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'Communism' in Taiwan and the Mainland: Transmission of the Great Leap Famine and of the White Terror

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I present the results of two local studies of the transmission of great state violence, one in the People's Republic of China, the other in ROC Taiwan, in both of which the word 'Communism' has had effects on the ways the experience of the violence is transmitted. In both cases, the experience of violence was accompanied by shame and dishonour. Also in both cases, the very political change that has enabled more open transmission has also been accompanied by great economic changes. Together these have created a generation gap, with the consequence that the young are not much interested in the history of past suffering. The two cases raise interesting questions and issues of the ways in which the recalling and transmission of personal experience are affected by printed and other forms of public transmission, including schooling, when the experience is part of something given great political significance. I conclude with a reflection on the distance between the ways people in both cases have found to commemorate, even without naming, the acts and experiences of state violence and more official public transmission and consider whether the archive of records, including our own oral histories, may or may not lead to new historical directions and stories.

I am concerned with the formation of the records, narrations, and transmission of a recent shared experience and their entry into a politics of history in two cases, one from mainland China, the other from Taiwan. They offer intriguing points of similarity, as well as expected contrasts.[1]

More generally, the dynamic that interests me comes from two kinds of experience – of memory and of learning. On the one hand recalling something experienced, recalling it to oneself or for interpersonal transmission, can produce not just an interpretation but also possibly an alternative or more conflicted sense of what is transmitted much more simply in public memory. On the other hand recalling even personal experiences is strongly affected by what is learned

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through the transmission of public memory. So there is a dynamic between the experience and the ways of sharing experiences that are learned in the process of remembering.

Public memory is always hierarchical, an honouring and a denigrating power of authoritative recognition. As a result, narratives that are interpersonally transmitted, whether habitually or consciously, have a ranked or even completely excluded possibility of identification with the public memory presented to the transmitters. Exclusion can give rise to the demand for inclusion, which is to demand a new establishment of public memory. The feeling of such a demand can be long-lasting and a version of the feeling can be transmitted, either by those whose experience it was or by others on their behalf, as grievance, for instance about shared harm caused by the powers that control public memory. It is transmitted as a painful feeling of social injustice. Its demands and any resolution of them will be determined by the political and legal culture in which it is transmitted and by the surrounding authorities to which it can appeal. Such groups of sufferers of shared harm can form into something like cults of affliction, finding solace in others who can be expected to know from experience what cannot be adequately expressed, and at the same time finding articulation in making a joint case for recognition and often also restitution. They can be continued over more than one generation from the original sufferers – prisoners of war from a particular camp, veterans' organisations, or victims of Japanese chemical and biological wartime experimentation are examples. It is usual that the formation of a political will to organise such groups takes a generation. On the other hand, it can happen that shared experience does not have the means, the precedent, the motivation or the external agency and politics for a righting of wrongs.

The two case studies

Through interviews and secondary resources, I have been studying two instances of the transmission of shared and catastrophic loss, both of which involve political terror, acts of state violence. One is an encirclement campaign by Nationalist (Guomindang) troops and police of some hamlets in the mountains of Luku in northern Taiwan in the winter of 1952-3. It has been established without dispute that the whole young and middle-aged male and much of the female population of the upper parts of Luku were rounded up and confined in the local temple, branch school and a local hall where they were interrogated and beaten into identifying who were the leaders and participants in what was claimed by the police and the military court to have been an armed Communist base. Thirty-five were executed, 97 imprisoned, and 32 went into hiding or were kept under surveillance but not sentenced. In all, 164 of the economically active men were thus removed from the mountain area, most of the male working population of the worst affected parts of Luku village (Zhang and Gao, 1998: 30-31). The operation is now seen as part of the period called the White Terror, and the families of the executed and imprisoned villagers have been compensated with cash and a memorial to the wrongs done to them. Their senses of having been wronged have been mobilised. Victims have been identified, most of the jailed and the close family of the executed and jailed have been named and brought together in two volumes of testimonial interviews

by Professor Zhang Yan-xian and two co-researchers. But the victims were never organised as a group.

My research colleague Dr Shih Fang-long and I later interviewed many of those who had been imprisoned, many of them already interviewed by Professor Zhang, as well as others of the same generation who are also from the area, and a younger generation of people both from outside who have come to live in the area and from local families near the area affected.

The second event took place in mainland China. It is the famine that occurred not just as a result of the Great Leap Forward but which was made worse by the continuation in 1959 of the campaign to raise production of grain and steel despite evidence of famine. Any complaint or disobedience of orders to report what were obviously inflated figures and absurd instructions were prevented by political shaming and use of force in an Anti-Right-Opportunist campaign in that year. The famine was of course far greater in scale than the Luku Incident. But by confining attention to a single locality, as in Luku, the event becomes more comparable. Certainly the Luku Incident was, for people of that locality, a major and a shared catastrophe.

For the Great Leap famine my research colleague Professor Wang Ming-ming and I interviewed people in the Quanzhou region of southern Fujian, not a severely affected area but in which people nevertheless suffered acute malnutrition to the point of oedema for the only time in their lives. In any case this famine differed from previous famines by being nation-wide and was a result of state policy and the fear of being accused of being a Rightist. Most of those we spoke to lived in a village to which Wang Ming-ming and I have been returning since 1991. Others to whom we spoke were in two rural townships of the same county, in the county (*xian*) capital, and in Quanzhou city itself.

In each place, my colleague and I interviewed a judgemental sample (not a representative sample, rather one that maximised contrasts across a number of variables that I judged to be significant) of people of different ages, positions or statuses, including some who are in a position to contribute to the compilation of records and the public narration of histories. The samples include people who lived through the event and younger people who only know about it through personal transmission, through public commemoration, or through the mass media and school.

The importance for transmission of a major shift in politics

In the People's Republic of China there were reversals of verdicts for many of those accused and sentenced for being Right-Opportunists as early as 1962, when there was a mass amnesty of 70% of cadres and all the ordinary people who had been labelled 'Right-Opportunists' (Bernstein 2006). In 1981 there was a partial condemnation of the leaders responsible for the policies that led to the famine and a further bout of reversals of verdicts. But reversals of verdicts and sentences of leaders have concentrated on the years of the Cultural Revolution. There has been no designation of the famine itself and those who starved in it as a period of culpable disaster, such as the decade labelled Cultural Revolution. There has been no judicial sentencing of those responsible for it, as there was for the so-called Gang of Four held responsible for the Cultural Revolution.

By contrast, in Taiwan, as in Germany since the Second World War, there has been an acknowledgement and an apology by the government of the same country for its past guilt. And as in Germany, what has made this possible is a more dramatic change in politics and in the writing of a past and its trajectory to a future than there has been in the People's Republic of China. In Taiwan and Germany, there has been compensation and ceremonial commemoration for the families of victims. Common to both Taiwan and Germany are notions of the state's guilt. The Guomindang government was induced, under President Lee Teng-hui, to acknowledge its guilt, as was Germany, under Chancellor Konrad Adenhauer, for the annihilation of Europe's Jews. Not only has the secret name 'White Terrror' been officially authenticated as history, so has its largest single operation been named the 'Luku Incident'.

On the other hand, in contrast to Germany and like the PRC, in Taiwan perpetrators have not been tried. And there is a contrast to be made between the new histories in Germany and in Taiwan. German history now favours German pride in unification of the territories of the defeated Germany, in having performed a miracle of economic reconstruction and in becoming an economic powerhouse in the European Union, but not in the fulfilment of a single national historic destiny. In contrast, instead of being a part of a nation that is also a sub-continental civilisation, such as Europe or China, the history of Taiwan is being rewritten as the story of an island people treated as its own autonomous subject. The White Terror is easily accommodated into this as a period of Taiwanese suffering and humiliation before rising triumphantly towards freedom. The context of the commemoration of the Luku Incident is Taiwan's burgeoning self-identification against the threat from the mainland.

The accusation of being a 'Communist spy' was one weapon in an armoury used by the Guomindang military command of Taiwan to censor and eliminate political opposition to its rule. But it is also possible and justifiable to understand the Luku Incident as a continuation of the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists, even though most of the villagers involved were not aware of the ideologies and politics of the China-wide conflict. Indeed, it could be said that the very name White Terror sanctions this, referring back to the slaughter of Communists by the Guomindang Republican government between 1927 and 1931. There could be an identification of Taiwanese compatriots with Communists as fellow sufferers of the Guomindang government, but, as we shall see, this understanding is marginalised because the spread of the Civil War between Communists and Nationalists to Taiwan in the years from 1945 to 1953 does not suit the new history of Taiwan.

There are two quite different uncertainties about the public memory of the Great Leap famine on the one hand and the Luku Incident on the other. In the case of the famine, the change of regime after the death of Mao and of the way history at the time was written, public memory has concentrated on the Cultural Revolution and its link to the Great Leap Forward as a leftist trend and error called 'the Communist wind'. But there has been no commemoration or compensation of the victims of the famine. The fear of being labelled 'Rightist' has been removed, but the subject of the famine is still censored. In the case of the Luku Incident, by being included in the White Terror, the victims have been commemorated and compensated, but there is still a political problem, even a taboo, on the question

of being sympathetic to what was at the time labelled 'Communist'. How these two exclusions are exercised in public memory, including the writing and teaching of history, and how they affect interpersonal transmission of the memory will be the subject of this paper.

Comparative recalling of 'Communism'

'Communism' figures in both, but in quite different ways. For the mainland, 'Communism' is not a scare word, as it is in Taiwan. Instead, it is in the name of the ruling Party. But one of the reasons now given for the excesses that caused the famine is the 'Communist wind' – the idea that in a short time, of a few years, production of steel and grain would reach UK levels and then the highest, of the USA, and that these would be reached by organising not only production but consumption on a large collective scale, and that people would be able to eat according to need, instead of according to the work they put in. In Taiwan, 'Communism' still bears many if not all of the connotations of the Chinese civil war as seen from the perspective of the Guomindang. For the almost forty years of what is now named 'White Terror', from 1949 to 1987, the problem of true or false accusations of being a Communist spy ('*feidie*') and the threat of being accused of *panluan*, subverting the Guomindang's Republic of China, was constant.

   In the mainland, 'Communism' is still in power but in charge of a change of politics and an even faster change of economics than in Taiwan. This change in policy has slowed down to an indifferently distant future the era of Communist abundance. It has speeded up the appearance of capitalist inequality and prosperity, complicated by the fact that the leaders of the capitalist reform, including Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun, were complicit in the Great Leap Forward.

   In Taiwan, anti-Communism has been overlain by fear of a Chinese-Communist-Party-led threat to Taiwan. The existence of a Taiwanese Communist Party has been made a barely noticeable past. Compensation for White Terror state violence against those accused of being Communist spies excludes those who are found actually to have been Communists, just as in the People's Republic of China, reversal of the verdict of having been a Rightist is subject to testing for having actually been a counter-revolutionary. The clarity of the issue in Taiwan is muddied by the fact that two prominent ex-Communists ran the Red-labelling terror – Gu Zheng-wen, head of investigation and surveillance and his boss Mao Ren-feng, head of the Secret Service (the Bao Miju).[2]

Some methodological findings and further considerations

What people told us about the catastrophic event was always heavily affected by what they had learned from other sources than their own or family members' experiences. In particular, they were aware of what was still censored. In the

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[2] I am most grateful to Professor Chen Yung-fa, a historian of the Chinese Communist Party at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, for this information, provided during discussion at a conference there, 4-5 November 2005, to which I presented the results of our research on Luku.

mainland to talk of greater suffering after Liberation (1949) than before was not permitted. In Taiwan to speak of having been sympathetic to the ideals of social justice taught by 'Communists' is an act of daring. At the same time they always kept something in reserve from the narratives they had learned. The degree to which something was held in reserve, and our access to what it might have been, varied a great deal, and it presents the most interesting subject and problem for my research.

Whatever the experience, its memory is always greater than what can be recalled and is actually transmitted. It is always to some extent personal and individual. Personal recall is always, inevitably, more detailed and more mixed with associated memories than any historical account. But when it is given social significance and that significance is changed radically it becomes a conflicted experience, at the same time shared and isolated from others by the humiliation, fear or shame that first accompanied it, and then the more recent change of significance creates another confusion.

From comparison with reports of other parts of China than Quanzhou, I have concluded that people will speak about what they had to do to survive the famine, but where they were not able to find sustenance for a member of their household they feel shame, and others do not identify them so that their shame need not be exposed. This does not apply to villages where so many died of famine that most families failed to ensure that all members survived. In these villages it is possible more openly to share the experience. In any case the shared hardship of what are still named, in a political downgrading of their significance, 'the three years of hardship (*sannian kunnan shiqi*)' is at the same time a playing down of the experience and a playing up of being together in the same predicament. Something similar happens in the transmission of the experience of concentration camp survivors: they cannot easily speak of the humiliation and degradation themselves, but prefer to speak of how they survived, including the occasional help of some SS guards (see for instance Bodemann 2005: 28-30).

But concentration camp victims were also victims of targeted violence, as in the targeting of the so-called Communists in Luku. They are isolated from everyone else. Indeed, for the whole of the period of martial law in Taiwan, the families of victims were isolated not only from everyone else but also from other victim families, no-one daring to recall the experience outside close family and friends. In sum, the different social politics of the experience of a social event at the time subsequently determine how an experience is recalled, how much it can be shared and the terms on which it is recognised as shared.

Before turning to the political uncertainties that affect how people have spoken about the catastrophic events in Quanzhou and Luku I want first to add the obvious but important fact that both the mainland and Taiwan have changed economically as well as politically, and therefore the reality and senses of reality and of what is important have changed.

New realities and their effects

Mainland China

The accounts given by those who were cadres at the time vary according to their willingness to admit responsibility, which is probably affected by how well they could trust us. Two who could trust us admitted they were responsible for carrying out orders against their better judgement. Those who were not in positions of any kind of power or who were among those identified as being 'bad' class elements were more willing to blame the whole Party, including its highest leader, Mao. Otherwise there was little difference in general tenor and shape between their accounts and official history, promulgated soon after the ending of the Great Leap campaign that the famine was the result of natural disaster and Leftism in the direction of policy, except that they provided far greater detail of the campaigns and the ways in which they cheated inspectors to enable them to give reports of high production figures and meet the wildly exaggerated quotas and so avoid being labelled Rightists.

We went to visit Mr Li, a lively septuagenarian who had been a 'bad element' because he is descended from a great imperial official and landlord whose house is now being promoted as a tourist site in a rural township. We spoke with him in the great house, where he works as a custodian (22 March 2004). He had told us that a few people had died of starvation during the famine in the township.

> *Did you tell your children and grandchildren about your* [famine] *experience?*
> Yes. But they just comment on how 'useless' ['*meiyou yong*' – South Fujianese:
> '*bou lou ieng*'] we were.

The same phrase, 'useless' (in the same language) was often on the lips of our interviewees in Taiwan as well. But there it always referred to the irrelevance of the history and the commemoration of the Luku Incident to current concerns of surviving and prospering. To Mr Li in a small town in the Quanzhou region it also refers to current circumstances, but only as a reason for the young not being able to understand how the older generation had put up with the commands of cadres that were obviously impractical and dangerous. It expresses incomprehension, rather than a context of what is useful. But the issue of the relevance of the past to the present is common to both.

Across this gap between generations made by the great political and economic changes that followed the death of Mao and the trial of the Gang of Four, the young think that their elders must have been stupid to follow the commands of the Great Leap Forward.

A retired cadre, who at the time was vice-chief of a brigade, answered our question

> *Do you tell your children about those times?*
> Yes. Some ask why we worked so hard. Others say 'you were so stupid.'

A middle-aged companion who was present added that his 20-year-old son said 'you must have been lazy not to have enough food'.

Apart from finding it incomprehensible in their own contexts, the young appear to reject the past of their elders, saying that it is not their own past. For their part, members of senior generations experience from the young a disowning of their pasts. But when they die, their lives are remembered conventionally with gratitude for the sacrifices they had made and the hardship they had suffered for their children. This was a general sentiment, without specifying the Great Leap famine.

Some idea of what the post-Mao generation say comes from a 31-year-old tea businessman in the main village of our Quanzhou research. We asked him:

> *From whom did you hear* [*about the difficult years*]*?*
> From my father's generation.
> *Why did they talk about them?*
> It was 'whip talk' ['*bianci*'], to teach children 'remember bitterness to think of sweetness' ['*yikusutian*'].
> *Did you learn about them at school?*
> No.
> *Should it be taught at school?*
> It's in the past. Teaching about it is useless.

But he did acknowledge a debt to Mao. He said, using the term Mao had used, that a *fanshen*, a turning about, had occurred because Deng Xiaoping took power. He added that Mao had created the foundation of enterprise (*qiye*), and then Deng had harnessed it. His wife agreed but had a different attitude to what young people should learn. She was the cadre in charge of women's affairs in the village. She said that children should be taught about the years of hardship, including the years of hard toil under the leadership of Mao:

> Now we have the single child system and a very high standard of living. We are very happy. It is important children know that *lai zhe bu yi* – to have reached this point was not easy.

The continuation of terms and genres coined during the Mao era is worth remarking in another instance from the young man's response. 'To remember bitterness to think of [present] sweetness' became a regular feature of ritualised meetings in which, during the Mao years 1949-1976, memories of suffering before the Chinese Communist Party took state power in 1949 were recounted in order to highlight Liberation (*Jiefang* – which also names the year 1949) from that suffering. Remembering a time *after* Liberation as bitterness was still felt as a very recent taboo by some of our informants and during the seventies it had indeed to be kept hidden.

Then we asked two middle school students who had been listening to this,

> *Have you learned about the hardship years?*
> No.
> *Have you been told about them by older people?*

No.[3]

Among the abrupt changes, one that I would single out, because of its having to do with public memory, is tourism as a way of preserving the past. In the mainland, one effect of recent political history on tourism has been to add the birth and campaign places of other leaders of the armed forces of the Communist Party than Mao, such as Deng Xiaoping as a military leader in Baise town, Guangxi. But a far greater effect has been to endorse the rebuilding of local temples, ancestral halls, and the refurbishing of the houses of what in the pre-Communist past had been the local elite. One result has been that the time of the Mao years, which had put all such institutions into a bitter and rejected past, have been put into a framework in which they themselves appear as a time of past hardship. This diminishes the Mao years, making them one turning point among others that preceded the prosperity after the Mao years for those who look back from the present.

The point I want to stress here is how the great changes and the generation gap have created a barrier to the transmission of the memories of those who lived through the famine. Although they are far freer to talk about it, few people in the next generation are interested.

Taiwan

There is not the same sharpness of a generation gap, nor the same coincidence of political and economic change in Taiwan. The changes in politics marked by the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the Presidential apology in 1995 for the 2: 28 1947 massacres of Taiwanese from 28 February to May 1947 and the subsequent years of White Terror by the Guomindang troops and police were preceded by economic growth that had many years before 1987 turned Taiwan from a predominantly agrarian into a predominantly industrial economy.

In Taiwan, what is of greatest significance is that, since 1987, rising incomes and increasing leisure time have coincided with the political movement of indigenisation, placing emphasis on Taiwanese history and identity. Prosperity has generated tourism in Taiwan. The mountainous areas of the border between Shiding, Xizhe, and Nangang, where the Luku Incident took place, are within easy reach of the growing city of Taipei and have become a resort for day visits. The economy of the mountains had until the 1970s been bare subsistence farming and coalmining. The execution or imprisonment of so many of the men forced the women of the Luku villages to seek work in the mines or elsewhere. Many moved away. Then when the coalmines closed for economic reasons, the area was

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[3] A man in his thirties, met in London January 2006 in the course of presenting this research, was born in a poor village in north-western China. He was frequently hungry as a child. But when he told his parents he was hungry, wanting to eat more and therefore depriving his younger sister of food, his parents would admonish him 'do you think you were born in 1960?', which was the middle of the famine. So, even subsequent severe shortage was nothing compared to the famine. Such reminders in everyday domestic life are a marker of the event, even without its being an official historical event. But it is not easily specifiable.

further depopulated. Its main sources of income are now related to tourism and associated industries of special foods (ginger, bamboo shoots, soybean, *lingzhe* edible fungi, tea) and crafts (woodcarving, dyed textiles, painting). On this basis outsiders are repopulating the area.[4] At the same time there has also been a return of the victims to claim their land for themselves and their families. They come to their old houses and spend the days there, doing odd jobs, before returning to the town or city home of the child who looks after them. Between them and the outsiders who have come to live in Luku, there is both a generation gap and the distance of a native from a newcomer.

We interviewed one outsider, the cook at a teahouse built during the nineties just above the road that is a route of buses that bring visitors to this picturesque mountain area. It is immediately above the memorial to the victims of the Luku Incident, to the side of the road coming up from Nangang. Just down the hill from the teahouse and the memorial is the Taipei Tea Museum. Both the memorial and the tea museum are stops on the route of a coach tour of this mountain area. He gave us a business card of one such tour organisation.

We asked him 'Do many tourists who come to the tea-house ask about the memorial?' 'Many do.' But he later qualified this when he told us that his parents, who lived in Taipei city, knew about it and added that anyone over the age of seventy would know about it and want to know more. A Taiwanese customer told him that he had been in Japan at the time of the Incident and read about it in Japanese newspapers, and that was why he had come to visit. In other words the generation that was adult at the time is likely to know about it and to be curious to remind themselves or to find out more. But younger people are not as interested, even when they live in the area. For them, as for him, the memorial is one spot on a tour.

Compare this with a man who was born in Luku but then moved to Taipei with his father, found various kinds of work there, married and had children, divorced and then after his father's death returned in middle age to his old home and rebuilt it. He remembered as a child seeing his father talking to others of that generation about the Incident. They would constantly look around in case anyone from another place was coming near, and would fall silent even when he, a child in the household, approached. His father warned him never to get involved with politics and politicians. In fact, in the course of his work in Taipei city, before returning to Luku, he had gone against his father's advice and made good contacts with a number of senior politicians of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), then the chief opposition party. When Shih Fang-long informed him that one of them had written a book on Communism in Taiwan, the skin on his arms immediately roughened into goose pimples. Both of them noticed and he observed how the fear from the old days had become instinctual.

He has made sure that his two daughters, in the local primary school, do know about the Incident. But none of the other children at the school, even the few others who come down from the Luku villages, know or care.

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[4] A restaurant and health resort using Lingzhe fungi has been built where the Taiyang coalmine clubhouse was until the mine was closed. The clubhouse was the venue of an initial rounding up of 'Communist' suspects in the Luku Incident.

A good friend of the same age from another part of Shiding is a keen local historian and a businessman in the flourishing tourist economy, whose promotion he is leading. He takes tourists to visit the temple, which was the main site of detention and interrogation and tells visitors what he knows. He is haunted by the thought that many were killed there because he saw human bones in the temple when he visited it as a child and thought [wrongly in fact] that they must have been the remains of those killed in the operation. But even he thinks historical knowledge for its own sake is 'no use'.

Economic reason vies with personal experience and interest for him, as it does for some of the victims, such as the wife of one of the executed, who cannot help recalling her terrified experience yet also asked what use is recording it. For her, it is no help in bringing her husband back or in alleviating what she had to endure to survive. She does talk about it, but at the same time it is no use. Her daughter therefore knows about it, but seeks to stop her mother from recalling it in a vain wish to stop her suffering.

For interpersonal transmission to be recorded and for a version of it to cross this gap between generations and include people who are not local depends on such public institutions as schools. The same applies to the public memory of the Great Leap famine.

School history

Schooling is an instrument of inculcating habits of learning and senses of belonging, of having a shared past with other citizens and subjects of the country whose government has the authority to oversee the coordination of a national curriculum. In all countries, advance from schooling into higher education brings greater opportunity to read and to choose relevant reading, except that infant and primary education is where teachers have the greatest freedom to choose and create their own teaching materials. Within these generalisations, which are true of all modern states, there is great variation in the extent to which states govern national curriculi and allow teachers and students their initiative in following them, in particular the curriculum of modern history and within that the history of the peoples of their nation.

School history teaching in mainland China and until very recently in Taiwan has been very prescriptive.

Taiwan

Until 1996 the government of Taiwan ran a school system with unified and standardised textbooks in Chinese, history, social studies, and geography at all levels of schooling. The Ministry of Education had a monopoly on the production of textbooks (Chang 2002: 235-238). It was not until 2002 that local culture, with materials developed by the teachers, became a compulsory and graded subject in all of the first 9 years of schooling. For higher levels of schooling a rewriting of textbooks has been in preparation for a long time. In the early eighties members of the Institute of History and Philology and then in the Institute of Modern History in the central research institution, Academia Sinica, were commissioned by the Ministry of Education to form two groups to prepare for rewriting history books for

junior middle and high schools, using oral history to compile materials, so that the history of Taiwan could be better included.[5] One of the best-known such set of textbooks *Knowing Taiwan* ('*Renshi Taiwan*') was produced under the direction of the then head of the Institute of History and Philology in 1995. In 1997 three textbooks, on Taiwanese history, geography, and society, were used from grade 7 (13 years old). Their original overseer is presently (since 2004) the Minister of Education and is now overseeing the autonomy of schools and their teachers to choose their own textbooks from both government and non-government publishers. One effect of this freedom has been that with changes in the party of local government, the three *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks could be abandoned in favour of others. In 2001, knowledge of Taiwan was integrated into a more general field of social studies and *Knowing Taiwan* was withdrawn from junior high school and a new version introduced for senior high school students in 2006 (Tu 2007).

In any case, textbooks for Middle and High school in Taipei that we have seen include only very short sections on the White Terror period, under one page long. The teachers' handbooks accompanying them expand the information to naming a number of well-known intellectuals and organisers who were prosecuted. But they include nothing on Luku. The only way in which it might be included is in primary school materials for *xiangtu jiaoxue*, studying the locality. The county, in this case Taipei County, issues the textbook for local studies. But it includes nothing on the White Terror, let alone Luku. So that leaves the extra materials that teachers in the local schools have the responsibility to compile.

We interviewed the head teacher of the school that caters for children from the Luku area. We found that the only local person on the staff of the school was the caretaker. She knows about the Incident, but she has not been included in the compilation of teaching materials. Inclusion of the Incident depends on outsiders taking an interest, but at the same time judging what are the priorities.[6] In 2005 the school organised the first trip for the whole school to visit local sites. One is planned to happen every year. Individual teachers go first to prepare students for their work reports (*xuexi dan*) to be completed after the trip. The teachers had asked local older people about the Luku Incident, but they were not willing to talk.

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[5] Many thanks to Dr Hsiung Ping-chen, one of the members involved, for this information.

[6] The school has a large catchment area, including pupils not only from Shiding but some from the neighbouring township of Shenkeng, and it is a model school pioneering the integration of nine years, of primary with junior middle school classes. According to the head teacher there are two types of book: popular (*minjian*), produced locally, and centralised (*tongbian*), issued by the state. Teachers are expected to produce their own materials to complement both. Taipei County's book describes each of the County's regions, including this one, Wenshan *qu*. In addition, the school is a centre for a view of local affairs and events, providing the locality with a library, which for instance contains a report (*baogao*) about the area produced by staff of the Huafan Buddhist University in Shiding. It omits the Memorial and the Incident. More personal reports (*qinzi gongbu*) can also be included. It is only in such reports that the history of Luku might figure in the future.

The head-teacher had noted the importance of the Incident when he came to the job and had kept a newspaper cutting about it, which he had framed. But he had subsequently found that, as he put it to us:

> There are so many points about the Luku Incident that remain inexplicable [*jie bukaide mi*]. The older generation are not willing to talk about it [*bu yuanyi tiqi*]. Their minds are still constrained by terror [*kongju*]. If you ask them about it they feel you are threatening them with something. So from the school's point of view, the attitude of the old seems to be that they just want to forget. The school doesn't want to cause them to feel terror. All the teachers are from outside and they do not understand what actually happened in Luku so whatever they might say would be without a basis in evidence [*buyao luanjiang*]. Moreover, there are many other things to teach about, such as the local geography, environment, community, and local culture. As for an unclear and indistinct historical event [*buming bubai lishi shijian*], the school has marked it [the Memorial] on the local map [*xiangtu ditu*] and taken students to visit it. That is why the teachers do not teach about the Luku Incident in the classroom.

It seems to me he is latching on to the condition of teachers doing their own oral historical research when he could have used Professor Zhang's two volumes of interviews.

The Memorial does contain some information. A plaque on one of its low walls describes the political situation after 1949 as unstable and autocratic. It goes on to give a brief factual summary of the event, set in tones of emotive sympathy:

> In the encirclement of the mountainous area of Luku, villagers were detained under suspicion of being members of an armed base of Chinese Communist sympathisers. […] This was the biggest political incident in Taiwan in the 1950s. […] The villagers were detained in the Vegetarian Hall of Luku, now called the Buddhist temple of Broad Enlightenment [Guangmingsi] [where they were] beaten into confession or charged on the basis of informants' intelligence without any evidence being brought forward. […] The result was countless wronged souls [of those killed] and suffering in prison. Families were broken, suffering torments of grief.

The last paragraph then states the purpose of the monument. It is

> not only to commemorate those who died unjustly but to learn the lesson from their arbitrary arrest and sentences that human rights were crushed and that we should today join hands to make Taiwan a democracy and a society in which rule of law and fair justice prevail.

But not even this memorial text is used in school lessons. So, the Luku Incident is not taught locally because it is, on the head-teachers' evidence, still too frightening for the witnesses to give teachers their testimonies. The memorial's inscriptions are written in the same tone as Professor Zhang Yan-xian's introduction to the first of two volumes of testimony that he published. Those two volumes show that victims were willing to speak to some extent. But they spoke to Professor Zhang and his two assistants in circumstances in which they knew that they could claim compensation for having been wronged. Now that time has

passed. They were subsequently willing to talk to us, because we came to them recommended by close local acquaintances or, in one instance, with Professor Zhang's own endorsement. But we might with some confidence conclude that the testimony they gave him and us was partial and that much of what is transmitted within families and among close friends has been withheld from public memory by political confusion and caution.

By contrast, the famine in China is definitely an item in school textbooks. But the problem there is how it is played down. The famine is not a named event.

China

The Chinese Communist Party is still a master of history. Its decisions on Party history to a great extent determine how and what history is taught in schools. A resolution was adopted by the 6th plenum of the 11th central committee of the CCP on June 27 1981 on the 60 years of advance from its foundation in 1921. Its stress was on the decade 1966-76 during which Proletarian Cultural Revolution was maintained as a Party aim. The resolution sealed a repudiation of mass mobilisation politics and turned it and its culmination in the Cultural Revolution into a regretted past.

The Party's judgement of history between 1921 and 1966, up to the Cultural Revolution, was a balancing of accounts, measuring the predominance of achievements – of economic construction and of strengthening the cause of socialism – against what it named 'mistakes' ('*cuowu*'). These were the mistakes 'of enlarging the scope of class struggle and of impetuosity and rashness in economic construction.'[7] The famine is buried in the Great Leap Forward and the errors of Mao 'and many leading comrades', which look forward to the Cultural Revolution.

This is also how the famine is mentioned in school history textbooks. It enters as a blip in the period of socialist construction and rising production figures until 1966.[8]

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[7] Reprinted from *Beijing Review* 1981 as an Appendix in Martin (1982: 188).

[8] Note e.g. the compulsory textbook *Zhongguo Jindai Xiandaishi* (2000) purchased in Beijing. Page 115 includes a table of falling grain production, but no figures of deaths.

Also, see *Duti yu Zuoti Gaozhong Lishi* (2003) bought in Quanzhou's Xinhua bookshop: '(1) In 1957 the extension of anti-Rightist struggle was seriously overdone. To an extremely large extent, it harmed the activism of the broad mass of cadres, the masses and especially intellectuals.

'(2) The problem of the speed and size of economic construction. In 1958, at the second congress of the 8th Plenary of the Party, the General Guideline was raised. The Guideline ignored objective regularities. It was biased in favour of and exaggerated the agency of the subject. In actual implementation [we were] blind to reality and pursued only speed. […] In 1958 the Great Leap Forward was launched heedlessly. The result was high indicators, blind instructions, boasting wind and 'Communist' wind, which became the chief manifestations of a Leftist tendency and the mistake seriously overwhelmed the whole country. It induced imbalance of national economic ratios. In addition natural disasters had a lot of influence. The Soviet government did not keep its promises. It tore up its contract of

There is far less fictional and memoir literature by those who experienced the famine, compared to the great amount about the Cultural Revolution.[9] Rather, there are interviews, like the published interviews with Luku victims, in other people's reports and collections of testimony.[10] Other than these, as a local historian observed to us, the Great Leap famine occurs in the context of other narratives, outside school and official histories, in TV and printed biographies. Until very recently, publications of materials on the Great Leap Forward and its disastrous results provided no figures on starvation deaths.[11]

The period of the famine is named 'the three difficult years' ('*san nian kunnan shiqi*'). In conversation, when we mentioned this official designation, few people under the age of thirty knew what three years were meant. For instance when we asked (25 March 2004) a 19-year-old woman who had been to a vocational high school in the county town, what she associated with the years of hardship she recalled the years of her early childhood in the 1980s when her home was

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economic and technical cooperation. All this induced serious difficulties [*yanzhong kunnan*] in the national economy between 1959 and 1961' (117).

[9] The exception is Mo Yan (1997).

[10] See for instance Chen *et al* (1993): 'In Hebei province 8-10 US billions of jin of crops were damaged and in addition there was great waste in the big canteens. So in the beginning of the spring of 1959, shortage in grain farming had already shown itself. The CCP committee in Hebei province reported to the centre on 3 May saying that: "currently the situation of our province's crops is tense. There are thirty counties in our province which are short of food. The most serious include 10 counties." [In Hubei the provincial Party Committee also reported that] the condition of crops is becoming more and more tense. From last year to this year the trend of grain riots [*nao liang*] has emerged here and there. Those places that were awarded red flags reported even more seriously that the spring farming is severe because of the difficulty in transporting grains from place to place. So we estimate that in some places there will be some famine. In Wuhan [city] more than two million people had experienced the condition of supply shortage. […]

'In February of 1959 people in some places suffered from edema because of serious shortage of food and some places suffered from the problem of abnormal deaths' (321-322).

Also see Zhang (1996): 'The government publicly advocated that the bad results of the People's Commune is because of natural disaster. And the government also described the difficult period as three years of natural disaster. In fact this conclusion does not fit the reality of Yan'guan and Haining areas [*diqu*].

'A middle-aged woman said she had four children and because of shortage of food she had to go to the canteen to get gruel for the children and she herself had to eat what they did not finish plus bark and had suffered from edema. In her village the skin of several people shone because of edema stretching it' (77).

The most extensive collection of testimonies is by Li Rui (ed.) (1999).

[11] Tu Wei-ming (1997: 178n3) mentions an issue of the Shanghai journal, *Shehui* (*Society*) that contained a figure of forty million deaths from starvation. The issue had to be withdrawn. A website on the famine (http://www.chinafamine.org) contained some articles, published abroad and containing figures of deaths. But it was censored and deleted in 2004, started again on a new site that has itself been deleted. Cai (2005) estimated 32.6 million deaths directly due to starvation and up to 12 million more from related illnesses.

designated a poverty county and when her family had only vegetables to eat and rice was a treat at New Year. She had not heard of the Great Leap Forward, though it is mentioned in Middle school history textbooks.[12]

Even those who can say what years, also think of a number of such 'periods of difficulty' ('*kunnan shiqi*'). An older woman, 31 years old in 2004, vaguely recalled (30 March 2004) that the Great Leap Forward was in the sixties and that there was hardship, but this was the generalised hardship suffered by the generation of her parents.

Moving back a generation, a village head in Quanzhou who was eight years old at the time of the famine said to us that it was as bitter as any time before Liberation. We knew him well from many previous interviews, and so he was willing to make this comparison. Before Liberation, he told us

> We were very poor, a family of many children and too little produce.
> *Were the hard years [of the famine] worse?*
> Yes, a bit.
> *For how many years did the hardship and hunger last?*
> Between two and three years. In 1962 there was a redistribution of fields, 0.1 mu per head. Productivity was low in the brigade-held fields because people paid most attention to their own fields.
> *Did anyone in - - - become very ill or die?*
> No-one starved to death. But some people got ill and died from the illness. I'm not sure who.
> *Have you ever talked to anyone about this time – before now?*
> Never to outsiders. I have talked to my children. It was the rule that people should only talk about suffering before Liberation and therefore that only older people could 'remember bitterness' [*iap ko sitian*].

In other words he is still affected by the idea that bitterness refers only to the time before CCP rule. In general, the diminishing of the famine, as a subject for historical investigation is remarkable in both official history and in personal accounts.

The present is a time of plenty, to which the same Party has led 'us', the collective noun of all of China. In both, the famine is a mistake of excessive Leftism.

Our witnesses link their privation to the collective canteens, the small smelters, and absurdly close cropping. For many it is also linked to the Anti-Right campaigns. Political criminalisation and persecution can become a subject for juridical review and reversal of verdicts. It is then a separate issue. For our interviewees, however, the campaign is part of the general experience of the Great Leap Forward. Shared suffering, even the loss of members of family and the infertility caused by malnutrition, do not qualify for any juridical process. Instead, shared privation is the general sense made of the famine years. Concern with hope in the future and with the hardship still evident in villages in some parts

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[12] Our talk, not an interview, was very relaxed but it was our first and only meeting. It may be that if we had known her better, we may have discovered that she could remember school and something more from her history lessons.

of Quanzhou (though nothing like famine malnutrition), is combined with a reluctance to rake up bitter pasts. A bitter past, as some young members of the audience to a lecture I gave on this project commented, is anyway the standard of Chinese history.[13]

Some of our witnesses did say that the famine was worse than pre-Liberation poverty. And witnesses of the far more severe conditions elsewhere than Quanzhou redouble this speaking bitterness of the years of Party leadership.[14] But I do not think that this, as yet, amounts to an alternative history of the famine, although of course historians outside China (such as Roderick MacFarquhar, Jasper Becker and Yang Dali) have turned the accounts of witnesses and statistics into a great and tragic event. Within China, their sources are restricted documents, not for public reading.

The language of verdicts and reversals of verdicts applicable to political criminalisation and the language of claims to compensation is applied by and on behalf of victims of the Japanese occupation and its atrocities. It is not applied or even mentioned by anyone speaking about the famine. Only in the most general terms, of the pitiful condition of the whole people, does the language of victimhood appear.[15] It is not a verbal, politically or historically specified claim to recognition of suffering and grievance as it is for the Luku victims (*shounanzhe*) in Taiwan. Instead, on one hand, personal stories of intense suffering and horror are told and on the other hand rituals and temples that have been built or rebuilt since the relaxation of controls on 'old' things and 'superstitious' activities are, as Jing Jun has nicely put it, 'saturated with memories of loss' (2001: 215).

Famine was a cause of infertility and death. Its worst horror was cannibalism and the swapping of dead children to eat (Becker 1996: 137).[16] So the building of

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[13] Thanks to Maurizio Marinelli (10 October 2005) for drawing my attention to the standard phrase for this idea of China's history: 'eating bitterness' ('*chiku*').

[14] For instance, Wemheuer (2004: 79) quotes a farmer quoted in an internal report saying that before Liberation it was possible to go to neighbouring villages for relief, but not in the Great Leap famine. And the notoriously high number of deaths from being beaten up as well as from starvation in the Xinyang region of Henan has, in a Party report, been given the name of an Incident (*Xinyang shijian*) (Wemheuer, 2004: 82).

[15] For instance, Felix Wemheuer reported (8 April 2005, at a workshop in Brandeis University) that villagers he talked to in northern Henan would say to him 'the condition of people was piteous [*laobaixing hen kelian*].' In a more causal expression similar to what some of the cadres we met reported as their blindness induced by fear or terror, Felix Wemheuer was told that before the Anti-Rightist campaigns 'Chinese people had human feeling' ('*yijian Zhongguoren hen laoshi*'). The campaigns divided families and thus made them less human. But this is still not reported as making them victims.

[16] Writing of his home province Anhui, Tang De-gang, a Chinese American revisiting for the first time since his childhood, describes this same horror recalled when he was enquiring after a close paternal cousin and found that his cousin's whole family had starved to death while whole villages were wiped out in the Great Leap famine. 'Most unbearable to hear was that when young children were fast asleep their parents suffocated them with pillows or quilts and exchanged them with their neighbours to steam. This is the vivid contemporary version of what was told of past [famines], that "people swapped children to eat."' See Tang (2005). This was downloaded and sent to me by Zhang Ning. Many thanks

a far greater number of temples than had existed before Liberation to the Niang Niang (fertility goddess), as Jing Jun reports, is a way of silently recalling their demise, overdetermined by the single child policy. [17]

In the Quanzhou village that was the centre of our study the ancestral hall had been damaged by flooding and left a ruin in the 1950s. But in 1961, the year of recovery from the famine, with the secret support of Chen Wan-sheng, a Commune-level cadre from the village, villagers rebuilt it as a way of serving the people, as he put it, in particular as a comfort to the elderly, including feeding them with meat on feast days. It was destroyed again in the Cultural Revolution. In the 1990s, now as an *ex*-cadre, Wan-sheng openly led and managed its rebuilding and the re-compilation of the lineage genealogy. The reconstruction and reissuing of the genealogy in the village included a ritual for 'ancestors who died without knowing their offspring.' It was an unusual, but traditional rite that did not specify those who could have no children because of the famine. The dead and infertile were included implicitly, as we ascertained with his friend, the head of the village.[18]

So, what is remarkable about the public memory and commemoration of the famine is first its paucity but then also that it saturates, as a recent and shared instance of extreme hardship, the temples and rites that people have built and maintained for themselves collectively on one hand, and the eating and plentiful nurturance of life that most Chinese enjoy on the other hand. Its politics are remembered but not marked at this level, any more than they are in school histories. This is reinforced by a political reluctance to commemorate deaths in post-Liberation disasters. To some students and to older people, famine is a reminder of constant hardship and of previous famines as conditions of life.

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to Zhang Ning for drawing it to my attention and to Shih Fang-long for help with the translation.

[17] Cannibalism is the most extreme inversion of biological reproduction, survival at the expense of the unburiable dead. Thanks to Mark Auslander (6 April 2006) for highlighting this. Children in Chinese rituals are incomplete humans and given a cursory burial anyway. Cannibalism of adults would, in this context, be an even greater shame.

[18] This element of the rite was remembered by the name given to the small paper and cane soul-houses provided for the orphan ancestors: *o'kham* in southern Fujianese. 'O' – black – refers to the orphan souls, not to the colour of the paper houses. The rite was part of the general salvation (*pudu*), conducted in the seventh lunar month of the year in which the genealogy had been restored and inaugurated, and included the merit making (*zuo gongde*) rite of rescue of souls from purgatory. Rites were performed for the unfortunate ancestors collectively by the whole lineage and individually by their families. It was pointed out that during family mourning rituals of merit-making it is normal anyway to include songs about ancestors' hardships and urge those who had died more recently to help their more wretched forebears (interview with Wan-sheng and the village cadre, 6 April 2004). In Taiwan, the name for the whole rite of inaugurating an ancestral hall is Ancuo Dadian – Great Rite of Pacifying the Place.

Conclusion

There is a generation gap in both China and Taiwan across which personal transmissions of the respective catastrophes are almost entirely filtered out. But there are now written records of some testimonies, and others are being and will be compiled.

The population that starved in the famine was not a categorised and targeted population, as were the Luku villagers in Taiwan, who were listed participants in a 'Communist' base. In the case of Luku, the naming of the Incident as part of the White Terror has, as has the naming of the Cultural Revolution in China, released the representation of those who suffered to write, speak, and be represented. Even though the writing of full historical accounts of the Cultural Revolution is still forbidden, ways have been found to publish personal records, fictionalised, or accompanying old photographs, or in histories published in Hong Kong.[19] The famine has far fewer such records but neither have yet had their own history in China.

Naming is a political historical act, driven by many considerations, not just by the victims' claims on recognition. But the victims become an important part of the politics of history involved in the naming of the past. When there has been no naming, as in the case of the Great Leap famine, the fact that the victims are anyway not designatable as a category or group adds to this negative effect. What is remarkable in both these case studies, despite the naming of the White Terror in Taiwan, is that, without a politics to spur the rewriting of history, the official, school transmission neglects them both.

On the other hand, written record and the politics of history and public memory could be the relatively exclusive concern of intelligentsia and government, while other forms of transmission such as food stories, feeding itself, and ritual are sufficient for those outside the political class and the intelligentsia. In Taiwan, the Compensation Fund and Professor Zhang and his co-researchers use the term 'victim' *shounanzhe* (literally 'recipients of difficulties'). The victims are remembered by name in his two books and they were named in a service conducted for all victims of the White Terror, held at the instigation and expense of the Compensation Fund in 2004. But the Luku victims are like the vast majority of the victims of the Great Leap famine in inscribing themselves in their own ways through death rituals, family remembrance, and local shrines, not in the media of mass communications, nor the inventions of civic religion. They are commemorated in what tourist guides, the Memorial, TV documentaries on the Luku Incident, and the books about them say. But they are distanced from these and from the politics of rectification. They keep a large distance between this public memory and what they can tell and probably do talk about among themselves.

Stories of fatal privation in the famine might be told and shared in the most severely affected villages and regions, as I have already indicated. But even in the Gansu village about which the anthropologist Jing Jun writes so eloquently and where the famine was much more severe, it is part of the experience of being

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[19] See the papers in the 2005 Symposium on History and Memory, organised by the Matteo Ricci Institute, Macao, presented by Michel Bonnin, Xu You-yu, and Ding Dong.

dislocated by the completion of a water-control project. It is part of another story. In areas such as Quanzhou there were only a few, northern mountainous areas where starvation was a vivid and prominent part of the experience of the Great Leap Forward. Where we interviewed, starvation, as distinct from malnutrition, was not common or did not occur at all. In Quanzhou, it is much more likely therefore that the Great Leap Forward will merge into the past before Deng Xiaoping, into a past that is known both as hopeful and as disappointing in relation to a new state of a strong China.

However they are recalled, one thing stands out: that the experience was itself saturated in a politics of promise and disappointment associated with 'Communism'. We know in the case of the Great Leap Forward what were the promises of social justice and eventual prosperity given in Party campaigns. We also know that they were almost immediately dashed and that prosperity, although not social justice, came later, benefiting another generation. In the case of Luku we cannot tell from anything said to us directly what were the longer-term senses that the villagers had of their own lives, what aspirations they might have entertained when receiving the little bit of money they were paid by the leaders of the Communist organisation and when the school children of a few selected families were given secret, out-of-school moral and political education by the leadership of this rudimentary base area.[20]

It may be that the careful records of Professor Zhang and others, including Shih Fang-long's and mine, contain hints at another possible articulation of their history. It would include acknowledging the political indeterminacy of the time, the different directions of personal aspiration and government to which the Luku villagers were being introduced. For some of the prisoners, it would include what they learned from fellow prisoners about Communism. It would certainly include their identifications with a locality, which has been passed on to their children. Pride in their locality combines with and at the same is distanced from that locality as a tourist destination. It may happen that in a changed political situation, the possibilities of recalling the Luku Incident as part of the history of social movements in Taiwan, or as something distinct from the White Terror, or as a more social issue than one of Taiwanese self-identification, will release other ways of recalling the Incident, at least as one of local significance.

Similarly, it may happen that in some political change the Great Leap famine will be named as a great and deplorable historical event. If that happens, whether or rather how that will change the way its victims and their descendants recall it personally and locally will be a matter of great interest. As in Taiwan, the accumulation of materials for such a history is taking place. The materials are there for some kind of reopening of a number of silenced issues: the arbitrariness of Land Reform, pre-Cultural-Revolution Anti-Rightist campaigns, the famine, and the massacres of June 1989. What is remarkable is that from such different political events and in such different politics, remnants still exist of the fear that had, at the time, silenced transmission outside the closest social circle of those that experienced them.

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[20] According to interviews with two who received this political education and another whose elder brother did.

In both cases this is an effect of current politics, despite the changes undergone since the original event. Recalling an event over more than one generation can never be without some degree of politicisation. No history is apolitical. Personal stories are always and only of interest to an audience or readership for current reasons. The significance given them by their authors is always coloured by a current politics and its moral dimensions and according to what listeners identify from their own experiences with the stories they are told. But I would say that the interpersonal transmission divulged from the reserve in which it is kept from a current politicisation can be stored in archives. Those archives, such as websites or copies of TV documentaries, are marginalised by currently dominant standards of significance in both mainland China and in Taiwan. But the marginalised archives can in turn become a resource for new directions of historical signification, politics, moral appraisal and identification. The reasons for having to hold them in reserve are always charged with emotions, of fear or shame, of anger or despair, of disillusion or of grievance. And since some of these emotions are conveyed in the stored accounts, they can be recharged by the emotions that drive the writing of new histories and political re-directions in which they become a resource.

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Death-Scapes in Taipei and Manila: a Postmodern Necrography[1]

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This paper analyses changing geographies of disposal in the urban centres of Taipei in Taiwan and Manila in the Philippines, specifically shifts from burial to cremation and the extent to which such shifts reflect changing patterns of residence, fraternity, mobility and conceptions of locality in both places. In this essay the term 'postmodern' will refer not to a body of theory but to material transformations in the structuring of the economy and polity marked by migration from rural areas to cities and the production of places and localities where 'traditional' signs of hierarchy, memory and belonging appear to have been abolished. It has been claimed that the analysis of social practices surrounding death 'throws into relief the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences' (Huntingdon and Metcalf 1979: 25). However, I shall argue that conventional anthropological approaches to death practices – which tend to focus on ritual rather than the sites of disposal – need radical revision in order to satisfactorily account for the kinds of changes that are specified over the course of this essay. Indeed, the privileged contextual horizon for conventional anthropological and sociological approaches to death, dying and disposal has been the concept of 'culture'. I will argue that the structuring of contemporary death rituals in both Taiwan and the Philippines is not local culture but rather, on the one hand, the modern state that seeks increasingly to intervene and regulate the minutiae of daily life and, on the other, the 'market' which continuously opens up new areas to the grasping hand of capital accumulation.

This paper analyses changing geographies of disposal in the urban centres of Taipei in Taiwan and Manila in the Philippines, specifically shifts from burial to cremation, and argues that such shifts reflect changing patterns of residence, fraternity, and belonging in both places.[2] In this essay, then, the term 'postmodern' refers not to a body of theory but to material transformations in the structuring of the economy and polity marked by migration from rural areas to cities and the production of places and localities where 'traditional' signs of hierarchy, memory and belonging appear to have been abolished.

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Death and reciprocity in Taiwan

Normative anthropological approaches to death rituals in Taiwan can be classified into three interlocking types. All are defined by a 'functionalist' mode of analysis that ultimately understands the ritual practices surrounding death as instruments of social control and as such focuses on their role in the creation and sustenance of collectively held sentiments and values and the coding of hierarchically structured social relationships (Bloch and Parry 1982: 38-42; Watson 1988: 1-19). For the first type, the study of death rituals reveals that the conception of the spirit-

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[2] It may be that the juxtaposition of Taiwan and the Philippines constitutes a heinous transgression of disciplinary boundaries: the Philippines belongs to the Southeast Asianists while Taiwan to the Sinologists. Indeed, it might be argued that such an arbitrary juxtaposition illuminates only the contingencies of a life – my life – where the boundaries between Taiwan and the Philippines have become confused. Or perhaps it is otherwise: as the logic of area studies crumbles in the face of the interconnectedness of the world, perhaps it is in such juxtapositions, which perhaps owe something to the technique known as 'collage', that different questions can be posed about the sense and meaning of locality in a post-modern world.

world commonly found in Taiwan is a translation, metaphor, or reflection of the imperial bureaucracy – in other words, that the imagining of the imperial state plays a structuring role in the organisation of the spirit world and its articulation with the world of the living (Feuchtwang 1974: 128-129; Wolf 1974: 179; Sangren 1987: 52). For the second type, the study of death rituals discloses an over-arching view of the cosmos defined by the concepts *yin* and *yang* through which social hierarchies such as those allegedly extant between men and women, seniors and juniors, living and dead, and ancestors and ghosts are naturalised, legitimated and negotiated (Thompson 1988: 71). For the third type, the analysis of ritual practices surrounding the burial and disposal of the dead opens out onto the vista of an underlying Chinese cultural logic of social reproduction defined in particular by the lineage and the patriline (Freedman 1958: 77). Thus, the imperial state, a conception of the cosmos, and the patri-lineal system of kinship emerge as the formative horizons and units of society and culture in Taiwan. Conventional research into death and disposal in Taiwan has as such assumed that the analysis of death rites provides, as it were, a window through which to discern an underlying and distinctively 'Chinese' 'socio-logic' (Sangren 2000) or grammar through which society and culture in Taiwan are articulated (Hong and Murray 2005).

In normative accounts of Chinese religious culture, grave sites and the bones interred within the grave are regarded as channels for *qi* or energy that can be transmitted on to the descendents of the dead. However, bones as a source of power and connection are ambivalent: handled inappropriately such sources of power, energy, or potency may cause harm to those who may try to benefit from them. Importantly, the potentialities that the dead have for the living are embedded within a religio-cultural matrix pervasive among Chinese-speaking peoples through which the environment is ascribed, perhaps for want of a better word, 'sacred' significance. *Feng shui* – which literally means 'wind and water' – refers to practices for the selection of sites for dwellings for both the living and the dead, as well as the correct alignment of elements within and outside the home for the maintenance of the unity and harmony of *yin-yang*:

> The dwelling – a house, a grave, a village, a town, or a city – becomes a centre around which the landscape is shaped, the central focus being the gathering point of the landscape's energies. It becomes a place centred on what the Chinese call *xue*, translated as a 'lair' because it is like a cave, the hole within which the dragon of the landscape dwells (Feuchtwang 2004: 166).

The conception of *yin* and *yang* is the imagination of a cosmic order of forces or energies conceived in terms of harmony and equilibrium. Ideally, the human world reflects this cosmic order and, as such, human relationships and behaviour must be carefully observed and regulated to ensure that no transgression of this order occurs. Where transgression does occur, imbalance and dis-equilibrium in the form of calamities, illness, and misfortune are the likely results and, as such, corrective ritual practices must be undertaken to re-establish the concordance of the human realm with the cosmic order. Confucian notions of filial piety (*xiao*) are to be understood as rules and regulations for the maintenance of balance and reciprocity in the human world, in particular relations between juniors and seniors,

women and men but also, and importantly for the purposes of this essay, between the living and the dead.

As such, the living and the dead do not reside in separate realms but rather along an ordered continuum of debts, obligations and reciprocal practices through which the order of the cosmos and the order of human affairs is sustained or nourished through time. Anthropologists and sociologists have produced an invaluable mass of literature that describes this normative 'Chinese' conception of the cosmos, and which claims to reveal 'a unified set of cosmological assumptions' (Sangren 1987: 51) and 'an underlying logic' (Tong 2004: 3) discernible in the practice of so-called ancestor worship or veneration:

> From the formal point of view, ancestor worship may be divided into (1) the funeral rites, (2) the mourning observances, and (3) the continuing sacrifices to the *manes* (spirit of the deceased). From the functional point of view, these practices serve to express the grief of the survivors in accepted or ceremonial manner; to help the spirit of the dead in its progress through purgatory; to give peace to the *p'o* (*yin*) soul in the grave and forestall its becoming a malevolent ghost; to obtain the blessings of the *hun* (*yang* hence *shen*) soul for the family; to give the family and lineage a continuing sense of wholeness; and, of course, to demonstrate the love and remembrance – whether real or affected – in which the family continues to hold its deceased members (Thompson 1996: 44-45).

These normative or synchronic snap-shots of a whole Chinese social or cultural logic, however, tend to ignore or deny significant shifts in the organisation and production of landscapes and dwellings for the living and the dead associated with urbanisation and the effect these shifts in spatial ordering have on contemporary rituals relating to ancestor worship and the propitiation of the spirits of the dead generally conceived. Indeed, according to Watson (1988) disposal – the expulsion of the deceased from the community – is only one of nine 'elementary features of Chinese funerary rites' (1988: 15) and, whereas the other eight elements are characterised by considerable diversity, the expulsion of the deceased from the living social group is 'orchestrated with considerable uniformity' (*ibid*). The implication, if one were to take Watson's essay as the point of departure, is that the manner of the disposal of the deceased is a rather unimportant feature of Chinese funerals. However, shifts in the structuring of death and disposal have important consequences for thinking about the articulation of social groups to landscape and for the relations between the living and the dead. Yeoh's historical analysis of burial landscapes in Singapore as '*contested* spaces' (1999: 241) sets out the points of departure that this kind of analysis can take: in 1965 in Singapore the vast majority of Singapore's Chinese dead were buried. However, the number of cremations rose steadily through the 1970s and 1980s. The emergence of state agencies to care for the sick (hospitals), the infirm (care homes), the terminally ill (hospices), and the deceased (funeral directors and local authorities) combined to break the hold of 'tradition' and shifted responsibility for the care of the sick, the handling of the corpse, and the disposal of the dead away from the family and on to the state, and according to Yeoh, central to this process was the erosion of regional, ethnic, and family associations that had previously organised and supervised funeral rites and the maintenance of grave sites. Under the rhetoric of

'national development', burial grounds were closed and cleared for the purposes of development (Yeoh 1999: 244) such that cremation has become the norm. According to Yeoh, this has had significant repercussions on the conduct of rituals that traditionally code relations of reciprocity and obligation between the living and the dead, and as such Yeoh focuses on the micro-tactics employed by ordinary people whereby ritual practices are adjusted to fit the new state-managed structures of death and disposal in Singapore.

Death and reciprocity in the Philippines

Very little scholarly attention has been paid to lowland culture in the Philippines and perhaps even less to death practices. Cannell's *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (1999) constitutes an attempt to rectify this and to challenge the assumption that the peoples of the Christianised lowlands have 'no culture worth the name' (1999: 1) and includes close analysis of Bicolaño conceptions of death, the process of burial and mourning (1999: 137).

According to Cannell, a significant feature of lowland, Christianised culture in the Philippines is the stress placed on negotiation and reciprocity between persons and entities of differing status, which is glossed by Lahiri (2002) as a 'pervasive logic of cultural practice' (2002: 45) that is centred in and around local idioms of exchange, debt, empathy, and pity (in Tagálog, *utang na loób* and *damay*). It is this 'logic' that, according to Cannell, defines the relationships between the living and the dead. A typical funeral procession proceeds from the house of the deceased with the coffin to a Requiem Mass at the local Catholic Church where the body and the coffin are sprinkled with holy water and incense and then on to the cemetery, which is usually situated outside of town, for the burial (Cannell 1999: 147). The priest rarely accompanies the coffin to the site of internment unless paid to do so. The early Spanish sources suggest that Filipinos believed that the dead passed into an afterlife located at the end of a long river journey and that the virtuous dead would enter a 'village of rest' while the non-virtuous would pass to 'a place of punishment, grief, and affliction' (Plascencia O.S.F. in Blair and Robertson Vol. VII 1903-1909: 195-196). With the arrival of the Spanish and the evangelisation of lowland populations, Filipinos were introduced to the notions of heaven, hell, and sin. According to Rafael (1993), evangelisation transformed the notion of indebtedness by conceptualising all persons as in need of the protection of God. Heaven was understood as a site of non-predatory exchange in accordance with an ideal hierarchy drawn between human beings and God, while hell was envisioned as 'exclusion from divine patronage' (Rafael 1993: 179). Heaven and hell, then, were understood by Filipinos very much in terms of local idioms of exchange and negotiation.

A significant feature of funerals among lowland Filipinos is the embalming of the corpse, its display in the coffin at the wake, and the importance placed on its appearance, particularly the concern that any marks of violence, anger, or discomfort be absent. Embalming involves the removal of the stomach and the blood from the body. It appears that pre-Hispanic Filipinos also embalmed their dead and decorated the corpse in order to protect it from attack by a spirit known as an *aswang* which is said to feed on body fluids and is thought to prey on the sick and the newly dead. Embalming is also thought to prevent the 'soul' of the

deceased from returning (Cannell 1999: 150-151). As such, Filipinos distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' deaths, with the latter denoting drawn out or sudden deaths which imply notions of sin, unpaid debts, and the possible presence of an *aswang*. Filipinos also, according to Cannell, believe that the spirit or soul of the dead can haunt family members and *antíng-antíng* or amulets may be worn to protect living family members from the unwelcome and dangerous attention of the dead (Cannell 1999: 154).

   Critically, one of the most important ritual occasions in lowland Filipino culture is the annual visit to the cemetery held on All Souls' Day, on 1 November. It is believed that the spirits or souls of the dead return at this time and so families go to the tombs of their relatives to keep vigil at the grave, to share food together and to offer food and prayers to the deceased and to clean the cemetery. The dead may not return to the dwelling places of the living but, once a year, the living may visit the dead in their dwelling places.

   In my experience, lowland Filipinos rarely talk about heaven or hell when asked about what happens after death, unless prompted to do so. As Cannell notes (1999: 162), they are more concerned with the relationships between the living and dead, and the importance of their effective separation: too much emotion either side might cause the return of the spirit of the dead or for that matter for a living person to seek death. As Cannell puts it, 'death should mark the moment when the debts of the living and the dying person to each other are settled' (1999: 163) and the embalming of the corpse, its blessing by the priest, internment, and the yearly visit to the graveyard at All Souls are all elements of a logic of reciprocity through which the living and the dead learn co-existence. Further, the beautification of the corpse and the importance placed on the wake and on having a large and noisy funeral all function to transform the newly dead at least temporarily into a patron whose *largesse* attracts followers. Cannell's account – and its veracity is not in question – is intended to reveal an underlying logic to lowland, Christianised culture in the Philippines. But I would suggest that a focus on the changing geography of death leads to some rather more nuanced conclusions.

The new geographies of death in Taipei and Manila

In this section of the essay I will focus on the new 'death-scapes' as evidence for change in the materialisation of space and place in terms of national and global processes of state-sponsored or entrepreneurial re-structuring and re-territorialisation (Eliade 1959; Appadurai 1996; Kong 1999; Gupta and Ferguson 2001; Feuchtwang 2004).[3] In Taipei, pressures of land-scarcity and patterns of

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[3] See also the social geographical approach to Taiwan taken by Knapp (1999) and Edmonds (2001). Knapp argues that 'Taiwan […] has traversed a development path that has strikingly altered its natural environment and given shape to cultural landscapes that resonate both an inherited Chinese character and international elements' (Knapp 1999:4). By contrast, Edmonds suggests that '"globalisation" can be seen as part of the process of "Taiwanisation"' (2001:18). Also of interest is Yip's (2004) exploration of the town: country opposition and its mediation in Taiwan's literature and cinema. Yip traces a trajectory from nostalgia for a rural *gemeinschaft* in the *xiang tu* literature of Huang Chun-ming to the more

migration from countryside to city environments suggest that patterns of residence, fraternity, and belonging are shifting: government legislation has been enacted to force residents to dispose of their dead in ways that ease the pressure on the land as a resource for planning and development. As such, for most Taipei residents coffin burial in a permanent grave is no longer an option, except for those wealthy enough to be able to return their dead to ancestral villages in China. In Manila, while similar pressures of land scarcity exist and where there are comparable patterns of migration from rural areas to urban areas, it is entrepreneurs, often in collaboration with parishes or missionary Orders rather than state agencies, that have stepped in to finance and construct new crematoria and columbaria for the storage of ash-urns.

Before 1983 in Taipei, the disposal of the dead was completely unregulated by the state or by local government, and it was perfectly legal for a family to select a plot of land and use it as a burial site. Since 1983, this practice has been increasingly subject to regulation by the state. In a meeting with the Section Head of Taipei City Government's Mortuary Services Division on September 15 2004, we learned that about twenty years ago the local government began encouraging Taipei residents to cremate their dead by offering cremation and accommodation in a government-run columbarium free of charge. Since 1999 this policy has changed, and these services must now be paid for by the family of the deceased. The city government runs two crematoriums, two columbaria for the storage of ash-urns, and two graveyards, though only the graveyard at Fude to the south of Taipei still has space. Underground burial at Fude costs NT$220,000. However, after seven years – the time at which the deceased would conventionally be exhumed and the bones cleaned and collected in preparation for secondary burial – the grave plot returns to local government ownership. There were fifty-three further graveyards in Taipei, although these are being cleared gradually as the city expands. Since 1989, burial in any of these graveyards has been forbidden by law. Nine have since been removed, three have been partially cleared, and two have been converted into parks.

The local government is also attempting to promote three new methods of disposal: these are 'tree burial', 'flower burial', and 'sea burial', and these new forms of disposal were justified to us precisely in terms of the saving of land/space. Thus, in our interview with the Head of the Mortuary Services Office at Taipei Funeral Home No. 2 on September 22 2004, we were informed that while 100 square metres of land could (only) accommodate approximately 25 underground burials, the same area could accommodate around 400 flower

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ambivalent representations of rural and urban life in the films of Hou Hsiao-hsien. With regard to the Philippines, Hedman and Sidel (2000) argue, with regard to the boom in the construction of shopping malls in Manila that 'malls have tended to create hermetically sealed "city-within-a-city" utopias remote and removed from traditional Philippine small-town plazas or urbanised "downtowns" with all their reminders of secular and ecclesiastical power hierarchies, social fragmentation, and political struggles. By the same token, the malls have also increasingly threatened to vacate the old city centres and, as a result, empty notions of national citizenship from the kind of lived experiences without which subaltern historical memory fades and the collective will for political change languishes' (2000:133).

burials or in the region of 30,000 ash-urns stored in a columbarium. Local government officials have estimated that the local government columbaria will be full twenty years from now and, given that there are at present no plans to build any more, there is a need to develop new methods of disposal (However, an official at the Mortuary Services Office would later inform us that there are about forty privately-run columbaria in Taipei, most of which are owned and run by Buddhist organisations). As such, these new burial practices have been available free of charge since November 2003. Importantly, these methods of disposal were developed as a result of enquiries into disposal practices in Australia. Until the date of the meeting there had been 128 so-called tree burials, five flower burials, and five sea burials. By the end of April 2006, these numbers had increased to 426, 19, and 52, respectively. Sea burial involves taking the ashes of the deceased some sixty kilometers out into international waters and scattering them into the sea. If flower burial is chosen, the ashes are simply scattered over a flower bed. Tree burial involves placing the ashes of the deceased in a bio-degradable container which is then 'planted' under a tree. Three kinds of container are available to choose from: one is plain, another is decorated with Buddhist/Confucian imagery, and a third kind features Christian symbolism. In these latter instances, these burials occur in a garden specially designated and managed by the local government for this purpose. Interestingly, in July 2004 Taipei local government approached the local district authorities in the city asking them to select local garden areas for tree and flower burial. The response to this request was overwhelmingly negative. The reason given for this was that such garden-grave sites would constitute a transgression of the fundamental notion that the living and the dead should occupy differentiated dwelling spaces.

We visited the garden and, like a traditional graveyard, it is situated well away from the dwellings of the living next to Fude Ling Gu Lou in the hills to the south of the city. Interestingly, it is referred to not as '*gong mu*' which means 'graveyard' but as 'Sheng Ming Ji Nian Yuan' which means 'Garden for the Commemoration of Life'. Nearby, a park has been built. The point to note here is the perhaps less than subtle attempt by the authorities to try to transform, through re-naming, the prevailing conception of the dead. Death is neutralised into a remembering that conjures no special prohibitions or fears. On a wall encircling the garden are plaques bearing the names and dates of the deceased buried there. An inspection of the plaques showed that those buried in this garden consisted largely of distant or forgotten ancestors, children, those who had died 'bad' or anomalous deaths, and Christians. This again is significant: the majority of these dead fall outside the coded form of remembering that ancestor worship prescribes. The low take-up rate for these new garden burials and the types of dead buried therein suggest that Taipei residents are as yet unwilling to accept or adopt such measures for the disposal of those considered to be ancestors.[4] Indeed, the geomancer introduced to me by my field-work assistant was positively appalled at the prospect of these new forms of burial but also at a perceived double-standard: wealthy families are allegedly still able to bury their dead underground while the mass of ordinary people must make do with a mode of disposal somewhat less auspicious and,

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[4] However, there are now plans to develop a second much larger memorial garden near the current site by October 2006.

from his point of view, positively detrimental to their well-being. Other individuals articulated similar sentiments, suggesting a class-status axis in Taiwan that seems most readily visible to upwardly mobile Taipei'ers.

We also visited two columbaria, one managed by the Zhongtaishan Buddhist organisation at Wan li in Taipei county, northeastern Taiwan called 'Tian Xiang' or 'Heavenly Fortune' while the other, also at Fude, is managed by the local government. The local government columbarium at Fude houses two types of urn: bone-ash urns of which they had 61,967 in September 2004, increasing to 68,339 by April 2006, and secondary burial urns which numbered 22,457 in September 2004 and which had increased to 22,891 by April 2006. The total number of urns stored was 91,230, with a total capacity for 108,732. At the Zhongtaishan Columbarium 'Tian Xiang', there are some 30,000 spirit tablets of family lineages, spirit tablets of individuals, and spirit tablets for *yuan qin zhai zhu* (those deceased to whom some debt is owed). Bone-ash urns are stored in the basement of the building. Spirit tablets marked with a strip of yellow are also accommodated temporarily during Dharma Assemblies and other merit-making activities.

Both buildings are huge atmospherically-controlled environments housing vast rows of lockers in which are stored the ash-urns of the dead and which bear a strange and uncanny resemblance to enormous apartment blocks or hotels. In *Alternate Civilities*, Weller juxtaposed temple worship as the expression of local identity and belonging with popular Buddhist groups and movements such as the Ciji Merit Association whose membership is voluntary and which bring together geographically dispersed individuals who share common beliefs, values, and sentiments in order to engage in varying forms of social action – groups and movements that, according to Weller, define 'new kinds of communities no longer based on local geography' (1999: 88). Likewise, Jordan (1999) has argued that 'high mobility makes physical place less salient' (1999: 153) noting a shift from deities of locale as nodes of religious belonging to island-wide movements and groups that draw individuals together from diverse areas through shared belief. If religious affiliation, then, is no longer determined by locality – indeed, if religious belonging, like national belonging, is a belonging in anonymity – so the shift from underground burial to the storage of bones and ashes in vast columbaria constitutes one element in general and anonymous processes of spatial redistribution and re-composition. This spatial re-ordering and consequent reformulations of belonging and fraternity reflect rural-to-urban migration and diaspora whereby community ceases to be articulated in relation to a fixed locality. For example, residents in apartment blocks in Taipei come from disparate villages, towns, and locales, and, similarly, the ash-urns stored in Taipei's columbaria reflect these new patterns of movement and settlement.

This also has consequences for the manner in which memory is encoded. Although graves are the markers of subjective and family remembering, graveyards are sites and vehicles for social memory that are, at the same time, 'maps' of local hierarchies and networks. As Taipei's graveyards disappear, giving way to the new burial sites and columbaria, memory markers are all but abolished and memory ceases to be tied to a fixed locality and itself becomes mobile, particularly with regard to portable ash-urns stored in columbaria, which can be moved around at will.

The storage of ash-urns in columbaria also necessitates the adaptation of ritual practices. During domestic worship and the annual *qing ming* or so-called 'Grave-sweeping Festival', *bai-bai* – the offerings of cooked food, incense, and spirit-money – are conventionally made to the ancestors. However, in the Zhongtaishan Columbarium offerings are rather made on a communal altar in what has become a kind of corporate ritual for the dead: regardless of surname or the circumstances of death, the dead are transformed into an undifferentiated and standardised, aggregate mass. Moreover, Zhongtaishan prepares its own offerings of incense, flowers, and such like for families to offer their ancestors, graded in terms of expense and merit to the deceased and the deceased's descendents and relatives such that the offerings themselves have taken on the character of a transaction stripped of affective content. In the local government columbarium, there are also communal altars and huge incinerators for burning spirit-money and spirit clothes, and families are encouraged to make their offerings on a communal table.

In the Philippines, internment in a Roman Catholic cemetery is the traditional manner of disposing of the dead. Usually, the cemetery is located well away from the church at the edge of the town, surrounded by a high wall and not, as a rule, frequented by relatives or friends of the deceased except on All Souls Day. Cemeteries are typically devoid of visitors and appear rather neglected places, while within their walls squatter families usually scratch a meagre living doing odd jobs such as clearing litter, cutting back weeds, and maintaining the tombs. What I found particularly intriguing, after visiting the cemeteries in Pasay in Manila, in San Pablo City, and in Los Baños, was the manner in which the layout of tombs constituted a kind of anatomy of hierarchy or a map of local status relations. In all three of these graveyards the largest tombs and mausoleums were positioned at the centre, while the coffins of the poorest were stacked, one on top of the other, at the edge, against the cemetery wall. In San Pablo the mausoleum of the Fule family was located at the centre of the cemetery, the Fule family being the largest and most powerful landowning family in the area. Radiating outwards from this centre of power the tombs grew smaller, indicating the decline in wealth and prestige of the deceased as the distance between them and the Fule tomb increased. Each of these three cemeteries, it seemed, could be viewed as a microcosmic representation of local Philippine society, a society in which status and prestige is worked out in terms of an individual's proximity to powerful families and individuals.

Cremations, ossuaries, and columbaria are not entirely new to the Philippines. Indeed, cremation has long been an option, particularly for Filipino-Chinese. The Paco cemetery in Manila was built in 1823 and has various wall niches for the dead and a chapel in the centre, though most of the niches are empty. It was originally built to accommodate victims of a cholera epidemic, while the Chinese cemetery in Manila also has wall niches and a crematorium in its grounds (Rodell 2002: 93). Outside Manila in the province of Laguna, Nagcarlan Church is famous for its crypt in which the remains of monks are buried and the wall niches outside the church in which the remains of parishioners are accommodated, though it is unclear whether the church is an ossuary and contains bone remains, or a columbarium containing ash remains. These sites are unusual in that they all offer – and have done for some time – a mode of disposal at odds with the conventional

Catholic preference for burial.[5] Nagcarlan is also unusual because of the proximity it inscribes between the dead and the living, though I was able to find other exceptions such as St Therese Church in the grounds of UP Los Baños where a memorial garden for the accommodation of bone and ash remains is similarly attached to the church.

Nevertheless, in the last seven years there has been a mini-building boom in Manila: many of the old cemeteries are full, as are the memorial parks that emerged in the 1970s and which offered a well-maintained, clean, and secure resting place for the deceased. As such, *entrepreneurs* – typically in partnership with local parishes or missionary Orders – have begun building large columbaria for the storage of ash-urns. Some of these buildings also have their own crematoria. As such, the Columbary of the Divine Mercy Shrine, the Sanctuarium, the St Gabriel of our Lady of Sorrows Columbary, the Santuario de San Vicente de Paul Columbary, and the columbary at the San Agustin seminary are all in or near metro Manila and are all examples of, on the one hand, a new kind of real estate business and, on the other, a new kind of life insurance package, with the parish or Order benefiting in terms of a percentage of the profits and/or a commitment to the construction of new Church properties. Niches are typically sold either on a 'pre-need' or 'transfer of rights' basis with sales of the latter outstripping the former. Purchase on a transfer of rights contract is essentially an investment whereby the investor buys a niche in order to sell it on at a later date, once the value of the niche has increased in value. Indeed, the promotional literature produced by these organisations resembles in many respects literature produced to sell real estate, highlighting the investment dimension and also employing phrases that might equally describe a condominium, a hotel, or even a resort, let alone a columbarium. For example, promotional literature for the 'Sanctuarium' in Quezon City, Manila, describes it as 'a retreat', as an 'investment opportunity', as a 'computer controlled' environment, and as offering 'the comforts, luxuries and security of a five star hotel.' Even the new construction of a memorial park with facilities to accommodate 'ash, bone and coffins' – a partnership project between a local development consortium, Manila city Council, and Mayor Lito L. Atienza, and which is as such a local government and private business initiative – is being marketed along similar lines. Moreover, the salespeople do little to dispel stories of grave robbers and urban myths that tell of families going to the cemetery for All Souls Day only to discover that the tomb where their relative was interred had been broken into and the body removed, though for what nefarious purpose is never clear – the mythology of the *aswang* seems to have become intertwined with tales of unscrupulous doctors and devil worshippers. Most of the columbaria have parking facilities, and much of the sales pitch revolves around the ease with which families can visit to pay their respects to the deceased in contrast to the general chaos of All Souls Day characterised by choking traffic, crowded cemeteries, and noise. They also emphasise the cleanliness and orderliness of the environment in contrast to the generally lamentable state of most if not all cemeteries and the portability of the ash-urn, meaning that not only can it be

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[5] In the Catechism of the Catholic Church it is stated that 'the Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body' (2301). See also the Code of Canon Law and the section entitled 'Ecclesiastical Funerals'.

removed on an *ad hoc* basis to hear Mass (something I witnessed a family do at the Columbary at the San Agustin Seminary), but also that it can potentially be moved from columbarium to columbarium if and when the family of the deceased migrate either internally or abroad. Unlike in Taiwan, where it is the state that has primarily been responsible for providing such services, in the Philippines it is *entrepreneurs* attracted by the possibility of large profits. However, as in Taiwan, the columbarium phenomenon in the Philippines is precisely related to the increased mobility of the population or a segment thereof, where the objective tie between subjective memory and locality is in the process of being severed and which witnesses the production of places that resemble offices, hotels, and condominiums that might be found in any city in any part of the world – in other words of places stripped of the markers of local culture, and where the design values are entirely utilitarian.

The columbaria themselves usually combine outdoor garden spaces for wall niches and indoor spaces which more closely resemble the controlled environments of the columbaria in Taiwan. Indicating the location of each ash-urn is a plaque bearing the name of the deceased, their birth and death dates and sometimes a few words in memory of the departed. The plaques and ash-urns are arranged in rows and although plaques at eye-level are more expensive than those located at ground-level or above head height, nevertheless, the overall impression is of the equality of the deceased. Each plaque is the same size and carries basically the same information: death and the disposal of the dead have been standardised and simplified such that the markers of status and prestige visible in a traditional graveyard are not merely absent but have been abolished.

The question now is which people are choosing cremation and storage in a columbarium over traditional internment? The answer is quite straightforward. The companies building the columbaria and marketing these services are predominantly trying to sell to 'C' class or middle-class Filipinos. The wealthy can maintain the signs of their prestige only via traditional internment; the poor, on the other hand, tend to view cremation as a kind of 'second death' that will annul the possibility of final resurrection, so they are afraid of it and anyway would not be able to afford it. Middle-class Filipinos, however, are more mobile and can afford it: they are buying 'lots' in these new apartments for the dead so they can negate the unbelievable inconvenience of All Souls Day and express their largely unconscious desire as a class to escape the kind of status relations that traditional graveyards inscribe. Unable to resolve the contradictions of Filipino society in practice, they find solace in the resolution of status contradictions in the other world.

One further consequence of the shift from burial to cremation is that the obligation to visit the deceased on All Souls Day is broken. The deceased can now 'hear' Mass at any time, and thus the relation between the living and the dead becomes more personalised and secularised as the form and substance of reciprocity is less and less determined by a ritual calendar and more and more by the vagaries of individualised, urban lifestyles.

Conclusions

In this essay I have analysed changing geographies of disposal in the urban centres of Taipei in Taiwan and Manila in the Philippines, specifically shifts from burial to cremation, to argue that these shifts in both places reflect changing patterns of residence, fraternity, and belonging. Further, I have suggested that conventional 'functionalist' accounts of death practices in Taiwan and Manila, which assume stable relations between communities and territories and unchanging, ritualised reciprocal relations between the living and the dead, require considerable revision in order to account for the conduct of death practices at the new, urban, death-scapes. I have also hinted towards a class-status dimension whereby certain social segments appear likely to pursue traditional interment to preserve the status markers this form of disposal confers. As such, this essay does not simply reproduce the meta-narrative of the collapse of local cultures as a result of global processes of urbanisation and modernisation, but demonstrates rather the contested-ness of such processes.

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The Intrusive Rendering: Dictation of Stereotypes and the Extra-Ordinary

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It is no longer a surprise these days to see a photographic image of a building with a rather dubious existence: whether or not it has actually been built or still exists only as a project yet to be realised. A photo-realistic image of a building that has not yet been realised is conventionally known as the rendering, a practical and effective tool of representation of architectural projects. While contemporary practices heavily rely on a parallel industry of image production for these renderings, this phenomenon has been mostly treated, within the field of architecture, as subordinate to critical design discourses. The rendering comes after the design; it is an image-production akin to an advertisement, a commercial commodity aiming to sell the design, and a visualisation to seduce the eyes of the client and the general public audience.

Out of the many examples of renderings produced for international architectural competition entries, it is often the case that a successful rendering exerts a tremendous power in winning the favour of the jury panel and the public audience. This is particular evident in the context of Taiwan, and at a even larger scale in China. This is the art of rendering that has had a phenomenal effect on the production, perception and valuation of architecture, which confronts the subordinate role of the rendering narrowly assumed within design practices in the West.

This paper examines a lack of awareness of the implications of renderings upon the design development of a project, which is entangled with prejudices formed historically in the discourses on representation in relation to the idea of art and design in the West, going back to philosophical arguments formed in the Classical period. On the other hand, the potentially intrusive role that rendering plays in the design process is investigated in the particular context of Taiwan and China, where the issue of representation has been built upon an entirely different set of cultural criteria. This opens up questions on the condition of the hypothetical in rendering a vision, the co-existence of the truth and the lie, the stereotypical imageries appearing as dictations of meaning and framing the extra-ordinaries, and how all these factors of the rendering sets different judgement criteria on the refinement and manipulation of what is meant to be a 'good' design.

Introduction

Unlike the painter with the brush on the easel or the sculptor with the chisel on the stone, the architect is persistently faced with the difficulty of not being able to work directly on the architectural object of creation, but having always to work through a visual medium of representation. Robin Evans observes this condition of the

architect's creative work in his 1986 essay 'Translations from Drawing to Building' not simply to emphasise the limitation posed, but to explore potentials that are opened up through this necessary process by which architects work through 'simulation' via drawings and models.[1] He states: '[…] for architecture, even in the solitude of pretended autonomy, there is one unfailing communicant, and that is the drawing' (Evans 1997: 155).

For centuries, before the advance of technology allowed the dissemination of visual information to the masses, most construction works were carried out without the support of architectural drawings with which to communicate ideas or methods. Construction works were done following a tradition of craftsmanship techniques, functional requirements and symbolic purposes which were passed down from generation to generation. Few architectural drawings were made and even fewer survived for external public view.[2] Architecture was essentially a constructive practice, and the impression and value of architecture came out of people's physical and sensual experience of the built environment. With the introduction of printing, lithography, photography, and eventually digital technology, architecture's ardent basis in physicality began to dissolve. With these developments, architecture has come to be experienced and valued not solely in the form of physical buildings, but as necessarily accompanied by images and texts. Such a fundamental shift in modes of architectural experience is acknowledged by contemporary architects, as can be seen in a remark by Bernard Tshumi in the 1980s: 'Architecture does not exist without drawing, in the same way that architecture does not exist without texts' (quoted in Forty 2004: 29).

This paper investigates a particular type of architectural representation – the 'rendering' – that has developed tremendously in recent years and now contests the preconceived hierarchical relationship between the design process and its representations. Instead of playing the role of Evans's 'unfailing communicant' of design, the overriding power of the rendering, awash with market expectations and popular imageries, competes with the specialised autonomy of the design process. The design as represented through renderings dissolves the authority of the design as a pure and intellectualised enterprise. Normally in design practice the rendering is expected to appear near the conclusive stage of the design development, but with greater demand for communication with the mass public,

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[1] '[…] the peculiar disadvantage under which architects labour, never working directly with the object of their thought, always working at it through some intervening medium, almost always the drawing, while painters and sculptors, who might spend some time on preliminary sketches and maquettes, all ended up working on the thing itself which, naturally, absorbed most of their attention and effort' (Evans 1997:156).

[2] The concept of 'design' (in Italian '*disegno*' or '*progetto*') in a sense close to our modern understanding appeared only around the fourteenth century within the Italian humanist thinking concerning the artistic creativity of 'man'. Writings by Alberti best illustrate this preoccupation with the development of a whole system of visual representation to make visible a universal and transcendental order of the creation of God. Architectural projects as developed in drawings bring philosophical ideas to visibility through a rigorous and mathematical exercise of measurements, compositions and ordering of relations between parts.

combined with the convenience of modern technology, the more frequently architects resort to renderings. Particularly in places where there is rapid urban transformation and a rapid rate of construction, architects find themselves in situations where the rendering of the design is produced ahead of the design development, so that a simulated complete vision appears before the spatial and functional layout of the building has been worked out. This simulation actively intrudes and upsets the normal routine of design, and consequently the effort of design is directed to support and fit into the projected vision.

To understand the nature of renderings and the intention behind their production, I start by analysing two examples of renderings produced by contemporary Taiwanese architects in recent competition-winning projects. My focus is not on the designs themselves, but on a characteristic formula by which a rendering is constructed that is full of atmospheric effects and visual stereotypes. The image delivers a sense of the design which can be immediately understood and appreciated by the mass public. Through these visual devices, rendering asserts a provocative power to arouse affective responses in the mind of the perceiver – it speaks a visual language different from other forms of architectural drawings such as sketches, plans, sections, and diagrams.

The visual language of renderings is based on pre-existing images: that which you have seen before, historically or personally associated, familiar to public perception and mass-reproduced. The stock of this visual language is circumscribed by social and political conditions of the time of its production. This stock is not exclusively defined by professional specificities of architectural practices, such as spatial elements or construction details. Because of this common base with the popular imagination, the rendering has a tremendous impact upon the design that is outside the control of the architect.

Many architects would shudder at this idea of the rendering dominating over design imagination, and this prejudice can be found at the core of twentieth century Modernism, nineteenth century Beaux-Arts training, eighteenth and seventeenth century Classicism during the Enlightenment, and further back to philosophical arguments formed in the fourteenth century during the Italian Renaissance. On the one hand, a whole sophisticated system of representation since the fourteenth century has developed based on the belief that the essence of the idea of the design is embedded in a graphical matrix of projectional lines, grids, geometries, and proportional measurements. On the other hand, and different from abstracted line drawings, there is a perceived need to produce realistic depiction to communicate the design to the lay public. This type of realistic depiction to communicate design, historically known as 'artist's impression' or 'artist's illustration', was produced to supplement other geometrical line drawings and to enhance the effect of the design with picturesque or sentimental qualities upon the mind of the perceiver.[3] This form of image production has been treated in

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[3] Bob Giddings and Margaret Horne describe this: 'It was the 18th century that saw the emergence of architects who had begun their careers as artists or sculptors, often studying in Italy. Towards the end of the 18th century the Picturesque Tradition, and its fashion for architecture and landscape gardening saw an establishment of designs composed as pictures. The new media and technique of the Renaissance had resulted in greater freedom of expression for the draughtsman and increased stature for the artist. Drawings,

most historical accounts of architecture to serve an artistic function that is separate from the critical architectural content.

However much the rendering has been considered as a compromised form of representation and merely a commercial commodity to sell the design to the external world, some architects have recognised and exploited its capacity to project visionary ideas. I will discuss some images by architects of the Avant-Garde generations in the 1950s and 60s where renderings were produced to allow the dramatic co-existence of the extraordinary vision and the nostalgic view. The significance of their work is that the architectural idea is carried solely by these graphic images; the project stops at the drawings without the intention that they should become real physical constructions. Instead of being a by-product of the design process, the making of the rendering is the actual critical process of design. This provides an alternative account of the nature of renderings in relation to architectural design imagination in the Western tradition.

From an understanding of the role of renderings historically in the West, this paper moves on to examine this type of representation in a wholly different contemporary context: the Chinese-speaking world in the Far East, where, very interestingly, we can see a tremendous surge of the use of renderings at all stages of design. The rapid urban transformation and construction boom sweeping across cities such as Taipei and Shanghai in this region is exemplary in registering the impact of the dependence on rendering production upon the design profession. This can be observed in local practices as well as foreign practices involved in the Chinese market. I will comment on the phenomenal growth of the rendering-production industry and, in the final part of this paper, analyse examples of renderings produced by architects in this region. Specific political, social and cultural conditions surrounding the architectural market of this region allow the rendering to take on the task of an efficient and effective conveyor of the design as demanded by general public aspirations and values.

Instead of the presumed supplementary, artistic function served by the rendering, it now constitutes the site and content of architectural design. This way of working applies to the output of the general architectural field in the region of the Far East and not just to a small group of radical designers. I believe this is what makes the Chinese field of architectural practices a significant context in which to study the way renderings offer an alternative domain of visual imagination and communication that overrides the normally expected routine of design. The investigation of this visual domain and implications in the transformation of the physical environment is central to the argument that this paper will explore.

In the final part, the technical process of producing renderings in Chinese practices is examined based on my own personal involvement with a typical case of project design. It is highly relevant to raise the question of a new organisation of the human sense perception that comes with this dominance of the digital virtual simulation, where not only the design is represented, but also manipulated. This condition of being freely manipulable has a consequence that digital simulations are more impressive as spectacles of technical innovation and less as the faithful

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paintings and physical models, making use of the technique of perspective, were used as a way of presenting ideas and clients, and some beautiful presentations emerged' (Giddings and Horne 2001: 2).

representative of a design concept. Walter Benjamin explains (1999: 216): 'The manner in which human sense perception is organised, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well.' Specific circumstances in the Chinese-speaking context, the demand for the aesthetics of renderings, how they are being consumed and how they manifest a certain ideological aspiration, need to be investigated to understand the relationships between the rendering-production industry and the architectural profession.

The exercise of comparative analysis between patterns of practices in the West and that in the booming Far East does not assume that the East and the West are distinct entities that operate somewhat in polar opposition to one another, such as the exotic 'Other' as portrayed by the Orientalist perspective. The methodology offered by this paper acts as a starting point from which to understand the impact of 3D simulated image-led design criteria as a global issue. Many of the issues at a greater socio-political level are beyond the scope of this paper and are introduced as brief generalised accounts and personal observations. Within the more limited scope of renderings and rendered reality, I wish to argue for a critical re-examination of how the exploitation of the rendering process is transforming the relationship between the commonly assumed hierarchy of the design idea, representations, and designed reality.

The Atmospheric Effect
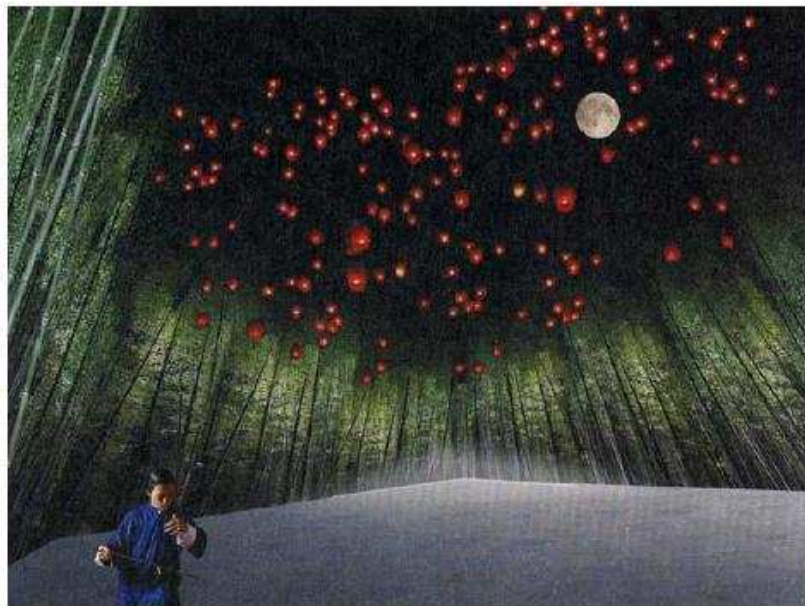
Fig. 1: Rendering of Sky-well night view (© CKPR/Tsai-her Cheng [鄭采和], Taiwan)

Figure 1 (above) was produced by a contemporary Taiwanese architect as part of her design proposal for an earthquake memorial in central Taiwan in 2003. In this international competition, her scheme was given first prize (*Dialogue* 2004a).

The most striking thing about this image is its dramatic atmosphere. An encircling movement conveys a sense of gathering and anticipation to witness something extraordinary. Against the depth of the dark sky, lights are emerging

everywhere from obscure sources, shimmering, reflecting, floating in the air. The grace of the magnificent full moon softly touches the ground, marking a tantalising inward focus. This light embraces the lone figure in the foreground playing a musical instrument. Three simple elements define this concentrated enclosure: below is the stony platform with a rising mist at the far corner, in between is the light dissolving in the depth of the surrounding bamboo forest, and above are a blanket of red lights like fireballs dancing in mid-air.

The purpose of this image is to convey this atmosphere to us the perceivers. While other drawings submitted as part of this design proposal, such as plans, sections and axonometric projections, are for the purpose of giving precise architectural information about the project, this atmospheric image shows very little of such information. This image cannot be accurately measured and cannot act as an instruction to the physical construction, yet it is immensely effective in arousing the interest of those who have no prior knowledge of architecture.

This image creates a memorable impression of the project without the need for the viewer to understand the information presented in other types of architectural drawings, such as the plan and the section, which are shown in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Fig. 2: Section across tilted terrain (© CKPR/ Tsai-her Cheng, Taiwan)

Fig. 3: Plan (© CKPR/ Tsai-her Cheng, Taiwan)

Visual Stereotypes

Another characteristic of Figure 1 is that it has been constructed by putting together visual elements that are familiar and immediately recognisable by the general public. This becomes obvious if we take the image apart (se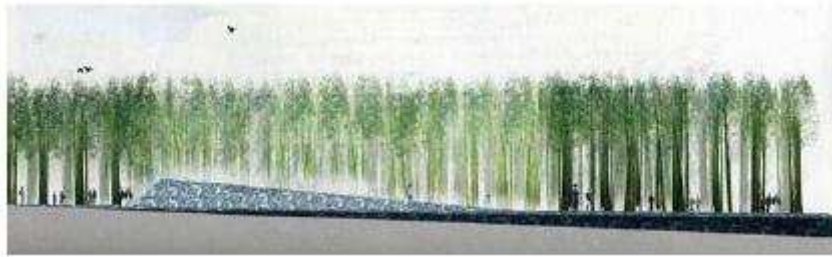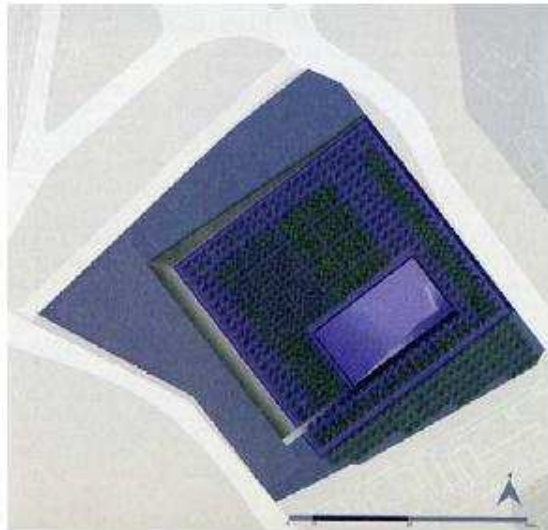e Figure 4, next page), which shows exactly six visual elements, most of which have very distinct cultural connotations:

- Bamboo symbolises endurance and longevity in Chinese culture, and is commonly featured in traditional Chinese paintings where it is associated with the cultivated lives of the Chinese scholars (the literati) and their activities in poetry, calligraphy, painting, music and spiritual meditations.
- Lanterns are frequently used in large quantities on important days of celebration on traditional Chinese calendars. These glowing red lights mark a special festive atmosphere, and are believed to be able to drive away bad spirits and to bring good luck.
- The roundness of the full moon symbolises the moment of completeness when people gather to celebrate. The mid-autumn moon festival is an annual event, on 15 July on the traditional Chinese calendar, when friends and family gather to admire the moon.
- The night sky encircled by the bamboo forest is the ceremonial void alluding to the 'sky-well', a square opening in the roof of traditional temples and dwellings. This spatial feature is central to the concept of the design project, as noted by the architect: the 'sky-well' is the heart of this memorial park.
- In traditional temples, an elevated platform symbolises the earth below, in opposition to the sky above. The platform is the territory of humans, where important prayer ceremonies take place and where offerings are made to the sky, the domain of the gods. In this project, the platform is tilted to represent the ground that is deformed by the earthquake.
- The musician wears traditional Chinese clothing and plays the quintessential Chinese string instrument called the Er-hu. This is a familiar figure of music-making from the street to the stage. Here it suggests to the viewer the experience of an event that could happen in this memorial park.

These elements are visual stereotypes, and each evokes a clear and predictable set of associations from its audience. They are visual *clichés* already excessively quoted in historical or contemporary visual media. On the one hand, this image makes use of carefully selected visual stereotypes to provoke certain nostalgic and idealistic values in Chinese culture. On the other hand, the image overall asserts an atmospheric effect that anticipates an extraordinary experience that the design shall bring. The combination of these two visual strategies, one in parts and the other as a whole, makes this image successful in impressing upon the viewer the distinct and memorable quality of this project. The image is capable of promising how the project would be significant in cultural, social and even ideological terms, beyond the design of the physical object.
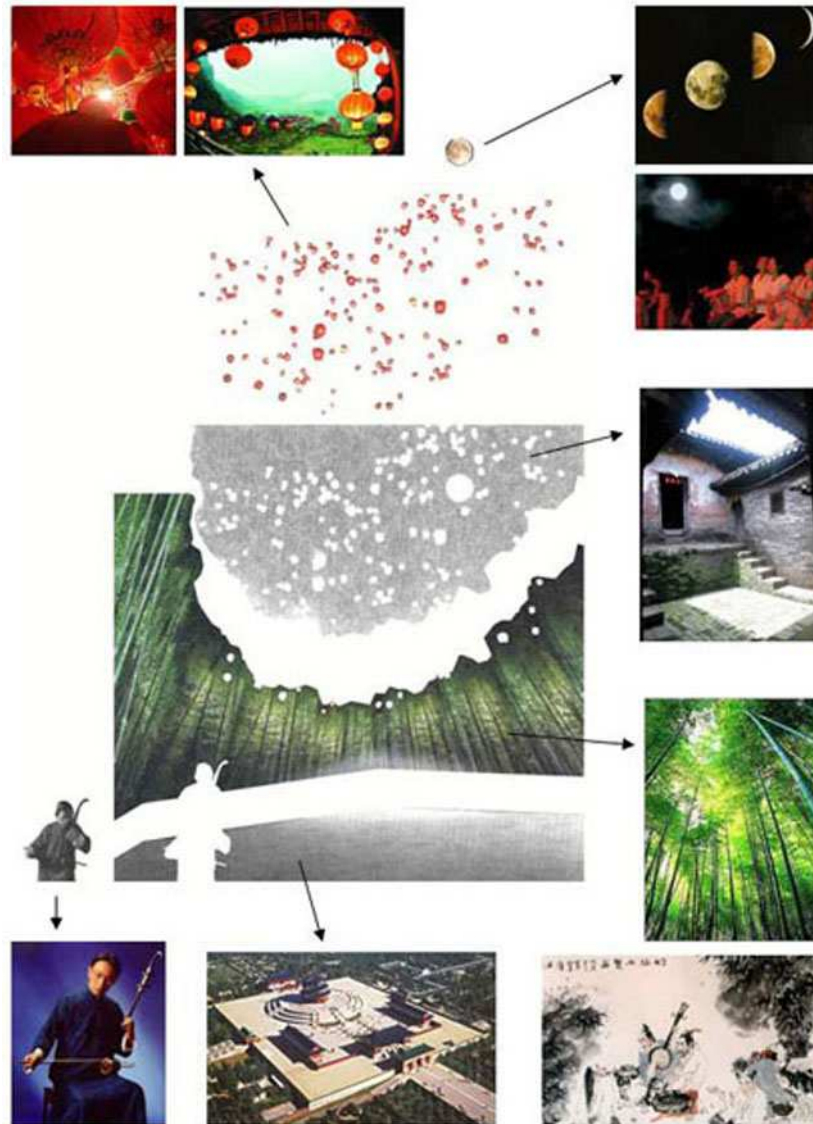
Fig. 4: Analysis of rendering: six visual stereotypes

Overleaf is another image (Figure 5) also produced as part of a submission for another international architectural competition in Taiwan (*Dialogue* 2004b). We see even less indication of a physical construction. The design scheme as represented here has been reduced to strips of overlapping colours along the far horizon, diffusing into the sky at dusk and the reflective surface of the water. The presence of the sail boats and silhouettes of people in the foreground appears to be more substantial than the presence of architecture, which is dissolving into ambiguous light and shadow. Again, we see visual stereotypes at play, and the overwhelming atmospheric effect beholds what the design promises to deliver as a special experience for viewers.

Fig. 5: Rendering (© Original Studio and Cheng Yao-jui Architects Assoc.
[原創空間實驗室和陳耀如建築師事務所], Taiwan)
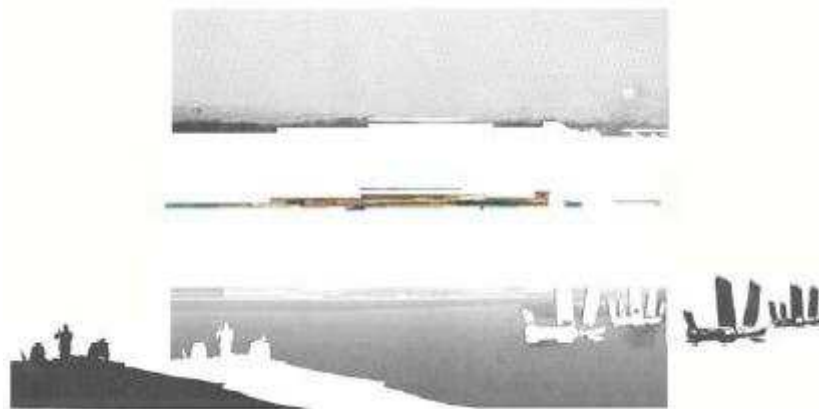
Fig. 6: Analysis of rendering: visual stereotypes

Figures 5 and 6 both create a visual engagement with the viewer that does not require any practical knowledge of the actual design, so in other words, it arouses an emotional response instead of an intellectual response from the viewer. Here we are dealing with a particular way of visualising architectural projects that is called the 'rendering'.

What is a Rendering?

Rendering is an effective way of presenting an architectural project as if it were already part of reality. The image on the next page on the left (Figure 7) shows a design presented as simple objects in a perspective view, while the image on the right (Figure 8) shows the final photo-realistic rendering. Manuals on rendering technique illustrate this process as the merging of the perspective of a line-drawing design and a photograph of the context onto one pictorial field. An illusion of the design becomes reality through rendering.[4] This is based on the assumption that

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[4] 'In the first stage, the aspiring renderer is encouraged to study existing settings through the unorthodox method of tracing or copying from photographs. In the second phase, the renderer is urged to develop the ability to translate features in photographs into three-

the design represented by lines in perspective projection remains an illusion while the process of rendering allows the design to appear in context with a photo-realistic presence. The design as a line-drawing remains abstracted and hypothetical, whereas the design as a photograph is believed to be real.
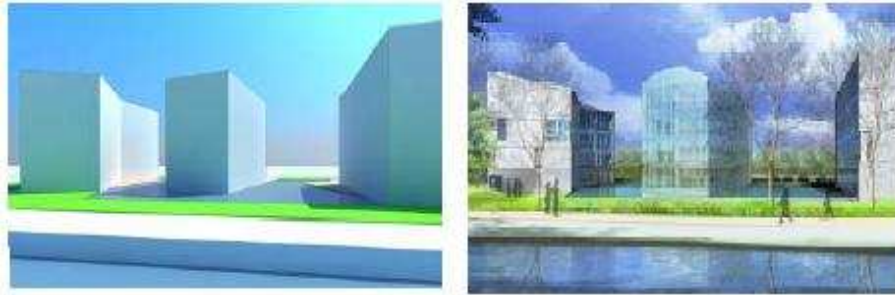
Figs 7 and 8: The process of rendering by computer from basic virtual 3D model to collaging of photo-realistic images, Shanghai (© O4workshop 2006)

The word 'rendering' literally means an act of interpretation, or a translation from one means of expression to another. For instance, the rendering of a piece of music or drama is the performance of it, which involves the interpretation of the work and the communication of its artistic intent. In visual terms, to interpret or to translate means to bring something that is not immediately visible or obviously expressed into a form of presentation that can be seen and clearly understood, i.e. to render something visible. In a similar sense, we can see why 'rendering' in the field of architecture has the purpose of communicating the nature of the design in a visual way that becomes obvious to any viewer, therefore demanding that the image appear as realistic as possible. Rendering translates a mental illusion of a design into a photograph, which is a type of image that we commonly believe to capture a certain truth about reality.

Apart from the name 'rendering', the process of visually merging the design project and a background context onto a realistic pictorial field has also been known historically as 'artist's impression' or 'artist's illustration'. This process can be done by hand or more recently by computer, but the technical procedure is basically the same, involving the setting up of precise perspectives, simulations of naturalistic lighting effects and material textures, addition of details of the background environment and traces of human inhabitations, either as people in activities or furniture objects.

Nowadays, given the tremendous advance in digital technology, it is no longer a surprise to see renderings of architectural projects that appear to be so realistic as to fool the viewer into believing that they are already part of reality, as can be seen in Figures 9 and 10 on the page facing.

By narrowing the gap between the hypothetical and the real, and visually conforming to the most conventional visual form of a photograph, the rendering

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dimensional models. In the third and final phase, the renderer is encouraged to bring idea and the reality together into one believable picture' (Forseth 1991: vii).

Figs 9 and 10: Digital renderings (© Crystal Digital Technology Ltd, China)

offers us a believable illusion. This is precisely where the rendering is fundamentally different from architectural photography, although both attempt to convey certain realistic aspects of an architectural object. It is useful to bring in the analogy of the Image-World that Susan Sontag (1979: 153) speaks about: instead of 'realities understood in the form of images', it is 'now being given to realities understood to be images, illusions.'[5] While architectural photography is to reveal, capture, discover, frame, and clarify realities of a building project through the form of photography, the rendering has the power to override, substitute, intrude, distort, and overwhelm our current reality with the illusion of another reality promised by the building project. The illusion conjured by the rendering is not merely the appearance of a partial capturing of a greater reality; rather, it offers itself as a significant 'other world' of an alternative, and somehow extraordinary, reality.

The message conveyed by the rendering is easily understood since it is visually consumed just like a conventional photograph. As the analysis of the visual ingredients of renderings from above reveals, the image is made entirely of things we have seen before. Since the rendering intends to address an audience that is beyond the architectural discipline, it is self-conscious about the potential of making a popular impression of the project. The use of visual stereotypes secures the immediacy of popular recognition, and hence the image can control the certainty of its effect and emotional response.

The Hatred of Rendering

As I have pointed out before, the rendering is differentiated from other conventional architectural drawings by the fact that it does not work with measured lines, orthographical projections or analytical diagrams, but with the composing, layering, transferring, collaging and blending of flattened two-dimensional photographic images. The differentiation of these two means of visualisation is not only at the level of production method, but also in the presumption of the kinds of

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[5] Sontag (1979: 153) quotes from the preface to the second edition of Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* '[…] our era […] prefers the image to the thing, the copy to the original, the representation to the reality, appearance to being.'

information or message they can carry, and the roles they play in the design process. Furthermore, the distinction between working with orthographical lines and working with flattened images reflects a divide of concern between the representation of the idea (the intellectual/conceptual project) and the representation of the physical object (the corporeal/experiential project) deeply embedded in the design process of architectural practices.

However, between these two means of visualisation lies something more than a categorical distinction. Within typical Western architectural practices there is a belief that certain forms of visualisation are more productive towards the design process than others. [6] A higher esteem is attached to working with the orthographical system of drawings, i.e. to work with plans, sections, elevations, isometric or axometric projections, to develop the architectural idea. To work with flattened images, i.e. the rendering, is restricted to communication with people outside the architectural profession, therefore of a lesser value in relation to the disciplinary content of the design.

This prevalent conviction of the differentiation and prejudice within the architectural drawing systems is best exemplified by Le Corbusier's remark in a lecture presented in Brazil in 1930:

> I should like to give you the *hatred of rendering.* For to render is only to cover a sheet of paper with seductive things; these are the 'styles' or the 'orders'; these are *fashions.* Architecture is in space, in extent, in depth, in height: it is volumes and circulation. Architecture is made *inside one's head.* The sheet of paper is useful only to fix the design, to transmit it to one's client and one's contractor. Everything is in the plan and section (Le Corbusier 1991: 230).

Le Corbusier was one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century, playing a central role in the Modernism movement of architecture in the 1920s and 30s. Clearly, he disregards the rendering and sees that it deserves no place in the legitimate course of the design imagination. The superior *idea* that is inside the architect's mind is conveyed by the plan and section, not the rendering. When it comes to how different forms of representation are valued within architectural practice, Le Corbusier's remark reflects a certain hierarchy where the representation of the *idea* is superior and more essential than the representation of the *object* itself.

In Le Corbusier's numerous writings, he makes extensive efforts to demonstrate to us the importance of the 'plan' as the generator, the basis of all architectural imagination and the decisive moment that determines everything (Le Corbusier

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[6] I use the word 'productive' to describe the process whereby architectural drawings aim towards an eventual physical construction. This is with reference to Robin Evan's statement: 'Drawing in architecture is not done after nature, but prior to construction; it is not so much produced by reflection on the reality outside the drawing, as productive of a reality that will end up outside the drawing […] it is through this inversion that architectural drawing has obtained an enormous and largely unacknowledged generative power: by stealth' (Evans 1997:165).

1989: 47).[7] He emphasises the plan and section as austere abstractions of the design *idea*, which is part of a pure, rational, and scientific process of design. This system is governed by principles found in mathematics and geometry; these lines have definite measurements and they show proportional relationship between parts and the whole. These lines already imply three-dimensional order in mass, form and spatial sequence.

The plan and section manifest the *idea* of the design, and therefore they express the beauty of this process of scientific abstraction, which Le Corbusier believes is the way to achieve architecture in the highest order of human spirit.[8] More importantly, the plan and section are not considered as passive representations of design, but they are analytical and ordering tools to assist the development of the *idea*, which allows the architect to assert a control over the composition and organisation of the whole project. The essence of the architectural design is developed as an intellectual process in the mind and embodied in drawings of plans and sections.

Architects use plans, sections, elevations, axonometrics or diagrams to delineate the objective content of the design scheme, from spatial layout and functional arrangements to construction details. These drawings define the building as a physical object and instruct how each part relates to the whole and how it is constructed and used. To be able to understand these drawings, one requires certain disciplinary knowledge about architecture and technical conventions of how these drawings are set out. These drawings are used mainly for communication amongst those somehow involved with the architectural practice: architects, contractors, builders, surveyors, planners, etc.

By contrast, rendering is a type of architectural drawing that concerns itself with immediate visual effects and common associations through visual stereotypes. Due to its intentional affinity with popular visual *clichés* and sensations, rendering as a form of representation hovers uncomfortably outside formal discourses on architectural design and theory. In typical architectural practice here in the UK, renderings are produced at certain stages when the design reaches a conclusive pause, and there is a need to communicate to an external audience the nature of the project. Therefore rendering exists as an afterthought of design; it is deemed as an advertisement, a commercial commodity aiming to seduce the viewers and sell the design. This is the reason why architects tend to express a general feeling of disdain when they are faced with the production of renderings: it is all too banal to reflect the true essence of the architectural idea.

The Idea in the Lines

To study this dismissive attitude towards rendering within typical Western architectural practices requires going back to a particular moment in architectural history when certain forms of drawing began to be significant in representing architectural ideas. It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace in detail the

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[7] The emphasis on the plan and section can also be found in his *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (1991).

[8] See the section on 'Three Reminders to Architects: III Plan' in his *Towards a New Architecture* (1991: 43).

development of representational systems in architecture, but instead, I will focus on works by a few key figures in architectural history to explain this particular tendency of the design process to rely on the sophistication of the technical convention of line drawings.

It was Alberti in the fourteenth-century Renaissance who stated that the basis of the noble and beautiful art of painting is rooted in nature, which is a relationship that can be demonstrated entirely mathematically. [9] This rationale also applies to architecture, since it was during that time when drawings became an essential medium to express architectural ideas. Alberti's treatises on painting and architecture demonstrate the systematic relationship between lines drawn on a sheet of paper and the representation of the three-dimensional reality around us. Through the development of orthographical and perspectival projections, drawn lines start to take up geometrical, volumetric, and spatial significance. The basis of the philosophical argument at that time was the belief that these systems of drawing are ways of observing, revealing, and representing a certain objective truth about the universal harmony in nature, as God's creation.

Alberti worked especially on the principle of constructing two-dimensional drawings to represent three-dimensional reality in view or envisioned by the design. The notion of using the grid in graphic projection was developed based on the relative positioning of the subjective viewer and the object of view, allowing a systematic means of depicting the reality in view onto a sheet of paper. The plan and section are part of a genre of drawings known as orthographical projections, which in a simple sense means that the object is drawn as if every point on its surface is always perpendicular and of equal distance to the point of observation. Basically this type of drawing appears to be absolutely flat, can be systematically measured to scale and is devoid of any perspectival distortion. Other related forms of orthographical projections include the elevation, isometric and axonometric.

Another type of projection is the perspective, which was developed at the time of the Renaissance also from the relative positioning of a viewing subject and an object in view. It is important to note that perspectival projection was conceived of along the same rationale as orthographical projections, which are meant to reveal the transcendental and invisible order of the universe. The perspective has a higher intellectual significance than simply to capture a realistic view. This is evident in the application of perspectival projection in oil paintings of that time, for instance, in Massacio's Trinity in 1425, where the construction of an illusion of depth on the painting effectively made visible a cosmological order of space and time understood in that period of time.

The central concern of this system of visualisation developed since the Renaissance is the manifestation of the idea, or the intellectual process of design, rather than with the physical reality of the building object. Philosophical arguments laid out by Alberti elevated this system of visualisation to an archetypal and

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[9] Alberti dedicated his book *On Painting* to Filippo Brunelleschi, and in the dedication, written in 1435, he stressed the foundation of art to be in pure mathematics, the key to decipher the truth and beauty of universal harmony in nature. 'The first, which is entirely mathematical, shows how this noble and beautiful art [of painting] arises from roots within Nature herself.' (Alberti 1991: 35). This is a conviction precisely paraphrased by Le Corbusier nearly 500 years later (Le Corbusier 1989: 11n5).

metaphysical status; it is representative of the idea in the mind. Consequently, architectural design can sustain itself solely through drawings within this system of visualisation, and implications at a physical level are secondary in the discourse.

 Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, this system of projected line drawings became more sophisticated, as is evident in design drawings done by Palladio and Vignola. Palladio's design process relies on this system of super-flat elevations to work out proportional and compositional relationships across the building *façades*, for instance in his design of the Palazzo Porto Fest in Vicenza (1549). These relationships are coherent within the graphical system, but for someone standing in front of the real building, the intricate mathematical relationship of the design is difficult to discern. At that time, the grasp of the former was much more important than the concern for the latter; these drawings are means by which the harmonious order of the design at a philosophical and transcendental level is manifested in the physical construct. Vignola's use of cut-away orthographic projection allows the design's plan, section, elevation and volumetric depth of inside and outside to be shown simultaneously, for example, in his drawing of Villa Farnese Caprarola (1617). Yet these graphic representations hardly indicate how the building in reality would appear to ordinary perception.

A whole technological enterprise supporting the design profession can be said to have developed alongside architecture's continuing absorption with the geometrical and projectional translation between two-dimensional graphics and three-dimensional reality. In the second half of the twentieth century, this fascination led to the development of the possibility of simulating three-dimensional reality in a virtual environment. This conveniently removes many obstacles between a sheet of paper and bricks and mortar: now both exist as a by-product of the digital simulation. Nowadays architecture is more favourably imagined and communicated through the domain of the digital simulation than purely through drawings or buildings. The elaborate manipulation of geometrical forms made possible by the digital environment can be seen commonly in trends of designs considered to be at the forefront, justified by concepts described as the morphogenic, the prototypical, the genealogical and the evolutionary. Furthermore, the digital environment allows impossible angles from which to view, and digital animation can offer a dynamic fly-through experience. These all constitute our contemporary sense of perception of architecture.

Architects believe that this process delivers new ideas and new constructs. What they do not necessarily realise is that these images and eventually the physical structure coming out of the virtual simulation are more representative of the sophistication of this technical process, instead of being representative of a genuinely original idea. The public is a mass that is perceptually trained to be acutely aware of the effect of the simulation, yet ignorant of the relevance of geometrical manipulation.

This increasingly internalised system of visual representation in architectural design means that it is more and more difficult for people outside the architectural profession to understand architectural drawings. The information and significant ideas conveyed by these drawings only make sense if one has the necessary disciplinary knowledge to decipher specific systems of line drawings and projections. The development of architecture in the West since the Renaissance

has largely been shaped by this reciprocity between the process of design as an intellectual exercise and the rigorous method of embodying the complexity of ideas in a system of representation through lines and projections. One gains sophistication through the other. This system of representation continued to dominate the practice of architecture and the nature of design well into the Modern period in the twentieth century. This somehow explains the underlying *rationale* to Le Corbusier's sentiment: how the plan and section is privileged and the rendering is subordinate. He says the plan is the basis, and without the plan, there is only the sensation of disorder and wilfulness (Le Corbusier 1989: 48).[10]

This general feeling of esteem towards the abstracted scientific representation (plan, section, and axonometric) and disdain towards the realistic or pictorial representation (artist's impression, rendering) is still prevalent across the field of architecture even now. For instance, in schools of architecture such as the Architectural Association (AA) in London that pride themselves in being cutting-edge and critical, tutors of certain design studios would actively discourage students from making renderings of their design project.[11] If students make a computer model, it is better to present it bare as wireframes or hidden lines. Attempts to simulate lighting and shadows, material textures and adding traces of human habitations in a photo-realistic setting would be objected to. Below are examples of drawings produced by a student, William Hailiang Cheng from AA diploma unit 5 during the year 2004-05. This is a unit with a particular focus on the use of mathematically based computer software as a way to explore the generation of form and spatial construct.[12] Projects by these students, as seen in Figures 11 to 14 on the next page and after, show a preference for line drawings by various techniques through different computer aided design (CAD) software to

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[10] Like many of the dramatic yet contradictory statements in this book, Le Corbusier first claimed that without the plan 'we have the sensation, so insupportable to man, of shapelessness, of poverty, of disorder, of wilfulness', and later on (1989: 51) to say that the plan carries in itself the very essence of sensation. In this way, he was able to keep sensation strictly to the principles of rational geometries and compositional orders, and away from irrational sensations that are ephemeral, mysterious or subconscious.

[11] This observation and the following examples of works from the AA school are based on a discussion in June 2005 I had with students who graduated from Diploma Unit 5 led by George L. Legendre and the MA programme Landscape Urbanism. Both groups rely heavily on specific computer programmes to generate architectural forms and interventions. Despite their different design agendas, tutors from both groups strongly discouraged students from rendering those images that they generated through particular software programmes. George L Legendre's unit explored potentiality of super-surface by using mathematical/analytical models as parametric prototypes, and the Landscape Urbanism programme takes on the task of integrating techniques and modes of operation historically described as landscape design into the domain of urbanism.

[12] In the *AA Prospectus 2006-07*, George L. Legendre states concerning the Diploma Unit 5 studio brief that: '[…] we will restrict the scope of our preliminary explorations to the mathematical/analytic models that yielded the most promising (if still underutilised) prototypes to date. This year we will narrow down our trial objectives to the production of elaborate tectonic arrangements needed to sustain pragmatic architectural proposals.'

indicate layout, geometry, volumes, organisation, and structural and diagrammatic analysis.

   If students use photographs from the site context or related reference sources to make a collage or montage, the preference is to select and crop these images and leave them visibly disjointed on the drawing in order to accentuate the contrast between the unfinished, suggestive quality of the design intervention as line drawings and the fixed certainty of photographic reality. The basis of this visual strategy implies a fundamental differentiation between the representation of the design idea and that of the contextual reality; they belong to separate realms, the faculty of the mind in opposition of the faculty of the experience.

   This naturally leads to the conviction that a drawing of ideas should be enforced through representations of a more abstracted and geometrical nature, and should never attempt to simulate a realistic depiction through painting or photograph. The fear is that if the representation of ideas is too far entangled with the representation of reality, the design imagination would reach a premature finality. Then the project would lose its intellectual purity and the potential to develop further the internal complexity of the originating idea.
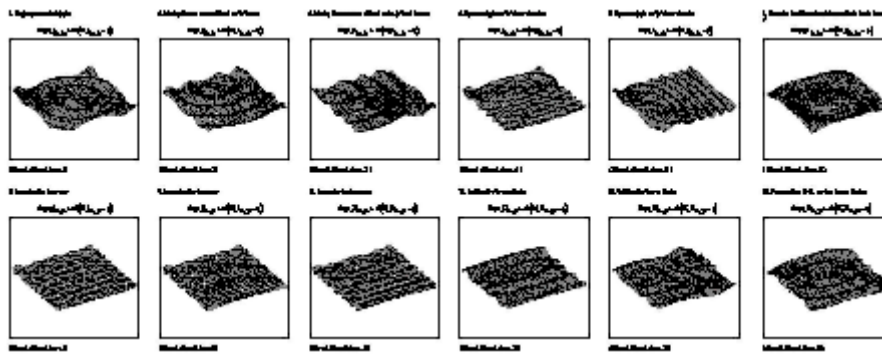
Fig. 11: Wave models generated from MathCAD (for AA Diploma Unit 5), Surf Gallery: An Extension for Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall (© William Hai-liang Cheng 2004-05)
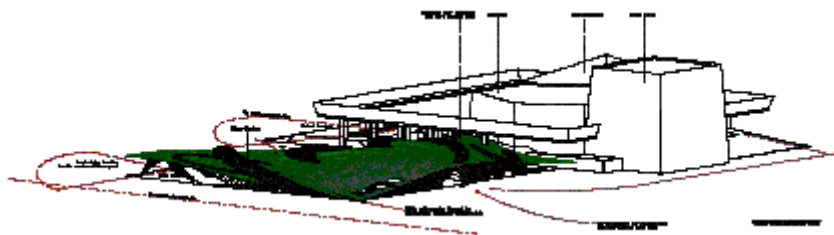
Fig. 12 Combination of wave models developed into building form and programme (for AA Diploma Unit 5), Surf Gallery (© William Hai-liang Cheng 2004-05)
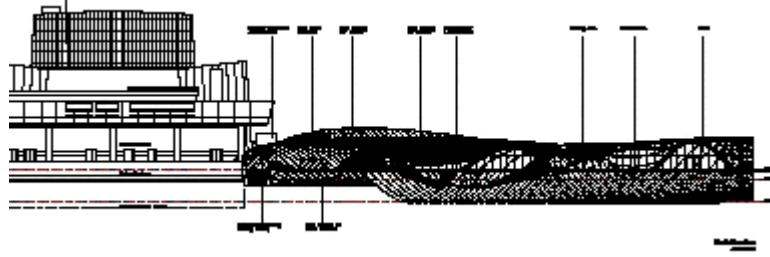
Fig. 13 Section (for AA Diploma Unit 5), Surf Gallery (© William Hailiang Cheng 2004-05)
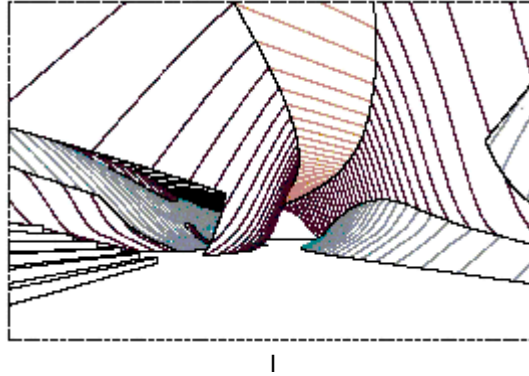
Fig. 14: Perspective interior view from digitally simulated model as wireframe (for AA Diploma Unit 5), Surf Gallery (© William Hai-liang Cheng 2004-05)

Given how much the architect seems to detest rendering, why is it still being generated frequently in design practices? This is because architects themselves are aware that drawings as part of the specialised system of representation, like those produced by students at the AA, are difficult to be understood by the general public without the necessary architectural knowledge. These are the people who may admire the aesthetic quality of the complexity of these line drawings, but they would not be able to decipher them. Despite their reluctance, architects need to establish other means of communication with the mundane world. As evident from the above examples of the praising and loathing of different forms of architectural drawings from the past to the present day, there is a clear reason why this 'other' means of representation is an aspect largely ignored in architectural history and critical discourses.

Photo-Reality: the Truth and the Deception

Why not? Isn't it great? There always comes a point where you don't know whether you're lying, or whether what you've invented is more truthful than you are yourself (Musil 2001: 21). [13]

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[13] This is a delicious and manipulative point in Musil's novel where Törless is tempting Beineberg into the pleasure of deception.

So far, I have used the word 'reality' interchangeably between contexts of both 'the reality in front of our eyes' and 'the reality captured on photographs'. Yet they are in fact two very different realms of 'reality as views' and 'reality as images', although in the popular mind, given the proliferation of photographic images in every aspect of our contemporary lives, these two realms are believed to be one and the same thing. Going back to my previous discussion on the nature of the rendering, the Image-World where reality is understood as photo-realistic images is entirely different from the World understood through being the subject of images.

In this part I would like to further investigate the peculiar characteristic of the rendering which allows co-existence of both the view and the vision in an image, and different 'realities' that a photo-realistic image intends to offer.

What makes a rendering so immediate to common viewers? This is largely because it takes advantage of the way we trust photographs, the innocent snapshot that captures how reality should appear. I said 'should' because our perceptual mechanism has been programmed to accept photography, being by far the most popular visual medium, and to believe its instantaneous documentary power to represent reality in the most truthful way. Yet what better way to deceive us than photography? In 1960, Yves Klein constructed a famous photomontage, 'Leap into the Void', showing himself leaping with arms wide-stretched from a high boundary wall along a small anonymous country lane with a cyclist in the background. At the first instance this image appears to be true because it is like a casual photograph. Yet upon closer inspection, it can hardly be possible for Yves Klein to have leapt off a wall at such a height and not have injured himself severely. The contradiction of this photo-realistic image could not be a more obvious demonstration of this manipulative power of photography to override our normal perception of reality.

For rendering to appear photo-like is only a disguise. It is to appear as a 'view' presented in a familiar way to our contemporary eyes, to conform to what is expected as a popular mode of representation, such as a photograph. In different historical periods, the popular mode of representation may be illustrations done in pencil or woodcuts, easel paintings in oil, or frescos on a wall. Nowadays, we all take our cameras and snap, and out comes the 'view', a flattened record of what we believe to be a record of reality. Some books on rendering techniques even go as far as to recommend strongly the necessary training of copying from photographs. [14]

But to appear like a photograph is not enough. The rendering needs to project a 'vision', a memorable impression of the design. Before the project is realised, it exists in the imaginary realm, so the task of the rendering is to merge the representation of this imaginary project with a realistic view. The rendering achieves a continuity between the illusion of the design and perceived reality. Camouflaged behind the neutrality of photography, the rendering is after all an artificial construct, a manipulated view of reality that is no longer innocent.

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[14] 'In the first stage, the aspiring renderer is encouraged to study existing settings through the unorthodox method of tracing or copying from photographs. In the second phase, the renderer is urged to develop the ability to translate features in photographs into three-dimensional models. In the third and final phase, the renderer is encouraged to bring idea and the reality together into one believable picture' (Forseth 1991: vii).

In other words, rendering is constructed so that it can cope with the enormous tension between the imaginary project and the reality of the context. However outrageous the idea may be, the image establishes this continuity with the familiar reality, not letting it collapse into mere fictions and phantasms. Therefore the final image accommodates the co-existence of both: the verging towards the common, quintessential, and nostalgic, and on the opposite end the visionary, futuristic, dreamlike, and surreal. Successful renderings keep the tension of an incongruous proximity between these two sensations and skilfully prevent the image from toppling onto either side of them.

The mounting of this tension in the rendering can be of strategic importance, such as the provocation found in Superstudio's 'The Continuous Monuments' series presented in 1969, showing how the contrast between an unusual architectural form and a familiar photo-realistic background is smoothed over to appear as a coherent visual entity.[15] When these two parts, the anonymous scaleless geometrical form and the picturesque Swiss town St. Moritz against the Alps, are separated, neither appears to be anything radical. Yet when Superstudio slices open the scenic photograph and inserts the megastructure, the contrast is extraordinary. The rendering exercise further adds shading on the surface of the megastructure in accordance with the direction of light in this scenic context, and the shadow of the form on the ground or reflection in the water. A smooth visual transition is established between the presence of the drawn megastructure and the photo-realistic sense of the context. One can interpret this image as both familiar and fictional, quintessential and provocative.

As part of the avant-garde legacy, the radical vision of Superstudio remains as graphic renderings. If their ideas had been presented in plans, sections or any other means of projected line drawings, they would not have been able to stir such a sensation of shock and intrigue in the imagination of the viewer. In other words, the architectural statement can only be successfully conveyed by means of rendering, where the tension of an incongruous proximity between the familiar and the fictional is kept and where the provocative vision arises.

More examples of rendering which use similar strategies of visual provocation to convey visionary architectural ideas can be found before the invention of photography. In the eighteenth century, Claude Nicolas Ledoux made a series of drawings to impress upon his audience the design of the ideal city of Chaux, centred around The Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans (1774-1779), as a template of Utopia. I would describe these as 'renderings' because they share similar characteristics to those images I analysed above. Instead of using photography, architects in Ledoux's time used realistic depictions of landscapes or cityscapes by manual draftsmanship in pencil, watercolour or oil painting as the background setting of their drawings. Ledoux's renderings persuasively handle the illusion of his architectural design, expressing both symbolic massing and practical functions, in a harmonious juxtaposition of a familiar and picturesque landscape, complete with animals, lush vegetation and active people. Despite the change of technical tools from manual in Ledoux's time to digital means in our own, the desire to

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[15] This image is taken from *The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings from the Howard Gilman Collection*; Museum of Modern Art exhibition 2002 collection catalogue, New York.

satisfy both the familiarity of a view and the provocation of a vision by constructing a rendering of the project remains the same.

So far we have surveyed a number of examples of images that attempt to convey significant architectural ideas through a process of simulating a realistic view of the project in its context. Such is the task of rendering which operates quite differently from the representation of ideas in the plan expounded by Le Corbusier and in the grid of projection envisioned by Alberti. Renderings are not a result of abstracted geometric investigations, compositions of tectonic details, or the organisation of spatial sequences. These renderings start by acknowledging those images that are already familiar in our minds, given by social, contextual, and personal conditions. These are collected as significant subject-matter of physical environments that existed already, with which the design must interact visually. The designer of the image makes use of these stockpiles of visual conventions to construct a vision that surprises us, superseding our expectations of a normal physical environment. The final presentation must have some sense of visual coherence, by means of a refined photorealistic view, to convince us of a reality that is not yet there and never will be there. Superstudio and Claude Nicolas Ledoux are both masters of such deception of which the rendering is capable.

But the impact of the rendering does not stop at the point of the architectural project. The co-existence of both the realistic view and the fictional vision as a new simulated reality problematises the distinction between experiences of natural reality and experiences of artificial photo-reality. Rendering cuts through the *naïve* trust we have instilled in photographic images because our perceptual framework is confused by conflicting messages: 'This must be real!' and 'This cannot be real!'

Through the eyes of the perceiver, these images not only leave impressions of the physical form and details of the object of design, but also the speculation on transformation that the design will bring to its physical context if it is realised. Rendering puts forward statements that seem to breach political, social or ideological matters, tangling with the larger domain of human expectations – dreams, hopes, desires – beyond the value of the design as a specialised discipline. This capacity of rendering to address issues that are clearly outside the delineation of an architectural design is something well-understood by avant-garde architects. The immediacy of communication as well as the potential for visual provocation allow these architects to use renderings to comment on or to criticise ideologies of the discipline or the society at large.

At this point, I will turn to investigate another context where the production of such rendering occurs at a point when the architectural idea has not yet reach a point of certainty. Although the design is not ready to have a definite visual presence, it is forced into an image by a sophisticated mechanism of photo-realistic rendering production. This is where the rendering process is accentuated to a point of crisis in the design, where the image reinserts itself back to influence the outcome of the design process. The hypothetical projection of the rendering is hijacked and fed back into the loop of design prematurely; instead of saying 'it could be like this', the rendering dictates over the design to say 'it must be like this'.

In the Chinese architecture market, the rendering is a point of eruption where the vision and the statement escape the control of the design. This has significant consequences in how architecture is developed, valued, and criticised in Chinese

context. This hypothetical reality structured by rendering convinces the general public that it stands in its own right and becomes the marker by which the eventual physical construction would be judged in accordance. The effectiveness of rendering is potentially in competition with the effectiveness of the design at the moment of realisation. The rendering runs ahead of the design – is the promise delivered through the image or the built reality?

Dictation of the Rendering Upon the City

> Resemblance serves representation, which rules over it; similitude serves repetition, which ranges across it. Resemblance predicates itself upon a model it must return to and reveal; similitude circulates the simulacrum as an indefinite and reversible relation of the similar to the similar (Foucault 1983: 44).

Fig. 15: Rendering, Taipei 101 [台北國際金融中心]
(© C. Y. Lee Architects [李祖原建築師事務所] 2001)

Fig. 16: Photograph of the Taipei skyline and Taipei 101 (© Doreen Bernath 2003)

Figure 15, above, is a rendering of the tower of Taipei 101, which was produced to impress upon the public that this project would be the world's tallest building. The image's point of view is from a position which is much higher than all the other

buildings except Taipei 101. This exaggerates the impact of the building's height and dwarfs the rest of Taipei. A dramatic sunset is rendered across the sky.

The second image, Figure 16, is part of a panoramic photograph taken by me on a hill behind my parents' flat. I took this photograph without knowing that a rendering had been constructed from almost exactly the same point of view for the Taipei 101 project. My photograph shows that the tower was still under construction and its height did not quite match what had been indicated by the rendering. Despite this small discrepancy, the set-up of both images, one an artificially created illusion and the other a casual snapshot, is almost identical. Two representations of the project successfully converge in our perception as one singular impression. In other words, the rendering and the actual photograph combine to form a seamless translation of the project in our mind from simulation to reality.

The resemblance of these two images is not coincidental. Technology has provided us with a domain of visualisation in the simulated digital environment to perceive all reality. All designs can be presented, analysed, manipulated and reproduced through digital simulation, hence what previously required a leap of imagination between graphics representation and final construction now finds a resistant-free transition within the simulated reality. Rendering represents a point of finality of all possible projection of the project, to which the design and building process has no choice but to follow.

I had the experience of working with one of the rendering companies in Shanghai recently for a new development project. The production involves a streamlined process of three technicians and computers taking on three distinct tasks: the construction of the 3D digital model; the simulation of texture and light on buildings required for particular views; and finally the addition of landscape, background, sky, vegetation and people, using Photoshop to smooth the image with a heightened photo-realistic effect. The process can be seen on the next page. Figure 17 shows the building when it was still at a phase of preliminary massing and site layout, without knowing clearly the internal arrangement and construction details. Figure 18 is how the image appears at the beginning of the Photoshop process, and Figure 19 shows the final version presented to the client. This process took about three full days working with technicians at a time when we were about ten days into the project. Then three weeks later the whole process was repeated again to produce a modified set of images for the next client presentation.

The design team had been highly aware of the immediate need to design through theses images, instead of through plans and sections. On the image, building shape changes, roofs were given angels, windows were located, the building envelope either become more transparent or more solid or more reflective. The judgement criteria are based on the feeling of the whole image: does it look beautiful, does it project the right mood and does it trigger the desired associations in the mind of the viewer? Each scene presented in the rendering is a story in itself, which does not necessarily relate to scenes in other parts of the project. In this process, first of all, the architect is relocated to work at the rendering company to direct the outcome of each image. Secondly, the architect is removed from the instrument of image-making and relies on verbal instructions to the technicians to make the desirable changes. Thirdly, the choice of changes is limited to what is
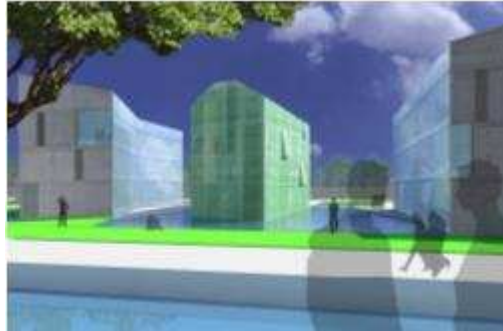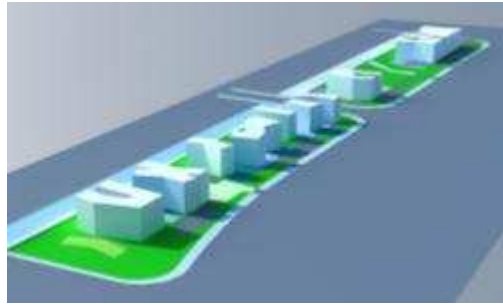
Figs 17, 18, 19: Three-stage process of digital rendering of project by O4workshop,
Shanghai (© O4workshop 2006)

available in terms of tools to control effect in the software and the stock of background images (sky, water, vegetation, material textures, etc.) for visual manipulation. The language of design is based on impressions of already-flattened images, which is very far from the traditional concept of organisation through line drawings and orthographical projections. The organisation of functional and spatial layouts is subordinate to the consideration of the effect of the image.

This is how in general projects are developed in architectural practices in the contemporary Chinese context. The architect is highly dependent on the efficient and effective image-production of rendering at all stages of the design. Many Western architects working in the Far East would not hesitate to admit that this demand for renderings at all stages of the design process has in some way dictated a certain outcome of the design that is beyond the control of the designer. This working process shows an intrusive role that renderings plays in the design process. In the fast construction pace of Taiwan and China, the expectation is to achieve what is promised in the rendering, instead of the plan. This phenomenon

of the production of renderings poses a challenge to the narrowly-defined role of renderings in the design process common to Western practices, as previously discussed.

Crystal Digital Technology (水晶石數字科技有限公司), established in China in 1995, is one of the best-known companies that produce 3D graphics of construction design, from renderings to animations.[16] They began by providing 3D graphics services for the architectural design profession, and went on to develop digital multi-media technologies including movie and TV shots, interactive procedure development and internet image application. Their portfolio includes the project of the restoration of old Beijing city in 2002 for the first time using 3D CG technology, and this was presented in a digital image exhibition called 'Memory of Beijing City'. In 2004 they became the designated 3D CG provider of the 28th World Heritage Conference. Recently they have been appointed to provide 3D animation, graphics production and digital multi-media presentation work for all 2008 Olympic-related projects in Beijing.

Crystal Digital Technology has been so successful and so much in demand that they are often in situations where they would produce images for competing teams on the same architectural competition. For instance, in the CCTV international competition, Rem Koolhaas and Toyo Ito both commissioned Crystal Digital Technology to produce renderings for their designs and at the end they won first and second prizes respectively. Since so much design is done through the medium of digitally simulated 3D graphics, such as the process I described above with the three-stage rendering process, the sheer technical capability of this process overwhelms the extent of our architectural experiences and imaginations. The more sophisticated the techniques of digital simulation, the more it saturates our perception and replaces other natural means of sensual and physical experience. In other words, architectural design can emerge, presented, experienced, and valued solely through the domain of digital 3D simulation. In April 2004, Crystal Digital Technology began to hold competitions for Online Architectural Design of the Crystal CG Cup. Many thick volumes have been published to honour projects with the best simulated 3D graphics, which is quite significant within the field of architecture in China, and also to a certain extent abroad.

The traditional understanding of a medium of representation can no longer provide an adequate platform to explain the way digital 3D graphics have the power to substantially reconfigure our memory and perception of the past (such as a no longer existing city wall) and the expectation for the future (such as a hypothetical building project). Images produced by companies like Crystal Digital Technology are infiltrating all corners of the city: on advertisement signs, propaganda posters, on billboards, glossy magazines and television. Rather than being the by-product of the design process, the presence of these images in turn sets conditions upon the outcome of urban transformations.

Walking around Shanghai, to me it all seems satisfactorily modern, complete with all the necessary elements of a prosperous urban development: the gleaming

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[16] Information on Crystal Digital Technology Co. Ltd is based on the company profile taken from its website http://www.crystalcg.com/ (August 2007).

Fig. 20: Crystal Digital Technology (© Crystal Digital Ltd, China 2007)

tower blocks, the tree-lined streets, the elevated highways, the public squares and gardens, the institutional and the monumental, the buzzing markets and the gated residential areas. This is a somewhat familiar urban backdrop, so far as it has successfully projected an idealised image of progress. Yet there is a disconcerting sense of unfit; quite quickly one notices the oddest happenings and practical readjustments of everyday life behind the projected image.

The integrity of each urban scene – for instance, down the commercial avenue, along the river bank, the central plazas and parks – breaks down when I turn the corner. I can almost sense the 'edge' of the image, the boundary from one collage to another. If the relative movement of the person and the city is reversed – let's say the city moves and the person remains stationary – then the effect will certainly be akin to a parade, a procession of setup scenes, one more elaborate than the next (see Figures 21 to 24 on the next page).

Each scene proclaims to be the most fanciful progressive icon, yet it remains a fragment that does not relate to other scenes. As shown in the images collected in Figure 25 (page 64), points of cracking and disjunction are everywhere: at the foot of these new business towers, in the same physical structure, a tiny room full of dirty equipment happily carries on its car-repair routine. Next door a shop is enveloped in steam from a bakery run by immigrants from the countryside, drying their towels on the stylish glass balustrade of a new residential complex. A sophisticated and

Fig. 21 (left): Rendering of Shanghai cityscape
Fig. 22 (right): Photograph of Shanghai cityscape (© Doreen Bernath)

Fig. 23 (left): Rendering of new highrise project Pudong, Shanghai
(© Crystal Digital Ltd)
Fig. 24 (right): Photograph of Pudong, Shangahi (© Doreen Bernath)

modern system of traffic circulation has been speedily implemented but a cyclist wanders dangerously into eight-lane traffic completely ignorant of the rules and the danger. The superimposed image is disrupted by another set of unrelated, entirely local and ordinary behaviours; the carefully constructed cityscape juxtaposed with the careless humdrum of everyday activities and physical adaptation. The city projects itself as a visually persuasive patchwork, a super-size manipulated collage across all scales of perspectives, stretching the extremes of illusions forced to become real.

There is an undeniable similarity between these visual graphics and physical structures. What they represent is less concerned with the idea of design, but with the capability of the simulation process to present the design with a desirable effect. With reference to Foucault's differentiation between 'resemblance' and 'similitude', the propagation of the rendered effect across visual graphics and physical structures shows the repetition of the similar upon the similar. This system of representation no longer follows the traditional hierarchy of 'less faithful copies' that attempt to resemble an original 'model' of authority. Instead, the repetition itself justifies endless repetition, because both the visual graphic and physical structure now occupies the same representative status in relation to the dominance of the rendered effect. All representation approaches, in Walter Benjamin's words, a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things'

overrides the aura of the original creative work. The urge of the contemporary masses to consume reproductions of an object in its likeness that Benjamin observed now dwells comfortably and effortlessly in the domain of digital simulations.

Fig. 25: Photographs: Urban transformation and people's everyday life in China
(© Doreen Bernath)

The consistent rendered effect that turns the visually ordinary to the extraordinary forms a repetitive cycle of reproduction. This process of reproduction through the realm of digital simulation concerns itself not with the uniqueness of each moment

of design originality, but with rupture of the 'simultaneous collective experience'.[17] Take the cityscape of Shanghai as an example again; upon closer inspection, each building strives to be different from others, and varies greatly in its appearance, from its volume to its surface. Since this spectacle of difference is already promised by the effect of visual graphics prior to the existence of the building, the similitude lies in the repetition of the difference. In other words, no matter how the building object appears at the end, a consistency is found through the simulation of a perceivable quality of difference. The multiplicity of differences verges onto the repetition of a universal sense.

The analysis of how renderings are constructed tells us that these images share a consistent visual quality through the repetitive use of familiar stereotypical elements and the generation of a desirable extra-ordinary effect. This is where the affirmation of this 'sense of the universal equality of things' is found, and it is the anticipation of this sense that I called the 'dictation' of stereotypes and the extra-ordinary. The digital environment allows first of all the fragmented categorisation of visual perception, from the different skies, material textures and activities of people which can be obtained from the stock of digital images within the computer. Secondly, the simulation process allows the re-composition and manipulation of these images to create a new illusion. Benjamin's study on photography and film already reveals the technical capability of the cameraman to penetrate deeply into the web of reality and obtain pictures that are 'multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law' (Benjamin 1999: 227).[18]

What is this new law? Walter Benjamin more than half a century ago already reminded us of the need to change the way we understand art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In the age of digital simulation, the concern with the object of art is replaced by that of the repetitive reproduction of simulated visual effects. By studying conditions in which rendering has been raised to such a dominant position within architectural practices, I have argued for a critical revaluation of rendering-based visualisation in architectural design process. The shock effect offered by renderings as a form of architectural experience that dictates our expectations of physical reality overthrows many traditional understandings of the work of architecture. It is simulation by 3D graphics, rather than the delineation of plans and orthographic projections, that proves to be much more effective in serving architectural projects' political, social and disciplinary purposes.

Conclusion: rendering and ideology

Historically it was the rising dominance of two-dimensional graphic reproduction in the West which brought into question the representation of a distinct three-

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[17] 'Painting simply is in no position to present an object for simultaneous collective experience, as it was possible for architecture at all times, for the epic poem in the past, and for the movie today' (Benjamin 1999: 228).

[18] This is the part where Walter Benjamin compares the difference between the painter and the cameraman with that of the magician and the surgeon. The important point is the lost of the totality of the object of observation, which is replaced by fragments as result of mechanical penetration.

dimensional physical reality. Now the underlying principle of this system of representation committing the design idea to graphic images has been overridden by the immediate availability of virtual simulation. Since simulated virtual reality allows manipulation of the design object at every moment, the object can transform from a simple sketch into a final photo-realistic appearance very quickly. The visualisation of the design object can oscillate back and forth repetitively. The implication is the dissolution of the traditional design-staging process that guides the project development gradually from simplicity to complexity. More significantly, this dissolves the authority of the design idea that is driving the development through design stages. The representations emerge to supersede the design. These simulations come to haunt the designer, telling him or her that this is how the project will appear at the end, before it can be imagined by the designer.

When renderings are translated into buildings, the process demands that the building should approximate to the image as closely as possible, hence producing physical urban scenes that only make sense if they are read as images. This is where the operation of renderings is not confined to simulations in the digital environment, but dictates the physical consequences of design. Between these two forms of manifestation the same organisation of human perception applies. Foucault's idea of 'similitude', a repetitive cycle producing likeness upon likeness that is found in modern system of knowledge, can be used to explain what can be observed in this phenomenon of repeated sameness from images to urban environments.

To interpret the proposition by Walter Benjamin of a new law that reassembles the multiple fragments of modern lives captured by the camera lens in the context of China, the mechanism of rendering is illuminating. In this concluding part, I will briefly discuss the arising socio-political function of the reassembling of stereotypical visual fragments through photo-realistic architectural renderings in contemporary China.

In the case of China, from rendered images of architectural projects to photographs of finished buildings, a whole mechanism of proliferating visual information through today's mass media is projecting a consistent message – the ideology of modernisation and progress promised by the current 'Communist' economic agenda. The effectual nature of renderings, the combination of popular imageries with the promise of the extraordinary, serves well the demand of Chinese central government's propaganda campaign at the core of Communist political agenda since the Mao era. To be proliferated like propaganda images is to assign a symbolic and social role to architectural renderings, aside their practical function within the design and construction industry. The perceptual sense of contemporary Chinese society has long been trained to recognise specific visual elements that signify specific political meanings, such as the presence of machines and labours symbolising the revolutionary spirit and the idealised modern cityscape as a sign of Communist development. While the depiction of manual labour in the countryside is a stereotypical visual element common in the Maoist propaganda campaign, it had been replaced by shiny architectural high-rises and elevated road networks since Deng's era of economic reform. The process of rendering allows the smoothing over of the realistic and the fantastical, which constructs an illusion of a historical-futuristic continuum necessary for the control and fine-tuning of the ideological agenda within the political hierarchy of Chinese government. The

presence of these rendered images visible everywhere acts as an assurance to society that economic development is shaping a better living environment for the good of the people. It camouflages the disjointed and chaotic physical reality where daily negotiations and appropriations at the most mundane level of survival are necessary.

In recent conversation with architects Zhuang Shen (莊慎), a principle director of Atelier Deshaus (大舍建築設計事務所), and Zhao Cheng (趙澄), a principle designer of A+VA Architects (建言建築設計有限公司), both based in Shanghai, they pointed out the crucial role that renderings play in the presentation of design projects to local or city government to gain official approval.[19] These renderings have to be of certain quality and style, and are often the determinant factor whether the project will be accepted or rejected. The photo-realistic image and its associated values, meanings and scenarios must appeal to the subjective judgement of those in charge. These officials in most cases are not familiar with specialised architectural knowledge; therefore their understanding of the reasoning of the design is limited. They would prefer to read realistic images instead of the more abstracted specialised drawings. This is where renderings are the most convincing means of visualisation: its deceptive power directly transmits an idealised image of a project where specific symbolic associations can be strategically integrated. In support of these key renderings, architects would endeavour to make verbal references to popular imagination, nostalgic memories and traditions in line with Communist Party ideology, in order to stir a favourable reception from those in charge. More objective questions of whether the layout, details and performance of the building satisfy building regulations and policies are considered secondary; these are less of a ground of dispute than those projected by renderings.

Yet the proliferation of renderings is not only sustained by demands arising out of the above socio-political condition in China. The fact that the rendering industry started off as supplementary to architectural practices now has grown to become independent and capable of running architectural competitions in the virtual digital environment has deep consequences at the core of architectural practices. Renderings determine the way design projects are exposed to the public outside the architectural discipline; they act as indicators of how projects are communicated and judged. It is the ideological and symbolic content of the rendered image that is of concern, instead depending on a value system determined by the design profession, as highlighted by the Chinese architect's experience of dealing with government officials and clients spoilt by photo-realistic images. After all, an architect should be trusted as an independent specialist, a position well-established within the Western intellectual tradition. To be esteemed as a 'good' architect is to foster a consideration of design that remains resolutely different to projects generated independently by rendering companies, which is a point stressed by Zhuang Shen along with many other architects in China.

Since techniques of simulation are shared globally, how much can one stretch the distance between these two intertwined productions, that of architects and rendering companies, remains a question. One can argue that there is little space

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[19] Interview with architect Zhuang Shen took place on the 25th of Sept. 2007 in his office. Conversations with architect Zhao Cheng took place throughout Aug. and Sept. 2007.

for such an autonomous position to develop in contemporary China precisely because the design profession lacks a ground of discourse outside socio-political demands. But, instead of stating this as a matter of criticism, I believe there requires an alternative perspective on architectural values which is not limited to the established understanding of the disciplinary framework that originated in the West. I believe that a second and more important condition exists behind the proliferation of renderings: a socio-psychological demand for systematised visual aesthetics which historically structures Chinese visual arts and perception of architecture. Such a continuity of a system of visual aesthetics cannot be defined as representational, since historically in China an architectural drawing is not meant to represent the actual building, the same way that a traditional drawing of bamboo does not represent the actual bamboo. Outside the representational framework, detaching the necessary link between the rendering and the architectural concept, the significance of the rendering process should be read differently: it is an instruction, it speaks by subjective inference and it emulates poetic associations traditionally taken up by calligraphy and ink painting. To decipher these complex issues demands a historical re-examination of visual aesthetics embedded in traditional Chinese creative thinking, which are important and complex arguments to be developed further in later research.

Beyond the context of China, the issue of originality in the realm of digital simulation through a powerful program called 'Photoshop', and consequently the world of simulated 'universal collective', in the sense described by Walter Benjamin as the invariable urge of the modern man for reproduction that erases the uniqueness of perception of the object of reality, are also important theoretical issues for ongoing investigation.[20]

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[20] 'Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things ' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object of means of reproduction' (Benjamin 1999: 217).

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The EU Two-Level Sovereignty System as Model for Taiwan and China

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The prospect of the People's Republic of China ceding any of its sovereignty to a supranational body is, it must be admitted, extremely unlikely – yet, when we consider the development of the European Union, we can see that events just as improbable have in fact come about. For example, for centuries Spain was a centralised country, and it ruled over an empire that made Spanish one of the most-spoken languages in the world. Despite this, in recent decades Spain has dissolved its unitary status and introduced widespread local autonomy, and has even accepted that the Catalonians are a different nationality. Further, at a time of booming economic development it chose to enter the EEC. If such vast changes are possible for Spain, we should not discount out of hand the possibility that the EU may provide a possible model for future relations between mainland China and Taiwan. Indeed, the idea has been floated by both KMT chairman Lien Chan and DPP president Chen Shui-bian.

Can constitutions be borrowed?

In Latin America there are many countries that used the USA as a political model, and in Cuba, Chile, and Puerto Rico the parliament buildings imitate those on Capitol Hill. Less successfully copied, however, have been the special checks and balances that characterise US political institutions.

The modern Chinese political tradition in Taiwan rests on Sun Yat-sen's five branch administration, a system that combines certain institutions from Imperial China such as the complaint and control board, with a modern Montesquieu-type of division of power. Taiwan has departed somewhat from this original model in scrapping the National Assembly, but basically all political parties in Taiwan apparently support the system of five branch administration.

The People's Republic of China, in contrast, imported the post-1936 Soviet constitution, but with some differences: as in Eastern Europe, smaller parties continued to exist, although endorsing the leading role of the Communist Party in the National People's Congress, and the China People's Political Consultative Committee included non-Communist perspectives.

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[1] The author is writing in a personal capacity.

Roots of the EU institutions

European integration required taking many differences into consideration as it established treaties that mixed intergovernmental and federal principles. The Treaty of Rome, which established the EEC, attempted to solve this problem by basing cooperation on intergovernmental principles, but with the addition of a federal element. Thus a Commission, a Council, and a Parliament were created.

This, however, did not solve all the problems. Some of the member states have strong and autonomous regions, or even constituent states, which need to have a say in the final process; consequently the Committee of the Regions was created. In some countries the government has to consult with social partners, such as trade unions and employers, and so the European Economic and Social Committee was set up. Courts play an important role in examining the decisions taken by some countries, and this is reflected in the key position of the European Court of Justice, which, at the request of any affected citizen or organisation, can examine any EU decision or legislation to see if it is compatible with the treaties. As the court procedure takes two to three years and often requires expensive legal advice in order for a claimant to be successful, there is also a special institution to help citizens with their complaints; this is the Ombudsman, which is based on a two-centuries-old Swedish institution which was further developed in Denmark to suit ministerial administrations. However, in countries where the parliament looks after complaints about maladministration this is seen as inefficient, and so a Committee on Petitions was formed in the European Parliament to serve as an alternate channel.

Building up large intergovernmental organisations like these can only be achieved with a certain amount of compromise and this might be seen as ineffective, thereby weakening the popularity of the project. However, in the European context support for European integration is strong as it is based on the perceived necessity to keep good relations between countries that have long histories of wars and confrontation. Countries are able to live with being financial net contributors if they receive advantages in return, although the two countries with the highest net contributions per capita, Netherlands and Sweden, have begun to see negative results in European referenda (The Netherlands on the constitutional treaty in 2006 and Sweden on accession to the EMU in 2003).

Attractiveness of the European model of cooperation

Scholars from Asia who have studied the EU have been struck by several things that make this organisation unique. First, no pressure is put on neighbouring countries to join the Union. The message is that if a country wants to join it must introduce 100 per cent of the *acquis* (the accumulation of European law), and the only thing to be negotiated is the length of the transitional period. Second, by helping new members raise their standard of living the EU creates an excellent motivation for poorer countries to cancel anti-democratic laws and procedures, in order to qualify for membership. Third, the EU is usually successful in reaching a consensus on vital issues, although observers can see the deployment of horse-trading, peer pressure, and other methods. There appears to be a constant reform

process, often described as 'the Brussels bicycle': as long as you maintain a certain forward momentum, you will not fall off.

The size of the country problem

China is of course bigger than Taiwan, not just physically but by all measures of comparison. According to the *CIA World Factbook*, the comparisons are as tabulated here:

Land area	289:1
Population	57:1
GDP (ppp)	15:1
Foreign trade	4.2:1
GDP (off)	1.5:1

Fig. 1: Mainland China and Taiwan in Comparison

The EU has rather easily dealt with this issue of proportionality through its voting procedures, the calculation of the budgetary contribution by the various members, and the allocation of seats to the European Parliament. Currently, the ratio of Germany to Malta is nearly 20:1. However, the situation for China and Taiwan is more complex, and different quotas may upset the delicate balance of power.

The language problem

Some EU plans have faltered due to the issue of language, and disrespect for national languages has turned out to be very a sensitive and also costly issue. The EU has chosen to arrange for minority languages to be accommodated, despite the delays and costs involved. This has led to the revitalisation of languages that were looked upon more as local, such as Gaelic, Catalan, and Galician.

   For China and Taiwan, problems of this sort would be the use of traditional and simplified characters; respect for differences in pagination and printing in horizontal lines or vertical columns; and respect for different systems for marking years (Republic of China Year 96 versus 2007 C.E.). There would also be a problem if Taiwanese participants at joint meetings requested the right to speak Minnanhua, which is derived from Fujian province, since China would not allow delegates from this province to use this language.

The democracy problem

How can co-operation be secured between a democracy and a dictatorship? The EU has not even broached this issue, but in Europe the problem is much discussed in UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) and OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe). In intergovernmental discussions, each government presents one position. However, this is very different from what goes on in parliaments, and in a China-Taiwan parliament there would be a danger of a split along PRC and Taiwan lines. It would therefore be difficult to give a mixed parliament a decision-making role.

A consensus-based parliament was once tried in Europe, in the form of the Polish Sejm's *liberum veto* from early in the sixteenth century to 1791. The European Parliament started off as a consultative organ with indirectly-elected members. In 1973 it was decided to increase the power of the Parliament, and to allow for direct elections from 1979. It would not seem too difficult to introduce a similar indirectly-elected consultative organ between China and Taiwan, provided that the setting is right.

The ceding of sovereignty problem

The European experience in ceding sovereignty has been generally unproblematic, although there are several well-known setbacks: the French 'empty chair', the Danish 'No' to the Maastricht treaty, and the British 'opt-out' from several policy areas. There are certain areas where one cannot opt out, and common symbols such as a motto, anthem, flag, and nation-like titles are therefore controversial. EU member states understand that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and at the recent European Council meeting in June 2007 it was agreed to scale down a number of federal symbols.

From a Chinese perspective cooperation between small and large, or strong and weak, countries is based on a concept other than that found in Europe. In Europe the Peace of Westphalia (1648) established the principle that all countries are equal, regardless of size or power. In contrast, in the Chinese perspective power relations determine if one country is stronger than another and the weaker ones are forced into some kind of system of tribute. If they accept, such as in the case of Hong Kong, they will be a part of China while keeping some kind of self-rule. This is obviously an elastic system which could be applied to Taiwan with a degree of self-rule that corresponds to the power relation at the time the agreement is made. Taiwanese politicians, however, find this unacceptable. Would China be ready to look at an alternative?

Cooperation between China and Taiwan has to confront the basic reality that China would be positive if Taiwan were to accept a higher union which would include 'China' as part of its name. However, whichever candidate wins the 2008 Taiwan presidential elections, this would mean agreeing to enter into a union which would reduce Taiwan's own external relations. Learning from the EU shows that this is possible, provided one avoids the traps along the way.

Possible proposals for an EU-like set-up

European integration started with the Schumann declaration on 9 May 1950 and the subsequent signing in 1951 of the Paris Treaty, which set up the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSS) and which lasted until 2002. This community consisted of four entities: the High Authority, which acted independently from member states and was guided by the treaty; the Council of Ministers, which had to approve decisions that required the consent of all member states; the Parliamentary Assembly, a consultative body from the beginning but given the right to audit; and the Court, which consisted of judges from all member states and which interpreted the treaty. No appeal could be made from the Court's rulings. In some ways all of these are necessary, but this model could also be modified.

Possible subjects of competence for the high authority

To save the most difficult question for the end – which areas could both China and Taiwan find suitable for relinquishing national sovereignty? Both countries are hyper-sensitive about maintaining a robust national sovereignty, but they are also aware of the merits of international cooperation and confidence-building measures. Let us imagine a possible internal debate that would give a window of opportunity:

- In China there is a growing worry that Taiwan will slowly slip away and not be willing to forge links with China, instead strengthening ties with the US and Japan. Some compromise should be made to bring Taiwan back to the motherland.

- In Taiwan, there is a growing pessimism over the possibility of being recognised by the international community as a sovereign state. The idea of creating a superstructure with China could be seen as a way of safeguarding national sovereignty, even for those who see sovereignty as the most important goal.

However, the area of jurisdiction for the new authority has to be carefully chosen. In the European case it was coal and steel production, which was seen as the basis for the arms industry – something that if not controlled could start a new war. In the Chinese-Taiwanese context what is needed is an area of joint concern, avoiding contentious issues with nationalistic overtones such as sports, or areas with possible military overtones such as space research. Issues such as disease control have a common aspect, but one that is too limited. Issues of history, culture and education are also best avoided, as these may inflame patriotic feeling. It could, however, be argued that this is exactly what the two sides have in common, and it would, for example, be very useful if both sides could agree on a formula for the Romanisation of the Chinese language. However, the European experience is that these areas should be avoided and the treaty explicitly forbids harmonisation in the cultural area. One should also avoid issues relevant to other areas, such as Xinjiang and Tibet, as this would make the whole exercise problematic from a Chinese perspective. The solution under discussion should not undermine Chinese authority over the mainland.
   I give two examples that I deem could be feasible.

The high authority for fishing control

The only thing that today is common to China and Taiwan is the sea between them. In these waters thousands of fishing vessels are plying the waves with little care for overfishing or pollution. Considerable smuggling activity is also known, due to the different tariffs that buying countries apply. A set of quotas and rules on driftnet fishing is probably necessary to preserve the maritime environment. There will be hard bargaining over quotas and the traditional rights of fishermen. Little

damage could be done if these rulings were made by a separate authority, whose objective is to take a long-term view and apply rules in a more efficient manner

The high authority for electricity trade

In Europe underwater cables supply electricity between neighboring countries such as Sweden and Poland, Finland and Estonia, Norway and the Netherlands, and Italy and Greece, just to mention a few. The cost of an underwater cable is low in comparison to the gains in supplying electricity from the surplus side to the side that has a shortage. The pay-back for the investment in these cases has so far not taken more than three years, and so as well as being a powerful tool for confidence-building it would also be a profitable project. There could, however, be a neutral body tasked with ensuring that the managing body is professional and not subject to influences from either side. A large multi-national firm could possibly fill this role, but there could be some concern about its neutrality. Therefore the idea of a wholly independent body is an interesting alternative.

   Could this be the beginning of something that could evolve and one day be an EU-like supranational body? Nobody can tell, but the experience of the Brussels bicycle is that once you have started on it, it is easier to continue than to stop and fall off.

The road forward

In the European process one can distinguish a number of significant steps that started the new process and thereby promoted new thinking. The Messina Conference of 1956 can be said to have been the midwife of the Treaty of Rome, and the 2001 Laeken Declaration which founded a Convention to study the future of the EU was particularly important; not for the result of its deliberations, but because the way it thrashed through the various issues provided many lessons and showed which options were unfeasible. One result is that there is no chance/risk of a federal Europe; that debate is over.

   What China and Taiwan seem unable to do is to take the first step to open up a debate. Scholars in both countries are respectful of their governments and not prone to launch new proposals on their own. NGOs in both countries are weak and have few channels to the government. Cooperation between parliaments is next to non-existent. Who dares to let the genie out of the bottle?

Ethnic Identity in the Politics of the Unreal

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> At the turn of the twenty-first century, Taiwan is a global hotspot. The events and rhetoric surrounding Taiwan's second presidential election in March 2000 raised fears that tensions in the region might result in actual warfare among nuclear powers. Why is Taiwan—with a stable, democratic government and a strong economy—considered a threat to world peace? […] Ultimately, the problem is one of identity—Han ethnic identity, Chinese national identity, and the relationship of both of these identities to the new Taiwanese identity forged in the 1990s (Brown 2004: 1).

The opening lines from the above recent book aptly epitomise the popular sentiments underlying the salience of national identity in contemporary Chinese-speaking societies and the apparent relevance of ethnicity in identity politics. On the surface of things, at least, the magnitude of political rhetoric at the global level on the one hand clearly accents the crucial relevance of ethnicity, while debates over the nature of ethnicity tend on the other hand to exacerbate ongoing political conflicts. Driving this relationship is an underlying assumption that both are necessarily intertwined. I argue, however, that appearances are often deceiving.

Ethnicity is the exemplary stuff of anthropology. Even without cultures, nation-states, identities, and similar phenomena, anthropologists have developed their own calculus of intra- and inter-ethnic relationships based on tangible criteria of real peoples practicing materially distinctive beliefs and lifestyles. Thus, we have learned to characterise ethnic relations in old Taiwan as the concrete interaction of discrete communities of Hakka vs. Hokkien, Zhangzhou vs. Quanzhou, Han vs. aboriginal plains or mountain peoples, and Chinese vs. colonial Dutch, Spanish or Japanese, which in postwar and contemporary periods might be transformed by the addition of Mainlander vs. Taiwanese and now the advent of 'transnational' labour and other beasts. In sum, there has been a long history of looking at ethnic relations-as-ethnic relations, if this is what characterises an earlier phase of anthropological research. This is nothing new.

Among anthropologists, there is enough debate regarding the nature and importance of ethnicity. Some anthropologists claim only to study culture and not ethnicity, others seem to recognise only the substantive nature of ethnic traits and customs, to the exclusion of culture in the abstract, while still others use ethnicity and culture interchangeably as though they are part of the same system as a whole. These largely invoke questions of definition, which in a Taiwan context has

made for keen word games. The autonomous nature of ethnicity was then problematised by a realisation that ethnic boundaries were constantly made, remade, if not invented, even as the conditions of such construction continued to be topics of fierce debate. In this regard, the advent of the nation-state and the emergence of national identity constitute important factors, but I argue that the dynamics of ethnicity in the context of Taiwan's nation-statism has been more thoroughly misunderstood than understood by scholars.[1] If anything, the Republic of China in Taiwan is the typical incarnation of a mono-cultural nationalism, yet Taiwan's experiences have clearly run counter to the norm, especially in ethnic terms. In most other places, such as the former USSR and Yugoslavia, as if to vindicate The End of History, crumbling socialist regimes have given way everywhere to the real face of ethnonationalism. In places such as South Africa, after blacks were given the vote, they voted quite naturally for majority rule. Only in Taiwan, where everyone knows that native Taiwanese constitute three-quarters of the population, did people (in its first free elections) knowingly vote for a KMT regime by a three-to-one margin that was dominated by alien Mainlanders. Any impartial analyst would have concluded that ethnicity *per se* accounted for little. By most standards, Taiwan should have become independent long ago; so what is the problem here? In actuality, ethnic realities have never been an object of doubt. They have always on the other hand been clouded by political discourses disguised as cultural realities. Yet scholars in and of Taiwan consistently refuse to confront the fictive nature of these discourses for what they are, opting instead to show how facts are perverted by politics.[2] A politics of ethnicity couched in such terms not only misses the point completely; it is also driven by an impoverished, if not vulgar, definition of politics.

Ethnicity is an arbitrary definition of culture. Anthropologists in particular seem to take for granted that culture *ipso facto* has to do with ethnic culture. Philosophers and literary critics do not necessarily think that culture is ethnically marked, and in most contexts I think they are right. On the other hand, I criticise Taiwanese sociological colleagues, who lean to the other extreme and seem to think that *benshengren* and *waishengren* constitute real ethnic groups (*zuqun*), whose relational dynamics can be statistically quantified to a tee. Contrary to what most people tend to think, *benshengren* and *waishengren* are inaccurately rendered as Taiwanese and Mainlanders. They basically just mean insiders and outsiders, from a Taiwan perspective, or us vs. them outsiders. They are Orientalist categories of the most vulgar kind, no different from what Chinese call 'you' Westerners. We know enough not to attach any meaning to 'Western' culture; but *waishengren* or Mainlander culture is equally meaningless, so how social scientific are any ethnic studies in Taiwan based on such *zuqun*? This is unreal. Moreover, if it is acceptable to read alien provincials (from the mainland) and (Taiwan) native provincials, which is what *benshengren* and *waishengren* refer to literally, as 'ethnic' groups, whose differences are largely experienced as a function of cultural mindsets and lifestyles, in addition to language and place of origin, then this would be like saying that Californians and New Yorkers constitute different ethnic groups

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[1] See in particular Chun (2000).

[2] It is possible to view identity politics as the product of 'rational' institutional development. See, for example, Chu and Lin (2001).

too, for which there is an abundant literature (mostly in the popular media) about inherently incompatible values and behaviours. The abuse of ethnicity as a sociological category, at least in Taiwan academia, has been compounded by statistical analyses and opinion surveys that routinely categorise data and assess social trends according to whether one is Taiwanese or Mainlander, even second and third generation ones. It is sometimes difficult to determine if the hardened existence of such groups (and perceptions) is the result of concrete (as though real) experiences or excessive reification by sociologists.

In an early essay, I characterised the KMT's policy of cultural nationalism as a politics of the unreal (Chun 1994). Not only was it predicated on the fictive nature of 'The Republic of China', or what political sociologist Philip Abrams would have called a collective misrepresentation; it placed a premium on a myth of historical-cum-cultural destiny. This cultural myth is different from the assumption of ethnic reality that seems to drive this cross-straits war of words and the ruminations of tea leaf readers who seem to revel in telling us what is really real. I am not convinced that ethnic realities are inherently relevant to anything,[3] in spite of the tremendous stock that people seem to have placed in the diverse transformations from monoculturalism to multiculturalism, Sinicisation to Taiwanisation, or cultural unification to ethnic independence. If this is the realm of the real, then I second the Baudrillard-inspired manifesto: 'welcome to the desert of the real'.[4] This famous line from in the movie *The Matrix* highlighted the ability of the state to impose an omnipresent sense of virtual reality, no different from the way ethnic and national identities represent political discourses or social constructions of the self.

The recent discovery of multiethnic hybridity or multiple identities in contemporary Taiwan, as though rooted now in the colonial and traditional, not to mention postmodern and transnational eras, is not in itself a revolutionary theoretical breakthrough. All societies, from time immemorial, have been multiethnic, only to be subject later to temporary erasure by the standard modern nation-state. The celebration of democracy in Taiwan has also been viewed as consonant with the increasing trend toward indigenisation, leading not only to heightened Taiwanese consciousness of various kinds, but also those of Hakka, aboriginal first peoples, and all other local voices.[5] The blooming of Taiwanese identity out of the dregs of the KMT's mono-cultural nationalist hegemony combined with the advent of oppositional, cosmopolitan, multivalent, and emancipatory cultural trends of all sorts in turn point to the same unilineal evolution from nation-state mono-culture to true cultural indigenisation. Yet few people seem to remember that the actual precursor to the current wave of cultural indigenisation was not the DPP's full-scale embrace of it as post-colonial emancipatory ideology but rather the first phase of the KMT's attempt to institute a policy of ethnic indigenisation, an initiative that eventually engendered the rise of

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[3] For an account of the transformation of cultural Sinicisation to Taiwanisation in the popular and official media, see Chang (2004).

[4] The phrase 'desert of the real' was originally coined by Jean Baudrillard in 1981 (see Baudrillard 1994: 1). The line from the film *The Matrix* (1999, dir. Wachowski and Wachowski), 'Welcome to the desert of the real', has since been invoked often in other contexts by Slavoj Žižek.

[5] See, for example, Hsieh (2005) and Wang (2005).

Lee Teng-hui and the Taiwanese faction of the KMT. I call this 'The Chiang Ching-kuo Effect'. Chiang's broad-based attempt to indigenise or localise the ROC state apparatus to the territorial confines of Taiwan in the aftermath of its expulsion from the United Nations was the point of departure too for his attempt to defuse longstanding conflict between Mainlanders and Taiwanese. His famous declaration that he was Taiwanese (despite his thick Zhejiang accent and obvious mainland origins) had important ramifications for the meaning of ethnic indigenisation and the process of Taiwanisation in particular. Or to paraphrase America's favourite *connoisseur* of Chinese taste, 'if Chiang can do it, you can do it too!' In many ways, this is a powerful testament to the subjective positionality of identity. If, as in Chiang's case, ethnic origins account for little, then it is just another way of arguing that alien Mainlanders can choose to be Taiwanese as well. It is, as Ernest Renan aptly phrased it, a matter of 'the will'. This is not exactly the kind of indigenous consciousness promoted by DPP-inspired Taiwanese cultural nationalists, but it is definitely a discourse of indigenisation. It is also difficult to dismiss the effects of this kind of indigenising mentality, especially on descendants of Mainlanders raised in Taiwan, not to mention its overt disavowal of diasporic sentiments among a declining population of diehard Mainlanders. The most recent resurgence of independence-minded Taiwanese indigenous consciousness was not an extension of The Chiang Ching-kuo Effect. It was a phenomenon that surfaced only in the run-up to the third presidential elections and began to be put into practice only during Chen Shui-bian's second term. Moreover, as I understand it, it had nothing to do with ethnicity *per se*; it was an election strategy, pure and simple, to galvanise more support from grassroots factions that had been marginalised by Chen's pragmatic or progressive faction within the DPP, not unlike George W. Bush's fervent appeal to his neo-conservative constituents in recent US elections.

In short, indigenisation has been a growing and universally accepted trend in Taiwan for the last two decades; it is just that the KMT version of it has been different from the DPP one. Neither of them divide along ethnic lines, as both parties have for at least the last decade been dominated by Taiwanese factions. In my opinion, these radically different approaches to indigenisation can perhaps better explain why people favour reunification, independence or some kind of hybrid perspective, but these political sentiments, strictly speaking, need not be prompted by perceptions of ethnic or cultural affiliation, despite what anthropologists tend to think. They can be and are often driven by political considerations, pure and simple.

The differences between these two approaches to indigenisation aside, however, few people have pointed to the close similarities that the DPP's grassroots approach to Taiwanese consciousness and national identity shares with the KMT's own cultural nationalist identity mindset, not so much in terms of content but rather in terms of form and function. It is as though a Chinese *shawen zhuyi* has been replaced only by a Taiwanese one, but it is an ethnic chauvinism in any case, defined in principle by the dictatorship of a shared language, customs, and values mostly to the exclusion of outsiders. As long as ethnic consciousness and political mindsets continue to be defined by such a standard conceptual framework, it will be difficult to transcend its inherent dualistic tendencies. Ethnicity, culture, and identity can, of course, transcend the rigid

stereotypes of meaning and function that currently inform them, but they are also dependent on the evolution of nation-state institutions. In many regards, the DPP has extended the KMT's cultural nationalist mindset and policies to new heights, evidenced partly by the first revision of the Immigration and Nationality Act in seventy years, with its intention of slowly phasing out dual nationality, bringing in new containment policies regarding foreign labour, and more 'liberal' policy toward permanent residence, which now enables non-ethnic Chinese to live long-term in Taiwan but only as a permanent invisible caste, like Japan's Koreans. In an era of transnationalist hybridity, this multicultural *façade* is in fact a reactionary fallback to the nineteenth century (or fascism). Taiwan's multiculturalism (*duoyuan wenhua zhuyi*) applies only to *benshengren*, i.e. Hakkas and aborigines.[6] People seem to have *only* recently discovered the advent of foreign labour, e.g. Filipino maids and Thai construction workers, despite their long presence. Even at Academia Sinica, when colleagues talk about the massive influx of foreign researchers (mostly South Asian and East European post-docs), they are not referring to their ethnic Chinese research fellows (a quarter of whom probably have U.S. green cards or passports).

In an early essay on Chineseness, I argued (Chun 1996a) that ethnicity-as-an-arbitrary-definition of culture must be distinguished, in analytical terms, from ethnicity-as-appropriated-by-identity. That both issues have been confused and conflated in the scholarly literature constitutes the source of our ongoing misunderstanding of Taiwan's situation and its underlying geopolitics. Although most people refer to ethnic or cultural identity as a synonym compound, identity is basically different from the other two. Ethnic customs and cultural systems can exist without social communities and the moral attachments that bind them to the latter. Because identity is literally subjective or position-based by definition, I find it impossible to determine on the basis of ethnicity or culture alone what identity is or without asking: who is speaking here? Shared ethnicity or culture means nothing as far as identity is concerned. I know many cases where one Mainlander Taiwanese sibling identifies as Mainlander and another as Taiwanese. Westerners increasingly appear on Taiwan TV to claim that they wish to be Taiwanese too. So who are we to presume that Taiwanese or anyone else as a whole should identify ipso facto in any necessary way, not to mention plains aborigines and Tujia? Most importantly, identity is not determined by ethnicity or culture, strictly speaking; it is determined by context. I can identify alternatively as Cantonese, Taiwanese, Chinese or Asian, depending on whether the context of speech deals with life routine, profession, intellectual inclination, or politics, and in no case is ethnic reality a relevant concern. The list of contexts is not exhaustive. Moreover, feminists, Marxists and humanists teach us that it is possible to identify as male or female, in combination with our ethnic or class backgrounds, or just as a generic human being. So how do we actually know that ethnicity is necessarily relevant to anything, offhand or in general? The inherent subject-positioning of identity means that it should be to some extent a function of politics, hence changing too, but what is politics? One must transcend events and actions.

I would argue that geopolitics at a fundamentally deep level creates abstract social and political spaces in which identity 'functions'. I first spelled this out in an

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[6] For the argument in full, see Chun (2002).

essay on discourses of identity, but it suffices to say here that most observers of Taiwan seem to be content with a notion of politics that can be gleaned in large part from the mass media, polemical discourse, opinion surveys, party politics, and official policies (Chun 1996b). Discursive transformations at the level of political events and social action are rooted in contests of power ultimately at a global level even as they articulate cultural processes that have meaning or value primarily in local terms.

Ethnicity is more often than not divorced from reality; any identity so constructed is really the product of complex political processes. The composition of Chinese living in Hong Kong and Taiwan after 1949 is roughly the same, with 25 per cent made up of people coming from mainland China after World War II and the establishment of the PRC, yet ethnicity is hardly seen as a relevant factor in Hong Kong. Hong Kong identity was always shaped by different forces. Despite its status as a British colony since 1841, which defined official state practice, most people lived in a world that was essentially an extension of China. Before 1949, borders with China were open, and prior to 1970 there was no sense of a distinct Hong Kong identity. People called themselves Chinese, and 'our nation' usually referred to China. Hong Kong was a battleground split by allegiances to either the PRC or ROC (not Britain) that peaked in the late 1960s. The transformation of Hong Kong into a free market port brought about explicit Westernisation, the evolution of a market society and the de-politicisation of public culture, which spawned, among other things, the emergence of a mass-mediated Hong Kong cultural identity. In this kind of public sphere, the ethnic dualism that epitomised Taiwan was clearly absent. If anything, it created a generation of people whose lifestyle was perceived as largely alienated from developments on both sides of the national divide and where an identity gap widened between Hong Kongers (regardless of ethnic origin) speaking Cantonese and rooted in 'a borrowed place and a borrowed time' on the one hand, and an older diasporic generation yearning to return to the motherland on the other, not to mention a growing number of people who identified with Britain. The Sino-British Declaration of 1984 to repatriate Hong Kong to China brought about a revival of Chinese cultural consciousness (as though in search of lost roots), but identity processes in Hong Kong ran counter to the trend of cultural indigenisation forming in Taiwan. If anything, ethnic identity in both places evolved in opposite directions.

In the realm of politics, politicians seem to have infected the general public, including gullible intellectuals, into believing that Taiwanese cultural consciousness can be mobilised at the service of increasing sentiments in support of political independence.[7] Within the United Nations, why not try the North-South Korea model, one might argue, or East Timor and the principle of self-determination? This is wishful thinking, and it does not hurt to try, but Tibet is incontestably non-Han and religiously autonomous too. Yet how far has it got with such efforts? One also tends to forget that the current 'perception' of incommensurable claims to cultural nationalism has been exacerbated in large part by the rise of nationalist sentiment that formed over the last decade in the PRC after the collapse of Marxist socialism and was fueled by China's advent into

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[7] In reading elections literally, many political commentators do the same. See, for example, Corcuff (2004).

a new global capitalist order. There were at least two occasions in history when Taiwan's call for independence would have been received more positively by the PRC regime; one in 1949, after its defeat on the mainland and retreat to Taiwan, and the other, after its expulsion from the United Nations. Even during the height of the Cold War, the inability of the PRC to conquer Taiwan militarily, not to mention the tiny island of Quemoy, just off the coast of Fujian, would have made Taiwan independence more feasible than reunification, from the perspective of most Mainlanders. Yet, in all these cases, the staunch determination by the KMT to recapture the mainland, reinforce the legitimacy of traditional China and keep alive all hopes of reunification, as exemplified by the slogan 'Don't forget the state of Ju', carved onto a mountain in Quemoy, kept the state of war alive, and it is this staunch legacy, from which later parties in Taiwan have implicitly retreated, that is being revived by the PRC government now, supported increasingly by popular nationalism in various domains of life. Is it any accident that the KMT, especially the staunch anti-Communist Old Guard yearning for eventual reunification, is the faction most eagerly courted by the PRC in reconciliation talks?

Why can't people think outside the box? I have argued elsewhere that Taiwan might have a better chance of achieving independence by avoiding ethnicity-sovereignty altogether. Why not try promoting itself as the first postmodern nation, a term which one of my super-realist sociological colleagues called an oxymoron? Scholars have made so much about neo-Confucianism and other grand narratives as the secret of success by East Asian tigers that it has overlooked one undeniable fact. Much of Taiwan's economic success took place after it was expelled by the U.N. and became a pariah state. That is to say, it has actually done better as a non-nation, so why does it need independence at all? As for being postmodern, wasn't its success attributable to its forward-looking economic policy in an evolving global economy? The U.N. is better off adopting postmodernism as a criterion of nationhood in the twenty-first century.

During the second presidential election, Chen Shui-bian gave a lecture at LSE, which was packed on both extremes with raucous PRC and Taiwanese students. Although ninety per cent of the questions had to do with sovereignty/independence issues, little if anything in his talk dealt with them, the topic being Taiwan's future role in the global economy. Finally, Chen calmly stated, 'in actuality, all three political parties agree on one point, i.e. that Taiwan has been *de facto* independent since 1949.' What is amazing in this regard is not the literal content of this statement, which most people should know by reading any modern history textbook, but the question of why it took fifty years to say this or why it was taboo (on both sides of the straits) to acknowledge this fact. Is this not a collective misrepresentation on a massive scale as well?

If normal politics is unreal, how unreal can it get? During the first PRC missile crisis, while trying to explain the incomprehensible calm that enveloped most of Taiwan in the face of PRC sabre-waving and the Western media's depiction of an Iraqi-Kuwaiti-like crisis in the making, I argued on *H-ASIA*'s listserv (mostly to the horror of PRC colleagues) that China would not invade (Chun 1996c). This would be like cutting off one's arm, just because it began to shake uncontrollably. Yet in the midst of all this commotion about reunification and independence, few if any of us bothered to ask what kind of 'unification' were people really talking about? I think it is safe to say that, for many Chinese (on both sides), 500 years is not a

long time to wait for reunification. Every student of Chinese history knows the story about the fall of the Qing dynasty, after which someone discovered a dusty placard in the imperial rubble, proclaiming 'restore the Ming', as if to suggest that it was worth waiting 368 years for this. In this postmodern, transnational, and cosmopolitan era, the very thought of it is inexplicably unreal. What are people fighting and dying for, in actuality, if not an anachronistic fiction?

If anything, politics should be forward-looking, not backward-leaning. It should be an ongoing negotiation of life in the present, with a vision of the future. To the contrary, recent trends in cultural discourse and social policy continue to reinforce ethnic fictions as the basis of political reality, institutionally investing them with even greater force and routinising given mindsets with even greater legitimacy. Thus, Chineseness in its various incarnations is now giving way to indigenous multiculturalism and celebrations of Taiwanese and Hakka cultural consciousness. At Academia Sinica and other universities, the vestiges of what initially began as institutes for the Study of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles have mutated into institutes for the Study of National Development or were dismantled entirely. In its place, institutes for the Study of Taiwanese Culture and History have appeared everywhere, in addition to faculties of Hakka Studies, each with its own liberal arts and social science departments, without doubt as intellectual monuments to the political correctness of our times. When Ernest Gellner (1964: 169) argued that (emphasis added) 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist', he underscored the seminal role of culture in the emergence of nations, all else being equal, but I doubt if he intended to argue the primacy of mind over matter, against all political obstacles to the contrary. History has shown instead that things can always change. The history of the nation-state is recent and will continue to mutate. The history of ethnic identities that have emerged as a result will change correspondingly as well. The failure of Taiwanese independence is not one of failing to recognise its ethnic reality but one of failing to seize political reality when they had such opportunities, in 1949 and 1970.

Meanwhile, on top of political fictions, one continues to get ideological and economic fictions that spiral into each other to increasingly convoluted heights. We already know very well so-called 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' that apparently epitomises the current trend. Consistent with this trend is the perception that cross-straits economic integration will in the long run become the basis on which political reunification becomes inevitable, if not increasingly desirable in practice. It is as though the informal reality will eventually give way to the official one, if not make political reunification a desirable and rational option. This is a convenient fiction that has gradually replaced the last policy of wishful thinking, namely that of 'one country, two systems'. These may have been conceived as regimes for recognising in the short term the apparent differences that set Hong Kong and Taiwan apart, while calming psychological anxieties about the future, but they are in the long term rhetorical strategies that still have firmly in mind the ultimate objective of reunification. As rhetorical strategies, they can always change with evolving situations. After all, does it matter what capitalism in China is actually called? Just as the negotiations leading up to the Sino-British Declaration of 1984 have already shown, the PRC is unlikely to change its mind about the eventual fate of Hong Kong, even after another fifty years of capitalist

lifestyle. Politically, it is already linked to the larger policy-making processes that drive the nation as a whole. Economically, Hong Kong's autonomy may not mean much, especially if it is eclipsed by the rise of Shanghai as the new focus of the global economy in China. Legally, after the meaningless guarantee of capitalist autonomy ends in fifty years, if it is desirable to integrate Hong Kong into the rest of China, at least from the perspective of Beijing, there will be little that Britain, UN or the international community can do to counteract any changes toward reunification, whatever that means then.

The situation of Taiwan is of course different, but the logic of economic integration in the political long term still has the same wishful thinking. If transnational capitalism toward the end of the twentieth century demonstrates that the omnipotence of the market can turn national economies into anachronistic mercantilisms that render political control equally unnecessary, then there would be much reason to believe that economic integration will facilitate political ones as well.[8] At present, the reality seems to be quite the contrary. Despite the rise of Third World economies in these emerging global markets, the increasing penetration of the global capitalist economy has still come largely at the expense of the have-nots, with increasing gaps in wealth in the larger order of nations. Nonetheless, like the possible eclipse of Hong Kong by an emerging Shanghai, the rise of the Chinese economy as a whole *vis-à-vis* Taiwan might have dire consequences for the existing political balance of power in cross-straits relations. What this might mean at that time for ethnic identity, however, is anyone's guess.

In the meantime, one is left mostly with the myopia of local party politics. In fact, the most serious dilemma in the history of party politics in postwar Taiwan is that there has never really been any alternative to the 'follow the leader' principle. During most of its martial law era, the KMT rarely publicly tolerated dissent from the official line. The very thought of Taiwanese independence, realistic and more probable then than today, would have more likely landed one a trip to the firing squad than a medal for bravery. It is an understatement to say that such ideologies were suppressed with the full force of the law, as it had at the same time managed to make such opposition parties illegal for most of that history. Hu Hou-hsien's film *City of Sadness* (1989), released after martial law, was acclaimed as being politically courageous for daring to deal openly with events of the 28 February massacre, which became the founding myth of Taiwanese self-determination and several years later replaced Retrocession Day as a public holiday, even though no one dared to mention 2-28 by name anywhere in the film. Few if any new trends in policy have come from the bottom; unreal politics is also unimaginative.

For most of Lee Teng-hui's tenure as up-and-coming bureaucrat and president, he had faithfully toed the party line, while repeatedly reminding people that KMT rule in Taiwan had been nothing less than positive, for which they should be very thankful for.[9] While this does not detract from his eventual achievements of publicly rectifying the past history of Taiwanese repression and his efforts to

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[8] Cabestan (2005) has argued that nationalist rhetoric will in the long run have counterproductive effects on economic relations.

[9] For a different rationalistic, institutionalist view of Taiwan's cultural policy and politics, see Wang (2004).

initiate state-to-state relations with the PRC, if they reflected his underlying principles all along, he never really showed his true colours until very late, which in turn resulted in his expulsion from the KMT, when his positions fell out of favour with those who later gained power. Moreover, it is not surprising that his perspectives in general tend to be closer to the independence-minded DPP. His establishment of the TSU Party is similarly the personification of Lee's positions, without which it is difficult to say what the Party really stands for ideologically. The establishment of the PFP Party by failed Presidential candidate James Soong shows that losers who can go no further up the party totem pole typically spin off to start up their own political party as the last resort for realising their personal ambitions.

As long as following the leader remains in institutional fashion, bold innovative ideas, even when they happen to reflect reality more accurately, will never find the light of day in political Taiwan. Like the LDP in Japan, nothing short of a disastrous election loss will force people to do things differently, which usually starts with thinking differently. Political parties in Taiwan have been too concerned with winning the next election to even attempt to forge a broad ideological vision of the polity and the future. It has always been easier to operate with given mindsets and negotiate in familiar strategic terrains. Rhetorical visions and discourses of culture or ethnicity are promoted less to make sense than to make people toe the line so as to conform to desired expectations. This in turn has reproduced a myopic field, where the more things change, the more they stay the same. In actuality, the politics of other countries are not dissimilar. How difficult is it for many Western liberal democracies to transcend the false duality of labour and conservative party politics? To the country's credit, Taiwan probably enjoys the distinction of being the only country in the world where party ideology is divided along reunification and independence rather than any discernible political ethos about the nature of society. This is a country where debates about how to gain admission into the UN will garner more headline news attention than 'trivial' matters of everyday life, like the economy, urban policy, corruption, environmental safety, etc., and where the urgency to create faculties of Taiwanese studies and Hakka studies in every university supercedes the necessity of first teaching any kind of general academic discipline devoted to ethnic or cultural studies. That politics is unreal is one thing; the extent to which it inundates the unreal world is surreal.

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The 'Red Tide' Anti-Corruption Protest: What Does it Mean for Democracy in Taiwan?

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Politics in Taiwan during the last two decades has polarised into two camps, associated with particular colours: the former ruling KMT (Kuomintang) Blue camp and the current ruling DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) Green camp. Between September and November 2006, Shih Ming-teh (施明德), the former chairman of the DPP, led a campaign against Taiwan's DPP President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), with the name 'A Million Voices against Corruption – President Chen Must Go' ('百萬人民反貪腐倒扁運動'), which involved a protest in front of the Presidential Building on Ketagalan Boulevard (凱達格蘭大道). This protest against alleged presidential corruption was a spontaneous civil movement, but its goal was to initiate a change of power at the highest level of government. Significantly, most of the protesters wore red in the demonstrations. It has since been called 'the Red Tide' ('紅潮'), 'the Red-Shirt Army' ('紅衫軍'), or 'the Red Phenomenon' ('紅色現象'). People in Taiwan had never before experienced or seen a political rally in which the marchers and banners were all in red and on such a large scale. The colour red is full of ambiguity, evoking various references within different contexts.

Being trained in anthropological approaches to the study of culture and society, I will attempt to give an anthropological interpretation of the so-called 'Red Tide' anti-corruption protest. I will begin by introducing the two main figures, Chen Shui-bian and Shih Ming-teh, with an emphasis on their respective political careers. I will then discuss how different political parties have interpreted the Red Protest (specifically the Green DPP and the Blue KMT, and also the 'Red' CCP), and how it was covered in both national and international media, organised chronologically. Following this, I will focus my analysis on the socio-cultural significance of the colour red for ordinary people in Taiwan, in particular its association with Communist China and the fear of Communism propagated by the KMT (particularly during the martial law period), but also the importance that the colour red has in festivals and rituals, where it is normally associated with auspiciousness and efficacy. Finally, I will analyse the impact of this Red Protest Phenomenon on Taiwan's current political culture in terms of Blue and Green colours and identities. I will try to give a meaning to this Red Phenomenon in terms of Taiwan's democratic history and the development of civil society.

About Chen and Shih

Chen Shui-bian, a so-called native-born Taiwanese, was elected as the first president representing the legalised opposition DPP in 2000, and re-elected in the disputed election of 2004 with a margin of 0.2 percent after being shot, albeit in rather mysterious circumstances. Chen's appeal to voters is said to lie mainly in his rural background and local charisma (*tu* [土]) – many refer to him by his Taiwanese nickname, A-bian (*BBC News* 2006b). He was born to an uneducated tenant-farmer family in Hsi-chuang village, Kuan-tien district, Tainan County, in 1951. He studied hard and gained a place at the prestigious National Taiwan University, where he was awarded a law degree. According to Kegan, 'Chen's rural background was a deficit that he had to overcome by being superior in all intellectual areas and by choosing to be on the cutting edge. Chen always took a unique approach' (Kegan 1998: 81).

Chen Shui-bian fell into politics after he had defended a group of political activists who battled for freedom of speech and association in 1979, in what has become known as the 'Formosa Incident' ('美麗島事件'). This was a milestone in Taiwan's democratisation process and perhaps the most important political case in Taiwan's legal history. The defendants and their lawyers later became the founding leaders of the DPP, and in 1994, Chen was elected as the first Taipei city mayor representing the party, which was then in opposition. In 2000 he was defeated, but he turned this into an opportunity to run for the presidency. However, his intention of building a lasting presidential legacy in his second term has been undermined by waning popularity and a series of corruption scandals. His problems began in May 2006 when his son-in-law, Chao Chien-ming (趙建銘), was detained on suspicion of insider trading on the stock market, and culminated in November 2006 when his wife, Wu Shu-chen (吳淑珍), and his three former aides Ma Yong-cheng (馬永成), Lin De-hsun (林德訓), and Chen Chen-hui (陳鎮慧) were charged with corruption over the alleged misuse of presidential funds. The allegations include evidence of corruption against President Chen himself, although he is currently protected by presidential immunity (*BBC News* 2006c, Yang 2006c).

Shih Ming-teh, formerly President Chen's ally before he became a campaigner against him, was born into a well-known medical family in Kaohsiung in 1941. When he was just six years old, Shih witnessed the shooting of three students by KMT troops in what is now called 'the 2-28 Incident'. He questioned authority and was suspended from school, but he managed to enter a military academy. In 1962, Shih was charged with sedition for running the 'Taiwan Independence League' (a discussion group), and he was sentenced to life in prison. He was released in 1977, as part of an amnesty following Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) death in 1975, (a gesture typically performed at the end of a Chinese emperor's reign). Once out of prison, Shih promptly joined the '*Dangwai*' (['黨外'], 'outside the only legal party') movement calling for an end to the political monopoly of the KMT. After playing a major role in a pro-democracy rally (the Formosa Incident), Shih was charged with treason and sentenced to life imprisonment for a second time. While in prison between 1985 and 1989, Shih went on hunger strikes, and was allegedly force-fed numerous times through a nasogastric tube. With the end of martial law in 1987, President Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) announced

nationwide sentence reductions and conditional releases for prisoners. Shih chose not to have his sentence commuted, maintaining his innocence and retaining his dignity.

In 1990, Lee Teng-hui, became the first native-born Taiwanese to assume the presidency. He ordered a special amnesty for all Formosa Incident prisoners and further announced the invalidation of the Formosa Trials. Shih finally accepted being released as an innocent person. Shih Ming-teh spent the longest time (25 and a half years in total) in jail under KMT martial law. According to Kegan, Shih Ming-teh always 'possessed the ardour and obsession of a political martyr', and is 'one of the most dramatic and irascible characters in Taiwan's modern [political] history' (Kegan 1998: 77; 69).

Upon recovering his freedom, Shih joined the now-legal opposition DPP. He gained the highest number of votes and was elected legislator for Tainan County in 1992, but his second term in 1996 was won only after a bitter campaign. Shih was also elected and acted as chairman of the DPP between 1994 and 1996. However, in 1996 Shih was defeated by the KMT member Liu Song-fan (劉松藩) in the campaign for Minister of the Legislative Yuan. Moreover, in the same year, Shih resigned his position as DPP chairman after the DPP was defeated by the KMT in the first direct presidential election. Shih was re-elected legislator in 1998 representing Taipei City. After Chen Shui-bian was elected Taiwan President in 2000, Shih walked away from the DPP, and he later attended several private meetings with high-ranking KMT members. Shih ran as an independent twice, for Kaohsiung City mayor in 2002 and for Taipei City legislator in 2004, but failed in both elections. An intellectual from Tainan County explained to me during an interview, 'Shih Ming-teh was an excellent political activist who knew how to fight the KMT's authoritarian rule and re-gain justice and freedom. But, he was an incapable legislator who had no idea and vision for governing a county. Our Tainan people were grateful to him for his sacrifice to Taiwan's democracy and so we tried hard to secure his seat for two terms.'

The Conflict of Interpretations

On 7 August 2006, Shih Ming-teh wrote a letter to Chen Shui-bian which was published in *China Times*. Shih began this letter by saying, 'The situation requires me to write this letter and this has been extremely painful for me.' In the letter, he urged his old friend Chen to step down from presidential office since Chen had lost the people's trust and confidence following a series of alleged corruption scandals. In the end, Shih encouraged Chen by stating, 'Only a truly brave warrior admits his wrongdoings and gives up what he has held' (quoted in *Boxun News* 2006a).

On 12 August 2006 Shih Ming-teh launched a fundraising campaign in the 2-28 Incident Memorial Park to finance a series of demonstrations against corruption and to unseat President Chen. He called on each person who supported this movement to donate NT $100 (GBP £2) as a symbol of commitment and a display of determination to oust Chen from office. Within seven working days, a sum equivalent to that raised from over one million people had been received. The designated account was soon closed and preparations for the marathon protest began (Gluck 2006). However, the actual number of donors was never revealed. As there was no restriction on the maximum amount of donation, it was possible

that the account had also received some huge amounts from a few wealthy supporters.

On 7 September 2006, Shih held a press conference announcing the launch of the campaign 'A Million Voices against Corruption – President Chen Must Go'. According to the *Taipei Times*, Shih stated that 'The DPP has lost sight of its founding ideals' and that 'Once the sit-in starts on September 9, there will be no going back' (Huang 2006). According to Gluck, writing for the BBC, Shih said that, 'I think I am following the people's will. [...] The anger towards President Chen is so widespread. It doesn't differ with regard to region, or ethnic groups, or even partisan positions. This whole island is angry'. Moreover, he affirmed his commitment to the protest, adding, 'The people believe in my willpower. They believe I will continue to sit with them. [...] I will not run away, surrender or give up until we can see the people's will prevail' (Gluck 2006).

At the press launch, Jerry Fan (范可欽), the campaign's designer, promised a 'creative' anti-Chen protest. He urged people to wear red to participate in the demonstration if they were angry at corruption and at President Chen (*BBC Chinese News* 2006). He also explained that a round-the-clock sit-in area would form the centre, with 2,300 seats to represent the 23 million people of Taiwan. The sit-in demonstration would be a silent protest (Mo 2006).

According to Taiwan's Central News Agency, the day before the campaign, Linda Arrigo, Shih Ming-teh's ex-wife, urged him to stop the demonstration, saying that 'September 9 is the thirtieth anniversary of Mao Tse-tung's death. On that day Chinese people will gather in Tiananmen Square to commemorate Mao by raising Red flags and by distributing Mao's Little Red Book. [...] If Taiwanese people also use the colour red to protest against their elected President, this will lead people to associate Taiwan's Ketagalan Boulevard with Red Square.' She further warned that 'China is likely to use this as an opportunity to say that the moment of cross-straits unification is around the corner' (quoted in *Boxun News* 2006b).

Ironically, China was observing a low-key remembrance of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Mao Tse-tung. In Beijing, the central government did not organise any commemorations for Mao. State-run TV made no mention of Mao, while the *People's Daily* published only two short news briefs on Internet remembrances (Gong 2006) and the construction of a new museum at his birthplace (Li 2006). Analysts said the government feared that high-profile public ceremonies honouring Mao could stir up bitter memories of tragic moments in Chinese history, such as the 30 million who starved to death during Great Leap Forward or the mass persecution of intellectuals and landlords during the Cultural Revolution (*VOA* 2006). Moreover, the opening line of an article in the English-language *China Daily* claimed that 'Time passes. The relevance of contemporary life pushes the events of the past out of the spotlight and into the shadows' (Montero 2006). The end of the article quoted a professor of political science at the University of California, Richard Baum, who said that: 'Most expats in Beijing these days are young professionals and entrepreneurs who came of age long after Mao Tse-tung's death [...]. For these latecomers, Mao's memory and mystique are not very potent – no more than a vague historical curiosity while the post-Mao reforms are a "given", which they take for granted.' Baum concluded, 'The new culture of entrepreneurship and self-enrichment has crowded Mao and Maoism out of the marketplace of relevant ideas' (Montero 2006).

Shih's campaign against corruption and President Chen kicked off on Saturday 9 September in front of the Presidential Building on Ketagalan Boulevard. It was reported by almost all the media in Taiwan over that weekend, and some pro-Blue media even covered it for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. There were about 200,000 people, mostly women, demonstrating and most of them were dressed in red, expressing their political passion for anti-corruption and the resignation of A-bian. This Red Protest was also widely reported by the international media. For instance, the AFP described it as a 'red storm created by Taiwanese people against Chen Shui-bian' (quoted in Wang Xian-tang 2006). The BBC reported that, 'Tens of thousands of people have been demonstrating in Taiwan to demand the resignation of President Chen Shui-bian over corruption allegations. [...] The protesters, many dressed in red to highlight their anger, gathered in the capital.' The BBC's Caroline Gluck, at the scene, was quoted as saying that it was a 'sea of red'. She also noted that 'There are four big balloons, representing righteousness, integrity, prosperity and honour' (*BBC News* 2006a).

The majority of deep-Green supporters were upset and did not know how to react to Shih's protest against President Chen. Indeed, the campaign came under fire from the DPP, and hardly any DPP legislators supported it. Several DDP members made personal attacks on their ex-chairman Shih (Yang 2006a), and even some of Shih's old friends questioned his intentions (Huang 2006). Furthermore, there was a rumoured conspiracy in Green circles, which claimed that the pro-unification camp (such as the Chinese Unity Promotion Party [中華統一促進黨] and Chinese Wave [夏潮], see in Lin Nan-sen 2006a) would gradually take over the leadership of the campaign and eventually hijack it in order to promote unification with China. According to the BBC, Yu Shyi-kun (游錫堃), the DDP chairman, described this demonstration as a 'Red Terror', and interpreted it as 'a sign of mainland Chinese bullying the Taiwanese' ('中國人欺負台灣人') (Yang 2006b)!

On September 16, Ketagalan Boulevard was handed over to a pro-Green Taiwan Group (台灣社). It organised a pro-Chen campaign in which were prominently displayed banners with slogans saying 'Go away, Red China!' ('紅色中國滾蛋!'), 'Come Forward, Green Taiwan!' ('綠色台灣起來!') and 'Resist the Red Guard!' ('拒絕紅衛兵!'). Remarkably, the political battlefield in Taiwan shifted, at least for a few days, from 'a battle between Blue and Green; to 'a battle between Red and Green' (Lin, Bao-hua 2006; Zhao 2006).

Coincidently, a similar conspiracy could also be found in some Chinese-exile and anti-CPP media such as, the *Epoch Times*. The *Epoch Times* is mainly run by Falun Gong (法輪功) practitioners and human right activists. Falun Gong was declared an 'evil cult' by the CPP authority and totally banned in 1999 (Madsen 2007: 189). According to the *Epoch Times*, Communist terms, such as 'siege' ('圍城'), 'revolution' ('革命'), 'bloody' ('流血'), and 'strike' ('罷工') were highlighted in Shih's Red movement, suggesting that this campaign was controlled and manipulated by the CPP government. The CPP government intended to use the division within the DPP and the division between DPP-Green and KMT-Blue to create further social unrest in Taiwan (Wang, Zhen 2006).

Ironically again, China's state-run media kept silent as this hot news from Taiwan developed. Only some Internet sites were allowed to dispatch tailored stories selected from the Taiwanese and Hong Kong media. The Taiwan Affairs

Office under the State Council of the Chinese government declined to comment on Chen's case, repeatedly saying that it was a domestic affair (台灣內部事務) (Hu 2006).

Augustine Tan in the *Asia Times* commented that, 'It is apparent that Beijing is afraid that reporting Chen's predicament in the mass media could backfire. The public might raise questions along the lines of "What can we do with official corruption?" And if Taiwan's President could be caught, "What about our own corrupt "big fishes"?' (Tan 2006). In terms of the amount of money allegedly involved, Chen is, indeed, a tiny fish compared with corrupt officials of lesser rank in China. Also, the broadcasting of such news might have led people in China to wonder whether China will ever have the same freedom to report and to demonstrate publicly without fear of intimidation or arrest against the corruption of party and government officials (Lin, Bao-hua 2006).

In contrast to China's CCP, Taiwan's pro-KMT media (e.g. TVBS) played a key role in exposing Chen's scandals, and in supporting Shih's Red Protest against Chen. During the first few days of the protest, we constantly saw from TVBS a succession of Blue big hitters, such as the KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), and People First Party Chairman James Soong (宋楚瑜), who visited or even joined the sit-in. TVBS claimed that the protesters were not mobilized by any group or party, but were part of a broad-based civic movement that transcended party political interests. However, it is obvious that the red campaign was seen by certain elements within the KMT as a possible vehicle for them to make political capital. For instance, a veteran actor, Chin Ti (金帝), impersonated the ex-KMT chairman Chiang Ching-kuo to boost the protesters' morale. He ended his performance by shouting 'Long Live the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT]'. In contrast, when the red campaign spokeswoman Wang Lie-ping (王麗萍) called out 'Republic of Taiwan' during a speech, she was booed by the crowd and had to issue a public apology, which showed the anti-independence sentiment of those participating in the sit-in. The protesters were later described as having 'Red Skins with Blue Bones'.

Gluck's report (2006) includes the perspectives of a number of Taiwanese. She quotes a retiree, who said, 'it is going to be a turning point in Taiwan's history. People power. [...] I am confident Taiwan will have a new direction. I believe we will have a new president very soon' She also gives the opinion of Emile Sheng, a politics professor: 'I think by putting people's attention on anti-corruption, it is going to send a message directly not only to the president, but also to every politician in the future in Taiwan. To let them know that we as a people really care about moral standards and want politics to be conducted in a civil way.'

In late November 2006, a charge of corruption was also made against KMT Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou, over his alleged misuse of a special mayoral allowance. Shih Ming-teh indicated he was not contemplating anti-corruption protests against Ma, but insisted there should be no double standards regarding corruption allegations (Lin, Nan-sen 2007; *Boxun News* 2007).

Shih's campaign retreated from the streets on 29 November 2006 when media attention turned to the mayoral elections and when the allegations against President Chen, his family and aides came under judicial investigation (Lin, Nan-sen 2006b). In early December, Shih Ming-teh began his self-imprisonment in the

campaign headquarters near the Presidential Building, claiming that he would keep to his word and continue the protest until Chen stepped down.

On 1 April 2007 at a press conference entitled 'The Red will Arise Again' ('紅將 再起'), Shih Ming-teh announced an end to his self-imprisonment and the beginning of preparations for a second wave of anti-Chen protests. Plans include presenting candidates for the 2007 legislative elections (*Epoch Times* 2007).

Red Implications

Red has long been a taboo colour in the socio-political geography of Taiwan. People's fear of the colour red is linked directly to the fear and ignorance of Communism propagated by the KMT during the martial law years and to the state terror perpetrated by the KMT against suspected Communists and their sympathisers in various incidents (such as the Luku Incident, see Shih 2006), which in public memory are described as the 'White Terror' (The term 'White Terror' was borrowed from the Russian civil war of 1917 to 1921 when the so-called Whites, led by former tsarist officers, were defeated by the Bolshevik Red Army. The term was used in Taiwan to describe the counter-revolutionary, or more precisely, the anti-Communist, violence exerted by the right-wing KMT between the 1950s and the 1980s).

One incident which shows this taboo occurred in 1984, when the Taipei Fine Arts Museum opened, dedicated to the development of modern art in Taiwan. In its first exhibition, a work by the artist Lee Tsai-chien (李再鈴) entitled *Minimalism without Limits* (低限的無限) was displayed in the plaza in front of the Museum entrance. The piece was an abstract sculpture in red stainless steel, and after few days the Museum's Director, Su Rui-pin (蘇瑞屏), received a complaint from a retired soldier, commenting that Lee's sculpture looked like a Red Star, the symbol of Communism. In response, Su ordered Lee's sculpture to be re-painted silver (Schoeber 2006). Lee's sculpture could only be understood in terms of one dimension of a diverse field of possible meanings; that is, the political implication of the Red Star, which made it impossible for it to be appreciated as a purely aesthetic object. Re-painting it silver suggested a solution to a political problem, but also seemed to suggest that all forms of material culture in Taiwan would be read in terms of a very narrow field of political meanings. The result of this would be that 'art' could have no autonomy from the state and from the political.

Since 1987, when martial law was lifted, and following the recognition in the mid-1990s of the victims of the White Terror, Taiwan has undergone a political transition to democracy. In particular, in December 1998 the Legislative Yuan passed regulations regarding compensation for those wrongly sentenced (either to imprisonment or to death) during the martial law period either for sedition or as Communist spies. However, while compensation money might buy off a defiled reputation, it cannot buy off the deep fear still buried within the unconscious that the colour red, in the context of politics, still holds. When in 2005 I interviewed a man in his fifties from Luku while conducting research on trauma and social memory regarding the White Terror, the word 'Communist' and the image 'red flag' instantly caused goose bumps to appear on his arms. This indicates his physical fear of Communism and its association with the colour red.

Thus, in 2006 during the Red Protest from 9 September to late November, people in Taiwan, both participants in the protests and non-participants, were faced with a unique spectacle: public displays of red in a political demonstration. I spoke with a man in his thirties, who said that, 'My parents seemed uncomfortable at seeing a sea of red during these days. In the first few days, whenever they saw my brother and me watching the reports of the Red Protest on television, they commanded us to switch to other channels. After the first week, we were allowed to watch this Red Demonstration but they themselves avoided these images. However, after many more days, they occasionally watched it from a distance.' I argue that this is due to his parents' experience of the White Terror. The colour red is a taboo in particular for that generation in the context of politics. Indeed, there was a worry from the beginning that this protest might be a conspiracy signifying unification with China, a theory that seemed all the more plausible given that 9 September was the anniversary of Mao's death.

Yet, this interpretation, associating red with fear and red with Communism, ignores the multi-vocal meaning of the colour red in Taiwan. For instance, in rituals, the so-called 'red matter' ('紅事') refers to weddings where the colour red is associated with auspiciousness (Suzuki 1989: 175-195). In religious festivals, the so-called 'red envelope' ('紅包') with money enclosed is normally used as a gift to ward off misfortune in a ritual transaction (Stafford 1995: 83-85). In domestic worship, the so-called 'red table' ('紅格桌') is a sacred object, on which one does not carry out activities other than the worship of the gods, and in this context red is associated with efficacy (Jordan 1985: 93-94).

Concluding Remarks

With the fading of the so-called Red Tide Anti-Corruption Protest, we are left with the question of how to interpret this unusual and ambitious demonstration. This protest tied a number of conflicting aims together, such as anti-corruption and the ousting of DDP President Chen, into one single movement, with special symbolic importance placed on the colour red.

Typically, analysis of the campaign has focused on how individual politicians or political parties gained or lost as a result of this Red protest. However, this is not the concern of this paper. In fact, none of the politicians or political parties or groups could be called winners or losers. For instance, the DPP Green camp and anti-CPP Falun Gong tried to demonise the Red Protest, respectively by linking it with unification with Red China or by associating it with manipulation by China, but both failed because the CCP government was silent and no definitive meaning can be ascribed to silence. The KMT Blue camp tried to use this demonstration to unseat President Chen, but it failed as the politicians who allegedly misuse state funds are not only Green but also include many Blue members, such as KMT chairman Ma Ying-jeou.

For Shih Ming-teh, the anti-corruption protests of 2006-07 were a kind of figurative re-working of the anti-authoritarianism protests of the 1970s-80s. Between the 1970s-80s, Shih believed that by an act of personal and political will on his part the landscape of Taiwan could be changed forever. In 2006-07 he utilised the same strategy. If this strategy of willpower was successful during the 1970s and 1980s, it was totally ineffective in 2006-07 – none of the aims of the

Protest were met. Perhaps this points to the limits of charisma or 'great man' politics in current Taiwan, or perhaps merely to Shih as an anachronism.

Furthermore, I would like to argue that the conventional focus on Blue-Green gain or loss fails to understand the significance of the Red phenomenon in Taiwan's democratic history. The Red Protest Phenomenon took everyone by surprise not because it was well planned and conducted, but because it exposed the lack of political choices and imagination available in Taiwan. Taiwanese politics has for a long time been dominated by elections, personalities and ideologies rather than policies, issues, and substantial debates, and in consequence by allegiance to Green or Blue camps.

Despite attempts by Green and Blue to control the movement, its focus on the issue of corruption – an issue that transcends conventional political identification in Taiwan – gave the movement uncertain status in Taiwan's political landscape. For once, even though just for a brief moment at the beginning of the protests, the domination of the civic space was interrupted, making the idea of a new politics of dissent thinkable. Perhaps one way to think of this demonstration is as the expression of the unconscious recognition of the need for a 'third space' outside of purely Blue-Green ideologies of identity.

The colour red displayed in the campaign has a number of overlapping meanings which can represent more than one thing simultaneously. The interpretation that associates red with Communism and red with China ignores both the protesters' own association of the colour red with anger and further associations with righteousness, integrity, prosperity and honour, as well as meanings that are embedded in the prevalence of the colour red in rituals, festivals, and worship, where it may also signal auspiciousness, fortune, and efficacy. The choice of the demonstrators to wear red must be seen as part of a complex field of culturally embedded meanings and significances, some of which are overtly political but many others of which are not. For example, Chen Ching-yu (陳幸妤), President A-bian's daughter, was dressed in red on the day when her husband Chao Chien-ming was in court to face charges of corruption (*MSN* 2007). As regards her choice of red dress, the layers of meaning and counter-meaning were woven so densely as to resist proper questioning. We might at least wonder if this 'mini-protest' against corruption associated with Shih's Red-Shirt Army was understood as such even by Chen Ching-yu herself?

This Red Demonstration is now part of Taiwan's democratic history and a sign of the development of its civil society. According to the results of the 2006 Freedom in the World survey released in early October 2006 by the US-based Freedom House, Taiwan received a rating of 1, indicating the highest degree of freedom in terms of both political rights and civil liberties, including, of course, the right to demonstrate and the tolerance of demonstration (Freedom House 2006). But, perhaps most importantly of all, Taiwanese people were demonstrating that party politics should not be reduced to election campaigns only, and that the campaigns of Blue and Green in terms of colours and identities are no longer enough. So if we really want to understand this Red Demonstration we must see it as the manifestation of a frustration with a party political system of colour/identity that needs radical change if it is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is

time for us to realise that neither Blue nor Green are enough.[1] We need more imagination from our political system: new voices and new ideas, and more debates on policies and issues, rather than the constant repetition of the same tired rhetoric.

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[1] One example of this is the Third Society Party (第三社會黨), established in July 2007 with the aim of moving beyond Blue and Green politics. Its website is http://www.society3.tw.

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Book Reviews

Huang Zhang-jian (2007) *Er-er-ba shijian zhenxiang kaozheng gao* (二二八事件真相考證稿 [*The Truth about 2-28: Assessing the Documents*]) Taipei: Lianjing (聯經). 600pp. ISBN 9570-8312-86

The 2-28 Incident of 1947 has long been one of the most controversial and contested events in modern Taiwanese history. Shortly after Taiwan's retrocession to China after fifty years of Japanese colonial rule, the Taiwanese rose in protest against the provincial authority of Governor-General Chen Yi (陳儀), demanding a higher degree of autonomy from the Chinese motherland and an end to the island's economic exploitation. After a brief period of feigned negotiations, the protest was brutally suppressed by military reinforcements from the mainland.

This year, the sixtieth commemoration of 2-28, has produced a number of new contributions to scholarship, one of the most remarkable being the book under review. Huang's book offers a meticulous and extensive selection of the relevant sources on the 2-28 Incident. Few of these are new, and Huang often resorts to material that has been widely discussed since the early 1990s – such as the communications between President Chiang Kai-shek and Governor Chen Yi in early March 1947, the reports of different newspapers at the time of the Incident, and various research reports on the 2-28 Incident compiled in 1947 on behalf of the government (such as the reports by Minister of Defence Bai Chong-xi [白崇禧] and the Censor for Fujian and Taiwan, Yang Liang-gong [楊亮功]). The enormous quantity and variety of the material is impressive, and fully justifies the author's claim that the book presents the fruit of twenty years of research. For various aspects of the 2-28 Incident, the book offers a substantial compilation and a mostly competent selection and evaluation of the official sources available. The extensiveness of his research, however, while meritorious, is sometimes overwhelming, and makes the reading of Huang's book an exhausting undertaking. The major events of the 2-28 Incident, as well as Huang's central theses, are buried under an avalanche of details, whose relevance for an understanding of the Incident is not always apparent. For instance, a large part of Huang's book (200 out of 580 pages) deals with the 2-28 Incident in Gaoxiong, and Huang goes to great lengths to convince the reader that the military suppression initiated by General Peng Meng-qi (彭孟緝) on 6 March was fully justified. The first third of Huang's book, consequently, appears like one grand apology for General Peng Meng-qi – supported, amongst other things, by 'new material' provided by Peng Meng-qi's son Peng Yin-gang (彭蔭剛) (167-194).

To be sure, the 2-28 Incident in Gaoxiong was exceptional and important in many respects, since it inaugurated the massacre of Taiwanese civilians, which in

most parts of the island only started after the arrival of the military reinforcements from the mainland on 8 March, but this is a massacre which Huang denies ever took place at all.[1] Irrespective of the plausibility of Huang's claims, however, the disproportionably large emphasis he puts on the events in Gaoxiong gives the whole book a strangely unbalanced appearance.

To believe or not believe government documents?

This, however, is not the gravest objection that must be raised against Huang's research. Of far greater consequence is Huang's seemingly unshakable belief in the validity of the official documentation on 2-28. Contemporary scholarship on the Incident, which began in the late 1980s, has always been perplexed by widely diverging and conflicting statements on the unfolding of events, as derived from the official files from government agencies, the testimonies of eyewitnesses, and memoirs of leading figures involved in the 2-28 Incident. The main task, therefore, has been to evaluate and deliberate over these often contradictory sources, and to examine to what extent official account of the 2-28 massacre is misleading.

Huang, however, seems to oppose this kind of comparative evaluation. He poses serious charges against contemporary research on the 2-28 Incident – most prominently, the official 'Research Report on the 2-28 Incident' ('*Er-er-ba shijian yanjiu baogao*' ['*二二八事件研究報告*']') drafted in 1991/1992 on behalf of the Executive Yuan. As Huang states in several places of his book, the 2-28 Research Report grants an unwarranted degree of credibility to dubious reports of eyewitnesses – with the purpose of exculpating the 'rebels' and to put unjust

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[1] Huang's account of the 2-28 Incident in Gaoxiong provides a good example of his selective usage of sources and his biased belief in official records on the Incident. On page 48, Huang quotes the testimony of Li Jie-xun (李捷勳), who claimed that hundreds of people were massacred by the military after 6 March. This allegation, Huang assures us, cannot possibly be true, since the archives of the Police Administration give no indication that such a massacre ever occurred. 'Mr. Li', writes Huang, 'fabricated these lies on purpose.' Huang never even considers the possibility that the Police Administration in Gaoxiong, as well as other government agencies, might have had good reasons to conceal the mass-killing of civilians.

In contrast, Huang claims that the military was forced to intervene, since the 'rebels' had attacked innocent Mainlanders, taking many prisoners and using them as human shields against an anticipated military counterattack. Furthermore, the military, according to Huang, had acted with extreme caution and restraint, even to the extent of putting the lives of soldiers in jeopardy. '[General Peng Meng-qi] knew that it would be difficult to differentiate between good and bad persons. Before dispatching his troops, he therefore gave orders to "issue warnings before taking action" and to "fire warning shots in the air". But [the rebels] had machine guns, and some of Peng's troops lost their lives' (91).

This flattering description of the military's actions, which stands in sharp contrast to the testimony of countless eyewitnesses, was derived from the memoirs of military commanders at the time, such as Chen Jin-chun (陳錦春) and Wang Zuo-jin (王作金). Again, Huang's selection and evaluation of sources shows a remarkable lack of critical reflection on the possible motives behind these reports from the military.

blame on the government. All information emanating from non-official sources, Huang cautions, must be regarded with a high degree of suspicion, since:

> The oral reports of some people may be used to amend the shortcomings of the official records, but sometimes the oral reports are in contradiction to the official files, and are [therefore] obviously false. Some of these falsehoods are caused by confused memories; sometimes people did not have all the relevant information – some people, however, omit, distort and lie on purpose (21).

The only reliable information on the 2-28 Incident, then, is to be found in the official files of government agencies. This assessment is surprising, for common sense should tell us that the official documentation of an authoritarian regime, which most likely committed a brutal massacre on a defenceless civilian population, might not be the most reliable yardstick for the unveiling of the 'truth' of 2-28. Huang, however, seldom seems troubled by this possibility. Even when faced with contradictions within the official sources themselves (such as the testimony of General Peng Meng-qi, who issued conflicting statements regarding an alleged assassination attempt in his memoirs and various interviews in the 1990s), Huang always strives to unravel these inconsistencies, and to demonstrate which of the statements are false, and which, by logical conclusion, must therefore be true (76 onwards). Quite curiously, it does not appear to Huang that General Peng Meng-qi, for instance, might have lied on all occasions.[2]

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[2] On 6 March, a number of delegates from the Gaoxiong 2-28 Resolution Committee met with General Peng Meng-qi to negotiate a 'peace settlement' with the military forces stationed in Gaoxiong. In his memoirs, Peng Meng-qi claimed that on this occasion, one of the delegates named Tu Guang-ming (凃光明) drew a gun and nearly succeeded in assassinating him. The delegates were thereupon arrested, and most of them executed. This failed attempt on his life, wrote Peng, was one of the major reasons for his decision to order an all-out attack on the city. In a number of interviews conducted in the early 1990s, however, Peng Meng-qi went even further in his accusations against the Resolution Committee's delegates, claiming that two of the delegates had carried hand grenades to the meeting.

Faced with these two contradictory statements, Huang concludes – quite reasonably – that the later claim cannot possibly be true: 'I can't see how hand grenades could have been hidden on [the delegates'] bodies and carried to the negotiations without anybody noticing. Furthermore, hand grenades are weapons used for middle-distance, and were not suited to be used in the close confinements of the conference room. It therefore stands to reason that [the two delegates] did not carry any hand grenades' (77).

After eliminating General Peng Meng-qi's second statement, Huang has thereby demonstrated – to his own satisfaction – that the first claim must be true, namely that Peng Meng-qi indeed barely escaped an attempted assassination, although no hand grenades were involved.

In fact, it is highly unlikely that Peng Meng-qi's life was threatened at all – a possibility that Huang fails to consider. It seems much more plausible that Peng Meng-qi's allegation of an attempted assassination by representatives of the Resolution Committee was no more than a thinly veiled pretext for military suppression. On the question of this alleged 'assassination attempt' see Zhang (張炎憲) *et al* (2006: 252 onwards).

This is one major problem that runs through the whole book: From the outset, Huang is equipped with a yardstick of 'truth' as depicted in the government's pronouncements, and any claim that runs counter to these 'truths' is, in his opinion, patently false.

The main theses of Huang's book may be summarised as follows:

1. The local authorities under Governor Chen Yi, while initially seeking a peaceful solution to the 2-28 Incident, were finally compelled to appeal for military reinforcements from the mainland on 5 March. This became unavoidable because the 2-28 Resolution Committees, initially set up by Taiwanese notabilities for a peaceful settlement of the Incident, were infiltrated by 'rebels and thugs', mostly consisting of Communists, members of the underworld (*Liumang* [流氓]) and Taiwanese youths formerly serving in the Japanese army.

2. To a large extent, the Taiwanese only had themselves to blame for the harsh reaction of the central government. They had plotted to disarm the military forces on Taiwan (which, in Huang's eyes, was equivalent to high treason) and had appealed for US intervention to achieve national independence for Taiwan.

3. The armed forces dispatched from the mainland succeeded in restoring law and order to the province, and the loss of human life was kept to a minimum.

4. Although some innocent people did suffer during the incident, this was mainly due the inappropriate handling of the incident by Governor Chen Yi, who had initially failed to implement the virtuous policy of forgiveness and leniency set down by President Chiang Kai-shek.

Negotiations failed – Governor Chen Yi, the 2-28 Resolution Committee, and Wang Tian-deng (王添燈)

After the outbreak of the 2-28 Incident, local Taiwanese leaders, with the consent and support of Governor Chen Yi, established various '2-28 Resolution Committees' ('*er-er-ba shijian chuli weiyuanhui*' ['二二八事件處理委員會']) with the aim of negotiating a peaceful settlement and restoring local order. After a few days, however, the central Resolution Committee in Taipei issued a number of demands for far-reaching reforms of Taiwan's political and economic structure. Chen Yi feigned agreement with these continued negotiations, while secretly appealing for military reinforcements from the mainland. Those are the facts, which are generally accepted amongst contemporary 2-28 scholarship, and Governor Chen Yi has been widely criticised for his deceitful manoeuvrings.

Huang does not deny that Chen Yi had secretly asked the central government for military reinforcements. After analysing the fragmentary and inconclusive communications between Chen Yi and President Chiang Kai-shek as preserved in the Daxi Archives, Huang concludes that this request for military reinforcements

was made on 5 March (209-212).[3] However, Huang claims that the blame for this development must be ascribed exclusively to the Taiwanese representatives.

During the first stage of negotiations, writes Huang, the 2-28 Resolution Committee was under the influence of responsible and moderate delegates headed by Jiang Wei-chuan (蔣渭川).[4] The Resolution Committee made substantial contributions to the restoration of public order, and the moderate nine-point demands of 6 March (most importantly, the abolition of the extraordinary powers of the Governor-General, the transformation of Taiwan into a regular provincial government, and the increased employment of local Taiwanese within the political structure) could find the support of Governor Chen Yi (414). A peaceful settlement of the incident, consequently, was just within reach.

After 6 March, however, the situation changed dramatically. The 2-28 Resolution Committee, Huang claims, came to be dominated by 'radicals and Communists' under the leadership of Wang Tian-deng, while the moderate delegates under Jiang Wei-chuan were ousted. Those radicals proceeded to issue a number of outrageous demands (the famous '32' or '42' demands, presented on 7 March[5]) that were equivalent to high treason and forced the government's hand:

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[3] The precise date of Chen Yi's request for military reinforcements is still disputed. A crucial document that Huang also refers to is a 5 March telegram from President Chiang Kai-shek to Governor Chen Yi, in which Chiang specifies the identity of the military units to be dispatched and their expected arrival date on Taiwan. This telegram, however, reveals that the military units were already being assembled by 5 March. It can therefore be speculated that Chen Yi's request for reinforcements might have been issued a considerable amount of time before, although no conclusive proof for this assumption has so far been discovered.

[4] Jiang Wei-chuan (蔣渭川), a leading member of the influential 'Society for the Political Construction of the Province of Taiwan' ('Taiwansheng zhengzhi jianshe xiehui' ['台灣省政治建設協會']), played a controversial role in the 2-28 Incident, which could not be completely clarified until today. Jiang was often portrayed as a 'traitor' to Taiwanese interests, since he apparently attempted to undermine the authority of the 2-28 Resolution Committee, and establish his own society as the leading representative body of the Taiwanese's demands vis-à-vis the provincial authorities. Huang's claim that Jiang Wei-chuan struggled to strengthen the Resolution Committee (390) is therefore not completely convincing. It should be further noted that in his memoirs, Jiang Wei-chuan claimed that he had never actually been a member of the 2-28 Resolution Committee, and that he had always regarded the Resolution Committee with contempt and suspicion. See Jiang (蔣渭川) (1996: 33).

[5] The first draft of the final demands of the 2-28 Resolution Committee contained 32 points. However, in the course of deliberations on these demands in the plenary meeting of the 2-28 Resolution Committee on 7 March, ten further demands were added. It is very likely that those additional ten demands – which included, amongst other things, the pardoning of war crimes committed by Taiwanese formerly serving in the Japanese army, and which were certain to encounter strong opposition from the central government – were introduced by the local authorities' agents provocateurs, with the aim of creating a pretext for military intervention. In her dissertation, Chen Cui-lian (1995) conducted extensive research on the government's possible attempt to intentionally effectuate an escalation of 2-28. Unfortunately, Huang does not refer to these interesting findings, although he quotes Chen Cuilian's book in other contexts.

> Chen [Yi] had already accepted the proposals of Jiang Wei-chuan […], for these proposals did not contravene the central government's military and civil-judiciary authority. […] Unfortunately, the first article of Wang Tian-deng's draft of the 32 demands of 6 March […] asked for the disarmament of the military. This was in excess of what the government could tolerate (229).

At this point, a few questions deserve attention. First of all, it seems implausible that the 32 demands of 6 March were the decisive factor in the government's decision to suppress the incident by force. As Huang himself concedes, the dispatch of military forces had already been decided upon by 5 March (at the latest). It follows logically that after this date, all tactical manoeuvring on the side of the Taiwanese delegates in the 2-28 Resolution Committee was completely meaningless, and without any consequence for the decision-making of the central government. These continued negotiations, which lasted until the very day of the arrival of military forces on 8 March, were merely a sham devised by Governor Chen Yi to buy time for the military reinforcements to arrive, and to 'settle' the situation in his favour.

Furthermore, Huang does not ponder the reasons why the demand to disarm the military was raised at all.[6] Huang appears to assume (although he never explicitly states so) that the 'radicals and Communists' within the Resolution Committee were seriously considering an armed conflict with the battle-hardened troops from the mainland, which seems far-fetched, to say the least. He does not give sufficient attention to the rationale given by the Resolution Committee at the time: namely, that since 28 February, soldiers and members of the Special Police Brigade had been running amok in the city, randomly shooting civilians. When seen in this light, the demand to put all weapons under the supervision of the Resolution Committee in order to avoid further bloodshed does not seem quite so preposterous.

Finally, Huang's allegation that the 2-28 Resolution Committee was infiltrated by Communists is not supported by historical evidence.[7] True, the allegation of 2-28 as a Communist plot to overthrow the government had long served as the regime's justification for military suppression. Recent 2-28 scholarship, however, has utterly refuted this claim.

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[6] It should also be noted that it is not clear if the '42 demands' did indeed ask for the disarmament of the military. It appears that several versions of those demands were in circulation on 7 March; a factor that Huang also addresses in his research.

[7] As a proof for the alleged Communist infiltration of the 2-28 Resolution Committee, Huang notes that the 32 demands of 7 March were suspiciously similar to a 'working paper' of the Communist 'Working Committee Taiwan', dated November 1946 (286). In my opinion, the reliability of Huang's source is very questionable. Furthermore, the economic and political hardships facing Taiwan after retrocession to the Chinese mainland were very obvious. Any similarities should therefore not be surprising, and should certainly not be considered as 'proof' for a connection between these two documents.

The 2-28 Incident as a call for Taiwan's Independence?

There is, however, one further charge of betrayal that Huang poses against the Taiwanese. During the 2-28 Incident, Huang claims, the Taiwanese had appealed to the US and British consulates on Taiwan, and asked for the intervention of foreign powers. The key document for this alleged attempt to achieve Taiwan independence is a petition signed on behalf of 800 citizens, which appealed for a joint administration over Taiwan by the United Nations, with the ultimate aim of achieving independence from the Chinese mainland. This petition constitutes, in Huang's opinion, the key issue of all 2-28 research:

> This [petition] is the core issue of the research on the 2-28 Incident, it […] is essential for an understanding of why Chen Yi resorted to a policy of severe repression. The people of Taiwan believe that they have done nothing wrong [during the 2-28 Incident]. However, through this petition […] they committed the gravest error of all (532).

This claim runs counter to the assessment of the mainstream of contemporary scholarship on the 2-28 Incident. Most authors agree that the movement for Taiwan Independence only developed as a result of the traumatic experience of the 2-28 Incident, leading to the formation of the Taiwan Independence Movement overseas that first took root in Japan in the early 1950s. During the incident itself, according to the general line of argument, this demand for Taiwan independence had not played any significant role.

To be sure, there were scattered voices that asked for Taiwan's separation from China, which should be hardly surprising considering the fact that Taiwan, during the preceding 18 months of Chinese rule, had experienced an unprecedented level of economic decline, widespread corruption, and social unrest.[8] Furthermore, it appears that several petitions were presented to foreign representatives on the island, although information on these alleged petitions is scarce. Quoting a report from Chen Yi to the central government, Huang assumes that there were at least seven of these petitions in early March 1947 (525), whose content is, in most cases, obscure.

Be that as it may: these petitions, to the extent that they existed at all, were certainly only supported by a tiny minority of Taiwan's population. The petition that Huang refers to was, by his own account, signed on behalf of no more than 807 individuals (with a total population of six million at the time, less than 0.02% of the inhabitants). Furthermore, the identity of the signatories of these petitions is, to date, completely unclear.[9] Huang's conclusions that 'the Taiwanese people' had

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[8] It would exceed the scope of this book review to discuss the question of whether an appeal to foreign embassies (even with the aim of pursuing independence for Taiwan) should indeed be regarded as 'high treason', which the central government was justified to put down by force. It should be noted that the issue of China's sovereignty over Taiwan was still contested at the time of the 2-28 Incident, and some authors argued that the United Nations had both the justification and the responsibility to intervene.

[9] In his book, Huang originally deduced that the petition presented to the US consulate on 3 March was most probably drafted with the cooperation of Lin Maosheng, who, according to

appealed to General Douglas MacArthur to create an independent Taiwan (583) is therefore unjustified.

The 2-28 Incident and the 'virtuous policy' of Chiang Kai-shek

Since the beginning of independent 2-28 scholarship in the late 1980s, the role of Chiang Kai-shek and his responsibility for the 2-28 massacre have stood at the centre the controversy. Some scholars (mostly with a certain political affiliation with the Taiwan Independence Movement) have claimed that President Chiang Kai-shek intentionally used the 2-28 Incident to dispose of Taiwan's social and political elite, in order to 'teach the Taiwanese a lesson' and to facilitate future domination of the island. Although no decisive proof for this allegation can, so far, be uncovered, even the most conservative circles of Taiwanese historians generally concede that Chiang Kai-shek was not completely without blame. Chiang Kai-shek did not make the effort to gain an accurate picture of the situation in Taiwan, and naively trusted the exaggerated and sometimes hysterical reports of the provincial authorities. Chiang Kai-shek, according to this historical evaluation, neglected his duty as Head of State, and rashly endangered the lives of many innocent civilians[10].

In Huang's account, both the charges of wilful murder and of neglected duty are invalid. Ever since the beginning of the uprising on 28 February, says Huang, Chiang Kai-shek had urged the provincial authorities to handle the 2-28 Incident with caution and leniency, and to give due consideration to all reasonable demands of the Taiwanese representatives. This enlightened policy of goodwill, however, had initially met with stubborn disobedience from Governor Chen Yi:

> After declaring Martial Law [on 28 February], Chen Yi was concerned for his own power, and did not instantly abide by Chiang's instructions. […] Chen Yi failed to stop the 2-28 uprising at its source. He did not apologise and admit his mistakes; he did not take the blame on himself and resign from office. Therefore, the 2-28 uprising aggravated, and spread […] over the whole island (223-224).

This tendency to hold Chen Yi responsible for the 2-28 Incident, while at the same time absolving Chiang Kai-shek from any wrongdoing, is by no means a very

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Huang, was one of the few Taiwanese dignitaries who had a fluent command of the English language (488). However, in a postscript to the chapter, Huang concedes that this original suspicion could not be maintained in light of recent findings (525), and he now claims that this petition was drawn up by Huang Ji-nan, who later became a prominent member of the early Taiwan Independence Movement in Japan (533 onwards). Although these speculations are of a certain interest, they are, as I argued above, not relevant for an understanding of 2-28.

[10] This understanding of Chiang Kai-shek's role was reflected, for example, on the memorial plaque of the 2-28 memorial in Taipei, where it is claimed that Chiang Kai-shek dispatched the army without sufficient verification (*wei ji xicha*). This languid description of Chiang's errors was heavily criticized by different organisations of 2-28 victims, who demanded a much more robust reproof of Chiang's crimes. The memorial plaque was destroyed only hours after its unveiling on 28 February 1997.

original notion. In fact, Chen Yi had served as the scapegoat for the government's misdeeds since the early 1950s, when he was executed in Taipei for his alleged surrender to the Communist enemy.[11] This simplistic view does not take into account that 2-28 was not an isolated event, but rather the culmination of developments that had begun in 1945. The policy of economic exploitation and political suppression, which had been enacted with the full support of the central government, had led to grave frictions within Taiwanese society, and a violent outburst of these tensions was probably unavoidable in the long term. A discussion and evaluation of the central government's (and Chiang Kai-shek's) responsibility for the 2-28 Incident, therefore, would have to comprise a much larger spectrum of analysis than Huang allows for.

Further, we are once again confronted with the question of the trustworthiness of the official documentation on the Incident. It is true, as Huang reminds us, that Chiang Kai-shek issued strict orders to his troops to maintain discipline, and specifically to refrain from any acts of 'revenge' against Taiwanese civilians (548). However, Huang does not reflect on whether these orders were actually carried out, or were even meant to be carried out. Consider this statement by George Kerr, the US Vice-Consul on Taiwan at the time of the 2-28 Incident:

> Obviously Chiang's remarks were not prepared for the Formosans (he could not care less what they might think, now that his troops were firmly in control) but for the public at Nanking, and for the historical record – the wonderful Chinese historical record of benevolent acts piously undertaken by paternal government and carefully set down for posterity to admire (Kerr 1965).

After digesting Huang's book, the reader is left with the impression that 2-28 was no more than an instance of local unrest of limited scale, handled with caution and competence, and might very well start to wonder what the fuss concerning 2-28 is all about in the first place. The only misconduct of the provincial government, according to Huang, was Chen Yi's insistence on charging the criminals of the 2-28 Incident through military courts instead of civil courts (again, in contradiction to Chiang Kai-shek's orders), with the effect that some people served rather harsh prison terms:

> Chen Yi did not comply with the instructions of the central government to handle [the incident] with leniency, that was his mistake. He arrested too many people. These people were later released by the government. Still, Chen Yi caused a lot of unrest and anger amongst the people (584).

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[11] After the 2-28 uprising, Chen Yi was transferred to the Mainland, where he served as the governor of Zhejiang until 1949. Chen was later arrested on charges that he had secretly plotted with the Chinese Communists for a peaceful surrender of the province, and was executed on 18 June 1950. Although Chen Yi's execution was not immediately connected to 2-28, the official propaganda of the time made it very clear that Chen was to be regarded as the true culprit of the 2-28 massacre.

The 2-28 Incident, one of the most traumatic episodes in modern Taiwanese history, appears to be no more than a slight procedural mistake of the local judicial authorities.

The victims of the 2-28 Incident – what victims?

One of the most controversial and puzzling topics regarding the 2-28 Incident has been the question of how many people perished during the Incident and its aftermath. To date, scholars have been unable to provide an even approximate estimation of the death toll, with numbers still ranging from between just over 2000 up to a staggering 100,000, although most authors tend to agree on a figure somewhere between 18,000 and 28,000 victims. However, it is a largely undisputed fact that the military committed unspeakable acts of violence and 'revenge' on the Taiwanese population. On 1 April 1947, for example, various representative Taiwanese groups on the mainland issued a public statement, decrying the unspeakable brutality of KMT soldiers, who were torturing, raping, and killing Taiwanese by the tens of thousands (Taiwan lü Hu liu tuanti [台灣旅滬六團體] 2002: 261-265)

In his book, Huang takes note of these allegations. However, he counters the accusations raised against the military with apparent ease:

> On 23 March, [Minister of Defence] Bai Chong-xi reported [to Chiang Kai-shek]
> in a telegram: These statements by the representatives of Taiwanese groups
> are merely based on rumours [...and] for that reason, Chiang Kai-shek did not
> further investigate (579).

Again, one must be astonished by Huang's seemingly unshakable belief in the credibility of the government's official statements. Any large-scale massacre of civilians, according to Huang, cannot possibly have happened – because the KMT's Minister of Defence said so in a telegram to President Chiang Kai-shek!

Only in a very few instances does Huang concede that some innocent Taiwanese might have suffered. One prominent case in question is the famous Taiwanese scholar Lin Mao-sheng (林茂生), who, together with Chen Xin (陳炘) and Song Fei-ru (宋斐如), was executed by order of Governor Chen Yi without proper authorisation (571 onwards). Huang's focus on these individual cases, however, rather results in obscuring the suffering of the Taiwanese population, since the reader might get the misleading impression that these isolated incidents had been the only cases of the authorities' abuses.

How many people, then, did die as a consequence of the Incident? Huang does not give an explicit number for the total death-toll. In the case of Gaoxiong, Huang puts the number of victims at around 120, based on a March 1947 estimate of the KMT's local Secret Service Bureau. Furthermore, Huang reminds us that these victims were not necessarily killed by government forces, but 'people in the town [of Gaoxiong] may just as well have been shot by rebels – this fact should be particularly considered in regard to the specification of the Secret Service Bureau' (200).

Huang concedes that after the arrival of the military reinforcements, some innocent Taiwanese were indeed abused by the military and police. In the first

stage of the incident, says Huang, the local military and police forces had been confined to their barracks on Chen Yi's orders, and they had to stand by helplessly while countless of their fellow countrymen from the mainland were abused and murdered by a Taiwanese mob. Consequently, 'the rage in their hearts had no outlet. When the reinforcement army arrived, therefore, [the soldiers] took revenge on innocent Taiwanese. Chen Yi, in accordance with the strict orders from Chiang Kai-shek, put an end to these [excesses]' (548).

   According to Huang, these 'excesses' against Taiwanese civilians (which, furthermore, were largely limited to beatings and insults, and did not lead to many fatalities) were therefore understandable from a psychological point of view, and should be judged with leniency.

   This assessment stands in stark contrast with countless eyewitness reports. Take, for example, the testimony of Xu Cao-de (許曹德), who witnessed the military's arrival in Gaoxiong:

> Through a crack in the door of our shop, I could see terrible scenes: soldiers raised their weapons against anybody who seemed suspicious to them. Grown-ups and children were shot. All through the night, I could hear the terrible sound of gun-shots, and the screams of innocent people dragged away by soldiers. […] The next day, the terror became even worse. Whoever moved on the streets or showed the slightest sign of disobedience was shot down instantly. On the streets, we could see piles of corpses. […] People were killed like ants. Any Taiwanese over the age of twenty who stepped out of the house could not hope to come back alive (Xu 1990: 117).

In his foreword, Huang expresses the hope that his book will be conducive to an easing of the 2-28 victims' pain:

> If this book can help the family members of the 2-28 victims to clearly understand the truth of the Incident, reduce their hatred against the ROC government and [thereby] diminish the resistance against a future unification between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, then it might be said that I have made a contribution for the Chinese people (10).

It is very doubtful that Huang's negligent treatment of the victim's suffering will realise this expectation.

The remaking of the old KMT's 2-28 history

The historiography of 2-28 has always been a highly politicised matter, and the Incident, a hallmark of Taiwanese identity, has been at the core of heated debate. 2-28, therefore, could hardly present itself as a topic of detached and unemotional research. The beginning of a free and independent 2-28 scholarship in the late 1980s developed as a protest and countermovement against the KMT's strategy of denial and repression. The mainstream of contemporary 2-28 scholarship, which strove to force the KMT into admitting its historical guilt and doing justice to the victims of 2-28, has been characterised by a high degree of criticism towards the KMT; a tendency that can still be observed today.

In recent months, however, it appears that a certain conservative backlash is forming. A number of authors write with the assumption that the demonising of the KMT has gone too far, and seek alternative approaches to 2-28, while at the same time justifying the government's actions in 1947.[12] These approaches should not be discredited outright. It is, of course, legitimate and even necessary to challenge the mainstream of modern 2-28 scholarship. As the saying goes, it all depends on who has the better argument.

One should not, however, completely ignore the findings of the last 20 years of KMT-critical 2-28 research, as Huang clearly does. Through his chosen point of departure, namely the assumed 'truth' of the incident as depicted in the regime's documentation of 1947, his path is firmly set from the beginning, and his point of arrival is predictable. Any research which is mainly based on the documentation of an authoritarian regime will never be able to find any indication of that regime's wrongdoing. How could it be otherwise?

Huang's research certainly has its merits. His book offers a comprehensive compilation of important material on the 2-28 Incident, and should certainly be consulted by any serious student of that period. Huang's conclusions as well as his general understanding of the incident, however, are not much different from the regime's propaganda of the authoritarian period.

In 1988, Premier Yu Guo-hua (俞國華), when confronted with the question of 2-28 in parliament for the first time, explained that 2-28 had been a plot by Communist elements to overthrow the government and achieve Taiwan independence. Although the provincial authorities under Chen Yi, according to Yu, had committed a number of serious mistakes in the handling of the incident, the central government had acted with extreme caution, and kept the loss of human life to a minimum (*Lianhe bao* [*United Daily News*] 2 March 1988: 3).

In regard to Huang's book, it seems that the KMT's old history of 2-28 is on the rise again.

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Kerr, George (1965) *Formosa Betrayed*. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press.

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[12] Another interesting recent attempt to relieve the KMT of its responsibility for 2-28 can be found in a book by Qi (2007). Qi assumes that the 2-28 Incident was, to a large extent, caused by the willful destruction of Taiwan's economy by the Japanese at the end of the Second World War.

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Shao-li Lu (2005) *Zhanshi Taiwan: quanli, kongjian yu zhimin tongzhi de xingxiang biaoshu* (*展示臺灣、權力、空間與殖民統治的形象表述* [*Exhibiting Taiwan: Power, Space and Image Representation of Japanese Colonial Rule*]).Taipei: Maitian (麥田 [Rye Field Publications]). 455pp. ISBN 986-7252-86-1

Visitors to contemporary China will be familiar with the exoticised depictions of 'minority nationalities' – whether Zhuang, Tibetan, Mongol or Uighur – that are common currency in the media, in the promotional literature of a burgeoning tourism industry, and in the rapidly multiplying array of museums and theme parks. The minorities in question are generally depicted in 'traditional' costume (which nowadays seldom reflects the garb of the average 'Tibetan on the street'); images of beautiful women singing and dancing predominate (and song-and-dance shows are a standard feature of package tours in minority regions); the natural beauty of the scenery and the bountiful production of local agricultural 'specialities' are celebrated; harmony between Han and the local minorities is promoted; and a historical narrative emphasising the benefits bestowed by the more 'advanced' Han supplies the inescapable subtext.

   Lu Shao-li's meticulous and fascinating study of the uses made of exhibitions as tools of colonial governance by the Japanese rulers of early twentieth-century Taiwan cannot but remind the reader of the strikingly similar strategies deployed by the twenty-first-century Chinese Communist Party to legitimise and reinforce their control of ethnic 'autonomous regions' on the vast periphery of the People's Republic (PRC). Indeed, this study might well make more than it does of such a glaringly obvious parallel – particularly given the exquisite irony in the way in which the incorporation of the Taiwanese aborigines within the official PRC (and the old Kuomintang) narrative of 'multi-ethnic' nationhood (as *Taiwan gaoshan zu*, they have been designated one of China's 55 minorities) appears to mimic Japanese representations of the relationship between the 'advanced' centre (i.e. the home islands), and the 'backward,' though exotic and picturesque, periphery. The difference, of course, is that in the early twentieth-century Japanese vision of

racial hierarchy, the Han themselves were also deemed backward and – civilisationally – peripheral.

This book opens with several highly timely observations concerning the continuing contemporary importance of large-scale international exhibitions (of various descriptions) as a means of communicating and popularising an official vision of the nation and its place in the world. In particular, allusion is made to the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, the 2008 Olympic Games, and the international exhibition scheduled by Taiwan for the same year as the Olympics (no coincidence). Lu grounds this study in a thorough (perhaps even overly-thorough) review of the increasingly abundant literature on the history of international exhibitions, and one theme that emerges from this is the corruption of the ostensible ideals of the very first modern exhibition in London in 1851 – which was opened by Queen Victoria with ringing endorsements of the principles of universal peace, international brotherhood and progress. As with twenty-first-century exhibitions (not least those staged in 'Greater China'), so with their nineteenth-century counterparts, the context of international conflict and one-upmanship, as Lu notes, generally played a more important role in shaping the aims and content of the great international exhibitions. These became the stage on which the colonial powers of the age aspired to strut their stuff.

The Japanese, aspirational and – by century's end – actual imperialists, were eager to join this parade. Lu devotes considerable space to analysing the process through which Japan became initiated into the rites of the large-scale international exhibitions that punctuated this period. The Japanese authorities were keen that their participation in such exhibitions should contribute to bolstering the impression of Japan's parity with the 'advanced' Western nations. Thus initial steps were tentative and exploratory, and full-scale participation in overseas exhibitions was preceded by domestic experimentation with the exhibition form, such as the 1877 exhibition of 'national products' in Ueno Park, Tokyo. The authorities quickly became aware of the potential of exhibitions as vehicles for propaganda of all sorts, for promoting new economic policies, and for constructing political identity. In colonial settings, as Lu observes, exhibitions possessed an additional utility – as a form of visual propaganda that overcame the language barrier.

The international exhibitions of the late nineteenth century featured increasingly competitive displays of the colonial achievements of the various powers, each vying to display the exuberant exoticism of its possessions – animal, vegetable, mineral and anthropological – as well as the ambition and successes of its 'civilising mission'. This was Taiwan's special contribution to the construction of Japan's self-image as an advanced, modern nation. For the earliest exhibitions staged in Japan following Taiwan's 1895 colonisation, groups of aborigines from 'head-hunting' tribes were brought to the home islands to highlight the backwardness of Taiwan, and the need for Japan's civilising influence. Over time, Lu argues, the aborigines became less prominent in Japanese representations of Taiwan outside the island itself, since the imperial authorities wished to accentuate the positive achievements of their rule, particularly in order to attract investment and settlers from Japan. Commercial considerations became increasingly important, and Taiwan exhibits in key international exhibitions in the run-up to the Great War established the teahouse as an enduring symbol of Taiwan. Tea, sugar, rice, camphor, and fisheries were promoted as the key sectors in the

colonial economy – the emphasis on primary products also serving to reinforce images of the island's backwardness *vis-à-vis* a Japan whose increasing industrial sophistication was stressed. Along with commercial came cultural sophistication – sometimes of a distinctly Edwardian variety: Lu reports the bizarre instruction in the guidebook to the Osaka Exhibition of 1903 advising Japanese visitors to the Taiwan teahouse to put milk and sugar in their Oolong tea; one year after the signature of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, this reflects a comical urge to emulate the foremost imperial power of the day.

As Japan's colonial ambitions expanded, so did the scope and range of the colonial galleries in Japanese exhibitions – culminating in the 1935 Taipei exhibition to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Japan's colonisation of Taiwan. This accorded prominence to displays featuring the new possessions in Manchuria, and took place against the backdrop of the escalating war with China, the developing 'southern advance' policy of the imperial government, and a mounting campaign of 'Japanisation' in Taiwan as in Korea. Here in particular, Lu analyses the spatial dimension of the exhibition – the prominence of the Manchurian gallery, for example, clearly signified a desire to highlight the progressive nature of Japan's influence over its newest dependency. However, following the work of the 'new museologists' such as Tony Bennett, Lu extends the concept of exhibitionary space well beyond the confines of the formal international or national exhibition – considering the representational strategies deployed in museums, departments stores and the nascent Taiwanese tourism industry. In the 'Museum of the Governor's Mansion' ('*Zongdufu*') – today's National Taiwan Museum – the Japanese curators focused their attention primarily on natural history, with an increasing emphasis during the 1920s and 1930s on anthropology (especially relating to the aborigines). Historical artefacts were also collected in increasing numbers, but most of these concerned the history of the Japanese on Taiwan.

Here is yet another striking parallel with contemporary exhibitionary strategies on mainland China, where museums in regions such as Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang display a similar emphasis on local flora, fauna, geology, and 'folk customs', while in their coverage of history only periods involving intensive interaction with (or rule by) the Han regimes of 'China Proper' are accorded much coverage. On Taiwan in the colonial period, the Han Chinese inhabitants received at the hands of the Japanese precisely the kind of treatment that has long been meted out by Han on the mainland to Uighur, Mongol, Tibetan, and other 'minority' groups. This is illustrated by the reproduction in Lu's book of the waxwork figures of traditionally-dressed Han that featured in the 1903 Osaka Exhibition, and by the photographs published by the railways department of the colonial administration of Taiwanese 'beauties' ('*meinu*') in *qipao* posing coyly in front of famous tourist spots. In a similar manner, tourist advertisements and displays of 'minority' culture in the PRC emphasise the innocent charms of the ethnic female, and the timeless, ahistorical, quaint, and backward nature of indigenous culture.

Lu emphasises the influence of modern Western exhibitionary practice on the evolution of Japanese efforts to use exhibitions, museums, tourism, and the apparatus of modern consumerism to re-imagine and represent Taiwan as a previously barbaric outpost of Japanese civilisation. This influence is clear and undeniable, but there is another side to the story. East Asian strategies of state-

building, visions of empire, and representations of colonised 'others' have histories that pre-date the impact of Western colonialism. As Peter Perdue argues in *China Marches West* (2005, published by Harvard), Chinese imperial expansion during the Qing, far from being simply a recapitulation of ancient dynastic state-building practices, was in both its scale and degree of penetration of indigenous societies of Central Eurasia something entirely new. For Perdue, Qing imperialism needs to be seen within the wider context of early modern empire- and state-building throughout Eurasia, and he demonstrates the striking similarities between the discourses of imperial expansion developed by the Qing intelligentsia and the champions of Russian expansion in Central Asia, and of British rule in India. The concept of the 'civilising mission' was as central to imperialism with Chinese characteristics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as it was to later Western and Japanese imperialisms. Moreover, as Emma Jinhua Teng demonstrates in *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (2004, published by Harvard), images of the savagery and barbarism of Taiwan played as significant a role in justifying Qing imperial rule as they were later to play in legitimising Japanese colonialism. The writings and pictures that Teng discusses were circulated both privately and commercially (in print form), titillating readers with images of the exotic (such as details of the sexual habits of aboriginal women), while also serving to familiarise Chinese intellectuals with the notion that Taiwan (like other new Qing possessions in the north-west) were parts of China's 'sovereign territory'. Thus while modern exhibitions, museums, department stores, and organised tourism constituted new strategies for the promotion and legitimation of imperial rule in the Taiwan of the Japanese colonial era, the content of these exhibitions, and the ways in which they sought to justify imperial rule, often had clear precedents in Qing imperial discourse.

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Mark Harrison (2006) *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity.* New York & Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 254pp, ISBN: 1-4039-7587-6

I want to begin this review by saying that this is a very important and original book, and that it should become required reading for all those interested in the study of Taiwan because it seeks to engage critically with political science scholarship in the field of Taiwan studies via post-colonial and particularly post-structuralist theory. Indeed, Harrison's book offers significant intellectual nourishment for scholars interested in theory and method and in the study of Taiwan. However, the argument that structures this book is not really about Taiwan. Or, given that it is an epistemological argument about the status of facts – are there such things as given facts or, alternatively, are they produced discursively via theory building – it might perhaps be more accurate to say that the argument that structures this book is not so much about Taiwan as applied to Taiwan as a kind of case study or instance. The consequence of this fact is that it is an argument with comparative

potential – its application to Taiwan is not a necessary outcome of the argument: it could have been applied to any place. It is this comparative potential that I will focus on in the concluding section of this review essay. In what follows I am going to offer a critique that is intended to further the theoretical reflection that Harrison sets in motion: it is not motivated by any will to destruction but rather by the same desire to apply the insights of contemporary theory to the societies and cultures of East Asia.

The most frequently-referenced theoretical term in the book's index is 'positivism' which is used both descriptively to characterise the methods of political scientists in their analyses of Taiwan's history, political vicissitudes, and nationalisms and, disparagingly, because according to Harrison, positivists operate under the unhelpful illusion that facts exist outside or before scholarly discourse. As such, Harrison argues that Taiwanese-ness or Taiwanese identity has been construed as a fact or as an object that can be specified as the necessary outcome of a classically liberal *telos*: the journey from colonialism to authoritarianism and finally on to democracy or, more prosaically, a journey from violence to civilisation. Harrison's argument attempts to demonstrate that the narrative itself constructs the facts that are privileged for analysis, objectifies them, gives them their shape, their resonance and their meaning such that Taiwanese identity is a product of 'the global academic system' (70). For example, in chapter one, Harrison's exquisite analysis of the naming of what today is called Taiwan – Formosa, the Republic of China, Chinese Taipei, Taiwan – as grammars delineating the boundaries of knowledge of the territory(ies) in question – demonstrates how the allegedly neutral, value-free knowledge of a place is indeed constituted by prior assumptions and constellations of political and economic constraint that determine what can be said about such and such a state of affairs in the world (160).

Let me interject, at this juncture, with the caveat that I am in broad agreement with the point Harrison is articulating, namely that the so-called positivist effort to rigorously separate fact from value is extremely problematic and that the emphasis on observation as a pure realm outside or free from ideological constraint – or, for that matter, from unconscious, cognitive structuring – is illusory. As Nietzsche might have put it, dispassionate and objective modes of writing are actually special instances of polemic that consciously seek to mask their own partisan nature. But, arguments about method in the sciences are more complex than Harrison allows for: Harrison's primary use of the term 'positivism' is as a form of abuse and, as a result, we are left only with a caricature. For example, Karl Popper's 'hyothetico-deductive' model of science explicitly recognises the theory-laden-ness of observation and is precisely intended as a critique of inductivist arguments that characterise scientific activity as a movement that begins with the neutral observation of facts and ends in the construction of theories or hypotheses. For Popper, the objectivity of the sciences lies not only in observation but also in the falsifiability of hypotheses (meaning that truth is never attained) and in the (alleged) autonomy of the sciences from political manipulation.

If, by positivism, Harrison means inductivism, then there are no grounds for disagreement between us. However, Harrison does not mean inductivism, or at least not only inductivism, because he uses the term 'positivism' like a dragnet. Moreover, he is rather wedded to Foucauldian arguments about the role of

discourse (discourse being the second most referenced term in the index) in the constitution of the objects of scientific enquiry and the ethical problems this raises for scholarship. This has interesting consequences. It would be true to say that positivists in all their shades assume that statements can be verified in terms of their accord with actual states of affairs in the world, but this is, of course, a very narrow view of language, and is not accepted as a satisfactory account of meaning in any serious scholarship today. But, for the likes of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, words-as-signifiers have an unfortunate predilection for non-arrival: instead of sticking to a purely denotative function, signifiers slide endlessly into other signifiers leaving meaning-as-reference adrift on an unforgiving and tempestuous sea. But if words do not point to things, how can accounts of events such as the 2-28 Incident ever be verified or evaluated? In his rejection of positivism and embrace of post-structuralism, Harrison runs the risk of leaving his reader without any criteria for establishing the truth or absence thereof of any account of a putative place or event. I would suggest that Harrison presents his reader with a false choice between positivism and post-structuralism, when other, more interesting alternatives are available (163).

Let me turn to the text and to a passage in which the tensions Harrison is grappling with are nicely manifest:

> One might ask, how would it be possible to avoid being complicit in the Taiwanese national idea. If […] it is impossible to write about Taiwan without producing the discourse of Taiwanese nationhood, how can one remain objective in one's scholarship? The answer is that one cannot. The best that one can do, as is being attempted here, is to understand and make explicit one's complicity with imagined, albeit academically approved, narratives of nationhood, and through that understanding offer a greater depth and nuance in describing the processes, including one's own, through which the Taiwanese national idea has come into being (43).

Objectivity, then, is impossible because of the scholar's 'complicity' in the production of the very facts or phenomena he or she is seeking to describe and analyse. The only way out of this bind is to direct enquiry towards the historical formation of the categories and concepts used, in this instance, in the study of the territory that is today named Taiwan. Yet, despite this determination to situate scholarship and to attend to the role it plays in the production of facts, the word 'one' is used seven times in this short passage. From where does this 'one' write? Harrison performs a double-movement in which his own academic biography is woven into the production of Taiwanese identity but, at the same time, meta-theoretical reflection inscribes a distancing *vis-à-vis* theory whereupon it becomes impossible to specify, with any certainty, where Harrison is writing from. For example: Harrison cites Edward Said's notion of 'Orientalism' to argue that positivist scholarship on Taiwan has uncritically reproduced the global hegemony of the West because it cannot recognise or acknowledge its own complicity in that hegemony (202). For Harrison, this is due to the positivist tendency to assume that its methods are objective and insulated from political contamination. But Said's meta-theoretical reflection requires the adoption of the same distancing and objectifying gaze (directed at 'Orientalism' as a discrete discourse-object) that

Harrison critiques. So, in what sense does Said go beyond the positivism Harrison is writing against?

Harrison also suggests that 'the' positivist's tendency to objectify can lead to the scholar unwittingly reproducing 'the discourse on Taiwanese identity, with all its attendant ideology and politics' and, worse, 'becoming part of its reproduction rather than merely its analysis' (51). Harrison now appears to long for the proper separation of fact from value and for an astronomical distance by which to guarantee scholarship about Taiwan proper analytical rigour. In what sense is this an anti-positivist argument? I confess that I can't be sure. On the one hand, 'positivists' are rebuked for their inability to recognise that facts do not exist outside theory and that, therefore, their attempt to separate fact from value is deluded. Then, post-structuralist scholarship is introduced to give weight to the argument that the objects of scholarly discourse about Taiwan are indeed constituted by said discourse and do not exist independently of discourse. But, in a strange twist, the impossibility of objectivity then becomes the ground for the demand for an *über*-positivism or a super-objectivity in which analysis is properly scientific and, as such, free from entanglement and involvement in the processes it seeks to examine.

Harrison's use of the work of Pierre Bourdieu is, given the above, significant. Bourdieu performs a mediating role between Harrison's hostility for positivism and attraction to post-structuralism, particularly the work on language, class, and symbolic power. As such, Harrison states his task as one of attending to the processes through which acts of naming have been legitimated: 'political acts are not moments that express identity, but rather they are the moments that constitute identity formations' (71). I take this to mean that the search for a primordial Taiwanese-ness or a proto-Taiwanese nationalism in various opposition movements from the nineteenth century onwards is problematic because the liberal *telos* of nationalism that imagines distinct *a priori* ethno-linguistic groups becoming self-conscious through struggle for, and eventual participation in, a democratic nation-state apparatus, is a just-so story that fails to acknowledge that 'ethno-linguistic groups' are not natural entities but historical products of specific processes and identifications. According to Harrison, then, 'what Taiwan Studies has interpreted as the "rise" of a Taiwanese identity is more systematically understood as [the] accumulation of symbolic power around the name Taiwan when it is used to describe the people of the island' (80). But, what are the specific processes through which such power accumulates or coagulates around or through particular instances of naming? Harrison's elegant analysis of different discourses of naming aside, we never find out.

In the conclusion to the book, Harrison says that he has been arguing for 'a textual approach to the problem of Taiwanese identity' that stresses the 'open-endedness of discourses' (201) in which a real Taiwan can never be specified because meaning – following Derrida – always eludes final delimitation. Following Derrida's critique of the so-called 'metaphysics of presence' it might be possible to conclude that Taiwan is in a constant state of becoming as it is repeatedly brought into being through the speech-acts or 'enunciations' of different historical agents. Yet, some speech-acts are better than others, as is clear from the final lines of the book where Harrison reminds his reader of the ethical dimensions of research about Taiwan. My question is, to what extent does the kind of 'textual approach'

advocated by Derrida and adopted by Harrison provide the tools with which to specify (and change?) the 'global geopolitics' (205) in which Taiwan and the study of Taiwan are embedded?

Let me now turn to the potential for this kind of theory to be applied beyond Taiwan. Harrison has argued, if I have understood him correctly, that scholars of Taiwan have tended to view their own knowledge practices as occupying a space outside politics and history. His critique of positivism pivots on this point: there is no neutral realm from which to observe, and facts are not given to observation but are actually constituted by the act of observation itself which is not pre-theoretical but rather theory-laden. This is surely an important point to be taken seriously by all of us who work in the human sciences. But, I wonder if a textual approach is really up to the task. It may indeed be the case that we apprehend the world through language and that, therefore, words in the final analysis point to other words and not to things. But, even if that is the case, institutions develop authorising practices to limit the meaning of words and it is surely to such authorising practices that we must attend. Only then can we develop an understanding of what 'home' means in a globalising and fragmented world.

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Response to Tremlett's Review of *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity*

The task of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences is rather more improvised and contingent than scholars sometimes like to admit. The principles of objectivity, or at least of disinterest, and a commitment to the boundedness of linguistic terms of analysis can encourage us to operate on the assumption that clear scholarly boundaries exist, and within those that knowledge is securely produced through certain styles, set routines and 'ways of doing'. Such a commitment, and its expression, is part of the establishment and maintenance of scholarly authority and legitimacy. Indeed, scholarly work can be devoted as much to defining its own boundaries as to producing new knowledge, to the elaborate process of including and excluding certain categories to demarcate one discipline from another, and rehearsing those 'ways of doing' which themselves produce the coherence of a discipline.

In this way, scholarship generally does not acknowledge its own improvisations and contingency. The generation of scholarly authority is very often produced by the active masking of its mechanisms, as an art that conceals its art, for to expose them is to potentially undermine the basis of its epistemological legitimacy. And yet, some of the most productive and innovative scholarship is created by applying the approach of one discipline to another, by introducing new categories into a field so as to reveal hitherto unread aspects of a subject or problematic. In the shadow of the necessarily authoritative scholarly voice is both a profound uncertainty about the limits and possibilities of the knowledge it expresses and also, in the very instability of its boundaries, the possibility for creative scholarly innovation.

In *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity*, a term I use to take in some of these issues is 'the theatre of scholarship' and the performance of scholarly authority in the book is something of a *commedia dell'arte.* It improvises a methodology based on a range of scholarly techniques to produce legitimised knowledge. Drawing on cultural studies, it is suspended from some very serious post-structuralist and post-colonial theory, delivering a special density of writing as it tries to apprehend the elusive and dialectical ways in which identity is addressed. Operating within an area studies, it also rests on thorough archival research drawing out new empirical knowledge from primary sources in sections such as those on naming, the notion of the East Asian Little Dragons, and on the history of the Diaoyutai Islands protest movement in the early 1970s. My solution to reconciling these approaches and to accommodating the instability I found around the categories of the study of Taiwan was to move self-consciously and self-reflexively between the methodologies, making explicit reference right through the text to the nature and mechanisms of scholarly enquiry, to the 'arch style of postcolonial theorizing' (163) as well as to academic 'labor in libraries and archives' (163).

Tremlett says that *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* is not really about Taiwan, but rather about the study of identity itself. The deliberate revealing of the mechanisms of scholarly writing in the book indeed can lead to the question of how knowledge about identity is produced, as much as to any specific knowledge about Taiwanese identity. A reader as astute as Tremlett immediately then identifies the conceit of the book, which is its presumption to speak from position of a higher or greater truth. If scholarship itself becomes part of the research then I am presuming to write above scholarship. It is a risky and perhaps exhausting technique, with an appeal to a scholarly truth above scholarship which is potentially endlessly recursive. Even here, in this response to a review, is the risk of being drawn into an academic hall of mirrors as I speak from a position above even my own work. It is part of the reason why the book returns throughout to the ground of 'labor in libraries and archives', and as an author I note the pleasure and respite that such expositionary sections offered.

Tremlett is right about the book's conceit when the scholarship in question is something called 'Taiwan Studies'. *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* describes throughout the instability of the boundaries of Taiwan Studies and the role of scholarship, self-reflexively including the book itself, in stabilising them. However, above its authorial subject position is still 'theory' – Derrida, Bourdieu, Bhabha, Chow, Said, and implicitly, Foucault. The authority of theory is why Tremlett wonders if the book is really about just identity, but at the same time it is this multilevel scholarly subject position which leads Tremlett to question the way the text appears to face off some of the heaviest contemporary theorists against the existing literature on Taiwanese identity. As Tremlett suggests, opposing Derrida or Bourdieu could be the rigorous defense of empiricism of Popper or Austin, rather than the wholly untheorised assumptions of an empirical basis for Taiwanese identity found in Wachman or Corcuff.

In the first instance, one could insist that the current inchoate nature of Taiwan Studies, described in chapter one, permits or even demands the introduction of solid theorising of its problematics and foundations. However possible it might be to deploy Popper or Austin to defend the empiricist basis of the existing literature

on Taiwanese identity, the fact is that its authors do not do that themselves. Therefore, at this level, the book's exposure of its own methodologies expresses the unevenness and quality of the literature. The study of Taiwan is full of gaps and elisions, and part of Tremlett's reservations result from my attempt to frame a text within the incomplete architecture of a field of unstable area studies. As the book elaborates, identity is a key problematic in Taiwan Studies and most of the existing literature is hopelessly undertheorised, so the book is, I believe, right to take it down.

Yet at the same time, the fight is so oddly unequal that Tremlett's unease must be taken seriously. The apparent contradictions make me wonder then if the specific nature of the topic is rather more central than Tremlett allows, both for my book and for all work on Taiwan.

Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity argues in a number of ways that the nature of studying Taiwan is an expression of the nature of Taiwan itself. That is, far from being a scholarly field which can maintain principles of objectivity, or at least of disinterest, Taiwan Studies (and any area studies) cannot be disentangled from the discursive production of the boundaries of the area itself. The scholarly elaboration of Taiwanese identity as a research problematic is itself a part of Taiwan's own ideology of its identification, even as scholarship so often claims to speak from a distanciated authorial position. In the book this argument is made by theorising identity as a form of knowing, and a key part of knowledge, especially of a nation, is found in scholarship. Scholarly writing on identity addresses it as an object at the same time as it functions to legitimise a subjectivity.

The book concludes on this basis with the point that scholars of 'Taiwan Studies' are completely implicated in Taiwan's legitimacy as a polity. The inverse of this is that it is the nascent, inchoate and contested nature of Taiwan's identity formations in terms of its politics and culture, and also Taiwan's real geo-political marginality in the international community with the ever-present threat (and attraction) of mainland China, that make a coherent and received Taiwan Studies so difficult. If an area studies elaborates and legitimises the coherence of an area, then it struggles to generate its own coherence when faced with an area which can be named but still suffers from a geo-political indeterminacy. As a result, the book struggles, I believe inevitably but ultimately fruitfully, with the entanglements of its own arguments. Even as it argues that it itself is producing Taiwan's identity, it must, to still be legitimate as scholarship, repeatedly try to extract itself from its implication in a nationalist ideology. This is where the improvised and self-reflexive methodology comes from, as well as the reaching up to hang off the authority of theory to avoid such epistemological quicksand.

What Tremlett does not acknowledge then is that *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* is, at its heart a radical critique of area studies. It breaks down the pretense of area studies to be an objective approach to a geo-political region and says that area studies is, in fact, part of the legitimisation and elaboration of a geo-polity's ideological, as well as geographical, boundaries. In particular, the book is a critique of the way the congruence of area studies with certain national boundaries implicates it nationalist ideologies all too easily. This is especially so in Chinese Studies.

This presents the Taiwan Studies scholar with an unusual choice in his or her approach to Taiwan, one which the contestations of *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* identified by Tremlett play out. Pursuing a 'critical' form of scholarly writing to the conclusion that I did represents a particular response to the epistemological problems of area studies. It is indeed an attempt at a 'greater truth' because however inevitably entangled it is with ideology and geo-political boundaries at least the book knows that it is. Uniquely it says openly and honestly.

Such a claim, including its presumption, leads Tremlett to wonder if it also expresses a profound resignation and impotence before Taiwan's uncertain political and cultural future. He asks: is it enough to merely note that Taiwan's future is in our own scholarship? As academics we can recognise our implication in that future but we can do nothing but write books and present conference papers. Against one thousand Chinese missiles or $107 billion of cross-straits trade, an academic's words are just that.

In response and conclusion, I wonder again if the choice is rather more stark and perhaps then meaningful than Tremlett allows. *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* faces off post-structuralism against positivist political science, and it looks like a one-sided contest. However, implicit in the book's conclusion that scholarship on Taiwan is part of Taiwan's legitimacy is that it is so regardless of the approach one adopts. As such the book faces off two profoundly different responses to Taiwan's future.

Academically, the political science on Taiwanese identity fails abjectly. Shelley Rigger's lament that 'operationalizing this concept [Taiwanese identity] as a measurable variable has proven difficult' (Rigger 1999) is simply an absurd statement. Nevertheless, understood in terms of its implication in Taiwan's future, it neatly expresses the objectification of the Taiwanese, explicitly excluding the political and moral dimensions of its own scholarship, which *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* then highlights. From this move academically it is a short step to being part of the discourse which really does objectify Taiwan, that of international policy-making and economic, governmental, and military planning in China, the US, and Europe, and sometimes in Taiwan itself. On a geopolitical faultline, Taiwan is a concentration of the power of politics, government, military and global capital, and the academic approach to its study is a part of a choice as to how an individual might navigate that power. Deploying Derrida or Bourdieu might effortlessly obliterate the existing scholarship, but right behind it the target is bigger than Tremlett concedes.

Do we choose to become participants in the empirical geo-political equation of Taiwan's future between China, the US, Japan, and Europe, pronouncing as academics on the values of 'variables' for those with their hands on the levers of the machinery of geo-politics, or do we stand within academic knowledge and offer via our own self-reflexive approach to our own work, a critique of the politics in which it operates? Against the real machinery of geo-politics, the strategy of deploying difficult post-structuralist theory looks far more feeble that Tremlett might think. The decision of how we stand before power is necessarily personal and delimited, even hopeless, but my book, despite its flaws and limitations, shows ultimately the choice I made.

Bibliography

Rigger, Shelly (1999) 'The Evolution of the DPP and KMT's Policies of the National Identity Issue'. Paper prepared for the Conference on War and Peace in the Taiwan Strait, Duke University, 26- 27 February 1999. http://www.duke.edu/web/pass/pdf/warpeaceconf/p-rigger.pdf.

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Submission Details

Academic articles
Articles should contain a comparative perspective in the widest sense. This could mean comparisons between Taiwan and other parts of the world, Taiwan in the past and in the present, different regions and cultures of Taiwan, or different methodological and disciplinary approaches to the study of a theme or issue concerning Taiwan. Articles for inclusion in the eJournal should be around 8000 words, and should follow the Harvard style of referencing. Manuscripts should begin with an abstract of around 100 words.

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As well as formal academic work, the eJournal is also interested in receiving relevant critical and theoretical writing aimed at an educated general readership. Such pieces should engage with a current political, socio-cultural, or economic issue, dealt with in a comparative or interdisciplinary perspective: for example, comparing Taiwan with another part of the world, Taiwan in the past and the present, different regions or cultures of Taiwan, or different theoretical approaches. Commentary articles should be around 4000 words, and footnoting should be kept to a minimum.

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Review articles should be around 1500-2000 words, and should contain no footnotes. Reviews should be of a comparative nature: either comparing a work (e.g. a book, film, or exhibition) on Taiwan with a work on another area, or bringing in background knowledge from a different area. Reviews may also be written on Taiwan-related material contained within volumes that have a wider scope, such as edited volumes with a chapter on Taiwan. The journal also welcomes reviews of older 'landmark' texts about Taiwan reviewed from a contemporary perspective; for example, a re-appraisal of George Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed* (1965) four decades on would be suitable.

Making the Submission
Submission should be made by MS-Word compatible email attachment with a file name based on the title of the article to F.Shih@lse.ac.uk. On the cover sheet, please give your full name, institutional affiliation (if any), and a brief biographical note of your research interests. Please do not include your name on other pages. All manuscripts should be double-spaced.

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Articles that are finally accepted will be returned to the authors for proof-reading before publication. The editors reserve the right to make changes to articles regarding content and length, although any substantial alterations will only be made in consultation with the author.

Please address any enquiries to Dr Fang-Long Shih at F.Shih@lse.ac.uk. Enquiries by post should be sent to the Taiwan Culture Research Programme, Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE.

References
References should follow the Harvard Style. Citations should appear within the text in parentheses, and consist of the author's surname followed by year of publication and, if appropriate, specific page numbers – e.g. (Yang 2005) or (Smith and Lin 1999: 74). If there are more than two authors, please indicate this as (Lee *et al* 1978). Where an author has more than one work cited which originated in the same year, the dates should be distinguished in the text and bibliography by a letter – e.g. (Hirose 1987a). Where several references appear consecutively, these should be chronological, or if from the same year, alphabetical – e.g. (Perkins 1997; Wu 2003) and (Adams 2003; Pan 2003).

Illustrations and tables should be referred to as Figures and given numbers – e.g. 'Fig. 1'. They should be submitted on a separate sheet with their captions, and the manuscript should indicate where they should appear in the text.

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