

Preliminary Thoughts on *Feixu Taiwan (Wasteland Taiwan)* and *Kuroi Ame (Black Rain)**

Bert Scruggs**

The novels *Black Rain* (1966) by Ibuse Masuji (1898-1993) and *Wasteland Taiwan* (1985) by Song Zelai (1952-) largely belong to the sub-genre of the diary novel. *Black Rain* is for the most part comprised of journal entries written by Shizuma Shigematsu and others that describe the destruction of lives in and around Hiroshima during the minutes, hours, days, months, and years following the atomic bombing. *Wasteland Taiwan* is primarily the journal left behind by Li Xinfu who commits suicide in a dystopian Taiwan of the future; a Taiwan undone by atomic accidents including leaks from nuclear power plants and mis-management of radioactive waste as well as other forms of social, political, and environmental decay. Among the many motifs found in both texts, trauma seems to offer a discursive link. This discourse in turn may provide for deeper analyses of formalistic and thematic similarities shared by other authors and texts in the region, and provide a meaningful means of culturally assembling or arranging them into a constellation of antinuclear movements and engaging intellectuals in East Asia. In this preliminary and exploratory essay I discuss briefly the authors and the novels, offer a reflection on diary fiction, and introduce post-traumatic stress disorder and assemblage theory. Much in keeping with Hayden White's comments on discourse as a "mediative enterprise", the final aspect of this essay, assemblage, both defines the interpretive

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** Associate Professor, Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, University of California at Irvine, USA.

mode and is the object of interpretation (White 4). In a nutshell, this essay should raise more questions than it answers because I want to draw as much attention to the tenability of the assemblage comprised of these novels, the psychiatric disorder, and interpretive metaphor as much as I hope to force a consideration of each in the Taiwanese and Japanese literary and scholarly establishments.

Ibuse Masuji and Song Zelai

Ibuse Masuji was born in 1898 in Hiroshima Prefecture, where he grew up in a household that had been part of the region for centuries; under the guidance of his grandfather, Ibuse developed an ear for traditional storytelling and local dialects. Ibuse eventually made his way to Tokyo and Waseda University where he studied French literature among other subjects, but failed to graduate. His first published work was the short story "Yūhei" ("Confinement"), which appeared in the July 1923 edition of *Seiki*, but "Koi" ("Carp"), which appeared first in the September 1926 issue of *Kogetsu* and in revised form in the February 1928 issue of the Keio University literary magazine *Mita Bungaku*, is the better known of his earliest works. It garnered him the acquaintance and help of the literary luminary who once visited Taiwan, Sato Haruo (Treat 44-45). Ibuse began publishing in the 1920s and, according to J. Thomas Rimer, was recognized as a highly respected author in the 1930s. Rimer also claims that Ibuse was an important mentor to Dazai Osamu, which Jay Treat confirms in detail by including Ibuse's feelings of guilt following Dazai's suicide in 1948 (Rimer 151; Treat 141-145). During the Second World War, Ibuse was drafted into the army, and served as a war correspondent in Thailand and Singapore. Following the war he wrote narratives of post-traumatic stress disorder including "Yōhai taichō" ("Lieutenant Lookeast"), a short story that describes the plight of an officer repatriated from Malaysia following the war. Treat asserts that "Lieutenant Lookeast", among other longer works of Ibuse in the years following the war, "subsume[s] the theme of death and its attendant guilt within the greater context of Ibuse's transcendental theory of continuity and change" (Treat 150).

In 1951 Ibuse published his first text explicitly confronting the horrors of

the atomic bomb, "Kakitsubata" ("Crazy Iris"), which appeared in the June 1951 issue of *Chūō kōron*. The story is set in Fukuyama, the town in which Ibuse grew up, and begins when the narrator notices a single iris "blooming out of season", "blooming crazily". Similar tales of botanic mutation also are found in literature from Chernobyl, and perhaps will arise in the aftermath of Fukushima. In fact, Ibuse was in Fukuyama the day that Paul Tibbets and eleven other men dropped the atomic bomb over Hiroshima: August 6, 1945. Reading Ibuse's journals alongside his fiction, much as the *Black Rain* reader reads journals alongside the narrator's putatively true account of events, Treat demonstrates that Ibuse's own description of the day closely parallels the narrator's memory of the day in "Crazy Iris". After learning of an impending bombing from pamphlets dropped from United States aircraft, Ibuse rode his bicycle into town from the family estate to which he and his family had been relocated, and he found nothing but boarded up shops (Treat 202). In "Crazy Iris" the narrator arrives in town to find all the inhabitants busily preparing to get out of town, but manages to visit three friends. Treat writes:

"The Iris" explains that refugees from Hiroshima have begun returning to their home villages only to die of a strange illness, dubbed "the volunteer soldier's disease" (*giyūhei no byōki*, literally "the brave soldier's disease"), since the first to manifest its symptoms was in fact such a person. Ibuse, upon hearing details of the bomb from these refugees, realizes with horror that while he was idly engaging the Fukuyama druggist in small talk, this man's son, some miles to the west in Hiroshima, was incinerated. This object of Ibuse's survival guilt is another example of mediation between directly experiencing the event (the dead son) and experiencing knowledge of the event (Ibuse), a process similar to learning that Fukuyama is burning through observation of far hills silhouetted by its fires. (Treat 203)

Ibuse's diary-novel *Black Rain* takes the next step and moves from the silhouettes outlined by the flames to those whose silhouettes were burned into

the pavement and those who survived, the *hibakusha* (victims of the bomb). *Black Rain* was serialized in *Shincho* between January 1965 and September 1966, and later released in book form in that year, which is also the year it received the Noma Literary Award. Also in 1966 Ibuse was honored with the Japanese Congressional Order of Cultural Merit. Initially the text was titled *The Niece's Marriage*, but it was changed to *Black Rain* after twenty installments. According to Reiko Tachibana, Ibuse's growing indignation at the use of such a monstrous weapon on innocent people led him to change the series title (Tachibana 166). *Black Rain* is an indictment of the use of the atomic bomb, but it is also a labyrinth of multiple levels of narration, inscription, and reinscription, the majority of which is comprised of journal or diary entries.

Song Zelai is the penname of Liao Weijun, who was born in Yunlin County, Taiwan in 1952. In 1976 he graduated with a degree in History from National Taiwan Normal University, and began teaching at Fuxing Middle School in Changhua County where he continued to teach until retiring in 2007. He rose to prominence with his 1978 collection of short stories *Danunian cun* (*Danunian Village*), which resonated with the locative (*xiangchou*) rather than temporal nostalgia (*huaqiu*) for the countryside felt by many newly urbanized Taiwanese at the time. In 1980 he continued to gain a reputation with another anthology, *Penglai zhiyi* (*Strange Stories from Penglai*), which followed in a similar vein to *Danunian Village*. It is worth noting that the publication of *Danunian Village* and *Strange Stories from Penglai* coincidentally bracket the January 1979 establishment of US-PRC relations and the December 1979 Kaohsiung Incident (*Meilidao shuyuan*), both of which are seen as significant events leading to an increasingly open and popular recognition of a Taiwanese consciousness or identity.

David Wang discusses Song Zelai as a latecomer to the Taiwanese *xiangtu* movement of the 1970s (Wang 309). Placing Song Zelai in the footsteps or standing on the shoulders of giants of the *xiangtu* movement such as Wang Zhenhe or Huang Chunming, Wang asks if it was possible for Song Zelai to come up with anything "new and provocative while maintaining the charm of an established discourse? Seeing that radical peers had turned the Taiwanese native soil movement into a political campaign, should Song Zelai keep describing

impoverished country life, decorated with quaint customs and good-natured rustic figures, or should he propagate activism at the expense of writing itself (Wang 310)? Wang reads Song Zelai's stories in the context of his theorization of imagined nostalgia, which he proposes is the mechanism or driving force behind the work of the early twentieth century Chinese author Shen Congwen, and decides in the end that stories like those contained in *Strange Stories from Penglai* and *Danunian Village* fail because they obtain "a story of stories about a legendary past, nostalgia over the original (imaginary) nostalgia" (Wang 311-312). Wang in particular finds Song Zelai's narrative device of a story within a story, which he uses repeatedly in *Strange Stories from Penglai* "clumsy and obsolete". Wang may find the device ineffective; however, perhaps it is exactly such a mechanism, a diary discovered by visitors to a site of destruction, yet another story within a story, that obtains a degree of temporal indeterminacy in *Wasteland Taiwan*.

Sometimes referred to as a third wave Taiwanese *xiangtu* writer, Song Zelai was praised by Ye Shitao, and compared to Wang Zhenhe, Huang Chunming, and Wang Tuo among others by other critics and scholars. According to most biographers, Song Zelai became very interested in Zen Buddhism in 1980 and it was not until the 1985 publication of *Wasteland Taiwan* that he returned to fiction. Chen Jianzhong refers to Song Zelai's early 1970s works as modernism, late 1970s narratives as nativism, and his 1980s texts as political fiction (13). With regard to Song Zelai's 1970s and 1980s writing, Chen's periodization tends to focus on formal experiments in the former and themes in the latter. *Wasteland Taiwan*, which was first published in 1985, is unquestionably a political novel. In 1987 "Kangbao de damaoshi" was published first in Taiwanese and then in Mandarin. Following its publication Song Zelai did not publish anything until 1994. In 2013 Song Zelai was awarded the 17th National Award for Arts. Unlike Ibuse's *Black Rain*, Song Zelai's *Wasteland Taiwan* contains only one diary; however, the diary is introduced by two short passages that bracket the diary. In other words, the novel is assembled of two bracketing narrations (obtained with a third person omniscient narrator) and a central, temporally indeterminate narration (obtained with a diary).

Assemblages, Diary Novels, and Single Consciousness Narrations

Both Ibuse's *Black Rain* and *Wasteland Taiwan* are assemblages on two levels as per the idea of assemblage developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Rhizome Introduction*. Dan Clinton neatly introduces the notion of the rhizome metaphor and by extension starts the process of introducing their understanding of an assemblage:

Rhizome principally constructs a model (a new map) for apprehending the constitution and reception of a book. As Deleuze writes, 'the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world'. (11) ...

As such, "Rhizome" rapidly seeks to extinguish every last trace of Hegelianism, particularly from the object of the book: "There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one or several authors as its subject." (Clinton)

As such, introducing *Black Rain* and *Wasteland Taiwan* in terms of (1), contextualization of the text within the text, and (2), how the novels function in connection with other things and how they do or do not transmit intensities; exploring these novels thus provides a way to think about how the texts themselves are multiplicities that can be inserted and metamorphosed in and by the discourse of trauma (Sakaki 8; Deleuze and Guattari 4-5). Song Zelai's first order of assemblage is simpler to trace, because the novel is comprised of a diary kept by a videographer between the months of February and November 2010, discovered in March 2015 by a political scientist and geographer with foreign names (Paul and Albert) who visited Taiwan some time following a

nuclear catastrophe. The discovery of the diary is narrated by a third person omniscient narrator, as is their departure after they have read the videographer's diary. Ibuse's novel on the other hand is a more complex assemblage, because the third person disembodied narrator, instead of disclosing a discovery of the text within the text, describes initially Shizuma Shigematsu's re-writing of his niece Yasuko's diary and his own diary, and later moves on to include his wife Shigeiko's memoir on food in the days leading up to the Hiroshima bombing, her redaction of Yasuko's diary, and the diary of Iwatake Hiroshi, a doctor caught in the bombing who survives both the initial blast and radiation poisoning. Given the multiple layers of writers and editors and their readers, or narrators and narratees, which these narrative assemblages, or novels, obtain, I wish to first consider on a basic level both the diary-novel and single consciousness narrations.

In *The Diary Novel*, Lorna Martens writes:

Let us define the diary novel more precisely in terms of form: It is a fictional prose narrative written from day to day by a single first-person narrator who does not address himself to a fictive addressee or recipient. This definition is based on the accepted distinction between first- and third-person narration. Within first-person narration, certain types of works purport to be written by the narrator. There are three main types of such works: memoir novels, epistolary novels, and diary novels. It is possible to describe the differences between these types in terms of a "narrative triangle" based on the communicative triangle of sender, receiver, and message. The poles [vertices] represent the fictive narrator, the fictive reader, and the narrator's subject matter, or what one might call the narrated world.

The diary novel is distinguished from the memoir novel by the narrator's relation to the subject matter. The memoirist or autobiographer is at pains to give an account of past events. The present moment, the time of writing, is itself of little or no interest. The memoirist rolls out the past like a rug, the cohesiveness the chronological march of events projects,

the unfolding of a "life," provides the novel with its ordering principles. The diary novel, in contrast, emphasizes the time of writing rather than the time that is written about. The progressive sequence of dates on which the diarist writes gives the narrative its temporal continuity. This present-tense progression tends to dominate the subject matter, so that the diarist usually writes about events of the immediate past – events that occur between one entry and the next – or records his momentary ideas, reflections, or emotions.

In its temporal structure the diary novel thus resembles the epistolary novel. As in the diary novel, the time of writing in the epistolary novel, represented by the sequence of letters, establishes the dominant temporal order; and what a correspondent writes in his letter is generally limited to what has happened to him since he wrote the last letter, or to his sentiments, ideas, thoughts, and recollections that reflect his present temper. But unlike the epistolary novel, the diary novel does not presuppose a fictive reader. Letters are by definition addressed to recipient; diaries are normally private. (Martens 4-5)

Considering Song Zelai's *Wasteland Taiwan* and Ibuse Masuji's *Black Rain* against Marten's theorization reveals among other things the strange twists that time seems to take in nuclear narrations. Li Xinfu's diary in *Wasteland Taiwan* does in fact progress in what appears to be a temporal continuity. Albeit his entries are limited to months, the dates are left blank. In addition to recording moments of the immediate past and reflections on those moments, however, he also indulges in perhaps nostalgic ruminations of the past such as the story of how he meets and falls in love with Xiaohui. (Song Zelai 42-53) Fu Dawei in fact focuses on nostalgia in his unpacking of the novel (Fu, in Song Zelai 5-18). Yet perhaps more significant in his record of disaster is the repeated disclosure of ecological accidents such as leaks from nuclear waste disposal sites or the establishment of monthly "incineration weeks", a prescribed week each month for industry to burn its trash. Revealed in the diary is not only the existence of these weeks of garbage burning, but also the fact that during these

times the Taiwanese need special equipment to drive their cars through clouds of smoke and must wear ventilator masks in order to breathe (Song Zelai 67-68). In addition to establishing a narrative of events punctuated by entry dates, temporal events like trash burning, and traditional moments such as the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival and Tomb Sweeping Day, Li's journal self-referentially develops the context for the journal and the more acute moments he records such as militaristic repression of human rights; in other words, the diary contains the moment and the years leading up to the moment of the diary suggesting that the text shifts between immediate diary and memoir or local history.

Labeling Ibuse's *Black Rain* a true diary novel in the strictest sense is also problematic not only because it contains more than one journal, but also due to redaction and readership. In the aftermath of the Hiroshima atomic bombing Takamaru Yasuko's diary is copied by Shizuma Shigematsu to account for her whereabouts in the days immediately following the bombing, in order to prove to a prospective husband and his parents that she is free from radiation sickness. At the same time, Shizuma recopies his own journal both to contextualize his niece's diary and to present to a local school as part of their efforts to document the suffering from radiation sickness and the original horrors of and following the bombing. Consequently the present moment is indeed the overriding interest of Shigematsu and Takamaru in the first inscription or enunciation of their experiences of the atomic bombing, but at least in the case of Shizuma the second inscription of the journal although formalistically remains punctuated by a progressive sequence of dates, thematically it is re-inscribed in an effort more akin to the motivations of the memoirist as outlined by Martens.

Song Zelai's diarist seems to write only for himself motivated by a sense of unease. In the first entry of the journal dated simply February, Li Xinfu writes,

I don't know why, but I find I want to jot down these miscellanies (*zaji*). And it seems I must tell some people (*mouxie'ren*) about what's about to happen. Of course this might have something to do with how much I value my own life and experiences. Of course I'm no one important – only a reporter – maybe it's because I'm a reporter, it's

become a professional habit that I naturally want to report on everything, and so I write this disjointed journal, maybe, but I can't be sure. (41)

Although Song Zelai's opening line ends with *zuyi*, a recognized genre of Chinese literature dating back at least to the Eastern Jin Dynasty and Ge Hong's Western Capital Miscellanies, suggesting Song Zelai is maintaining his practice of composing a larger story with vignettes as he did with *Penglai*, more important are the readers for both *Black Rain* and *Wasteland Taiwan*. Shizuma Shigematsu is recopying his and his niece's journals for a particular reader, Yasuko's potential in-laws and future historians. Li Xinfu's diary is being written for some people. Contrary to diary narratives like Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman", Nicholas Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", or even Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*, there is an intended reader beyond the writer. Gerald Prince has written of the diary novel "What about the naratee in a diary novel? Presumably, the writer of a journal intime writes for himself only or, at the very least, he does not write with a specific reader in mind, a reader whom he would regularly show his diary, for whose benefit he would mention or suppress certain details, whose questions he would answer, whose suggestions he would follow." (Prince 478) This last item does not hold true with Ibuse's novel, because Shigematsu and his wife Shigeko hold at least one editorial conference on what should and should not be included in the redacted version of Yasuko's diary.

Since the theme of the diary novel seems tied to answering the questions asked above concerning its assemblage into an anti-nuclear discourse and how or whether these works function as books, asking the question why write a diary of *hibakusha* suffering or a diary of ecological destruction and ideological corruption seems akin to the themes and motifs of the diary novel itself. I am not peaking of such topics as loneliness, authenticity, loss of self, quest for self or affirmation of self, which are so prominent in many fictive (and non-fictive) diaries but are also found in many other works. I am speaking of the theme of the diary, the theme of writing a diary and its concomitant themes and motifs. Why does the narrator begin keeping a diary? (Prince 479) Perhaps Li Xinfu begins to answer the question why even keep a diary with his compulsion to

write about something that is about to happen, or, as Treat and others argue, keeping a journal is extremely commonplace in Japan, but what about the themes of authenticity or a self, which Prince so quickly dismisses? Perhaps they are alter-egos of the authors, but how do the assembled diarists lead to a better understanding of the potential these texts offer; in other words, how do they help define the critical or theoretical shift from contextualizing the diarists and diaries within the texts to situating diarists as well as their authors in contemporary ecological discourse, especially the ethics of establishing or even maintaining nuclear power plants in Taiwan and Japan?

The *walkushi shōsetsu* or more commonly *shishōsetsu*, is a well known genre or metanarrative from modern Japanese literature, which often hinges on among other things a game of cat and mouse between the reader and author as to how close in fact the events in the text parallel or link with the life of the author. As Edward Fowler suggests, it is the author's life that is the definitive text. (Fowler, xviii). A famous example is the affairs among Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Chiyo Ishikawa, and Satō Haruo as encapsulated and implied in Tanizaki's novel *Tade kuu mushi* (*Some Prefer Nettles*). *Black Rain* or *Wasteland Taiwan* cannot be read as *shishōsetsu*, but the subject of a single consciousness narration lies inherent in the sub-genre. A diary novel seems to suggest a stable philosophical subject, one who describes several different narrative occasions and various sequences of events, and appears to suggest a regular passage of time which occasions several different sittings and a stable diarist who writes at these sittings.

In fact, Ibuse's novel is comprised of redacted versions of actual diaries kept by survivors of the atomic bomb and much of the novel is based on thousands of records "such as diaries, newspaper excerpts, notes, medical documents, and interviews with *hibakusha* and their families." (Tachibana 165) It is this assembly of a multitude of voices into a few that drew the Kenzaburo in a statement of mourning following Ibuse's death to note that "the excellence of *Black Rain* lies in Ibuse's ability to transform actual documents into his own style without rewriting their original meanings, and to describe the birth of new life in contrast to the misery of the *hibakusha*." (Tachibana 166) However, it is

this same process of assembly that has drawn criticism of the novel. With the original publication of the novel there was no mention of the actual journal that inspired and upon which the text is composed, the diary kept by a man named Shigematsu Shizuma, it was only at an award ceremony that Ibuse remarked that he himself "should be called the editor of the novel" (Tachibana 175).

The diarist in Song Zelai's novel on the other hand seems to simply be the work of the author; however, one curiosity of the text is that very rarely does the diarist's name, Li Xinfu, appear in recorded dialogue. More curious is that Xiaohui a woman from his past who decides to divorce her husband and marry Li during the time span of the narrative usually refers to him as photographer (*sheyingjia*), because he wrote a book on photography and now is a state employed videographer. Moreover as a ranking party member, it is his profession and his political affiliation that give him access to sites and sights often beyond the purview of the general population, which in turn lead to his sense of unease and desire to write the journal. Li Xinfu creates an ironic underscoring of the validity of the written word; a protagonist with access to what can be presumed to be the most effective means of documenting reality chooses instead to put pen to paper. The power of the written word and traditional methods of inscription is also highlighted in *Black Rain*, concerned that the ink of a Western pen will fade, Shizuma takes pains to use traditional ink and a brush pen to record the events stemming from the ultra-modern atomic bomb (40-44). These validations of paper and pen be they traditional over modern or simply pen and paper over videography aside, considering the creation of a diarist by the collapsing of a thousand voices into six, or the melodramatic blurring of the individual into a profession suggest that as with the texts themselves, scholarly concern may be not with who wrote the diaries but how the diaries function or what can be done with the diaries and more largely the texts comprised of the diaries.

The diary is a very personal text; blank diaries are often sold with locks on them. And recalling Marten's discussion the narrative triangle is collapsed with a diary, because the reader is the writer. Perhaps such a personal narrative approach suggests a more engaged writer and reader. How then do these journals narrate nuclear disasters?

Narrating Atomic and Nuclear Catastrophe: Symptoms of Trauma

Written in 1984, *Wasteland Taiwan* certainly resonates with George Orwell's eponymous work not only because it includes a doomed love affair, television monitors that gently but insistently educate the population, and a political party known as the Beyond Freedom Party that could easily be construed as Big Brother, but also because of the dystopian atmosphere that permeates the novel, and the ghosts of trauma who haunt both texts. From the very beginning of *Wasteland Taiwan*, the importance of television and videography are foregrounded. As already noted Xiaohui usually calls Li Xinfu photographer instead of using his name or another term of endearment, and he spends a great deal of time driving among locations in Taiwan recording events ranging from the elimination of a perceived foe by killing everyone in the building to nude dancing. The writing of a journal may or may not be subversive, but the power of videography and broadcast media, especially closed systems, is repeatedly underscored by the narrator's occupation, and still more significantly by the public education television that citizens are required to watch daily. In the closing months of the diary the number of hours of required viewing is repeatedly increased. It is shortly after the daily dose is increased to five hours per day on entry 21 (September 2015) that Xiaohui disappears. In entry 22 and 23 Li learns of confusion on the coast and that fishing boats have already taken to the sea to net (*lau*) bodies. Thereafter Xiaohui and Xiaowei, a boy the couple were caring for, disappear, presumably drowning in the ocean. It is unclear if her body or ashes are in the tomb that he erects in her memory.

The fragmented diary suggests the fragmentary flashbacks or hallucinations that are symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Thematic evidence of this psychiatric disorder unsurprisingly abound in *Black Rain*, but the disorder in Ibuse's novel demonstrate symptoms both in the assemblage of the text and in various diegetic registers. Edward Gunn uses the definition of trauma advanced by the American Psychiatric Association to consider representations of trauma in both theory and practice. Such a practice seems to help deconstruct Ibuse's and Song Zelai's novels. Gunn writes:

Among the various ways to discuss trauma there is the most narrow and specific definition of it as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Chinese 創傷後應激障礙 or 創傷後壓力症候群). The discourse of medicine does not necessarily match those of literature and cultural criticism, nor need they conform to each other, and the focus here is on the strategies that literature and cultural criticism adopt to represent trauma in comparison to a current medical definition. The definition includes a collection of symptoms, any one of which might not have anything to do with traumatic experience, but multiple symptoms point with increasing intensity to a psychological syndrome caused by traumatic shock. The symptoms include "persistent re-experiencing the traumatic event [through intrusive memories or flashbacks, hallucinations or nightmares], persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness [such as detachment from other people], and persistent symptoms of increased arousal [insomnia, acute and unpredictable episodes of anger, and hypervigilance]." (APA 424, 463-64) Although this is historically a recently defined syndrome (1980), which may or may not endure or be modified, its features had long before attracted attention and been recorded under other terms and diagnoses. And although Chinese literature is only occasionally given to psychological realism, still we do find occasional descriptions that strongly suggest aspects of the syndrome. (Gunn 2)

In the first week following the explosion, Shizuma's repeated trips to the city in an attempt to find coal is a literal re-experience of the site of the traumatic memory, but instead of flashbacks of being thrown from a train platform, he revisits the moment in encounters with incinerated and maimed human beings, the flashbacks are the reality that will become the flashbacks, and it might be suggested that each act of writing in a journal is a yet another persistent revisiting of the moment. Moreover, with each return to the city in an attempt to get coal Shizuma encounters a pedantic bureaucrat-soldier who refuses to help him; it seems reasonable to suggest that this hypervigilance is both the hypervigilance

symptomatic of the syndrome and a procedure in order to avoid the unbelievable horror which he sees before him: the parade of broken, ruined human beings and an invisible city that disappeared in a bright, white, intense flash of light, heat, and sound. However, Shizuma is all too aware of the impossibility of filling in the vacuum the traumatic experience has created. One evening as Yasuko is helping Shigeiko with dinner he walks into the kitchen and says, "I got through a lot today. I've copied all out up to the place where the West Parade Ground is jammed with people taking refuge from the mushroom cloud. Even so, I haven't got down on paper one-thousandth part of all the things I actually saw. It's no easy thing to put something down in writing." (Ibuse, translated by Bester, 59-60) Also worth noting is that although the text drifts from journal to journal visiting topics like a common meal in Hiroshima days before the bomb, to Iwatake's miraculous survival, in the final entry Shizuma reflects on the absurdity of a military uniform manufacturer now that the war is over and the hope that fresh water eels swimming in clear water offer (300). However, though the journal ends on such a note the novel ends with Shizuma's futile hope for Yasuko's recovery. His musing, "Let a rainbow appear – not a white one, but one of many hues – and Yasuko will be cured," grimly resonates with Gunn's assertion that "traumatic memory can always predict the future: it is the same as the past." (Ibuse, translated by Bester 300; Gunn 7)

If the narration of the aftermath of Hiroshima describes an ethos of repeatedly reliving the moment but never quite grasping the enormity of the inhumanity of the atomic bombings as in Shizuma's case, or avoiding the incomprehensible by hypervigilance towards clerical procedure with the young soldier, Song Zelai's *Wasteland Taiwan* seems characterized by the vacuum of the traumatic moment as in the disappearance of Xiaohui and Xiaowei into the ocean. There is no description of their demise only the notification that bodies are being pulled from the ocean and the suggestion that a mass panic or suicide has perhaps been instigated or triggered by five hours of public-education television a day. However, "a sense of "numbness" and emotional blunting, detachment from other people, unresponsiveness to surroundings" also pervades the text. Nuclear accidents have become a common occurrence, or so it seems; people are blasé, there is little anxiety about radiation leaks from three nuclear

power stations in 2000 killing 200,000 people and lowering life expectancy in Taiwan to 50. Li comments that it is not that people were not upset it is just that these things turn into political disputes and in the end dissidents end up in jail and nothing really gets done (Song Zelai, 39-40). But in another instance the potential trauma that the nuclear power plant near his home represents strikes him as a "monster" a "frightening temple where people pray for demons and evil" (56). In entry nine (April) Li seems detached as he reflects on the reputation Taiwan has attained among foreign contractors that build nuclear power plants as the "Kingdom of Nuclear Power"; the assumed risk that the Taiwanese seem willing to take on; and a reiteration of the 2000 accident that cost 200,000 lives as he and other party members and officials meet concerning another accident in a plant only fifty kilometers from his dormitory. As they walk home after the meeting, lost in his own thoughts he wonders if he and Xiaohui have contracted radiation poisoning until Xiaohui breaks down in tears and tells Li that before she dies she wants to marry him (123). Beyond the sense of numbness that seems to pervade Li, or the sublimation of the nuclear power plant into a monster or evil temple, Xiaohui seeks to avoid the trauma by turning to marriage. As with *Black Rain* the diarist repeatedly visits sites of trauma physically, and with each diary entry both texts revisit moments of human suffering, trauma, and atomic energy or weapons. The diary novel, with its repetitive nature seems suited to narrations of nuclear disasters because it is self-reflexive and self-contextualizing, the vacuum caused by a traumatic rupture comes into focus in part by repetition, and in part by the repetition of absence, because it is always just happening, or almost happening, and so both the vacuum and the absence are always immanent. Xiaohui's disappearance or death is lost, missing from the videographer's conscious memory, following or in entry twenty-two she disappears from Li's world, but not the diary.

Conclusion

Only three years after the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant disaster and in the wake of recent protests in Taipei that led to the use of water cannons by riot

police and a seven day hunger strike by the well-known political activist Lin Yixiong, the dangers of radiation loom large in both Japan and Taiwan in 2014. In her review of Egoyan Zheng's *Lingdidian (Ground Zero)*, a thriller which in large part hinges on the post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by a nuclear power plant engineer, Fan Mingru playfully approaches the danger of radiation by suggesting a Taiwanese mentality with regard to modernization, ethnic pride, economics, and nuclear power among other things that argues "Japan can, why can't we?" before turning this mentality inside out with Taiwanese government officials who replied to the reality of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant disaster in March 2011 with "It can happen in Japan, but it won't happen here" (Fan 124). The political forces that installed and maintained the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Japan were not evil and totalitarian as were those that installed so many nuclear power plants in Taiwan in Song Zelai's novel, and I hope that an accident at any of the three nuclear power plants in operation in Taiwan would not lead to the horrors contained in *Black Rain*; however, the trauma and ecological degradation that Japan and the Japanese are confronting in the aftermath of March 11 haunts the Taiwanese too. It is impossible to know how in years from now stories from Fukushima will compare to stories from Chernobyl, but it may be possible to examine more fiction and perhaps film from Taiwan and Japan that confront the threat of potential nuclear disaster now. The repetitive nature of traumatic memory suits the repetitive nature of the diary novel in these two texts, but it seems reasonable that the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder will also appear in fiction, and fiction and documentary film both thematically and in the assemblages of the texts into cultural discourses. Perhaps the discursive space surrounding radiation and trauma offers a field in which to understand these two diary-novels in connection with each other, and novels such as *Ground Zero* and Ye Chunzhi's *Minghe (Acheron)* or stories such as "Futari no bohyō" ("Two Grave Markers") by Hayashi Kyōko, and how they do or do not transmit intensities, and how within the text itself other multiplicities are inserted and metamorphosed. The vacuum caused by traumas only atomic science can yield seems to loom in the shadows and sustain texts and writers such as these in the Japanese and Taiwanese literary

establishment, perhaps seeking out and exploring these shadows may in turn lead to deeper analyses of formalistic and thematic similarities shared by authors and texts in the region with regard to cultural concerns such as antinuclear movements, engaged intellectuals, and the organic relations and assemblages among scholars and writers in Japan and Taiwan.

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