Chang. The production and consumption of intimacy centered on Chang in the popular romance industry (including romance fictions, stage play adaptations, gossip, poetry, photographs, fashion, illustrations and radio shows) redefine the individual's relation with the society, and further foreground the *individual* existence in the crisis that consumed every aspect of life and demanded every citizen to devote herself to the collective cause. Chang did not “subvert” political control per se; instead, she used individualism to cope with the existential crisis caused by the total war. What is more akin to Huang's observation on engaging “political dialogues of the time” by writing is in fact the tabloid journalists' imagination of intimate relationships with Chang, through which they attempt to reconstruct a shared sense of masculinity in political crisis.

I. Fabricating Public Intimacy: Eileen Chang as Courtesan

The tabloid newspapers in Occupied Shanghai, like elsewhere, were apt at exposing the private to public gaze as a way to promote sales. *Power News*' satirical “news” about Eileen Chang's rumored actress career is but one of the examples. The tabloid journalists would report (and even invent) stories about private domains such as romantic love and sex of celebrities, particularly of “famous women,” in gossip columns.¹¹ In this way, they construct a fictional intimate relationship between the writer and the target of their writing as well as between the reader and the “famous women.” The readers, as well as the journalists, enjoyed the voyeuristic pleasure of observing the famous women's private life and could imagine their *intimate*

¹¹ Sui Jing, one of the earliest Eileen Chang experts in postwar era, remembers Chang's private life was reported extensively in tabloid papers because she's a “famous woman” (ming nüren 名女人) when he was in Occupied Shanghai. Sui Jing, *Wei Zhang Ailing Bu Zhang* (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2004), 177.

knowledge of her boudoir, her clothes, her body, her talent and her personality, and thus fabricated a public intimacy with her. In fact, this is a legacy of journalistic culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. When Chinese journalism emerged in the urban centers such as Beijing and Shanghai at the turn of the twentieth century, journalists often “reported” courtesans’ stories whom they frequented in order to attract readers’ attention. Thus, from the beginning of Chinese journalism to wartime, public intimacy is often constructed on the model of the relationship between courtesan and patron. It is in this context the journalists in Occupied Shanghai concocted Eileen Chang’s public persona as a courtesan. How did they do so? How did journalists (and readers) utilize the imagined intimacy with Chang to react to wartime politics?

1. Constructing the Courtesan Image of Eileen Chang

The tabloid journalists who composed the satirical “news” about Eileen Chang’s acting career in the 1940s were in fact a group of writers who inherited the cultural upbringing of the first generation of modern journalists at the turn of the twentieth century, who in turn were descendants of late imperial literati.¹² Therefore, the wartime journalists, like their predecessors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, were literati-journalist who are often labeled as “Talent of the Foreign Concession” (*yangchang caizi* 洋場才子). This group of writers, both at the turn of the twentieth century or during the wartime, frequented courtesan houses and composed news and literature of courtesans in their newspapers.¹³ According to Perry Link, it is from the writings about romantic encounters between the courtesan and the literati-journalist that

¹² The journalists in the turn of the twentieth century, see Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 157-162.

¹³ Catherine Vance Yeh, *Shanghai Love: Courtesans, Intellectuals, and Entertainment Culture, 1850-1910* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 15-17.

the modern popular romance, or Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies genre, emerged in the 1910s.¹⁴ The Mandarin Ducks genre continue to dominate mass entertainment in newspapers, magazines, theater and films up until the War. The wartime literati-journalists, who themselves published Mandarin Ducks fiction (and some of them were already famous Mandarin Ducks writers in the 1920s)¹⁵, maintain this persona as patrons of courtesans and reporters of courtesan culture when they composed “news” and literature of “women writers,” especially that of Eileen Chang.

The wartime literati-journalists often make explicit or implicit connections between Chang and women in the entertainment industry or even in the pleasure quarters—oftentimes the two are inseparable. Chang and her works are regarded as dancehall girl, storyteller, and prostitute—all of these professions are associated with or part of the image of courtesan.¹⁶ For example, Zuiyun 醉雲 in his article “Nü zuojia 女作家” (Women Writers) says, “Eileen Chang is one of today’s women writers. ... Her name is as lecherous and vulgar as a woman who sells her waist [to men, i.e. dancehall girl]. Anyone who doesn’t know that she can write probably

¹⁴ Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, 161.

¹⁵ For example, Qiuweng (Ping Jinya) who published one of the most influential popular magazine *Wanxiang* during the wartime wrote several popular romance novels in the 1920s, such as *Renhai chao* 人海潮 (Tides of the Sea of Human) in 1927. One of the most interesting episodes in *Renhai chao* is the “Flower President Election,” in which people vote for the most popular courtesan. Qiuweng was considered one of the “masters in Mandarin Ducks school.” See Yao Yiming, *Wenxue beihou de shijie: Mingguo wenren xiezuochuban mishu* (Taipei: Xinrui wenchang, 2013), 288-289.

¹⁶ In early twentieth century the courtesan was storyteller (*Changsan* 長三) who may have sexual relationship with favored patron. They may play the game of love, but the relationship between courtesan and patron is undeniably based on business transaction: money exchanges for passion and sex. In 1930s and 1940s dancehall girls became a new profession who gradually replaced the storyteller in the economics of desire. See Yeh, *Shanghai Love*; Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 57-58; Andrew D. Field, “Selling Souls in Sin City: Shanghai Singing and Dancing Hostesses in Print, Film and Politics, 1920-49,” in *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, ed. Yinjing Zhang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 99-127.

thinks she's a dancehall girl."¹⁷ Qiuweng 秋翁 (Ping Jinya 平襟亞, 1892-1978), a veteran Mandarin Ducks writer and a publisher, complained that Eileen Chang received the royalties beforehand but discontinued the serialization of her novel *Lianyuan tao* 連環套 (Linking) in his magazine *Wanxiang* 萬象 (The Phenomena). Qiuweng's friend, Wenzhou 文滄, comforted him and said, "You like to go to dancehalls, don't you? Just take the one thousand dollars [you paid Chang] as the fee for a dancehall girl."¹⁸ Qiuweng is still upset and makes an analogy between the writer and the storyteller. "It is like that a teahouse owner hires and schedules a storyteller to perform. Thousands of people gather and are listening to the exhilarating storytelling when the storyteller suddenly cuts the performance short and leaves the teahouse."¹⁹ In another article co-authored by three writers, Chang's *Love in a Fallen City* is criticized as follows: "her work is like a prostitute selling her body; it is decorated by colorful cosmetics but has no soul."²⁰ One such writer sums up the women writer phenomena in the eye of tabloid literati-journalists in Occupied Shanghai: "Women writers become famous because they are rare and thus precious, not because their works have high achievement. Another possibility is that men, as the center of the society, have dirty thoughts about women and treat women writers like Beijing opera actresses; they consider her as an object in their sexual fantasy."²¹ In short, the male literati-journalists, instead of treating Eileen Chang as a writer with equal talent, constructed an image of her as first and foremost an object of sexual desire and treated as if she were a courtesan.

In courtesan culture up until 1940s, if one wanted to become intimate with a courtesan, he has to be formally introduced by well-established patrons of her house, carry on a long

¹⁷ Zuiyun, "Nü zuojia," *Libao* (November 16, 1943).

¹⁸ Wenzhou, "Huidian," *Libao* (August 21, 1944).

¹⁹ Qiuweng, "Jianzhu tongwen wei mo nüzuojia shi," *Haibao* (August 27, 1944).

²⁰ Fangfu, Yunyan, Daozi, "'Qingcheng zilian' erchong zou," *Xin Shenbao* (December 23, 1944).

²¹ Fengsan, "Nü zuojia," *Haibao* (October 19, 1943).

“courtship” by such means as gifts and poetry and call her to dinner parties; his goal is to become the exclusive guest in her boudoir.²² Likewise the wartime journalist-literati also expected to make connections with Eileen Chang in such a fashion. Liu Lang 劉郎, pseudonym of Tang Yunsheng 唐雲旌 (1908-1980) and a journalist in *Haibao* 海報 (The Shanghai Herald), in an article titled “Jianyijian Zhang Ailing 見一見張愛玲” (Meeting Eileen Chang) complains that he wanted to invite Chang to a dinner party in order to get to know her but was rejected. He sneers at Chang’s “reserve” and says that even the Beijing opera superstar Mei Lanfang or a movie star would not hide themselves from the public. Not giving up, Liu Lang then approaches a Mr. Li who was a cousin of Chang’s; he pleads with Mr. Li to introduce him to her. Mr. and Mrs. Li assured Liu Lang that Chang would certainly attend the dinner party if the couple invited her. Unfortunately, this invitation was turned down by Chang again. Then, like a spurned suitor, Liu Lang claims: “I don’t want to see this prolific woman writer anymore. Even if Mr. Li invited me again I won’t bother to go!”²³ Clearly Liu Lang and his cohort expect Chang to fit into their imaginary relationship based on the courtesan and patron model but unfortunately fail.²⁴

While they are unable to approach Eileen Chang in person, the tabloid journalists manage to form an imaginary intimate relationship with her by possessing her photograph. When a writer commented on Chang’s short story collection, *Chuanqi* 傳奇 (Romances), the only impression he has is the autographed photograph of Chang in the book. (Figure 5.1) “Miss Chang is quite pretty. She tilts her head and her hair is like the ocean. She slightly closes her eyes and looks like

²² Yeh, *Shanghai Love*, 105-110; Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*, 42-43.

²³ Liu Lang, “Jianyijian Zhang Ailing,” *Haibao* (December 2, 1944).

²⁴ Interestingly, when Eileen Chang was accused of being traitor and had difficulties publishing her works in the postwar era, Tang Yunsheng was among the first ones to publish her new short stories in his tabloid paper *Guanghua ribao* (Light Daily News) and *Yibao* (Yi News) and reprint her wartime stories. See Cai Tengshan, *Fanhua luojin—Yanchang caizi yu xiaobao wenren* (Taipei: Xiuwei, 2011), 238-224.

Loretta Young [who was widely seen as fabulously beautiful in the US at that time]. ... My friend bought a copy of *Romances*. After we studied the autographed photograph together he displayed the book on the bookshelves like ‘settling a beauty in a golden chamber’ (*jinwu cangjiao* 金屋藏嬌).”²⁵ The flirtatious posture of Chang and her “serpent-like,” “curvaceous,” “extremely seductive” autograph elicit the desire of the beholder of the portrait photograph; he treats it as the embodiment of a lover or even a concubine—as the idiom “*jinwu cangjiao*” often suggests. Portrait photography, a modern invention introduced into China in the late nineteenth century, was an old trick of the courtesan at the turn of the twentieth century to increase publicity. While direct access to high-class courtesans was restricted, as suggested by the long, expensive and oftentimes failed “courtships,” photography becomes a convenient (and cheap) alternative for the ordinary people to get hold of these desirable objects.²⁶ Similarly, the writer who savors the beauty of Chang (in photograph) suggests to the readers that by spending only two hundred dollars (i.e., the cost of the book) they will be able to “own” the body of the female writer.²⁷

The most creative and outrageous way of portraying Chang in the traditional literary trope of prostitution is in a piece of classical prose fiction (*biji xiaoshuo* 筆記小說) by Qiuweng,

²⁵ Wen Haili, “‘Chuanqi’ yinxiang,” *Libao* (August 24, 1944). Wen Haili is the penname of Zhong Zimang 鍾子芒 (1922-1978) who wrote “Zhang Enhui xiaoshuo yu dianying,” *Shanghai yingtian* 1:2 (November 1943).

²⁶ Yeh, *Shanghai Love*, 84-87.

²⁷ An interesting comparison between woman writer, photography, and prostitution is the movie *Xin Nüxing* 新女性 (New Woman), starred Ruan Lingyu. The 1934 movie depicts a school teacher, Wei Ming, and how she struggles to publish her novel, raise her child, and resist the sexual advances from the publisher, a tabloid journalist, and a decadent rich man who happens to be a board member of her school. Her child gets sick, her job is taken away because she refuses the rich man, and she is forced to become a prostitute to make money to cure her child’s illness. At the same time, the tabloid paper published her portrait photograph with the news “Woman writer Wei Ming publishes her novel.” She later commits suicide because her child dies and she loses all hopes. The tabloid then publishes a sensational news of “Woman writer Wei Ming’s suicide.” Woman writer seemed to be regarded as a profession that not only sells her words but also her image, and eventually her body. This theme continued from the 1930s to wartime Shanghai.

titled “Hongye 紅葉” (Red Foliage), which was published in *The Shanghai Herald* in 1944. In this story Qiuweng narrates a story of a fox spirit. The narrator, an old man, tells a guest that he encountered a wild fox in his garden. When the fox first comes to his garden it is only a young furry fox. This fox works very hard to metamorphose into a human being. Every night during spring and autumn, this fox would kneel in front of the Violet Pavilion and pray to the moon. When the fox burns the first brazier of aloeswood incense, half of its body becomes human. When it burns the second brazier, it becomes human being completely, even though its tail is still hanging. Only within three years she becomes a beautiful lady with pink cheek and rouged lips. The guest, out of curiosity, asks: why does the fox want to transform itself into a human being? The old man smiles and answers: she becomes human being so that she can have sex with men and “borrow the *yang* force from men to strengthen her *yin* force” (*caibu* 采補).²⁸ This story is obviously a satire of Chang because she published her debut short stories, “Aloeswood Incense: First Brazier” (*Chenxiang xie: Diyi luxiang* 沉香屑:第一爐香) and “Second Brazier” (*Dier luxiang* 第二爐香) in the Mandarin Ducks journal *Violet* 紫羅蘭. Qiuweng in fact, as mentioned above, published some of Chang’s short stories in his journal *The Phenomena*. However, he was unable to obtain the right to publish Chang’s *Romances*, which sold out in four days and created great financial success for the publisher Zazhi she 雜誌社 (The Miscellany Magazine Company). It was believed that Qiuweng wrote this classical fiction to mock Chang’s ability to “metamorphose” from a nobody to a successful and profitable woman writer in a short period of time and to vent his resentment of losing the chance to profit from Chang’s short story

²⁸ Qiu Weng, “Hongye,” *Haibao* (November 3, 1944).

collection.²⁹ On the other hand, this story also demonstrates how male literati-journalists imagined woman writer as a lascivious yet undomesticated body. They were incapable of maintaining an intimate relationship with the object of their desire because the woman writer, like a fox spirit, is cunning, deceptive, and illusory—which are the negative attributes of “bad” courtesans at the turn of the twentieth century.³⁰ She could manipulate male desire, but not the other way around. The male literati-journalists, once a sponsor of her writings (like Qiuweng published Chang’s early stories), suffer “abandonment rage” when they realized they are not privileged to be an exclusive sponsor (read, “patron”) of hers. In the end, the literati-journalists’ fabrication of public intimacy turns out to be merely wishful thinking

While the image of Eileen Chang as sexual object sounds sarcastic and not without contempt, the tabloid literati-journalists, from negative or positive perspectives, composed pieces in various literary genres to praise or mock her, and to construct their own narratives of her. Wartime literati-journalists use several traditional literary forms to write *on* or *for* Eileen Chang: classical verse forms such as *shi* poetry (*shi* 詩), *ci* lyrics (*ci* 詞), Music Bureau poems (*yuefu* 樂府), and classical prose fiction as in Qiuweng’s “Red Foliage”—all of these genres are used by literati to portray and engage with courtesans in tabloid papers in the early twentieth century.³¹ For example, in the same tabloid paper which published Chang’s rumored acting career, Jinyuan 嚶園 wrote a heptasyllabic *shi* poem to praise Chang’s talent and to wish success for the spoken drama of *Love in a Fallen City*. The first stanza of the poem, entitled “Love in a Fallen City,” reads, “Thousands of palms clapping like thunder in the theater/ The drama vividly describes the

²⁹ See Xiao Jin, *Jiuwen xinzhì Zhang Ailing* (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chuban she, 2009), 167.

³⁰ Yeh, *Shanghai Love*, 214-216.

³¹ See Yeh, *Shanghai Love* and Christian Henriot, *Prostitution and Sexuality in Shanghai: A Social History, 1849-1949*, trans. Noël Castelino (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 71-72.

true feelings of the heart/ The dream of Hong Kong is broken by the beacon fires/ This love could really topple a city!” (座中萬掌作雷鳴，曲繪心頭欲準情。烽火香江 X [character unclear in original newspaper] 夢破，果然此戀足傾城!)³² *The Shanghai Herald*, another popular tabloid paper, published a *ci* lyric to the tune “Que ta zhi 鵲踏枝” (Magpie on the Branch) for the same occasion. The second stanza of the *ci* lyric reads, “Fragrant dream of emerald and orchid is getting warm/ In dream there are beacon fires/ When awake the love endures through the ups of downs of time/ All of this is performed in theater, in several scenes/ This will cause all in the theater to weep tears of pearl.” (翡翠蘭苕香夢暖，夢裡烽煙，夢醒滄桑戀! 付與舞台分幕演，定知滿座啼珠泫。) ³³ Both the *shi* poem and the *ci* lyrics quoted here, unlike those writings that treated her as prostitute, dancehall girl, or storyteller, seem to appreciate the brilliant design of Chang’s romance story and anticipate the performance of *Love in a Fallen City* will stimulate the audience’s emotional response. Nevertheless, the traditional literary forms and diction in these poems disclosed that the semi-traditional, semi-modern journalists, no matter whether they hated or loved her, in fact treated Chang as someone who shares similar cultural heritage and sentimentality with them. Her works and her writer persona are thus consumed in the context of the traditional image of a writing woman, who was often from the pleasure quarters like many courtesans in the late imperial period. (see below) In contrast, even though several other famous women writers such as Su Qing 蘇青 (1914-1982) and Pan Liudai 潘柳黛 (1920-2001) were often mocked in tabloid news articles (written in modern vernacular language), none of them became the muse—in positive or negative terms—for classical poetry or fiction written by the literati-journalists. Another comparison is Yang

³² Jinyuan, “Qingcheng zilian,” *Libao* (December 14, 1944).

³³ Zifeng, “Qingchen zilian,” *Haibao* (December 7, 1944).

Jiang 楊絳 (b. 1911), a playwright who is Chang's contemporary and who published numerous modern spoken drama scripts in wartime Shanghai.³⁴ As prolific as Chang, Yang and her works had never become an object of praise or criticism in tabloid literati-journalists' publications.³⁵ In sum, Chang's writer persona is especially treated as writing woman from pleasure quarters or courtesan, a cultural trope inherited from late imperial China.

2. *The "Remnant People" and the Courtesan*

The previous examples of constructing the image of Eileen Chang as a courtesan, a sexual object, and a fox spirit bespeak the insecurity and anxiety felt by the tabloid literati-journalists in Occupied Shanghai. They were insecure in several respects: because, first of all, they were incapable of taming her (wild) femininity and fitting her into their cognitive framework of gender roles. This gender dynamics further indicated their anxiety felt in losing their symbolic capital when finding their own position in wartime politics. In order to understand the mentality of the wartime literati-journalists, I suggest to analyze their imagination (and disillusion) of Chang as courtesan in the context of "remnant people" (*yimin* 遺民) who were loyalists, traditionalists and cultural conservatives, and their relationships with the grand courtesans in late imperial culture. How did the conventional image of courtesan become the epitome of the symbolic capital of eliteness in late imperial and early Republican China? How did the male literati perceive their roles in politics via conceiving their relationship with courtesans?

³⁴ Yang Jiang's plays published in Occupied Shanghai include *Nongjia chengzhen* 弄假成真, *Youxi renjian* 遊戲人間, *Fengxu* 風絮, etc.

³⁵ Even though Yang Jiang was a writer, a scholar, and a married woman (to a respected scholar), the tabloid literati-journalists seemed to have no interest in her and never wrote about her.

In her seminal study on courtesan culture, Wai-yee Li argues that the late Ming courtesan is often presented as the “epitome of elite culture” and a “cultural ideal.”³⁶ Dorothy Ko also suggests that because the courtesans were good at writing poetry, the most revered literary form in traditional Chinese culture—and being written about in poetry—“they partook in the aura of the *wen* culture of the literati.”³⁷ In other words, the courtesan in late imperial China represents cultural sophistication and literariness in elite culture. Because they were the only women who could socialize with elite men in late imperial China, and because they were trained in elite cultural forms such as poetry and music, courtesans were considered members of the scholar-official world.³⁸ When literati in the late imperial China sought fulfillment with a gifted woman to match him, the courtesan was the best option they found.³⁹ Therefore, the courtesan is not only a sexual partner but also a companion who has compatible literary talent and could appreciate the literati’s poetic fineness rightly. What is more, she is sensitive and is able to understand and empathize with his ups and downs. She possesses the most genuine *qing*—i.e. feeling, passion and love—that transcends death.⁴⁰ In particular, the grand courtesans during the transition of Ming and Qing dynasties were endowed with yet another ability or function: the late Ming literatus who lost his country to the Manchus depended on her “to instill in him the ethical

³⁶ Wai-yee Li, “The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal,” in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, ed. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 47.

³⁷ Dorothy Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot: A History of The Courtesan’s Aura,” in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, 95.

³⁸ See Paul S. Ropp, “Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China,” in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, 19-20.

³⁹ Kang-I Sun Chang, *The Late Ming Poet Ch’en Tzu-lung: Crisis of Love and Loyalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 12.

energy either to die nobly or to recover and regenerate,”⁴¹ because she is most capable of the moral feeling of love—either loving an individual or the country. Courtesan and romantic love were thus summoned to restore or reinforce the literati’s moral integrity in the times of national and political crisis. In other words, if the literati at the dynastic transition identified themselves as “remnant people” or loyalists who refused to serve the new dynasty, the courtesans were the reminder of “remnant people’s” ability to love the country as well as the stimulus of male literati’s conscience and loyalist sentiments. They are “extraordinary females” who are “sensitive and full of feelings” (*douqing qi nizi* 多情奇女子); they “deeply appreciate and understand” the men of letters (*zhiyi* 知音) and are the foil of the literati’s persona.⁴² Stories such as the courtesan Li Xiangjun 李香君 and the late Ming literatus Hou Fangyu 侯方域 in *Taohua shan* 桃花扇 (The Peach Blossom Fan, 1699) are among the most prominent examples. In the writings about losing one’s country, the courtesan became the metaphor of the end of a dynasty, the destruction of a culture, and a sense of nostalgia and personal loss.⁴³

The first generation of journalists inherited the sentiments of loss (both personal and national) in the times of political crisis and the convention of linking that to the image of courtesan. During the transition from late Qing to Republican era, a group of literati who were trained in traditional learning in preparation for the civil examinations and becoming scholar-officials suddenly lost their purpose of life and means of living when the civil examinations were abolished in 1905. In order to make a living, they reluctantly used the only skill they had—writing—and became the “Talents of the Foreign Concession,” the first generation of Chinese

⁴¹ Keith McMahon, *Polygamy and Sublime Passion: Sexuality in China on the Verge of Modernity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 51.

⁴² Yeh, *Shanghai Love* 189, 248; Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, 173.

⁴³ See Chang, *The Late Ming Poet Ch’en Tzu-lung*, 18; Wai-yee Li, “The Late Ming Courtesan,” 47.

journalists, as mentioned above. Not unlike the late Ming literati, they felt unappreciated and powerless because their only hope of becoming “useful” as government officials was doomed. And similar to their late Ming predecessors they found solace in forming intimate relationships with courtesans who, in traditional literature, were equally powerless and mistreated (because they are usually forced into pleasure quarters and to “sell their bodies” unwillingly, while the literati “sold writing” in modern journalism reluctantly). Thus the courtesan could fully empathize with the literati’s sense of loss.⁴⁴ These literati not only lost the means of living but also lost the symbolic capital of eliteness: in the imperial period literati who passed the civil examination became political, moral and social leaders, while in Republican China they were but members of the common people.⁴⁵ In this vein, the literati sometimes would assume the role of a savior of the helpless courtesan so as to reconstruct their lost masculine confidence caused by the deprivation of symbolic capital.

The sentimentality of loss and powerlessness in political turmoil was carried into wartime; male writers—tabloid journalists and “serious” writers alike— often expressed their frustration and resentment of the war in the stories about courtesans or prostitution. For example, *The Peach Blossom Fan* was adapted into spoken drama *Li Xiangjun* by playwright Zhou Yibai 周贻白 (1900-1977) and directed by film director Bu Wancang 卜萬蒼(1903-1974) in 1940 to promote the idea of “not submitting to the foreign invader.”⁴⁶ Wang Tongzhao 王統照 (1897-1957) serialized a novel “Shuangqing 雙清” in *The Phenomena* about a “beautiful, determined and

⁴⁴ See Yeh, *Shanghai Love*, 16.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 218.

⁴⁶ During the Japanese occupation, some film directors changed to direct spoken drama because of strict censorship in film and relatively loose censorship in theater. Bu Wanchang and Fei Mu are two examples. About the spoken drama *Li Xiangjun*, see Shao Yingjian, *Shanghai kangzhan shiqi de huaju* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2012), 94.

noble” singsong girl who suffers in war.⁴⁷ In these examples courtesans are often described as either the advocate of resistance or the victim of war who awaits rescue by male literati. Their determination and integrity implies the authors’ (and readers’) wish or aspirations during the national crisis. Qiuweng, on the other hand, portrays a group of scheming prostitutes and their ignorant patrons who lead a decadent and lavish life even in the midst of war in his satire “Zhu Bajie you Shanghai 豬八戒遊上海” (Zhu Bajie visits Shanghai).⁴⁸ In this story, Qiuweng, similar to his tale of fabricating Eileen Chang as a fox spirit who wants to have sex with men, seems to adopt a condescending attitude toward those who are enjoying sensual pleasures. No matter whether depicted from positive or negative perspectives, the courtesan and prostitute represent the wartime writers’ (including literati-journalists’) wish and inability to intervene the war and the politics.

It is in this context that Eileen Chang’s public persona was consumed in tabloid newspapers. The wartime tabloid journalists inevitably, like the late Ming literati, assumed the mentality of “remnant people.” They displayed a strong sense of loss and powerlessness via the foil of courtesan or prostitution. Their sense of loss is similar to yet different from their late Ming or early Republican predecessors, however. While the late Ming “remnant people” mourned the loss of country and declared their loyalty to the bygone dynasty, the wartime literati-journalists lamented the loss of the glory of elite culture exemplified by the courtesan. In the past, the courtesan culture was often associated with the imperial examination because many young scholars who went to the capital for the exam would frequent courtesan houses as a rite of

⁴⁷ When serializing the story in *Wanxiang*, Wang Tongzhao uses the penname Hong Meng. Hong Meng, “Shuangqing,” *Wanxiang* 3:2 (August 1943), 78. On the same issue of *Wanxiang* Eileen Chang published her short story “Xinjing.” About “Shuangqing” also see Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 64-65.

⁴⁸ Qiuweng, “Zhu Bajie you Shanghai,” *Wanxiang Shiri kan* 7 (July 1, 1942), 68-71.

passage. The wartime literati, however, like their early Republican predecessors, were unable to take the imperial exam and serve in the government. What is more, they not only lost the opportunity and social status that was originally reserved for them in the imperial period but also had very little, if any, influence in politics when Shanghai was occupied by Japan. In their writings about courtesans, the wartime literati-journalists, unlike late Ming “remnant people,” seldom express loyalist, nationalistic or patriotic sentiments (perhaps due to censorship). All they could write about is to eulogize the beauty and integrity of the grand courtesan of the past or to denounce the immorality of prostitution in the present. They were “yimin” (remnant people) not in the sense of remaining loyalists like the late Ming literati. In contrast, they were a group of people who are “yimin” because they are “left behind” (*yiliu* 遺留) when many patriotic writers escaped occupied Shanghai and relocated to the hinterland with the Nationalist government. Furthermore, they are “deficient” (*canyi* 殘遺) because they, even though witnessing the country fallen apart, are as powerless and politically effeminate as courtesan and could not intervene in the course of history.⁴⁹ One writer reflects that when he attended the spoken drama production of *Love in a Fallen City* and watched the scene when Hong Kong was attacked by Japanese, he felt “self-pity” (*ziai* 自哀) over the chaotic times (*shibian* 世變).⁵⁰ Eileen Chang’s rise to fame during Japanese occupation seemingly rekindled their love/hate relationship with courtesan and the elite culture she represented, in which the literati were once the saviors not only of the mistreated women but also of the nation. In fact, Chang herself, voluntarily or involuntarily, participated in making her public image into a courtesan persona.

⁴⁹ The various connotations of *yimin* see David Der-wei Wang, *Hou Yimin Xiezou* (Taipei: Maitian, 2007), 36.

⁵⁰ Hanliang, “Guan Qingcheng zhilian,” *Haibao* (December 23, 1944).

II. Interval: Eileen Chang as Accomplice in Making a Courtesan Persona

While a number of women writers became popular in Occupied Shanghai, Eileen Chang was singled out by the tabloid literati-journalists and particularly consumed in the context of courtesan culture.⁵¹ This has to do with Chang's participation in constructing her image in the vein of courtesan in her writings. Together with tabloid journalists' gossip columns and classical literary works, Chang became the incarnation of a talented courtesan who specializes in telling exotic romance stories.

Chang's writings contribute to the literati's fabrication of her courtesan persona in two ways: the form or the narrative framework and the content or the characterization and plot. These were best demonstrated in her debut work, "Aloeswood Incense: First Brazier."⁵² This fiction opens with the narrator assuming a storyteller persona—one who tells a story from afar in an indoor space furnished with antiques that emanates the aura of past glory: "Go and fetch, will you please, a copper incense brazier, a family heirloom gorgeously encrusted now with moldy green, and light in it some pungent chips of aloeswood. Listen while I tell a Hong Kong tale, from before the war. When your incense has burned out, my story too will be over."⁵³ The narrator creates an intimate setting between the storyteller and the audience by addressing the reader ("you") directly and inviting him to immerse himself both in the exotic story and in the

⁵¹ About women writers in Occupied Shanghai, see Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity*; Yang Chia-Hsien, *Xuanya shang de huayuan: Taiping yang zhanzheng shiqi Shanghai wenxue changyü, 1942-1945* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2013).

⁵² Before "Aloeswood Incense: First Brazier" Chang published several Chinese short stories in her high school magazines and a few English essays in a popular magazine *XXth Century* in Shanghai. Chinese short stories in high school magazines include "Niu" (Ox, 1936) and "Bawang beji" (Farewell my concubine, 1937) in *Guoguang*; English essays include "Chinese Life and Fashions," *XXth Century* 4:1 (January 1940) 54:61. However, "First Brazier" is the first fiction that establishes Chang as a Chinese-language writer.

⁵³ Eileen Chang, "Chenxiang xie: Diyi luxiang," *Ziluolan* 2 (May 1943), 20. For an English translation, see Eileen Chang, *Love in a Fallen City*, trans. Karen Kingsbury (New York: New York Review of Books, 2006), 7.

traditional storytelling environment infused with the aroma of aloeswood incense. The narrator also reminds the reader that when the incense burns out, the story will end and the magic created by storytelling will be over, too. The storyteller persona is foregrounded by employing an I-narrator to unfold the story and the reader (“you”) as a willing participant in the literary reenactment of the traditional entertainment of storytelling. As mentioned above, storytelling is a part of courtesan’s arts. Therefore, the narrative framework of Chang’s debut work inevitably connects the first-person narrator and her fictional narrative to the professional storyteller like courtesans.

The characterization and plot in Chang’s fiction also implies traces of courtesan culture. After the narrator sets up the storytelling environment, the narrative of “First Brazier” goes on to tell Ge Weilong 葛薇龍’s adventure in an extravagant mansion in Hong Kong and how she becomes a courtesan-like figure. Weilong, a young girl student, is from Shanghai and relocates to Hong Kong with her family due to the war. When her family decides to move back to Shanghai, Weilong is only one year away from high school graduation. Not wanting to start high school all over again in Shanghai, Weilong plans to stay in Hong Kong and finish her education. Her family is unable to support her, so she visits her aunt, Madame Liang, for financial help. Madame Liang was the fourth concubine of a Hong Kong billionaire; she inherited a huge amount of money and the extravagant mansion when her husband died. A socialite in her fifties, Madame Liang frequently hosts dinner and mahjong parties and loves to mingle with men of all ages. She decides to support Weilong only with one condition: Weilong must live with her. The first day when she moves in, Weilong sees a closet filled with clothes for all occasions—brocade housedresses, short coats, long coats, beach wraps, bath wear, nightgowns, evening gowns, afternoon cocktail dresses, semiformal dining wear, etc. At first she thought Madame Liang must

have forgot to clear the closet out. After having a second thought, however, Weilong realizes that “Isn’t this just how a *Changsan* courtesan house buys a new girl?” because otherwise “what use would a schoolgirl have for all this [i.e. clothes]?”⁵⁴ At that night, she couldn’t resist the temptation and tries on the clothes one after another. Hearing the mahjong party and the jazz and rumba music from the living room, Weilong, in her bedroom, talks to herself: “Why not give it a try?”⁵⁵

She didn’t end up only giving her aunt’s luxurious life style “a try.” With her youth and beauty, Weilong successfully attracts many men, young and old, to Madame Liang’s mansion. Some of the men, knowing Weilong is not available due to her aunt’s guard, become Madame Liang’s lovers instead and provide the lady of the house money, jewelry, and most importantly, sensual pleasure. Weilong understands that she is the bait her aunt uses to bring men to the mansion and should remain single; however, she couldn’t help but fall for a multiracial young man, George Qiao. George is a notorious playboy whom Madame Liang used to flirt with. He can make Weilong happy but couldn’t love her, because, as he admits, he has too little money at his disposal; even though he is one of Sir Qiao’s dozens of sons, he is not favored by the patriarch of his family. Weilong wants to marry him so badly that she decides to use her charm and social skills to lure more men for money and gifts. They eventually get married and Weilong continue providing for George by being with men. On the Chinese New Year Eve George and Weilong take a walk in a night market, in which young streetwalkers lining up in street looking for customers. A few English sailors misunderstand Weilong as a streetwalker and chase after her. George pulls her into their car and drives away. He laughs at the stupid English sailors and

⁵⁴ Eileen Chang, “Chenxiang xie: Diyi luxiang,” *Ziluolan* 2, 33. English translation modified from *Love in a Fallen City*, 28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*; *Love in a Fallen City*, 29.

says, “What do they take you for?” Weilong replies, “But how am I any different from those girls,” she stops, and says again, “How could there not be any difference between us? They don’t have a choice—I do it willingly!”⁵⁶ The story ends when George, knowing she must be crying, drives into the darkness. The narrator concludes, “Here is the end of this Hong Kong story. Weilong’s brazier of incense will soon go out, too.”⁵⁷

The details of the story reveal Weilong’s journey from a girl student to a courtesan-like socialite in colonial Hong Kong. Like late imperial courtesans, she attracts men not only by her physical appearance but also by her ability to participate in upper class activities—this time the modern version of talents such as playing piano, conversing in English and French, playing tennis, etc. Like the courtesan, romantic relationships between Weilong and many of her suitors are a game and business transaction; money and gifts are exchanged for love and passion. Like in courtesan house, however, money does not guarantee sex. It is not explicitly stated in the fiction but Weilong most likely doesn’t sleep with any men without her aunt’s permission—her sex is a precious and rare treasure only reserved for privileged guests. Because of the resemblance between Weilong and courtesan, and perhaps partly because of the similar background of the female protagonist and the author—Chang was also from Shanghai and attended school in Hong Kong due to the war, and she was also one year away from graduation when her study came to a halt—contemporary readers might relate the author to the female protagonist and her courtesan-like quality.⁵⁸ Chang’s contemporary readers admitted that they often conflated the author with

⁵⁶ Eileen Chang, “Chenxiang xie: Diyi luxiang,” *Diyi luxiang* (Taipei: Huangguan, 2005), 85; *Love in a Fallen City*, 76.

⁵⁷ Eileen Chang, “Chenxiang xie: Diyi luxiang,” *Diyi luxiang*, 85; *Love in a Fallen City*, 76.

⁵⁸ It is a well-known story that Eileen Chang was admitted to University of London in 1939 but was not able to go due to the WWII in Europe. She then switched to University of Hong Kong in the then British colony and studied English literature. She returned to Shanghai in 1942 because

her characters.⁵⁹ In fact, not only the semi-traditional, semi-modern journalists considered Chang and her writings as a woman in the pleasure quarters; some “progressive” youth also complained that Chang’s works are filled with pornography and worse than prostitution. A reader’s letter to a modern literary journal chides Chang for writing about sex and bringing “hundreds of thousands of women to degeneration.”⁶⁰ The alleged female letter-writer (who claims she is a high school student) protests that while human trafficking and seducing good girls to become prostitutes are deemed illegal and punished, Chang’s writings have similar effect to human trafficking but nonetheless are welcomed by the reading public.

The “progressive” girl student’s letter in fact reveals an interesting twist of Chang’s version of the courtesan story. That is, Chang tells the story of a (female) courtesan-like figure’s adventure and psychology—in other words, the material enjoyment and carnal pleasure of a “degenerated” girl who might, like the progressive letter writer dreads, seduce “good” girls to pursue a “decadent” yet gratifying life. In contrast, in the past the narratives about courtesans, whether about the “good” courtesans such as those who “instill ethical energy” to male literati when they encounter national crisis, or the “bad” courtesans who are cunning and deceitful, are all written by male writers from the (male) patron’s perspectives about male protagonists’ adventure in courtesan house. In other words, Chang’s courtesan story shifts the narrative perspective from male to female, and gives the often-objectified courtesan figure a voice of her own. This subtle change of narrating voice, even though is still placed in the context of courtesan narrative, might somehow unsettle the male literati-journalists’ discourse of gender dynamics.

the university closed due to Japanese attack in December 1941 and the following occupation, even though she was only one year away from graduation.

⁵⁹ For example, Shang Zhu states that many readers “are seduced by her works and thought she is a beauty, at least as pretty as her characters.” Shang Zhu, “Kan nü zuojia,” *Guanhua ribao* (July 11, 1945).

⁶⁰ “Duzhe zhisheng: Guanyü Zhang Ailing,” *Xiandai zhoubao* 3:8 (1945), 36.

While the courtesan-like figure, Weilong, takes the initiative to seduce men and use the material she gains from these “business transactions” in exchange for George’s “love,” in a way she reverses the gender roles in conventional courtesan narrative. She no longer awaits a male character’s rescue; on the contrary, she can be the one who “save” the “unappreciated” George from his father’s neglect. (George’s father, even though dislikes George, is affectionate toward Weilong and gives them luxurious wedding gifts--only for Weilong’s sake.) Perhaps this was similar to the anxiety felt by the male literati-journalists about the rise of “women writers” in Occupied Shanghai, i.e. the fear of gender role reversal. Women writers such as Eileen Chang and Su Qing, another prolific women writer, were now occupying the most prestigious literary journals and even editing magazines of their own, while the male writers resented the shrinking space and profit in their publishing enterprise.⁶¹ Therefore the tabloid journalists time and again had to remind the readers that these *women* writers do not have real talent like themselves but stood out only because of their gender/sex. When commenting Chang’s spoken drama adaptation of *Love in a Fallen City*, a journalist in *The Shanghai Herald* bitterly said, “Those who support ‘women’ writers (not women ‘writers’) must be very busy now.”⁶² The once weak female gender now threatened the male dominance in literature and culture industry of selling romantic fantasy.

Furthermore, Chang’s courtesan-like figure unveils the true nature of the intimate relationship between courtesan and patron: it is actually not based on love or passion, but based on materiality and sensuality, while in conventional courtesan novels money is almost always

⁶¹ For example, Fengsan writes a satirical piece about women writers and suggests that the only way to make a profit in “cultural enterprise” is to open a “women writers school;” Eileen Chang and Su Qing should be hired as honorary principals of the school. Fengsan, “Nü zuojia xunlian ban,” *Libao* (June 23, 1945).

⁶² Yifan, “Zhang Ailing yü Qingcheng zhilian,” *Haibao* (August 24, 1944).

concealed or downplayed.⁶³ This idea about intimate relationships based on materiality and sensuality becomes the core of Chang's wartime popular romances in general and subverts the mainstream conception of intimacy based on romantic, selfless, and self-sacrificial love, as shown in *Begonia*, *Lovable Foe* and "Farewell at a Wedding" in previous chapters. In social psychology terms, the romantic love in Chang's stories belongs to the categories of *ludus* (game playing, uncommitted) and *pragma* (practical, calculating), while the mainstream romance emphasizes *agape* (altruistic, giving) and *storge* (friendship).⁶⁴ *Love in a Fallen City* is one of the best examples of *ludus* and *pragma* love: Bai Liusu 白流蘇, the female protagonist who is a young widow, wants to marry the rich Fan Liuyuan 范柳原, the male protagonist, because he can provide her material security, while Liuyuan loves to flirt with her because it's a fun game to play. The tabloid literati-journalists, however, didn't realize the difference between the modes of romantic relationship in Chang's formulation and theirs, and still wanted to fabricate their imaginary intimate relationship with the female writer based on the mainstream model of romance. When they finally became aware of the differences, they, again, like spurned suitors, berated Chang for having a "business eye" (*shengyi yan* 生意眼) but no genuine feeling—meaning all she cares is making money.⁶⁵

In sum, the tabloid literati-journalists intended to conceptualize the public persona of and their relationship with Eileen Chang modeled on the conventional intimate relationship of courtesan and patron but had to inevitably (and reluctantly) recognize that the time has changed. The "courtesan" they imagined is no longer a fragile and voiceless girl forced into pleasure

⁶³ Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures*, 112.

⁶⁴ Clyde Hendrick and Susan S. Hendrick, "Styles of Romantic Love," in *The New Psychology of Love*, ed. Robert J Sternberg and Karin Weis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 149-170.

⁶⁵ For example, Qiuweng, "Ji mo nü zuojia yiqiany uan de huidian," *Haibao* (August 18, 1944); Zhen Xizhe, "Lun Hu Lancheng yü Zhang Ailing," *Haibao* (September 6, 1944).

quarters, nor a creature who is most capable of genuine feeling and love.⁶⁶ On the contrary, Chang, even though a willing accomplice in making a courtesan persona for herself, demonstrates that her courtesan-like figure (and perhaps her authorial persona) has a voice of her own and self-agency in (writing) intimate relationship, and discloses that the materiality and sensuality in intimate relationships are more authentic than the “genuine feeling and love” imposed on courtesan characters by male writers. While the male literati-journalists might use their fabrication of a courtesan persona to vent their disgruntlement of politics, Chang is ready to construct a different public persona, a movie star, and establish a more distant intimacy with her readers and audiences.

III. Distant Intimacy across Media: Eileen Chang as Movie Star

The highest point of Eileen Chang’s wartime popularity occurred while the spoken drama production of *Love in a Fallen City* was being staged. The promotion of her play in newspapers such as *Shenbao* 申報 (Shanghai News) greatly expanded Chang’s publicity: her name now appeared along side theater and movie stars such as Luo Lan 羅蘭 who plays the female lead, Liusu; her play’s advertisement was published side by side with blockbusters such as *Begonia*.⁶⁷ Chang became not only a literary star but also a star across media. In fact, her writer persona and romance fiction/play *Love in a Fallen City* are often discussed vis-à-vis another popular film and a great love story, *Gone with the Wind*. Chang’s contemporaries’ references to the 1939 film adaptation of Margret Mitchell’s novel indicates that Chang as a popular romance writer and her works are produced and consumed in conjunction with the culture industry of cinema, especially

⁶⁶ In this vein, the literati-journalists were indeed “remnant people” who were left behind by times.

⁶⁷ “Qingcheng zilian,” *Shenbao* (December 27, 1944), 2.

Hollywood film. First of all, not only both of the two love stories are set in wartime (Japanese attack of Hong Kong in 1941 in *Fallen City* and American Civil War in *the Wind*), the characterization also bears interesting resemblances. Su Qing commented that the personality of Liuyuan in *Fallen City* is like Rhett Butler in *the Wind*: “This type of men is ‘bad,’ but when they are in a romantic relationship they could give women ‘sweet stimulus.’”⁶⁸ Ma Boliang 馬博良 pointed out that Liusu is similar to Scarlett O’Hara and *Fallen City* resembles “Luanshi jiaren 亂世佳人,” (A beauty in a turbulent time), the Chinese title of the film adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*.⁶⁹ While Chang says Su Qing, a fellow woman writer and editor, reminds her of “luanshi jiaren” in an essay entitled “Wokan Su Qing 我看蘇青” (Su Qing from My Perspective),⁷⁰ another writer disagreed and decided that Chang is the real “beauty at the turbulent time.”⁷¹ Nicole Huang aptly points out that Chang actually used Su Qing (as well as Scarlett O’Hara) to position herself; she too is a legend of her time and “survives and thrives against all odds.”⁷² Like the trajectory of Mitchell’s bestseller from novel to film, rumor has it that Chang was in contact with the film director Zheng Xiaoqiu 鄭小秋 (1910-1989) and the film studio Huaying 華影 (Chinese Film) to make *Love in a Fallen City* into a film.⁷³ In short, Chang implicitly or explicitly situates (and is situated by) her popular romance and writer persona in the context of film culture.

⁶⁸ Su Qing, “Du ‘Qingcheng zilian’,” *Haibao* (December 10, 1944).

⁶⁹ The title of the novel *Gone with the Wind* is usually translated as *Piao*, while the film title is known as *Luanshi jiaren*. The author referred to the story as *Luanshi jiaren* and therefore seemed to compare *Fallen City* with the film adaptation. Ma Boliang, “‘Qingcheng zilian,’ ‘Liuli wa’ pingjia,” *Wenchao* 1 (January 1944), 76.

⁷⁰ Eileen Chang, “Wokan Su Qing,” originally in *Tiandi* 19 (April, 1945), see Eileen Chang, *Huali yuan* (Taipei: Huangguan, 2010), 280.

⁷¹ Bazhu cang, “Cuibi zhuanjia,” *Da Shanghai bao* (April 22, 1945).

⁷² Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity*, 5.

⁷³ Lu Zhi, “Maosui zijian, Zhang Ailing shizi da kaikou,” *Haibao* (September 26, 1944).

Chang especially fashions her public persona as a movie star in various media by utilizing several publicity techniques. As Richard Dyer suggests in one of the most important studies on stardom, modern movie star is a configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs in all kinds of media texts.⁷⁴ He further contends that the star image consists of love, marriage, and sex. In light of Dyer's study, I ask the following questions: How did Chang publicize her star image in visual, verbal and aural media? How did the star image of Chang utilize the issues of love, sex and marriage to construct intimacy with her fans? Furthermore, how did the star image promise personal relationships and intimate access to an authentic self, as proposed by Christine Gledhill's treatise on stardom,⁷⁵ in Occupied Shanghai when the masses were mobilized to devote their individual selves to the collective?

1. The Extraordinary Star: Intimacy from a Distance

Eileen Chang built her star persona by highlighting *qi* 奇, or extraordinariness, in her works and in many means of publicity. The title of her short story collection, *Chuangqi* 傳奇 (Romances), best illustrates the extraordinary qualities of Eileen Chang. While *qi* connotes the phenomenal, strange, exotic and spectacle (*qiguan* 奇觀), *chuan* implies the actions of spreading, conveying, and passing on. Thus the strange characters in her exotic fiction as well as her phenomenal talent and remarkable life should be and will be spread widely to the anonymous masses and passed on. In addition, *chuangqi* also means legend; Chang in fact promoted herself as a legend and was received as such in Occupied Shanghai. Finally, *chuanqi* refers to a theatrical form that emerged during the Ming dynasty, which also denotes the theatricality of

⁷⁴ Richard Dyer, *Stars*. New Edition (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), 34.

⁷⁵ Christine Gledhill, Introduction to *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991), xvii.

Chang's works and star persona. Her popular romance was dramatized in Occupied Shanghai—even though only *Love in a Fallen City* was successfully adapted into spoken drama, another novella “Jinsuo ji 金鎖記” (The Golden Cangue) was said to be in preparation for spoken drama production (but was never actualized during the wartime).⁷⁶ What is more, her public persona is no less dramatic than her fictional works; her star image is constructed by theatricalizing her verbal and visual presentations. In sum, Chang's “starness” was an extraordinary, widespread, legendary and dramatic *chuanqi*.

Her unique tales and unusual personal life provide the otherwise ordinary readers pleasure of exploring the realm of the extraordinary, just like the movie star could offer audiences.⁷⁷ The extraordinary star, in her extraordinary tales and experiences, establishes an intimate relationship with the strangers in the reading public. The intimacy is formed from a distance, and from the “presence in absence”⁷⁸ in her aural, verbal and visual presentations. In these extraordinary tales, life story and public presence exist in Chang's charisma which, according to Dyer, are “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which [she] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least superficially exceptional qualities.”⁷⁹ Dyer maintains that the charismatic appeal is especially effective “when the social order is uncertain, unstable and ambiguous and when the charismatic figure or group offers a value, order or stability to counterpoise this.”⁸⁰ How does the charismatic persona of Chang engage with the reading public in affective terms? Do Chang's “supernatural, superhuman, exceptional qualities” offer the reading public in the occupied city and the

⁷⁶ The “news” about “Jinsuo ji”'s spoken drama production, see Kewu, “Zhang Ailing iang jüzuoze fanwan: Jinsuo ji gaibian wancheng,” *Haibo* (November 23, 1944).

⁷⁷ See Behroze Gandhi and Rosie Thomas, “Three Indian Film Stars,” in *Stardom*, 107-108.

⁷⁸ Christine Gledhill, “Signs of Melodrama,” in *Stardom*, 219.

⁷⁹ Richard Dyer, “Charisma,” in *Stardom*, 57.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 59.

“turbulent time” a value or stability? Could her charismatic star persona counterpoise the uncertainty of war?

Her popular romance stories exhibit the *qi* quality in the exotic setting, unconventional characterization, psychological complexity and in some cases dramatic plot. For example, the landscape and customs of Hong Kong are described as an exotic land where the old, traditional China meets the tropical British colony. Madame Liang’s extravagant mansion in colonial Hong Kong in “First Brazier” seems to be in a time warp and so strange that Weilong feels like her aunt “had preserved, in her own small world, the opulent lifestyle of the late Qing dynasty. Behind her own doors, she was a little Empress Cixi.”⁸¹ In such an exotic setting, characters are always unconventional. Mu Mu 穆穆, a writer of Chang’s generation, suggests that the popularity of Chang’s fiction derived from “Chinese characters who wear Western clothes,” meaning they are ethnic Chinese but are so Westernized that they are unfamiliar to Chinese readers. These westernized, unfamiliar characters, according to Mu Mu, create the legend of Eileen Chang.⁸² What is more extraordinary, or *qi*, in Chang’s stories, however, is the psychological complexity of the characters. Edward Gunn asserts that the strangeness of Chang’s romance stories comes from Freudian unconsciousness and irrational experience.⁸³ In “Xinjing 心經” (Heart Sutra) for example, the twenty-something girl, Xiaohan, has a secret Electra complex for her father, while in “The Golden Cangue” Qichao’s sexuality is repressed due to her invalid husband and displaced with endless resentment, revenge, and morbid control of her children. Chen Jianhua points out that ambiguity and uncertainty of uncanny situation in

⁸¹ English translation modified from *Love in a Fallen City*, 23.

⁸² Mu Mu, “Jizai qianmian,” *Zhanshi wenxue xuanji* (Nanjing: Zhongyang dianxun she, 1945), 6.

⁸³ Gunn, *Unwelcome Muse*, 203, 230.

characters' psyche is the essence of Chang's fantasy (*qi*).⁸⁴ The extraordinariness or strangeness in her tales may not be able to offer values or stability for a turbulent time as Dyer proposes; rather, it further disturbs the already uncertain social order and the psychological worlds of wartime readers. Perhaps this is the reason the tabloid literati-journalists and writers felt uneasy about her: instead of providing moral models in times of chaos like late Ming grand courtesans, Chang's wartime popular romances lay bare the unsavory human psyche without condemning her characters or giving moral instructions.

The extraordinariness of her stories attracted readers' attention not only to her fictional works but also to the writer herself. Similar to her unique fiction, Eileen Chang's personal life was considered "qi" by her contemporary readers as well. Many fans were eager to know her life story as much as possible.⁸⁵ However, the extraordinariness of her private life is not conveyed through her own words; instead, it was constructed by other's writings. For example, the news about Chang's aristocratic family background was widely circulated in tabloid papers and "serious" journals alike. Hu Lancheng 胡蘭成 (1906-1981) was the first to describe Chang as an "aristocrat" (*guizhu* 貴族): "It is not because she has the blood of a traditional aristocratic family but because of her unrestricted talent and self-appreciation."⁸⁶ The tabloid journalists quickly gathered that her great grandfather on the maternal side is Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901), one of the most influential officials in late Qing who was awarded Marquis status. Qiuweng,

⁸⁴ Chen Jianhua, "Zhiyi lixing, fanfeng ziwo: Zhang Ailing Chuanqi yu qihuan xiaoshuo xiandai xing," in *Zhang Ailing: Wenxue, dianying, wutai* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2007), 240.

⁸⁵ For example, the high school girl who wrote to *Xiandai zhoubao* says that when her classmate whose name is Fen saw the cover of *Xiandai zhobao* with the headline "Eileen Chang and others" she immediately bought one copy because she thought it was about her private life, only to be disappointed because it is actually criticism of Chang. "Duzhe zhisheng: Guanyü Zhang Ailing," 36.

⁸⁶ Hu Langcheng, "Ping Zhang Ailing," *Zazhi* 13:2 (May 1944), 77.

when reporting this information, mocked that even German or American or Japanese doctors couldn't tell the difference between the "aristocratic blood" and the "commoner's blood."⁸⁷ Chang seemed to understand how to translate the aristocratic family background into the sales of her popular romances. Qiuweng, in another article, unveiled a secret of Chang: In a letter dated June 15, 1944, Chang tells him that her grandparents' story could be found in *Niehai hua* 孽海花 (A Flower in the Sea of Sins), a late Qing *roman à clef* featuring political figures. If the story about her aristocratic ancestors could promote the sales of her fiction, Chang suggested to Qiuweng (her publisher at the time) that it was all right to use it as publicity stunt.⁸⁸ This anecdote is likely to be real because in a postwar memoir, Chang mentions that her grandparents' love story could be found in the said novel.⁸⁹ However, she never explicitly declared nor confirmed others' words about her family background in any of her wartime writings. No words about her have been vindicated by the writer herself except through the perpetual hearsay, guess, and rumor in tabloid papers, literary journals and popular magazines. The reading public thus worshiped her star persona from secondhand knowledge and from afar. If private life becomes a new site of knowledge and truth in modern popular culture and stardom,⁹⁰ secondhand knowledge only intensifies the feelings that the truth of the star is to be discovered but unapproachable. The distance between those who wrote about her legend and the legend herself thus enhances the mystique of Chang.

The noble, mysterious and distant star makes connection with her fans by details of private life, which is signified by her love story. Edgar Morin has reminded us that the essence of stardom is love, while Dyer further explains that the relationship between star and fan is

⁸⁷ Qiuweng, "Yizhen jianxue," *Haibao* (May 10, 1944).

⁸⁸ Qiuweng, "Zuihou de yiwu xuanchuan," *Haibao* (September 12, 1944).

⁸⁹ Eileen Chang, *Duizhao ji* (Taipei: Huangguan, 2010), 32.

⁹⁰ Richard deCordova, "The Emergence of the Star System in America," in *Stardom*, 63.

invariably a heterosexual, emotional/erotic one.⁹¹ As the examples in tabloid literati-journalists' writings have shown, Chang was perceived as an object of desire and even sexual fantasy. The knowledge of Chang's love life, again, is not revealed by her own words even though she's a romance writer; gossip columns and others' words supplied the fans with much desired information. It is particularly noteworthy that while Chang never explained her love life in non-fictional works, she did permit Hu Lancheng to recreate their intimate conversations in magazines. In "Ping Zhang Ailing 評張愛玲" (On Eileen Chang) Hu wrote, "One day Eileen Chang told me, 'I'm a selfish person.' In her words she is apologetic and stubborn at the same time."⁹² In this short example, Hu implies that they were so close that Chang could expose her "weakness" and true self to him. He, on the other hand, is an understanding listener who accepts everything about her. In another occasion, they were looking at her photograph in *The Miscellany Magazine* together; she laughed and said, "Even I feel like I look so pitiful. It is as if someone just punched me." A friend of hers said she looks like a slave in the picture, Hu then told Chang, "Let's caption it as 'A Woman Slave Escapes.'"⁹³ In this episode Hu poses himself not only as a listener but also an interlocutor. Chang shares her thoughts—no matter how trivial—and laughter with him, and he responds with repartee. They even participate in the process of creating a caption for her photograph together. Through Hu's words, readers for the first time were introduced to the firsthand observations of Chang's mind, personality, feelings, and, most importantly, her unspoken affection for a man. Because the atmosphere of their conversations is so intimate, it almost makes readers feel like they witness the ongoing courtship between the two.

⁹¹ About the star/fan relationship as a heterosexual one is still debatable. We can't ignore the fact that people are attracted to star of same sex. However, the historical data about Chang's female fandom in Occupied Shanghai is relatively few, this chapter therefore focus on the heterosexual emotional/erotic model of star and fan. Morin's and Dyer's claims see Dyer, *Stars*, 45.

⁹² Hu Lancheng, "Ping Zhang Ailing," *Zazhi* 13:3 (June 1944), 79.

⁹³ Hu Lancheng, "Ping Zhang Ailing," *Zazhi* 13:3 (June 1944), 80.

A tabloid writer responds to Hu's "On Eileen Chang" satirically and says, "His critique of Eileen Chang is filled with sweet love and tender feeling; it's truly a great, standard work of 'Mandarin Ducks' and 'Butterflies.'"94

To make the relationship between Hu and Chang even closer, there was a self-portrait of Chang attached to Hu's article about her. (Figure 5.2) The illustration seems to attest that what Hu has said about the woman writer in the article is the real image of her, just as the portrait is the most authentic depiction of Chang, because it was drawn by none other than the writer herself. Many of Chang's romance stories were accompanied by her own illustrations when they were published in wartime literary journals, such as *Love in a Fallen City*.95 (Figure 5.3) The readers recognized the distinct drawing style of hers and considered her illustrations a part of her writer persona.96 Her illustrations, including the self-portrait, thus imply an authentic authorship; the words by Hu "accompanying" the self-portrait could be authentic, too. The self-portrait further creates an effect that Hu's words were validated by the most-sought-after-yet-hardest-to-meet woman writer in Occupied Shanghai, while others such as the tabloid journalist Liu Lang were rejected. The hand-drawn portrait also indicates her acknowledgement of Hu's showing their intimacy in public. In contrast, Chang remains mysterious and unapproachable about her private life. When asked by a journalist about her views on love (*lianai guan* 戀愛觀) (because he had heard so much about her love life from friends and in tabloid papers), she declines to answer and says, "Even if I had any opinion I wouldn't want to tell you so easily."97 Because of the deliberate distance maintained by the woman writer herself, the "authenticated" gossip in Hu's words became more intriguing. It offers the ordinary readers slight opportunity to get

94 Zhen Xizhe, "Lun Hu Lancheng yu Zhang Ailing."

95 Eileen Chang, "Qingcheng zilian," *Zazhi* 12:1 (October 1943), 99.

96 For example, see Qiushui, "Zhang Ailing hua," *Libao* (November 12, 1943).

97 "Nalianghui ji," *Zazhi* 15:5 (August, 1945), 72.

intimate knowledge of her, and yet this tidbit of knowledge is limited and mediated by someone who is the object of her affection. No wonder a tabloid writer felt “envious” when he reported that Hu and “the most famous woman writer today” are getting married.⁹⁸

This “envious” remark is interesting in that, it reveals the fans’ longing for being intimate with the star; they wanted to replace the man who is both the object of her desire and the speaking subject of the gossip. Through gossip, the fans could “gain possession of a morsel of intimacy with the star,” as suggested by Morin.⁹⁹ According to Morin, the fans’ love is impotent; this love attempts to fix itself on a fragment, “a symbol of the beloved in default of her real presence.”¹⁰⁰ This is a fetishistic desire, and the only way to satisfy is through obtaining more fragments of the star. The fetishism of the (imaginary) intimate relationship between star and fan also manifests in photograph, autograph, manuscript and radio show—all are “presence-bearers” in Morin’s terms. Chang, the extraordinary star, is kind enough to be “present” in every fan’s house, office, and friends’ gathering, as long as the fans purchase her short story collection (which contains an autographed photo), get hold of the magazine that published an image of her manuscript, or turn on the radio and listen to her reciting her romance stories.¹⁰¹ Each of the visual, verbal and aural media texts of her presents tangible evidence of her existence, yet also amplifies the fact that only the chosen one could develop real intimacy with her. Chang’s publicity techniques (gossip, photographs, etc.) produce intimate feelings between her fans and her and transform the anonymous stranger in the modern reading public into an intimate based

⁹⁸ Laofeng, “He Zhang Ailing,” *Libao* (June 6, 1945).

⁹⁹ Edgar Morin, *The Stars*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 74.

¹⁰⁰ Morin, *The Stars*, 74.

¹⁰¹ *Zazhi* published an image of Zhang’s manuscript of “Hong meigui, bai meigui 紅玫瑰、白玫瑰” (Red Rose, White Rose) on issue 13 number 5 (August 1944). The news about Chang reciting her works see *Shenbao* (November 14, 1943), 3.

on the model of romance;¹⁰² however, this intimacy based on “the presence in absence” is one-sided, if not manipulative.

2. *The Fashionable Star: Visuality and Individuality*

Another publicity “handle” Eileen Chang used is fashion, a common advertising vehicle used by woman stars.¹⁰³ Dyer argues that woman stars are often leaders of fashion, while fashion promotes the notion of woman as spectacle.¹⁰⁴ Woman’s agency in fashion is often debated, but Chang’s conscious choices of clothing and how to make herself a spectacle—another *qi* quality of her—set her apart from other celebrities at her times. I argue that Chang is different from literary celebrities such as Su Qing in that she promoted herself not only in literary, verbal and aural presentations in romance fiction, gossip, radio shows, etc, but more importantly, she publicized her glamour in visual forms especially in fashion. It is the visuality—and the glamor of it—magnifies Chang’s movie star persona. In addition, fashion and clothes link biological body to the social being, and connects the private to the public, as suggested by Elizabeth Wilson.¹⁰⁵ On the one hand, the spectator’s gaze at the fashionably dressed body shows an imaginary closeness of the spectator and the wearer of the clothes. On the other hand, and in an interesting twist, the wearer of the clothes indicates a desire to display the intimate object in public gaze.

¹⁰² About romantic literature, celebrity culture and production of intimacy, see Calra Tuite, “Tainted Love and Romantic ‘Literary Celebrity,’” *ELH*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Spring 2007), 59-88.

¹⁰³ Charlotte Cornelia Herzog and Jane Marie Gaines, “‘Puffed Sleeves Before Tea-Time’: Joan Crawford, Adrian and women audiences,” in *Stardom*, 78.

¹⁰⁴ Dyer, *Stars*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 2.

Eileen Chang was notorious for sporting antique, museum-quality clothing from the Qing dynasty in wartime Shanghai.¹⁰⁶ In one famous photo she wears an antique jacket with wide sleeves, low collar and stylized cloud pattern, which also becomes the inspiration for the cover design of her essay collection, *Liuyan* 流言 (Written on Water).¹⁰⁷ (Figure 5.4, 5.5) Her contemporaries were astonished by her clothing choices and suggested that “If you were at a party and you knew Ms. Chang was there [but don’t know which one is her], you would not need anyone to tell you; you can still recognize who she is. This is because she wears special, uncommon and outlandish clothes (*qizhuang yifu* 奇裝異服).”¹⁰⁸ Her clothes were described as “dress from the Qing court,” “costume” and “Daoist priest’s robe.”¹⁰⁹ If Chinese people wore the nation on their backs, as Antonia Finnane puts in, by wearing clothes that heeded the nation’s needs,¹¹⁰ Chang seemed to wear the nation backward. She ignored the modernization of clothes (and the modernized body in the new clothes) by showing her youthful body in an old jacket from a “backward” past. More importantly, she neglected the needs of the nation at war by wearing clothes that were unsuitable for moving, working, and combating. In contrast, women in wartime Japan and Taiwan reformed the traditional clothes so that the body in the modified designs is able to work in the field and factories to supply battlefield’s needs and to evacuate

¹⁰⁶ Antonia Finnane, when studying fashion in modern China, suggested that the Qing dynasty clothes were displayed in museum and not wore by people at least in 1930s. Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Eileen Chang, *Liuyan* (Shanghai: Zhang Ailing, 1944).

¹⁰⁸ Laoge, “Zhang Ailing de yizhuo,” *Dongfang ribao* (June 2, 1945).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 17.

during air raid.¹¹¹ Chang's sporting antique pieces therefore was a gesture of differentiating herself from the mainstream and dominant ideology of nationalism.

In addition, Chang is also famous for wearing her (and her close friend, Fatima Mohiden's) outlandish new designs when attending public functions. For example, when she appeared in a roundtable discussion with the "East Asian movie star," Li Xianglan 李香蘭 (or Li Kôran, 1920-2014), she wore a dress, which, according to her memoir, was designed by Fatima and was made from the cover of a comforter her grandmother owned.¹¹² Many contemporary writers would describe Chang's clothes in detail even when they were writing literary criticism of her works. For example, in "On Eileen Chang" Hu Langcheng writes, "Because she loves herself, she would wear short tops and long pants with classical embroidery and walk in the street without paying attention to other's gaze."¹¹³ Her brother Zhang Zijing wrote, "She likes to be special.... She likes strange looks. I remember three years ago when she returned to Shanghai from Hong Kong, I went to visit her. She wore a *qipao* with extremely short collar. Several huge blue and white flowers are printed on crimson cloth. ... I've never seen any *qipao* like this and asked if this is the latest fashion. She smiles and says, '... This style is very common in Hong Kong. I feel like it's not special enough.' I was so stunned that I couldn't ask any further questions."¹¹⁴ In the strange clothes she is no longer an objectified figure in (male) fans' sexual fantasy; the writer who described her clothes as "costume" and "Daoist priest's robe" comments that "Ms. Chang probably didn't dress up for others because men don't necessarily like overtly

¹¹¹ Hong Yuru, "Qipao, yangzhuang, monpe: Zhazheng shiqi Tiawan nüxing de fuzhuang," *Jindai Zhongguo funü shi yanjiu* 17 (December 2009): 31-64.

¹¹² This anecdote reminds us of an episode in *Gone with the Wind* when Scarlett uses a curtain to make a dress. This is another coincidence of Chang's public persona and *Gone with the Wind*. See Eileen Chang, *Duizhao ji*, 60.

¹¹³ Hu Lancheng, "Ping Zhang Ailing," *Zazhi* 13:2 (May 1945), 76.

¹¹⁴ Zhang Zijing, "Wode jiejie Zhang Ailing," *Biao* (September 1944), 59.

outlandish appearances.”¹¹⁵ Hsiao-hung Chang claims that Eileen Chang used fashion and clothes as a protection mechanism to diminish the stimulus from the outside world and the voyeuristic gaze.¹¹⁶ In her publicity vehicles she constructs but also deconstructs the (imaginary) intimate relationship with fans.

The strangeness or uniqueness of her clothes further challenges the boundaries between old and new as well as normality and abnormality. Their ambiguous boundaries disturb the spectator and reinforce the visuality of her individual being in the collective. Gilles Lipovetsky claims that fashion foregrounds the individuals because it “allows people to reject, modulate, or accept the novelties of the day,” and “[encourages] them to pay more attention to the way they present and represent themselves, by inciting them to seek elegance, grace, and originality.”¹¹⁷ Therefore, Chang’s fashion and clothes individualize her existence in the wartime crisis in which the personal and the private were to be subjugated to the collective and the public.¹¹⁸ In a sharp contrast, a group of movie stars launched a “Simple Clothes Movement” in Shanghai in 1940 to respond to the lack of material resources in the war against Japan.¹¹⁹ Chang’s unique and sometimes lavish fashions thus differentiated her from the collective and redefines her subjectivity. She is an autonomous subject who, through the juxtaposition of old and new, normal and abnormal in her writing, star persona and especially fashion, finds that individualism may be the salvation against the desolate ruins of human civilization. Individualism emphasizes uniqueness and dignity of each person. It demonstrates an excessive preoccupation with one’s

¹¹⁵ Laoge, “Zhang Ailing de yizhuo,” *Dongfang ribao*.

¹¹⁶ Hsiao-hung Chang, *Zai baihuo gongsi yüdao lang* (Taipei: Lianhe wenxue, 2002), 283.

¹¹⁷ Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 29, 32.

¹¹⁸ Wilson contends that in the age of mass-communication although many individuals experience fashion as a form of bondage, the final twist to the contradiction that is fashion is that it often does successfully express the individual. Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Zhao Shiquan, *Yingtian gouchen* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang, 1998), 138-139.

self-interest and ignores the needs of the larger community.¹²⁰ Thus, one must be individualistic, paying obsessive attention to her needs, or even be selfish in order that she could survive the apocalypse brought by war. “War” in Chang’s formulation does not only refer to a specific war such as the bombing of Hong Kong in December 1941 or the air raids in Shanghai. Rather, it’s a state of total destruction. She writes, “There will come a day when our civilization, whether sublime or frivolous, will be a thing of the past. If the word I use the most in my writing is ‘desolution,’ that is because this troubling premonition underlies all my thinking.”¹²¹ In the desolution brought by war Chang and her friends “scoured the streets in search of ice cream and lipstick.”¹²² Her classmates worried that they did not have proper clothes for the occasion of the war—as if war were just another cocktail party or tennis match. The materials such as snacks, cosmetics and clothes—not essential for life but for personal enjoyment—become the tangible proof of individual existence when it might otherwise be destroyed by the total war. The relationship between materiality (signified by fashion), individuality and political crisis may be best summarized by Chang’s own words: “In an age of political disorder, people were powerless to modify existing conditions closer to their ideal. All they could do was to create their own atmosphere with clothes, which constitute for most men and all women their immediate environments. We live in our clothes.”¹²³ Chang lived in the atmosphere of individualism she created.

Conclusion

¹²⁰ Karen K. Dion and Kenneth L. Dion, “Individualism, Collectivism, and the Psychology of Love,” in *The New Psychology of Love*, 298-311.

¹²¹ Eileen Chang, “On the Second Edition of Romances,” in Eileen Chang, *Written on Water*, trans. Andrew Jones (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 199.

¹²² Eileen Chang, “From the Ashes,” in *Written on Water*, trans. Jones, 46.

¹²³ Eileen Chang, “Chinese Life and Fashions,” *XXth Century* 4:1 (January 1943), 60.

To conclude, I argue that popular romance was a culture industry for intimacy in Occupied Shanghai in texts and context. It was a field of production and consumption of romantic discourse. The romantic discourse was constructed, first of all, of course, by writing and reading the text, and secondly, by constructing the relationships between the producer and consumer of the genre based on a romantic model. The relationships, as mentioned above, are structured by two tropes of intimacy: movie star versus fan and courtesan versus patron. The two tropes of intimate relationships demonstrate different ways of redefining the terms of emotion, affect, and love through written words such as gossip and tales and visual forms such as fashion and photography. The differences demonstrate how the producer and consumer in the popular romance genre position the personal in relation to the public in wartime crisis differently. While the trope of courtesan/patron from the tabloid journalist-literati's perspective suggests a patriarchal response to the national crisis (which was also treated as masculinity crisis), the movie star/fan trope from Eileen Chang's camp indicates a feminine (or even feminist) response to spiritual crisis. The all-encompassing wartime crisis was thus perceived and reacted to quite differently. The tabloid journalist-literati tackled the collective crisis by a paradoxical collective individualism as demonstrated in Chapter 4 on *Begonia*, while Eileen Chang used an *individualistic* individualism to deal with the apocalypses caused by war. In this regard, the articulation of love and production of intimacy become a coping mechanism in existential crisis. Popular romance genre was thus a contested field between the individual and the collective, the private and the public, as well as the masculine and the feminine.



Figure 5.1 Eileen Chang's photo in *Chuanqi* (Romances, 1944)

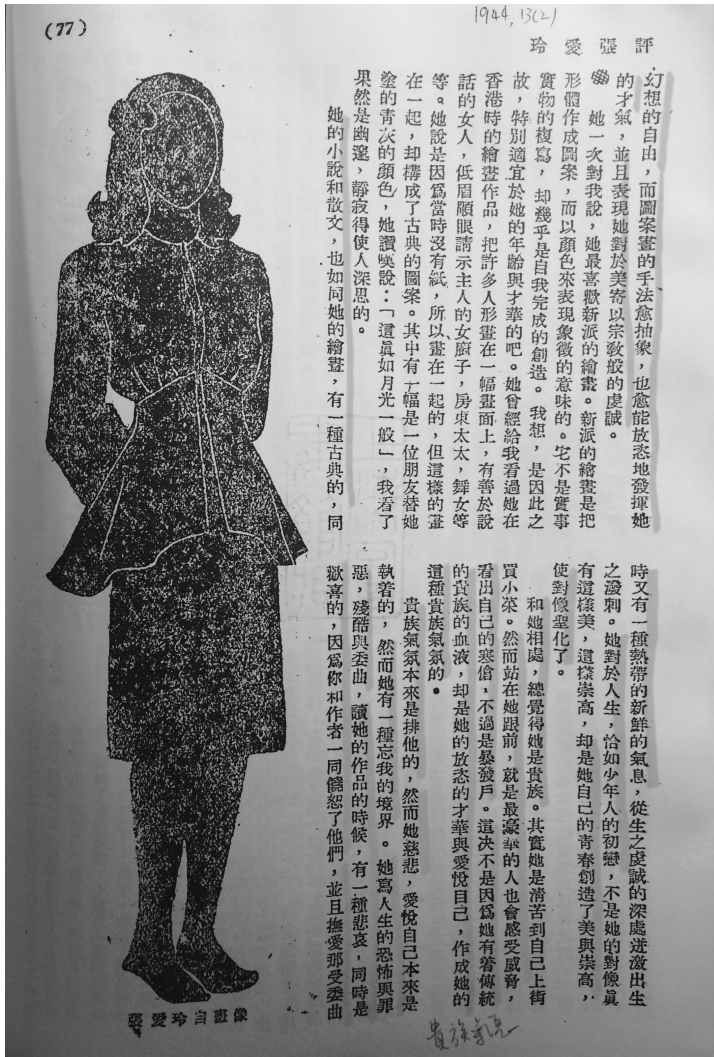


Figure 5.2 Eileen Chang's self-portrait in Hu Lancheng's "Ping Zhang Ailing" (On Eileen Chang in *Zazhi* 13:2 (May 1944), 77.

山。人家跟我要心眼兒，我不跟人家耍心眼兒，人家還拿我當傻子呢，準得找著我欺侮！」柳原聽了這話，倒有些黯然的，都怪我。我裝慣了假，也是因為人人都對我裝假。只有對你，我說過句把真話。你聽不出來。」流蘇道：「我又不是你肚裏的蛔蟲。」柳原道：「是的，都怪我。可是我的確為你費了不少的心機。在上海第一次遇見你，我相著，離開了你家裏那些人，你也會自然一點。好容易盼著你到了香港……現在，我又想把你帶到馬來亞，到原始人的森林裏去……」他笑他自己，聲音又啞又澀，不等笑完他就喊僕歐拿眼罩來。他們付了賬出來，他已經恢復原狀，又開始他的上等的調情——頂文雅的一種。

他每天伴著她到處跑，什麼都玩到了，電影，廣東戲，賭場，格羅士打飯店，思豪酒店，青島咖啡館，印度細緞莊，九龍的四川菜……晚上他們常常出去散步，直到夜深。她自己都不能夠相信，他連她的手都難得碰一碰。她總是提心吊膽，怕他突然摘下假面具，對她作冷不防的襲擊，然而一天又一天的過去了，他維持著他的君子風度。她如臨大敵，結果毫無動靜。她起初倒覺得不安，彷彿下樓梯的時候踏空了一級似的，心裏異常怔忡，後來也就慣了。只有一次，在海灘上。這時候流蘇對柳原多了一層認識，覺得到海邊上去去也無妨，因此他們到那裏去消磨了一個上午。他們並排坐在沙上，可是一個面朝東，一個面朝西。流蘇嚙有蚊子。柳原道：「不是蚊子，是一種小蟲，叫沙蠅。咬一口，就是個小紅點，像硃砂瘰。」流蘇又道：「這太陽真受不了。」柳原道：「稍微曬一會兒，我們可以到涼棚底下去。我在那邊租了一個棚。」那口渴的太陽汨汨地吸著海水，漱著，吐著，嘩嘩的響。人身上的水分全給它喝乾了，人成了金色的枯葉子，輕飄飄的。流蘇漸漸感到那奇異的眩暈與愉快，但是她忍不住又叫了起來：「蚊子咬！」她扭過頭去，一巴掌打在她裸露的背脊上。柳原笑道：「這樣好吃力。我來替你打罷，你來替我打。」流蘇果然留心著，照準他臂上打去，叫道：「哎呀，讓它跑了！」柳原也替她留心著。兩人劈劈拍拍打著，笑成一片。流蘇突然被得罪了，站起身來往旅館裏走。柳原這一次並沒有跟上來。流蘇走到樹陰裏，兩聲



Figure 5.3 Eileen Chang's illustration of "Qingcheng zhi lian" (Love in a Fallen City) in Zazhi 12:1 (October 1943), 99.



Figure 5.4 Eileen Chang sports clothes from Qing dynasty. Photo taken in 1944. From *Duizhao ji*, 62.



Figure 5.5 Cover of Eileen Chang's *Liuyan* (Written on Water, 1944)

Afterword

Through studying the production and consumption of Chinese popular romance in Japanese controlled or occupied regions including Taiwan, Manchukuo and Shanghai, this project suggests that the articulation of emotions, especially of love, bespeaks the writers' and readers' construction of affective subjectivity in relations to other individuals, the society, the nation, and the concept of collectivity when the social and political orders were in crisis. They may respond to the crisis of political identity by constructing a model femininity such as that in Xu Kunquan's wartime story "New Mencius's Mother" and Zhang Wenhuan's Japanese translation of *Lovable Foe* in colonial Taiwan or Mu Rugai's "Farewell at a Wedding" in Manchukuo. They may respond to personal crisis such as Wu Mansha's propagandist romances for commercial profit that could solve his personal financial problems in colonial Taiwan. They may also respond to the psychological crisis such as that in Shanghai audiences' hysterical tears that indicates an individual's helplessness in the spoken drama and film adaptations of Qin Shou'ou's *Begonia*. They may even respond to spiritual crisis or existential crisis such as Xu Kunquan's Christian love in place of the religious fervor in Japan's "Holy War," or Eileen Chang's materialism and individualism that foregrounds individual existence when the individual was being consumed by the collectivity in Occupied Shanghai. Together they challenged the boundaries between the passion for an individual and the passion for a nation, and reimagined the ethics of human relationships.

The writers of popular romances in this study, while each of them were tremendously popular in their own right in the colonized and occupied regions during wartime, their lives encountered enormous challenges after the war ended in 1945. Taiwan, the then Japanese colony,

was taken over by the Republic of China (led by the Nationalist Party, or KMT) when Japan lost the war. Manchukuo and Shanghai both returned to Chinese control as well. The writers' involvement in the colonial or occupation regimes prevented their wartime works from being recognized by the reading public in the immediate postwar with the exception of Qin Shou'ou. Xu Kunquan was said to have participated in a Taiwan independence movement, in which a group of people asked the last Taiwan Governor-General of the colonial government, Ando Rikichi, to revolt when the ROC troops came in in 1945.¹ Xu was then sentenced to prison for one year by the ROC government; he later became an editor of *Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuan wei* 臺灣省文獻委員會 (Taiwan Provincial Archives) in 1950 and published very few works before his untimely death in 1954. Wu Mansha adopted a patriot's identity in the immediate postwar—this time a patriot of the ROC—and tried very hard to interpret his wartime popular romances as anti-Japanese works. He continued his writing career but mainly wrote about folklore and historical customs in his postwar publications.² Mu Rugai returned from Manchuria to his old home Beijing, changed his name to Ning Yuzhi 寧裕之 and became an editor in *Beijing wenshi guan* 北京文史館 (Beijing Institute of Culture and History) in 1952. It is said that he later made a living by being a singer/storyteller (*changqu* 唱曲) until his death in 1961.³

In Shanghai, Qin Shou'ou and Eileen Chang were treated completely differently in the immediate postwar period. Qin's *Begonia* was still welcomed by postwar audiences; a writer wrote an article to discuss the question "Why audiences love *Begonia*?" while the script of a

¹ Huang Tiancai and Huang Zhaoheng, *Jinghan meixiang: Gu Zhenfu rensheng jishi* (Taipei: Lianjing, 2005), 99-100.

² Li Zongci, *Koushu lishi: Wu Mansha de feng yu yue* (Taipei: Taipei County Government, 2002), 173-183.

³ Zhang Juling, "Fengyun bianhuan shidai de qiji zhuojia Mu Rugai," *Manzu yanjiu* (2006/4), 116.

tanci version of the story was published in the popular magazine *Shengli wuxian dian* 勝利無線電 (Victory radio) in 1947.⁴ On the other hand, Eileen Chang was singled out as a monster (*guiwu* 怪物),⁵ ugly woman,⁶ and a Jeep girl (*Jipu nülang* 吉普女郎),⁷ meaning she had prostituted herself to American soldiers in Shanghai. This might partly be because *Begonia*, through its title, connotes a patriotic passion for China, whereas Eileen Chang's works contain sensual pleasure and individualism. This might also be because Qin left Shanghai for Chongqing, the Nationalist wartime capital, when the Japanese troops took over the foreign concessions of the city. Thus he was regarded as a "patriotic writer." In contrast, Chang not only rose to fame during the occupation but also married Hu Lancheng, a cultural functionary in Wang Jingwei's puppet government and thus was considered subservient to traitors in the immediate postwar period. *Begonia* has continued to enjoy popularity well into the later half of the twentieth and the twenty-first century: one TV series were made in Taiwan in 1986 and the other in mainland China in 2006,⁸ while the *Yueju* 越劇 opera version can still be found on Youtube.⁹

However, it is Eileen Chang who truly became a cultural icon and even a cult figure when she survived defamation in the immediate postwar. Since the 1970s numerous conferences and symposia about her life and works are held in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the

⁴ The first example see Mo Yi, "Guanzhong weishime huanxi kan Qiu Haitang," *Xinsheng Zhongguo* 1 (1946), 37. The second example see Yao Mushang and Zhou Bochun, "Qiu Haitang geju," *Shengli wuxian dian* 11 (1947).

⁵ Rentu 人土, "Zhang Ailing hai xiangsi bing," *Xingguang* 15 (1946), 2.

⁶ Lin dingding, "Zhang Ailing langman you Faguo fengwei," *Haijing* 22 (1946).

⁷ Hongyu, "Jipu nülang you duo yige: Zhang Ailing toubi gaihang," *Wanhuatong* 7 (1946).

⁸ "1986 Huashi Qiu Haitang dianshiju piantou qu 1986,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVltbsChv-c>, access March 18, 2016; "Dianshiju Qiu Haitang," http://www.youku.com/show_page/id_zcbfec886962411de83b1.html, access March 18, 2016.

⁹ "Qiu Haitang quanju," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XK3mP_OK9kk, access March 18, 2016.

USA. Many writers, voluntarily or involuntarily, inherit her legacy and become Chang's literary descendants, such as Chu T'ien-wen (Zhu Tianwen 朱天文, b. 1956) in Taiwan and Li Zishu 黎紫書 (b.1971) in Malaysia.¹⁰ Countless stage plays, films and TV adaptations of her early and later works continue to flood the market every several years.¹¹ A TV series about her legendary life was produced and a film based on her life story was made.¹² An exhibit entitled "Zhang Ailing tezhan: Ailing jinxing shi 張愛玲特展: 愛玲進行式" (Eileen Chang exhibit: Eileen in present progressive tense) in Taipei in February 2016 not only recreates the living room of Chang's apartment in Occupied Shanghai but displays her clothes and wigs and caused much debate about the privacy of a deceased legend.¹³ The stardom and fandom of Chang's writer persona now largely surpasses that during the author's lifetime.

Among various stories of the wartime popular romance writers' postwar life arise several interesting questions deserve future research. What caused these writers' different endings? How did the postwar readers/audiences respond to the wartime popular romance? Why did some of them remain popular while others fade into oblivion beyond the obvious political reasons? How

¹⁰ David Der-wei Wang, *Xiaoshou Zhongguo* (Taipei: Maitian 1993), 339; Ying Ni, "Malai xiya zuojia Li Zishu—zuiju Zhang Ailing tese de cainü zuojia," *Fenghuang wang dushu* (March 30, 2012), http://book.ifeng.com/yeneizixun/detail_2012_03/30/13560650_0.shtml?_from_ralated, access March 18, 2016.

¹¹ For example, *Love in a Fallen City* was adapted into a film of the same title in 1984, a TV series in 2009, and a stage play called "Xin Qingcheng zhilian" (New Love in a fallen city) in 2005. See Jessica Tsui Yan Li, "From Page to Stage: Cultural 'In-betweenness' in (New) Love in a Fallen City," in *Eileen Chang: Romancing Languages, Cultures and Genres*, edited by Kam Louie (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), Kindle edition; "Qingcheng zhilian" <http://baike.baidu.com/subview/297493/4875644.htm>, access March 18, 2016.

¹² TV series see "Ta cong haishang lai: Zhang Ailing chuanqi 她從海上來: 張愛玲傳奇," produced by Taiwan's Public Television Services and aired in 2014. The film based on her life see *Gunyun hongcheng 滾滾紅塵 (Red Dust)* was released in 1990.

¹³ "Zhang Ailing tezhan: Ailing jinxing shi," *2016 Taipei International Book Exhibit*, January 17, 2016, http://tibe.org.tw/chhtml/news_more/237/?pagenum=1, access March 18, 2016; "Taibeiguoji shuzhan Zhang Ailing tezhan yin zhengyi," *Xinhua wang* (February 27, 2016), http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-02/27/c_128756559.htm, access March 18, 2016.

is the wartime experience represented in emotive and affective terms in postwar artistic or commercial productions in different Chinese-speaking communities? The study of wartime popular romance promises further insights into emotions, love, gender and sexuality vis-à-vis politics in modern Chinese literature.

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