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You Are Whom You Eat: Cannibalism in Contemporary Chinese Fiction and Film

DISSERTATION

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by

Yun-Chu Tsai

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Bert Scruggs, Chair
Professor Hu Ying
Professor Chungmoo Choi
Professor Gabriele Schwab

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DEDICATION

To

my family,

for their unconditional love and support

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
CURRICULUM VITAE	v
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1:	25
Unconventional "Classical Love": Breaking of Traditions in Yu Hua's Writing of Haunting and Cannibalism	
CHAPTER 2:	62
A Consuming Identity's Melancholic Consumption of the Object: Gourmet Cannibalism in a Market Economy in Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*	
CHAPTER 3:	110
A Delicacy to Rejuvenate the Nation: Fetus Consumption in Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's *Dumplings*	
CONCLUSION	150
BIBLIOGRAPHY	157
GLOSSARY	170

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Yun-Chu Tsai

2003	Research Assistant, Institute of Public Administration, National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan
2005	B.A. in English, National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan
2005-2006	Research Assistant, National Digital Archives Program, National Science Council, Taiwan
2007	Certificate in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan
2009	M.A. in English, State University of New York, Stony Brook
2009	Certificate in Women's Studies Certificate, State University of New York, Stony Brook
2011-2015	Teaching Assistant, University of California, Irvine
2015-2016	Teaching Associate, University of California, Irvine
2016	Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of California, Irvine

FIELD OF STUDY

Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature and Film

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Food and Medicine in Chinese Culture

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

You Are Whom You Eat: Cannibalism in Contemporary Chinese Fiction and Film

By

Yun-Chu Tsai

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Professor Bert Scruggs, Chair

You Are Whom You Eat studies cannibalism in the works of Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee. In contrast to other scholars who have interpreted cannibalism in modern and contemporary Chinese literature as merely allegorical, I find that cannibalism is better understood as both allegorical and literal. The trope of cannibalism uncovers the potential incorporation of Chinese gourmandism (Chinese culture of eating food and delicacies) and medicinal/gourmet cannibalism (eating human flesh for health benefits or pleasure) in the discourse of modernization and globalization. This project considers literary and cultural texts as problematic sites in which historical memory and cultural pathology are juxtaposed. It engages with key periods of Chinese history: the Great Leap Forward (1958-61), the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the 1989 Democracy Movement and contemporaneous economic reforms, and the rise of today's Chinese Dream. Contemporary writers no longer use cannibalism to illustrate the *split* between tradition and modernity. They instead explore it as an allegory of *cooperation* between tradition and modernity, while also exploring people's desire to cannibalize – metaphorically and literally – in a market economy.

In my dissertation, I employ historical and anthropological perspectives, and literary and psychoanalytic analyses to show how the trope of cannibalism has been involved with Chinese identities, and argue that the ambiguous boundaries and identities portrayed and imagined through cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature debunk the progressive temporality of history and the integrity of subjectivities. I build on the modernist texts of Lu Xun, who portrays feudal China as a cannibalistic system in which every person is a consumed victim and/or a consuming cannibal, and argue that these contemporary writers continue to advance the allegory of China as a cannibalistic, self-consuming society. These authors' works centered on cannibalism have mass appeal because they reflect and embody both the anxiety of being marginalized and consumed others and the desire for consumption in post-socialist, neoliberal Chinese society. They reveal people's anxiety about the rapid transformation that is causing displacements and their ensuing insecurity in neoliberal China, in which desire for mass consumption is intertwined with China's internal consumption of minorities and Chinese overseas expansion.

INTRODUCTION

In the study of cannibalism based on Yu Hua's novella "Classical Love," Mo Yan's novel *The Republic of Wine*, and Lillian Lee's novella "Dumplings" and its adapted feature-length film *Dumplings*, this project investigates the ways in which the emergence of subjectivity, which produces a marginalized other, is represented through the trope of cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature and film. I begin with the overview of the western perspectives on cannibalism and the history of cannibalism in China, and then look into the representation of cannibalism in modern Chinese literature and trace its development of this representation through time in contemporary Chinese literature and film.

Eating, to consume food in order to sustain physical functions for survival, is one of the fundamental practices for all human beings. However, the act of cannibalism, to eat human flesh or organs of other human beings, is often tabooed and considered savage by western societies, especially in the context of the colonial discourse; it is also considered as unimaginable by most of the contemporary modernized societies. Therefore, in order to study the topic of cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature, it is inevitable to examine how the practice of cannibalism is interpreted in western perspectives as well as in Chinese history and literature. It is also essential to analyze how cannibalism has become a literary trope in modern and contemporary Chinese literature, as one of the most enduring symbols of imperial China's self-destructive ideology.

Western scholars have long discussed their observations on the practice of cannibalism. Anthropology offers various perspectives on the subject: some anthropologists, who study Aztec society, have found that the practice of cannibalism was a product of the economic and

ecological circumstances that utilize human flesh for consumption.[1] Other scholars disagree with this point of view and consider the cannibalistic act to be a ritual of religious transference that has cultural and spiritual significance. Within this perspective, the institutionalized eating of human beings is an expression of psychically primitive oral and sadistic impulses.[2] Yet another group of anthropologists take cannibalism as the constitution of an "other" that is nominally unrelated to a colonial "us."[3] These scholars believe that, in the European colonial discourse, cannibalism is an ethnocentric impression of the non-western world. Cannibalism evokes "the image of ferocious consumption of human flesh frequently used to mark the boundary between one community and its others" (Hulme 78-87). In the anthropological study of cannibalism, we find analyses of what cannibalism means and debates on the existence of cannibalistic practices. We also discover what cannibalism represents in western anthropological discourses: it can be a colonialist way to perceive the (racial) other in the formation of a colonial self/subject.

Cannibalism has long history in China; it has been practiced for its emotional, ethical, and medicinal benefits. In his *Cannibalism in China*, historian Key Ray Chong categorizes the practices of cannibalism in China into survival cannibalism and learned cannibalism. According to Chong, survival cannibalism in China is not distinct from survival cannibalism in the rest of the world. However, certain practices of learned cannibalism are only seen in China. These particular practices of learned cannibalism in China therefore become spotlighted in the discussion of cannibalism in Chinese history and literature.

In his chronological studies of cannibalism, Chong classifies learned cannibalism from the Han to Ming dynasties into acts intended as (a) punishment for disloyal and jealous persons,

[1] See Brown and Tuzin; Gzowski; Harner; Harris; Sagan.
[2] See Sahlins; Sanday.
[3] See Arens; Harris; Hulme; Kilgour.

(b) revenge, filial piety, love and hatred, (c) brutality for mental and monetary satisfaction, and (d) medical treatment for loved ones. Chong argues that the practice of learned cannibalism in China expresses secular ideals, such as showing loyalty to superiors and filial piety toward senior family members by offering parts of one's body as food and medicine. The Chinese have understood learned cannibalism of this type in terms of love and loyalty toward family or political superiors. These non-religious, secular ideals, intertwined with medicinal and culinary discourse, have shaped Chinese thinking and behavior. As Chong suggests, "[t]he Chinese equated food and medicine with loyalty and filial piety in reality. Practicing cannibalism, they saw no big differences between survival cannibalism and learned cannibalism in motives and modes" (171). The practice of cannibalism is deeply intertwined with feudal values, especially filial piety and loyalty, and helps to reinforce them.

Chong's historical data on cannibalism, however, leaves out a critical analysis of culture, history, and politics. His accounts of the obscure difference between survival and learned cannibalisms, as well as of the ambiguous Chinese attitude toward acts of human consumption at the end of his book, have yet to be critically engaged. To further explore these issues, I intend to provide cultural, historical, and political perspectives of how cannibalism is involved with all these forces by showing how the trope of cannibalism develops in the history of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. This exploration will start with a discussion on the leading figure among the modernist writers, Lu Xun, whose works are canonical in modern Chinese literature and in the study of cannibalism in Chinese literature. The contemporary writers' works centered on cannibalism, I believe, are inevitably inheriting his legacy and conversing with his narratives from the modern Chinese literature.

Lu Xun published "Diary of a Madman" in 1918 and "Medicine" in 1919, two stories of cannibalism that criticize traditional Chinese culture and call for the creation of a new Chinese culture. As the leading figure of the New Cultural Movement – also known as the May Fourth Movement – a cultural and political movement in 1919, Lu Xun and his works set up a literary convention to converse and negotiate with tradition in a time of rapid change.[4] This rapid political and cultural change characterizes the historical background of the May Fourth Movement and Lu Xun's writings. Lu Xun's cannibalistic allegories of "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine" establish enlightenment subjects who recognize classical and feudal ethics as cannibalistic and therefore call for the need to reform. The madman in "Diary of a Madman" can be read as an enlightened subject who acknowledges that the didactic teaching of "Confucian Virtue and Morality" (Lu Xun 42) in the history of China illustrates the logic of "eating human." The madman looks for the innocent who haven't eaten anyone or been eaten and asks for help to "save the children" from becoming cannibalistic or cannibalized. Xia Yu, the revolutionist in "Medicine," can be considered as another enlightened subject who calls for the right of the people and revolutionary changes. However, both characters are inevitably cannibalized – allegorically or literally. The madman's paranoia of questioning everyone's intention to cannibalize is eventually "cured"; this implies that he is culturally cannibalized – incorporated and assimilated – in the end. Being sentenced with a death penalty as a rebellious revolutionist, Xia Yu is literally cannibalized. His blood is sold to the ignorant Hua family, who believe that human blood cures tuberculosis, and is consumed by the tubercular son, Xiaoshuan. The martyr's

[4] At the beginning of the twentieth century, China underwent a period of instability and turmoil that came with the fall of the Qing dynasty, the establishment of the Republic of China, and forceful foreign involvements.

blood does not save the wretched body from the conservative superstitious family; the cannibal and the cannibalized both perish.

Deriving from Chong's claim, the history of cannibalism in China reveals that several practices of learned cannibalism in China are inseparable from feudal ideologies. Lu Xun, the modernist writer and one of the intellectual leaders of the May Fourth Movement, therefore, uses cannibalism to criticize feudal ideologies in "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine." Unlike most scholars who understand Lu Xun's works on cannibalism allegorically, I find that cannibalism in Lu Xun's works as well as Yu Hua's, Mo Yan's, and Lillian Lee's works are better understood both allegorically and literally. Chong's argument about China's survival cannibalism and learned cannibalism – in terms of motives and modes, there is no difference between these two styles of cannibalistic practices – has brought an epistemological shift of understanding the practice of cannibalism here: while speaking of the practice of cannibalism in China to criticize feudal ideology, which to Chong is inseparable from the real practice of cannibalism, Lu Xun could have been referring to a real practice of cannibalism for the sake of feudal ideology. In "Diary of a Madman," cannibalism allegorically refers to self-consuming destructions of the feudal ideology in imperial China. In "Medicine," cannibalism literally refers to medicinal cannibalism, a practice of learned cannibalism for the sake of its health benefits. Therefore, Lu Xun's stories of cannibalism connote both metaphorical and literal significances in the study of cannibalism in China.

Modern Chinese literature starts at Lu Xun's cannibalistic story, "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine," at the beginning of the 20th century. Interestingly, contemporary writers continue his narrative and the trope of cannibalism at the turn of the 21st century. The experimental works on cannibalism written by the contemporary writers Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and

Lillian Lee, inheriting Lu Xun's legacy, explore cannibalism in terms of its allegorical and literal representations in cotemporary China. In this dissertation, my research questions center around this continuation of the narrative tradition on cannibalism: Is the contemporary narrative of cannibalism a mere extension of the modern one, or a variation that speaks more to the contemporary conditions? If cannibalism is one of humans' deepest fears and desires as Peter Hulme suggests (78-87), what does its emergence in Chinese literature mean? Why is the representation of cannibalism a phenomenon in contemporary Chinese literature? How has the narrative of cannibalism changed from the modern to the contemporary eras? If cannibalism in modern Chinese literature is a trope to criticize imperial China, what does it stand for in contemporary Chinese literature and film? To what extent has a culture's representation of cannibalism molded its outlook on the culture itself and the world?

To answer these questions, I employ (1) historical analyses of these three contemporary writers' backgrounds, (2) historical and anthropological perspectives on how the concept of cannibalism were viewed differently according to cultural needs throughout Chinese history, and (3) psychoanalytic theories about cannibalism, narcissism, and melancholia. The employment of these methodologies is to show how this trope has been involved with Chinese identity.

By considering literary and cultural texts as problematic sites in which historical memory and cultural pathology are juxtaposed, my dissertation engages with key periods of Chinese historical change after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. I investigate the ways in which the emergence of subjectivity, which produces a marginalized other, is represented through the trope of cannibalism in Chinese literature and film. I begin with the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), then the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989 and contemporaneous economic reforms, and finally address the rise of

the Chinese Dream in the twenty-first century; these key periods are the most influential years of the contemporary writers' lives. In these writers' interpretation of the contemporary experience, the ambiguous boundaries and identities portrayed and imagined through cannibalism debunk the progressive temporality of history and the integrity of subjectivities.

Building on the works of modernist writers like Lu Xun, who portrays feudal China as a cannibalistic system in which every person is a consumed victim and/or a consuming cannibal, contemporary writers continue to elaborate on the ambiguity that exists between the consumer and the consumed, while emphasizing on the element of desire to consume, while also advancing the allegory of China as a cannibalistic, self-consuming phenomenon. My first chapter investigates how Yu Hua's unconventional narrative of haunting and cannibalism in "Classical Love" is an allegory of historical trauma during and after the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution and exposes a post-Mao intellectual's perplex subjectivity. In my second chapter, I explain how Mo Yan exposes the cannibalistic culture and identity by associating Chinese medicinal gourmandism with gourmet cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine*. His portrayal of what I call a "consuming identity," which dehumanizes and consumes everything, marks the grotesqueness of human commodification in a Chinese market economy and the instability of one's subjectivity in post-modern China. My third chapter analyzes how cannibalism in (Fruit Chan and) Lillian Lee's *Dumplings* is a trope to reveal the historical and economical transition from Mao's "serve to people" in Communist China to post-Mao "serve people" in capitalist Hong Kong and post-socialist China. This cannibalistic story demonstrates the devaluation and commodification of women and the minority in a capitalist society. The trope of cannibalism also uncovers the potential incorporation of Chinese gourmandism and medicinal/gourmet cannibalism in the discourse of modernization and globalization. These three

contemporary writers demonstrate the transformation and reincarnation of the cannibalistic ideology that has pervaded Chinese society from the modern to the contemporary period. Unlike the modernist anxiety about cannibalism, the contemporary writers explore both the fear of being consumed and the desire for consuming everything. This omnipresent ambivalent attitude toward cannibalism also characterizes a Chinese post-modern subject's complexity and instability.

My first chapter, "Unconventional 'Classical Love': Breaking of Traditions in Yu Hua's Writing of Haunting and Cannibalism," which employs literary and generic analyses and a historical perspective, helps understand Chinese postmodern cultural phenomena through the reading of "Classical Love." Unlike other critics who trace the significance and residue of history in Yu Hua's avant-garde works of explicit historical reference, I use textual and generic analyses to decode the historical context of "Classical Love," one of Yu Hua's avant-garde works that reveals almost no sign of contemporary historical context. I show that this story, seemingly set in distant imperial China, uses and transforms the narrative tradition of scholar-beauty romance to expose the cruelty and trauma caused by contemporary political events. These events include not only the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the significance of which has been emphasized by other critics, but also its precedent political movement, the Great Leap Forward (1958-61). My first chapter investigates the way the Great Leap Forward influenced the Cultural Revolution in aggravating the Great Famine and leading to acts of cannibalism in Mao's China. In this regard, I demonstrate these political movements cannot be singled out from Yu Hua's avant-garde writing. Reading "Classical Love" through the historical lens contextualizes how the historical trauma affects the psychic and everyday lives of every Chinese in contemporary Chinese society.

Scholars have discussed the political message from Yu Hua's avant-garde fiction. There have been many scholarly works focusing on how the influence of the Cultural Revolution is represented in works like "1986" or "The Past and the Punishments."[5] Hua Li's critique of Yu Hua's works highlights the young protagonists' destined-to-fail autonomy, subjectivity, and individuality during the Cultural Revolution.[6] Other scholars consider that Yu Hua's incorporation of strange events in his avant-garde works has turned his own narrative style into a specific style that exposes the shifting boundary between the fictional and the real as well as a certain Chinese "postmodern" reality.[7] Scholars believe that Yu Hua's novels present a mode of Chinese postmodernism.[8] His avant-garde denaturalized language becomes symptomatic of an existing social order that was radically disintegrated and delegitimized (Tang 11-2)[9] and

[5] For more detailed analyses, see J. Chen, "Violence" 15-6; Choy 205-10; Dai 31-3; X. Yang *Chinese Postmodern* 56-73; X. Yang "Madness" 218-9.

[6] Hua Li's manuscript shows how Yu Hua's and Su Tong's fiction documents the social and cultural history of the Cultural Revolution in the form of the *Buildungsroman*'s Chinese counterpart, *chengzhang xiaoshuo*. She considers their works as a satiristic and parodistic negation of the Chinese Communist Party's ideology of collectivism. Their narrative betrays "a tendency toward a gradual victory of the collective spirit over individualistic self-cultivation, and of national salvation over enlightenment humanism" (Li 2). Li highlights the young protagonists' destined-to-fail autonomy, subjectivity, and individuality during the Cultural Revolution in Yu Hua's works.

[7] Scholars mention the rich and varied Chinese generic tradition of "recording the abnormal" (*zhiguai*) that dates back from the fourth century, and how modern and contemporary writers have been using parts of the *zhiguai* tradition; Yu Hua, for a postmodernist purpose, transformed this generic tradition into a specific narrative style in his avant-garde works. Both Chen Jianguo ("Logic") and Wedell-Wedellsborg use "*Shishi ruyan*" ("The Ephemeral World" or "World like Mist") as an example to show the shifting boundary between the fictional and the real, and both notice the shift of purpose from moral and didactic significance in the classical ghost narrative to the postmodern fantastic that exposes the Chinese contemporary reality.

[8] For more detailed analyses, see Xiaobin Tang; X. Yang, *Chinese Postmodern*; Wedell-Wedellsborg.

[9] Tang uses Jameson's theory of "residual modernism" to explain how the narratives of the experimental fiction express the "end of idealism," a "characteristic of 'postmodern,'" that terminates the tradition of May Fourth humanism of recognizing and realizing one's role. This postmodern characteristic also implicates the modernist anxiety and despair (9). Fredric Jameson asserts that the postmodern must be characterized as a situation in which the survival, the residue,

represents a condition of indifference identified as "a cultural phenomenon," not located in the individual (Wedell-Wedellsborg). Most of the critics consider the Chinese avant-garde literary works as reflections of political turbulences. They trace the avant-garde writers' cultural memory and narrative to the influence of the contemporary Chinese political movements (the Anti-Right Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution).[10] Yu Hua's avant-garde short stories and novellas are considered as an ironic turn against the grand historical narrative.[11] His avant-garde works demonstrate the disintegration of a unified national subjectivity (Wang, "Scene" 135).

Yu Hua's avant-garde stories have generated a great number of discussions; however, his novella "Classical Love" has not been much discussed. Critics mention it briefly within the context of Yu Hua's other avant-garde works. Yang Xiaobin is the only scholar who studies it in a longer context in *The Chinese Postmodern*, where he analyzes Yu Hua's parody of the traditional narrative of the scholar-beauty romance in "Classical Love" (188-96). As a consequence, little to none of those who study Yu Hua's avant-garde works specify the significant role history plays in "Classical Love," and how this factor of history transformed the generic tradition into Yu Hua's postmodern narrative style. My chapter on Yu Hua's "Classical Love," tracing the tradition of literary narrative of haunting and cannibalism, fills the gap by providing a historical perspective to this understudied text. It also contributes to the study of the literary tradition as this historical perspective brought by my chapter explains the transformations

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the holdover, the archaic, has finally been swept away without a trace. In the postmodern, then, the past itself has disappeared (along with the well-known 'sense of past' or historicity and collective memory)" (309). Tang Xiaobin uses Jameson's notion of "residualtiy of the modern" as a powerful strategy to contextualize the postmodernist theoretical discourse that reexamine the modern itself, both its myths and demystifications.

[10] For more detailed analyses, see X. Chen 31; X. Yang *Chinese Postmodern* 50.

[11] For more detailed analyses, see X. Yang *Chinese Postmodern*; Zheng.

Yu Hua's parodies bring to the literary conventions in post-Mao China. Therefore, this chapter offers an insight to read Yu Hua's writing of haunting and cannibalism as a postmodern, post-socialist response to historical catastrophes.

My second chapter analyzes Mo Yan's writing on cannibalism. As the most prolific contemporary writer in China, Mo Yan's works have received a broad range of scholarly examination before him winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2012. After being awarded the prize, Mo Yan and his works are given even more scholarly attention. Rather than attempting an exhaustive analysis of Mo Yan's fiction, this chapter, "A Consuming Identity's Melancholic Consumption of the Object: Gourmet Cannibalism in a Market Economy in Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*," focuses on Mo Yan's texts on cannibalism, *The Republic of Wine*, "The Cure," and "Abandoned Child," and compares the first two texts with Lu Xun's writing on cannibalism, "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine." I conduct a textual and psychoanalytic study of *The Republic of Wine* to analyze how Mo Yan's writing on the topic of cannibalism and his narrative style blur the boundaries between the real and the fictional, self and others, (writing) subjects and (written) objects, and the cannibals and the cannibalized. I argue that a subject of melancholia who denies a lower position in a consumerist hierarchy develops what I call "a consuming identity" and consumes every beneficial material, both metaphorically and physically. This novel reveals that metaphorically, the upper class consumes every last resource of the lower class. Physically, the upper class consumes the children of the lower class. Therefore, this "consuming identity" ultimately involves cannibalism, both allegorically and literally. My psychoanalytic reading explains how the narrative on cannibalism and reform transforms from Lu Xun's call to arms during the May Fourth Movement to Mo Yan's call for material desire after the crackdown on the 1989 democracy movement and under the market economy.

My focus is on how Mo Yan uses an experimental narrative strategy to rewrite the story of cannibalism. The new narrative style and structure is employed to reveal the unsteady position of a subject in postmodern, post-socialist China, a continuation of Lu Xun's reflection on modernity in the May Fourth era. Therefore, I focus my attention on Mo Yan's narrative strategy and his inheritance of Lu Xun's legacy, and how other scholars critique these aspects of *The Republic of Wine*. Mo Yan's works have attracted a great deal of critical attention. However, *The Republic of Wine*, considered by the author to be the best and his favorite, has received considerably less scholarly attention. In an interview conducted by Molesworth, Mo Yan, while discussing *The Republic of Wine*, mentions his inheritance from Lu Xun and their differences, as well as the significance of textual experimentation in this novel which has been overlooked. Among the three comprehensive manuscripts on Mo Yan's novels, it is surprising that Angelica Duran and Yuhan Huang's *Mo Yan in Context* and Li Bin and Cheng Guiting's *Criticism on Mo Yan*[12] do not examine *The Republic of Wine*. Only Shelley W. Chan in *A Subversive Voice in China* thoroughly discusses this novel, the topic of cannibalism, and the connection between Lu Xun and Mo Yan (181-201). Despite exploring these important aspects of *The Republic of Wine*, Chan does not analyze Mo Yan's narrative strategy in this novel, which I consider the novel's best achievement. Therefore, I provide the following review of the scholarly essays on intertextuality in *The Republic of Wine*.

[12] Li Bin and Cheng Guiting's *Criticism on Mo Yan* is a collection of scholarly essays that criticize Mo Yan's narrative style, and the excessiveness of violence, sex, ugliness, and rhetoric in his writing. However, this collection of criticism does not examine *The Republic of Wine*, which I believe is Mo Yan's best experiment with narrative structure.

A number of critics examine Mo Yan's experiment with narrative style and its intertextuality in *The Republic of Wine*.[13] Yang Xiaobin's "Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*" highlights Mo Yan's intention to allegorize subjective disintegration through the novel's narrative structure and discursive decadence. Vivian Chan points out that unlike Bakhtin's carnival against power, Mo Yan's discursive carnivalesque turns out to be essentially anti-carnivalesque and implies cultural decadence. Zhang Hong briefly discusses the binary between the real/fiction, investigation/anti-investigation, and the normal/carnivalesque without further exploration ("Mo Yan" 52-68). Huang Shanming argues that Mo Yan's use of triple narrative structures in the novel[14] is his experiment to criticize and escape from normality. However, Huang does not validate his argument with examples of how Mo Yan's narrative strategies achieve this goal. Bi Guangming, on the other hand, successfully discusses how three types of intertextuality in *The Republic of Wine*[15] expose Mo Yan's intention to criticize Chinese social reality in the market economy as well as excessive material desire through his experimental narrative strategy. Meanwhile, Li Jungping's "Reading Mo Yan with Another Perspective" brings readers attention to various perspectives of narrative[16] and the shift between the first and third person narratives in the novel. However, none of the critics argue the significance of the shift of narrative position. I employ a detailed narrative analysis to show that the shift between

[13] See Bi; J. Li; S. Huang; X. Yang; D. Wang, "Spectacle," "Cross-century Magnificence;" H. Zhang.

[14] The triple narrative structures refer to (1) Ding Gou'er's narrative of investigation, (2) the communication between Li Yidou and "Mo Yan," and (3) the stories written by Li Yidou about what he witnesses in Liquorland ("jiu guo," the republic of wine).

[15] These three types of intertextuality argued by Bi Guangming include (1) internal intertextuality in the novel itself, (2) intertextuality between *The Republic of Wine* and other works on cannibalism (like Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" or "Medicine"), and (3) intertextuality between this fictional novel and the real world.

[16] These perspectives include the ones of Ding Gou'er, Li Yidou, "Mo Yan," and Li Yidou's shifting positions between the first and third person narratives.

the first person and the third person narratives reveals the unstable boundary between the (writing) subject and the (written) object; in the meantime, it also blurs the line between the real and the fictional, the heroic investigator and the evil cannibals, the cannibal and the cannibalized, and the writer and the reader. By doing so, Mo Yan continues Lu Xun's thinking about cannibalism and modernity, and redefines the boundaries of these concepts to reveal the postmodern reality of Chinese society.

Critics have noted Lu Xun's evident influence on Mo Yan's works.[17] In *A Subversive Voice in China*, Shelley Wing Chan mentions that Mo Yan carries on Lu Xun's tradition of fighting against social injustice, cultural disorder, and political failure, while still developing his own narrative style and identity. Mo Yan's inheritance from Lu Xun on the topic of cannibalism and its meanings has been discussed by Shelley Chan and other scholars.[18] David Der-wei Wang has several essays on Mo Yan, some of which is analysis of Mo Yan's works in chronological order, while others are on topics like nostalgia, hunger, or haunting[19] and how Mo Yan inherits some of the topics from Lu Xun. Yang Xiaobin, examining works from *Journey to the West* to Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" and Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*, explains how the trope of cannibalism develops through time, and how it reveals postmodern subjective disintegration in *The Republic of Wine*. Howard Goldblatt touches upon the culture of "vaunted cannibalism" (481), recognizing Lu Xun's legacy in Mo Yan's works and Mo Yan's abandonment of impassionate tone in this novel to anatomize the "political and social fabric of contemporary

[17] See S. Chan; G. Bi; D. Gu and D. Jin; X. Luo; D. Wang; G. Yue; L. Zhang; C. Zhu. Among these critics, Gu and Jin, Luo, and Zhang only analyze Mo Yan's continuation and variation on Lu Xun's topic of cannibalism, but do not examine the cultural, historical, and political meanings of writing on cannibalism in the 1990s.
[18] See Goldblatt; D. Wang, "Spectacle"; X. Yang, *Chinese Postmodern*; Yue.
[19] See David Der-wei Wang's "Imaginary Nostalgia: Shen Congwen, Song Zelai, Mo Yan, and Li Yongping," "The Literary World of Mo Yan," "On Mo Yan," "Spectacle of Daily Routines: on Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*," and *The Monster that is History*.

society" (483). Similarly, Yue Gang's *The Mouth that Begs* recognizes the coloniality of Lu Xun's allegory of cannibalism by presenting the dichotomy between the (colonial) modern subject and the cannibalistic other (imperial China), and how Mo Yan expands cannibalism into carnivorism to capture "the social gluttony and historical madness of the emerging of 'meat market,' a distorted mixture of the worst elements of the corrupt political system and the capitalist 'free market'" (263). Yue contextualizes the concept of "gourmet cannibalism" (270-1) in the discussion of cannibalism in Chinese literature. Yue's arguments echo Shelley W. Chan's reading of cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine*, which is "denounced as an extreme in the discourse of a system that is both capitalist and communist (i.e., a capitalist economy with an authoritarian government)" (195).

These critics' comparisons of Lu Xun and Mo Yan, especially Yue's and Chan's readings of *The Republic of Wine* and the topic of cannibalism, draw my attention to both their similarities and differences. I argue that in this novel, Mo Yan inherits Lu Xun's plea, "save the children," satirically by presenting his readers with the phenomena of "eat the children" in the market economy. I believe that this representation of desire for consumption as a form of "gourmet cannibalism" in Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine* is what makes Mo Yan different from Lu Xun. I also argue that Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine* is in response to the Democracy Movement of 1989 and the subsequent government crackdown. This political movement is an unfinished project of political and cultural reform that was initiated in the May Fourth Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century and that continues to thrive at the end of the twentieth century.[20] The anxiety about corruption, one of the main targets for political reform in the 1989

[20] As Shelly W. Chan points out, Mo Yan, like Lu Xun, criticizes "the 'everydayness' of reality and culture in China and attacks such evils as cultural cannibalism" (180). Chan also claims "Mo Yan's frequent return to the topic of cannibalism can be interpreted as one of the thematic

democracy movement, is represented in the form of cannibalism in Mo Yan's novel. After the crackdown on the movement, people's desire for political reform has been transformed into the desire for consumerism, which is also embodied in the form of cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine*.

My third chapter, "A Delicacy to Rejuvenate the Nation: Fetus Consumption in Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's *Dumplings*," shows how cannibalism in Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's film *Dumplings* is a trope that reveals the historical and economical transition from Mao's "serve to people" in Communist China to post-Mao "serve people" in capitalist Hong Kong and post-socialist, neoliberal China. This cannibalistic story demonstrates the devaluation and commodification of women and minorities in a capitalist society. In this chapter, I argue that Lee and Chan's use of a revolutionary song "Wave after Wave in Honghu Lake" and their deletion of some of its lyrics generates a cultural and political critique of the Chinese Communist Party's misconduct. I employ literary and cinematographic analyses as well as historical and medical anthropological perspectives, and argue that the reoccurrence of this song and Fruit Chan's cinematography in *Dumplings* reveals the connection between two eras (Mao and post-Mao eras), two economic ideologies (communism and capitalism), two classes (poor laborers and rich capitalists), and two systems of medicine (traditional Chinese medicine and western biomedicine). *Dumplings* manifests a consumerist, cannibalistic world in which women of lower class are "consumed" by what David Harvey calls "neoliberalism 'with Chinese characteristics.'"

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continuity of the May Fourth tradition represented by Lu Xun" (184). Comparably, Yue Gang considers Mo Yan's novel as a signal of a paradigmatic shift from morality to material practice (264). I build my argument of the thematic continuation and paradigmatic shift upon their critiques.

Scholarship on Lillian Lee's works is mainly based the following discussions: (1) (national) identity, (2) the connection between eroticism and politics, (3) her works as commodity, (4) meta-fiction as her narrative style, and (5) a comparison between the genres of fiction and film in her works. This project elaborates on the first two discussions. A number of scholars consider gender, sexual, cultural, and national identities as an important theme in Lee's works. Many critics believe that her works reflect Hong Kong people's loss and pursuit of identity. Some consider that the identity represented in Lillian Lee's works is unstable and precarious, or marginalized and hybrid in contrast to Chinese national identity.[21] Others consider this represented identity as a continuation of Chinese culture and identity.[22] Scholars perceive her portrayal of marginalized characters and their ambiguities as her depiction of Hong Kong boundary-crossing identities and her hope for the emergence of Hong Kong subjectivity.[23] There is also a group of scholars who associate Lillian Lee's writing of eroticism with politics. Similar to the discussion of identity, the discussion of the connection between Lillian Lee's erotic writing and its political connotation also exposes Hong Kong's anxiety about its own future and its complicated relationship with China.

Gender and sexuality have been important themes in Lillian Lee's works, which usually goes along with the rewriting and remembering of history. Critics consider her writing to be neo-historicist because it unmasks cultural and historical contexts through literature. They believe that Lillian Lee writes the stories of minorities to reconstruct a history of the marginalized and to deconstruct the arbitrariness and violence of the grand narrative of history.[24] Among these

[21] See S. Fuji 81-98; J. Liu 28-30; D. Wang, "Chinese Fiction" 151-65; L. Wong; X. Zhao; C. Zhu, "Hong Kong" 60-3.
[22] See Y. Huang 68-74; C. Ye.
[23] See Chiang 20-6; J. Liu 29-30; L. Wong, Li, and Chan 209-40; C. Zhu, "Hong Kong" 60-3.
[24] See A. Chen 662; L. Wong 16, Chow, "Writing" 51-2; Chiang 25-31.

discussions, the analysis of how her portrayal of prostitutes is associated with the colonial history of Hong Kong is most inspiring to the study of Hong Kong literature and history. Many scholars are interested in the writing about prostitution in Hong Kong literature, and argue that this writing can be understood in association with Hong Kong colonial history and its wandering identity after British colonization and the handover to China.[25] However, most scholars have only discussed the historical context of the Cultural Revolution in texts like *Farewell My Concubine*, and the 1997 handover in *Rouge*. Only few scholars contextualize history in *Dumplings*. They analyze how the representation of the heroine Mei's collection of knickknacks in *Dumplings* reveals her socialist past and current transformation into a capitalist cannibal.[26] Among these critics, only Bliss Cua Lim and Chuck Kleinhans have pointed out the significance of the revolutionary song in *Dumplings* and the association it makes between China's socialist past and China and Hong Kong's capitalist present. Meanwhile, earlier analyses have not provided enough historical and textual backgrounds to allow us to comprehend the transformation from Mao's communist China to post-Mao post-socialist, neoliberal China. Furthermore, Lillian Lee's refusal to be associated with a specific identity can be put into the context of Hong Kong's ambiguous relationship with China. Without understanding this contemporary historical context in which this novel is grounded and closely connected, we cannot achieve a holistic understanding of Chinese literature and its implication in contemporary Chinese society. Therefore, my analysis contextualizes the theme song of the film and historicizes the film and its implication of historical and cultural transition at the turn of the twenty-first century.

[25] See H. Chiang 1; J. Liu 29-30; L. Pun 81-103; L. Wong, Li, and Chan 211-2.
[26] See Kleinhans; Lim; Yeh and Ng; T. Lu.

Like Mo Yan's stories on cannibalism, Lillian Lee's cannibalistic stories also extend from Lu Xun's narrative of cannibalism. Unlike Mo Yan's discernible inheritance of Lu Xun's narrative, which has received significant scholarly attention, the connection between Lillian Lee's and Lu Xun's works on cannibalism is less recognized. Some critics study the connection between these two authors by analyzing their narrative strategies, especially their rewriting of the classics.[27] However, only Lu Tonglin points out Lu Xun and Lillian Lee's connection through their writing topic of cannibalism, and considers Lillian Lee's *Dumplings* as "a new 'Diary of a Madman'" in the global capitalist market of the new millennium. Lu Tonglin notes the difference between Lu Xun's anti-traditional cultural critique of the May Fourth Movement and Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's class-oriented allegory that reveals China's phenomenal success in the global capitalist market. Along the line of the debate between tradition and modernity in the context of Lu Xun's cannibalistic allegory during the May Fourth Movement and its continuity in contemporary writings on cannibalism, critics have not discussed the role gender inequality plays.[28] My analysis of *Dumplings* therefore provides a perspective of how gender and class inequalities work together to reinforce the capitalistic, neoliberal hierarchy, and how

[27] In *The Carnival of Tensions: On the Involvement of Subjectivity in the Novels of Lu Xun and the Writers Thereafter*, Zhu Chongke discusses Lillian Lee's works in the context of "old tales retold" and juxtaposes her works with the works written by Lu Xun, Shi Zhecun, Liu Yichang, Ye Si, Xi Xi, and Tao Ran. In "The Old Tales Retold in Hong Kong," Chen Yan also compares the stories written by Lu Xun, Liu Yichang, and Lillian Lee.

[28] Lillian Lee writes several stories on cannibalism, including "The Woman Who Eats Eyes," "The Woman Who Eats Marinated Goose," "The Woman Who Eats Insects," and *Dumplings*. Among these works, her novella *Dumplings* is most well-known because it is turned into a short film *Three… Extremes* and a feature-length film *Dumplings*. I notice that all of these stories portray women cannibalize men, or their own and other's children in the context of bitter relationships. *Dumplings* not only elaborates on women's status in their relationships like Lee's other works does, but also manifests a vulnerable status women have in capitalistic society, especially the women who are losing their "beauty" capitals, who have no economic foundation, or who did not have any resource to build their own capitals. To my knowledge, there has not been any scholarly article that identifies the connection between the topic of cannibalism and gender inequality in Lillian Lee's works.

modernization and globalization in contemporary China are established on the exploitation of women and minorities. This highlight of gender and class aspects is one of the major differences between, on the one hand, Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's allegory of self-consumption in neoliberal China, and on the other hand, Lu Xun's critique of tradition in the beginning of the twentieth century.

A number of scholarly works in English have approached Chinese cannibalism from historical and anthropological perspectives.[29] A number of scholarly essays have focused on cannibalism in Chinese literature in particular.[30] However, there has not yet been a book-length study on the subject of cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature and film. Given the fact that the representation of cannibalism has a long tradition in Chinese history and literature, and that it has become a prevalent trope in modern and contemporary Chinese literature, this research on cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature contributes to the field in multiple ways:

1. It shifts the discourse of cannibalism away from the western colonial perspective to reexamine it from the Chinese historical context of memory and identity, as well as the cultural context of Chinese gourmandism and medicine.

2. It reveals the transformation of the narrative of cannibalism from modern to contemporary Chinese literature, from a self-salvation to a self-destructive narrative.

3. It illustrates Chinese post-colonial, post-modern, and post-socialist identity formation, which exposes what I call a "consuming identity" that engulfs one's self and the rest of the world.

[29] See Chong; Edgerton-Tarpley; Gittings; Y. Zheng.
[30] See Yue 61-143, 222-87; Keefer; C. Rojas, "Cannibalism," "Introduction" 1-12, "1906" 35-94.

4. It provides a solution of self-sacrifice to "save the children." While my previous points show that the Chinese society is cannibalizing its children, my analysis of the contemporary stories of cannibalism ultimately offers a solution in correspondence to Lu Xun's call for "save the children" by discussing a worker's self-sacrifice to save a child not his own in Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*.

In response to Lu Xun's plea for "save the children," Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee continue Lu Xun's legacy of cannibalism in their distinct perspectives: in "Classical Love," Yu Hua delves into the traditional narratives of scholar-beauty romance, haunting, and cannibalism and reveals post-Mao intellectuals' perplexed subjectivity and their inability to "save the children." In *The Republic of Wine*, Mo Yan experiments with a new narrative strategy to expose the indistinguishability between the self and other, cannibal and cannibalized, writing subject and written object. Deriving Lu Xun's legacy, Mo Yan characterizes a subject's transition from "save the children" to "eat the children" in the post-1989 era of market economy. Lillian Lee, writing at the turn of the 21st century, historicizes *Dumplings* through a revolutionary song and contextualizes the practice of cannibalism by showing the paradigmatic shift from Mao's "serve the people" to post-Mao "follow the money" and ultimately "serve people." In these contemporary writers' works, the trope of cannibalism is used to represent people's anxiety of being consumed, their struggle for a political and cultural reform, as well as their failure and disillusionment that initiates the turn to desire for consumption. Their works on cannibalism seem to reflect a social tendency towards egoism, or a criticism against this cannibalistic tendency. However, is this their ultimate answer to Lu Xun's plea for "save the children?"

In terms of Lu Xun's legacy of cannibalistic allegory, Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* (1995), a novel that portrays Xu Sanguan's selling of his blood as a livelihood in

exchange for the necessities of his family's lives, provides a different perspective of shifting from egoism to altruism. The exchange and use of blood is not new in the writing of cannibalism. Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* is like a variation of Lu Xun's "Medicine": in "Medicine," Mr. and Mrs. Hua purchase the blood of another person in hope that their sick son would be cured after consuming the blood bun. In *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, Xu Sanguan sells his own blood multiple times in order to save his "step-son," whose father turns out to be his wife's ex-boyfriend. Knowing that his "step-son" does not carry his bloodline, Xu still sells his own blood (and almost his life) without any hesitation in order to save his "step-son's" life. Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* demonstrates a story counter-cannibalism: Unlike Lu Xun's story, in which parents purchase and use another person' blood in order to save their own son, Yu Hua presents his readers with a father who sells and uses his own blood in order to save his step-son. From Lu Xun's "Medicine" to Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, there is a transition that is noteworthy. Zhang Hong's psychoanalytic reading of *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* and Levinas' theory in *Otherwise than Being* can help us understand this transition.

In "Psychoanalysis on Blood," Zhang Hong's interpretation of blood provides us an insightful perspective to examine the writing of cannibalism. Zhang Hong categorizes the representation of blood in modern and contemporary Chinese literature into three types: blood as sacrifice, blood as object, and blood as commodity. He demonstrates that the representation of "blood as sacrifice" as it appears in Lu Xun's "Medicine" in a revolutionary context has gradually transformed into the presentation of "blood as object" in Yu Hua's and Mo Yan's avant-garde works in post-revolutionary era, and later into the representation of "blood as commodity" in Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* in the era of market economy. Zhang's

analysis of the representation of blood in modern and contemporary Chinese literature corresponds to my interpretation of cannibalism in modern and contemporary Chinese literature: the literary representation of cannibalism has also gradually transformed the understanding of cannibalism as a form of commodity in correspondence with the societal shift into a market economy. What Zhang previously considered as a "sacrificial" and medical practice that involves using one's blood for another's health benefit in Lu Xun's "Medicine" has now become an economical practice of consuming one's flesh for another's health or pleasure. The practices of cannibalism in the studied texts written by Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee are all described as commercialized behaviors. It seems that people are either consumed or driven by the desire to consume everyone and everything beneficial in the post-socialist, neoliberal Chinese society. However, Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* provides a different perspective to reflect upon the meaning of using one's flesh as commodity for the sake of altruism.

Unlike the characters in Yu Hua's "Classical Love," Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*, and Lillian Lee's *Dumplings* who sell the others' human flesh for commercial profits, Xu Sanguan in *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* sells his own blood to save his family; he is even willing to sacrifice himself for the son of another man. Xu Sanguan's ability to recognize himself in the place of the other embodies Levinas' notion of substitution – the transformation of one's being as a subjection *by* the other into a subjection *for* the other (99-130). Xu Sanguan represents Levinas' "the-one-for-the-other" (or being-considerate-for-the-other), which is the essence of being that transforms the action of "sacrificing other's children for one's pleasure and benefit" to "sacrificing oneself for other's children." Therefore, Yu Hua, in response to Lu Xun's plea, offers a self-sacrifice perspective to "save the children" in contemporary Chinese literature. Yu Hua's bottom-up description in *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* implies that the answer is among

the people. After a century-long violent and bitter journey, the trope of cannibalism comes out with a new direction at the turn of century and demonstrates that only an altruistic sacrifice can "save the children."

CHAPTER 1

Unconventional "Classical Love":

Breaking of Traditions in Yu Hua's Writing of Haunting and Cannibalism

Modernist writers like Lu Xun allegorically portray feudal China as a cannibalistic society in which every person is a consumed victim and/or a consuming cannibal. Building on these works, contemporary writers explore ethical issues in CCP-governed China while advancing the allegory of China in the modern literature. As a leading figure of Chinese modern literature during the May Fourth Movement – a movement of anti-western imperialism that marked a rejection of traditional values and a call for democracy and science -- Lu Xun portrays feudal ethics and rites as cannibalistic in "Diary of A Madman." In response to this, Yu Hua breaks away from the modernist call to "save the children" and portrays a world in which the children who were to be saved are instead doomed for by the alienation of humanity and the collapse of faith in ethical good that happened during and after the man-made disasters of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Yu Hua's appropriation of literary traditions – the narratives of ghost and scholar-beauty roman – is not a salute to the tradition, nor is it a criticism of it like Lu Xun put forth in his writing. It is a use of tradition to manifest its variation in CCP-governed China.

This chapter shows that Yu Hua uses cannibalism and haunting in his "Classical Love" as tropes to question the Chinese Communist ethical negligence of their political actions during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. I argue that Yu Hua breaks the literary conventions of the long accepted ghost narrative and the genre of the scholar-beauty romance to create a tale of cannibalistic horror. His shift from romantic narratives of love and trust to a

horror narrative of betrayal and distrust symbolizes the collapse of tradition during the Cultural Revolution, which paradoxically took place without eradicating the most damaging element of the Chinese traditional culture – hierarchy. Cannibalism embodies the terror of a total cultural destruction that is espoused by the revolutionary goal of exterminating tradition in order to achieve modernity at the expense of human lives and humanity. The failure to eradicate authoritarian hierarchy in the Cultural Revolution, however, highlights the ethical issue of authoritarian politics, in which making moral judgments about political action and voicing criticism of political leadership are not allowed. An inability to recognize the ethical problems that lie in the human agents and the larger structures of society results in a cannibalistic world and a failure of rebirth.

In Yu Hua's "Classical Love," a young scholar, Willow, falls in love with a beautiful maiden named Hui. On his trip to take an imperial examination in hopes of winning an official rank, Willow meets Hui and spends a night with her. After failing the examination months later, Willow loses track of Hui after he returns to find her household deserted. Three years later, Willow again passes through Hui's town on his way to retake the exam, but the landscape has changed and a famine has taken place. He witnesses a mother and a daughter being sold by their husband/father as human meat in a market. He eventually finds Hui in an inn. Her leg has been dismembered and is being sold on the meat market. Willow purchases Hui and her leg, and then kills and buries her upon her request. Following this, he no longer desires to take the examination and years later becomes the guardian of her grave. One night, Hui appears to Willow in his dream. He so badly wonders if she is real or is his own fantasy that he exhumes her body and, to his delight, discovers that she is in the process of being resurrected. The story ends that night

when the maiden returns to the scholar's dream again, she tells him that the resurrection has failed because of the exhumation.

My chapter examines "Classical Love" in terms of narrative and ethics. Yu Hua's "Classical Love" is adapted from various classical texts, including *The Peony Pavilion*, "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter," "Feng Xiaojiang's Son," and "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" for the narrative of the scholar-beauty romance, haunting and revenant, as well as "Notes of Summer in Luanyang" for the narrative of human as meat to be cannibalized. Both "Feng Xiaojiang's Son" and "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter" describe the same revenant story of how Xu Xuanfang's daughter returns with the help of Feng Xiaojiang's son. "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter" in Tao Qian's *Sequel to In Search of the Supernatural*, however, contains more description of the revenant procedure, including the rituals at specific moments, the way of nurturing after the maiden's return, and the process of the engagement and wedding. Therefore, the following analysis is based on the story of "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter" written by Tao Qian.

In the traditional narrative of human-ghost romance, the obstacle to a couple's romance usually comes from their parents in the form of disapproval or arranged marriage. A couple looks for agency and satisfaction of their desire and emotion without directly confronting feudal didactics – at least not in their lifetime. Therefore, the revenant (*huanhun*, a returned soul) of a lover's ghost is considered to be an indirect resistance against feudal ethics and social restriction.[31] A successful revenant not only symbolizes a couple's autonomy to choose the subject of their love, but also praises their autonomy. An unsuccessful revenant, on the contrary, is usually caused by the parents' involvement or a lack of appropriate rituals. Similarly, the

31 Scholars argue that the traditional narrative of the scholar-beauty ghost romance, such as *The Peony Pavilion*, is often used to subvert the traditional and feudal code of ethics. See Hsia; Chang; Ke.

traditional narrative of human as meat (*cairen*, human beings to be sold on the meat market and to be eaten as meat by other human beings) strengthens didactic values.

However, in Yu Hua's "Classical Love," the hero Willow's misconduct – exhuming the heroine Hui's grave to unearth the truth of her return – directly results in the failure of her revenant. Yu Hua's narrative of the revenant is based on classical narratives, but lacks traditional parents as scapegoats to be criticized. The contemporary allegory of cannibalism and haunting implies destruction during Mao's The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. It is not only a criticism of Maoist violence and turmoil, but also a post-trauma monologue in postmodernist China. My analysis of "Classical Love" is structured into two parts: the "classical" and the "love."

The Classics in "Classical Love":
The Traditional Narratives of the Revenant (*huanyun*) and Human as Meat to be cannibalized (*cairen*)

The narrative of the revenant is inseparable from the ghost narratives. Both have thousands of years of literary tradition in China. Both narratives express the unspoken voices of the Chinese writers' contemporary reality. In the history of Chinese literature, the first peak of the ghost narratives is during the Six Dynasties[32]. The development of the ghost narratives satisfied people's preferences for speaking of mysteries and worshiping the supernatural. The literary genre of brief "accounts of the strange" (*zhiguai*) developed in the fourth and fifth centuries CE during the Six Dynasties under this romantic and less-ritualized fashion. The

[32] For the history of the ghost narrative and the human-ghost romance in the Chinese fiction, see H. Lu; Y. Yang; Kao; D. Wang, "Second Haunting" 231; Lau, *On Classical Fiction* 249; Yan; Zeitlin.

intellectual at the time used this genre of *zhiguai* to sinuously express their romantic inclination through the appearance of the supernatural. This is to make compensation in the world of imagination for what cannot be realized in the world of reality (Ye 9). In the eighth and ninth centuries during the Tang dynasty, there developed "longer and more elaborate 'tales of the marvelous' (*chuanqi*)" (Zeitlin 5). This genre was merged with a popular narrative of scholar-beauty romance in the Tang dynasty to emphasize the value of infatuation. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the intellectual and the uprising middle-class still enjoy speaking of mysteries. The late Ming and early Qing dynasties is regarded as "the high point of the literary ghost tradition" (6). The success of Tang Xianzu's human-ghost romance, *The Peony Pavilion*, further glorifies the topic of the revenant. The preface of *The Peony Pavilion* shows that this revenant story comes from two previous revenant stories from the Six Dynasties. "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" narrates a failing revenant, while "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter" narrates a successful revenant. Both stories are significant to Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion* and Yu Hua's "Classical Love."

The narrative of the revenant, like the narrative of the ghost, is a challenge to social rituals and moral ethics, and a criticism of social phenomena. Yan Jihua argues that the writers and their readers, instead of directly confronting their gods', emperors', or fathers' wills, seek to relieve their desire through writing and reading the narrative of the ghost – the story of a wandering female spirit implies the relief of oppressed love, while the story of a wandering male spirit reflects the harm of imperial examination (Yan 33). Like Yan Jihua, Zhu Diguang also believes that from *A Lady's Wandering Spirit*, which is an "account of the strange (*zhiguai*)" during the Tang dynasty, to *The Peony Pavilion*, which is a Ming dynasty play, the account of the strange is used to accomplish what is unfeasible in reality (Zhu 123). These literary representations which seem to be impracticable and extremely romantic are actually dealing with

realistic issues through imagination. Through writing of the wandering and returning of the spirit, the writers set females free from direct conflict and allow them to seek their love. According to Yan, their spirits symbolize self-realization and the breakthrough of reality and tradition on the one hand. On the other hand, their bodies still subject to regulations and rituals and do not physically violate any classical ethics (37). The writers of the classical texts, therefore, were seeking balance between the "classical" and the "love."

This conflict between the "classical" and "love" is the major theme of *The Peony Pavilion*, and its adapted preceding texts "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter," "Feng Xiaojiang's Son" and "Li Zhongwen's Daughter." It also has a decisive influence on the results of revenant in these three stories. The revenants in *The Peony Pavilion*, "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter," and "Feng Xiaojiang's Son," with more emphases of "classical" rituals in the narrative, are eventually successful. However, the revenant in "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" fails while the description of "love" and physical contact is the emphasis in the story. In the preface of *The Peony Pavilion*, Tang Xianzu mentions that this play draws materials from the stories of Li Zhongwen's and Feng Xiaojiang's children.

The story of "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" describes a failure of a revenant: Li Zhongwen's daughter dies young and returns as a ghost to meet Zhang Shizhi's son. They secretly meet at night and have a physical relationship. The narrative even emphasizes Li's virgin blood on their first night together. However, the lady's maid discovers this secret relationship on her visit to Zhang's mansion while seeing her lady's shoes under Zhang's bed. Both parents open Li Zhongwen's daughter's coffin and find out that the lady is in the process of returning. However, the revenant fails due to the untimely exhumation.

The story of Feng Xiaojiang's child is based on two earlier stories: "Feng Xiaojiang's Son" in Liu Yiqing's *Records of the Hidden and the Visible Worlds* and "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter" in Tao Qian's *Sequel to In Search of the Supernatural*. Both stories portray a successful revenant of Xu Xuanfang's deceased daughter. This lady's ghost appears in Feng Xiaojiang's son's dream and requests for his help for a revenant so that they can get married. The lady, with Feng Xiaojiang's son's help in performing rituals at certain moments with a rooster, porridge, rice wine, has been brought back to life and nurtured with porridge and goat milk. She finally returns to life and gets married to her benefactor.

The different order or emphasis of the "classical" and "love" in these stories play a crucial influence on the result of the revenant. Both stories of Li Zhongwen's daughter and Xu Xuanfang's daughter sound familiar: Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion* chooses the happy ending of a successful revenant in "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter," while Yu Hua's "Classical Love" follows the pattern of "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" and results in an unsuccessful revenant due to an inappropriate exhumation. Ke Qingming asserts that the key to a successful revenant relies on timing and ritual procedure (234-7). In Ke's analysis, even though the fact that she was a virgin before she sleeps with Zhang Shizhi's son has been emphasized, Li Zhongwen's daughter and Zhang Shizhi's son have a physical relationship before any ritual performance; meanwhile, their secret relationship has been discovered by a maid. On the contrary, Xu Xuanfang's daughter goes through a formal request, confirmation, waiting, rituals of revenant, and 200 days of nurturing before she is affirmed to be alive. According to Ke Qingming, Xu Xuanfang's daughter returns to life because she follows the proper rituals of Daoism.

Similarly, Du Liniang's ghost in *The Peony Pavilion* experiences a long waiting period and a series of rituals before her successful revenant. In *The Peony Pavilion*, the couple's

physical relations occur in their dreams, or between Du Liniang's ghost and the hero Liu Mengmei. On their wedding night after Du Liniang's successful revenant, Du Liniang reveals to Liu Mengmei that she has retained her virginity until now.[33] This self-revelation and explanation shows that her virginity is a crucial element to their marriage and her new life. The revelation of Du Liniang's virginity is essential to the perfectness of Du and Liu's relationship in the revived life, prior to Liu's scholarly achievement and Du's parents' consent.[34] *The Peony Pavilion* and its antecedents, "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" and "Xu Xuanfang's Daughter," put emphasis on the conflict between the "classical" and "love" as well as the importance of ethics.

However, Yu Hua's "Classical Love," adapting stories from all of the above, focuses on the conflict between the "classical" and "love" in an unconventional way. Yu Hua no longer emphasizes rituals and ethics, intellectual achievement, emergence of subjectivity, or love. In "Classical Love," the hero Willow, who is supposed to help the lady's revenant, is not a heroic character at all. On the contrary, he causes the failure of Hui's revenant due to his inappropriate exhumation. According to David Der-wei Wang, Willow (*Liusheng*)'s name obviously is making a tribute to Tang Xianzu's *Liu* Mengmei (*Peony Pavilion* 690-8). Consequently, the prototype of Yu Hua's heroine Hui is supposed to be Du Liniang in *The Peony Pavillion*, who actively pursues her love and freedom in a feudal society. However, Hui turns out to be an object of Willow's desire in Yu Hua's "Classical Love." To understand Yu Hua's intention to appropriate

[33] In the Scene of Elopement, Du Liniang tells Liu Mengmei that she is still a virgin on their wedding night. She explains that her body remained intact because she spent their previous nights of love in her ghostly form: only now does she bring him her "real self" (Tang 210).
[34] The Scene of Elopement (Scene Thirty-Six) occurs prior to Liu's departure for his imperial examination (Scene Thirty-Nine), Du Liniang's reunion with her mother (Scene Forty-Eight), Liu's Proclamation as a Prize Candidate (Scene Fifty-Two), and Du Liniang's father's final approval at the imperial palace (Scene Fifty-Five).

and break the convention of the scholar-beauty ghost narrative, an exploration of this ghostly motif is necessary.

Scholars have different opinions on how ghost stories reveal the cultural desires of the time. Yin Ping Grace Lau in her book *On Classical Fiction* states that the motif of the ghost narrative is to complement the main characters' or ghosts' regrets or dissatisfactions, be it poverty, loneliness, hatred, disaster, or unrealized love (Lau 248).[35] In another essay "Catastrophe and Catharsis," Lau further points out that the romance between human and ghost reflects an inevitable calamity of the time, such as the change of dynasties, and how the writers use ghostly romance as a complement and catharsis to repentance.[36] Correspondingly, by examining the topic of love in *The Peony Pavilion* and how this story of love is intertwined with the change of time and northern barbarian invasion, Ke Qingming analyzes Tang Xianzu's wish to revive the Ming dynasty (255-6). Both studies show that the ghost narrative, especially human-ghost romance, echoes a dynastical change and the intellectuals' wish to revitalize a dynasty.

Yu Hua's story of an unsuccessful revenant is undoubtedly not an allegory of a revived "dynasty" or country. The revenant is miscarried because of the heroine's untimely exhumation. Unlike *The Peony Pavilion*, which follows the story of Xu Xuanfang's daughter and depicts a successful revenant, Yu Hua's "Classical Love" follows the story of Li Zhongwen's daughter, which results in an unsuccessful revenant (Wang, *Peony Pavilion* 684). Both revenants in

[35] Lau discusses the concept of ghosts as a complementation to what has been lost in reality in two chapters of her *On Classical Fiction: Mythology, Psychology, and the Psychic*.
[36] In her "Catastrophe and Catharsis: On Human-Ghost Romance Fiction in *New Paper Cut Lantern Anthology*," Yin Ping Grace Lau analyzes the symbolic meaning of human-ghost romance at the turn of dynasties. The temporal background of the human-ghost romance in *New Paper Cut Lantern Anthology* is at the turn of Yuan and Ming dynasties, in which bandits are revolting at the end of the Yuan dynasty.

"Classical Love" and "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" fail because of inappropriate exhumations. Nonetheless, the exhumation in Yu Hua's work is different from the one during the Six Dynasties. The Six Dynasties' case of revenant in "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" does not succeed because of an intervention from the couple's parents: they inappropriately open the lady's coffin to see if she is truly alive; her revenant therefore fails at the final stage. On the contrary, Yu Hua's contemporary story of a revenant is a miserable one not because of the family's meddling or any ethical restriction. It fails because of the hero Willow's impulse to see if the lady is really alive. The lady Hui's revenant breaks at the final stage.

The failure of the revenant in "Classical Love" comes from the self's irresistible urge to "exhume." In Yu Hua's portrayal, this inappropriate exhumation reveals the theme of conflict between the self and its desire in avant-garde fiction. This desire, however, is no longer the desire for sexual subjectivity or freedom of marriage. The desire Yu Hua refers to is an irresistible impulse to "expose the truth." Both failing for inappropriate exhumations, the revenants in "Li Zhongwen's Daughter" and "Classical Love" differ on the agents of exhumation. In "Li Zhongwen's Daughter," the lady's maid exposes the couple's secret relationship and the couple's parents exhume her grave before her body is ready to be shown to the public. In this case, the couple has no control over everyone else's wills and deeds. However, in Yu Hua's "Classical Love," Willow has no control over his own will and deed and inappropriately exhumes the lady's tomb. This exhumation begets the second death of his loved one. Written in 1988, Yu Hua's "Classical Love" reflects historical residues of time. It manifests a paradigmatic shift from a classical narrative of heroic and omnipotent subjects to a post-Mao narrative of a disabled subject.

How does a hero transform from a loving and protective subject of his lady to a frail, devastating, good-for-nothing character? Yu Hua's "Classical Love" is a rare example in the narrative of a revenant in which the hero himself (not the other people) causes the failure of the revenant. Yu Hua intentionally breaks this narrative tradition to unveil the unspeakable. This unspeakable, arguing with Judith Zeitlin's theory of "*huaigu* ghost story," is what has not been told in the history of contemporary China, in which Yu Hua grew up. In *The Phantom of Heroine*, Zeitlin studies the seventeenth century ghost narratives and argues that in addition to the connotation of love/affection (*qing*), Chinese intellectuals often mark the fall of and express nostalgia for the former Ming dynasty with the appearance of female ghosts (7, 87-130). In "Ghosts and Historical Time," Zeitlin examines a specific "historical ghost tale" (*huaigu* ghost story) - "a ghost story about a traumatic historical event rather than a problem of individual mortality" (88). Zeitlin's reference to "*huaigu* ghost story" in the seventeenth century offers a new lens with which to view Yu Hua's contemporary ghost story in terms of inheritance and subversion of the traditional narrative. Borrowing the idea of "*huaigu* ghost story" to analyze "Classical Love," we can see the secret history in contemporary China that Yu Hua intends to expose.

To begin with, "*huaigu* ghost story" always carries a sense of loss and contains three elements. According to Zeitlin, the seventeenth century historical ghost story usually dramatizes the present's encounter with the past, which "is always represented in some form as a loss to be mourned and lamented," yet "of a temporal distance that cannot be bridged" (88). Zeitlin's and other scholar's definitions of the *huaigu* ghost story – a form of rumination on history in Chinese literature and "poetic reflection stimulated by visits to historic sites" – heavily stresses the importance of "the mortal visitor's presence at a historic site and the feelings the place stirs in

him that provoke the apparition" in seventeenth-century ghost tales (Zeitlin 88-9, Frankel 361, Owen 20). Meanwhile, Owen's conceptualization of three basic elements of *huaigu* ghost story helps us to understand how Yu Hua appropriates the traditional ghost narrative. The three *huaigu*'s elements are: "an ancient site encountered, the poet stirred by human loss in contrast to nature's cyclical continuity, and the outlines of absent shapes that hold the poet's attention and keep him from leaving" (Owen 20). In "Classical Love," Yu Hua skillfully provides visible or latent references to these three elements.

Yu Hua manifests the three "*huaigu* ghost story" elements by showing the ruin of the maiden Hui's mansion as "the ancient site encountered," the (re-)blossoming scenery of the maiden's town as the "nature's cyclical continuity," and the hallucinating sound seemingly made by the maiden as "an outline of the ghost"[37]. The complete representation of these three "*huaigu* ghost story" elements demonstrates that Yu Hua's "Classical Love" is a historical ghost story about traumatic historical events. Hui's mansion – "the ancient site encountered" – is represented by the term – a vista of crumbling buildings or ruins (*duan jing can yuan*)[38] – several times. Meanwhile, the blossoming scenery of the lady's town – "nature's cyclical continuity" – has been shown by another term – a spring landscape full of happy and colorful scene (*cha zi yan*

[37] The image of "absent shapes" of Hui keeps emerging on Willow's last visit to the yellow highway and Hui's town. The white fish in the river and the lady who lives in Hui's household are all reminding Willow of Hui. An outline Hui's shape even emerges from the river next to Hui graveyard. Willow decides to stay at her graveyard overnight to keep her company. He hears her movement on that night and sees her on the second night.

[38] In Andrew F. Jones's translation, "*duan jing can yua*" (斷井殘垣) is translated into "a vista of crumbling buildings littered across a ruinous, empty wasteland" (27), "a vista of crumbling buildings littered across a barren wasteland" (33), "the crumbling remnants of the pavilions" (34), "an image of crumbling ruins" (45), and "the ruins" (54). The following analysis uses these difference translations according to where they appear in the text. However, they all refer to the same term, "*duan jing can yua*."

hong)[39]. Yu Hua's significant representation of "*cha zi yan hong*" and "*duan jing can yuan*" is undoubtedly a tribute to and an adaption of Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion.* Yu Hua's tribute with a ruinous inclination, however, not only structures essential elements of a *huaigu* ghost story, but also reveals the destructive history of contemporary China.

In Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion*, the terms of "*cha zi yan hong*" and "*duan jing can yuan*" appear together. By providing a happy ending to the story, Tang reinforces the image of "*cha zi yan hong*" to elaborate his pursue of sincere love and revival. Tang Xianzu's "*duan jing can yuan*" and "*cha zi yan hong*" in *The Peony Pavilion* refer to a crucial moment in the garden that initiates the heroine's self-awakening and encourages the emergence of her subjectivity: Du Liliang sees "how deepest purple, brightest scarlet open their beauty to a dry well crumbling"[40] (Tang 44) when she visits the garden in her mansion for the first time. The image of life – "deepest purple, brightest scarlet open their beauty" (*cha zi yan hong*) is blossoming over the image of ruin – "dry well crumbling" (*duan jing can yuan*) emphasizes that the heroine has an epiphany over this scene and succeeds in living a thriving life throughout this whole play. In Tang's portrayal, the scene – "deepest purple, brightest scarlet blossom" (*cha zi yan hong*) on a "dry well crumbling" (*duan jing can yuan*) – reminds Du Liniang that she, the blossoming flower, is growing in a wasteland created by strict feudal ethics. Putting these distinct and contradicting scenes/terms together grants the heroine an epiphany: she recognizes the void of her life and the world she is living in; this recognition pushes her to pursue her love and subjectivity (Chang

[39] In Andrew F. Jones's translation, "*cha zi yan hong*" (奼紫嫣紅) is translated into "the brilliant colors of spring" (12), "a field of brilliant flowers" (44), and a "lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes" (48, 56). The following analysis uses these difference translations according to where they appear in the text. However, they all refer to the same term, "*cha zi yan hong*."

[40] The original text written by Tang Xianzu goes, "*yuan lai cha zi yan hong kai pian, si zhe ban dou fu yu duan jing can yuan*" (原來奼紫嫣紅開遍,似這般都付與斷井頹垣).

270-1). Du Liniang has her epiphany while seeing "dry well crumbling" and "deepest purple, brightest scarlet blossom" in the garden. She dreams of meeting the love of her life in the garden, is buried there, reunites with her love as a ghost, and returns to life all in this garden. The garden and its scene of "dry well crumbling" and "deepest purple, brightest scarlet blossom" symbolize her growth and vitality.

However, Yu Hua's "*cha zi yan hong*" ("deepest purple, brightest scarlet blossom") and "*duan jing can yuan*" ("dry well crumbling") constitute a calamitous world in which the threat of the ruinous desolation is always lurking behind the scene of the brilliant colors of spring. In "Classical Love," Yu Hua mentions "*duan jing can yuan*" five times, and "*cha zi yan hong*" four times. The term "*cha zi yan hong*" appears separate from and prior to the term "*duan jing can yuan*." However, ever since the first appearance of "*duan jing can yuan*," its destructive image has been lingering and haunting Willow and Yu Hua's readers. Eventually, the terms of "*cha zi yan hong*" and "*duan jing can yuan*" appear simultaneously in Chapter Four and Five. But, the image of "*duan jing can yuan*" ("dry well crumbling") triumphs and overwhelms the image of "*cha zi yan hong*" ("deepest purple, brightest scarlet blossom"). I choose these two terms to be my central focus of analysis not only because they are the two essential elements that constitute a *huaigu* ghost story, but also because they serve to elaborate Yu Hua's intention of writing a destructive history of contemporary China.

The image of "dry well crumbling" serves as the "ancient site" to be encountered, while the image of blossoming "deepest purple" and "brightest scarlet" flowers represent the "nature's cyclical continuity" in contrast with the human loss the scholar has experienced. Meanwhile, in Willow's hallucination, the sound seemingly made by the maiden symbolizes "an outline of the ghost," the last element that constitutes the "*huaigu* ghost story." Yu Hua's appropriation of this

traditional ghost narrative is to ruminate and reflect on the contemporary history during and after the Mao era. I would first like to explain how these two terms constitute the elements of a *huaigu* ghost story. Then, I would like to analyze how Yu Hua's use of these two terms transforms the meanings of them with contemporary significances, draws a picture of suffering intellectuals in contemporary China, and reveals the (dis)continuity of history and classics.

Zeitlin's "the poet stirred by human loss in contrast to nature's cyclical continuity":
The brilliant colors of spring, "cha zi yan hong"(奼紫嫣紅)

The first appearance of "*cha zi yan hong*" ("brilliant colors of spring") foreshadows the later appearances with a negative connotation: Instead of portraying a landscape of "brilliant color of spring," Yu Hua's use of "*cha zi yan hong*" is to build a destructive view of the world. This term first occurs in the first chapter when Willow is on his way to the imperial examination: "The brilliant colors of spring unfolded before him like a scroll, but he had no eyes for the scenery" (12). This first occurrence is intended to show Willow's anxiety in the sense that he doesn't even care about the scenery because he is worrying about the imperial examination. Starting with the shadow of failing the imperial examination, Yu Hua's first use of "*cha zi yan hong*" brings out the theme that this is a story of intellectuals' anxiety and (dis)achievement, not a story of "brilliant colors of spring" which celebrates life.

The subsequent occurrences of "brilliant colors of spring," undertaking the ominous connotation of the first, play a role as "nature's cyclical continuity" in contrast to the "human loss" that stirs the poet/intellectual while the story progresses. None of the subsequent occurrences are set alone with the physical or metaphorical image of the ruin – "*duan jing can yuan.*" The term appears for the second time in Chapter Four, during which Willow fails his first

imperial examination, the lady's family becomes ruined, the country suffers from a great famine, and the lady is butchered and cannibalized. Willow holds the lady's body and looks over the fields that were "enveloped by yellow as far as the eyes could see. It was the height of spring, and not a patch of green could be seen let alone a field of brilliant flowers" (44). Willow's helpless search for any sign of life or continuity of life is eliminated when he witnesses cases of cannibalism and the death of his loved one. Therefore, almost a decade later, when Willow visits the lady's town again and sees "a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes" (48) in a year of recovery and booming economics, it reminds him of his first and second encounters with the lady. His experience with the rapid change of time and ephemerality of life in the past makes him wonder, "how long the prosperity could last" (48). All of Yu Hua's uses of "brilliant colors of spring" are progressively building up what Zeitlin calls "the impulse to recall what has vanished from a place, to fill in what is missing or concealed from view at a spot" (89). This emphasis on "the imaginative work of memory, on recalling what is no longer visible," according to Zeitlin, is "particularly striking in the earliest instances of a recognizable *huaigu* sensibility" (89). Each use of "brilliant colors of spring" is not only a quest for what has been missing, it also derives a question towards reality and affirms a disastrous view of the world: no spring colors can be seen in the years of disaster, nor can spring colors last forever even in the time of blossoming and booming. Willow the intellectual is "stirred by human loss in contrast to nature's cyclical continuity" of "brilliant colors of spring." However, Yu Hua's "*cha zi yan hong*" ("brilliant colors of spring") is deeply associated with the connotation of discontinuity in the other term "*duan jing can yuan*" ("the image of crumbling ruins").

Zeitlin's "an ancient site encountered":

The image of crumbling ruins, "duan jing can yuan" (斷井殘垣)

"*Duan jing can yuan*" – "an image of crumbling ruins" – in "Classical Love" symbolizes Zeitlin's "an ancient site encountered" by the intellectual. This "ancient site" is the first element of a *huaigu* ghost story. Traditionally, this site is often a site of a famous historical event that arouses the poet's nostalgic reminiscence. An initial inspection may reveal no specific historical site in Yu Hua's "Classical Love." However, I argue that the site of personal history and trauma functions as an ancient site encountered. Furthermore, the transformation of the *huaigu* story's first element in this avant-garde work reveals the disappearance of a centralized historic site in the contemporary era. In other words, the scenic site of an imperial historical event is replaced by a site of personal history and trauma. In this sense, Yu Hua's cannibalistic ghost story is not about imperial history or the scholar and the beauty's elite romance and separation, but is instead about the common people's life and suffering. In "Classical Love," Yu Hua sets this horror-story-to-be in imperial China in order to reflect historical trauma in contemporary China. In my analysis, I will show how this cannibalistic horror is an allegory of the tragedy during Mao's Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, I argue that the absence of the specific historic site in this contemporary ghostly "classical love" story not only symbolizes the destruction of a generation at the turn of a new political era, but also creates a narrative that turns the readers' attention to the everyday life that was damaged by historical trauma as well as to the suffering of the common people.

To delve into the course of history that is reflected in "Classical Love," a further discussion on the elements that form a *huaigu* ghost story is necessary. In Zeitlin's analysis of seventeenth-century *huaigu* ghost stories, she focuses on the fall of the Ming and the Manchu conquest that establishes a new dynasty, and "how the memory of these events was reconfigured and worked through in the early Qing ghost story" (88). According to Zeitlin, in these early Qing

ghosts tales which "reflect upon violent events of the recent past, the course of history becomes the trauma that produces the ghost(s)" (Zeitlin 88). Similarly, we can look at Yu Hua's cannibalistic ghost story from the same aspect – the historical background of the author and the setting of the story. To begin with, Yu Hua was born in 1960 during the Great Leap Forward, and grew up as a teenager during the years of the Cultural Revolution. His "Classical Love" is written and published in 1988, and is one of his post-Mao avant-garde pieces produced in the late '80s. "Classical Love" is set in imperial China. However, it is not about imperial China and its ethics because it does not follow the narrative of classical human-ghost romance, nor does it follow the narrative of cannibalism in imperial China. Many hauntologists believe that the appearance of a ghost reveals something unspoken in the history. If we look at the setting of the story and the author's background together, we can see that Yu Hua's elaboration on the extensiveness of the famine and the cases of cannibalism during the famine in "Classical Love" identically matches the historical record of the Great Leap Forward. However, a further examination of how the two *huaigu* ghost story elements in "Classical Love" - "*duan jing can yuan*" and "*cha zi yan hong*" – constitute the historical details is required.

"Duan jing can yuan" and "cha zi yan hong" in "Classical Love":

When the ruinous images engulf the brilliant colors of spring

From the analysis of "*duan jing can yuan*" ("the image of crumbling ruins"), the ancient site encountered by the poet, "*cha zi yan hong*" ("the brilliant colors of spring"), the nature's cycling in contrast to human loss that stirs the poet, and the great famine, we uncover what has been lost and unmentioned in the history of contemporary China. The term "the image of crumbling ruins" first appears when Willow fails his examination and sees the ruins of the maiden's mansion when he returns from the exam. The later occurrences of this ruinous view

are ubiquitous throughout the following chapters, be it during the years of famine or the years of peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, these later occurrences of "the image of crumbling ruins" usually overlap or even cover the image of "the brilliant colors of spring." The Ming play *The Peony Pavilion* juxtaposes the terms "the image of crumbling ruins" and "the brilliant colors of spring" to demonstrates the heroine's liveliness. Unlike Tang Xianzu's optimism, Yu Hua uses these two terms together to emphasize the desolation of the ruins and to represent the unspoken historical trauma. The garden of life in classical texts turns into a locus of an intellectual's illusion and disillusion.

In "Classical Love," Yu Hua uses "the yellow pathway" on the way to his imperial examination to symbolize the way to power in the People's Republic of China.[41] On this yellow imperial highway, Willow witnesses "the image of crumbling ruins" and "the brilliant colors of spring" multiple times. The term "the image of crumbling ruins" first appears on Willow's return from the imperial examination: He fails his first attempt of the exam, revisits the lady's mansion, but only finds "a vista of crumbling buildings littered across a ruinous, empty wasteland" (Yu Hua 27) with no sign of where the family went. Judging from what happens in the human meat market three years later, the family's fortune must have declined and the lady is eventually sold by her family as "*cairen*" – human meat – to the meat market. When Willow is on his way to take the imperial examination for the second time, he witnesses a great famine, the sale and butcher of human beings, and cannibalism.[42] The description of these cruel and seemingly

[41] In imperial China, yellow is the color of emperor and power.
[42] "Three years later, Willow traveled once again down the yellow highway on his way to the civil service examination in the capital. It was the height of spring, just as before, but this time the landscape had been transformed" (Yu Hua 30). In this chapter, Yu Hua depicts a land of famine, devastation, human meat market, and cannibalism.

unrealistic events, however, unimaginably corresponds to what happened in the Great Chinese Famine during the Great Leap Forward in Mao's period.[43]

Between the first and the second time Willow travels to take imperial examination, the status of "crumbling ruins" pervades the three years between. This ruinous development reflects the brutal Chinese experience during the Great Leap Forward. On his first attempt to take the imperial examination, Willow meets the maiden. A few months later, he fails the exam and returns to the maiden's town, only to find out that the rich household of the lady has turned into a ruin. What happened to Willow – taking the imperial examination, failing after a few months, and witnessing the change in the lady's household – symbolizes what happened to the Chinese intellectual during Mao's Great Leap Forward: the experience of trying to gain an official rank by taking an imperial exam symbolizes China's attempt to realize socialist China through the implementation of the Great Leap Forward in 1958. Willow's experience of failing the exam symbolizes the failure of China's high socialist attempt after executing the Great Leap Forward for several months. The transformation of the lady's rich household also symbolizes the initial change of a once-prosperous family during China's high socialism.

Willow's disastrous experience on his second attempt to take the imperial examination three years later further implies the tragedy during the Great Leap Forward. If the change of the lady's house represents a disaster of a small group of people, what Willow witnesses three years later on his second attempt to take the imperial examination demonstrates a national calamity. Willow witnesses the scene of "a vista of crumbling buildings littered across a barren wasteland"

[43] There are several recently declassified collections of local government documents that describe cannibalism, including eating dead family members, substituting each other's children to eat, stealing dead bodies to eat, or murdering outsiders to eat, during the Great Chinese Famine. See Becker; Dikotter; J. Yang.

(Yu Hua 33) everywhere – on the yellow highway, in every town he visits, in the lady's town, or in front of the lady's mansion. This description applies to the rich and the poor alike, which shows that this famine is a national disaster with few exceptions. This experience of seeing various ruins within three years stirs Willow's exclamation: his object of grief has shifted from his personal loss of the lady to the loss human beings in this evanescent world. Willow's ruinous experience of "*duan jing can yuan*" implies an intellectual's experience during the Great Leap Forward in Mao's era. All these transformations, along with Willow's primary experience with "*duan jing can yuan*," indicate the impact of the Chinese Communist Party's misguided policies.

Since the first attempt and failure of the imperial examination and its consequence – the trauma that the intellectuals have encountered since the execution of the Great Leap Forward, the scene of "ruin" ("*duan jing can yuan*") at the lady's empty household has traumatizes and haunted Willow the Chinese intellectual. This trauma emerges continuously in later years, and inconveniently corresponds to - "*cha zi yan hong*" – "a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes." On Willow's second attempt to become a scholar-official, the scene of ruin emerges three times (Yu Hua 33, 34, 45) and shows how devastating the famine is. Among these three occurrences, the ruinous scene that emerges while Willow is cleaning Hui's corpse is the most representative one because it overlaps with a blossoming image close to "*cha zi yan hong*."

Willow the scholar and Hui the beauty reunite at a fatal incident of butcher and cannibalism. The image of "ruins" and the image of a flower in bloom emerge together in Willow's illusion while cleaning the maiden's body. This merging illusion demonstrates a catastrophic view of the history Yu Hua intends to expose. In this second and last attempt to obtain an official rank, Willow has to kill Hui upon her request that he help her to minimize her pain, caused by a leg lost to a restaurant owner. After killing his loved one, Willow sees that the

fields are "enveloped by yellow;" not "a field of brilliant flowers" can be seen even though it is "the height of spring" (44). In this brutal experience, the closet moment Willow has to the scene of brilliant flowers is the stab wound in the lady's chest that looks like " a peach flower in bloom" (45). Willow realizes that "[t]hree years of longing had culminated in a stroke of a knife" and created a fatal puncture that "he himself…had done" (45).[44] This image of "a peach flower in bloom" correlates with an image of "crumbling ruins came vaguely to mind" (45) when Willow's fingers are "flustered by the sharp edge of shattered bone" created by the butcher. As my previous analysis indicates, the image of the ruins implies the damage created by the Chinese Communist Party's misguided policies during the Great Leap Forward. Therefore, the ruinous image that reemerges from the butchered puncture is an implicit accusation against the political mismanagement that allowed the misguided policies to severely damage the body of the people. This is a metaphor of vast sacrifice among the people of the People's Republic of China during the Great Chinese Famine. This damage directly results in Willow's termination of Hui's life, and generates the image of "a peach flower in bloom." Willow's stabbing of Hui's chest symbolizes the rupture of his individual or political ideal and love. Yu Hua describes the omnipresent desolation during the famine years and even the scene of cannibalism to imply the destruction of the "Difficult Three Year Period"[45] during the Great Leap Forward. All of Willow's failure to pass the imperial examination to obtain an official rank and his inevitable

[44] Before he re-encounters with the maiden in the kitchen where Hui is butchered, Willow saw in another town that a father sold his wife and daughter at a human meat market. Willow also witnesses that the mother had to stab and kill her own daughter so that her daughter would not suffer the pain of being butchered alive. This previous scene Willow witnessed the other day reminds readers that the maiden Hui might have been sold by her father, the patriarch of her household, and become a "*cairen*" – human meat. This scene also foreshadows Willow's tragedy to end Hui's life by stabbing her into her chest with a knife to end her pain.

[45] The Chinese Communist Party refers to the three years of the Great Chinese Famine, a result of the execution of the Great Leap Forward, as the "Three Years of Natural Disasters" or the "Difficult Three Year Period."

killing of his beloved and ideal maiden suggests an inconvenient truth: under the shadow of the Great Chinese Famine, the high-socialist policy of the Great Leap Forward has come to an end. The Chinese intellectuals have to eliminate the lives of their ideal and loved object, and eventually terminate their dream of or desire for obtaining a position in power. When Willow sighed that, "[t]hree years of longing had culminated in a stroke of a knife" (45), the Chinese intellectuals' love towards the political body has shattered.

Yu Hua's implicit revelation of time in "Classical Love" implies the unspoken history of Maoism. Willow's first and second encounters with Hui are three years apart; meanwhile, Yu Hua's description of a great famine indicates that it is an allegory of the Great Leap Forward, the "Difficult Three Years Period," not a portrayal of any famine in imperial China. Willow's first and third encounters with Hui, however, are ten something years apart.[46] Yu Hua's specific indication of "three years" and ambivalent reference of "ten something years" is an intentional reference to the unspeakable political reality. Willow's first trip on the yellow highway that might lead him to power, according to my previous analysis, is a metaphor of the CCP's initial execution of the Great Leap Forward in 1958. Willow's last encounter with his ideal love Hui is ten something years later. Chronologically speaking, this time frame can be understood as during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) or right after the Cultural Revolution. Compared to *The Peony Pavilion*, time in "Classical Love" extends to more than a decade. In *The Peony Pavilion*, it only takes three years for Du Liniang's ghost to return and meet her Willow (i.e. Liu Mengmei). Du's three years of delay in the underworld, moreover, results from a political reason in the mortal

[46] Yu Hua's original text here is "ten something years ago (*shi duo nian qian*)" (73-4). However, it is translated as "ten years before" (49) by Andrew F. Jones.

world.[47] Similarly, Yu Hua also plans the return of Hui's ghost "ten something years" after her death for a political reason. This "ten something years" can either be eleven years or nineteen years, indicating in any case a time period that is during or after the Cultural Revolution. Yu Hua intentionally specifies the time of "three years" and obscures the time of "ten something years" to imply the most damaging periods in the history of the People's Republic of China – The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

Therefore, when Willow is on the yellow highway for his third visit to the maiden's town a decade later, Yu Hua's deliberate disposition of the two terms together - the imageries of the ruins ("*duan jing can yuan*") and a lovely spring landscape ("*cha zi yan hong*") – challenges the meanings of the Mao and post-Mao "honor and glory." Yu Hua's challenge to the contemporary reality of prosperity emerges when Willow traveled for several days through "a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes":

> The desolation of the past was nowhere in evidence, and Willow found himself thinking of the prosperity he had seen on the occasion of his first journey down *the yellow highway*. Images of *desolation* and *prosperity* cycled in turns through his mind, shuttling back and forth so that *the yellow highway* under his feet came to seem real one minute and entirely insubstantial the next. Even as these delightful spring visions leapt before his eyes, the desolation of the past lingered like a shadow cast on the roadside by the bright sun overhead. Willow wondered how long the prosperity could last…. In a world of infinite, ceaseless change, what good are *honor and glory* anyway? (48-9, italicized mine)

[47] The political reason refers to that the Song imperial house of Zhao battles with the Jin barbarians. This mortal world's strife causes terrible human losses and results in the change of politics in the immortal world. The infernal Judge Hu returns to his position and judges Du Lininag's case three years after her death.

Willow's uncertainty is stirred by "a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes" and his memory of desolation (the traumatic memory of the ruins and cannibalism that follows). This uncertainty stands for Yu Hua's inquiry about the Chinese communist misconduct under Maoism. Yu Hua's juxtaposition of the yellow highway, a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes, and the memory of ruins and desolation, questions so-called "glory and honor." The yellow highway symbolizes the path to intellectual or political "glory and honor." However, Willow's experience on this yellow highway – his attempt to become a scholar-official – is ill-fated and insubstantial. From Willow's perspective, the imagery of prosperity is always haunted by the memory of ruinous destruction and brutality. Willow's wonder of "how long the prosperity could last" (48), therefore, is Yu Hua's doubt about the contemporary reality in the post-Mao society.

This doubt about substantiality of the yellow highway and the overlapping imageries of "the ruins" and "a spring field landscape" corresponds to Willow's inability to distinguish the real and the imaginary during his last revisit to the maiden's mansion. Revisiting the maiden's elegant estate on his third trip, Willow recalls his memory with Hui at the courtyard of the renovated estate, but all of a sudden faces the illusion of the ruins and a splash of cold water in this courtyard full of blossoming flowers and colorful scenes:

> Willow sensed that dusk was approaching…. Then the rain would come…. A rope would sway down to the ground, and Willow would clamber up the rope into the tower. As she retired to the inner apartments of the tower, the maiden would sway with a lovely motion like a white fish…. Several months later Willow would return, having failed the examination in the capital, only to find a desolate expanse of ruins. The sudden appearance of the ruins startled Willow out of his reverie. Looking around the bright and

> sunlit garden, he came to the realization that it had all been a daydream. And at that very moment, he realized that the rainstorm had been a terribly real basin of cold water…. Willow, his daydream evaporated like mist into the air, could not help but be overcome by sorrow. The tower was as before, but this was clearly a different sort of maiden. He sighed and turned to leave. (Yu Hua 53-4)

In *The Peony Pavilion*, Du Liniang's witness of "a lovely spring landscape" blossoming over "the image of the ruins" awakens her subjectivity. The garden is the locus of her life, death, and rebirth.[48] However, in "Classical Love," the maiden is no longer the subject of growth and awakening, but an object of desire. The secluded courtyard is no longer a spiritual locus of life and stability, but a disillusioning locus of death and ephemerality to Willow, the new subject of "growth." The reappearance of the ruins ("*duan jing can yuan*") and a spring field landscape ("*cha zi yan hong*") here is an adaptation of these two terms from *The Peony Pavilion* in order to redefine the relationship between these two terms. Unlike the positive message from *The Peony Pavilion* that the brilliant colors of spring grow out of the ruins, the ruinous scenes in "Classical Love" ominously grow out of a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes. This inversion is the thematic turn Yu Hua takes from *The Peony Pavilion*. The garden is no longer a locus of achieving spiritual growth (Chang 285), but becomes an empty shell where disillusionment takes place in the form of a basin of cold water. The illusion of desolation and traumatic memories repetitively haunts Willow, the intellectual subject, and makes him wonder, "how long the prosperity could last" and how substantial the reality is.

The Love in "Classical Love":

Eroticizing the Narrative of Haunting and Cannibalism, Eroticizing the Revolutionary Discourse

[48] In the Ming scholar-beauty romance, the garden suggests endless vitality and love (Liu 126).

As brutal and violent as cannibalism is, "Classical Love" still has an erotic context. Similar to the preceding texts of resurrection, the return of a female ghost is eroticized to fulfill sensual desires. However, unlike the other texts, the heroine in "Classical Love" is turned into a mere object of desire. The maiden becomes a real commodity on the market to satisfy men's appetite. Yu Hua eroticizes this brutal scene of cannibalism and burial. His eroticizes violence to manifest the fatal attraction the destructive violence has in the CCP's discourse of revolution and the desire for it. The people's desires for their political idol Mao Zedong and his ideology of revolutionary destruction ignite a zealous fever during the Cultural Revolution. However, the desire only brings a destructive violence without contributing to the positive change it promises. In "Classical Love," Yu Hu transforms the once-faithful relationship of scholar-beauty romance in classical narrative into an alienated relationship that ruins the happy ending. This transformation demonstrates that the ultimate theme of "Classical Love" is not about love, but about the destruction of love towards one's ideal or the nation.

In classical love stories, the scholar-beauty romance and the lady's body are usually eroticized. In classical scholar-beauty ghost romance, the existence of the ghost is eroticized as well. The term "scholar and beauty" ("*caizi jiaren*") first appeared in the Tang dynasty.[49] The narrative of scholar-beauty romance has a long history.[50] A happy ending is the feature of the seventeenth century scholar-beauty novels. Along this tradition of the romantic narrative, there is also what Keith McMahon calls "eroticization of the scholar-beauty romance." In *The Study of Gender Discourse in* "*Sanyan*," Liu Guo analyzes the female ghost stories in the Ming dynasty, and categorizes two types of the ghost narrative: the ghost-and-human narrative and the human-

[49] Li Yin's *The Record of Xiaoxiang* in the Tang era uses the term "scholar and beauty (*caizi jiaren*)" to refer to a compatible couple.
[50] On the history of the narrative of scholar-beauty romance, see Ou; M. Huang; Hessney.

and-ghost narrative. In the ghost-and-human narrative, the ghost conceals the fact that it is not human. This type of female ghosts who bring the heroes troubles is usually demonized in order to show the danger of the erotic, strengthen the disciplinary gender discourse, and defend male benefits (Liu 157-8). On the other hand, in the human-and-ghost narrative, the female ghosts seem to be born and die for "love" – they are either obsessed with the heroes, ingenious in winning their loves, or active in pursuing their loves. This type of female ghosts transgresses mainstream gender roles and shows admiration toward "sincere love." The pursuit of love peaks in *The Peony Pavilion*, in which an erotic context of death and rebirth for "sincere love" is shown. However, Yu Hua's "Classical Love" is neither of these types. Eroticization in "Classical Love" is not to regulate the disciplinary discourse, nor is it to praise the couple's sincere love. In "Classical Love," Yu Hua turns his heroine Hui into an object of desire and disables the intellectual subject Willow by revealing the destruction of the ideal in front of him.

Like its preceding classical love stories, the maiden's body and the romance itself are eroticized in "Classical Love." Hui's body, since the beginning of the story, is eroticized and associated with the hero's loneliness and desire. Before Willow meets Hui, he sees a white fish with "a lovely swaying motion" by the riverbank that stirs his "gloomy" feeling and "loneliness;" simultaneously, grass "poked through"[51] his pants, "tickling his legs" (Yu Hua 14). Willow's experience of seeing the white fish is full of visual and sensual stimulations as well as the sense of "intimacy"[52]. Later, when he sees the maiden for the first time, the "motion of her body called to Willow's mind the lovely sway of the white fish he had seen swimming through the stream"

[51] The original term Yu Hua uses here is "*charu*" (Yu Hua "Classical Love," the original text 43) – "penetrate" – the exact wording to describe a penis' penetration into a vagina. However, Andrew F. Jones elegantly translates it into "poke through" (14).
[52] In Yu Hua's original text, Willow has a feeling of "intimacy" when grass pokes through (or penetrates) his pants, tickling his legs (Yu Hua "Classical Love," the original text 43). However, this feeling of intimacy is omitted in Jones's translation (14).

(22). Relating the figure of the white fish to the motion of Hui's body, Willow's desire is finally rewarded by his romantic and physical relationship with Hui on that night. Moreover, this obvious association of the maiden's body and the white fish reveals Willow's desire more than once (32, 49, 54, 55). Every time he thinks of or sees the white fish, the memory of the maiden and her body returns. Associated with the erotic senses aroused by the white fish – "lovely"[53] and "swaying" –the maiden's body motion is highly sensualized and connected with Willow's "loneliness" as well as sensual feelings and desires.

Unlike the classical human-ghost love stories, the maiden in "Classical Love" becomes a pure object of desire – spiritually and physically; she is no longer a subject possessing agency. It is true that in the classical texts, female ghosts' return is always eroticized.[54] According to Anthony Yu, the revenant of "the amorous ghost" is virtually always female, while the mortal lover virtually always male" (397-434). Yu Hua's contemporary ghost story, with the spice of cannibalism, is no exception in providing an erotic context. Nonetheless, none of the preceding texts objectify the heroine as much as "Classical Love." In this contemporary text of haunting and cannibalism, Hui the maiden is turned into an object of male desire, and a real object – human meat to be sold and eaten on the market. Her appearance is always associated with desire – the desires for sex, affection, food, and power – as well as the violence that comes with the desires.

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[53] "*Wumei*" (Yu Hua "Classical Love," the original text 43) is translated into "lovely" by Andrew F. Jones (14). However, the original term connotes a sensual meaning of "seductive," which has been missed out in the translation of "lovely."

[54] Zeitlin points out that, "male ghosts are propelled by motives other than sexual desire; female ghosts may also appear for a variety of reasons and are not always restored to life, but when they do revive, it is almost always in an erotic context" (14).

In addition to eroticizing and subverting the narrative of the scholar-beauty ghost romance, Yu Hua also revises the convention of "*cairen*" narrative. The term "*cairen*" is first used in Ji Xiaolan's fantastic fiction, *Yuewei Cottage Notes*, in the Qing Dynasty. "*Cairen*" refers to human beings sold as meat on the market. The story, "The Summer in Luanyang," features a man who encounters two women about to be sold and butchered on the market during the famine.[55] This story provides the basic framework of the "*cairen*" narrative that manifests traditional moral values like justice and righteousness. Similar to most of the "*cairen*" stories, females are the most vulnerable victims during famine. The traditional narrative of "*cairen*" shows gender and the moral economy during famine.

However, Yu Hua's "*cairen*" narrative violates the happy ending by portraying Willow's unfaithfulness in order to show the level of mental destruction after Maoist traumas. Cannibalism in "Classical Love" is used to reflect political reality during the Great Leap Forward. Being famous for his fascination for violence, Yu Hua describes in detail Willow's traumatic experience of hearing the maiden being butchered and of touching her wounds. This description includes a mix of the couple's unbearable pain, Willow's peculiar desire for the maiden under this brutal circumstance[56], and the cruelty as well as fascination violence brings. In this case of cannibalism, the maiden Hui becomes not only an object of male sensual desire, but also a real commodity on the market to be purchased, sold, and consumed by men. Yu Hua's "*cairen*" story, intertwined with the narrative of a failing revenant, is not meant to show any moral didactic, but

[55] In this story, one of these two women has had an arm chopped off and she begs the man to kill her, while the other begs him to save her. He kills the first woman, and purchases and marries the second woman, who eventually bears him a son. This story "The Summer in Luanyang" from *Yuewei Cottage Notes* is didactic in the sense that the man is rewarded with a wife and a son to carry his bloodline because he shows his justice and righteousness by saving the women from their pain and death.

[56] Yang Xiaobin elaborates in detail the ambiguity of Willow's emotions in Chapter 4 and 11 of *The Chinese Postmodern Trauma and Irony in Chinese Avant-Garde Fiction*.

to reveal the intellectual's loss of subjectivity by presenting his inability to believe in the good of humanity or to control himself and act properly.

To see what causes Willow's final betrayal, one cannot neglect Yu Hua's intense description of the brutality of violence, as well as Willow's mixed feelings of pain and fascination for the traumatized body after he kills the maiden upon her request. This is a significant scene in which the two terms of "*cha zi yan hong*" and "*duan jing can yuan*" appear together again and, as I previously analyze, symbolize the rupture of an intellectual subject's love towards the ideal. What is peculiar about this scene, moreover, is the description of Willow's sensual feelings when he hears the butchering of the maiden and when he cleans the maiden's body. Yu Hua sensationalizes these violent and traumatic scenes and associates the acts of violence with a man's sensual experience. When Hui is butchered, her screams first sound "as short as fingers, flying neatly" past Willow. Then, her moans remind Willow of "the maiden's recitation below the window of the brocade tower" three years before (41). Before realizing that it is indeed the maiden Hui who is butchered in the next room, Willow bizarrely associates one lady's painful moan with the maiden's chant, which had initiated Willow and Hui's dreamy and romantic night three years ago. This association of violence and sensation reoccurs in the following passages when Willow is washing Hui's corpse. The wound he made on her chest with a knife looks like "a peach flower in bloom" – a metaphor for a beauty in classical Chinese literature (X. Yang, *Chinese Postmodern* 192). This metaphor demonstrates that Hui's traumatic wound is associated with the projection of Willow's desire – the maiden's body is an object of the intellectual's projected desire.

In "Classical Love," the appearance of the maiden or her ghost is always associated with desire. In addition to an individual's sensual and emotional desires, she is metaphorically

connected with political desires and the violence that comes with them. The famine described in "Classical Love" symbolizes the Great Chinese Famine during the Great Leap Forward. Under the Maoist governance, individual desires are transformed into a collective desire for Chairman Mao and his high-socialist dream. This forceful feverous passion, however, has resulted in a destructive violence that the Great Leap Forward ended up with.[57] The authoritarian power and violence has lead to a cannibalistic society, and has eventually traumatized the body of the people. Hui, who embodies the body of the people, has been left with "an image of crumbling ruins" that grows out of "a peach flower in bloom" (45). The image of the ruins that emerges from the maiden's wounded chest – "a peach flower in bloom," an image close to "*cha zi yan hong*" – allegorizes Yu Hua's contemporary reality in which "the brilliant colors of spring" only grow "the ruinous remnants." Borrowing these two contradicting terms from *The Peony Pavilion*, Yu Hua manifests people's fascination for desire and violence, as well as the devastating trauma that is generated by the ultimate utopian desire.

The relationship between romance/revolution and love/death has always been connected to inspiring people's passion for revolution in the Chinese Communist Party's revolutionary discourse since the modern period. Yu Hua, however, reshapes the narrative of making sacrifices for the ideal into a narrative of making sacrifices and losing for nothing. In "An Undesired Revolution," David Der-wei Wang discusses the parallel relationship between romantic and revolutionary passions and the romantic association of love and death in the revolutionary discourse. According to Wang, romance and revolution "constitute major phenomena in the

[57] An unchallengeable, hierarchical structure underlies all of the political movements of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, Anti-Hiding-Property Movement, or agricultural collectivization during or after the Great Leap Forward. Therefore, the Great Leap Forward features "coercion, terror, and systematic violence," and motivates "one of the most deadly mass killings of human history" (Dikotter x, xi).

literary etiology of the First Chinese Communist Revolution of 1927" (79). He argues that revolution is romanticized to the sense that even death for revolutionary and romantic passions is idealized in the narrative of revolution and romance. However, Yu Hua's postmodern avant-garde piece makes a turn at the romantic discourse of revolution. From the modernist and May Fourth pursuit of the ideal to the postmodern, post-Mao disillusionment of the ideal, Yu Hua's "Classical Love" breaks the discursive convention of romance and revolution that has formed since the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party by deconstructing the ideal, be it romantic or political. Both romantic and revolutionary significances are completely dismantled when Hui the ideal is dismembered.

If Hui's experience symbolizes the Chinese experience during the Great Leap Forward, her silence allegorizes the real voice of the people in the PRC that were suppressed during all of the political movements. In "Classical Love," Hui rarely speaks. She only speaks four times: on their first meeting, she asks Willow to return as soon as possible after the exam, no matter the result. The second time, she asks Willow to kill and bury her. The third time, she returns as a ghost but doesn't specify if she is human or ghost. The fourth time, she tells Willow that her revenant fails because he exhumes her grave. Each time she speaks is a moment of disillusionment that marks the people's disappointment. Her request for Willow's return only leads to him seeing the ruins and eventually to her tragedy of being sold and cannibalized. Hui's tragic experience, possibly initiated by her parents' betrayal and sale of her during the famine, can be understood as the traumatic betrayal of the Chinese by the CCP's misguided policies during the Great Leap Forward. Later, Hui's unwillingness to reveal her real identity and Willow's uncertainty, which causes the exhumation, symbolize the people's loss of trust during and after the Cultural Revolution. After the "revolutionary" destruction of culture and humanity,

the possibility of restoring a life is eradicated. Hui, therefore, represents an ideal object where desires are projected, the people who may never truly express what she really needs, wants, or means, or the ideal that has never been practiced.

Yu Hua's description of how Willow experiences this cannibalistic disaster and how he cleanses the trauma presents a reflection on politics in the Mao era. Furthermore, his criticism of Mao's politics extends into a further stage by showing Willow's "betrayal" to perform an inappropriate exhumation and therefore his contribution to a failing revenant. The intertwining of personal desires and a destructive force is further represented in the plot of exhumation, which is an allegory of the Cultural Revolution. On his last trip on the yellow highway, Willow the Chinese intellectual is full of doubts: he first questions "how long the prosperity could last" (Yu Hua 48); then after reuniting with Hui, he cannot suppress his uncertainty about whether she has really returned and so he exhumes her grave (60). After killing the ideal object of desire, the Chinese intellectual not only loses his desire for "any worldly success" (46), but also loses his ability to believe. This final impulse to expose "reality" does not come from nowhere, but can be traced to the previous episodes when Willow is unable to comprehend the reason for ceaseless change and destruction while seeing the ruins (27-30), is unable to distinguish the real and the insubstantial of the yellow highway (48), or is unable to identify when he could ever love and trust someone again after he re-encountered an elite mansion and a maiden's lovely chanting (51-4). The Chinese intellectuals' reponses come from the previous political turmoil of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution as well as the constant uncertainty and insecurity caused by these political movements. These political movements generate hierarchical coercion, terror, and systematic violence that peak at the Cultural

Revolution and provoke serious ethical crises.[58] These traumatic experiences cumulated over a decade have paralyzed the Chinese intellectual's subjectivity and agency and turned him into a non-heroic, banal character. This symbolic change of a supposedly heroic subject into a good-for-nothing character symbolizes the Chinese intellectual's loss of critical thinking after all the political movements. Yu Hua creates a post-Mao allegory of horror in Hui's exhumation and failure of resurrection. The failure of the revenant embodies the cruel fact that the alienation among the people during and after the Cultural Revolution has forfeited any possibility for them to resurrect or to restore the ideal love.

From *The Peony Pavilion* to "Classical Love," Yu Hua's use of crumbling ruins replaces Tang Xianzu's "sincere love" and becomes the only permanent element in the post-Mao, postmodern China. In Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion*, only "sincere love" breaks corporeal boundaries and achieves eternity. However, in Yu Hua's "Classical Love," nothing is more prevalent than the image of crumbling ruins. The element of "love" in "Classical Love" is visible but not consistent: Hui is precious to Willow, but not unforgettable. Yu Hua even depicts how Willow forgets about Hui: Willow "left the ruins far behind, his memories of the maiden crumbling away with each step he took" (35). Without the foundation of "sincere love," "Classical Love" is left with frequent appearances of the image of crumbling ruins. It appears in the years of famine and prosperity. Witnessing the ruinous images in reality or in hallucination, Willow is exposed to a fast-changing destructive world that deprives him of his ideals and

[58] According to Hong Zhigang, in addition to cheesy political passion and idolatry as well as irrational ideology, the Cultural Revolution also provokes the unspeakable dangers of ethical crisis, the breakdown of belief and value, and the uncontrollability of one's destiny (26). Similarly, Yang Xiaobin believes that the most profound destruction of the Cultural Revolution "lies not only in physical victimization but also in psychic traumatization, which deprived the nation of its faith in the historical truth and the ethical good" (X. Yang, *Chinese Postmodern* 230).

desires. The appearance of ruinous images marks the impermanence of life, blurs the boundary between the real and the imaginary, and exposes the insignificance of worldly honor and glory. In Yu Hua's description, the contemporary Chinese intellectual is no longer able to see current or future prosperity – what he sees is desolation of the crumbling ruins. He is not able to recue or resurrect his ideal love – what he is capable of is destroying the chance of restoration. While Liu Mengmei and Du Liniang's love grows "a field of brilliant flowers" from "the ruinous remnant" in *The Peony Pavilion*, Willow only sees and creates "crumbling ruins" out of "a lovely spring landscape full of happy and colorful scenes" in "Classical Love." A post-Mao contemporary intellectual is no longer the heroic scholar who saves his love and gains political power like his ancient models did in the classical texts, but is a helpless and perplexed subject[59] who loses his ability to recognize approaching dangers or inappropriate behaviors, and denies his ideal, self, or any worldly success. In Yu Hua's description, the world is torn down into incomprehensible fragments of suffering, suspicion, and void. Yu Hua's "Classical Love" has extended desolation of the ruinous remnants into eternity.

In the classical narratives of the scholar-beauty ghost romance and revenant, the obstacle of the couple's romance usually comes from their parents. The revenant of one of the couple's ghost is considered to be a resistance against traditional ethics and rituals. A successful revenant in a human-ghost romance is a praise of subjectivity and satisfaction for the couple's love and desire. An unsuccessful revenant is usually caused by the parents' involvement. In addition, the traditional narrative of "*cairen*" comes with the significance of didactic teaching. However, in Yu Hua's "Classical Love," adapted from various ghost and "*cairen*" narratives, Willow the Chinese intellectual is no longer the heroic subject who saves his lady for love or ethics. On the

[59] Yang Xiaobin, in his "Perplexed Narration and the Subject" in *The Chinese Postmodern*, discusses the perplexity in Yu Hua's avant-garde works.

contrary, he turns into an ignorant character who causes an inappropriate exhumation that leads to a failing rebirth. Willow's traumatic experience as well as the return of Hui's ghost and her unsuccessful revenant not only reveal desire and violence in the traumatic history of contemporary China, but also expose a post-Mao intellectual's inability and perplexity.

CHAPTER 2

A Consuming Identity's Melancholic Consumption of the Object: Gourmet Cannibalism in a Market Economy in Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine*

In 1992, a few years after the '89 Democracy Movement in front of Tiananmen Square, Mo Yan published a book about cannibalism in contemporary China. *The Republic of Wine*, which according to Mo Yan was supposed to be a novella that "avoids politics" and only describes the relationship between alcohol and human life, has inevitably turned into a novel of social critique of contemporary society's power struggle and trafficking.[60] This novel was written between September 1989 and 1992, during and after China's economic reform and several social movements. It depicts the satisfaction of sensual and mental desires through drinking wine, eating delicacies, and pursuing sex and power. Human flesh in this novel is a delicacy that fulfills people's sensual and mental needs. *The Republic of Wine* is a post-modern response to and variation of Lu Xun's modern allegory of cannibalism. In Mo Yan's contemporary allegory, the distinction between the real and the fictional, the omnipotent writing subject and the manipulated written object, as well as the righteous self and the cannibalistic other is ultimately indiscernible and puts post-modern subjectivity into crisis. This new perspective of the self also offers a possibility for future change. There are three versions of the novel discussed in this chapter: the original 1992 Taiwanese version, the 1994 Chinese version with various deletions and variations, and the 2000 English translation made by Howard Goldblatt. Each version has multiple differences from each other. This chapter is mainly an

[60] Mo Yan's "Post-Drinking Whisper" ("*Jiuhou xuyu*") is published as the author's afterward in the 1992 Taiwanese version of *The Republic of Wine*. In this afterward, Mo Yan includes the development of the novel: his own drinking experience, the inspiration of the novel, his original and evolving intentions to write this novel, as well as its structure.

analysis of the original 1992 Taiwanese version, with a comparison of other versions that shows the significance of the later omissions and changes.

Mo Yan's intention to blur the boundaries between reality and imagination, the self and other can only be fully understood in the original complete version, published in Taiwan in 1992. The novel tells the story of a 48-year-old special investigator, Ding Gou'er, who has been sent to investigate a claim of cannibalism in Liquorland, a fictional city in China. Ding's investigation eventually leads to the removal of the noble mask from the cannibal investigator. Mo Yan interlaces the story of the investigation with yet another story of the correspondence between the narrator/writer, "Mo Yan," and his admirer/reader, Li Yidou. Li is a Ph.D. candidate in liquor studies in Liquorland and an aspiring writer. The novel also includes nine fictional short stories that Li sends to "Mo Yan" and wishes to publish, including "Meat Boy," "Cooking Lesson," and "Swallows' Nests." In Li's stories, he describes the lives of Liquorland residents, who have instituted a system of raising children to be eaten, the so-called "meat boys" in the narrative. Li's short stories show the inevitability of cannibalistic identity in which the subject incorporates the other (human) beings. As the narrative develops, Li grows bolder and invites "Mo Yan" to visit Liquorland. In the meantime, "Mo Yan" becomes less confident in the process of writing his new novel, *The Republic of Wine*. "Mo Yan" eventually accepts Li's invitation and journeys to Liquorland. The novel is composed of ten chapters, each containing four parts: Ding's investigation as written by "Mo Yan," a letter Li writes to "Mo Yan," a short story written by Li, and a letter "Mo Yan" writes to Li.[61] The novel first tells the story of Ding's investigation. Then, it shows us the short stories that Li hears and writes down in Liquorland that fictionalize, or

[61] Each of the first nine chapters contains these four sections. However, in the Chapter Ten, there is only a brief letter written by "Mo Yan" and the story of his journey to Liquorland. I will analyze this change of structure later.

perhaps authenticate, Ding's experiences. Finally, "Mo Yan's" journey to Liquorland explores the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary. "Mo Yan's" drunken vision in Liquorland, only seen in the 1992 Taiwanese version and the 2000 English translation, echoes Ding's final end, drowning in an open-air privy. The ending plays with the concept of reality and imagination and the distinction between them. It also creates room for the inconclusive coexistence of self/other, subject/object, and truth/falseness.

This dissertation chapter has two sections: the first section deals with the melancholic subject and argues a consuming identity that emerges from the narrative of gourmand cannibalism. The second section explores how Mo Yan's works respond to Lu Xun and the May Fourth spirit on the topic of cannibalism and reform. In the first section, I will use the figure of the cook, known as "Li's mother-in-law," to illustrate how and why she creates the "meat boy" dish, as well as the melancholic psychic maneuvers underlying the ideology of Chinese gourmandism, which associates social capital with eating exotic food or delicacies. Then, I will discuss how the collapse of subject and object in Ding's double vision of his son and the meat boy obscures the dubious line between the righteous self and the cannibalistic other. Moreover, I will push the discussion of the collapse of subject/object one step further to a discussion of the circuitous structure of the narrative between Ding, Li, and "Mo Yan" that deconstructs and problematizes the real/fictional and self/other. Finally in the second section, I will connect Mo Yan's cannibalistic allegory back to the reformative tradition of the May Fourth Movement and see how Lu Xun's call to arms turns into Mo Yan's call to desire, both acting through the trope of cannibalism.

The Melancholic Subjects' Consuming Identity:
The Indistinguishable Self and Other in *The Republic of Wine*

In the short stories that Li sends to "Mo Yan," "Swallows' Nests," and "Cooking Lesson," the shifting representations of Li's mother-in-law, who goes unnamed, show her evolution from a dominated and consumed object to a commanding and consuming subject. Mo Yan uses this character to associate Chinese gourmandism with gourmand cannibalism. The connection between Chinese gourmandism and gourmand cannibalism is based on the long tradition of Chinese medicinal discourse. Li's mother-in-law is known for cooking the meat boys, though the story reveals that she spent her childhood with her family collecting swallows' nests, a delicacy in China. Because of the rareness and cost of swallow's nests, eating swallow's nests symbolizes elite and noble status in society. However, gathering swallow's nests is a very dangerous activity and will often lead to the death of swallows and nest gatherers alike. Unwilling to live off gathering swallows' nests, she left her hometown and became the best cook in Liquorland and invented the "braised baby." The description of collecting swallows' nests tells of the costs and the risks of the task. Her uncle and her father eventually fell to their death while gathering swallows' nests. Their brains splashed on the nests and cave rocks. The childhood of Li's mother-in-law was thus shaped by a fear of death. These events make her fearful of gathering the nests, but she still holds on to the social capital associated with food/delicacies, which possibly shows an inclination to still be involved with the lost love-objects, that is, her family. Therefore, her inability to let go of her loved ones gradually develops into a melancholia that is expressed as a cannibalistic tendency.

This melancholic identity is crucial to my concepts of melancholic subjects and a "consuming identity" in *The Republic of Wine*. Before delving into these two concepts, I discuss Freud's and Abraham's theories of melancholia, which offer fundamental insights into the current context. According to Sigmund Freud, melancholia is a regression of libido to primary

narcissistic stage. In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud differentiates mourning and melancholia: in mourning, Freud states that when an object-loss takes place, the free libido is displaced onto another object; however, in melancholia, it is withdrawn into the ego – an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object is established in melancholia. Freud reveals,

> an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss…. This substitution of identification for object-love is an important in the narcissistic affections…. It represents a *regression* from one type of object-choice to original narcissism…. The ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it. (Freud 249-50)

Freud, in his analysis of melancholia, argued that the patients' self-accusations are usually charges of the love-objects, which have been transferred onto the patients' egos because of a libidinal regression back to the narcissistic level. The object becomes part of the ego and is criticized by an agency (conscience). The patients get satisfaction and sadistic pleasure from criticizing themselves because they are actually criticizing and avenging the objects. Freud did not say much about the cannibalistic phase of the libidinal development, but referred to Karl Abraham's attribution to connecting the refusal of nourishment with melancholia, which explained more about the cannibalistic desire in melancholia.

Karl Abraham's study of severe forms of melancholia also suggests that melancholia is the result of a regression of the libido to the primitive oral (cannibalistic) level. Both the regression of the libido to the oral/cannibalistic stage and the mechanism of introjection are important and connected. To make it clearer, "the introjection of the love-object is an incorporation of it, in keeping with the regression of the libido to the cannibalistic level"

(Abraham 72-3). In his analysis, Abraham suggests that the psychological process of introjection of the object can be seen in both mourning and melancholia; but he also states that the process of introjection in the melancholia is based on a severe conflict of ambivalent feelings. The subject can only escape the feelings by "turning against himself the hostility he originally felt towards his object" (82). In dealing with the melancholic cases Abraham has constantly come across the patients' indulging in "very vivid phantasies based on cannibalistic impulses," expressed in "an uninhibited and infantile way," or "behind the feelings of disgust and terror" (88-9). In Abraham's research on the melancholic cases, the patients represent an ambivalent attitude towards the love-object: they feel both a strong affectionate tendency to love yet a destructive impulse to destroy the object. They usually express strong oral-sadistic/cannibalistic tendencies and suffer from mental depression caused by these incompatible and violent emotions in themselves. Melancholia is cannibalistic because melancholic subjects fantasize about incorporating the objects in order to mitigate conflicting, violent emotions.

Freud's and Abraham's studies on melancholia provide a way to read the characters in *The Republic of Wine*. Li's mother-in-law, for instance, is a melancholic figure who incorporates the objects of her love in the form of cannibalism – through creating and consuming a delicacy of human flesh. In "Swallows' Nests," Li's mother-in-law's admiration toward her uncle and father is mixed with a fear of death closely associated with them after watching them die in front of her while collecting swallows' nests. Under normal circumstances, "she could never have become a famous chef of swallows' nests…. The connection between the nests and human brains made her uncomfortable" (Mo Yan 270). A normal person in mourning will gradually move object-cathexis from the original object to a new one. However, in the melancholiac – Li's mother-in-law in this case – these ambivalent emotions (both admiration and fear) lead to a

melancholic introjection of the love-object. This cannibalistic incorporation of the love-object contributes to the development of cannibalistic phantasies. This severe conflict of ambivalent feelings is where the process of introjection in the melancholiac rests on (Abraham 82). Her emotions are so strong and conflicting that Li's mother-in-law has to escape by cannibalizing the love-objects. There seems to be a move between "turning against herself 'the hostility [s]he originally felt towards [her] objects'" (Abraham 82) and "cannibalizing the love-objects." However, Abraham's theory bridges the gap: Li's mother-in-law was closely bond to her father and uncle who collected swallows nests for a living. However, the anxiety she felt as she watched them die during their work in a swallows' cave also haunts her continuously. She fears and detests the death that her love-objects all suffer as well the anxiety that her love-objects' deaths cause in her. Her conflicting emotions of love and fear are so overwhelming that she has to turn against herself the hostility and oral-sadistic impulses that she associated with the love-objects. Her hostility comes from her anxiety and fear of not being able to survive as a subordinate in hierarchy. This oral-sadistic impulse is first an impulse to consume the swallows' nests and swallows and is deeply connected to her love-objects. This later develops into a tendency to cannibalize babies.

To make clear what swallows and their nests symbolize in this story, I will provide an example of how Li's mother-in-law is raised and prove that swallows and their nests are both deeply connected to her love-objects and can be part of her love-objects:

> By drinking swallow's nest soup and eating baby swallows, my mother-in-law grew into a strong, healthy child…. My mother-in-law said that, in some respects, she was nurtured and raised by male swallows and their precious saliva, since her own mother was afraid

to breast-feed her, given the presence of the four teeth with which she was born. (Mo Yan 259)

Li's mother in law is raised and fed by swallows. In a way, she has been consuming the parental figures in her diet since she was born because she was rejected by her supposedly first object of love, that is, her own mother. She turned her love to her father, her uncle, and swallows. Her early diet shows that she eats those who nurtured her. However, the oral-sadistic tendencies towards her love-objects remain unclear until she develops these cannibalistic phantasies into a real invention – the "braised baby." This is because she suffers from extreme contradictory emotions of love and fear after the death of her family and this initiates melancholia.

Li's mother-in-law gradually develops cannibalistic phantasies and practices: she first becomes a famous chef of swallows' nests through which she metaphorically consumes her family. She even carries "the colossal nest stained with her uncle's blood" (270) when she sets off on a long journey of her own and gradually becomes a cook. The association of human flesh (blood and brains) with swallows' nests is direct. The uncomfortable association between the nests and human brains (270) reveals her ambiguous feelings about her objects: she loves her family but fears the death that is associated with them. When she sees the swallows' nests, she also sees benefits from eating swallows' nests; at the same time, she sees her family's struggle, blood, and tears, as well as how their lives have been taken. The uncomfortable feelings are so strong that she must have indulged herself with "very vivid phantasies based on cannibalistic impulses" (Abraham 88). The discomfort, the sign of ambivalent feelings, "disappeared only after Liquorland accomplished the glorious coup of cook and eating meat boys" (Mo Yan 270) –

a delicacy invented by Li's mother-in-law.[62] At this stage, she becomes a melancholic cannibal who, instead of loving other objects, "overcomes" the discomfort of eating human flesh and "successfully" incorporates the object-loss so that she will never lose it again. She escapes from her conflicting emotions by inventing the "braised baby" and constantly cannibalizes so that she does not have to acknowledge her ambiguous emotions.

To deepen this discussion of melancholic incorporation, I use Butler's theory of "melancholy gender" and "refused identification" to illustrate my argument. In "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification," Judith Butler argues that drag "allegorizes heterosexual melancholy" by which "a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of love; a feminine gender is formed through the incorporative fantasy by which the feminine is excluded as a possible object of love, an exclusion of never grieved, but 'preserved' through heightened feminine identification" (146). With the notion of "double disavowal" (the subject has never loved and therefore never lost the object), Butler argues that "heterosexuality naturalizes itself by insisting on the radical otherness of homosexuality, then heterosexual identity is purchased through *a melancholic incorporation of love that it disavows*" (139, emphasis mine). Butler's idea of "refused identification" conceptualizes the process of subject formation in which the subject melancholically incorporates the prohibited love-object so that this disavowed "otherness" becomes part of the subject and will never be lost again. Likewise, I argue that Chinese hierarchical identity is purchased through "a melancholic incorporation of love that it disavows" (to borrow from Butler's words). This identity is also a refused identification by which the inferior is denied and oppressed. What has been loved, rejected, lost,

[62] From the previous story, "Cooking Lesson," Li Yi-Dou says that, "the creator of this gourmet dish [braised baby] was my beautiful mother-in-law" (219). Therefore, we know that Li's mother-in-law is the inventor of the "braised baby."

and incorporated are those that are "inferior" in the hierarchical structure. The superior, dominating subject/self is the ultimate model to identify with, while the inferior "others" are to be excluded and eliminated. However, the subject/self and the object/other always coexist and rely on each other. The subject/self is never self-sufficient. Li's mother-in-law in "Cooking Lesson" offers us a stronger sense of this "refused" yet "reliant" identification, which is something I will discuss further in the following analysis.

Shadowed by the anxiety of being dominated by the poverty of her childhood as well as losing the right to live because of being an inferior member in hierarchical social rank, Li's mother-in-law refuses to identify herself as the exhausted other in adulthood. She develops what I call "a consuming identity" and consumes every beneficial material, both metaphorically and physically. Metaphorically, the upper class consumes every last resources of the lower class. Physically, the upper class consumes the children of the lower class, as Li Yidou's creative writing of "Meat Boy" suggests.[63] Li's mother-in-law dedicates herself to becoming a dictatorial human subject that controls the life and death of animal and human others. Her cannibalistic invention is a denial of the right and existence of the subordinate other. Her uneasy feeling about the connection between the nests and brains of the nest collectors disappeared after she struck upon the idea of cooking and eating meat boys (270). Li's mother-in-law lost the feeling of discomfort over time, eventually developing the following logic:

[63] The story of "Meat Boy" (Mo Yan 60-74) is one of the nine short stories Li Yidou writes and sends to "Mo Yan" in hope of publishing it. Li, who turns what he sees, hears, or experiences in Liquorland into fiction, describes in "Meat Boy" that a poor family sells their son to the Special Purchasing Section of the Culinary Academy. This son is raised as a high-quality "special product and not a child" (73), with the best quality of breast milk this family could produce by offering the mother their best food, and sold as the "top grade" merchandise of the best price. The purchased children, according to another story of "Cooking Lesson" written by Li Yidou, will later be served as "a gourmet dish prepared with special techniques" (219).

> A chef should never waste emotions. Rather than being human, the babies we are about to slaughter and cook are small animals in human form that are, based upon strict, mutual agreement, produced to meet the special needs of Liquorland's developing economy and prosperity. In essence, they are no different than the platypuses swimming in the tank waiting to be slaughtered…. They are not human. They are little animals in human form. (Mo Yan 222)

The words of Li's mother-in-law clearly express the logic of a consuming identity that is associated with Chinese gourmandism and hierarchy and that gradually develops into gourmet cannibalism. Yue Gang points out the association of eating and cannibalism in terms of bipolar complementarity in *The Republic of Wine*. The logic of "gourmet cannibalism," according to Yue Gang, is not for hunger, hatred, or incorporation of spirit – "I do so simply because I desire your flesh for the sake of the longevity, health, or sensual satisfaction of my flesh. The act of 'gourmet cannibalism,' then, has to be located in the site of the body of the human animals, where the flesh is equated to meat" (270). Yue Gang argues that Mo Yan's portrayal of "gourmet cannibalism" reveals a paradigmatic shift from cannibalism to carnivorism, from "the moral question of cannibalism to a critical scrutiny of the material and cultural practice of carnivorism" (268). Mo Yan's revelation cancels out the dualistic contraction between "'high culture' of gourmandism and 'low nature' of cannibalism" (270) and exposes "the deep-seated predatory nature of the human condition" and "naked reality of carnivorism" (271). In Chinese gourmandism, there is also a strong hierarchical sense that "the human self's" desire and need precede "the animal other's" right to survive. In cannibalism, the defines "self" and "other," "me" and "not-me," and "human" and "non-human" and then dehumanize the "other," "not-me," and "non-human" in order to consume. Chinese gourmandism and gourmet cannibalism share

the same discourse in which the existence of "the other" is meaningful only for the desire and satisfaction of the self. Both Chinese gourmandism and gourmet cannibalism share the logic of eating animals or human beings for one's own immoderate physical need and pleasure. In this sense, poor children are considered as the consumable "non-humans" for the rich. In Li's mother-in-law's cannibalistic logic, there is no difference between swallows, platypuses, and babies. The babies are not human; or rather, they are "small animals in human form" (Mo Yan 222). The cannibal subject (Li's mother-in-law in this case) distinguishes "the human self" clearly from "the animal other" to keep her subjectivity intact. The desire to dehumanize and incorporate the other demonstrates her anxiety to deny and get rid of her past. Li's mother-in-law categorizes the unwanted part of her love-object as "the other," which is the denial of the inferior's right to live in hierarchy. This unwanted part is also the threat of death that she associates with her family. She manipulates, absorbs, and obliterates this "not-me" to disavow the fact that she ever was, had ever had, ever loved, or ever lost the object. The disappearance of her uneasy feeling toward the death of animals and human beings demonstrates her successful incorporation of the lost other in melancholia. Chinese gourmandism, along with the culture of delicacies, whether it refers to eating swallows' nests, platypuses, or human babies, is a manifestation of melancholic incorporation of the subordinate in hierarchy.

From connecting human brains with swallows' nests to associating human babies with platypuses, Li's mother-in-law melancholically resists and "overcomes" the anxiety of consumption and death. However, her melancholic reaction to the ambiguous coexistence of the fear of being consumed and the desire to consume in one's self blocks her ability to acknowledge the embrace of this coexistence. The stronger her fear of being consumed, the more violently she denies that anxiety. This logic of dehumanization and othering dominates Liquorland and

everyone within it. It manipulates the sellers, buyers, and cooks of human babies as well as the cannibals. Li's mother-in-law is, therefore, included in this structure and is also a melancholic subject who is not able to acknowledge the ambiguous emotions. Both her invention of the "braised baby," a form of gourmet cannibalism, and the other Chinese delicacies underline the cannibalistic logic of Chinese gourmandism.

Li's mother-in-law, a melancholic subject in post-modern China[64], develops a consuming identity that ultimately involves cannibalism, both allegorically and literally. This subject of a consuming identity adopts Chinese medical discourse and gourmandism and values one's pleasure over "the others,'" and is ultimately cannibalistic. On the one hand, the upper class allegorically consumes every resource of the lower class. On the other hand, this identity, which was reinforced by the consumerist ideology in the post-1989 society, dictates the pursuit of pleasure and longevity at all costs, even at the consumption of human flesh. *The Republic of Wine* "exposes the normalization of the flesh so that it can launch a sweeping critique of the 'meat market' in post-1989 China" (Yue 271). Indeed, human carnivaorism is not unique to the Chinese culture. However, the "gourmet cannibalism" Mo Yan articulates in *The Republic of Wine* is considered to be a form of delicacy and correlates with the culture of Chinese gourmandism and Chinese medical discourse that requires social, cultural, and economic capital. The gourmet culture of eating delicacies inherits and reinforces the cannibalistic nature of Chinese hierarchical culture. In this social hierarchy, only those who have power and money can eat the delicacies that symbolize a higher social status. The gourmands' pleasure and desire for delicacies outweighs any creature's life, even though preparing these delicacies might cost

[64] Mo Yan, expressing through the words of Li's mother-in-law, emphasizes the evolving significance of gourmet pleasure after "the rapid development following the four modernizations and the constant upping of people's living standards" (220).

human lives (such as in the case of collecting swallows' nests). In "Swallows' Nests," the literal and metaphorical association of swallows' nests and human brains demonstrates the brutal violence of Chinese delicacies. The structural violence is camouflaged by harmonious appearance of the "civilized" feast and demonstration of social status and power. Mo Yan portrays the Liquorland dignitaries who said that the delicacy of "meat boy" is "not human, but a gourmet dish prepared with special techniques" (219); he also shows that Li's mother-in-law, the inventor and the chef of "meat boy," associates the development and modernization of Chinese society with the "profound art" of Chines gourmandism, and therefore the ultimate cuisine of "meat boy" while instructing her students at the Culinary Academy (220). Mo Yan, by describing the delicacy of "meat boys," connects this discourse of Chinese gourmandism with gourmet cannibalism in a market economy. In the following analysis of Ding's investigation, I will explain more about the connection between Mo Yan's gourmet cannibalism, Chinese gourmandism, and cannibalistic capitalism in China under the rise of market economy.

In this practice, the cannibal is the subject that defines and the "meat boy" is the object to be defined, consumed, and incorporated. The invention of the cannibalistic feast seems to carry people away from the powerlessness of being the other. However, it is also the investigation and narration of cannibalism that discloses the powerlessness of a subject and narration. Corresponding to Li's "fictional" short stories, Ding's investigation adds another layer of complexity to the representation of Liquorland, cannibalism, and identity. Mo Yan creates Ding as ambiguously a cannibal or perhaps just a gourmand; it is unclear in the novel.[65] As the

[65] Whether or not Ding eats a real boy does not matter. What matters is that his prevaricating attitude and decision to investigate represents the unreliable and corruptive system of the Communist Party. An investigator can be easily persuaded to believe and follow what the potential criminal says. The investigation (official or political actions) might originally function for the sake of people, but gradually loses its track in order to satisfy personal desire or impulse.

investigation of cannibal crime progresses, Ding gradually realizes that he is not a heroic, omnipotent subject, but a good-for-nothing loser. This uncomfortable understanding is foreshadowed by Ding's relationship with his son, and later reinforced by Ding's improper behavior. Before the investigation starts, Ding tells his son that he is going to Liquorland on business, his son answers, "So what? ... What do you expect me to say?"(14) His son's indifferent response shatters the authority of his fatherly figure. During his investigation, he is invited to a feast by Liquorland's officers. He is not able to refuse their invitation and gradually loses his consciousness after drinking. In his drunken fury, he pulls out his gun and shoots the officers who host him, whom he considers cannibals. Ding wants to shoot the cannibal yet only shoots the meat boy. He joins the cannibals afterwards and consumes the meat boy greedily. This earlier father-and-son conversation initiates Ding's drunken illusion that merges the images of the meat boy and his own son together. This first scene of a disempowered authoritative figure echoes the entire theme and the final ending of the novel, which is the deconstruction of a subject. The loss of his authority leads to his desire to reconstruct his subjectivity, and this makes him into a melancholic subject.

The meat boy is the surrogate of his own son that illustrates his desire to both save and consume the child. Ding sees the ambivalence that has been long rejected by him. It is the ambiguity of the line between the self and the cannibal that has been denied. In Ding's stream of consciousness, the image of himself being nothing (not a good husband and father, or even possibly a cannibal) quickly shifts to the one of his heroic figure. In the illusion, he sees a "cunning little fellow, the boy gushing perfume, a tiny son joining ranks with his mother" (78). He solid identity becomes destabilized in his realization that he is not a good husband and father, which happens when his illusory son shows a lack of interest in Ding and goes towards his

mother. His rhetorical description of the dual vision of his son and the meat boy as "the boy gushing perfume" even reveals the internal cannibal in him. However, the more cannibalistic he becomes, the more dramatic his gesture to deny it. Therefore, his pain of possessing an unrecognizable identity as an unqualified father, husband, and investigator is rapidly replaced by his fierce desire to kill the cannibalistic officers. Before shooting, he fantasizes that his son and every child in China need him. In this way, his consciousness shifts from losing his identity toward feeling heroic. The shift reconstructs the disintegrated subject. However, even his heroism fails when he is persuaded to eat the meat boy, believing that it is not made of a real boy. When he attempts to shoot the officers, he is melancholically refusing the idea that he could have identified with the cannibal or the cannibalistic society. However, this only produces more cannibalistic anxiety and desire.

The narrative of cannibalism deconstructs Ding's subjectivity and transforms him into a melancholic cannibal himself. Meanwhile, the narration of cannibalism also deconstructs the writing subject. When the story develops, the author "Mo Yan" is no longer an omniscient and omnipotent subject who writes, but a written object as an involuntary character in the narrative. The inability to distinguish the subject from object verifies the desire of the subject to return to the original unity that existed before separation. The final uniting is a form of melancholic cannibalism in which the subject is the object and vice versa. There are three significant shifts in point of view in *The Republic of Wine*: 1. The third-person written object – Ding – shifts to the position of the first-person subject in his drunken illusion. 2. "Mo Yan's" narrative slips from the first person (in the first nine chapters) to the third person (in the last chapter). 3. "Mo Yan," the actual writing subject, becomes indistinguishable from Ding Gou'er, the fictional written object,

at the end of the novel. Each of these shifts makes important connections between Ding and "Mo Yan," the imaginary and real, and the object and subject.

The shift of structure, fonts and narratives between the first person and the third person reveals the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary in *The Republic of Wine*. Each chapter of the novel includes sections of Ding's investigative story in one font and the letters between Li Yidou and "Mo Yan" in another font. From Chapter One to Seven, Ding's investigative story is told in the third person and precedes both the letters and Li's short stories that are embedded in the letters; the letters are in the first person and follow Ding's story. This clear distinction of narrative and font differentiates the worlds of the real and the fictional. However, in Chapter Eight and Night, the letters precede Ding's investigative story. This change of order manifests the fact that Li Yidou's letters and short stories are transforming and taking over "Mo Yan's" writing, gradually leading Ding towards death in the end of Chapter Nine. Chapter Ten starts with a brief letter that "Mo Yan" sends to Li Yidou before he journeys to Liquorland. Then, "Mo Yan's" journey is told in the same font in which Ding's investigative story is told. Therefore, "Mo Yan's" journey to Liquorland is a continuation of Ding's journey and destiny. In Chapter Ten, the narratives also constantly oscillate between the first person and the third person. This oscillation further blurs the line between the real and the fictional. In this novel, the world in which "Mo Yan" and Li Yidou (told in the first-person perspective) live is the authentic world in which both of them are writers who write fiction. The world, Liquorland, where Ding investigates is a fictional one (told in the third person). It is created by "Mo Yan" but authenticated by Li Yidou, who actually lives there and writes short stories based on his experience in Liquorland. However, Liquorland is an ambiguous existence: we do not know if it is a real place when Li lives or a fictional place that "Mo Yan" creates. When "Mo Yan" is

persuaded by Li Yidou to visit Liquorland for inspiration of his novel, the worlds of the authentic and the fictional become indiscernible.

The powerlessness and impotence of the narration permeates *The Republic of Wine*. The shift in the point of view appears in the novel three times; each time obscures the distinction between the writing subject and the written object one step further. The confusion over subject and object first appears in Ding's drunken illusion in which he overlays an image of the meat boy with his son (78). In this passage in Chapter Three, the written character Ding occupies the perspective of the writing subject. When Ding is still sober, he is portrayed by the third-person narration as a heroic figure who investigates criminals. Yet when he is drunk, he is so overwhelmed by his own stream of consciousness that he cannot even tell the difference between human flesh (a "meat boy") on the platter and his own son. This is the first shift of narrative from the third person (written object) to the first person (writing subject).

In this first transition, the narrative reads as follows:

> *He[Ding Gou'er]* was face-to-face with a bottomless, foul-smelling cesspool that would pull *him* down into its obliterating muck and keep *him* there forever. But that cunning little fellow, the boy gushing perfume, a tiny son joining ranks with his mother, sitting amid a fairy mist the shape and color of a lotus flower, raised his hand, actually raised his hand toward *me*! (Mo Yan 78, emphasis mine)

In this passage, Ding is initially still able to tell where he is located and what he is doing. However, he gradually loses his consciousness: his vision of the meat boy on the platter merges with the vision of his own son. When the meat boy is "gushing perfume," his "cunning little fellow" son joins "ranks with his mother," and raises "his hand toward *me*." The first-person

narrative "I" or "*me*," which should only be used in the outer frame of the story in the conversation between "Mo Yan" and Li Yidou, sneaks into the inner narrative, that is, the *mise en abyme*. This is the first time the third-person character occupies the position of the first writing subject. It is also the first time that Ding's identity is mixed up with "Mo Yan's." The narratives shift back and forth between the third-person and the first-person in this section of the novel (80, 84-90). In fact, this narrative fluctuation at the beginning of the novel foreshadows the indiscernible identity between Ding and "Mo Yan" at the end of the novel.

The second conversion happens when "Mo Yan" enters Liquorland, which belongs to both real and fictional worlds (331-2). At this point, the writing subject (the first person) becomes the written object (the third person). The deliberate shift among narrative points of view signifies the indistinguishable identities between Ding and "Mo Yan." This phenomenon is reinforced and elaborated at the end of the novel. The inability to distinguish the subject from the object takes place when "Mo Yan" is on his way to Liquorland: after the death of Ding, the first-person narrator "Mo Yan" starts to refer to himself in the third person. In Chapter Ten, "Mo Yan" is on the train to Liquorland. He has an out-of-body experience, where he observes himself sitting there:

> I know there are many similarities between me and this Mo Yan, but many contradictions as well. I'm a hermit crab, and Mo Yan is the shell I'm occupying…. There are times when I feel that this Mo Yan is a heavy burden, but I can't seem to cast it off, just as a hermit crab cannot rid itself of its shell. I can be free of it in the darkness, at least for a while…. This Mo Yan disgusts me, that's the truth….

> Quickly Mo Yan and I merge into one. He sits up in his middle berth, which means that I sit up as well…. (Mo Yan 331-2)

In this quote, the first and third-person narratives coexist. After the merge of the two, the narrator continues to narrate in the first person until the "I" meets Li Yidou; the narrative then shifts to the third person. This constant split of narrative leads to a general confusion about which world "Mo Yan" exists. "Mo Yan," as a first-person narrator, creates himself as the third-person character. This is also the same operation in the real world Mo Yan creates. The always "out of field" narrator, "Mo Yan," in Ding's investigation now suddenly appears as a first-person narrator and a third-person character in the last chapter of the novel. Moreover, this first-person narrator not only watches the figure of the third-person character/writer, "Mo Yan," but also eventually merges into the figure of "Mo Yan." At the moment at which "[q]uickly Mo Yan and I merge into one" (332), the world of the (third-person) fictional has become the world of the (first-person) actual. Meanwhile, the fonts in the 1992 Taiwanese and 1994 Chinese editions also change, though not in the 2000 English translation. Through these two editions, the font continuously changes as the narrative shifts from the fictional world to the real world. The change of fonts implies a shift from the fictional world to the real world. However, in the last chapter, except for in the final letter "Mo Yan" writes to Li, the story about "Mo Yan" taking a train to go to Liquorland is printed in the same font as Ding's investigation story. Therefore, the authorship of the novel exposes the question of authenticity. Truth is no longer consistent, and therefore becomes indiscernible.

The shift between first-person and third-person narratives questions the boundary between the real and the imaginary. It also jeopardizes the chronological sense of time. In *The Republic of Wine*, time was basically chronological at the beginning of the narration until (1)

"Mo Yan" finishes Ding's story and visits Liquorland, with a hope of getting more inspiration and inventing a better ending rather than drowning the hero in a privy; (2) the already-dead Ding Gou'er returns and appears in front of "Mo Yan" in "Mo Yan's" stream of consciousness. The continuity in time has been disrupted. In my interpretation, Deleuzian indiscernibility that appears in the discussion on "false continuity," an operation of time that reveals the disruption of chronological continuity in time, is manifested at the moment when the virtual and the actual coalesce or merge in the circuit. At this point, past and present coexist, so do the virtual and the actual (Deleuze 168). Playing with time and narration, Mo Yan's narration operates what Deleuze calls false continuity. The indiscernibility shows the limit of chronological time, the coalescence of past and present, the virtual and the actual. This, in Deleuzian terms, is the power of the false.

The shift of narrative puts truth into crisis. What has been lost is the consistency of truth or authenticity. It is no longer true that we are living in the world of the actual, safely separate and distanced from the world of the virtual and the imaginary. The narrative suggests we are living in the world in which the actual and the virtual are distinct but indiscernible. The indiscernible distinction or identity of the third-person narrative (supposedly objective) and the first-person narrative (supposedly subjective) generates "the power of the false" and puts truth in crisis. Behind the seeming truth of separable worlds of the real and the imaginary, it is the real (author) that authenticates the imaginary (fiction). Without the real, there won't be the imaginary, the fictional, or the fake. This is the relationship between the real and the imaginary. It is the real that creates the paradox and authenticates the fictional. The relationship also exposes the truth of how close the real is to the imaginary.

The indiscernibility of the virtual and actual penetrates the whole novel. In the previous quotation about the coalescence between the first-person "I" and the third-person "Mo Yan," the two narrators are both distinct and indiscernible. They are distinct in the sense that "I" sometimes "can be free of it ["Mo Yan"] in the darkness" and watches as "Mo Yan's" brain is inundated with all kinds of bizarre events (332). However, this "I" is not separable from "Mo Yan," as a hermit crab cannot leave its shell, or a shadow cannot leave its figure. They are indiscernible as the actual ("I" as an omniscient narrator who observes every event) is to the virtual ("Mo Yan," the fictional character in *The Republic of Wine*). The real (the real writer *of the novel*, Mo Yan) is so close to the imaginary (the "I" or "Mo Yan" *in the novel*) as to blur into one another. Their positions are not fixed. On the contrary, the real and the imaginary chase each other in the circuitous structure Mo Yan creates in *The Republic of Wine*.

The final conversion takes place in "Mo Yan's" drunken stream of consciousness. His ambiguous words make it impossible to distinguish "Mo Yan" and Ding Gou'er, supposedly the writing subject and the written object. In his drunken words, "Mo Yan" narrates,

> Ding Gou'er is my shadow…his shadow and mine overlap intertwined impossible to tell who's who He pulls out Ding Gou'er's handgun I recall there's one bullet left for an emergency…he says I'm really going to shoot no more mister nice guy I'm going to fire it at the cannibalistic beasts…OK faster than it takes to tell him aims at our layered shadows on the ground and fires the last bullet…We both feel our hearts pierced with unbearable pain we jump up like carp on dry land with all hope gone it seems our flesh was shot but what springs up from the ground are our shadows then we fall down face to face smiling like true brothers reunited after a long separation…. (356)

In "Mo Yan"'s last words, the narration shifts back and forth between the first and the third-person perspectives. The shift in point of view makes it difficult for readers to tell who is speaking and who occupies the position of the first-person narrator (who describes himself as the omniscient and omnipotent *writer of* the novel), and who occupies the position of the third-person narrator (who describes the *character in* the investigation narrative). Mo Yan slips into his own story: in this passage, it could be Ding or "Mo Yan" who pulls out Ding Gou'er's handgun and fires at "the cannibalistic beasts." "Mo Yan" and Ding are indistinguishable. Like the melancholic identity of cannibalism, the subject is the object; the object is the subject. "Mo Yan's" out-of-control writing repeats Ding's failure to investigate and save himself from actual and spiritual drowning. It also reproduces the failure to distinguish the subject from the object. Meanwhile, "Mo Yan's" physical presence in Liquorland implies the merging of the writing subject and written object. The reunion of Ding and "Mo Yan" at the end of the novel symbolizes the reunion of the subject and lost object, the heroic self and the cannibal other.

A perfect circuit is formed between "Mo Yan," Li Yidou, and Ding Gou'er. These three characters are distinct, and refer to each other, but are somehow indiscernible. First, there are "many similarities" between the first-person narrator, "I" ("Mo Yan") and the third-person narrator, "Mo Yan," but "many contradictions as well" (331). Then, Li Yidou transforms "Mo Yan's" novel and existence through Li's own stories and invitation. Meanwhile, Li's stories shape the investigative account of Ding Gou'er. Last but not least, "Mo Yan" and Ding Gou'er are each other's shadows and brothers that eventually reunite in the world of indiscernibility. The epigraph at the beginning of the novel in the 1992 Taiwanese edition, which is also Ding Gou'er's epitaph, reads, "in the chaotic and corrupt age, my brothers, do not bring our own

brothers to trial."[66] In the 1994 Chinese edition, titled as *Republic of Drunks (Mingding guo)*, the epigraph/epitaph is rewritten as such: "in the romantic and amorous age, my brothers, do not bring our own brothers to trial." As Wu Yenna argues, this romanticized version in 1994 softens the novel's satire "by describing the present age as romantic rather than depraved, and making the novel merely fanciful rather than poignantly critical of official corruption" (75). The change of words from "chaotic and corrupt" in the Taiwanese edition to "romantic and amorous" in the Chinese edition highlights the subversiveness of the original 1992 Taiwanese edition. In the 1994 Chinese edition, the author has to self-censor and avoids using words like corruption and chaos to describe contemporary China. Meanwhile, as Yang Xiaobin argues, this epitaph can actually be read as saying that, "the one who may be brought to trial is oneself, as one of the cannibals in a fraternal community" (*Chinese Postmodern* 224). Accordingly, the real "cannibalistic beasts" refer to one's selves. In the block quote included above, the "we" can be "Mo Yan" and Ding Gou'er, Ding Gou'er and Li Yidou, Li Yidou and "Mo Yan," or anyone in Liquorland, including Li's mother-in-law, the parents who sell their children, or the merchants and cooks at the Culinary Academy. Meanwhile, it can also be Mo Yan, the writer, and us, the readers. The gunshot only seems to be fatal; as the novel tells us, "it seems our flesh was shot but what springs up from the ground are our shadows then we fall down face to face smiling like true brothers reunited after a long separation" (Mo Yan 356). After the long separation, the subject and object finally join together. The distinction of their flesh and shadow falls apart. What has been shot might not be the flesh, but rather the shadow that springs up; their real existences of

[66] There are three editions that I refer to in this chapter: the 1992 Taiwanese edition, the 1994 Chinese edition, and the 2000 English edition. The epigraphs only exist in the first two. There are no page numbers for the epigraphs in either the Taiwanese or Chinese editions. There are some obvious changes that were made for the Chinese edition in general. This rewording of the epigraph is one of them.

flesh smile at each other in reunited harmony. The indiscernibility between the subject and object reveals the melancholic desire to incorporate the other or to be incorporated.

Mo Yan's ambivalent conclusion of the novel – the unknown result of the self-trial – breaks the distinction between the self/other, the subject/object, and the righteous-self/cannibalistic-other. By doing so, Mo Yan not only continues to converse with the May Fourth narrative tradition of cannibalism, but also redefines the anxiety about and desire for cannibalism. In the second section of this essay, I will elaborate on my discussion of the ending of *The Republic of Wine* by first comparing the works of Lu Xun and Mo Yan, then analyzing the themes of cannibalism and reform in Mo Yan's works in relation to the May Fourth spirit, and finally examining the endings of Mo Yan's *Sandalwood Death* and *The Republic of Wine* to explore the evolution of the people's reforming consciousness in contemporary China.

Cultural Cannibalism in Lu Xun's and Mo Yan's Stories: From May Fourth to June Fourth

In 1918 and 1919, Lu Xun published "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine," two stories of cannibalism that criticized traditional Chinese culture and called for the creation of a new Chinese culture. As the leading figure of the New Cultural Movement – also known as the May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun and his works set up a literary convention to converse and negotiate with tradition in a time of rapid change. Almost eighty years later, between 1986 and 1992, Mo Yan publishes "Abandoned Child," "The Cure," and *The Republic of Wine*, three stories that involve cannibalism and inherit Lu Xun's reflection on tradition and reform. Written in the years of economic reform and during another wave of "new cultural movement" that eventually results in an infamous tragedy on June Fourth, 1989, Mo Yan's cannibalistic short stories and novel question social issues of ethical crisis, corruption, excessive desire, and consumerism in the fast-

changing post-socialist Chinese society. This section explores how Mo Yan represents these social issues by analyzing Ding Gou'er's epigraph and "Mo Yan"'s monologue in *The Republic of Wine* in relation to his earlier works of "Abandoned Child" and "The Cure." I also compare the endings of *The Republic of Wine* (1992) and *Sandalwood Death* (2001), and conclude Mo Yan's implicit political and social critique of contemporary China during and after the "new cultural movement" in the late 1980s.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, China underwent a period of instability and turmoil that came with the fall of the Qing dynasty, the establishment of the Republic of China, and forceful foreign involvements. This rapid political and cultural change characterizes the historical background of the May Fourth Movement and Lu Xun's writings. Lu Xun's cannibalistic allegories of "Diary of a Madman" (1918) and "Medicine" (1919) establish enlightenment subjects who recognize classical and feudal ethics as cannibalistic and therefore call for the need to reform. The madman in "Diary of a Madman" can be read as an enlightened subject who acknowledges that the didactic teaching of "Confucian Virtue and Morality" (Lu Xun 42) in the history of China illustrates the logic of "eating human." The madman looks for the innocent who haven't eaten anyone or been eaten and asks for help to "save the children" from becoming cannibalistic or cannibalized. Xia Yu, the revolutionist in " Medicine," can be considered as another enlightened subject who calls for the right of the people and revolutionary changes. However, both characters are inevitably cannibalized – allegorically or literally. The madman's paranoia of questioning everyone's intention to cannibalize is eventually "cured"; this implies that he is culturally cannibalized – incorporated and assimilated – in the end. Being sentenced with a death penalty as a rebellious revolutionist, Xia Yu is literally cannibalized: his blood is sold to the ignorant Hua family, who believe that human blood cures tuberculosis, and is

consumed by the tubercular son, Xiaoshuan. The martyr's blood does not save the wretched body from the conservative superstitious family; the cannibal and the cannibalized both perish.

Lu Xun associates these two stories on the theme of cultural cannibalism – both allegorical cannibalism and medical cannibalism. These two forms of cannibalism – metaphorical and literal – are not separable in Lu Xun's mind. In "Diary of a Madman," the madman blurs the distinction between metaphorical and literal cannibalism by doubting if a doctor is a cannibal because the classical medical textbook of traditional Chinese medicine instructs the use of human flesh for medical use (44). In addition to this doubt, the stories of "Diary of a Madman" and "Medicine" involve intertexuality in the sense that the madman refers to medical cannibalism (48), which is the theme of "Medicine." Through the madman's eyes, Lu Xun examines all forms of learned cannibalism in China. These include offering a cannibalistic meal for the sake of loyalty or filial piety, a practice usually reserved for medical purposes and which has been reinforced by the traditional Chinese medical discourse. Therefore, the traditional Chinese medical discourse is intertwined with feudal morality. Lu Xun's description of cannibalism is, thus, a representation of "cultural cannibalism" – both literal and allegorical. Literally, the Chinese cannibalize for feudal moral reasons. Allegorically, the traditional culture and hierarchy cannibalize the vitality and creativity of the culture and the future of the nation. Lu Xun's concern reflects a May Fourth's central critique of the traditional Chinese culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. This critique, even with the progress of modernization throughout the century, has become a critical convention and is a still-existing concern in contemporary China.

Eighty years later, when Mo Yan writes the cannibalistic stories of "The Cure," "Abandoned Child," and *The Republic of Wine* from 1986 to 1992, the social issues that

concerned Lu Xun continue. Unlike Lu Xun, what Mo Yan criticizes during and after the "new cultural movement" at the end of the century is no longer feudal ethics of virtue and morality. In contrast, Mo Yan explores the excessive desires in the consumerist society. What is interestingly unchanged, however, is that Mo Yan's stories of cannibalism are still involved with medical cannibalism and therefore associated with Chinese medical discourse: "The Cure" portrays an ineffective practice of medical cannibalism just like in Lu Xun's "Medicine." "Abandoned Child" also involves a story of medicinal cannibalism in the satisfaction of desire for youth and beauty, while the story criticizes patriarchal male-preference and highlights human desire and selfishness. Scholars like Shelley W. Chan, David Der-wei Wang, Michael Duke, and Michael Berry have noticed that Mo Yan carries on a dialogue that was initiated by Lu Xun and his contemporaneous May Fourth writers, reflecting both continuities of the previous social critique and its variation. However, the notion of Chinese medical discourse in relation to cannibalism has not yet been emphasized.

Both Lu Xun and Mo Yan associate cannibalism with Chinese medical/medicinal discourse. Their stories of cultural cannibalism therefore involve allegorical and literal cannibalism. In Lu Xun's world of cannibalism, the Chinese characters are paralyzed by being submissive to the Chinese feudal ethics (such as being loyal to the emperor in the story of "Medicine"). Feudal morality legitimizes the practice of cannibalism, be it medical cannibalism (in "Medicine") or cannibalism for pleasure (the case of Yi Ya offering his son's flesh to his emperor in "Dairy of a Madman"). Feudal hierarchy and morality cannibalizes the new lives of the Chinese society. In Mo Yan's world of cannibalism, the criticism shifts from feudal hierarchy to hierarchy of a consumerist society. From medical cannibalism in "The Cure" to medicinal cannibalism in "Abandoned Child" and *The Republic of Wine*, Mo Yan's social critique of

corruption and excessive desire is connected with the practice medical/medicinal cannibalism. In Mo Yan's works, a consumerist hierarchy manipulates the practice of medicinal cannibalism or cannibalism for desire. Mo Yan's strongest and fullest criticism of corruption and excessive desire, however, can only be seen in the epigraph and the concluding chapter in the 1992 Taiwanese version of *The Republic of Wine*.

The epigraph, which is absent in the 2000 English version, varies in the 1992 Taiwanese version and in the 1994 Chinese version of *The Republic of Wine*. Furthermore, the concluding chapter in the 1992 Taiwanese version is entirely removed from the 1994 Chinese version. These changes have significant meanings in terms of the novel's theme of cannibalism and its association with Chinese medical discourse. The 1994 Chinese version replaces "In the chaotic and corrupt age" with "In the romantic and amorous age," and the epigraph continues, "my brothers, do not bring our own brothers to trial." This rewording in the Chinese version, however, highlights Mo Yan's original intention to criticize the contemporary chaos and corruption. Moreover, the epigraph echoes the concluding chapter in Mo Yan's original version (the 1992 Taiwanese version) by providing a scene of Ding Gou'er and Mo Yan putting each other to trial; this significant concluding chapter, however, is removed from the 1994 Chinese version. In the beginning of the novel, Mo Yan and his character advise against "bringing our brothers to trial." The epigraph might seem to reveal a persuasion of complicity in cannibalism and corruption. Nonetheless, through the adventurous self-realization journeys of Ding Gou'er, Li Yidou, and "Mo Yan," the ending of *The Republic of Wine* presents the readers with the scene of trial. The question now is: what is it that should be brought to trial?

In the concluding chapter of *The Republic of Wine*, "Mo Yan"'s drunken stream of consciousness first appears to be a list of unrelated events, but then turns out to be the history of

cannibalism in China. First, "Mo Yan" makes references to ancient Chinese cannibalism, such as Yi Ya's, Liu Bei's, and Li Kui's cases (352). The case of Yi Ya offering his son's flesh to Duke Huan, also a reference in Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," is representative because it is a practice of cannibalism for feudal "loyalty" and hierarchy. "Mo Yan" further mentions The Great Leap Forward and the one-child policy, both contemporary policies made by the Chinese Communist Party. Both references are critiques of hierarchy – hierarchy in an authoritarian society and hierarchy in a patriarchal society. The reference to the Great Leap Forward implicitly indicates the case of survival cannibalism during the Great Leap Forward. The case of survival cannibalism during the Great Chinese Famine, caused by the CCP's political mismanagement during the Great Leap Forward, is also described in Mo Yan's short story "Dream and Bastard."[67] Mo Yan's intention to criticize Mao era's political mismanagement, therefore, is implicit but appears in his various texts. The reference to the one-child policy, which is the background of Mo Yan's "Abandoned Child" and *Frog*, suggests a criticism of patriarchal hierarchy: in the story of "Abandoned Child," Mo Yan associates the abandonment of female babies with a story of a beautiful lady who cannibalizes men for medicinal and rejuvenating benefits to highlight his critique of patriarchal male-preference. These two references of the Great Leap Forward and the one-child policy, therefore, reveal the existing hierarchy that might have extended from or replaced feudal hierarchy from ancient China. Moreover, the reference to *Exposes of the Corrupt Official World* (*guanchang xianxing ji*) in "Mo Yan"'s drunken stream of consciousness (352) as well as the original epigraph in the 1992 Taiwanese version implies that the central theme of *The Republic of Wine* is the reflection on corruption. As the original

[67] In his "Dream and Bastard" (*Mengjing yu zazhong*), Mo Yan portrays a scene of cannibalism in which the villagers, while working manual labor during Mao's Great Leap Forward, were fed with buns that contain fingernails, implying that human fingers were part of ingredients.

epigraph suggests, *The Republic of Wine* is about the corruption and chaos that lead to a cannibalistic society. The corruption is derivational of a hierarchical social structure, be it feudal, authoritarian, or capitalistic. Hierarchy, connecting Lu Xun's and Mo Yan's worlds of cannibalism, as well as associating Mo Yan's several works on various topics, is what should be brought to trial.

Mo Yan's call for a trial represents a transformation from Lu Xun's modern call for "save the children" from the cannibal "other" to a post-modern self-recognition as a cannibal. Lu Xun's madman recognizes his close relation to the cannibal, possesses a position to criticize cannibalism and his own relation to it, and calls for changes to the culture of cannibalism. The modernist "Diary of a Madman" discloses the fear of being consumed and of being related to the cannibal: "I myself will be eaten by others, but none the less I am the younger brother of an eater of human flesh!" Lu Xun's cannibalistic allegory recognizes the fear of being consumed and being part of the cannibals, but there is an absolute denial of the desire for eating people. In contrast, Mo Yan's acknowledges both the fear *and desire* for cannibalism. The epitaph of Ding Gou'er in Mo *Yan's The Republic of Wine* echoes Lu Xun's recognition: "In this chaotic and corrupt age, my brothers, do not bring our own brothers to trial." Both writers acknowledge the cannibalistic nature of Chinese culture: what the Chinese consider as highly "civilized" cultures, such as feudal "virtue and morality" or the Chinese medical discourse and culture of eating delicacies, are in fact cannibalistic. Both Lu Xun and Mo Yan point out that I, as a human being, may be eaten by the cannibal, yet the "I" is also related to the cannibal. However, unlike Lu Xun's madman who constantly resists against cannibalism, Mo Yan's Ding Gou'er joins the feast of cannibalism to satisfy his own appetite. Mo Yan acknowledges that "I" can be brothers with the cannibals, "I" can also be the cannibal; therefore, don't bring the cannibal brothers

(including "I") to trial. This acknowledgement is a form of self-elimination, yet also a form of self-rediscovery. The awareness that I am also a cannibal threatens the stability of one's subjectivity yet redefines and rebuilds one's identity. A true reformation only starts with the recognition and understanding of this ambiguity. In Mo Yan's literary world, he recognizes that there might be a cannibal in each and every self. Unlike Lu Xun's indicted tone against the cannibalistic modern "other," Mo Yan's attitude toward the cannibals is ambiguous and subtle. Seemingly contradicting to what he says in the epigraph, Mo Yan brings the "brothers" of his characters, "Mo Yan" and Ding Gou'er, to a trial in the concluding chapter. This action of trial is therefore Mo Yan's political move that examines the hierarchical structure of the contemporary Chinese society.

In Mo Yan's works, we can see that the author inherits the May Fourth Spirit and develops a critique of the hierarchical and complacent ideology. Meanwhile, his contemporaries generated a wave of critical thinking to hierarchy and promoted reform in the late 1980s.[68] This ideal, however, was exhausted by political manipulation and oppression, and eventually collapsed in 1989 after the government's brutal suppress. During the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, the protesters called for government's accountability, freedom of the press and speech, and the restoration of workers' control over industry. The people's political consciousness had increased but was condemned as "counter-revolutionary" by the Chinese government. The government suppressed and cracked down on the protesters and their supporters during the June

[68] *River Elegy (He shang)*, a six-part documentary film produced in 1988, is a representative example that reveals the thoughts of young intellectuals in the Post-Mao and Pre-Tiananmen Square era. According to Rob Gifford, a National Public Radio journalist, this film criticizes traditional Chinese culture and thinking and suggests learning from Western culture. In this film, sediments of the Yellow River, in which Chinese culture originated, are the metaphor for a Confucian tradition that causes China to stagnate. This film earned praises from reformist officials and popular discussions among the people in 1988; it is considered as an enlightenment film for '89 Democracy Movement.

Fourth Massacre. After the massacre, political reforms were halted and economic reforms did not resume until 1992. Any discussion or remembrance of this movement has been strictly prohibited and censored ever since. The people's political energy has been strangled and instead directed into striving for economic development. In contemporary China, as Rob Gifford analyzes in *China Road*, the younger generation in urban areas is near-completely depoliticized, and the older intellectuals, in order to survive, "have also shelved their thinking about political change in favor of the economic reforms that have taken place in the twenty years since Tiananmen" (167-8). People's quest for reform in terms of democracy, freedom, as well as human and workers' rights has been buried in the name of economic development. China's economy booms rapidly without looking back on its history or concerning itself with its social problems. Developing material prosperity has become the primary concern of a contemporary Chinese society. In this sense, it could be said that the Chinese hierarchy has consumed the memory of the Chinese: the number of deaths or how and why the protesters died has never been clarified and remembered. All of these questions remained unanswered and tossed away; they were considered as irrelevant and insignificant in terms of economic growth. But, Mo Yan, who picks on the issue of corruption in *The Garlic Ballads*, continues to develop a story of social/national corruption and depravation through cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine*.

Mo Yan uses cannibalism to allegorize the consumption of memory and identity by Chinese hierarchy. Before the June Fourth Movement, there had been a rich tradition of popular protests in the 20th century. Yue Gang argues that the historical connection between May Fourth in 1919 and June Fourth in 1989 is the mass protest movement for social reform (224-5). Mo Yan's cannibalistic allegory refers back to the May Fourth spirit that condemns feudalism as cannibalistic. It also reveals the contemporary society after the June Fourth Massacre in which

materialism replaces reformative will and precedes everything. What people envisioned in the Eighty-Nine Democracy Movement failed on June Fourth: the voice of reformist has been muffled and directed into the desire for materialism. In 1989, students marched to Tiananmen Square to mourn Hu Yaobang, a liberal reformer who lost a power struggle with conservative camp over the direction of political and economic reforms. They supported Hu's grievances against corruption, nepotism, inflation, and limited career prospects. This democracy movement eventually was suppressed violently by the Chinese government; all of these social problems are no longer criticized. All of the social issues, related to the unequal distribution of resources, are further consolidated by an authoritarian and consumerist hierarchy, which drives China's desire for economic development in the '90s. The government reiterates that the use of force in the June Fourth Massacre was a necessity to control a "political disturbance" and to ensure stable economic prosperity. Therefore, the stability necessary for economy precedes the search for social justice and equality.

Official demands for stability without critical thinking and retrospection is not new in China. It has been a part of Confucian feudal ideology for thousands of years. This ideology did not die in the May Fourth Movement (New Culture Movement) or in the Cultural Revolution (the deconstruction of traditional Chinese culture), nor did it disappear after the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 and the June Fourth Massacre ('89 Democracy Movement). This ideology is supported by and reinforces a hierarchical structure that empowers any vested interests, including authoritarian governments. In order to achieve a higher status or to maintain the existing structure, one caters to the superior and suppresses the inferior without question. In the hierarchical structure, servility characterizes most of the Chinese. Obedience is the central thinking in Confucian feudal ideology, embodied in loyalty (*zhong*) and filial piety (*xiao*): Yi-Ya

offers his son's meat to the emperor to show his loyalty. Children offer their meat to parents to show their filial piety when parents are sick or starving. Confucian morality is testified and strengthened through the act of cannibalism. Cannibalism becomes a means of reproducing the Confucian hierarchy and inheriting the feudal structure. However, only those who are authorized to define what is good and bad can decide if cannibalism is a moral act. In Confucian feudal structure, only those who are superior in the hierarchy have the right to define. In the past, the superior means the emperors or officials. In the contemporary context, it means the officials and businessmen (those who have power and money). Take adulterated food for instance. Businessmen disregard human life and safety in order to make money. In order to get power, officials ignore the issue of human rights when it comes to systematic reform. Abusive systems, which allow people to trample upon one another, have produced the moral crisis in contemporary China.[69] Mo Yan's works since the '80s, such as *The Garlic Ballads*, *The Republic of Wine*, and *Sandalwood Death*, are criticizing these vested interests groups and systematic issues.

One of the major themes in Mo Yan's works is people's voice against hierarchical authoritative systems. Both *The Garlic Ballads* (1987) and *Sandalwood Death* (2001) portray people's suffering and resistance against unequal treatment by the authoritative governments. *The Republic of Wine* (1992) depicts a world of less resistance, a materialistic and desirous world of prosperity and cannibalism in "peace." All of these works reflect Mo Yan's concern in official corruption and people's consciousness since the '80s. This concern inherits the May Fourth tradition of anti-feudalism, anti-imperialism, and resting political power with the people. Lu Xun allegorizes feudal hierarchy as cannibalistic, and calls for an awakening for the sake of the next

[69] In Liao Yiwu 2013 book, *An Exotic Dancer at Dong Dong Disco and a Cook of Sichuan Cuisine*, he juxtaposes stories of adulterated oil and fetus consumption in order to use food to criticize the systematic abuse of human life in contemporary China.

generation. During ’89 Democracy Movement, people’s quest for democracy and freedom is in opposite to feudal hierarchy; it is also a quest for reforming and loosening the hierarchy. Many of Mo Yan’s works, including the three mentioned above, reflect this awareness.

The Garlic Ballads, *The Republic of Wine*, and *Sandalwood Death* are a series of works by Mo Yan to explore the unresolved social issues in contemporary China. First, Mo Yan’s *The Garlic Ballads*, inspired by news of conflict between the people and the government due to unmarketable garlic in 1987, was written less than two years before 1989 and explores a vision of peasants’ life under uncaring and corruptive bureaucracy of the party. In the end of the novel, the critical view on the system can be read as families are destroyed; peasants die; officials return to power. Second, *The Republic of Wine*, written and published after the failure of ’89 Democracy Movement, discusses the destruction of a society lead by bureaucracy and corruption. In this novel, Mo Yan illustrates a world in which the Chinese hierarchical structure rationalizes the desire for power, money, and pleasure as well as the practice of cannibalism for desire possible. In fact, *The Republic of Wine* also allegorizes that the Chinese “cannibalize” their historical memory in trade of a materialistic world in “peace” and “harmony.” The people’s wish to reform has been transformed into endless desires for prosperity in a cannibalistic world. One will either to kill to survive or be killed. In this hierarchical, self-consuming world, the inferior in social rank becomes food. *The Republic of Wine* ends in uncertainty, implying the death of tne author and the hero. It is up to the readers’ interpretations to elucidate whether the hierarchal structure is shaken after “the trial.”

Third, Mo Yan’s *Sandalwood Death*, published in the beginning of the 21st century, examines to the Chinese bureaucracy in the beginning of the 20th century, which led to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. This novel describes a historical event in which the people were

struggling against the threat of foreign imperialists (in this case, German). The Qing government, unable to defeat the imperialists, turned to punish those who stood up to fight against the invaders. The critique of feudal or systematic hierarchy and its violence is clearly manifested in this novel. Even though both of *Sandalwood Death* (2001) and *The Garlic Ballads* (1987) explore the consequences of hierarchy, *Sandalwood Death*'s ending is different from *The Garlic Ballads*: in *Sandalwood Death*, death comes not only to ordinary folks, but also to officers and law-executioners equally. This suggests that without elimination of feudal ideology and hierarchical oppression, the people and the system will be doomed. These three stories are related consequential, intertwining with Chinese hierarchical ideology.

The Republic of Wine, seemingly describing an age of material abundance, actually portrays Mo Yan's Chinese contemporaries' anxiety over material and spiritual lack. This literary work demonstrates the historical amnesia of the people as well as their collective resistance, conscious or unconscious, against amnesia. It implies that the awareness of physical and mental revolution gradually "evolves" into an empty authoritarian spirit with insatiable consumer desires. During this "evolution," the appetite for cannibalism grows in this context: the cannibalistic Liquorland is not a fictional world but the real world that every Chinese lives in. It is born with hierarchical governance and nourished by a feudal ideology that incorporates Chinese gourmandism and medical discourse. If eating is "a metaphor for human condition" that "must be broadened to take account of historical changes and environmental implications"(Yue 12), I argue that cannibalism is an allegory for the loss of historical memory. For Mo Yan, cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine* allegorizes the collective amnesia of what the CCP intends to erase, including the CCP's political mismanagement and the people's resolution to reform

during the democracy movement. In the meantime, *Sandalwood Death* is Mo Yan's resistance against historical amnesia. It is a record of the people's voices.

The Republic of Wine uses cannibalism to manifest systematic abuse and historical amnesia. *Sandalwood Death*, on the other hand, includes a carnivalesque scene that reveals the people's political consciousness against an authoritarian and abusive system. *Sandalwood Death* is set around 1900, a decade before the May Fourth Movement, when foreign imperialists invaded China; in this case, Germans were building railroads in northeast China. In this novel, Sun Bing, a famous "Cat Tune"[70] opera singer/player, is sentenced to the "sandalwood death" – impaling in public – because he stands against the Germans, some of who molested his wife. The German soldiers take revenge by destroying his family and town. Sun Bing therefore joins Boxer Rebellion to fight against the German soldiers but is apprehended by the German and Qing armies. Sun Bing's daughter, Sun Meiniang is married to a butcher with the intellect of a child, Zhao Xiaojia, whose father, Zhao Jia, is the law-executioner for Sun Bing's case. Sun Meiniang also has an affair with the county magistrate, Qian Ding, who is the official in charge of the execution. The Qing government is determined to make Sun Bing an example of the rebellion and orders their best executioner to carry out the sentence of death in the most effective way. Zhao Jia, the executioner, coms up with the idea of the "sandalwood death," in which the criminal is impaled with a sandalwood stake and tortured for days until the ceremony of the railroad's first ride. He invites his son, Zhao Xiaojia, to be his assistant and even prepares some ginseng soup to extend Sun Bing's life so that he can survive until the ceremony. When Sun

[70] "Cat Tune" (*Miaoqiang*) is a fictional opera style created by Mo Yan. It is usually performed in a desolate tone but sometimes in a light tone. It is called "Cat Tune" because the performers and the people sing it as if they were cats, i.e. making a "meow" sound. It is described in *Sandalwood Death* that every northeast Chinese, everyone in Gaomi County (the fictional county Mo Yan created) grows up with and is fascinated by the "Cat Tune." It is described in this novel as fundamental to the northeast culture in China.

Bing is sentenced to the "sandalwood death," a group of opera players, whom used to be lead by Sun Bing the chief singer, gathers in front of the crowd and performs a "Cat Tune" show, called "Sun Bing Fights against the Germans." "Cat Tune" is a local opera style that every northeast Chinese would know. The opera players and the crowd all sing along with the show in a carnivalesque spirit until the German soldiers begin to shoot at the players. Qian Ding, the magistrate, suffering from watching his people dying and his country doomed, and being unable to save Sun Bing from his torture, comes to the scaffold to assassinate Sun Bing, as is Sun's wish. Qian Ding accidentally kills Zhao Xiaojia when he "protects" the criminal from assassination. Zhao Jia is murdered by an out-of-mind Sun Meiniang when he is fighting with Qian Ding. When Qian Ding eventually kills Sun Bing, Sun's last words to Qian are: "the show… has ended."

"Sandalwood death" parallels the logic of revenge cannibalism: both demonstrate extreme hatred by means of brutal destruction. In both "sandalwood death" and "revenge cannibalism," consumption plays a significant role in elaborating the pain of the victim. However, Mo Yan gives this story an unexpected turn at the criminal's consumption of jinseng during the sandalwood death: this consumption of a delicacy for a "medical benefit" metaphorically nourished the body of the people, whom this brutal punishment is supposed to intimidate and torture. In the story, the "sandalwood death" is invented to bolster imperial authoritarianism as well as strengthen the punishing discipline. This discipline of vengeful punishment actually shares the same logic as "revenge cannibalism" (Yue 53-4): the logic that one denies and destroys the other's existence, and sometimes even consumes the physical being out of vengeful hatred. Cannibalistic vengeful punishment is supposed to be a way that the government, while fortifying magisterial authority, criminalizes, dehumanizes, and excludes the

criminal as well as the ordinary folk (in this case the "Cat Tune" players). Meanwhile, the use of traditional Chinese medical dietary gourmandism during the sandalwood punishment – the criminal's consumption of jinseng soup – is supposed to extend Sun Bing's life for further demonstration of his tortured body and to cultivate the terror and obedience of the crowd. However, the dietary supplement instead extends and cultivates the unexpected frenzy of the people. Unlike the medical dietary cannibalism in Lu Xun's "Medicine" or Mo Yan's earlier "The Cure," which only causes the death of the people, the dietary treatment in *Sandalwood Death* results in the deaths of the executor of totalitarianism and its ignorant successor. By providing an unexpected resolution, Mo Yan reaffirms a strong sense of the people and their subjectivities.

With the description of a communal performance of the "Cat Tune," Mo Yan's *Sandalwood Death* animalizes human beings and also humanizes animals. It also displays the people's carnivalesque consciousness. The "Cat Tune" in *Sandalwood Death* is described as a local opera branch that fascinates every Gaomi (a fictional County in northeast China created by Mo Yan) local. Whoever was from the Northeast Township and infatuated with "Cat Tune" opera would be mesmerized by the performance that "filled with music and passion" and "had an irresistible appeal" (388). The "Cat Tune" opera can make them "cry out meows along with those cat figures" (the "Cat Tune" performers), and even "start rolling around the ground, climbing walls, and shinnying up tress, until this pitiless execution site turned into a paradise for cat-calling menagerie of dancing" (389). In the chapter, "Sun Bing's Opera Talk," there is one such carnivalesque scene when Sun Bing is on the way to his sandalwood death sentence:

> I thought of Little Peach, my wonderful wife, and of my two delightful children. My loathing for the Germans, whose railroad has destroyed the feng shui of our Northeast

Gaomi Township, knew no bounds. Grievous thoughts made my throat itch, and I raised my voice in tribute to my fellow villagers and townspeople….

Look up at swirling winds of gold, then farther down lush trees behold~~a martyr's spirit, I raise the flag of rebellion, as commanded on high, to preserve China's rivers and mountains, and not allow a foreign railroad our land to enfold~~…fiery spirits and ambrosia drink have made me bold~~~

Meow meow meow~…

There were tears in my fellow villager's eye, but then, starting with the children, they echoed Xiao Shangzi's (Sun Bing's protégé's) cat cries. It must have sounded as if all the cats in the world had come together at this place.

As my song and my fellow villagers' cries swirled in the air together, I saw that the color had left Yuan Shikai and von Ketteler's faces, and that the frightened soldiers, foreign devils included, were ashen-faced, as if confronted by mortal enemies. Sun Bing could now die with no regrets, in the wake of this spectacular operatic moment! (Mo Yan, *Sandalwood Death* 342-3)

Sun Bing's first-person narration reveals his emotion, the crowd's singing of the "Cat Tune" along with him, and the enemy's response to this carnivalesque scene. This "Cat Tune" performance exposes the people's suffering under hierarchical oppression, a critique of the government's corruption, and the way in which the people are integrated and expressed in the "Cat Tune" performance.

First of all, what initiates Sun Bing to sing on his way to death is the desire to claim his suffering when the Qing government is supposed to take care of its people but fails. When Sun Bing's wife is harassed and insulted by German soldier, Sun fights against the soldier. However, his "rebellious" defense of his family leads German's revenge and the destruction of the whole town. The Qing officer, Yuan Shikai, and the German officer, von Ketteler, sentences Sun Bing the "sandalwood death" to make him an example of rebellion. Sun Bing represents every folk person in northeast China under the foreign imperialist invasion in 1900. They were forced to raise the flag of rebellion to save their own country. "Cat Tune" articulates their pain of losing family and land.

Second, the content of the "Cat Tune" songs is a satirical existence that criticizes the corruption and impotence of the Qing officers. While every official reads classics of loyalty to pass the imperial examination and get a position, it is the regular folk, like Sun Bing, who is brave enough to have principles. There is an example that shows the contrast between the people and the official on the concept of loyalty: during the execution of the sandalwood death, a group of "Cat Tune" players wants to stage and perform "Cat Tune;" Qian Ding, the magistrate, tries to convince them to leave in avoidance of any conflict. He preaches to them,

> [Cat Tune] promotes loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and justice. Teaching people to be reasonable and understanding corresponds exactly with my principles of instruction. I have always supported your performance activities and hold you in high esteem for your deep-seated love of the arts. But not here and not now. I order you to leave. (387)

This passage is particularly ironic because Qian knows that he is not the loyal official that he though he was. He lacks the faith and the allegiance to die for a righteous cause, to pick up a

knife and end the life of that treacherous official, even though he has studied the classics and the martial arts since childhood. Even though in his own retrospection, Qian realizes that he is a cringing coward, who "swagger[s] around the common people, but treat [his] superiors and foreigners to flattery and obsequious smiles" (369-70). He understands that the "Cat Tune" players are performing for the sake of loyalty (their loyalty to the heroic "Cat Chief" figure of Sun Bing who stands up to fight against the foreign invasion) that is taught in the classics and "Cat Tune" show, he enforces his power to stop these common people from demonstrating their loyalty so that he can keep his position as a magistrate or even get a promotion. The people's righteous spirit in "Cat Tune" contrasts Qian Ding's bitter retrospection of being a weakling. The sadness and pain voiced out in "Cat Tune" is an accusation of the impotence of the Qing officials.

Fu Zheng-Ming criticizes the voice in *Sandalwood Death* as a nationalist voice of cruelty and violence. However, Fu neglects that the voice of "Cat Tune" sung by the folk people. There is indeed a portrayal of imperialist violence and hierarchy, specially represented by the law-executioner, Zhao Jia. However, this representation is a necessary evil in manifesting the corruptive, hierarchical, and brutal essences of an authoritarian nation. Like Xie You-Shun has argued, the law-executor's attitude toward human beings corresponds to authoritarian attitude toward its own people (272). By treating and killing humans like animals to "honor" the emperor, Zhao Jia's brutality and numbness to humanity reflects the authoritarian atrocity. By criticizing this authoritarian form of governance, Mo Yan criticizes not only the imperial Qing Dynasty but also the contemporary Chinese government. On the other hand, the voice of the magistrate, Qian Ding is more of an ambiguous voice that oscillates between loyalty toward the Qing Empire and caring for his people. Qian Ding represents the intellectuals who are struggling among different values, such as between loyalty to a feudal hierarchy or caring and justice for the people, when

the county goes through dramatic changes.[71] In the meantime, "Cat Tune" provides a channel to gather and voice the people's consciousness. The "Cat Tune" crowd, undoubtedly, is another voice that penetrates the whole novel, different from the voices of the law-executor and the magistrate. It is the voice of the people in a carnivalesque form.

Bakhtin understands the carnival as "the material bodily principle" and "contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed" (10). For him, "carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people;" it is "not an individual reaction to some 'isolated comic' event" (21). In this sense, the "Cat Tune" crowd presents the collective mode and mood of carnivalesque practice that Bakhtin illustrates. In *Sandalwood Death*, Sun Bing is arrested and criminalized because of his anti-imperialist struggle against western invasion in North China. The crowd voices their anti-imperialist consciousness in the carnival "Cat Tune" performance during the sandalwood punishment. They "meow" and dance their pain, sadness, anger, fear, love, passion, fascination, and enjoyment as if they were cats. The "carnivalesque party" liberates their collective emotions, such as their love for family and lovers, their anxiety of being persecuted by the foreigners and the government, and their desire to fight for justice. This is not only a song of the people in Qing dynasty, but also a song Mo Yan sings for the contemporary Chinese.

Mo Yan's portrayal of Liquorland between 1989 and 1992 show the destruction of the ideal after the June Fourth Massacre; his 2001 description of Sun Bing's century-old rebellion, however, represents the resurrection of the people's consciousness at the turn of the millennium. Meanwhile, the endings of *The Republic of Wine* and *Sandalwood Death* echo each other and

[71] Qian Ding, in my interpretation, is a reminiscent of the reformative figure, Zhao Ziyang, who, during '89 Democracy Movement, supported students and protesters and eventually lost his battle with the conservative camp. After he lost power, he was under house arrest until his death.

reveal the potential for change. In *Sandalwood Death*, the carnivalesque fest ends in the numerous deaths of all the "Cat Tune" performers, the lawful executors, Sun Bing, and possibly even the magistrate. The deaths of the executed representative of the people, Sun Bing, as well as of the lawful executor, Zhao Jia and his son, echo the ending of the trial in *The Republic of Wine.* Both works are in response to the '89 Democracy Movement. According to Yue Gang, June 1989 marked the end of the "healthy, 'primitive' carnival" (284). The zeal of the people shown in *Sandalwood Death*'s "Cat Tune" performance represents of the carnivalesque of the crowd in Tiananmen; the feverish desire for material and pleasure in *The Republic of Wine* allegorizes the death of the ideal and the transference of the people's desire from politics and reform to economics after the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Both the endings of *The Republic of Wine* and *Sandalwood Death*, however, hint at the death of the complicit conspirators in hierarchy and therefore also at the possibility for reform. In the post-Mao era, the people's consciousness has become an empty shell. The idealistic, heroic national narrative has been hollowed out and replaced by an insatiable desire in a consumerist narrative. *Sandalwood Death* is Mo Yan's response to the cannibalistic gourmandism in Lu Xun's "Medicine," his own "The Cure" and *The Republic of Wine*: set in the beginning of the twentieth century, the revolutionary carnival in *Sandalwood Death* might have been suppressed at the end of the Qing dynasty; the Tiananmen crowd incarnates the festive passion that exists again at the end of the twentieth century. This passion was extinguished in the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 and is resurrected in the name of desire in *The Republic of Wine* in the 90s. The feast of insatiable desire quickly drowned to death in Liquorland, in which the shadows of Ding and "Mo Yan" are shot and the real flesh lives on. "Mo Yan" (as well as Ding Gou'er and Li Yidou) seems to end tragically. However, the "real" writer Mo Yan keeps writing. This carnivalesque fury is reclaimed in *Sandalwood Death*, which

is published in 2001, suggesting a possible chance for the people's consciousness to be restored in the twenty-first century.

A potential restoration of the people's consciousness underlies *Sandalwood Death*'s seemingly fatal close. Similarly, *The Republic of Wine* also ends ambiguously and implies the possibility of self-recognition and reform. In Mo Yan's original 1992 Taiwanese version, the novel ends with the shooting trial scene between Ding Gou'er and "Mo Yan" in "Mo Yan"'s drunken stream of consciousness. Both Ding Gou'er's and "Mo Yan"'s hearts are "pierced with unbearable pain" (356). From this drunken narrative, the impossibility of distinguishing whether it is Ding Gou'er or "Mo Yan" who pulls the trigger demonstrates that, to Mo Yan, Ding Gou'er and "Mo Yan" – the "fictional" character and the "real" writer – can both be cannibals and both deserve a trial. This also implies that the "fictional" writer ("Mo Yan"), the "real" writer (Mo Yan) and the "real" readers (us) can also be cannibalistic and deserve self-acknowledgement of cannibalism. This self-trial is a post-modern recognition of the self. The inconvenient truth is: there is no longer the distinction between the modern subject and the cannibal other as Lu Xun suggested. The subject/self and the object/other are now distinguishable and both cannibalistic. Moreover, Mo Yan's proposal of the self-trial initiates the possibility of change with his intended ambiguity among the last few lines – "it seems our flesh was shot but what springs up from the ground are our shadows then we fall down face to face smiling like true brothers reunited after a long separation…" (356). If what sprung up from the ground were just their shadows, it could be possible that their flesh was still alive. After all, this is a drunken narrative, which implies all of this could just be an illusion. What is peculiar in this narrative, however, is their reactions toward the experience of being shot and "almost dead": they smiled at each other and felt "like true brother reunited" – a reaction of true understanding of the self and the other as "true brothers"

that finally reunite. The impulse of shooting indicates one's intense desire to eradicate the destructive nature of the cannibalistic culture. If "we" who "fall down face to face smiling like true brothers reunited after a long separation" referred to Ding Gou'er and "Mo Yan"'s flesh and they were truly not dead, then what survives is a reformed flesh whose shadow of cannibalism has been recognized and eradicated.

In this sense, the melancholic subject that develops a consuming identity and consumes every "otherness" has to recognize what has been lost in order to stop the cannibalistic incorporation of the lost object. The melancholic subject rejected the cannibalistic other without realizing the indistinguishability between the self and other. The cannibalistic self remains unrecognized. This rejection of the cannibalistic desire within one's self strengthens one's modern identity of progression and development. However, Mo Yan breaks the boundary between the self and the other and shows that this identity is unstable. In his allegorical world of cannibalism, every one has an inner cannibal in hierarchical post-socialist consumerist China. In this hierarchical society, people are inevitably categorized as upper and lower classes. *The Republic of Wine* shows how people become melancholic subjects, rejecting and consuming what is considered unacceptable. The unacceptable, in Li's mother-in-law's and meat boys' cases, means being the lower class, which is supposed to be incorporated and consumed in the hierarchical structure, metaphorically or literally. This melancholic, consuming identity uses every last source of the lower class in hierarchy, even including consuming the flesh of the lower class. *The Republic Wine*, along with Mo Yan's other thematic works on cannibalism and reform, reveals that only a self-recognition of cannibalism and a painful trial that reconstructs one's identity and society can spark a new beginning.

In the discussion of the cannibalistic gourmet and gourmet cannibalism in *The Republic of Wine*, the formation of cannibal identity and culture is revealed. The cause and construction of Li's mother-in-law's cannibal identity exposes the dread of being exhausted and the transformation of fear into the desire to devour the other. The Chinese cannibalistic gourmandism that permeates "Meat Boy," "Swallows' Nests," "Cooking Lesson," and the novel constitutes the consumption of other (human) beings to satisfy the self's desires. Furthermore, Ding's drunken illusion obscures the images of his son and the meat boy as well as the boundaries of the heroic self and the monstrous cannibal. The crisis of the indiscernible self/other escalates and reaches another crescendo: Ding Gou'er, Li Yidou, and "Mo Yan" form a circuitous relation that destructs the barrier of the subject/object, the authentic/imaginary. This ambiguous circuit produces an untraditional awareness that includes and embraces ambivalence and variety. In the age of post-socialist market economy, individual materialistic desire is expanded by consumerism. The human need for spirituality is rejected and eradicated by totalitarianism. The universal value of human beings is replaced by economic value, which results in gourmand cannibalism, allegorically or even literally. The seemingly carnivalesque scene in *The Republic of Wine* ultimately reveals an internal crisis of morality and value. Only recognition of one's own or one's culture's cannibalistic nature initiates a possibility for self-acknowledgement and reform. In the world of indiscernibility, those of us with seemingly opposite qualities shall, like true brothers, smile at each other, and be reborn again.

CHAPTER 3

A Delicacy to Rejuvenate the Nation:

Fetus Consumption in Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's *Dumplings*

Mrs. Li, a wealthy businessman's wife and a former famous actress, pays high prices to eat Aunt Mei's expensive aborted-fetus dumplings. It is said that these dumplings are effective in rejuvenating the eater; Mrs. Li is desperate to regain her youth and win her husband back from his younger mistress. Among all the cannibalistic stories written by contemporary Chinese writers, Lillian Lee's *Dumplings* is probably one of the most realistic works of "fiction" in accurate spaces and time.[72] To research and write the film script of *Dumplings*, the novelist/script writer Lillian Lee and the director Fruit Chan interviewed a doctor at a clinic in China; there, without even noticing it, they might have been served a pot of aborted fetus soup (Lee, "Feeling"). "Is it possible?" is a question that the author Lillian Lee ponders. Is it true that under China's one-child policy, abortions are so common that people can get fetuses easily and make delicacies to revitalize themselves? How does this cannibalistic practice relate to China's culture of eating delicacies and taking traditional Chinese medicine? How does this "traditional" practice function in the contemporary world of market economy? In Hong Kong writer Lillian Lee's novel *Dumplings* and its adapted film of the same name, directed by the Hong Kong director Fruit Chan, the consumption of human fetuses exposes the change of status in Hong Kong's

[72] Another example is Liao Yiwu's "Chi-Fu the Gourmand of Fetus Soup," translation mine) in his 2013 book, *An Exotic Dancer at Dong Dong Disco and a Cook of Sichuan Cuisine*. Liao Yiwu's multi-volume *Interviews with People from the Bottom Rung of Society*, banned in China and published in Taiwan in 2001, is composed of transcribed interviews with people on the margins of Chinese society and is written in a reportage style. Similarly, all the stories in *An Exotic Dancer at Dong Dong Disco and a Cook of Sichuan Cuisine*, including "Chi-Fu the Gourmand of Fetus Soup," are also written in a reportage style that portrays the real situation and life in China.

postcolonial culture. There are two filmic versions of *Dumplings*: a shorter version of *Dumplings* released as part of *Three…Extremes*, and a feature-length version of the film. This chapter analyzes the feature-length version of *Dumplings* and examines Lillian Lee's novel, *Dumplings*. This chapter argues that a revolutionary song in *Dumplings*, "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake," not only bridges two eras, two economic ideologies, two classes, and two systems of medicine, but also reveals the transformation from Mao's "serve the people" to post-Mao "serve people." Then, the chapter inspects Chinese medical discourse on the potential health benefits of cannibalism and analyzes the relationship between delicacies, Chinese medicine, and market economy.

"Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake":
The Song and its Variations in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* and in *Dumplings*

In *Dumplings*, Lillian Lee inserts a theme song that runs through these literary and filmic works. This song, I argue, connects the Maoist with the post-Mao eras, communist with capitalist economies, the classes of rich capitalists with poor labors, and western biomedicine with traditional Chinese medicine. In this chapter, I first introduce the original song at the turn of 1960, then its appearances in *Dumplings* in 2004. I structure this chapter according to my analysis of this song's occurrence and significance in *Dumplings*.

The theme song, "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake," is a revolutionary song written for a successful Chinese opera in 1959, *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*[73]. In 1961, it was made into a very popular film of the same name. Both depict how the Chinese Workers' and Peasants'

[73] Note that "the red guards" in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* (*Honghu chiweidui*) refers to "the red defense force" ("*chiweidui*"), not "the red guards" ("*hongweibing*") in the Cultural Revolution.

Red Army led local people to fight against the Nationalist Army[74] in 1930. These revolutionary artistic works became favorites of the 1960s generation. Part of the song is sung repetitively in *Dumplings*:

> Wave after wave in Honghu Lake
>
> My home is on the shore
>
> At dawn, boats go out with nets
>
> At dusk, they return loaded with fish
>
> Wild ducks and lotus roots are here
>
> The scent of rice fills the autumn air
>
> They say heaven is beautiful
>
> How can it compare with my Honghu Lake[75]

The depiction of a heavenly "home" runs throughout the above lyrics. The rest of the song, which is intentionally omitted from *Dumplings*, goes:

> Wave after wave in Honghu Lake
>
> It glistens under the sunlight
>
> The Communist Party is benevolent, greater than the East Sea
>
> Year after year is a fisherman's year, better than the last
>
> — "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" ("*Honghushui langdalang*")

In the movie *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*, the song "Wave After Wave in Honghu

[74] The Nationalist Army fought for the Nationalist Party and the Republic of China, but eventually retreated to Taiwan after losing the Chinese Civil War in 1949.
[75] This translation is from Chuck Kleinhans' "Serving the People: *Dumplings*" (2007). I make few changes to the title and the lyrics.

Lake" is performed after the Red Guards' first triumph and praises the greatness of the Communist Party and the dearness of their homeland. However, the lyrics and images of "Wave after wave in Honghu Lake" appear two more times in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*. Each time, the song is sung in different tones with different lyrics and depictions. "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" is performed in the following three scenes:

1. After the Red Guards' first triumph over the Nationalist Army, the proletariats gather together to celebrate and proclaim their communist visions. They take turns saying what they wish to achieve by the time the Communist red flags are all over the country.[76] The song "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake," performed in a romantic and optimistic sense, comes after they envision a brighter Communist future.

2. When the heroine Han Ying is captured and imprisoned by the landlord Peng and the Nationalist Army, she sings the song in a heroic and sacrificial tone. The lyrics in this scene portray the landlord's persecution and the proletariats' firm determination of and expectations for revolution and liberation.

3. When the Red Guards win their final battle, they sing "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" to welcome the Communist Army and express their hope to liberate China to the Communist rule. The scene unleashes a spectacle of exultation by the lake.

All three variations of the chorus in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* reinforce and reassure the

[76] The heroine Han Ying envisions a Communist future before performing the song: "By the time the red flags are all over the country, there won't be any despotic landlord. We proletariats will live a non-oppressive and elated life. We will farm in field with tractors and receive bumper harvests every year. We will cast nets with machines on the lake and catch big hauls of fish everyday. Our village will become like Wu Chang City. By the time, we will invite Commissar Mao to visit our village and try out our famous lotus root and fish!" After she delivers this speech, everyone laughs and the song "Wave after wave in Honghu Lake" proceeds.

idea of "serve the people."[77] However, I argue that Lee and Chan's removal of the chorus' last few lines of lyrics from *Dumplings* signals the transition from "serve the people" to "serve people" as time progresses from the establishment of the People's Republic of China to contemporary China.

Lee and Chan's appropriation and deletion of the song's revolutionary connotation and its glorification of the Communist Party reveals an inconvenient truth: even if China was liberated by the Communist Party, the proletariats were still struggling to live. The heavenly homeland envisioned in "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" and in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* was a world of make-believe. The song was written in 1958, the year before the 10th anniversary (1949-1959) of the People's Republic of China and the year when the economic and social campaign of the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) began. In portraying the Red Guards and the Chinese Communist Army's revolution of 1930, the song conveyed a heroic and revolutionary spirit to protect and establish a better "homeland." It seemed to depict a land of abundance and happiness under Communist governance.[78] However, it is only an imaginative wonderland. This wonderland didn't exist during the Chinese Civil War, the period of time *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* depicted. It did not exist during the Great Leap Forward, during which *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* was produced. The real life context behind the song was the Great

[77] "Serve the People" ("*wei renmin fuwu*") is a widely used political slogan during the Mao era. This slogan was first delivered in Mao's memorial speech for a comrade who died "for the people" in 1944. The slogan and speech appeal to the people to unite, and to live and die for the people, the party, and the country. This catchy slogan became popular and part of the Mao cult.
[78] The scene in the movie, *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*, in which the song is presented, is an extremely happy one. All workers in the scene, who are fishing and harvesting in the waters of Honghu Lake, are eerily smiling for the entire song. The lake is full of blossoming lotuses, from which men and women gather their food in a carefree manner. It is ironic that this movie was produced during the Great Leap Forward's great famine, which was actually caused by Communist political mismanagement. For the study of the Great Leap Forward and Communist political mismanagement, see Becker; J. Yang; Dikotter.

Chinese Famine that occurred during the Great Leap Forward. This Great Chinese Famine was the most damaging in Chinese history and in human history (Ashton; Edgerton-Tarpley), and was followed by the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).

"Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" is appropriated in *Dumplings* at various crucial and transitional moments. In *Dumplings*, Mrs. Li, a former actress who married Mr. Li in her twenties, is gradually losing her youth after fifteen years of marriage. In order to win her husband back from his mistress, Mrs. Li looks for help from Aunt Mei, whose infamous dumplings are said to be rejuvenating. Mei was a gynecologist in China who performed numerous abortions under the one-child policy. She later moved to Hong Kong and now makes expensive dumplings from aborted fetuses obtained from Mainland China. Mei "helped" Kay, an incestuously raped girl, to abort her five-month-old fetus without using chemical aids so that she can sell this fetus to Mrs. Li and make dumplings with stronger rejuvenating effects. Mei then seduces Mr. Li during his visit to her apartment, and finally escapes back to China before the police come to investigate her role in the incestuous abortion. Mrs. Li pays Mr. Li's mistress to abort her baby and cannibalizes it. In this cannibalistic story, the song, "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake," appears four times:

1. Mei sings it when Mrs. Li eats the dumplings for the first time. The song continues into the next scene where Mr. Li consumes a fertilized duck egg while flirting with his mistress.

2. Mei sings it when she visits the Lis' mansion and swims in their pool. She inserts Mrs. Li into the song's lyrics while asking Mrs. Li to "cast her fishing net."

3. While having sex with Mei, Mr. Li sees a picture of a 20-year old Mei in 1960, performing "The Red Guards on Honghu Lake" in a school variety show. In the show, Mei sang the song as the revolutionary heroine Han Ying.

4. The song resonates in Mei's fugitive scene in Shenzhen, China and continues while Mrs. Li, at her newly renovated mansion in Hong Kong, chops the male fetus that was aborted by the mistress.

The appropriation of the song and deletion of the lyrics bridges two eras, two economic ideologies, and two systems of medicine. This happens especially in its third occurrence in which Mei's past and present are revealed, and in its first occurrence, when major characters' desires for a promising future are exposed. The song's third occurrence bridges not only the Mao and post-Mao eras, but also the communist and capitalist ideologies. It also reveals Mei's personal history and allegorizes her transformation from the "serve the people" of the communist Mao era in China to the "serve people" of the capitalist post-Mao era in Hong Kong. In addition to this third occurrence, the song's first occurrence bridges the classes of the rich and the poor, as well as biomedicine and traditional Chinese medicine. The image of public buildings in the song's first occurrence further connects the rich and the poor's desire for a better future. Meanwhile, the medical connection lies in the use of aborted fetuses. This biomedical waste of abortion is used to cook medicinal delicacies – a culinary culture that is supported by traditional Chinese medical discourse. The use of traditional Chinese medicine and culture is then brought into the discussion of Chinese modernization and marketization in the global world.

Two Eras and Two Economic Ideologies: From Mao's "Serve the People" in Communist China to Post-Mao "Serve People" in Capitalist Hong Kong

The revolutionary song "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" in *Dumplings* can be recognized as a cultural and historical artifact that reminds us of both Maoist and post-Mao China as well as Mei's past. At the third occurrence of "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" in *Dumplings*, Mr. Li sees the photo of 20-year-old Mei. Audiences then realize that Aunt Mei, who starred as *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*'s revolutionary heroine in a campus variety show in 1960's communist China, has now become a cannibalistic cook for money in capitalist Hong Kong. Mei's personal history demonstrates both the social transition from the Mao to the post-Mao eras, and also that the authoritarian essence of the Chinese Communist Party is still preserved.

The creation and popularization of the song is a reconstruction and memorialization of a "glorious" wartime memory and the Communist national identity. The time in which the song was written (1958) and popularized (1959-61) overlaps with the Great Leap Forward (1958-61). During that time, the Chinese were fervently obsessed with mobilizing their willpower for a quick socialist transformation and to improve their welfare (A. Chan; Dikotter). The political and ideological battles between socialist and capitalist regimes can be seen in various cultural representations, including *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*. This 1960s' visual representation highlighted the greatness of socialist society and the failure of pro-capitalist rightists such as the Nationalist Party and Honghu Lake's landlord. In portraying the Red Guards and the Chinese Communist Army's revolution of 1930, the song conveyed a heroic and revolutionary spirit in order to protect and establish a better "homeland." In this high-Mao era, all cultural representations and political propaganda were intended to shape a stronger socialist identity during the Great Leap Forward. The song seemed to depict a land of abundance and happiness

under Communist governance.[79] However, without living up to its revolutionary mandate to eradicate social inequality, this heavenly homeland of communism is an imaginative wonderland that didn't exist during the Chinese Civil War, the period of time that *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* depicted. It did not exist during the Anti-Rightist Movement[80] and the Great Leap Forward, during which *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* was produced. The real life context behind the song was the communist persecution of the "rightist" and the Great Chinese Famine that occurred during the Great Leap Forward, led by the Chinese communist authoritarian model.

The Chinese communist political persecution severely discouraged people from expressing their opinions about the communist regime during the Anti-Rightist Movement (1957-1959) and the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961). It also directed the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) toward ideological solidification by employing more violent means, which resulted in losses and severe setbacks (MacFarquhar; Dikotter). Numerous people were persecuted, suffered, and died; individuals were targeted and families were separated in these movements. Within this last decade of Mao's regime, traditional Chinese cultures and values had been severely damaged. The negation of tradition continued into the first decade of the post-Mao era in a pursuit of modernization and neoliberalization. The conceptualization and implementation of

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[79] The scene in the movie, *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake*, in which the song is presented, is an extremely happy one. All workers in the scene, who are fishing and harvesting in the waters of Honghu Lake, are eerily smiling for the entire song. The lake is full of blossoming lotuses, from which men and women gather their food in a carefree manner. It is ironic that this movie was produced during the Great Leap Forward's great famine, which was actually caused by Communist political mismanagement. For the study of the Great Leap Forward and Communist political mismanagement, see Becker; J. Yang; Dikotter.

[80] The Anti-Rightist Movement, roughly active from 1957 to 1959, engaged in a series of campaigns to eradicate "rightists" from within the Chinese Communist Party. Their definitions of "rightists" were not always consistent, but officially referred to those intellectuals who favored capitalism and were against collectivization. The movement was expanded into purging whoever criticized the government and its policies. Under this political movement (1957-1959), an estimated 550,000 people were persecuted.

China's one-child policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s exemplifies how the Chinese Communist Party disregarded cultural factors in order to expedite China's modernization. However, after all these political movements in both Mao and post-Mao eras, the hierarchical authoritarianism – the most damaging element of traditional Chinese culture – still remains under the name of revolution or modernization.

In "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy," anthropologist Susan Greenhalgh questions two powerful and self-evident notions of post-1979 population policy: the first is that China faced a population crisis that was sabotaging the nation's modernization. The second is that the one-child policy was the only solution to the population crisis (165-166). Greenhalgh questions these "truths" by looking at how natural science defeated social science in population policy making.[81] Population growth was represented as an "all-purpose villain" that keeps China backwards. Poor choices in social and economic policy from the 1950s to 1970s remained unmentioned by the Party (174). In Greenhalgh's argument, the actual making of the policy was based on borrowed ideas from the West and from Western science. In expediting modernization, the Communist Party avoided pointing fingers at "communist coercion" (166), which delayed modernization during the Anti-Rightist Movement, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution at great human cost. Instead, the party chose to restrain population growth despite the cost of social and cultural values, risked women's lives over illegal pregnancies and forced abortions, and again disregarded human life and free will in the name of nation and progression.

[81] Greenhalgh's argument questions how these "truths" were constructed by natural scientists. These natural scientists defeated social scientists in a major struggle for policy influence, leaving China with a policy that "may have restrained population growth, but did so at great human cost" (166). In the post-1979 population policy makers' minds, "population was constructed as a biological entity belonging to nature. Social and cultural factors were explicitly excluded from their calculations" (170-1).

The Chinese Communist population policy, exerting power over every Chinese citizen's life and death since the end of the 1970s, is the background of *Dumplings*, and the crucial factor which determined Mei's destiny. It made possible Mei's best achievement of working to diligently "serve the people" as a skillful gynecologist who "performed over three thousand abortions a year during the 1970s" "without blood" (Lee, *Dumplings* 64-77). However, it is also the reason that Mei's only love left her after he realized the essence of her career.[82] Furthermore, this one-child policy inspires her cannibalistic business.[83] Mei donated her youth and passion for the country and for the Communist wonderland. Every time she sings the song, she is mesmerized by her glorious past in her young age. She is not simply nostalgic for her youth, but for the better homeland that was envisioned by the entire generation of "Wave after Wave in Honghu Lake" – a wonderland where everyone follows the Communist lead, "serves the people," and lives better. The desire for a better homeland is the latent longing that underlies the song, and which temporally and spatially stretches across modern and contemporary China.

This is why Mei's personal history, revealed by the song's third occurrence in *Dumplings*, connects two eras and two economic ideologies: she is a "survivor" who lives through every historical stage of the People's Republic of China and moves from Mao's communist China to post-Mao capitalist Hong Kong. She was born in 1940 (before the establishment of the PRC in 1949), learned and sang the song in 1960 at the age of 20 (during the Great Leap Forward and the Great Chinese Famine). In the 80s, she "served the people" as a gynecologist who helped to

[82] While waiting to have dinner with Mei, Mei's artist fiancé saw a hospital worker disposed of surgery waste (including fetuses, placentas, and blood) into a garden at the hospital where Mei served. Prior to the waste disposal, Mei (Dr. Huang) had performed a forced abortion of an 8-9-month-old infant. For more details about Mei's past, see Lee, *Dumplings* 82-95.
[83] All of Mei's dumpling ingredients (i.e. aborted fetuses) are supplied by the nurse she used to work with at her past hospital. See Lee, *Dumplings* 62-4.

abort numerous fetuses under the one-child policy[84] and economic reform, then later moved to Hong Kong, and at the turn of the 21st century, makes a living by selling her expensive fetus dumplings of rejuvenation and seducing her customer's husband. Mei's personal history and her relationship with the song in *Dumplings* at the four different scenes counter those three moments in which the song appeared in *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* – moments which reaffirmed the peasants' intention and determination for revolution and glorified the Communist contribution to China, and which are in sharp contrast with *Dumplings*. The four moments in which "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" appears in *Dumplings* manifest the transition from communist planned economy to market economy, and from "serve the people" to "feast on the people."

Therefore, I argue that Lee and Chan's removal of the last few lines of the lyrics in *Dumplings*, including "[t]he Communist Party is benevolent…. Year after year is a fisherman's year, better than the last," exposes the fact that the proletariats' lives were not necessarily getting better after the establishment of the People's Republic of China as they had envisioned. Lee and Chan's removal of these lines serves as an implicit criticism of the Chinese Communist Party and its political mismanagement. The reappearance and deletion of the song's lyrics in *Dumplings* signal not only a nostalgic reminiscence of communist past, but also an implication of Chinese communist destructive force.

The Symbiotic Classes: Rich Capitalists and Poor Laborers

The first time "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" appears in *Dumplings* demonstrates a clear class distinction in public housing vs. hotels, laborers vs. the rich, and the communist past vs. the capitalist present via a contrast between two locations in which workers provide their

[84] China's one-child policy was introduced in 1978 and enacted in 1980.

services to satisfy rich people's needs. Fruit Chan's representation of housing and medicinal delicacy discloses a symbiotic relationship between the rich and the poor, as well as a coexistence of biomedicine and traditional Chinese medicine. In this scene, "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" associates lower-class public housing with the wealthy, capitalist hotel residences. When Mrs. Li is eating the dumplings at Mei's public housing complex for the first time, Aunt Mei sings and dances "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" to ease Mrs. Li's fear and anxiety. The music continues as the camera moves with the light rail from the public housing to the hotel penthouse in the city where Mr. Li enjoys a massage from his mistress and eats a fertilized egg for rejuvenation. This link between different forms of housing provides clues to a symbiotic relationship between the exploitation of the wealthy capitalists and the struggle of the poor lower-class laborers.

Fruit Chan's representation of all forms of residence in *Dumplings* bears every character's desire, fear, resentment, love, nostalgia, and remorse. Fruit Chan's juxtaposition of Hong Kong's poor public housing[85] and a luxurious private mansion or hotel penthouse[86] carries out the desires and fears in both the capitalists' or laborers' minds – the desire to acquire capital, power, and status, as well as the fear of failing to do so and being trapped in the same place/social status. Meanwhile, it makes a clear contrast between these two classes by showing their choices and possibilities. The "derelict lower cost" estates (Cheung 118) or "low-class government housing" (Trbic) in Fruit Chan's cinematography is indeed the site of "[the] secret

[85] According to the director Fruit Chan, Mei's apartment is believed to be "the first generation of public housing in Hong Kong," built in 1950. Chan states that, "[a]pproximately 50 percent of Hong Kong's population live in 'low-class' government housing" (Trbic).
[86] These sites include the hotel (where the Lis temporarily stay when their mansion is renovated and where Mr. Li stays with and his mistress) or the Lis' mansion (which is under construction).

trafficking of desire"[87] (Cheung 118) as Esther Cheung notes. Fruit Chan's juxtaposition of various housing estates of the rich and the poor, however, requires more attention in order to understand the symbiotic and dangerous relationship between the exploitative rich capitalists and the struggling poor laborers.

Fruit Chan is known for presenting Hong Kong's public housing as a struggling space of marginalized subjects; his representation of Kay's household is definitely a cruel but faithful illustration of the lower-class' struggle in life. This representation appears to be viewers' punctum[88] with a personally touching detail that "shoots out of it [the photography] like an arrow and pierces" the viewer (Barthes 26). This wounding feature is embodied with the claustrophobic experience of viewing the gruesome and bottomless building presented by Fruit Chan. This claustrophobic scene provokes an uneasy feeling in contemporary audiences by revealing the urban struggle of class. The movie shows audiences the rounded, multistory building where Kay and her parents reside. The director presents a crime scene in which Kay's mother kills her husband in their apartment, following Kay's death due to excessive bleeding from an illegal abortion. In this scene, a high angle shot is followed by a low angle shot that shows police officers running through the building's lobby and raising their heads to locate the crime scene. The camera shot then alludes to the police officers' spiraling run up the building toward the

[87] Esther Cheung notices the centrality of public housing, home to the marginalized subjects, in Fruit Chan's films. Cheung argues that "The derelict low-cost housing estates in *Dumplings* have become sites of [the] secret trafficking of desire, … done between Hong Kong and a southern city in China [Shenzhen] where postsocialism has generated cultural flows beyond anyone's control" (118).

[88] Roland Barthes develops the concept of "punctum" in *Camera Lucida*. He defines "punctum," a Latin word derived from the Greek word of trauma, as a wounding, personally touching detail that "shoots out of [the photography] like an arrow and pierces" the viewer (26). It "pricks" (27) or wounds the observer; in this sense, the punctum inspires a private meaning to the viewer.

crime scene, using a tracking shot. The camera eventually reaches the dark tiny room of Kay's household where Kay's altar is placed.

Fruit Chan's narrative of camera not only evokes viewers' emotions, but also illustrates the material existence of Hong Kong's real life and a metaphorical social ladder of class: his high angle shot presents the unfathomed scale of the building. The low angle shot, on the other hand, displays a view that evokes the feeling of being at the bottom of a well, which can easily arouse audiences' claustrophobic anxiety. Because of the narrowing visual, the top of the visual tunnel – the top of the building – looks narrower than where the camera is set. Seen from the top of the "well," where thousands of people live, the bottom of the "well" appears too restricted to fit everyone. Seen from the bottom of the "well," the low angle shot evokes the audience's deepest anxiety about being trapped in a dark well and being unable to escape through the narrow opening. The director uses these images to portray the real life of the lower-class laborers who live in public housing estates. The well-like building symbolizes a spiraling social ladder that the lower class climbs day after day and tier after tier.

It is true that Fruit Chan visualizes the lower-class struggles and desires with the image of this multistory public housing. However, he does not hesitate to smash this dream of climbing up the social ladder. In a previous scene in which this multistory building appears during Mei's visit to Kay's household for the first time, Fruit Chan's camera movement and Mei's words foreshadow the devastating ending of this dream. Mei's curse – "What the hell is this place?" – as well as the low-angle shot used to highlight the narrow sky express and intensify her wish to escape from the building. Here, the director arranged a close-up of the sky, seemingly offering hope of escape. However, the scene following the sky shot is the one of the abortion that leads to Kay's death. This shot is taken next to Kay's vaginal area, where life should have been delivered.

However, this is instead the site of crime and death – the father's rape crime and the fetus' death. The imagery of both scenes of the building corresponds in Fruit Chan's film narrative: the climb on the social ladder abruptly reaches its end at the tiny dark room where crime and death take place. The room where Kay's mother murders her father is also where Kay was raped by her own father. Desperation and helplessness permeate this dark room in which there is no longer a view of the sky. In this way, the director leaves no room for escape and no vision for hope. The hopes and lives of these "marginalized subjects" – "migrants, the aged, and the poor" (Lim 423) are drowned in the gloom of the "well" and social hierarchy.

From public housing to luxurious hotels and mansions, Aunt Mei's revolutionary song connects two classes of people in Hong Kong. Through Chan's camera narrative, the first appearance of the song shows that Mrs. Li's desire extends from her location at Mei's public housing to Mr. Li's location at a luxurious hotel. The second occurrence of the song further reveals the expansion of Mei's desire into the Li couple's deluxe mansion. Aunt Mei, a single lady who also lives in public housing, does not yield to her fate easily. She plays an active role with her mobility in both space and mentality. In *Dumplings*, she wanders in private spaces, spaces in transit, and hospitals. According to herself, she is a free spirit.[89] On her visit to Lis' mansion, Aunt Mei and Mrs. Li seem to have an intimate moment of exchanging their past and love stories. However, it is also during this visit that Aunt Mei realizes how wealthy the Li couple is and decides to "help" Mrs. Li get the most effective five-month fetus by performing the abortion for Kay. Mrs. Li trades money for youth and beauty, and Mei risks an involvement in an

[89] When Mrs. Li takes Aunt Mei to visit Lis' renovated mansion, they had a conversation about each other's past and passion. Aunt Mei then told Mrs. Li that, "I don't think you dare to divorce. Women like you are everywhere. Be glad you know me. Otherwise, [you will be a] second wife in 5 years, [a] third wife in 10 years, and [a] fourth wife in 15 years. I am different from you. I rely on me. You may be rich, but I am free."

illegal abortion for a larger sum of money. The secret trafficking of desire not only occurs in the low-cost housing estates as Esther Cheung argues, but it also permeates the other private residences, such as Lis' mansion or the hotel where Mr. Li and his mistress stay.

The second time the song appears in *Dumplings* is during Mei's visit to Lis' mansion, which makes a significant connection between the Maoist and Post-Mao eras, as well as the socialist and capitalist societies. Before this second appearance of the song, Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan arranged a conversation to foreshadow this significant connection: during Mrs. Li's first few dumpling meals, Mei has a conversation with Mrs. Li about her own past and philosophy of life while Mrs. Li panics from seeing chopped fetuses:

> Mei: "I was a doctor. In China, only the best minds could study medicine. My forte was surgery with no bleeding. Always bloodless."
>
> Mrs. Li: "So you saved many lives?"
>
> Mei: "Nothing is left after I'm done! We must all face our fates. Our fates are all different. So we *must treasure our time and live well.*" (italic mine)

Later, when she swims in their pool during her visit to Lis' mansion, Mei sings the song for a second time and intentionally inserts Mrs. Li's name into the lyrics: "At the shore is my home. Mrs. Li, go cast your net. Mrs. Li! Return loaded with fish…" In Mei's youth in 1960, both "Wave After Wave in Honghu Lake" and *The Red Guards on Honghu Lake* were calling for people's dedication to build a Communist nation. Now in her sixties in 2004, Mei is calling for Mrs. Li's awakening to "treasure our time and live well" by "casting her own net" and actively seizing what she wants. In order to follow the nation's and her own wills, Mei became a doctor and offered her "best mind" to the country, served the people by operating numerous abortions

and assisting in killing innumerable lives, and eventually seized her and her rich customers' youth by conducting cannibalistic consumption. The revolutionary connotation of "serve the people" has gradually switched to "kill the people (for the country)," "follow the money," and eventually to "feast on the people."

This transformation from "serve the people" to "feast on the people" can be seen in Mei's and Mrs. Li's personal histories, and the time period of their stories. The asceticism of the Maoist period did not disappear when Deng Xiaoping announced China's opening to the capitalist world in the late 1970s. The 1980s was the decade in which the volume and tenor of Maoist political language (with its demand that everyone "serve the people") slowly changed (Farquhar 15-6) and shifted toward "follow the money" (N. Chen "Between"). Scholars have analyzed how the representation of Mei's collection of knickknacks in *Dumplings* reveals Mei's socialist past and her current transformation into a capitalist cannibal.[90] However, only Bliss Cua Lim and Chuck Kleinhans have pointed out the significance of the revolutionary song in *Dumplings* and its association of China's socialist past with China and Hong Kong's capitalist present. Meanwhile, earlier analyses have not provided enough historical and textual backgrounds to allow us to comprehend how the song bridges two eras, two regimes, two forms of economy, and two systems of medicine. At the same time, it brings out the nostalgic sense for a wonderland that has never existed. Negligence in nostalgia amended people's memory and blocked their inquiry.

Mei's "Wave after Wave in Honghu Lake" evokes nostalgia and creates fantasy in *Dumplings*. This allusive longing for a no-longer-existing object is not new to Hong Kong films. In her essay "The Souvenir of Love," Rey Chow discusses Lillian Lee's other novel/film *Rouge*

[90] For more detailed analyses, see Kleinhans; Yeh and Ng; T. Lu; Lim.

and defines nostalgia as "a feeling looking for an object" ("Souvenir" 61). She argues that the Hong Kong films are nostalgic for unspecifiable objects, and that the Hong Kong writer Lillian Lee "constructs loss as something that is not specifiable and yet traceable in the intertextual relations between the past and present" ("Souvenir" 73). Furthermore, Chow's "Nostalgia of the New Wave: Structure in Wong Kar-wai's *Happy Together*," also points out a sense of nostalgia for "a fantasy, a metaphysical conjuring of something that never took place" in another Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai's films. Nostalgia in Chow's point of view is a fantasy of an imaginative, uncertain object. This object, seemingly clear as the fading "youth" in *Dumplings*, haunts the entire movie without revealing its true features. What then is the nostalgic sense for, if not (just) youth? To answer the question, it is necessary to explore Lillian Lee's novel, *Dumplings*, rather than just the movies (short or long versions) as previous scholarly essays do. Invited by and cooperating with Director Fruit Chan, Lillian Lee writes the screenplay and publishes the novel while the film is released.[91] The novel provides more detailed information about Mei's past in China. It therefore shows more traces of what her nostalgia is about.

Indeed, it is the desire for youth that permeates *Dumplings*. However, the deletion of the song's revolutionary connotation, which is inseparable from Mei's life and identity, underlines the significance of an invented desire for the Communist homeland. If we trace back to the age of the 1960s, the revolutionary connotation of the song projected a fantasy of a Communist paradise available to the entire generation, including a 20-year-old Mei who identified with the revolutionary heroine. The heavenly world of communism depicted in the song, however, had never existed, was not happening in the 1960s, and would not take place in the near future. Instead, the political turmoil of the Great Leap Forward and the preceding Cultural Revolution

[91] Both the feature-length film and the novel are released and published in August 2004.

crushed the fantasy of how the Chinese Communist Party is "benevolent, greater than the East Sea." Therefore, *Dumplings*' appropriation of the song and deletion of its revolutionary connotation in the approbatory lyrics manifests the fact that the communist mandate eluded the entire country.

The Communist Party's mismanagement, however, did not end in the Great Leap Forward or in the Cultural Revolution. On the contrary, it continues in the policy making of population control. The one-child policy, privileging natural science over social science, exerts power over every Chinese's life and death since the end of the 1970s. This policy is the background of the entire movie/novel, and the crucial factor which determined Mei's destiny. It made possible Mei's best achievement to diligently "serve the people" as a skillful gynecologist who "performed over three thousand abortions a year during the 1970s" (Lee, *Dumplings* 64) "without blood" (77). However, it is also the reason that Mei's only love left her after he realized the essence of her career (82-95).[92] Furthermore, this one-child policy has also inspired her cannibalistic business (62-4).[93] Mei contributed her youth and passion for the country, and for the Communist wonderland. Every time she sings the song, she is mesmerized by her glorious past in her young age. She is not simply nostalgic for her youth, but for a better homeland envisioned by the entire generation of "Wave after Wave in Honghu Lake" – a wonderland where everyone follows the Communist lead, "serve the people," and live better and better every year. The desire for a better homeland is the latent longing that underlies the song which temporally and spatially stretches across modern China. However, without living up its

[92] While waiting to have dinner with Mei, Mei's artist fiancé saw a hospital worker disposed of surgery waste (including fetuses, placentas, and blood) into a garden at the hospital where Mei served. Prior to the waste disposal, Mei (Dr. Huang) had performed a forced abortion of an 8-9-month-old infant.

[93] All of Mei's dumpling ingredients (i.e. aborted fetuses) are supplied by the nurse she used to work with at her past hospital.

revolutionary mandate to eradicate social inequality, this longing for a heavenly homeland of communism is an imaginative ideal.

Social inequality and polarization, which are uncomfortable resemblances between communism in China and capitalism, are the special connections between post-Mao China and postcolonial Hong Kong and are portrayed by Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan. In *Dumplings*, the tragedy of Kay's rape and death signifies a childless and homeless future destroyed by the malfunctioning parental figures. It is not only a personal/family tragedy, but also a collective/historical remnant of the past. The dysfunctional parents reflect the dominant but distorted tradition that came about at the hands of authoritarian socialism and postcolonial capitalism. These malfunctioning parental figures are not limited to Kay's parents, but applied to every character in *Dumplings*. In her youth, Mei devoted herself passionately to the Maoist dogma of "serve the people" without ever having time to or wanting to have children. In the post-Mao era, she "served" the people by aborting their children. Away from Maoist socialism, Mr. and Mrs. Li, and the mistress (who is eventually paid twice by Mrs. Li to abort her fetus), choose to eat, abort, or trade children in order to satisfy their own desires. Barrenness in *Dumplings* therefore reflects the brutal contemporary reality. It allegorizes a capitalistic society that consumes its own offspring in order to prolong the aging of people who are supposed to fade away naturally.

From public housing to luxurious hotels and mansions, and through the revelation of people's connected desire for an illusory dream of a better homeland, Aunt Mei's revolutionary song connects two classes of people as well as Mao's communist China and post-Mao capitalist Hong Kong. However, without recognizing the historical truth in the past, political mismanagement will always be obscured by the delusive mirage of an unattainable utopian

homeland. Linking this cannibalistic phenomenon with China's population control also reveals the cruel histories of the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party's policy making. In *Dumplings*, the nation's mismanaging leaders are embodied by the family's malfunctioning parental figures. Kay's tragedy also manifests the temporal discontinuity of present and future. She was almost a child, but also (not quite) a mother. She will remain in this status and be trapped in limbo, always mumbling, "I don't want to die" with "the voice of an infant" (Lee, *Dumplings* 186). She cannot be a child or a mother, nor can she maintain her presence in the present and continue it into the future. Her looming ending foreshadows the end of this distorted society, which disregards love, care, and respect, and only concerns itself with money and desire. The absence of "home" and the disappearance of children imply this out-of-control society is sliding towards a cannibalism and self-consumption. Illusory nostalgia for a passionate youth and a secure homeland eventually shatters into pieces.

Two Systems of Medicine: Biomedicine versus Traditional Chinese Medicine

In the scene in which Mei's revolutionary song first appears in *Dumplings*, Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan successfully use the image of housing estates to demonstrate class distinction and coexistence. Medicinal delicacy is another intriguing element in this scene, which discloses the link between two systems of medicine – biomedicine and traditional Chinese medicine. Mei sings the song while Mrs. Li tries the fetus dumplings for the first time, and it hovers and looms over into the following shot when Mr. Li eats a balut and caresses his young mistress' legs. This scene is not merely an example of Mencius's "Appetite for food and sex is nature." In fact, I believe it is these Hong Kong artists' delicate arrangement that raises their ultimate question about Chinese gourmandism and medicinal discourse. I relate this Chinese discourse of medicinal gourmandism to western biomedicine from an ethical perspective: through discussing

the ethics of human consumption, a western debate on bioethics becomes involved. Meanwhile, by associating this cannibalistic practice with eating delicacy in pursuit of youth, beauty, and health, Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan question the discourse of Chinese gourmandism and medicine as well as the history and motivation of Chinese cannibalism.

Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's inquiries on food, medicine, and the search for youth, beauty, and longevity question the value of human life and existence. In an interview, Fruit Chan points out the link between eating and medicinal benefits. He connects the pursuit of rejuvenation with the one of beauty: "[p]eople started to eat embryos a long time ago. Average housewives tended to eat placenta for regaining health after giving birth to a baby. In Chinese tradition it's a common means of rejuvenation in real life... The plot of *Dumplings* actually connects it with the ultimate pursuit of beauty" (F. Chan 2006). Meanwhile, in Lillian Lee's anecdotal article, "The Feeling of Eating Fetuses," she also questions the legitimacy of consuming delicacies. She challenges her readers' perceptions of "cannibalism" to lead them to redefine what is edible and what cannibalism means. In this article, she describes how Fruit Chan might have drunk fetus soup on multiple occasions. Fruit Chan had broken his ribs in a filming accident, and his doctor offered him "exceptional" soup for ten consecutive days – deliberately concealing the fact that the soup was made of fetus by telling him it was made of placenta. Fruit Chan recovered quickly without knowing the truth. It was not until much later when Fruit Chan and Lillian Lee went to the same doctor's clinic to do research for *Dumplings* that Fruit Chan finally realized he had eaten soup made from a miscarried five-month fetus. At the moment they heard this truth, they were in the process of drinking a pot of exceptionally sweet and delicious soup served by the doctor. After this, Lee felt energized all night until dawn and wrote one of the most important scenes of the movie – Mei's extended monologue during the sex scene of Aunt Mei and Mr. Li,

in which Mei recounts the history of cannibalism in China. Writing the script of *Dumplings*, Lillian Lee questions Chinese medication and gourmandism in relation to the practice of cannibalism: If placenta consumption is acceptable, why is eating aborted fetuses immoral?

To answer this question, one might start with distinguishing that a placenta is a human organ and a fetus is a human being, even though eating them are both cannibalistic. Speaking of cannibalism in relation to (im)morality, why is it that certain kinds of cannibalism are practiced in imperial China to prove moral standards (e.g. offering one's own flesh for parents to show filial piety, or offering one's son's flesh for the monarch to demonstrate loyalty), to demonstrate one's intense emotion (e.g. hatred cannibalism in times of war or during the Cultural Revolution), or to improve health (e.g. eating placenta) in contemporary Chinese or western societies, while other kinds of cannibalistic practice (e.g. eating aborted fetuses) are considered unethical by most of "civilized" 21st-century societies? What are the associations among these practices and what are the differences that provoke people's unease?

The major differences between placentas and fetuses lie in their form of life: placentas are human organs that grow during pregnancy and are to be discarded (if not eaten) after delivering babies. (Aborted) fetuses, on the other hand, are human life forms that have the potential to grow into human beings (if not aborted). Eating aborted fetuses, unlike eating placentas – the organs that grow again in subsequent pregnancies – is considered murder and the consumption of human life by western or westernized societies. However, are "aborted fetuses" human beings? This is an open ethical question that is also central to the philosophical debate in the field of human embryonic stem cell (HESC) research: are human embryos human beings? Is the destruction of human embryos – which are mostly created in excess for infertility treatment – for stem cell research ethical?

In the case of these "doomed embryos," spare embryos exist after fertility treatment and are "destined to be destructed" if the individuals for whom the embryos are created have chosen to discard or donate them to research.[94] Deriving embryonic stem cells from these spare embryos would mostly likely kill these potential human beings. However, researchers who derive HESCs from embryos do not directly cause their death. Instead, the decision to discard the embryos causes their death; research just causes the manner of their death (Green 555). In other words, researchers are just using the medical waste of fertility treatment procedures. Similarly, in the case of *Dumplings*, the making of dumplings with aborted fetuses may be understood as a use of medical waste of the one-child policy. The forcefully executed policy to abort extra children causes the death of the fetuses. Morally speaking, Aunt Mei is not responsible for the death of numerous fetuses, even though she caused the manner of their death and is making use of them after their death. It is the one-child-policy-maker on whom we should place greater moral weight.

Embryos in HESC research, however, are fundamentally different from aborted fetuses under the one-child policy in two aspects – the (re)production process and the parental consent. First of all, the production of the embryos and the reproduction of the fetuses are essentially different: the former cannot be made without artificial and technological aids; the latter are created naturally. Spare embryos would not have existed without assisted reproductive technologies. Meanwhile, they are discarded or donated for research according to the couple's consent. In contrast, the parents' intent to give birth to and raise the children under China's one-child policy is often brutally neglected. Fetuses are forcefully aborted regardless of someone's will to keep these potential human beings. The Chinese government does not consider these

[94] The couple's other options would be storing the embryos for future reproductive use, or donating them to other infertile couples.

fetuses to be human beings, nor does it take the parents' will or even the mother's safety into consideration.

The major differences between placentas and fetuses in their forms of life distinguish people's reactions toward eating placentas and eating fetuses. However, they are both cannibalistic and associated with the Chinese eating culture. The consumption of placentas is believed to be re-energizing and has been practiced in real life for a long time.[95] *Dumplings*' artistic yet realistic portrayal of fetus consumption is also related to the quest for rejuvenation through eating delicacies. The link between eating and the promise of rejuvenation in *Dumplings* has been previously identified (B. Lim 424). The literary and artistic forms represent the contemporary quest for beauty and longevity.

It should be noted that these artists' observations of the pursuit of rejuvenation and beauty are not alone. Medical anthropologist Nancy Chen observes that Chinese society has shifted from "following the money" in the early years of economic reforms to "following the bureaucracy as it addresses the ongoing concerns for the well-being of its citizens" in recent years. "New meanings of well-being and the good life," Chen argues in *Bio*in*security and Vulnerability*, "are linked to the consumption of medicinal products and beauty aids" (90). With the political shift away from Communism towards market reform and market economy, China's public health has evolved into "a public good" (89). Medical anthropologists have recognized the

[95] The medical use of human placenta as "a healing agent after bodily injury" (P. Leung 25-7) can be dated as early as 200 BC in China. For the history of the medical use of placenta in China, see Ping Chung Leung's "Placenta and Umbilical Cord in Traditional Chinese Medicine" in *Regenerative Medicine Using Pregnancy-Specific Biological Substances* (2011). Li Shizhen writes a section on the medical use of placenta in his sixteenth century medical classic, *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangnu*): "[w]hen a woman in Liuqiu has a baby, the placenta is eaten." For the contemporary study of human placentophagy, see Yanchi Liu; Young and D. Benysheka.

close relationship between food and medicine, which has taken a new turn in the age of neoliberal globalism: Chen discloses how "the new meanings of well-being and the good life" in China are linked to "the consumption of medicinal products and beauty aids" (90). In *Appetites*, Farquhar's observation of Chinese medicine's positive view of health and "medical services as objects of desire, as fulfilling wants rather than needs" (28) further connects the ongoing concerns for the well-being of a nation's citizens in the global age with the modern "traditional" practice of Chinese medicine and gourmandism. Living in this transitional age, Lee's and Chan's observations on these pursuits of "health" and beauty and its commodification are reflected in their presentation of Chinese medicinal delicacies and the history of Chinese cannibalism.

Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan use several images to associate the traditional means of rejuvenation with the pursuit of beauty. First, Mr. Li constantly eats fertilized duck eggs to revitalize himself. This delicacy is common in South Asian countries like The Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam[96]. The consumption of duck embryos is connected with the consumption of human placentas. Both practices are common and are believed to have the effect of rejuvenation. Sharing the same logic in the pursuit of youth – the ultimate combination of energy and beauty – Fruit Chan associates these common practices with the horrifying practice of cannibalism and thereby exposes the cannibalistic nature of Chinese gourmandism. What Yue Gang means by "gourmet cannibalism" – the consumption of human flesh "for the sake of the longevity, health, or sensual satisfaction of my flesh" (270) – shares the same logic with Chinese gourmandism. Both "gourmet cannibalism" and Chinese gourmandism are intended for

[96] Fertilized duck/chicken egg is a developing duck/chicken embryo that is boiled and eaten in the shell. In the Philippines, it is commonly sold as street food. In China, it's called *huozhuzi* (literally "living bead") or other various names. People believe that eating such fertilized eggs provides anti-aging effects, and nourishes and invigorates human bodies, all of which are acquired from the nutrients in the embryo. The practice of placenta consumption is believed to have similar effects.

consumers' pleasure, not for their survival. In *Dumplings*, Fruit Chan successfully provides a visual connection between a daily practice of Chinese gourmandism with that of "gourmet cannibalism" by juxtaposing the consumptions of fetus dumplings and fertilized eggs. The connection between eating fetus dumplings and eating fertilized duck eggs links the traditional means of rejuvenation with cannibalism. It also reminds Chan's audiences how close the Chinese eating culture is to cannibalism.

This above connection between Chinese cannibalism and gourmandism in pursuit of youth further shows the deep-rooted culture of cannibalism in China, and is highlighted by Mei's extended monologue addressed to Mr. Li. Lillian Lee writes this monologue after her possible unintentional consumption of fetus soup. In this scene, Mr. Li visits Mei's apartment to "investigate" if fetus dumplings are real and effective. While hosting him and serving her rejuvenating dumplings to him, Mei prepares Mr. Li for the cannibalistic experience by delivering the following monologue:

> You should never consider cannibalism immoral in China. It has existed since history began. Li's *Herbalist Handbook* clearly stated that human flesh and organs are admissible ingredients for medical recipes.
>
> During famines, neighbors traded and cooked each other's children for survival. The famous chef Yi Ya heard that his emperor wanted to try human flesh. He butchered and served his son as a course to the monarch. Tales abound of caring sons and daughters cutting off flesh for their parents' medicines. The classic *Water Margin* depicted heroes who savored their enemies. One even served buns with human flesh filling. The Japanese have definitely eaten many Chinese. You think our country could have got through all

these wars and famines without consuming human flesh? What about out of pure hatred – to skin you and eat you alive? Our national hero Yue Fei once wrote, "Pep up with a meal of the invaders' flesh. Celebrate with a drink of the invaders' blood." When two people are deeply in love, all they desire is to be inside each other. Inside each other's guts.

Mei's monologue conveys Lillian Lee's examination of the history of cannibalism in China. By doing so, I argue that she questions the motivation of this practice along its history. Mei's list includes survival cannibalism in famine and war[97], and other forms of learned cannibalism. Her extended monologue, however, focuses more on the cases of learned cannibalism to justify her and her customers' cannibalistic practice in a world of capitalism and neoliberalism. Lu Tonglin suggests that (Lee and) Chan's use of Mei's monologue is a tribute to Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman"[98] and a reflection on contemporary China. He believes that in this short story, the character of Lu Xun's madman "cleverly (mis)used several quotations from classical books as proof of cannibalism in traditional Chinese culture" (190). Lu Xun's madman quotes them to stand against cannibalism and the feudal ideology underneath it. According to Lu Tonglin, *Dumplings* is therefore not only a "new 'Diary of a Madman' in post-Mao global capitalism" in the way it converses with the May Fourth spirit and the Chinese classics in contemporary society, but it also engages with various forms and motivations of cannibalism in

[97] For the record and analysis of survival cannibalism in famines, see Becker; J. Yang; Dikotter.
[98] In this national allegory of cannibalism, Lu Xun depicts a paranoid madman who believes everyone around him is cannibalistic and wants to eat him. He reads all doctrines in Chinese classic texts as teachings of "man-eating" and calls for "saving children" at the end of the story. Lu Xun constructs an enlightenment identity that considers feudalistic cannibals as the enemy. This enlightenment identity was the rallying cry for the May Fourth Movement – an anti-imperialist, cultural and political reform movement that rejected traditional values and advocated for Chinese nationalism, democracy, and science in response to the imperial invasion of the West and the decadence of the Qing Dynasty. As a leading figure in the May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun wrote "Diary of a Madman" in 1918 to advocate China's need of reform.

the post-Mao era of market economy and globalization. These forms of cannibalism both underlie a significant part of Chinese culture and also form Chinese politics of body and affect[99].

These practices include survival cannibalism in famine and war, and other forms of learned cannibalism such as medical cannibalism and cannibalisms for loyalty, filial piety, hatred, and love. Mei's words, "You think our country could have got through all these wars and famines without consuming human flesh?" invoke cases of cannibalism presented in many literary works and historical records of The Great Leap Forwards and the subsequent Great Chinese Famine.[100] Her words also echo with the song she sings throughout the film, which details the history of the highest Maoist socialism and its great famine. During famines and wars, cannibalism has been practiced for the sake of survival or hatred (Zheng). Mei's extended monologue shown previously, however, focuses more on the cases of learned cannibalism to justify her and her customers' cannibalistic practices.

For Lu Xun's madman and Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's Aunt Mei, the Chinese have been practicing cannibalism for medical, moral, or emotional reasons – be it health benefits, manifestations of filial piety or loyalty, hatred against enemies, or love. Furthermore, these reasons are not separate but interlaced. The belief in the health benefits of cannibalism is practiced and strengthened in order to prove filial piety. Therefore, the childless condition in *Dumplings* provides a counter-allegory of cannibalism for the sake of a moral standard. If learned cannibalism has always been about a certain affect or moral standard, what does it represent in the context of contemporary China or Hong Kong? How does it evolve through time?

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[99] Sara Ahmed, in "Happy Objects," defines affect as "what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connections between ideas, values, and objects" (29).
[100] See Becker; Hong; J. Yang; Dikotter.

Among the list of the types of learned cannibalism in Mei's monologue, the use of human flesh as medication is the most representative because it was the most commonly practiced in imperial China. Historian Ch'iu Chung-lin's analysis of cannibalistic medication provides a historical and cultural perspective. His study of the cannibalistic practice of self-harm as a medical behavior that heals one's parent points out that what distinguishes the Chinese medical practices of cannibalism from the practices of other cultures is its exclusiveness: Chinese medical cannibalism was only practiced for family members. He demonstrates that the rise and fall of this cannibalistic practice is connected to Confucian filial piety and the concept of family, and is regulated by various governments in different Dynasties. According to Ch'iu, the belief in sharing the same "vitality" within a family made the practice of cannibalistic medication an "intra-family" behavior.[101] This idea of close-kinship "vitalism" also made the market for cannibalistic medication unpopular. Moreover, Ch'iu analyzes the evolving concepts of Confucian filial piety.[102] Indeed, the rise of cannibalistic medication was driven by children's love for their parents. Some emperors honored this act in praise of filial piety. However, there were also emperors who banned this act, also out of respect for filial piety.

[101] In his "A Socio-historical Study of the Phenomenon of 'Cutting One's Flesh to Heal One's Parent' from the T'ang Dynasty to Modern China," Ch'iu indicates that what makes Chinese medical cannibalism distinct is that it was only practiced among family members. The concept of a transmittable "vitalism" in Chinese medication is the foundation of this practice. People believed that by consuming another's flesh and blood (preferably from the patient's family members, especially the children), the patient can be revitalized.

[102] In his "The Human-Flesh as a medicine and the Idea of 'Vitalism,'" Ch'iu' Chung-lin shows that Chinese medical cannibalism was only practiced for family members. He also shows how this phenomenon varied when the concept of "family" changed over time. Meanwhile, Ch'iu demonstrates how the Confucian concept of filial piety evolved with the rising custom of cannibalism as medicine. There was first encouragement from the government via money and a plaque or exemption from military services to honor those who cut and then offered their flesh to parents. This essay demonstrates how this official encouragement and later ban on this custom were reinforced with the change of the Confucian concept of filial piety.

Interestingly enough, the honor is banned for the same reason in both cases: filial piety. Ch'iu's historical study of "cutting one's flesh to heal one's parent" in imperial China reveals the evolution of this self-amended custom in support of a feudal hierarchy that bolsters the empire for millennia. In the opening explanation of the didactic classics, *The Classics of Filial Piety*, there is a saying: "the body, hair and skin, all have been received from the parents, and so one does not dare damage them—that is the beginning of filial piety" ("*Shentifafu shouzhifumu buganhuishang xiaozhishiye*"). Based on this concept, the autonomous act of offering one's own flesh to parents should not be encouraged. However, this medical behavior becomes a collaborative custom in the name of filial piety. As more intellectuals adopted this practice in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, they debated and transformed the concept of Confucian filial piety. They condoned and discouraged this "pious" cannibalism as these intense debates were occurring. China's foundational morals of loyalty and filial piety have been iteratively self-amended and rationalized to buttress its empire.

In Ch'iu Chung-lin's discussion of medical cannibalism, I notice that people only performed "cutting their own flesh" for close family members and usually for superior family members: sons and daughters offer their flesh to parents, daughters-in-law to parents-in-law, wives to husbands, or even servants and maids to their masters. This hierarchical sacrifice corresponds to the five Confucian relationships – ruler-subject, father-son, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, friend-friend – the foundation of feudalism. These feudal relationships support and are reinforced by the feudal and hierarchical structure within a family or an empire. The hierarchical structure is further reinforced in the practice of cannibalistic medication by the fact that only the inferior offer flesh to the superior in the social hierarchy. These exclusive and hierarchical features characterize past Chinese medical cannibalism. Therefore, when Lu Xun

talks about feudal China as cannibalistic in his "Diary of a Madman," it is both metaphorically and literally.

By analyzing how this cannibalistic practice of offering one's flesh to a parent is related to Confucian moral standards and Chinese medicinal traditions, we gain insights on how the Chinese medicinal discourse can be incorporated into the modern and contemporary discourses of the nation's public health as a commodity. From "cutting and offering one's own flesh to cure one's parent" to "eating the flesh of one's children to rejuvenate," the medicinal benefit of Chinese learned cannibalism has gone through a tremendous ideological transformation from altruism to egoism. This transformation, I argue, echoes the political and ideological shift from Maoist "serve the people" to Post-Mao "follow the money" and "feast on the people." Mei's personal history in communist China and capitalist Hong Kong – presented in her constant singing of the revolutionary song, her regular shuttling across the border, and her business of and comment on Chinese cannibalism – symbolizes that excessive political language becomes meaningless in contemporary China; without eradicating authoritarian hierarchy, this trend of ideological excessiveness and vacuum occurred in China's planned economics and is also taking place in post-socialist China. In this cannibalistic childless world, exclusiveness is no longer a major concern in medical cannibalism. Hierarchy, however, has always sustained the practice of cannibalism, be it Confucian or capitalistic.

From "serve the people" to "feast on the people" in *Dumplings*, the culture of Maoism that speaks of "past suffering (in the old society), future utopia (when communism is achieved), and in the present, work, production, and service" (Farquhar 3) have shifted to the marriage of two ideologies - "the cynicism of post-Mao China's ideological vacuum" and "Hong Kong's unrestricted consumerism" (T. Lu 193). This marriage of two ideologies, Lu Tonglin argues,

gives birth to Fruit Chan's "globalized version of 'Diary of a Madman'" (193). Destructing the critical edges of the communist discourse that intended to "destroy three mountains that crash Chinese people" - imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic comprador capitalism, Lu points out that in order to fill up the ideological vacuum left by the collapse of the communist ideology, the Chinese Communist government has recently endorsed Confucianism as the core cultural value (195). Similarly, Tu Wei-ming also attributes the economic success of East Asia to Neo-Confucianism and argues that, "the capitalism rooted in Confucian ethics may turn out to be more consequential for the twenty-first century than the classic capitalism fashioned by the inner-worldly asceticism of Puritan ethics" (10). Both Lu's and Tu's statements show that Chinese tradition is now no longer in opposition to or separate from capitalist modernity because capitalism has become part of Neo-Confucianism by absorbing the profitable essence of Confucianism.

Meanwhile, Lu uses Abbas' words to argue that [Lee's and] Chan's negative representations of Hong Kong are related to "the problematic nature of a colonial space making the transition from imperialism to multinational capitalism" (Abbas 362). This negativity "constitutes the political voice of the Hong Kong cinematic" (362) and is "specifically located in the third emerging wave of negating Chinese tradition, as a politicized discourse against Chinese tradition as a mixture of classical culture, communism, and neoliberalism" (T. Lu 184). Therefore, *Dumplings* is a new "Diary of a Madman" in the sense that it not only converses with the May Fourth dialectic on traditional Chinese culture and its relation to cannibalism, but also carries this retrospect on cultural ideology into a contemporary search for a new criticism on China's traditional culture.

Post-Mao market reform and "Socialism with Chinese characteristics"[103] – which some now prefer to call "privatization with Chinese characteristics" (Harvey 122) – managed to construct "a form of state-manipulated market economy that delivered spectacular economic growth," but also "led to environmental degradation, social inequality, and eventually something that looks uncomfortably like the reconstitution of capitalist class power" (122). This "Socialism with Chinese characteristics," or what Harvey later refers to as "neoliberalism 'with Chinese characteristics,'" deepens social inequality and polarization in China (H. Wang; Harvey). Moreover, the government's support of neo-Confucianism in recent years further incorporates Confucian hierarchy with market-economy consumerism. This "neoliberalism with 'Chinese characteristics'" strengthens the discourse of Chinese national development and modernization, and reconstitutes capitalist class power by reinforcing Confucian hierarchical order.

Feudalism has been criticized by Lu Xun in "Diary of a Madman" and his other works, as well as those of his May Fourth contemporaries. Being appropriated by the Communist Party in China[104], Lu Xun's concern of social inequality and its destructive power has never been alleviated in the revolutionary era. According to Lu Tonglin, Chinese cultural tradition has experienced three significant moments of negation in the modern period: First is modernization – the May Fourth radical intellectuals and the Communist Party's repudiation of classical Chinese culture as repressive and backward. Second is neoliberalization – when the anti-new-traditional intellectuals used neoliberalism during the 1980s to resist the Communist ideology that was seen

[103] Deng Xiaoping initiated a socialist market economy and reform in 1978 and introduced his program "Socialism with Chinese characteristics."
[104] The Chinese Communist Party greatly valued Lu Xun and upheld his works as orthodox examples of communist literature after 1949, even though Lu Xun never joined the Chinese Communist Party.

as an extension of Chinese tradition.[105] Third is the search for a new oppositional politics – a new criticism. Despite these three stages of radical negations, the negated cultural elements have not disappeared (T. Lu 183-4). The Hong Kong writer Lillian Lee and director Fruit Chan develop their strategies to speak to the historical and contemporary moments in the art forms. They are situated in the historical moment and location in which the emergence of the third wave of negation takes place and are searching for a new critical discourse in postcolonial and post-socialist Hong Kong. They connect Chinese medical discourse, market economy/neoliberalism, and the rise of neo-Confucianism in the trope of medical cannibalism and thus generate a criticism that expands the May Fourth dialectic into the contemporary neoliberal capitalistic societies.

Hong Kong's postcolonial condition, integrating imperialist capitalism with (post)socialist market economy, plays a significant yet inconclusive role in these Hong-Kong-based productions of art as well as in the contemporary history. To further elaborate Abbas's and Lu's statements of Hong Kong's postcoloniality and its negative representations, I argue that Lee and Chan capture the negativity through the representation of the ambiguous character of Mei, who is constantly crossing the porous border between Hong Kong and China in order to smuggle fetuses. These border scenes reflect what David Harvey means by "taking advantages of [Hong Kong capital's] many hidden connections across the border into China" (136). With these connections between Hong Kong and China, China's initial success of market reform strategy depended upon "the Hong Kong connection" and its "significant centre of capitalist dynamism" (136); Hong Kong capital also made use of its market network with global economy and its

[105] This anti-new-traditional wave is exemplified by the 1988 TV documentary "River Elegy," directed by Xia Jun. This six-part documentary has been viewed as an enlightenment film for the '89 Democracy Movement.

function as an intermediary. The artistic portrayal of China-Hong Kong connections in *Dumplings*, however, reveals not only the economic inter-dependence of the two, but also their ideological and discursive symbiosis. The porous border makes capital, illegal conducts, political ideologies, and discourses of nationhood and modernity all transmittable. As the hub of global capital markets, which is deeply connected with China's "neoliberalism with 'Chinese characteristics'," everything becomes marketable – citizen's well-being, a modern lifestyle, or even human flesh.

Cannibalism in the Global Economy?
Chinese Medicinal Gourmandism, Market Economy, and Globalization

The trade of human flesh through permeable borders in the global age seems to be a fictional fantasy. However, fiction always tells us something about reality. In May 2012, South Korean customs confiscated more than 17,000 "health" capsules smuggled from China that were found to contain human flesh, most likely flesh extracted from aborted fetuses or stillborn babies (Shears and Cooper; Los Angeles Times). Almost a year prior to this confiscation, one of the most authoritative Korean TV channels, Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), produced and broadcast a documentary on these smuggled "health" capsules (Seoul Broadcasting System). The SBS producers first asked around in traditional herbal stores in South Korea about rejuvenating "fetus pills" – some stores fearfully responded there are no such pills. Others believed that those pills are made of placentas. The team finally found someone who revealed that those pills are ordered on request. The team then followed this Korean dealer and traced the pills to their origin – a hospital in northeastern China and an apartment that processed (by drying and powdering) aborted or stillborn babies in a rural area. To confirm the contents of the pills, the SBS documentary team took them to two DNA test centers, one of which was South Korea's

National Forensic Service (NFS). The results of test centers showed that the pills' contents were 99.9% identical with human DNA. The DNA test result at the NFS showed human male DNA – therefore it could be possibly made of human placentas or male fetuses. It is unclear if the pills are made of placentas or fetuses, and whether or not the consumers know what the pills are made of. The tremendous market price difference between placenta capsules and these "health" capsules, however, reveals a suspicious difference between them.[106] The ambivalence of this "health" product's content and its consumers' attitude shows not only the cannibalistic essence of traditional Chinese medicine, but also the possibility of collusive corruption in the medical and food administration in China. The culture of Chinese gourmandism, including medicinal delicacies, is extensive and human-centered (or even self-centered). Bear paws, gallbladders, fins of endangered fish, or even human flesh can all be served as delicacies or medications for human consumers. This tradition of eating delicacies in contemporary societies has become profit-oriented and cannibalistic. Both features strengthen and are strengthened by the hierarchy and collusion of capitalism.

According to the SBS documentary, bears' gall bladders, snake stews, jingsengs, and placentas are the current delicacy trends in South Korea. This delicacy tradition derives from a long-established and pervasive concept in Chinese gourmandism: "If one eats an organ of an animal, then it will be beneficial to the corresponding organ (of the same shape) in one's body" (*yixing buxing*). The quest for "health" by means of consuming delicacies and as a dietary cure, derived from Chinese medicine and gourmandism, has become physically and discursively permeable across all borders in Asia.

[106] The SBS documentary team does not address customers' awareness directly. However, it shows the price difference to its audiences: in China, one placenta costs about 16 USD. Generally speaking, one placenta can produce more than 100 capsules. The "market price" of these "health" capsules, however, is 100 capsules for 700 USD.

In Lee and Chan's representations, Mei's monologue which comments and appropriates the history of cannibalism to justify the commodification of human flesh/body corresponds to a moral and ideological shift through time. When Lillian Lee writes Mei's extended monologue after Lee's possible consumption of fetuses, she makes tributes to medicinal benefits as well as the moral and affect manifestation of cannibalism in China. In this monologue, Lee acknowledges personal and collective desires for (individual or public) health. These desires have been incorporated into national discourses of modernization, globalization, and neoliberalism. However, this monologue also reminds us that the medical and culinary cultures that fulfill these desires are not only cannibalistic but also hierarchical. It was hierarchical in a Confucian sense that children offered flesh out of filial piety and officials in feudal court offered their flesh to monarchs. In *Dumplings*, it is hierarchical in a capitalistic sense that the rich consume anything and everything, including the children of the poor. In these postcolonial and post-socialist lands, everything is marketable and consumable for the fulfillment of one's desires. Lillian Lee's and Fruit Chan's representations of cannibalism connect the ancient medical practice to the contemporary quest for beauty and health through the discourse of modernity, consumerism, and "social harmony" in hierarchy.

Dumplings' artistic appropriation of the revolutionary song "Wave after Wave in Honghu Lake" reveals a utopian imagination of communism and its destruction through mismanagement. This nostalgic song in *Dumplings* also bridges Mao's communism and Post-Mao "socialism" or neoliberalism, the rich exploitative capitalist and the poor struggling laborer, as well as traditional Chinese medicine and western biomedicine. Mei the singer also links the ancient practice of cannibalism with communist policy-making as well as marketization in China and Hong Kong – both are profoundly related to the life of every person in China, and are deeply

intertwined with the concept of modernization and globalization. The aspects of population control for building a "modern" and "healthy" nation have been incorporated into the discourse of China's modernity. This Chinese modernity, however, is built on great ethic and human cost. Furthermore, the re-emergence of Chinese traditional cultures and values, including medical traditions and Neo-Confucianism, are reshaping people's and nation's concepts and concerns of public health and modernity. *Dumplings*, therefore, provides a critical perspective to reconsider the role the traditional Chinese cultures play in the rising empire of authoritarianism in the global world.

CONCLUSION

This project started with a simple question: why do the most widely read contemporary Chinese writers – Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee – all have works centered on the topic of cannibalism? In examining Chinese society from the 1980s to the early 2000s, in which these works on cannibalism were published, the question directs us to a moment of drastic change: China is transitioning from Mao's "building Chinese socialism" to post-Mao market-oriented reform. I initiated this project with a psychoanalytic reading of cannibalism and melancholia, but then soon realized that the historical perspective becomes inevitable in the study of cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature. Chinese historical and cultural experience since the establishment of the People's Republic of China plays a significant role in the ways in which both individual and societal psychic conditions are represented through the trope of cannibalism. Similar to Lu Xun's works on cannibalism, which indicate a social anxiety during the May Fourth era about traditional Chinese culture's negative influence, the works of Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee on cannibalism reflect certain kinds of social reality that are unique to post-socialist, neoliberal China.

As a leading literary figure of the May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun portrays feudal China as a cannibalistic system in which every person is a consumed victim and/or a consuming cannibal. It is true that the hallucinatory idea of ubiquitous cannibals in Lu Xun's works on cannibalism reflects intellectuals' anxiety about being paralyzed and cannibalized, or becoming cannibals. This debate between traditional culture and modern innovation, however, was never fully solved during the May Fourth Movement. When China finally moves away from Mao's total denial of traditional culture during the Cultural Revolution and steps into the era of economic reform in the 1980s, the conflict between tradition and modernity accelerates again

with the people's increasing demand for political reform. This conflict reaches its peak in the 1989 Democracy Movement and is repressed with violence on June fourth, 1989. The people's political anxiety is not answered; their passion and desire for a better political and cultural environment is turned into another prevalent desire: a desire for consumption in market economy. Therefore, the works centered on cannibalism, written by the contemporary writers Yu Hua, Mo Yan, and Lillian Lee, have mass appeal because they reflect and embody both the anxiety about being marginalized and consumed others and the desire for consumption in post-socialist, neoliberal Chinese society. The works reveal people's anxiety about rapid transformation and insecurity about displacement in neoliberal China, in which desire for mass consumption is intertwined with China's internal consumption of its minorities: the growth of China's economic power is at the cost of its minorities' welfare and right. Through the trope of cannibalism, the fear of being consumed and the desire for consumption reveal the real struggle in neoliberal China – in order to succeed, one has no choice but to step over another's body, or else to be stepped over.

Yu Hua's "Classical Love" articulates this anxiety by representing the disintegration of the narrator's subjectivity and ethical values. Yu Hua breaks the literary conventions of the long-accepted narratives of ghost and scholar-beauty romance to create a tale of cannibalistic horror. My literary and historical analyses explain that this shift from romantic narratives of love and trust to a horror narrative of betrayal and distrust signals the subject's disintegration after Mao's political movements and their traumatic aftermath. Borrowing Zeitlin's theory of the "historical ghost tale," I historicize Yu Hua's "Classical Love" in the context of the aftermath of Mao's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, and argue that Yu Hua's parody of Tang Xianzu's *The Peony Pavilion* transforms a classical romance into a contemporary horror which

contextualizes the dissolution of both the rational, omnipotent subject and progressive history. Subjects who are capable of saving themselves or their significant others in classical narratives of ghost and scholar-beauty romance are transformed into a failing subject who is incapable of saving a loved one from being dismembered or cannibalized, or making the right decision. Yu Hua's "Classical Love" therefore unmasks post-Mao intellectuals' anxiety of being dismembered and cannibalized.

Mo Yan's *The Republic of Wine* demonstrates how Chinese society has turned into a post-socialist society that "follows the money," according to the rhetoric of economic reform in China, instead of "serving the people," it ends up serving poor people, and instead of "making its people happy," a major goal of the Chinese Dream, it's only making its rich people happy. I examine Mo Yan's fictional portrayal of "meat boys," those boys coming from poor households, as a delicacy to satisfy rich and powerful people's desire for pleasure and longevity. I demonstrate how the novel associates "Chinese gourmandism" (the culture of eating delicacies, e.g., swallow's nests) with what Yue Gang calls "gourmet cannibalism" (e.g., braised babies) to show how both are served for consumers' pleasure. Mo Yan's association of Chinese eating culture with a potential practice of cannibalism for the same reason demonstrates the building of what I call "consuming identity" under an egoist logic of consuming every beneficial material for one's own health or pleasure. This identity dictates that eating an animal's organ benefits one's corresponding organ, and is ultimately cannibalistic in a hierarchical society, be it feudal or capitalistic.

In feudal China, "cutting and offering one's own flesh to cure one's parent(s)" is a cannibalistic practice of self-harm as a medical behavior that heals one's parent. What distinguishes the Chinese medical practices of cannibalism from the practices of other cultures is

their exclusiveness: Chinese medical cannibalism was only practiced for family members and usually for superior family members (out of respect for filial piety and the Confucian relationships). These feudal relationships support and are reinforced by feudal hierarchy within a family or an empire. The hierarchical structure is further reinforced in the practice of cannibalistic medication by the fact that only the inferior offer flesh to the superior in the social hierarchy. In neoliberal China, however, the feudal ethics and restraint are replaced by the logic of market economy and egoism. The association of Chinese gourmandism and gourmet cannibalism therefore implies a consuming identity that is programmed to expand its own existence even by cannibalizing under neoliberalism, a system that induces egoistic behaviors within individuals.

Written after the economic reform and the crackdown on the '89 Democracy Movement, Mo Yan's novel criticizes corruption in a hierarchical structure in which the rich consume the poor. This "socialism with Chinese characteristics," as it is called by the Chinese government, or what Harvey refers to as "neoliberalism 'with Chinese characteristics,'" deepens social inequality and polarization in China. Moreover, the government's support of neo-Confucianism in recent years further incorporates Confucian hierarchy with market-economy consumerism. The resulting "neoliberalism with 'Chinese characteristics'" strengthens the discourse of Chinese national development and modernization, and reconstitutes capitalistic class power by reinforcing the Confucian hierarchical order at the expense of the disempowered groups. My analysis reveals that hierarchy, be it Confucian or capitalistic, continues to sustain the practice of cannibalism, and that this hierarchical structure is fundamental for the neoliberal Chinese society. Therefore, Mo Yan's novel renews the unfinished project of critiquing modernity initiated by Lu Xun in a new global consumption network.

Cannibalism in Lillian Lee and Fruit Chan's film and novella *Dumplings* is a trope that reveals historical, economic, and cultural transitions, through the appropriation of a revolutionary song and deletion of some of its lyrics, and society's response to these changes. This revolutionary song bridges two eras (Mao and post-Mao), two economic ideologies (communism and capitalism), two classes (the rich capitalist and the poor laborer), and two systems of medicine (traditional Chinese medicine and western biomedicine). It also juxtaposes Mao's "serve the people" in communist China to post-Mao "serve *people*" in capitalist Hong Kong, as well as the two medical systems. The former juxtaposition reveals the devaluation and commodification of women and minorities in a capitalist society. The latter exposes the cannibalistic nature of the Chinese culture of eating medicinal delicacies by connecting this culture with the practice of medicinal cannibalism. The trope of cannibalism in *Dumplings* therefore discloses the inconvenient truth that it can be read both allegorically and literally; the upper class consumes the lower class, both metaphorically and literally, in neoliberal China.

Mo Yan's and Lillian Lee's works on cannibalism present "a consuming identity" in a hierarchical, neoliberal environment, both allegorically and literally. Allegorically, the upper class uses every last resource of the lower class. Physically, in these novels, the Chinese culture of eating medicinal delicacies (ex. cutting and offering one's own flesh to cure one's parent, eating placentas, or eating swallows' nests) is associated with "medicinal cannibalism" and "gourmet cannibalism," meaning eating human flesh for health benefit and pleasure. The connection between cannibalism and consumable delicacies comes from the long tradition of eating medicinal delicacies, and is central to my criticism of the consuming identity. This "consuming identity," which consumes every beneficial material, leads to infinite expansion and consumption. In the novels I study, the contemporary authors intentionally blur the line between

the fictional and the real to expose the fact that the reality of contemporary China still consists of hierarchy and that cannibalism is unbelievably close to real life, whether allegorically or literally. Fictional yet seemingly realistic, the novels echo the news of "health capsules" made of human remains, which were smuggled from China to Korea in 2012. As the discourse of traditional Chinese medicine and its derivative medicinal delicacies is extended into a global market, I argue that this medicinal discourse can "strengthen" China's state economic and cultural power at the cost of internal cannibalism.

This trope of cannibalism and its use in Yu Hua's, Mo Yan's, and Lillian Lee's works show the historical trauma of how human rights and equality have been eliminated in China in the name of modernization and globalization. Their association with the current practice of eating medicinal delicacies, which derives from the discourse of traditional Chinese medicine, with "gourmet cannibalism" and "medicinal cannibalism," brings the reading of their cannibalistic allegory to another level. The three contemporary writers no longer use cannibalism to illustrate the *split* between tradition and modernity as Lu Xun suggested. They instead explore it as an allegory of *cooperation* between tradition and modernity, while also exploring people's desire to cannibalize – metaphorically and literally – in a market economy.

The chief scholarly significance of *You Are Whom You Eat: Cannibalism in Contemporary Chinese Fiction and Film* is fourfold: first, this study expands the boundaries of scholarship on the representation of cannibalism as a theme in Chinese literature. Until now, there had been no comprehensive and systematic study of cannibalism in contemporary Chinese literature; this study explores cannibalism as a theme in Chinese literature and fills the gap in scholarship. Second, this project expands the study of cannibalism by addressing the representation of cannibalism in China from historical, political, cultural, and psychoanalytic

perspectives, and by showing that in both China and the West, the representation of cannibalism can be read as a reaction to modernity. Third, this study contributes to our understanding of how Mao's political campaigns and movements from the fifties to the seventies as well as the subsequent economic reform shape social and cultural history during and after the Maoist era, and therefore affect contemporary Chinese society. While I examine the thematic content of these contemporary authors' cannibalistic works, I also analyze their perceptions of the effect of politics as well as the social and cultural context of contemporary China. The alienation and cruelty among the Chinese in the cannibalistic worlds created by these authors, therefore, are not isolated instances, but a postmodern cultural phenomenon of an ethical crisis following man-made disasters. Last but not least, this project answers the humanistic question raised by Lu Xun one century ago – how the Chinese can "save the children" – by examining Yu Hua's *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* which offers a solution: "sacrifice oneself to save someone else's children." The voluntary self-sacrifice of the people, therefore, is the contemporary author's response to cannibalism after a hundred-year-long man-eating journey.

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GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION

chengzhang xiaoshuo	成長小說
zhiguai	志怪

CHAPTER 1

huanyun	還魂
cairen	菜人
qing	情
huaigu	懷古
duan jing can yuan	斷井殘垣
cha zi yan hong	奼紫嫣紅
yuanlai cha zi yan hong kaipian	原來奼紫嫣紅開遍
si zheban dou fuyu duan jing can yuan	似這般都付與斷井頹垣
shi duo nian qian	十多年前
caizi jiaren	才子佳人
charu	插入
wumei	嫵媚

CHAPTER 2

"Jiuhou xuyu"	"酒後絮語"
Guanchang xianxing ji	*官場現形記*
zhong	忠
xiao	孝

CHAPTER 3

Honghu chiweidui	*洪湖赤衛隊*
chiweidui	赤衛隊
hongweibing	紅衛兵
"Honghushui langdalang"	"洪湖水浪打浪"
wei renmin fuwu	為人民服務
Bencao gangmu	*本草綱目*
huozhuzi	活珠子
shentifafu, shouzhifumu, buganhuishang, xiaozhishiye	身體髮膚, 受之父母, 不敢毀傷, 孝之始也
yixing buxing	以形補形