

**The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma  
Through Distributed, Mediated Visions of Memory  
in  
2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Canadian Chinese Experience**

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented herein is entirely my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:  .....

Nathan M.L. To, 2014

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## ABSTRACT

The sheer affective force of trauma from a 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history filled with the scars of war, chaos, poverty, famine, and disaster, transmits across ethnic Chinese Canadian diasporas through (un)conscious silences and remembrances. *Diasporic visions* of memory that embody these traumatic histories can become entangled through affective, discursive, and hegemonic forces that include: a) *transgenerational hauntings* through the transmission of affective intensities across social links, familial bodies and collective diasporas b) the tension of ‘blurring’ boundaries between history, testimony and fantasy c) official memory productions across media d) and the hegemony of nation-state power concerning which ‘historical ‘wounds’ are chosen or silenced for public consumption and transnational distribution. My research questions include: How does the transmission of trauma affectively pass from one generation to the next? What ‘methods of seeing’ can diasporic ethnic Chinese employ to crystallize invisible histories and lost traumas? How can Chinese Canadians engage problematic, mediated visions of the past and develop a reflexivity that both ‘sees’ haunted histories and critically *defies* the power problematics within memory production?

For Chinese-Canadians, those compelled to seek out the histories of our migrant parents/grandparents are left with fragmented, silenced memories. Narratives of an era filled with trauma are expressed as ‘moral lessons’ and/or ‘Confucian’ virtues. Access to histories for postgeneration Chinese-Canadians, therefore, is dependent on a *diasporic vision* that assemblages multiple ways of ‘seeing’ the gaps in trauma through mediated memory, including: the memories of elder generations, memoirs, moving images, and artworks and multimedia installations. My research intentionally subverts traditional research methods that incorporate critical approaches that juxtapose mediations of memory, defying the problematics of power and memory production. Through a critically reflexive autoethnographic approach, I perform a ‘staging’ of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadian Chinese experience by composing a diasporic montage of data and im/material hauntings.

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## PREFACE

### *Haunted Sights*

*One of the most poignant impacts on my road to even starting this project occurred on the bus in a snowy Canadian winter in 2008. I remember running into a Chinese elder well into his 80<sup>th</sup> year, who is, coincidentally, a next door neighbour of mine (though I had never really spoken to him much prior besides the usual pleasantries). The conversation began with small talk and soon it evolved to a recollection of his pained experiences growing up in Mainland China. I listened with indignation in my heart to stories of a government-instituted local genocide that occurred in small pockets of the country, obviously kept hush-hush by the government-run Chinese media. In addition, my elder disclosed personal stories of his family being betrayed by his own relatives; his subsequent life was one of poverty and horrid living conditions. Eventually, he was fortunate enough to move to another town with other supportive relatives before beginning a new life. Though I had for many years attended many Asian studies university classes, learned much about the history and atrocities that took place in Asia, travelled around China, and even watched many documentaries describing similar scenarios to the stories my elder disclosed to me, I was, nonetheless, deeply affected by his tales. The only words that escaped my mouth in broken Cantonese were, "Our generation of a Canadian-born Chinese do not know such difficulty in our 'peacetimes'". I left that conversation with a tremendously heavy heart for several days. This moment left me with a search for new ways to see what I could not.*

Clearly, I had not yet understood. What histories did I not know? I would learn, over the course of my thesis research that 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history was filled with the scars of war, chaos, poverty, famine, and disaster, and I will argue this history transmits across ethnic Chinese Canadian diasporas through (un)conscious silences and remembrances. And the sheer affective force of trauma persists, repeats, and spreads across generations in relentless affective hauntings. Thus, for ethnic Chinese individuals born or raised in Canada, those who feel compelled to seek out the histories of our migrant parents and grandparents are



instead left with fragmented, even silenced memories concerning their survival. Fragmented narratives of an era filled with trauma are expressed as ‘moral lessons’ that often embody themes of shame, honour, and/or ‘Confucian’ virtues such as filial piety.<sup>1</sup> Such narratives can create tensions within both the next generation’s cultural identifications as well as their relationships with elders. Furthermore, an era of trauma that has served as the (un)natural livelihood for our elders further compounds the distance and disconnections between migrant and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. Pragmatic access for the next generation Canadian Chinese, therefore, is dependent on mobilizing multiple ways of ‘seeing’ the gaps in trauma across various memory media, including: informal interviews with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation diasporas, the memories of elder generations, oral and written memoirs, representations from moving images (e.g. film and television), and visual artworks and multimedia installations.

Specifically, my thesis’ discussions are crystallized around the following research questions: How does the transmission of trauma affectively pass from one generation to the next? What ‘methods of seeing’ can diasporic ethnic Chinese employ to crystallize invisible histories and lost traumas? How can Chinese Canadians engage problematic, mediated visions of the past and develop a reflexivity that both ‘sees’ haunted histories and critically *defies* the power problematics within memory production?

Part of the challenge of beginning my search for lost histories and an understanding of trauma has much to do with my educational and professional background. When I first began my research, I did so from the perspective of a clinical counsellor and theoretical assumptions based in traditional counselling psychology (which is already considered ‘less conventional’ than mainline clinical psychology). My theoretical assumptions were oriented around studies of psychopathologies, the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth edition) and pursued wider disciplinary dialogues through lenses such as ‘*biopsychosocial*’.<sup>2</sup> The terminologies, ontologies, epistemological

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the Confucian notion that commands one to obey and honour one’s parents’. The filial piety notion is much ‘deeper’ than this, and is further discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘biopsychosocial’, is for instance a popular all encompassing term in psychological jargon that I felt was quite open-minded at the time. Even though it very well suggests so, its open conceptualization I find was restricted in the discourses of traditional psychology.

assumptions, and understandings within this particular background tended to veer towards essentialization. My methodological approaches to research tended to be positivist (or post-positivist at best). Fortunately, my therapeutic approaches were much more open (e.g. Sound therapy, body-kinaesthetic modes) and not restricted to traditional clinical psychological approaches alone (e.g. cognitive-behavioural talk therapies).<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, despite their being ‘cutting edge’ in terms of psychological approach, my thinking nonetheless tended to be somewhat deterministic and still bound within the limits of psychological discourse, conventional traditions, and essentialist understandings of human mental health.

In my counselling practices as a young, eager counsellor, I sometimes found myself assigned to children and youth born in Canada, whose parents were mostly immigrants from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. These ‘clients’ included an ethnic Chinese next generation teenager that presented with ‘problems’ such as drug dealing and ‘teenage rebellion’; another next generation young adult in isolation, along with depression, and self-esteem issues; one ‘mixed-race’ (Japanese and Caucasian) child with divorced parents. On occasion, I would have the opportunity to work with the ‘migrant’ parents as well. At the time, I had not fully formulated the ‘situation’ or realities of what was happening in these sessions, but they often inspired me to consider my own cultural identity as well as those of my peers. However, I theorized that these were merely issues of ‘intergenerational conflict’, between (dualistic) conceptions of ‘East’ versus ‘West’ (parents as more ‘East’ and the children as more ‘West’), issues of acculturation, assimilation, ‘Chinese’-parenting versus Canadian education exposure—these were issues that I wanted to find out more about.<sup>4</sup> Since these conceptualizations, my intellectual formation has been challenged in rewarding ways. This thesis performs many of these developments and new learnings.

As will be evident through this thesis, my act of writing articulates my own

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<sup>3</sup> The clinical work I was doing, was, compared to conventional clinical practice, quite innovative, and eclectic, involving a combination of ‘Sound therapy’, Body-Kinaesthetic based therapies, conventional talk therapy, play therapy, etc.

<sup>4</sup> As I developed my original thesis proposal for admission to my doctoral program, I distinctly developed it including problematic terms such as ‘bicultural identity’ to describe Canadian persons of ethnic Chinese descent. My understandings of ‘affect’ limited to its being defined as most often synonymous with emotions or a more comprehensive term of emotional registers that includes the array of neurological, physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects in the psychological senses of these terms.

‘working-through’ of these concepts in ways that challenge ‘myself’ and the many conventional assumptions that exemplified my prior background. Significantly, as Chapter 2 will articulate, this thesis embodies a performative act of ‘staging’ my search for lost histories, forgotten voices, and the silenced dead.

A number of fields significantly influence my interdisciplinary approach to this thesis research, including work concerning ‘affect’ and the “affective turn” (e.g. Blackman 2012, Walkerdine 2012, Clough 2007), critical history (e.g. Ban Wang 2004) aesthetics (e.g. Bennett, 2005), film studies (e.g. Berry and Farquhar 2006; Lebow 2008), and psychoanalytic work (e.g. Davoine and Gaudillière 2004; Gordon 2008; Volkan, Ast, and Greer 2002). Undoubtedly, perhaps the ‘ghost’ of Derrida (1994) too, ironically, echoes throughout these discussions, as much as Marx did in his own treatise concerning the Spectres of Marx. While I do not discuss or focus per se on Derrida’s seminal discussion of ‘hauntologies’ in this thesis, I should reflexively assert how Derrida’s discussion of apparitions echoes in the background of much theoretical work on haunting, including my own (regardless of how much or little Derrida’s notions are emphasized in my actual text). In particular, Derrida’s arguments for the ‘love’ of justice resonate with me. I resonate with how his discussions of ‘hauntologies’ consider the apparitions of injustice in the historical and remembered contexts that have pervaded across European history and memory that persists and repeats through the present. Derrida (1994) poses key challenges to scholars who love ‘justice’ and are courageous enough to ‘speak’ with the apparitions of traumatic pasts. Derrida says:

The question deserves perhaps to be put the other way: Could one address oneself in general if already some ghost did not come back? If he loves justice at least, the "scholar" of the future, the "intellectual" of tomorrow should learn it and from the ghost. He should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet. (p. 221)

Thus, Derrida’s own concluding assertions eerily echo my hopes for this thesis and despite offering Derrida ‘little screen time’ in the course of my thesis, his will to

‘justice’ and desire to converse with ghosts echoes one of the hopes in how I ‘stage’ my thesis. Albeit in a historical context and traditions quite different from Derrida’s, I, too, hope this thesis creates a ‘stage’ for the unseen and unheard ghosts of the ethnic Chinese diaspora to be listened to and voiced.

Thus, returning to the primary emphases of my thesis, I attempt to create a space for ghosts to speak through unique methodologies that incorporate an innovative approach to autoethnography that I have integrated from a number of seminal authors.<sup>5</sup> These authors, along with many others that I will be discussing throughout this thesis, have significantly influenced the development of my research, arguments, methodologies, and concepts. Significantly, they have all been a key part in developing ‘new ways of seeing’ intergenerational ghosts across ethnic Chinese diasporas.

In particular, as I will discuss more in the first chapter, Grace Cho’s (2008) *Haunting the Korean Diaspora* has been a key spark of inspiration for my thesis journey. Cho’s (2008) work starts from her perspective as a second generation Korean-American; she innovatively performs a search to ‘see’ ‘transgenerational ghosts’ that persistently haunt through the lost, silenced, traumatic histories of the Korean diaspora across generations. Through an interrogation of colonialist re-writings and forgettings of history, Cho offers what she calls a ‘diasporic vision’ of the Forgotten War, the haunting apparition of the Korean comfort woman, her own mother’s voice-hearing, and also reveals moving testimonies and autoethnographic revelations that render ghostly voices both locatable and unlocatable.

Cho’s (2008) poignant revelations and arguments started me on my own journey of research innovation and unique interdisciplinary contributions to the area of affect, memory, and the transmission of trauma. Of course, since those first moments of awe and amazement upon reading the book, I have come a long way towards evolving my own ‘niche’ and implementation of unique, innovative ideas, concepts and methodologies for this thesis. Undoubtedly, I have much more to learn. And as I continue learning, I look forward to challenges, creating dialogues, and stepping out of my ‘niche’ to see what ‘new visions’ can be seen. But I am hopeful that this thesis thus far contains some intriguing contributions to a

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<sup>5</sup> A more specific account of my rationale for this approach along with a reflexive discussion of its advantages and challenges is evident in Chapter 2.

number of different disciplines that concern themselves with notions of affect, media, diaspora, cinema, memory and even cultural identification.

Returning to Grace Cho, the decision to adopt and adapt Cho's concepts within the design of my thesis (and its own evolution from them) is due to the book's combination of concepts that resounded with me. My experience of reading it was a paradoxical combination of epiphany and disturbance—perhaps the best way to read a book. I found myself asking tough questions relating to how I 'saw' the world, which included my research, of course. Significantly, I could see 'hauntings' persist and repeat through the ethnic Chinese diaspora in its own unique context and histories.

Furthermore, if one should prefer to jump to the conclusion, one will notice a detailed explanation of what I have called a 'diasporic montage'. Formulating the concept and action of creating a 'diasporic montage' only arrived upon completing the near final drafts of my thesis' concluding chapter. It developed into my concluding framing quite organically, and quite literally signified how my 'performative' thesis evolved, and how I evolved with this thesis. It should be noted that Avery Gordon's (2008) conceptualization of articulating the montage in relation to hauntings has been significantly helpful in how I have begun to develop the concept in this thesis as well. While Gordon does not actually discuss 'montage' more than twice (and often with crediting Walter Benjamin's notion of 'montage-based constructivism', I found her use of the term, 'montage' of particular interest. Later, I found out that Ban Wang (2004) also drew from Benjamin and applied the montage term through his analysis of Chinese productions of memory and power. Thus, as will be evident in the concluding chapter (Chapter 7), the 'framing' and diasporic creation of a 'diasporic montage' is, I suggest an urgent, and important way to 'seeing ghosts' in critically reflexive ways, through the gaps, silences, and memory productions. Undeniably, that chapter has also found inspiration from Aby Warburg's foundational work on adapting Eisenstein's cinematic 'montage-collision' (Michaud 2007: 285). Michaud discusses how Warburg seeks out haunted histories through juxtaposed photographs. Interestingly, Warburg's experiments took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet continue to offer striking, contemporary resonances with my work and how I have considered the notion of 'diasporic montage' throughout this

thesis, and as summarized in its entirety in Chapter 7.

As the subsequent chapters will argue, this thesis is performative in its staging and in its whole. I have tried to articulate the performativity of my thesis reflexively throughout the chapters.<sup>6</sup> In Chapter 1, I further discuss Cho's key concepts and how I have understood them in the context of the ethnic Chinese 2<sup>nd</sup> generation diaspora in Canada. It should be noted that my use of the description '2<sup>nd</sup> generation diaspora' is in itself limited. In some literatures, the children of ethnic Chinese immigrants have been referred to as 1.5 generation or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, depending on whether the child was legally born in Canada (2<sup>nd</sup> generation), or was legally born overseas but primarily 'raised' in Canada (1.5 generation). These debates concerning when one would be specified as '1.5' or '2<sup>nd</sup>', depend on issues such as age, developmental stage, and so forth. While perhaps interesting as a tangential discussion in another forum, I am less interested in these issues for my thesis. Thus, I interchange terms such as '2<sup>nd</sup> generation' and 'postgeneration' throughout this thesis.<sup>7</sup> My decision to use '2<sup>nd</sup> generation' in both my title and as a term worthy of mention is primarily due to how the term tends to receive a fair share of attention in diaspora studies as a distinct 'concept' and area of focus. While I do find 'postgeneration' a helpful term to use, especially in reference to one's intergenerational links to historical traumas, I still find value in using '2<sup>nd</sup> generation' as well. It seems understood as descriptive of a generation that was born in a 'society' that is the originary 'home' to them, but is set in stark contrast to their immigrant parents' originary 'home' elsewhere.

Lastly, since my thesis utilizes a 'critical autoethnographic' approach, it seemed appropriate to offer a 'label' that was descriptive of my *own* generational diasporic 'positioning' (as a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Chinese-Canadian). While to do so may be a problematic exercise in itself, its very self-labelling is indicative of the very

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<sup>6</sup> In Chapter 2, I discuss Peggy Phelan's (1998) 'performative writing' as a mode of 'writing' (or 'staging') this thesis as my composition of a 'diasporic montage' (see also Chapter 7).

<sup>7</sup> Postgeneration refers to the 'generation after', and is described in Hoffman (2004) and Hirsch (2012) within the context of Holocaust studies and the 'second generation' children of individuals, families and communities who have lived, died, or in some way, directly or indirectly experienced the Holocaust. I adopt this term in regards to the children of migrants who have directly or indirectly lived through a traumatic 20<sup>th</sup> century of war, poverty and chaos in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. I will specifically describe what I mean by the 'postgeneration' Chinese-Canadian (and its histories) more in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses the 'postgeneration' in much more detail as well.

disconnections evident in the sociocultural, economic, historical and affective circumstances of my own upbringing versus those of my migrant parents. And it is indeed these very gaps, spaces, and confused histories that I explore throughout this thesis.

Thus, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, and throughout the thesis, my overall methodological and epistemological approach tends to subvert/raise questions about traditional approaches. Specifically, I utilize a critically reflexive autoethnographic approach to 'stage'/'perform' multiple ways of seeing affects through a diverse media of 'memory production'. Thus, from the perspective of an autoethnographic 'staging', I search for immaterial, affective bodies of generational haunting through different types of 'empirical data' that I argue mediates memory, including the following areas throughout the thesis:

a) transcripts of stories that diasporic 'subject-peers' 'remembered' hearing from parents/grandparents and other elders (e.g. via informal conversational interviews, where 'peers' refers to those whom I know personally as friends, thus purposely challenging the long-held establishment of the 'distant research subject' and critically engaging/extending the boundaries of what constitutes 'autoethnographic');

b) a 'performative group case study' with several subject-peers that involved the screening of a documentary about a historical massacre in Chinese history. The performance activity involved 'bodily' responses to the horrors remembered/articulated on screen (e.g. embodied gestures and physical movements + vocal grunts or silence that can express both conscious emotional and unconscious, circulating affects, especially in what sorts of gestures were performed or left unperformed)

c) written/video oral archives of memoirs/testimonies from elder generations I do not know personally; this 'stages' my autoethnographic search through these archives to see what memories continue to be remembered, and which ones tend to be silenced or forgotten.

d) mediated visions through aesthetics: e.g. seeing how traumatic affects are both mediated and distributed through film or television productions of Chinese traumatic histories; also searching for traumatic affects through key visual artworks and multimedia installations.

In Chapter 3, I explore the questions and disclosures that my subject-peers and I raised in our conversation-interviews that concerned what we *remembered* from fragmented narratives told (often with moral lessons), or silenced and how these remembrances and (limited) access to generational stories of our ethnic Chinese past might connect to how we, as the next generation construct our cultural identity/identifications.

Chapters 4 and 5 work together thematically, as both refer to the scars of war and chaos. Chapter 4 involves my carefully tracing the steps of transgenerational ghostings and its transmission through the official and unofficial histories, memories and testimonies of those in our parents and grandparents' generation through various archives and histories. I also performed an analysis that introduced yet another 'experiment of the impossible' that created possibilities of engaging the transgenerational ghost through aesthetic works, in particular visual art and installations.<sup>8</sup> Their narratives of survival and poverty during a tumultuous period where China, Hong Kong and Taiwan would endure the 'scars of war', registered traumatic affects with intensities that expressed themselves in various ways, individually and collectively. Also, questions were raised concerning the mechanism behind collectively shared trauma, and how my inquiries concerning memory-history-fantasy could (dis)connect with what Volkan, Ast and Greer (2002) describes as mass or 'chosen' large group traumas that can spread through the unique self-representations of individuals across families, generations, and geographical space. Furthermore, all of these questions from Chapter 4 led me to consider the figure of the ethnic Chinese migrant in Chapter 5.

Thus, Chapter 5 specifically explores oral histories about the significant

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<sup>8</sup> The experiment I attempt is 'impossible' because I explore questions of affective connect-ing and connection that are not constrained by our concepts of chronological time nor geographical space. In this way, it privileges the importance of the performative, through imagining or fantasy. See also Chapter 5.5.1 for a more detailed discussion and performance of this experiment.



burden of such *remembered narratives*, the Confucian legacy (e.g. filial piety) and familial expectations of entrepreneurial success affectively carried through in 'his' efforts, struggles, dreams and hopes in a new 'Western' land mythologized with promise or great fear. I also conclude this chapter with a discussion of visual artworks that articulate many of the themes and questions concerning history, memory, fantasy, and generations that were discussed in both Chapter 4 and 5.

In Chapter 6, my final empirical chapter in this thesis, I turn to the *moving image* as another means of enacting a 'method of seeing' the ghost through a 'diasporic vision', through film, television, video installations and other visual media forms.<sup>9</sup> Cho (2008) suggests that the transgenerational ghost 'joins forces with media technologies that enable it to be seen in order to create alternate ways of reading both the silences surrounding an unspeakable trauma and the hallucinatory voices that speak' (Cho 2008: 166-167). Specifically, I explore how the transgenerational ghost disseminates through visual media such as film and television and how the next generation can possibly "see" hauntings and listen to lost voices. For the next generation Chinese-Canadian, this involves an exploration of both "seeing" the influence of film in our subjective experiences, as well as possibilities of how to critically engage such media in the present and future. That is, I explore in this chapter, film's capacity to offer a diasporic vision of transgenerational ghosts across the ethnic Chinese diaspora.

Finally, Chapter 7 offers a concluding discussion of the thesis, and returns the discussion to 'diasporic montage' as a development of Cho's diasporic vision. I particularly explore how my conceptualization of the 'diasporic montage', in fact, integrates and implements many of the key theorists whose voices have been expressed throughout my thesis, including Cho (2008), Ban Wang (2004), Jill Bennett (2005), Avery Gordon (2008) and Aby Warburg (in Michaud 2007).

Fundamentally, my work here aims not as a means of mere critique, but as a work that can produce connection and healing for any willing readers, and certainly for the ethnic Chinese diasporas I focus my discussions on. I hope this work can continue to produce the will towards connections and healings as much as it encourages a critical reflexivity. Significantly, I hope my work offers a stage for some of the lost voices and unseen dead to be heard and seen once more.

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## CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 Introduction

*Because when I begin to forget who I am, where I'm from, I will also begin to forget. As if change does not occur. As if I am as I have always been, unchanging.*  
- Ana Chang, *Surfacing 3*, 1994.

#### 1.1.1 New Beginnings

In this Chapter, I conduct an interdisciplinary review of key literature that has helped me formulate my research questions and thesis arguments throughout Chapters 3 to 7. The texts I discuss here can be situated in fields as diverse as media and cultural studies, film studies, sociology, psychology, affect studies, trauma and memory work, history, Asian studies, and diaspora research. As mentioned in the Preface, the foundational text that has aided my thesis development is Grace Cho's (2008) *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*. Cho's work has been a seminal influence to my intellectual formation and development of my own research questions/arguments.

Consequently, I have framed this literature review by engaging selected debates of Cho's work at the onset of each section. Then, I further engage these issues by engaging additional key texts that have helped me further expand Cho's work and conceptualizations in new directions within the context of my own thesis' arguments, concepts, and the Chinese diaspora. This approach 'stages' how I have attempted to engage these readings, and ultimately how my 'working-through' this literature have led to both my own intellectual growth and the development of this thesis' arguments and research questions.<sup>10</sup>

My research questions include: What is the nature of intergenerational haunting, and how does the transmission of trauma affectively pass from one generation to the next? What 'methods of seeing' can diasporic ethnic Chinese employ to crystallize invisible histories and lost traumas? How can Chinese Canadians engage problematic, mediated visions of the past and develop a reflexivity that both 'sees' haunted histories and critically *defies* the power problematics within memory production? In Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, I further

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<sup>10</sup> As the Preface discusses, Cho's (2008) work truly helped challenge me to think subversively and beyond traditional psychology.

unpack these questions.

### 1.1.2 Reflections

*I struggle with the question of how one can see and hear a trauma that the subject of trauma herself cannot. How does one work through this paradox of telling a story about loss that is unnameable and trauma that is dislocated and materialises in forms far removed from the traumatic event itself, often through sensations, emotions, and unconscious thought? (Cho 2008: 24)*

I will argue that to understand the contexts of trauma that have brought the ethnic Chinese diaspora into the centre of this dialogue, one needs to account, in some way, for the societal and personal historical atrocities, oppressions, and injustices within 20<sup>th</sup> century China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This tumultuous era in Chinese history has produced a dispersal of ethnic Chinese migration to ‘promised lands’ such as the ‘West’ (e.g. so-called ‘developed’ countries such as Canada, Britain, and the United States) that advertised wealth, success, privilege and a new life. As the fantasies of ‘Gold Mountain’, ‘American Dreams’, or just an overall better life swiftly met reality, new difficulties and successes were juxtaposed with a century of chaos and war. Such horror ranged from genocides such as the infamous Nanking Massacre in 1937, where Japanese Imperial Soldiers participated in the murder of thousands, rape and pillaging. Whether through eyewitness, word of mouth, or news reports, memories involving the political and social upheaval incited by Mao Zedong and the Gang of Four during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), resulted in brutal civil slayings and destruction (e.g. Yan 1994). Certainly, the military massacre of students during demonstrations fighting for democratic reform in Tiananmen Square on June 4 1989 (e.g. Zhao, 2004) remains a bloody legacy at the cusp of the final decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century China; a century better left forgotten for many Chinese.

Such horrors require moments of silence, and also conjure *disturbing* silences. Some of these silences are remembered, while others are imposed and then forgotten. Some silences arise from suffocation and erasures, while others arise from defiance. Silence can suggest a significant tranquility, peace; a perfect stillness and rest. Silence can be restless, uncomfortable, lonely, shameful, and embarrassing. Silence can be paradoxical. Silence can be indescribable and

*described*, voiced and voiceless, seen and unseen, heard and unheard, known and unknown, remembered and forgotten. Silence can be haunting. Silence can be transforming. In this chapter I hope to address the bodies of work that have led me to articulate these important questions that will clarify the theoretical assumptions I make in this thesis: What is the intergenerational transmission of trauma? How is this affective? How do intergenerational hauntings involve the intersections of affect, trauma, diaspora, and history, and memory? As I look at these questions throughout the thesis, I explore different bodies of research concerning the transmission of trauma and the concept of intergenerational haunting. In the next section, I turn my review to a discussion of the literature on 'hauntings' and the 'diasporic unconscious' that have also significantly influenced the development of my thesis' research questions and arguments.

## **1.2 Hauntings, Diasporic Unconscious and the Korean Diaspora**

Cho's (2008) discussion of the Korean-American diaspora brilliantly intersects with her interpretation of Abraham and Torok's (1994) theory of transgenerational haunting.<sup>11</sup> Cho's work discloses her experience as a second-generation Korean-American and invokes a language of 'ghosts' and hauntings' that draws from psychoanalytic theory and sociological concepts. In this section, I review how Cho's arguments have seminally helped me make sense of intergenerational hauntings in the Chinese-Canadian diaspora and think through my own research questions.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.2.1 *Grace Cho, Diaspora, and Hauntings***

Cho situates her arguments concerning 'transgenerational haunting' within the trauma that haunts her Mother's unspoken, silenced migration story: the figure of

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<sup>11</sup> Chapter 1.3 reviews the key literature concerning 'hauntings' in more detail.

<sup>12</sup> I confess that I am still in the process of working through the different perspectives of trauma, transmission and affect that I have thus far drawn from. This is particularly so, as my psychological training still 'haunts' me as well. For example, I originally conceived of 'affect' quite traditionally through a framework that privileged 'basic emotions' such as 'sad', 'mad', and 'glad' for research and clinical application (see To 2008; Ekman 1999, 1992). Even so, I believe I have come a 'long way' in my intellectual formation by exploring the tension of multiple perspectives and debates.

the 'yanggongju' and the 'Forgotten War'. *Yanggongju* is a Korean term that means 'Western princess', and, 'broadly refers to a Korean comfort woman, or one 'who has sexual relations with Americans', but 'is most often used pejoratively to refer to a woman who is a prostitute for the U.S. Military' (Cho 2008: 3). Specifically, Cho discusses how the 'voice-hearing' of her mother is affectively manifest through the very silencing of history through the Forgotten War.

For Cho, this figure of the yanggongju is a 'carrier' of generational trauma. Specifically, this means that the yanggongju bears the injustice of forgotten history and embodies traumas that persist through *hauntings* across generations. This *haunting* is then able to pass incorporeally through time and space due to the child's 'direct empathy with the unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object' (Abraham and Torok 1994: 181). Applying the language of 'ghosts', Cho suggests that the silencing, disavowal and forgetting of the 'yanggongju' within recorded American history are precisely what produce hauntings. Therefore, these traumas experienced by 'yanggongju' (and forgotten in history) become 'ghosts' that affectively 'haunt' across generations.<sup>13</sup> Cho discusses how this ghost is embodied and passed from her mother to Cho herself, as a second-generation Korean-American. That is, the yanggongju's memories of trauma transfer through the unconscious precisely because they have been intentionally forgotten. Cho (2008: 155) claims that 'the children of yanggongjus...carry the knowledge of their family histories in their bodies despite an absence of language to translate'. Thus, this yanggongju 'carries' silences, gaps in histories, traumas and voices that persist to tell of unspoken, forgotten injustices.<sup>14</sup> This ghostly legacy of the yanggongju is, therefore, exemplified and clarified through Cho's own experience (along with others in the Korean diaspora) as a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-American who has been *affectively* ravaged by the haunting silences and gaps of a forgotten trauma embodied within experience.

### 1.2.2 Hauntings and the Diasporic Unconscious

Cho's work prominently applies a language and theoretical framework of ghosts to

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<sup>13</sup> Again, I will explain how Cho develops this language and concept of 'ghosts' in later sections.

<sup>14</sup> I will later return to the key intersection of affect trauma, history, diaspora and their conceptual connections.

the diasporic realities and traumas within her Korean diaspora. Cho (2008) innovatively draws on a concept of ghosts from Gordon's (2008) groundbreaking sociological study, Abraham and Torok's (1994) transgenerational haunting, and a creative presentation of her autoethnographic methodology. Also, Cho's development of what she calls the 'diasporic unconscious' is an important and inventive model of extending understandings of the unconscious 'crypt' (as discussed by Abraham and Torok 1994) in a way that powerfully offers a way of seeing haunted histories.<sup>15</sup> I have found Cho's (2008) interpretations of these concepts helpful, as her approach has inspired me to explore ways to adapt these concepts in ways that would be relevant within the context and history of the ethnic Chinese diaspora and our postgeneration Chinese-Canadian experience.<sup>16</sup>

Abraham and Torok's (1994) unique concept of *transgenerational haunting* articulates a psychoanalytic process of the transmission of trauma across generations, moving beyond conventional understandings of 'time', 'space', and 'place' through forgettings and remembrances. Developing their theories as a product of their own survival from the Holocaust, Abraham and Torok's (1994: 167) theorizations of 'hauntings' view the 'phantom' or 'apparition' as a formation of the unconscious that spawns from the unfinished business of the parent/ancestor, and passes down to the descendants.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that, 'consequently, the phantom is not at all the product of the subject's self-creation by means of the interplay between repressions and introjections. The phantom is alien to the subject who harbors it' (Abraham and Torok 1994: 181). Amidst the figure of the ghost is the importance of 'silence', 'gaps', or 'erasures' of traumatic memories that spawn the existence of these spectres. These 'ghosts' are spawned from the silences and gaps that exist from the previous generations' forgotten stories (whether intentional or otherwise), confounding and haunting the next generation. Significantly, the memories transfer through the

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<sup>15</sup> I will review these concepts in more detail throughout this section.

<sup>16</sup> Specifically, I also want to apply 'hauntings' as a way of re-framing and challenging conventional research on the Chinese diaspora. This research has traditionally understood intergenerational issues in terms of psychological perspectives of bi-cultural identity and family conflict (which were originally central to my own counselling practice in this area, which I discussed in the Preface).

<sup>17</sup> According to Bellamy (1997: 20-21) Abraham and Torok were both Jewish emigrants to France (Abraham from Hungary and Torok from Budapest, respectively) and survivors of the Holocaust. They conceptualized their brand of French Psychoanalysis from their observations and experiences in clinical practice with the generation that survived Auschwitz.

unconscious precisely because they have been intentionally forgotten. In response, uncovering the 'hidden', remembering what was forgotten and rendering the invisible into visibility requires a 'diasporic vision', of what Cho describes as the 'diasporic unconscious' (I will discuss 'diasporic *vision*' more in Chapter 1.6). Cho's innovation of the concept of the 'diasporic unconscious' is central to understanding the process of intergenerational haunting that circulates throughout the diaspora. This concept has been pivotal in how I have developed my own thesis arguments. Chapters 4, 5, and 6, for instance, discuss the diasporic unconscious in relation to 'diasporic vision'.<sup>18</sup>

Cho's conceptualizations are unapologetically psychoanalytic, drawing from Abraham and Torok's (1994) metaphor of the unconscious as a 'crypt'. Abraham and Torok's (1994) perspective of the unconscious as a 'crypt' is essential to understanding the transmission of trauma via haunting across generations of family history. It is the space where memory is an "always already" experience: in the psychic crypt, memories do not so much "originate" as occur retroactively' (Bellamy 1997: 21). Bellamy further adds that in conceptualizations of transgenerational haunting, 'because the dead (whether family secrets or the victims of mass murder) can be kept alive within the unconscious, the crypt hides, even as it disguises the fact of its own hiding...the crypt is a "secret interior" that "speaks only to silence" ' (ibid.: 23). Therefore, throughout this crypt-space, according to Derrida (1986: 78), 'the inhabitant of a crypt is always a living-dead, a dead entity we are perfectly willing to keep alive, but *as* dead, one we are willing to keep, as long as we keep it, within us, intact in any way save as living'.<sup>19</sup> A discussion of traumatic histories then, is not only in what can be seen, told, and 'represented' in the materiality of its common discourses (e.g. authorized, official histories), but also in the immateriality of what is silenced and left untold.<sup>20</sup> Thus, these are ghosts that mark the unknown territories of the voiceless, the nameless

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<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, these diasporic processes also form a central part of what I have termed a diasporic montage (see Preface and Chapter 7).

<sup>19</sup> Though Jacques Derrida strongly critiqued Freud's psychoanalysis, Derrida was much more sympathetic to Abraham and Torok's (1994) brand of psychoanalysis. In fact, Derrida and Nicholas Abraham developed a friendship, and the influences of Abraham (and Torok's) theories can be seen through several of Derrida's writings (Derrida 1986), including the seminal *Spectres of Marx* (1994).

<sup>20</sup> By 'immateriality', I am referring to Blackman's (2012: xxv) term of 'the body's potential for psychic or psychological attunement.'



dead, and the forgotten. Such spaces embody the very disavowals and forgettings from unjust demonstrations of power, private silences and official forgettings that condemn these ghosts to a chasm and curse of involuntary anonymity. A ghost that possesses the space of the crypt, however, is 'not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure' (Gordon 2008:8). Whereas Abraham and Torok's (1994) view of the unconscious and the transmission of trauma (through 'transgenerational haunting') is conceived of in terms of familial generations, Cho's (2008: 185) invention of the 'diasporic unconscious' can be considered collective in its multiplicity (Guattari 1995: 9) and distinctly trans-subjective in its distribution of affect, extending across kinship and through the ethnic Chinese diaspora across time and space. Throughout this chapter, I will be continuously returning to Cho (2008) and Abraham and Torok's (1994) discussions of ghosts as these concepts have significantly contributed to the development of my thesis' research questions and arguments.

### **1.3 Diaspora: Entanglements of Ethnicity, Identity and Power**

#### **1.3.1 Diaspora**

Cho's (2008) innovative discussion of the 'diaspora' concept within her Korean-American context has been influential in how I have understood 'diaspora' within my own Chinese-Canadian contexts. In this subsection, I want to spend some time reviewing some of the key readings about 'diaspora' that have informed my own formulation of diaspora as I have discussed it in this thesis. This literature has also both challenged and helped me understand the notions of ethnicity and identity in terms of relations to power. Specifically, I have found myself asking several important questions concerning 'diaspora': What are the potentials and problematics in considerations of diasporic issues? How does the concept of 'diaspora' intersect with notions of power, identity/identifications, and framings of ethnicity?

Classically, according to Kalra, Kaur and Tutnyk (2005: 10), diaspora relates to forced movement and exile, with consequences of loss. The Jewish diaspora, the authors argue, has been pinpointed as a watershed point of research for the development of the term, 'diaspora' (Kalra et al. 2005: 10). The problematics of

the term arise when 'diaspora' is applied vaguely. In such cases, Kalra et al. argue, it becomes 'akin to a game of "name those people": what such lists allow commentators to do is take a group divided by class, gender, age, etc. and lump them together in a flexible, but vague, self-confirming category' (ibid.: 11). From these arguments, the key problematics of the terms primarily concern generalizations, an absence of context, specificity, and a lack of attentiveness, accidental reinforcements of racialized hierarchies through essentialized perceptions of skin, culture, class, and to the political struggles and injustice that can arise from the use of such potent terms.

This critique is best applied in light of Safran's (1991) problematic view of diaspora as satisfied vis-à-vis certain categorization criteria: dispersal and scattering (from a homeland), collective trauma (while in the homeland), cultural flowering (while away), a troubled relationship with the majority (while away; a sense of community transcending national frontiers (home and away), and promoting a return movement (away from home) (Kalra et al. 2005: 11). The meaning of 'home' and 'migration' thus require rethinking that considers the 'transnational movements of bodies, objects and images [that] have transformed concepts and experiences of home and belonging (defined as locality and community as well as nation)' (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2).

Canadian scholar Vijay Agnew (2005) begins to address this issue by arguing for a more dynamic, broader definition of 'diaspora'. Agnew argues:

[Diaspora] is defined by its ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations. Diasporas can thus denote a transnational sense of self and community and create an understanding of ethnicity and ethnic bonds that transcends the borders and boundaries of nation states. Yet, the individual living in the diaspora experiences a dynamic tension every day between living 'here' and remembering 'there', between memories of places of origin and entanglements with places of residence, and between the metaphorical and the physical home. (p. 4)

Thus, diaspora, in Agnew's (2005) terms avoids the presumptuousness of Safran's (1991, as cited Kalra et al 2005: 11) formulations by eschewing homogenizing definitions and dualisms.

Furthermore, associated terms such as 'immigrant' in literature can sometimes be deemed problematic due to the public perception of its use (e.g.

immigrant as ‘outsider’ to majority culture), and also exclusionist public policies concerning immigrants in contemporary society. My assumptions of how I conceptualize diaspora are admittedly open, and for the purposes of this thesis, I am less concerned with participating in the conceptual debate concerning *whether* to use the term ‘diaspora’ or not.<sup>21</sup> Instead, I am more interested in exploring diaspora in context of cultural-historical trauma and forgotten histories within particular individuals and communities. Furthermore, I wish to stage how the entanglement of individual and community are complicit/co-implicated with one another’s capacity to ‘see’ what voices have been lost in a particular context. For example, Cho (2008) situates her ‘diasporic’ discussion specifically in the context of: second generation Korean-Americans, the silencing of a Forgotten War, ‘White’ American colonialist injustice, a postcolonial response, and within a critically reflexive, autoethnographic text. Furthermore, these discussions of diasporic-historical context are situated at the intersection of specific ‘hauntings’, or how affective trauma transfers intergenerationally through her own mother’s voice-hearing. Thus, I contend that ‘diaspora’ can still be a useful term, with potential and promise. Specifically, I argue that the notion of ‘homeland’ in diasporic discussion is not merely nostalgic and a passive object of longing (and belonging), but both a place and ‘space of memory’ that conjures ghosts (e.g. of voices and memories of the Forgotten War) which affectively haunt across generations and invoke remembrances of what has been lost. I evaluate this argument through my thesis and the critical reflexivity I employ, which is a methodological approach I discuss further in Chapter 2.

### 1.3.2 Ethnicity , Identity, and Power

Additional literature influential to me has debated the importance of ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic identity’. As Cho’s (2008) discussion of the Korean diaspora and the yanggongju suggests, the issue of ethnicity is poignantly entangled in relations of power. Thus, in this section, I want to briefly review some key scholars

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<sup>21</sup> However, within studies of diaspora, the term continues to be a contested term and multiple meanings. The debates concerning the discursive and rhetorical applications of the word ‘diaspora’ continue to be a subject of much discussion (see Ahmed et al. 2003). The difficulty of course, in current day has much to do with both the origin of the term as well as questions regarding whether it continues to be relevant today.

that have discussed the 'ethnicity' discourse, and how their arguments are significant for my own research.

Significantly, approaching ethnicity in light of power relations offers a way of addressing notions of 'bicultural identity' and 'generational conflict'—restrictive frameworks that I inherited from my psychological background. According to the literature over the past decade, problematic issues from the 'lure of diaspora' are also evident in issues of cultural identification concerned with 'ethnic Chinese' (e.g. issues of 'racial' constructions) or 'cultural Chinese' (e.g. in terms of heritage and tradition) (see Lowe 2003; Lai 2008; Chow 2003). Notably, these debates have been notably persistent in the structuring of debates, academic scholarly disciplines and research assumptions that reinforce hegemonic positions of power (see Rey Chow 2003).

Such discussions intersecting the conceptual problematics of diaspora and the problematic of ethnicity or race have been the subject of much work. For example, more than a decade ago, Paul Gilroy (1993) sought to move beyond Stuart Hall's (1987) conceptualizations of race and culture. Gilroy (1993: 1) offered heuristic conceptualizations of the 'Black Atlantic' in a landmark book of the same name. This effort was meant to oppose the development of 'racist, nationalist or 'ethnically absolutist discourses' of 'black identities' that have been pervasive as products of modernity and political subordinations. Gilroy's critique can be paralleled with the notion of 'ethnic identities' being in of themselves, *performative*. These arguments were also central to Hall's (1987) work, as he theorized/framed (Black) identity within a concept of 'becoming' (rather than 'being', for example). Furthermore, performing ethnic identities is exemplified in Hirsch's (1997, 2012) work, as she 'performs' an ethnic identity (as a current generation child looking 'backwards' to the past) of haunting images that affect her return and social link to a Jewish history during the Second World War filled with danger and survival (Tilmans, Vree, and Winter 2010: 15; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).

Within the Asian diaspora, 'Asian-American' writer Lisa Lowe has been at the forefront of debates about identity and ethnicity. In her landmark article, Lowe (2003) is particularly vocal about the issue of racialized identity, particularly in

how Asian-Americans are represented in autobiographic literature.<sup>22</sup> Lowe argues that to continually re-produce certain narratives of intergenerational conflict (e.g. between migrant first generation and second generation) within a) restrictions of familial relations between father-son, or mother-daughter, and b) reductions to master narratives concerned with adoption of 'Western' culture and the loss of an original 'Eastern' culture, actually essentializes 'Asian-American' culture and risks the 'homogenizing of Asian-Americans as exclusively hierarchical and familial' (ibid.: 135). This echoes the problematic, simplistic definition of *diaspora* as understood by Safran (1991). Echoing the spirit of Gilroy's observations of the Black Atlantic, Lowe (2003: 136) further argues that 'the making of Asian-American culture includes practices that are partly inherited, partly modified, as well as partly invented'. To Lowe, these range from one's desire for a 'cultural identity represented by a fixed profile of traits' and, on the other part of the spectrum, a critical engagement and challenge concerning the inheritance of not only the 'cultural definitions and traditions but also accounts for the *racial formation* that is produced in the negotiations between the state's regulation of racial groups and those groups' active contestation and construction of racial meanings' (ibid.: 136). Instead, Lowe proposes a perspective of 'heterogeneity' that situates Asian-American groups within indications of particular contexts that recognize the existence of differences (ibid.: 138).

The notion of hybridity is also preferred by Lowe, which she defines as 'the formation of cultural objects and practices that are produced by the histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations...Hybridity, in this sense, does not suggest the assimilation of Asian or immigrant practices to dominant forms but instead marks the history of survival within relationships of unequal power and domination' (ibid.: 138). Lowe (2003: 140) thus privileges Gramsci's concerns of hegemony: that is, the politics of power from dominant forces or groups (e.g. in

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<sup>22</sup> For instance, Maxine Hong-Kingston's (1989) *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* is a creative, autobiographic narrative that was groundbreaking and renowned in Chinese-American studies (and as a resource for Chinese-Canadian studies). Hong-Kingston relates her own struggles as a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Chinese-American who has only known American culture and is 'haunted' by the (ethnic) Chinese culture she knows very little about. Her creative approach weaves her own story to the tragic stories that her mother tells (which actually echo some of the remembered narratives in Chapters 3 and 4 in this thesis), and the tale of Mulan (e.g. see Disney's child-friendly interpretation in *Mulan* 1998). While groundbreaking in its time, Lowe critiques Hong-Kingston's work for how it (and similar autobiographical works) essentializes ethnicity and unintentionally perpetuates colonialist relations of power.

culture, politics, ideology) that achieve consent from emerging groups and maintain the superiority of the dominant ones (see also Zylinska 2005).

The importance of these discussions within the Asian-American context parallels the emergence of these very issues in the Asian-*Canadian* context. In particular, Larissa Lai (2008: 87) challenges the contemporary problematic of the Chinese-Canadian form of the 'autobiography' that risks '[deepening] oppression, not just by reiterating it, but also by driving deeper underground aspects of marginalized subjectivity that do not fit into conventions of autobiography'.<sup>23</sup> This is particularly in the notion of reinforcing colonialist assumptions through the very act of producing and performing a voice of one's own marginalized subjectivity. This articulates the problematic of 'double consciousness' and what Du Bois (1903: 45) describes as a 'sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others in the mirror'. These discussions exemplified by Lowe and Lai are important, firstly, in light of Chapter 3 and my interviews with my subject-peers. The questions there concern a) how 'I'/'we' perceive ourselves and b) how our particular localized group of Chinese Canadians (and our very use of that term) understand our cultural identifications and passed-down narratives. In Chapters 4 and 6, I am particularly concerned with asking: how is an ethic and definition of 'Chinese-ness' produced by various hegemonic productions of power? Also, how are such productions of national (e.g. a 'Chinese-ness' aligned to the Mainland Chinese nation-state) and cultural identity (e.g. a 'Chinese-ness' aligned to a mythic, apolitical version of Chinese traditions and values) produced through media? (see Chapter 6).

The issue of 'hyphenation' (even as I write the words 'Chinese-Canadian') suggests the struggle of '[renaming] the place/space in order to name myself' (Pavlovic 2011: 47). Pavlovic (2011: 47) asserts that 'a hyphen is a description with historical connotations, personal meanings, and cultural resonance drawn from our conscious environment but reflective of our subconscious selves. Each *French-Canadian*, *Serbian-Canadian*, *Irish-Canadian*, *Japanese-Canadian*, etc. has its own story of spirits, demons, tribal fires, and ancestors, which through

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<sup>23</sup> Lai (2008), however is careful and cautious to note that she is not denying the liberating power of autobiography nor advocating its uselessness. Instead, she is challenging the widespread use of autobiography typically written by Chinese Canadian authors. I will revisit 'autoethnography' in Chapter 2.

enfiguration, are molded into history'. Pavlovic is speaking autoethnographically from a standpoint of an 'émigré' to Canada (describing himself as a 'Montenegrin-Canadian, trying to hold on to both ends of the hyphen') (ibid.: 47). Reflexively, as a 'second-generation' Chinese-Canadian, I resonate with his assertions concerning the 'naming of space', such that I am 'appropriating a story and locating myself within a history, thus claiming ownership of all three: space, story, and history' (ibid.: 47). The implications of these insights (in light of both Pavlovic's experience and my own) raise urgent questions that I explore in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. For instance, in Chapter 5, I ask questions about the migrant experience, the myths of migration and its hauntings, and the historical-societal refigurations of migrants in their new countries. I explore what sorts of mediated perceptions concerning the migrant experience are distributed throughout the ethnic Chinese diaspora. In later sections, I will further discuss the issue of mediated perceptions or visions.

Significantly, these perceptions concern the entanglements of story, history, time and space, which further raise questions about the presence of transgenerational ghosts, which I will continue to explore in Section 1.4 (see also Section 1.2). Significantly, the existential considerations Pavlovic suggests are also issues I query in Chapter 3 in how the second generation consider our/their own cultural identities/identifications. However, subverting 'double-consciousness' requires reflexivity (see also Du Bois 1903). As articulated via Lowe's (2003) earlier critiques, what is required is a perspective that *locates* the 'hyphenated identity/identification' as a self-reflexive space of the 'in-between', and significantly 'as the site of contestation about fixed identities' (Saul 2008: 145). In author Fred Wah's (1996) brilliant collection of short stories and poetry in *Diamond Grill*, Wah offers a flippant remark that is simultaneously reflexive and critical; Wah confronts the space of contestation concerning 'racial origin' within the hyphenated term 'Chinese-Canadian'. For Wah (1996: 54), the hyphen is *provocative*. He suggests that this space of contestation 'could be the answer in this country: If you're pure anything, you can't be Canadian. We'll save that name for all the mixed bloods in this country and when the cities have Heritage Days and ethnic festivals, there'll be a group I can identify with, the Canadians'. Thus, for Wah, the 'hyphen' is 'noisy' in its very space of 'in-between'. Even the rhetorical use of these 'hyphenated' terms raise debates about the dangers of *limiting* one's

identifications to concepts of ‘ethnicity’, cultural background, and/or national affiliation. Therefore, the performance of ethnic identities articulates particular relations to power; these are dynamics that individuals (and perhaps diasporic peoples) must critically engage in order to subvert what is otherwise being produced.<sup>24</sup> Thus, discussions of diaspora at the *intersection* of ethnicity reveal conceptual problematics and entanglements with power, which complicate discourses on how ‘peoples’ such as ‘Chinese-Canadians’ are seen and see themselves.

Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier, and Sheller (2003) also offer helpful insights about this entanglement of power, ethnicity, identity and diaspora through what they describe as ‘regroundings’. For Ahmed et al. (2003: 2), these areas of ‘*regroundings*—of identity, culture nation, diaspora—can both resist and reproduce hegemonic forms of home and belonging’. Thus, what needs immediate attention is how subjective bodies and forms of experiencing submission, consent, and/or resistance to hegemonies can be re-framed in new ways. That is, addressing issues of home and migration in terms of ‘uprootings’ and ‘regroundings’ in context of transnational circuits of exchange and power can rethink and reimagine notions of home and migration by considering the political milieux and entangled productions of politics and power (ibid.: 2).

In the context of my own empirical research, the intersection of affect with diaspora then, concerns ‘affect transfer at a distance’; these involve assumptions of geographical space, chronological time, and perceptions of affective circulation and intersubjective communications between im/material bodies (Blackman 2012: 136). These possibilities of affective potential and hauntings across the ethnic Chinese diaspora (and specifically in the case of Canada) are questions that I interrogate in Chapter 4. In Chapters 4 and 5, I explore these concerns of power and memory production, and also incorporate my critical autoethnographic approach alongside research into mediated memories through memoirs, interviews, film, artwork and installations.

In this section, I started by discussing Cho’s innovative approach of ‘diaspora’ at the intersection of affect, memory, and trauma and its seminal

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<sup>24</sup> I query the potential of this reflexive form of performativity within my act of writing this thesis (see Chapter 2).



influence for my thesis. I also reviewed complementary texts that have been highly influential to my intellectual formation and the development of my research questions. Specifically, this literature (beginning with Cho's), have challenged me to 're-think' the concept of diaspora, critically reflect on the performance of ethnic identity/identification, and to seriously explore the salience of power. The inspiration of these debates, therefore, has challenged me to explore new arguments far beyond the limits of my psychological training. In the next section, I review the literature on the transmission of trauma, memory, and affect studies that have also helped me develop my arguments throughout my research.

## **1.4 Challenging Traditions of Trauma and Transmission**

The literature discussed in this section has further challenged the conventions of my clinical training through innovative perspectives on the transmission of trauma and the unconscious psyche. These theories have dared me to critically (re)think new ways of 'seeing' trauma, its transmission, and its relationship to theorizations of the unconscious (see Chapters 4, 5, and 6). The development of my research questions and arguments have also benefited from these texts. I will begin by discussing Cho (2008) again, as her arguments first challenged me to subvert traditional psychological approaches that had become ingrained in the language and practice of my counselling work. Then, I will continue by engaging how transgenerational haunting might engage debates from affect studies.

To address these realizations, I want to begin by briefly returning to a review of Cho's (2008) disclosures of her mother's voice-hearing (see Section 1.2), as her discussion has initiated a small but significant 'spark' in my intellectual formation.

### **1.4.1 Challenging Traditions of Trauma: Voice-Hearing and Im/materiality:**

Cho's (2008) challenge to traditional models of psychology and medicine begins with a disclosure of a diagnosis: that her mother's voice-hearing was psychopathological, and incurably symptomatic of some form of schizophrenia (Cho 2008: 185). Cho (2008: 185), however, rejects medical models of trauma as an 'illness' to be treated, suggesting instead that 'schizophrenia is a normal mode

of memory for a *diasporic unconscious* that is in constant displacement and that reverberates with the voices of haunted histories'. Cho approaches voice-hearing as an entangled process of affective transfer or transmission that expands beyond the typical affective definitions as 'sensation, intensities, bodily or kinaesthetic feelings' (Blackman 2012: 134-135). The immateriality of voice-hearing, Blackman (2012: xxii) argues, can be reconfigured as a 'different way of knowing; a form of communication that perhaps connects the voice to alterity'. The traumatic memory of forgotten histories thus potentially transfers in this way, through the intercorporeal forms of voice-hearing. Blackman (2007: 15) suggests that, 'rather than presuming that the subject is or should be 'affectively self-contained', it is recognized that affects, voices, abuse, and trauma can be passed between subjects such that the voice-hearer becomes a conduit for processes that they may have little understanding of'. What we learn from these perspectives then, is that perhaps the voices, too, are displaced, speaking from the pasts of pasts and casting origins in the shadows of uncertainty (Cho 2008: 185).

Therefore, Cho suggests that these mental illnesses are consequences from an unconscious (or even conscious) practice of 'remembering' what has been silenced and forgotten, rather than irrational perception (ibid.: 189). We might also appendix, how, under the conventions of Western psychology and Western psychiatry, the voices that need to be heard are instead kept *silenced* through such histories of medicalizing trauma under the guise of mental illness, such as schizophrenia.<sup>25</sup> Thus, amidst the figure of the ghost is the importance of 'silence', 'gaps', or 'erasures' of traumatic memories within the Korean diasporic narrative that produces these spectres. Cho (2008: 59) suggests that 'invisibility' occurs from being too visible, such that 'the continuing effects of the Korean War have become so *ingrained* in the fabric of everyday life in Korea that they have become

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<sup>25</sup> Though I have been trained clinically to 'see' from a framework of psychopathology and illness, I feel that the prevalence of this discourse has become more damaging than helpful. On one hand, as a counsellor, I can empathize with and understand the 'value' of 'psychopathological' perspectives, in the sense that it tries to identify 'suffering' that can therefore be helped and alleviated for an 'easier' way of living. On the other hand, I have felt for some time that such models have gone 'too far', and become too reliant on psychopathology such that it becomes virtually impossible to escape one's identification with a particular diagnosis. Consequently, an understanding of 'human' functioning becomes limited to a specific ontology of self-referential containers of what it means to be 'human'. Furthermore, I argue that the growth of psychology, while beneficial in some ways, has itself become problematized due to the forces of power and public policy that circulate these problematics.

almost imperceptible to those who live under the regime of stalemated war'. However 'seen' or 'unseen' though these traumas have been, depending on country of upbringing, it is clear that the psychic traumas have become so embodied and embedded in the collective Korean psyche, that, with or without 'eyes', the trauma has nonetheless been rendered 'invisible' or 'imperceptible'. These 'ghosts' embody the silences and gaps that exist from the previous generations' forgotten stories and continue haunting the next generation.

Apart from offering a challenge to traditional mental health approaches (that I had been accustomed to), these intriguing discussions have opened up a powerful space for me to further engage additional texts and studies that have helped me develop my approach to intergenerational hauntings within the ethnic Chinese diaspora.

#### **1.4.2 Challenging the Psychoanalytic Unconscious: Affect Studies**

In an effort to better understand 'how' 'transgenerational hauntings' might occur, I expanded my literature search to affect studies. Significantly, this literature on affect has been important in helping me further develop my research questions concerning transmission (see also Section 1.5). From the influence of this scholarship, I formulated questions such as: In what ways might we conceive of spectres/ghosts of generational trauma as affective? Or how does trauma transmit affectively? Might affect be descriptively 'traumatic', if that is even possible? As I will clarify through this section, my research creates conversations between alternative views of the psychoanalytical unconscious (e.g. Abraham and Torok 1994; Volkan 1987) and affect studies.<sup>26</sup> While this 'mix' of theories may not always appear complementary to one another, I engage the tension between these texts.

#### ***Affect Studies***

Conceptualizations of affective circulation from the 'turn to affect' (see also Clough 2007) have largely been associated with phenomenological perspectives that have been subject to much potential, promise, and critique (e.g. Leys 2011;

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<sup>26</sup> To be fair, both owed much to Freud's groundbreaking contribution to the field, and their critiques should be read as debates cognizant of their origin.

Wetherell 2012).<sup>27</sup> In fact, only a handful of theorists associated with the ‘turn-to-affect’ from the phenomenological tradition (as typically influenced by the philosophies of Deleuze, Guattari or Spinoza), have conversed with issues of the psyche. These include (non-exhaustively) the works of Blackman (2012), and Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012). (I will discuss these authors in more detail later).

Apropos the phenomenological tradition of affect studies, theorists aversive to psychoanalytical concepts can be exemplified in the altogether seminal, debated, and problematic work of Brian Massumi (2002).<sup>28</sup> Massumi’s antagonism towards Freud’s problematic concepts (e.g. rigid perspectives of the repressed such as Oedipal complexes), and its ‘overuse’ in cultural studies and humanities has been asserted as a central reason why psychoanalysis is perceived aversively by many affect theorists (see Leys 2011; Papoulias and Callard 2010: 29)<sup>29</sup>. Consequently, affect theorists developed from Massumi’s influence see ‘transmission’ differently from psychoanalytic perspectives (see also Wetherell 2012). For instance, the rhetorical preference for the term ‘*nonconscious*’ conceptually liberates affect theorists away from the problematics associated with (Freudian) psychoanalysis and the ‘unconscious’ (ibid.). For Massumi (2002: 16), the nonconscious is very different from the Freudian unconscious (though it borrows from its terminology), as it discards Freud’s theories of *repression*.<sup>30</sup> The nonconscious allows for transfer between inorganic objects. It is ‘non’ conscious because, for Massumi (2002: 16), ‘whereas the feeling of the relation may be “too small” to enter perception (it is infra-empirical), the relation it registers, for its part, is “too large” to fit into a perception since it envelops a multiplicity of potential variations (it is super-empirical)’. Thus, for Massumi (2002: 61; 1995), ‘transmission’ involves the Spinozian definition of the body’s ‘ability to affect and

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<sup>27</sup> In her foreword introducing the significance of ‘affect’ in the humanities field, Patricia Clough (2007) argues, ‘the challenge of the perspective of the affects resides primarily in the synthesis it requires. This is, in the first place, because affects refer equally to the body and the mind; and in the second because they involve both reason and the passions’ (ix). I might add that such a synthesis is complex in reference to the debates in studies connected to ‘the turn to affect’ in media and cultural studies

<sup>28</sup> Massumi has been particularly critical of *Freud’s* psychoanalysis, which must be differentiated from the psychoanalytic perspectives I focus on in this thesis (more on this in later sections).

<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Massumi’s arguments have also been the subject of critiques decrying simplistic attempts to bring neuroscientific concepts to his conceptualizations of affect (see Leys 2011).

<sup>30</sup> While psychoanalytic, Abraham and Torok’s (1994: 181) diverse manifestations of the phantom (as discussed in Section 1.2) are not directly related to instinctual life and are not to be confused with the (Freudian) return of the repressed.

openness to be affected' as autonomic, nonconscious, nonsignifying 'intensities' that circulate/transfer between organic and/or inorganic bodies.

Following from Massumi, the 'turn to affect' has produced quite a number of theorizations of transfer. These include discussions of affective transfer in terms of contagion and panic (e.g. Gibbs 2008); understood and innovating ways of seeing and understanding the development of mass hysteria amidst crowds in various settings (e.g. such as within rock concerts, dance clubs, riots, protests) as a site of such phenomena (e.g. Walkerdine and Blackman 2001); considerations of affect as 'a register in process-a *flow*...[which is] elaborated and changed as it comes into contact with other people and things, even as these (particularly in the case of other people) are changed by it and its entanglements' (Redman 2009, as cited in Wetherell 2012: 153); and as biochemical processes such as a movement of pheromones between subjects (e.g. Brennan 2004).

These are interesting, varying theories of affective transfer, and suggest the importance of 'movement' in theorizations of affect. However, this is not to suggest that affect can only be exclusively understood through definitions of unending 'movement'. For example, Venn argues from these theorizations of affect as *milieux* where entangled '[processes] of becoming in which a potential in the system' 'takes a particular form' (Venn 2010: 139).<sup>31</sup> In other words, the entanglements within a given system (e.g. mould-hand-clay) as an 'associated milieu' articulates a theorization of affect as *process* as well as a mediated form. Thus, affect can be embodied through mediated forms as much as it can move between material and immaterial bodies. This is further reflected in Henriques' innovative work on affect that considers it as 'propagations of vibrations' that entangles 'frequency bands/movements' that are sociocultural (e.g. MC's call and crowd response in dance clubs), material (DJ vinyl turntables), and corporeal (choreographic gyrations, muscle contractions) (e.g. Henriques 2010: 71).

### ***The Psyche in Affect Studies***

I find it unfortunate that many theories of affect have abandoned the 'unconscious' and instead favoured the 'nonconscious'. This abandonment has

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<sup>31</sup> To clarify his assertion, Venn (2010) describes the activity-process of making a clay brick, where the dynamic entangled system of 'mould-hand-clay' becomes actualized without one component privileging over the other.

much to do with the (over)reaction against Freudian psychoanalysis in phenomenological studies of affect. This aversion, however, ignores (intentionally or otherwise) the potential contributions of intriguing, alternative streams of psychoanalysis, which include Abraham and Torok's (1994) approach. In fact, Abraham and Torok were also critical of Freud's predetermined notions of the unconscious (e.g. 'repressed incestuous wishes', Oedipal complexes). Consequently, there is an indelible mark of absence in regard to affect studies addressing the psychological and psychic.<sup>32</sup>

Though many affect theorists (within phenomenological traditions) have opposed the psychoanalytic unconscious, a few notable scholars have remained open to intersecting discussions of affect with the psyche and the unconscious. For instance, Kleinian object relations theory has been one of the more prevalent understandings of 'affective transmission' through 'projective identification' (Wetherell 2012: 148-150).<sup>33</sup> Perspectives of affect in the work of Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) have drawn from Klein, though they have done so while integrating Bracha Ettinger's (2006) matrixial theory.<sup>34</sup> Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012: 176-177) understand the mechanism of the affective transfer of trauma across generations through the model of the 'womb' as a 'dynamic borderspace', as an 'inter-intra-subjective transhistoric space of connection', that provides a 'permeable membrane' that links mother to foetus, and makes an affective connection between people possible (through the 'womb') (see also Ettinger 2006). In this regard, the 'unconscious' becomes a site of affective circulation/transmission from a psychoanalytic Kleinian perspective due to its service as a relational and non-individualistic space of connection (Wetherell 2012: 153). Interestingly, Abraham and Torok draw from the conceptions of

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<sup>32</sup> My thesis also aims to address this gap in affect studies, and contribute new, innovative arguments by exploring the affective transmission of trauma across generations.

<sup>33</sup> The influence of Freud's contributions is undeniable, even within alternative streams of psychoanalysis. However, with so-called 'neo-Freudians', such as Melanie Klein, fundamental disagreements exist against some of Freud's more rigid theorizations. In Klein's case, she is much more critical of (and minimizes) Freud's emphasis on *sexual drives* in concepts such as object relations.

<sup>34</sup> Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) also discuss Anzieu (1989)'s 'skin ego' concept, where psychic skin, like physical skin is just as important, because the psychic skin offers 'boundaries' in the affective sense. Thus, 'leaks', 'spillings', and sensations that cannot be contained in the body can be associated with unconscious anxieties. This notion of 'psychic boundaries', is then put into dialogue with Walkerdine and Jimenez's (2012) discussion of Ettinger's (2006) permeable boundaries of the womb, as she discusses intergenerational transmission.

'transference' evident within Melanie Klein's work on object relations and also Ferenczi's (2002) theories also (both also differed from Freud).<sup>35</sup>

Significantly, Lisa Blackman's (2010: 172) work on affect has also argued for the importance of addressing the 'problem of the psyche' in new ways rather than ignoring or minimizing it (as has been typical within the tradition of affect studies). Such perspectives are further innovated by Blackman's (2012) work with incorporeal modes of telepathic transfer with or without subjects through phenomena such as suggestion and voice-hearing (see Blackman 2012, 2007, 2001). Thus, within my thesis, I am also advocating for retaining the relevance of the unconscious in discussions of affect due to how it offers new and different ways of seeing the psychic. However, I am not suggesting a return to the mysterious, 'mystical', Oedipal, Freudian unconscious that is being critiqued. Instead, I echo Blackman (2010: 172) who cites the relevance of Guattari's (1995:11, 63) view that the unconscious 'should be approached as inventions or productions; as 'assemblages of subjectivation' that operate as 'partial instruments' that allow the 'putting into place [of] new assemblages of listening and modelization'. These arguments point to why I have found Cho's (2008) concept of the 'diasporic unconscious' an innovative and helpful 'invention' (in Guattari's sense) in developing my thesis arguments (see also Chapters 4 and 6). The diasporic unconscious produces new assemblages (e.g. diasporic vision) that create new models of seeing trauma that is not easily identified due to its disavowals, gaps and silences (Cho 2008; Guattari 1995: 10-11).<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, my perspective of affect within this thesis purposes to draw from both phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives of affect and extend them in a dialogue that can explore affective hauntings. For the purposes of my thesis, I echo the importance of Venn (2010) and Blackman's (2012) arguments

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<sup>35</sup> Abraham and Torok (1994) developed their own 'stream' of psychoanalysis and instead favoured a more active therapist-patient relationship that more closely empathized and considered patient experience (which contrasts Freud's preference for the distant and iconic 'therapist's back to the chair'). Bellamy (1997: 21) further asserts, 'for Abraham and Torok, traumatic symptoms arise not because of the repressive demands of the Oedipus Complex, but because of unspeakable secrets inherited from an earlier generation'. Whereas, in Dupont's (1998: 235) review of psychoanalytic development from Ferenczi's (2002) conceptual heritage of psychoanalysis, Freud dismissed some of his patient's hysteria as 'pathogenic fantasy'; however, Ferenczi insisted that such demonstrations of neurosis are rooted in real trauma.

<sup>36</sup> Cho's (2008) diasporic unconscious draws from Abraham and Torok's perspective of the unconscious and extends it to a way of understanding intergenerational trauma across a diaspora.

respectively, and their conceptualizations of affect as both material and immaterial, or as Blackman prefers-- 'im/material'--which rhetorically avoids dualistically separating the concepts.<sup>37</sup> Notably, Blackman (2012) theorizes:

affect is not just an amorphous intensity or set of intensities, a formless process that flows through bodies, captured through emotion...Rather, affect is part of the process through which adjustments to the milieu take place, including adjustments that involve the participation of human subjects, but which cannot be understood as singular human adjustments'. (pp. 173-174)

Within such understandings of affect, I argue that ghosts, and their hauntings across generations, can therefore be considered in terms of im/material affects in the 'process-of-becoming' within an entangled *milieux* (see Venn 2010; Blackman 2012: 172). Ghostly hauntings or the affective transfer of trauma across generations, I argue, can be described in terms of *affects* circulating between immaterial and material bodies, refusing subjective boundaries and defying temporal containment (see Blackman 2012; Cho 2008).

Reflecting on these accounts of affect in relation to intergenerational trauma has challenged me to further interrogate issues such as subjectivity, relationality and bodies within my thesis arguments by considering immaterial bodies of affect, and varying definitions of (affective) transfer/transmission/circulation. My 'working-through' these texts have helped me develop a research methodology that is both innovative and open to subverting traditional notions of singular subjects and boundaries between bodies (see Chapter 2.3; see also Chapter 6.2). This literature has also dared me to first 'distance myself' from my traditional psychological training, before 're-entering' psychoanalytic traditions (alternative to Freud) with a more critically engaging, reflexive eye.<sup>38</sup> This reflexivity has, in fact, become a significant part of my autoethnographic methodology (see Chapter 2). Importantly, this literature on affect has further helped me (re)consider and re-configure the (diasporic) unconscious in ways that

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<sup>37</sup> I find Venn (2010) and Blackman's (2012) work valuable, as I appreciate their open perspectives of affect that not only consider innovative ways of 'seeing' affect, but also remain inclusive of interdisciplinary dialogue.

<sup>38</sup> This 'distancing' before critical re-engagement can be understood from the perspective of a Brechtian 'alienation effect' or similarly, Bennett's (2005) empathic vision (see also Chow 2012; Brecht 1974).



expands my understanding of trauma and its transmission (e.g. see Chapter 6). These insights have aided my own intellectual formation and helped develop many of the research questions and arguments within my thesis.

### 1.5. Trauma, Memory, History and Transmission

In addition to affect studies, there have been a number of influential texts associated with trauma and/or memory studies that have also theorized various approaches to the '*transmission*' (or circulation) of traumatic memory. I have also found this literature significant in helping me explore how memory and trauma might intersect with intergenerational transmission and their links to particular histories. As I continued to reflect on Cho's understanding of trauma, in light of Abraham and Torok's (1994) concepts of hauntings, I found that other scholars also conceptualized transmissions of trauma across generational time. However, these theories both resonated with and differed from the notion of 'transgenerational hauntings'. I will spend time here reviewing some of these debates that have further aided my thesis arguments and research questions concerning history and memory vis-à-vis the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Significantly, what is the role of history? What kinds of 'memories' pass? In light of this, what are other perspectives of transmission in addition to what I have discussed thus far? How might they further shed insight into the possibilities of *how* hauntings affectively pass across generations, time and space?

I begin by reviewing key texts often associated with this scholarship of trauma and memory. Theories on their *transmission* are then briefly accounted for, as the literature has also helped my own intellectual formation and development of my research questions/arguments. These debates, however, do not necessarily incorporate the language or concept of 'hauntings' that I adopt in this thesis.<sup>39</sup> In

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<sup>39</sup> As I have made clear so far in this thesis chapter, I have chosen to subscribe to Cho's (2008) and Abraham and Torok's (1994) language of 'ghosts' and 'hauntings' to articulate my arguments of traumatic memory and their (affective) *transmission*. This language has helped me engage the otherwise impossible task of seeking new ways to 'see' 'traumas' that are lost and unseeable (see Gordon 2008, Cho 2008). For instance, Avery Gordon (2008) also uses the concept of ghosts to discuss the disavowal and silencing of traumatic histories. The 'ghosts' of history can be understood as 'the sign, or the empirical evidence...that tell you a haunting is taking place' (see also Cho 2008: 29; Gordon 2008: 8). My more detailed discussion of Gordon (2008) can be found in Chapter 2, particularly concerning how her concepts of hauntings have helped me develop my

fact, many do not neatly 'fit' nor easily complement the theory of transgenerational haunting subscribed to by Cho (2008) and Abraham and Torok (1994). However, I reflexively 'work-through' ways of engaging tensions and integrations between hauntings and various perspective of transmission (e.g. Walkerdine 2012, Davoine and Gaudillière 2004, Volkan 1997), in order to develop my own questions and arguments.

Cathy Caruth's (1995) own interpretation of trauma resonates with notions of transgenerational haunting as Caruth perceives the power of trauma as contingent on its very forgetting, where it is not so much experienced in the moment of the traumatic event (the shock is too much to register).<sup>40</sup> Caruth (1995) says:

the historical power of the trauma is not that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness, of historical experience: since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time. (p. 8)

Thus, the importance of time and the belated return of the past into the present, reflects, for Caruth (1995:58), a dual reading of both Freud and the recurrent flashbacks typical of *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*, as part of the problem and potential of human survival.

This intersection of generational trauma, memory and survival is linked to the horror of incomprehensible histories. These themes reflect the interconnectedness of *memory* that privileges the familial unit across trauma, diaspora and exile (see Hirsch 2012; Assmann, J. 2011; Assmann, A. 2010). Furthermore, Aleida Assmann (2010: 40-41) begins from conceptualizations of 'individual memory' and extends 'outwards', articulating the importance of family and larger society as a key means of transmitting remembrances or forgettings. In a topological sketch of interconnectedness, Assmann articulates different forms of

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'diasporic montage' (see also Chapter 7).

<sup>40</sup> I found that Caruth's (1995) own analysis of Freudian (and to some extent Lacanian) perspectives of trauma shared both similarities and differences to Abraham and Torok's (1994) perspectives. However, while Abraham and Torok are clearly psychoanalytic, Caruth (1995) is somewhat more agnostic about psychoanalysis in general.

memory. These include what is termed ‘communicative remembrance’ (individual memory to social memory), and ‘cultural remembrance (e.g. political and cultural memory) (Hirsch 2012: 32; Assmann, A. 2010: 40-44).<sup>41</sup> These discussions, in turn, further connect with the importance of the social links of microhistories to larger traumatic histories from the perspective of Davoine and Gaudillière (2004), whom I will discuss more in a later section. Furthermore, this power of *traumatic memory or memory of trauma*, therefore, as echoed by Kai Erikson (1995: 184), involves how ‘our memory repeats to us what we haven’t yet come to terms with, what still haunts us’.

Similar to Abraham and Torok (1994), Hirsch’s concept of postmemory is drawn from the next generation, or what Hirsch (2012) calls ‘postgeneration’ children of Holocaust survivors. Specifically, Hirsch’s (2008) work with *postmemory* and photographs echoes historical groundings with Abraham and Torok (based on generational work as a result of the Holocaust) and shares concerns of second-generation trauma with Cho (2008) (specifically in second generation trauma of survivors from historical atrocity), citing the significance of maternal loss and mother-child separation. Hirsch does not define postmemory as ‘movement, method, or idea’. Instead Hirsch (2008) theorizes postmemory as:

a structure of inter-and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a *consequence* of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove...Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (p. 106)

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<sup>41</sup> Assmann (2010) clarifies how ‘collective memory’ has been descriptively too vague amidst the research literature. She replaces its definitions into three terms instead—social, cultural, and political memory. ‘Social’ memory refers to the ‘memory of a society’, or a given society’s localized experiencing of remembered or forgotten past. It can be divided into various generational memories as articulated within families, as well as shared experiences (Assmann 2010: 41). While Assmann makes a distinction on the basis of her topology between *inter*-generational communication (structures individual and social memory) and *trans*-generational communication (structures political and cultural memory), my distinctions will assume Abraham and Torok’s (1994) assumptions of ‘transgenerational’, which confusingly refers more to familial forms. In this thesis, I will use the terms, ‘transgenerational’ and ‘intergenerational’ interchangeably and *pari passu*.

These points echo Abraham and Torok (1994) concerning the generational passing of trauma through *affective* memory. Specifically, Hirsch (2012: 31) suggests that 'memory signals an affective link to the past,' and how *postmemory* 'approximates the affective force of memory'. For instance, Hirsch (2008: 109) follows van Alphen's (2006) argument that trauma, in fact, cannot truly and literally be transmitted between generations (as if memory's trajectory must be a continuous, formed result from being an actor to the original event), where the children of Holocaust survivors could not possibly have truly formed or acquired the actual memories of their parents. 'Nothing could be truer or more accurate,' agrees Hirsch (2008),

of course we do not have literal 'memories' of others' experiences, of course different semiotic principles are at work, of course no degree of monumentality can transform one person's lived memories into another's. Postmemory is not identical to memory: it is 'post,' but at the same time, it approximates memory in its *affective force*'. (p. 109)

Hirsch's descriptions of 'affective force' recall comparisons with Massumi's (see 2002; 1995) considerations of affect theory as intensities and forces (though Hirsch, there, does not directly make this link to Massumi herself). Likewise, similarities are echoed with Abraham and Torok's (1994) conceptualizations of transgenerational haunting, even though the role of the unconscious is not of particular interest to Hirsch.

Further complementing the contributions of Abraham and Torok (1994) and Hirsch (2008, 2012), are perspectives that further assert the importance of historical traumas or haunted histories, and their intergenerational transmission. Psychoanalytic work that concerns the transmission of trauma within psychic unconscious relations between parents and their children can be seen in Vamik Volkan's (1987) concept of *deposited representation*. While the emphasis of the parent-child relationship is similar to Abraham and Torok (2004), Klein's object-relations, or even Freud's concepts of libidinal drives, instinct and wishes, Volkan's conceptualizations, too, must be considered from a 'different' psychoanalytic stream in comparison to the other psychoanalysts I have described. He states that a 'deposited representation emphasizes the role of the objects who unconsciously—and sometimes even consciously—force aspects of themselves, or

aspects of their own internalized object-images, into the self-representations of children'. In other words, the children become akin to 'reservoirs' of entangled (un)conscious material. Volkan, Ast and Greer suggest (2002):

By depositing images and representations into the child's developing (or a regressed adult's) self-representation, the object influence the child's sense of identity and gives the child certain specific tasks to perform. In fact...other people can pass their images, with associated affects, to children even before children achieve an intrapsychic separation between their own psychic boundaries and those that belong to the object. In the process of deposited representation, the active partner is the other person, not the child (or regressed adult) whose self-representation functions as a reservoir. (p. 36)

Thus, Volkan et al. (2002: 6) privileges a language and concept of the mental 'image', or mental representation (a mosaic of 'images') within the unconscious psyche that '[initiates] unconscious fantasies and thus influence individual members' psychopathology, adaptations, or both'. Thus, 'depositing' occurs when words, entangled images, (unfulfilled) wishes, desires, and aspects of selves (perhaps collective selves), from the generation traumatized via survival, war, poverty, 'deposit' into the child's identity formation. However, 'the experiences that created these mental images in the adult are not 'accessible' to the child, but instead, are deposited or pushed into the child, but without the experiential/contextual framework that created them' (Volkan and Greer 2007: no pagination). Thus, in Chapter 3, I offer examples from my analysis of subject-peer interviews to articulate how Volkan's concepts are helpful for exploring affective intergenerational hauntings, and 'glimpsing' how the traumas from stories told (and untold) transmit to the next generation unconsciously.

Significantly, Volkan, Ast, and Greer (2002) have also conceived the striking and powerful notion of 'large group' or 'chosen traumas'. Quite incredibly, this concept describes how some historical traumas can be collectively transmitted intergenerationally as 'large group' traumas (e.g. within a particular area or region) or as 'chosen traumas' (e.g. quite literally unconsciously 'chosen' across the global diaspora of a particular peoples). Such traumatic transmissions act on the concept of 'deposited representation' through both the individual and collective unconscious. In Chapters 4 and 6, I interrogate these concepts by analyzing the intersection of historical atrocities and memory production within the ethnic

Chinese diaspora in Canada, and also, in reference to the global ethnic Chinese diasporas. Significantly, the value of Volkan's concepts is deeply entangled in a political project in pursuit of justice, challenging injustice and articulating bridges of reconciliation. This emphasis on the political-historical connections to the unconscious are also helpful as I discuss the relations of power in producing national memories and collective identifications in Chapters 4 and 6.

Volkan's research and theorizations attend to, like Davoine and Gaudillière (2004), the links of large (macro) histories to personal and familial traumas. However, in contrast to Volkan, psychoanalysts Davoine and Gaudillière's (2004) view of intergenerational transmission is situated from a (post)Lacanian perspective that articulates the importance of social narratives in their articulations of the importance of 'social links' to histories beyond trauma. Specifically, what is privileged is 'the actual social history' that is thus 'crucial to the patient's emergence from madness' (xii). Thus, trauma is understood in terms of the 'social link' between microhistories (e.g. manifestations of madness in patients) and macrohistories (e.g. Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012: 157). The 'breakage' or 'cut-out' ness of such social links occurs when trauma (e.g. of war) is embodied (as opposed to the concept of the 'repressed'), and 'known by the body but unable to be brought to thought' (ibid.: 158). Forming a link also requires *immediacy*, which opposes causalist models (e.g. focused on problem-solving the issue of 'madness' and finding a solution) and argues that '[it] is better to conceive of all crises of madness as beginnings' (Davoine and Gaudillière: 2004: 168). This does not mean to disregard the past, but to allow the patient to recover the urgency of the crisis itself and help them 'formulate the intersection and coordinates of histories that go beyond both of them' (ibid.: 169). Recovering the 'links' also involves an *expectancy* that trusts the other and 'expresses the actual hope for life when life has been banished from the horizon' (ibid.: 209). This centrality of history is further brought out in Walkerdine's own work with steelworkers. In their research, Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) describe three key periods in the history of Steeltown and its community that link to the generational collective trauma produced. These involve a period of turbulence and insecurity (first 200 years when steelworks were open and the centre of town); second involved a catastrophe in 2002 that resulted in the closing of steelworks

forever; third is the post-catastrophe period (Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012: 79). These three eras assert that 'it is the centrality of how Steeltown had managed to engage creatively with the threat of annihilation and chronic insecurity that is at the heart of a history spanning 200 years' (ibid.: 85). These histories, according to Walkerdine and Jimenez, created '[ruptures] in the flows of time and space' that either produced annihilation anxiety, a chronic insecurity, or creative capacity to survive (ibid: 78-79). Furthermore, such histories produced intergenerational transmissions of trauma. For example, Walkerdine and Jimenez describe how the perpetuations of a particular masculinity (through the history of the town and steelworking men) circulated through the community. For next generations of young men, their inability to participate in such work (due to catastrophes closing the steelworking factory), and necessity to work in 'feminine' jobs, not only challenged 'male' pride (linked to the Steelworks history and production of masculinity), but also led to their experiences of shame and embarrassment (ibid.: 133). Thus, the entanglement of affects, histories, and production of memory (concerning such histories as well as gender expectations) articulates an intergenerational transmission linking micro and macrohistories. What I have found helpful in Walkerdine and Jimenez's work is their discussion of individuals and communities in relation to the persistence of trauma across centuries of chronological time. Their discussion of the social links broken and recovered intergenerationally due to the legacy and trauma of history (e.g. loss of steelworking factory) has aided my own intellectual formation and how I am (continually) developing my understandings of trauma and the transgenerational transmission of affect.

### **1.6 Mediated Visions of Hauntings: Potentials and Problematics**

Grace Cho's (2008) *diasporic vision* begins my discussion here as a foundational model of 'mediated perception' (or 'seeing') of invisible, silenced trauma. Additionally, this section discusses texts that intersect mediations with relation to power and the memory production of national identities. The literature in this section has helped me formulate questions that intersect hauntings with media, and also helped me intellectually develop the arguments I make in later chapters

about the entanglements of transgenerational ghosts and media (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6).<sup>42</sup> One key research question I ask is: What forms of mediated perceptions can offer new ways of seeing haunted histories?<sup>43</sup>

### 1.6.1 Diasporic Vision

The notion of ‘diasporic vision’ can be considered a form of distributed, ‘mediated perception’ or ‘mediated vision’ that conceptualizes ways of ‘seeing’ the gaps and silences of forgotten histories through mediated means. Specifically, Cho’s (2008) work has presented a model of ‘seeing’ intergenerational hauntings, a process where ‘the power of the secret joins forces with media technologies that enable it to be seen in order to create alternate ways of reading both the silences surrounding an unspeakable trauma and the hallucinatory voices that speak’ (Cho 2008: 166-167). What this means is that the silences of trauma distribute (and can be seen distributed) through mediations that materialize some vision of it.

Adapting Johnston’s (1999) concept of ‘machinic vision’, Cho describes how these past, unspoken, secret ‘ghosts’ find their own way to be ‘seen’ beyond the limits of historical time and space.<sup>44</sup> She does this by referencing *Soul’s Protest* (2000), a semi-historical North Korean movie reminiscent of James Cameron’s *Titanic* (1997).<sup>45</sup> Such films, Cho argues, describes how cinema can provide a mediated means for all who are viewing to participate in the ‘assemblage of eyes, tongues, and other parts distribute through time’ (Cho 2008: 174; see also Johnston 1999).

Furthermore, Cho (2008: 166) says, ‘in searching for bodies through which

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<sup>42</sup> Chapters 4 and 6 continue to explore the questions of history and memory in the context of Chinese nation-state production. My discussion in Chapter 6 argues for a more inclusive expansion of Cho’s diasporic vision where im/material bodies can mediate, circulate, and embody *affects* (see Blackman 2012; Cho 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Throughout this thesis, ‘media’ includes artworks, cinema, oral testimonies, and so forth. Thus, media is not limited to popular keywords like ‘visual media’, ‘cinematic media’, ‘television media’, ‘mass media’, ‘media technologies’ or ‘digital media’.

<sup>44</sup> Johnston’s (1999) concept of machinic vision draws from Deleuzian understandings of distributed perception. This assumes the co-implication of human and machine as an assemblage (contrasting oppositional human versus machine perspectives), where new subjectivities and ways of seeing the world are rendered possible (see Gates 2011). Therefore, machinic vision does not privilege the human body over machine in terms of subjectivity, but instead suggests a vision of the human body as ‘but one material form within a universe of organic matter’ (Harbord 2012: 101).

<sup>45</sup> *Soul’s Protest* melodramatically portrays the history of liberated Korean slaves (of Japanese colonizers) on a Japanese naval vessel when suddenly the ship explodes (split in two, similar to the *Titanic*). The film montages scenes of the Korean slaves in Japanese labour camps and attributes the atrocity to the Japanese crew (Cho 2008: 170; Blackman 2012: 136).



to speak, the ghost is distributed across the time and space of the diaspora in order to create another type of body, an assemblaged body whose purpose is to see and speak the traumas that could not be seen and spoken by those who directly lived them'. This machinic 'assemblage of seeing, speaking and listening components' suggests, then, not only a distribution and visibility of the trauma, but an intimate tie and co-implication between ghost, voice of the other, listener, and certainly viewer (Cho 2008: 184). What is evident from this suggestion is an interconnectedness and mutual complicity that shares in the sufferings of humanity and calls for justice that Caruth (1995: 11) asserts, 'can only take place through the listening of another'. Cho suggests the importance to 'see one's implication in another's trauma...[allowing] us to recognize the life that can be taken in every body' or a means with which the individual can command the 'entangled 'we' to appear' (ibid.: 196). These ways of seeing are therefore linked through their distribution where seeing and speaking, for instance, 'are mutually important parts in an assemblage of trauma' (ibid.: 166). Thus, diasporic visions of trauma can be distributed through mediated forms such as artworks, written works, dance, and other media. Therefore, 'mediated perception', as I understand it in this thesis, concerns seeing mediated bodies that distribute mediations of memory through both material and im/material bodies. However, mediated perceptions of hauntings are not limited to media forms, but also involve the distribution of trauma. This assemblage of distributions is what Cho means by diasporic vision; it is a central concept within my work and how I compose a 'diasporic montage' (see Preface and Chapter 7).

Thus, affective transfer in the context of diasporic vision across the 'diasporic unconscious' can be understood from a trans-subjective ontology, and not restricted by geographical space or chronological time (Blackman 2012: 136). *Diasporic vision* does not refer to visual media alone. Its affective potential to 'seeing' hauntings can be considered *synesthetic*, where sights can be heard, voices can be seen, unseen histories can be listened to, and lost voices can even be felt (Cho 2008: 187). This key conceptualization of diasporic vision resonates through the questions I ask concerning 'seeing' transgenerational ghosts within the ethnic Chinese diaspora.

Cho's participation in a creative arts and performance exhibit called *Still*

*Present Pasts: Korean-Americans and the 'Forgotten War'*, is comprised of dance, visual artworks and other works that embody Korean-American memories and life stories, and importantly, to revive what has been actively forgotten and fragmented within her Korean diaspora (Cho 2008: xii). For instance, one image printed in her book shows an artist's innovative depiction called, *A Girl with a Tank*. Regarding its construction, Cho (2008: 165) describes how 'the image of a girl standing in front of a tank was drawn on a piece of cloth; it was then cut up and reassembled with other materials'. Cho then describes to us how its artist, Injoo Whang described the work: 'When something is broken apart and put back together it creates very different integrity but the newly created image still retains a history of the broken-apart parts' (Cho 2008: 164). This relationship between 'affect' and 'haunting' is thus expressed through mediations of material artwork, but through a diasporic vision, we can see immaterial affects transmit unknown (and at best fragmented) memories of trauma through the very gaps and spaces that cannot hide the evidence of what has been broken-apart and ruptured. Thus, specifically, through this work, we gain an insight about the affective potential that this haunting legacy has on the next generation of Koreans through its very performance of juxtaposing fragments.

To this end, the early work of Aby Warburg, particularly his unfinished *Mnemosyne* in the late 1920's, articulates a 'montage collision' of photographs that frees photographic images from the limits of their materiality (Michaud 2007: 285). Warburg utilizes a series of black screens with text and photographs pasted-on that are then grouped together thematically, with intentions of tracing the persistence and survival of visual motifs from one period (e.g. classical period) into the visual arts media of another (e.g. Renaissance) (Valiaho 2010: 153). The importance of this work is its very dynamism, through juxtaposing the visuality of what is 'seen', with the 'abyss of time' evident in the black gaps between images (Valiaho 2010: 155). The embodied mediation of histories, what is seen and unseen, renders an affective potential (beyond language and discourse) within the very 'inter-relating' of the montage of images themselves, as well as for the spectator engaging its very montage collision of im/material images. Thus, the montage of material images (what is visible, histories are evident) and the visual 'black gaps' 'collide' dynamically and simultaneously with the immaterial 'image'

(what is invisible, unseen; histories unknown; gaps; spaces). Thus, the discussion in this chapter sets up the performative dimension of the thesis and points towards a variety of ways to stage intergenerational haunting which include engagements with history, subjectivity and mediated forms of perception.

The importance of ‘memory’ and ‘seeing’ mediations of memory has also been further discussed in other literature. For Marianne Hirsch (2012: 33), memory is powerfully mediated through literature, testimony, and photography because ‘memory signals an affective link to the past—a sense, precisely, of a material ‘living connection’. For Hirsch (1997: 20), photography in relation to loss and death is not to mediate the process of individual and collective memory but to bring the past back in the form of a ghostly revenant, emphasizing, at the same time, its immutable and irreversible past and irretrievability. However, as Kuhn and McAllister (2006: 2) suggest, ‘in such attempts to return, photographs do not always disclose clues, nor lead us to the sites we image, nor release us from what lies in the silences and the ambivalent traces imprinted onto their surfaces’.

This literature from Warburg (in Michaud 2007), Valiaho (2010), Hirsch (2012, 1997), and Kuhn and McAllister (2006) have also helped me intellectually explore and ‘make sense of’ the importance and potential of Cho’s (2008) diasporic vision in directions that Cho has not addressed in detail within her own work. In response, my thesis therefore expands Cho’s concept of diasporic vision by interrogating the distribution of trauma through multiple mediations that are *not* limited to what is visible and material. Mediated perception certainly creates visions of trauma whether it be human, tongues, eyes, film, photographs, that ‘can act as forms of distributed perception, allowing one to bring a trauma that has been foreclosed into the social, so that the voices can be listened to’ (Blackman 2012: 136). Therefore, by ‘mediated perception’ or ‘mediated visions’ of affective hauntings in this thesis, I refer to both specific, material forms of media (e.g. film, photographs, memoirs) as well as the immaterial mediations through the gaps, spaces and silences between what can be materialized.

### **1.6.2 Problematics of Mediated Memory**

Cho’s discussion of diasporic vision, however, does not confront the potential problematics of both mediated memory and the performance of history.

To address this issue, I have found helpful Film Theorist David Martin-Jones (2006) work, and his arguments concerning the negotiations of the past and present in national histories and memories. While Martin-Jones incorporates strongly Deleuzian framings and 'Deleuzian language' in his analysis, the 'gist' of his arguments (e.g. concerning relations of power and identity production) are, of course, not new and have been well attended to in cultural studies (see Zylinska 2005), diasporic debates, and some of the research I have already discussed<sup>46</sup>. However, some particular nuances of Martin-Jones' (2006) arguments are worth exploring here briefly. For instance, Martin-Jones comments on the capacity of history to demonstrate two different planes of historical narrative and production; his Deleuzian framing doubly offers a convenient means of analysing these concepts within cinema as well (which I will discuss more of in the next section). For instance he argues that one plane of history can be visualized as a line of time (official histories) and another, as a labyrinth of time (multiple possible histories). Specifically, he refers to Deleuzian terms from diaspora studies such as the 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization' of national identities through Bhabha's (1994) conceptualizations of the 'double time' of a nation.

Interestingly, Martin-Jones (2006: 31) then describes Judith Butler's (1993) concept of compulsive repetition of gender role performativity (where one is compelled to repeat and sustain the illusion of heterosexuality, 'man', 'woman'), and relates this concept of compulsive repetition to a genealogy of how national identity is performative of a dominant view of national history (e.g. colonialism, compulsory heterosexuality, dominant race). Thus, attempts to deterritorialise such dominant narratives (e.g. via postcolonial critiques, queer sexualities, diasporas-in-context) can indeed threaten the 'pedagogical discourse' (e.g. the 'official' memory or history being reinforced through power). However, these problematic performative histories of power are then 're-territorialized' to maintain and persist the official narrative (Martin-Jones 2006: 35). Martin-Jones (2006) argues:

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<sup>46</sup> My reason to offer a specific iteration of Martin-Jones' (2006) argument here, however is due to the visual analogies he applies to historical and memory production, which he also connects to a discussion of cinema (which I will discuss more later on). While my discussion of film through my thesis in Chapters 3-7 do not evidence particular emphasis on Deleuzian framings (e.g. using Deleuzian analysis through terms movement-image, time-image, cinematic time), the influence of Gilles Deleuze (and Felix Guattari) do echo through parts of the thesis.

National identity was thus maintained through a circuitous process in which the present was seen to be a continuation of a past that was itself a construction of the present! In the present it is decided which 'rhetorical figures' (which flags, salutes, wars, founding fathers, invasions, revolutions, religious allegiances, racial characteristics and so on) constitute the nation's origins. (p. 33)

Thus, the 'circuitous' process of repetition, maintenance, and a pedagogical re-territorialisation then suggests the performative nature of history and memory towards a particular official narrative, even in light of resistance and different visions of silenced histories that disrupt dominant perspectives. It only permits a singular and linear directionality while dismissing (and forgetting) other discourses and historical possibilities. This describes how, for instance, in Cho's (2008: 25) case of the *yanggongju* and the Forgotten War, a particular narrative is articulated in American history and the fantasy of 'whiteness' and the 'American Dream' (from a colonialist perspective) that erases 'take-for-granted narratives of the family, assimilation, an U.S.-Korea relations'. Consequently, in Cho's context, American history books have instead been filled with official texts of the past while the erasures of unjust histories are left to haunt across generations within the Korean diaspora. Therefore, the linearity of past and present renders problematic multiple histories, some of which are instead left forgotten and silenced in favour of a particular, performed and particularly produced past.

The performative potential comes through the possibility of 'ungrounding' the produced narratives due to the gaps or Deleuzian understanding of a 'time-lag' that opens up from a present time de-territorializing of a national narrative and before its re-territorializing (see Martin-Jones 2006). My reading of Martin-Jones' (2006) interpretation suggests that this is comparable to the critical space offered through a reflexivity that is consciously staged as a performative project during investigations of histories, narratives and memories. Such efforts, are, in fact what I propose to do throughout this whole thesis, and I discuss this methodology further in Chapter 2.

Within the context of the ethnic Chinese diaspora, an important example through which such questions and problematics of national identity arise is through relations of power and ethnic Chinese film and television. I particularly focus on this issue in Chapter 6 and ask to what extent relations of power are

entangled in diasporic transnational media productions and audiences. For instance, in Chapter 6, I explore how the 'logic of the wound' may persist through media productions of particular national-historical 'wounds (e.g. Nanking Massacre), and explore how a 'critical historical consciousness' can help critically engage the problematics of power and production (Berry, M. 2008; Wang 2004; Berry, C. and Farquhar 2006). Wang's (2004) critical historical consciousness is also an important methodology to analyzing the tension of history and memory that I discuss in Chapter 2.

Specifically, the very problematic of a 'Chinese' production concerns not only how it is described by its ethnic or national descriptive of 'Chinese' (see prior discussions on the performativity of ethnicity), but also in the problematic of power discourses that *re-territorialize* and maintain particular images and memory productions of 'Chinese film' (or television) in the national (e.g. local Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong, or Taiwanese) markets, diasporic markets (e.g. ethnic Chinese living around the world) and 'foreign' markets (e.g. marketing Chinese film in Canada, America-Hollywood or Britain). If I am being reflexive about this, even these categorizations can be deemed problematic due to, indeed, the many shifts and movements of diaspora transnationally, which has been a subject of growing debate in diaspora studies (see Ahmed et al. 2003; Chow 2003).

My purpose of offering these examples in this section is to introduce the problematic and potentials of ethnic Chinese films in relation to questions of affect, trauma, haunting, diaspora, memory, and performativity. While the analysis of different moving images occurs in the later chapters, these descriptions of film aim to raise questions about how moving images of any genre in ethnic Chinese productions perform particular national and transnational narratives to their desired audiences.

## 1.7 Conclusion

From a background steeped in traditional psychology to engaging the many intersections within this literature review, my own intellectual journey has been a challenging yet rewarding experience. Grace Cho's (2008) work with the Korean

diaspora has been a foundational text that has helped me work-through my own questions concerning the ethnic Chinese diaspora. Situating Cho's work in dialogue with the various scholars I have discussed in this chapter has greatly aided my overall intellectual (and personal) formation. Significantly, this interdisciplinary approach to engaging the tensions of differing scholarship has helped me develop innovative research questions and intersections that preface my research arguments in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. The many studies in affect, trauma, transmission, memory, media/mediation, moving images, diaspora and the links of history have inspired key insights and challenging questions for me to consider. My method of writing this chapter also performs my attempt to 'stage' my 'working-through' these many debates (see also Chapter 2).

Significantly, my primary research questions concern the intergenerational hauntings and the mediated perceptions of historical remembrances and forgettings.<sup>47</sup> Using the language of 'hauntings' and 'ghosts', one primary research question asks: What are intergenerational, affective, transgenerational hauntings and how can they be critically engaged and seen? As I have clarified in this chapter, this question can be understood in terms of *transmission* or circulation. Therefore, this inquiry can also be re-framed as: how does trauma and memory *transmit* or circulate intergenerationally across generations in the ethnic Chinese diaspora? What are some ways to critically engage these affective transmissions? Through what media and methods might one 'see' what is otherwise 'invisible'?

Moreover, each chapter offers specific research questions (see Preface). These include: What kinds of silenced or unspoken traumatic affects, therefore, are only visible through the distribution of the ghost across a crystallization of different methods? How can we 'see' ghosts through media such as film and artworks with a diasporic vision as well as with critical reflexivity? What are the possibilities of encounter with the lost voices of the dead? What kinds of new questions do they raise about the blurry tensions amidst memory, history, and remembrance? How might such vision invite whole new ways of encountering transgenerational affects throughout time and space? In the next chapter, I turn to

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<sup>47</sup> As I have discussed throughout this chapter, these texts have also been seminal in my own intellectual formation and how I have developed my thesis arguments throughout Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.

a more in-depth discussion of methodology, epistemological assumptions and how my thesis embodies and performs a critically autoethnographic 'staging' of assembling haunted histories through my very practice of writing.



## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY: WAYS OF SEEING

*Perhaps the key methodological question is not what method have you adopted for this research? But what paths have been disavowed, left behind, covered over and remain unseen? (Gordon 2008: 41)*

### 2.1 Introduction: New Ways of Seeing

Within my own autobiographical experience of searching for haunted histories in my ethnic Chinese diasporic context within Canada, I have been curious about what narratives and stories have been told within the families of my peers whom I describe in this thesis as my ‘subject-peers’<sup>48</sup>. Writing about trauma and intergenerational traumas requires new and different ways of seeing histories and voices that are left incomprehensible, unutterable, and unseeable. As a second generation Chinese-Canadian who is searching for unknown histories, I have wrestled with what sorts of methods can ‘see’ voices, listen to the unseen dead, and remember unknowable and forgotten individuals who have passed on. Furthermore, I have challenged myself to critically engage my own educational background within a traditional psychology approach (and its restrictions) in order to ‘see’ in new ways what precisely cannot be seen.<sup>49</sup>

In this chapter, I will discuss a number of interdisciplinary methodological concepts that have helped me shape a unique research design that interrogates affective hauntings, forgotten traumas, and silenced histories in the ethnic Chinese diaspora. For example, my methodology involves a performative writing approach alongside an emphasis on reflexivity modeled by empathic vision throughout the thesis. This way of writing applies the diasporic vision method (as discussed last chapter) that,

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<sup>48</sup> I consider myself here the ‘subject-researcher’, and my peers as ‘subject-peers’ within my autoethnographic approach. The choice for my using these terms, discussion of insider/outsider researcher issues, and my choice/rationale of using ‘friends’ within my autoethnographic approach will be discussed in Section 2.5.

<sup>49</sup> In the Preface, I described my background and original educational biases that were steeped in traditional assumptions of psychology. This of course, includes an experience of listening to the power narratives of the field that suggested how positivist methodologies were particularly privileged over alternative perspectives. Even though Counselling Psychology was more open-minded than conventional psychology, I was advised (with good intentions) that in the field of psychology (at the time), a Master’s thesis based in quantitative methodological assumptions would be more highly favoured by institutions for doctoral study acceptance versus a qualitative one.

according to Cho (2008), offers the only way of seeing gaps, silences, and forgotten histories that affectively haunt across the diasporic unconscious. Diasporic vision is a central method in my approach that proposes a way of seeing generational hauntings in the ethnic Chinese diaspora through different forms of data. In particular, this thesis focuses on discussing and analyzing conversational interviews, written memoirs, artworks, documentary cinema, and video installations.

In order to perform my search for histories, I employ a reflexive act of performative writing (e.g. Phelan 1997) alongside my critical autoethnographic method that co-implicates my voice and story as a second generation Chinese-Canadian person with those of my fellow peers. My epistemologies and specific research design approaches of performative writing, reflexivity and critical autoethnography are key approaches to developing my diasporic vision of the hauntings within the data (mediated forms of memory) I analyze in each chapter. These approaches are important in how I 'stage' my search for histories and structure this thesis as a performance of my efforts to compose a diasporic montage. My critical approach to autoethnography privileges the entanglement and mutual complicity of our life experiences and stories, rendering the experiences of my peers as part of my autoethnographic narrative as much as my narrative is a part of theirs. Ban Wang's (2004) critical historical consciousness also offers a complementary method. Wang's perspective brings an important interrogation of the tensions between history and memory at the intersection of production and power in Chinese historical contexts. These perspectives are particularly helpful in my explorations of memoirs and testimonies that I will discuss in Chapter 4.

Jill Bennett's (2005) 'empathic vision' brings another critical approach that complements diasporic vision through 'seeing oneself feeling', within my explorations of performance and aesthetics (e.g. artworks, film), in Chapters 5 and 6.

Together, all of these approaches (under the umbrella of a diasporic montage) each contribute a method of analyzing different modes of data as evident in the following chapters. These approaches all form the basis of

what I have described as a ‘diasporic montage’, that is, composed *through* a critical autoethnographic approach. Thus, what my performative writing approach throughout the thesis *performs* is a ‘staging’ of my own (critical) autoethnographic journey to compose a ‘montage’ of fragmented mediated memories that can uncover haunted histories and how affect transfers across generations regardless of the limits from chronological time or geographical space. The concept of ‘montage’ is drawn from Gordon (2008) and Wang’s (2004) discussion of the ‘montage’, both of which are strongly informed by Walter Benjamin (1999), which I will speak more about later. Therefore, my way of understanding how all of these approaches complement one another is by reflexively framing new ways of ‘seeing’ hauntings through data by composing a ‘montage’ of visions that interrogates the intersection of trauma, history, memory and affect.

My primary questions in this chapter concern: What are the specific methodologies as epistemologies I employ to study and analyze ‘ghosts’ or generational traumas that are situated at the intersection of affects, trauma, memory, diaspora, transmission, and media? How do I generate and analyze the data within each chapter within my research design and framing of the thesis? What research choices do I make within my research design to analyze this data in light of diasporic vision? How do I frame the thesis as I ‘perform’ my efforts to compose a ‘diasporic montage’?

## 2.2 ‘Reflection: *The Field.*’

*Footprints in the mud.*  
~(...toes, claws, feet, shoes)

*Remembering smiles.*  
~(...toes, claws, feet, shoes)

*Rain. Clouds*  
~(...toes, claws, feet, shoes)

*Old Umbrella. Old Companions*  
~(...toes, claws, feet)

*Floats Away. Crawls away.*  
~(...toes)

*New Companion. Old Umbrella.*

*~(...toes, feet, legs)*

*Sun. Sight. Smiles.*

*~(...toes, foot, leg)*

*Dripping.*

*~(...toes, foot, leg)*

*Not water. Not a mouth.*

*~(...toes, leg)*

*Not the sun.*

*~(...toes)*

*Forgetting. Forgettings.*

*~(...)<sup>50</sup>*

## 2.3 Performative Writing, Empathic Vision and Critical Autoethnography

### 2.3.1 Performative Writing and Empathic Vision

Gabrielle Schwab (2010: 25) argues that ‘the sense of the creative and integrative writing of trauma comes with working through an event’. This active ‘working-through’ during my search for haunted histories begins with a method of reflexivity that draws from Cho (2008) and Gordon (2008), and how they both creatively embody a reflexive way of writing their research.<sup>51</sup> Jill Bennett’s (2005) discussion of ‘empathic vision’ has also offered a reflexive approach that has informed my own ‘performative writing’.

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<sup>50</sup> In this poem, I am performing a waking dream. I see myself with my toes in some nondescript field with patches of grass. I am standing in some mud with some nondescript animals I cannot see. I just see what below me are some animal claws and animal feet, and my toes. It starts to rain. I open my old umbrella, but it does not really work properly, so the animals float away and crawl away. I can still only see below me or just what’s below the spatial surroundings of the umbrella. Soon a new companion appears, a person I think who does not mind my old umbrella, as it keeps at least a little bit of the rain away. I see feet and legs. Then the rain and clouds appear to clear. Somehow, I think I see smiles and some sun as it suddenly gets quite bright. I am wrong. I ‘see’. I only see dripping. And it is not rain. I am not sure it rained much at all. And I realize that I did not see a smile, as I never saw a mouth. It was never the sun. I also only see one leg. One foot. Then I fail to see the foot anymore, and the leg is gone too. All that is left are forgettings. As I imagined this scene, the only proper description I could provide for this is ‘The Field’. And evidently, I conclude that the field I am imagining in my waking dream is in fact a field at the end of a war. And I do not know if I was there.

<sup>51</sup> Gordon (2008) embodies an interesting ‘voice’ in her text that is reflexive in challenging conventional social science approaches of research. She questions intersections of fiction, fact, and what histories have been silenced (hauntings) in disciplinary and institutional genealogies. This is particularly evident in her discussion of Freud, Jung and Sabina Spielrein and their letters to each other. With a reflexive mode, Gordon weaves an analysis that is performative of her writing a paper for a conference with her being ‘distracted’ by the ghost of Spielrein in a photograph and being more inclined to study hauntings versus the conventional rigours of academia.

Peggy Phelan's (1997) groundbreaking development of the term 'performative writing' within the field of Performance Studies more than a decade ago considers the very book she was writing in *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*, a 'piece of theatre, a staging of an encounter that may or may not take place between two characters', such as the 'reader' and the 'writer'. She reflexively challenges a type of writing that:

enacts the death of the "we" *that we think we are* before we begin to write. A statement of allegiance to the radicality of unknowing who we are becoming, this writing pushes *against* the ideology of knowledge as a progressive movement forever approaching a completed end-point. Performative writing is set against the normative ideology that insists that we die once in an expository, teleologically driven future'. (p.17, italics mine)

Phelan (1997: 17) thus removes the 'illusion of the authenticity of the possessive that usually escorts bodies into sentences (his, hers, theirs, mind, yours) and renders that possession phantasmatic' through the very blurring of subjective boundaries and bodies'. This argument re-frames the question of subjectivity and the 'I', which echoes other debates concerning autoethnography that I will discuss later.

Furthermore, I have found helpful Dwight Conquergood's (1989: 82) discussion of performance and method of research through the categorical framings of play, process, power, and poetics.<sup>52</sup> The framings include attention to: 'poetics' (e.g. culture, 'selves', human realities are both 'created' and 'creative'), 'play' (e.g. experimentation and subversion of method, self-reflexive critiques that can lead towards 'transformation' or new possibilities), 'process' (e.g. commitment to process, shifting away from positivism) and 'power' (e.g. hegemonies, ideology, struggle) (Conquergood 1989: 83-84).

### **2.3.2 Autoethnography and Crisis of the I/Reconfiguring the I**

Within traditional perspectives of autoethnography, reflexivity from the 'I'-as-subject has been a strategic way of interrogating issues of power and oppression.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> I find the late ethnographer, Conquergood's (1989) work a useful heuristic reference for my methodological framing. I do not explicitly 'use' these specific 'categories' to frame my thesis, but I draw from them conceptually as the basis for the performative writing I attempt.

<sup>53</sup> Autoethnography, as I discussed in Chapter 1, has a particular history of being a form of writing

For instance, autoethnographic innovation has been typically situated within postcolonial responses to colonial oppression (e.g. Pratt 1992). Amongst diasporic, ‘minority’ writers, countless seminal contributions of many autoethnographic writers of ethnic Chinese descent have been published in the past couple of decades (see Hong-Kingston 1989; Choy 1999).<sup>54</sup> However, as I discussed in Chapter 1.3.2, some ‘minority writers’ utilize traditional autoethnography as a method alone, but in doing so, actually reinforce the very problematics it purports to subvert (see Lai 2008).

In response, my epistemology of autoethnography, therefore, follows Cho’s (2008) efforts that can be further situated in debates concerning the problematics of the self/individual concepts of subjectivity and how these have been reformulated into understandings and challenges/rethinkings of the relational or trans-subjective.<sup>55</sup> For instance, Cho’s (2008: 25) work paradoxically ‘[holds] in tension questions of telling a story about trauma and speaking from a subject position, on the one hand, and a mode of memory that comes out of a diaspora of trauma that is deindividualized on the other’. This critical approach also brings attention to the problematic of the ‘I’ in autoethnographic/autobiographical works, that I discussed in Chapter 1.3 (see Lowe 2003). My approach of critical autoethnography not only embraces personal narratives, but is reflexive of its own problematics (e.g. critiques of the ‘I’). In response, I utilize ‘multiple I’s’ that simultaneously embraces and critiques the ‘personal’ within the ‘I’, and is moreover inclusive of a wider collective experience. This collective subjectivity involves ‘my’ own subjective affective hauntings becoming entangled with the hauntings of peers within my personal circle.

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that is resistant to problematic relations of power, while simultaneously allowing for one’s ‘voice’ to be powerfully and creatively expressed through a personal narrative. Seminal thinkers of autoethnography include Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner (2000), known for the creative use of their own autoethnographic narratives to model qualitative research inquiry.

<sup>54</sup> In his brilliant pseudo-memoir *Paper Shadows*, Choy (1999) shockingly experienced a shocking revelation about his “family myth”. After his mother’s death two decades earlier, during a publicity tour for one of his best-selling books in Canada, Choy, suddenly learned from a strange phone-call that the mother he buried was, in fact, not his biological mother. Choy learned this a few weeks before he turned 57 years old, and from that day on, became an *orphan* (Choy 1999). Choy’s autoethnographic narrative is particularly unique and blurs fiction and fact to subvert conventional autobiographical forms. See Chapter 1.3.2 for a brief summary of Hong-Kingston’s work.

<sup>55</sup> Cho (2008) has described other similar approaches that have influenced her own work. For instance, what Cheng (2001) describes an “anti-documentary”, which refers to a kind of displaced autoethnography, because it enacts a very particular relationship with the world: one that is melancholic, unlocatable, and cannot be fully named (Cho 2008: 46).

I draw from debates that include the problematic of the 'subject as unitary, autonomous, self-sufficient entity' (Blackman and Venn Couze & Blackman 2010: 19-20; see also Hollway et al. 2011). Developments from Simondon's (1992) conceptualizations of individuation and milieu where, the relational connections view the subject body as 'more assemblage than form, more associated milieu than being' have also been influential to me (Manning 2010; see also Venn 2010). Significantly, I also draw from rethinkings of relationality and subjectivity of immaterial bodies, rendered unlocatable through disruptions of trauma, unknowable memory, and the incorporeal transmissions of affect across time and space (see Blackman 2012; Cho 2008). Conceptually, these debates have challenged me to re-think the conventions of autoethnography or autobiography in ways that avoid the problematic confines of '*my story*'.<sup>56</sup> Alisa Lebow (2008) shares a helpful response to the apparent impossibility of one's subjective 'voice', easing the existential angst arising from this crisis of the 'self' (that is typically emphasized in autoethnographic narrative). Lebow (2008: 91) suggests, '[thus] the first person "I" takes hold regardless of whether or how tightly, I hold onto it. It is not something I can do without, or write without, even as its credibility is subject to debate. It is also not something I can thoroughly interrogate, as there will always be an unanalyzable remainder, something the "I" can never see. But this does not mean "I" cannot write, or "I" cannot represent myself... This crisis of subjectivity is not an impediment to the representation of the self; it is the very condition of its possibility'.<sup>57</sup> This epistemology of a 'critical autoethnography'

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<sup>56</sup> On a personal note, I confess that I felt quite 'anxious' at first about proposing autoethnography as a part of my method for my dissertation. Perhaps I was 'haunted' (if I may use the term in this context) by my training in psychological disciplines. So, considering 'autoethnography' itself as an established, viable, and important method of research was a challenge to 'orthodoxy'. In Counselling Psychology, this 'might' be seen as somewhat more acceptable, but certainly nowhere near as 'reputable' or prestigious as positivist (or at best postpositivist) approaches. 'Transpersonal psychology' is perhaps the most open to new methodologies, but seen as unorthodox with perhaps less respect than mainline psychology. Thus, discovering autoethnography's widespread use and debates across sociology, and especially anthropology was definitely eye-opening. Furthermore, this notion of employing a critical autoethnography that challenges the traditional autoethnographic mode is, I argue, 'light years' ahead of traditional psychology research methods and what I ever thought was possible when I first arrived at Goldsmiths.

<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, though unlocatable, the 'I' is likewise undeniable and somehow, embedded and entangled within the ghostly 'us' of the Canadian-born ethnic Chinese diaspora (Cho 2008: 46). Lebow (2008: 1) describes a form of autoethnography (what she calls 'transitive autobiography' or 'indirect autobiography') that explores the imprints of the past while the autobiographical subject herself is unlocatable (Cho 2008: 46).

therefore attempts to address the problematics of these conventional forms of 'self' within autoethnographic writing, and can be deemed as performative of particular visions of identity and relations of power (as discussed in Chapter 1).

Significantly, my epistemology behind my autoethnographic method opens up a wider space of interrogation; the method explores how one considers the 'collective' unconscious or, in particular, a 'diasporic' (collective) unconscious and the production of (mediated) memory through the ethnic Chinese (Canadian) diaspora. This, then, performs a method that explores the potential of diasporic vision in seeing hauntings. Overall, my epistemology concerns how a critical autoethnography must also be inclusive of the relational connections; not as 'them' or 'others' but as belonging to a trans-subjective assemblage where 'I=you=we=us=me'.

### **2.3.3 Writing 'Voices' as Part of Research Design: Performative Writing Through a Critical, (Un)Locatable Autoethnography**

Throughout my thesis, I employ a performative, critical, and (un)locatable autoethnographic writing approach to explore the affective transmission of trauma. These are key methods that allow me to 'stage' my own search for haunted histories and demonstrate my efforts to compose a diasporic montage (which I will discuss in more detail later). Furthermore, my critical approaches to performative writing also act as part of my analysis through a self-reflexivity.

Specifically, I utilize different writing 'voices' throughout the thesis. This has been evident in this chapter where I, of course, write with an 'academic voice' (as I am doing now). However, I have also designed this thesis by interspersing various 'Reflections' in between my academic discussion and analysis. For instance, in this present chapter, I have already disclosed my subjective 'I' through prose and poetry. In Chapter 3, I begin to challenge this subjective 'I', by identifying its trans-subjective complicity, just as I acknowledge my retaining of this 'I'. I intersperse vignettes through 'Reflections' that purposely experiment with locating and 'unlocating' the 'I'. These vignettes share some of my own experiences and learning through my own efforts to compose a diasporic montage. However, some of these vignettes also render unlocatable this 'I'. The reflexive



analysis occurs through the questions I raise, as I respond to and examine the disclosures of my subject-peers. Chapter 4 commits to similar 'Reflections' with interspersed vignettes. However, my academic voice in that chapter openly 'stages' my own wrestling with the history-memory tension as I actively 'search' through and assemble historical testimonies and archives. This reflexive analysis is integrated with Wang's (2004) critical historical consciousness that I will discuss in a later section. Chapter 5 and 6 demonstrate similar efforts as well. Chapter 6 particularly involves reflexive analysis in light of empathic vision (which I will also discuss later). Chapter 4 and 5 also include performative 'experiments of the impossible', that utilizes a number of analytic approaches including critical historical consciousness and empathic vision. While both retain an 'academic voice' of analysis, these experiments express my performative attempts to juxtapose memories together. Throughout this chapter, I specifically discuss the details of my research design alongside the central methodological concepts that this thesis applies. In the upcoming sections, I will further describe additional methods I have used to conduct the analysis of each chapter.

## **2.4 Seeing Hauntings: Diasporic Visions of Mediated Memory**

Within literature on research methods, studies concerning the unconscious have notably been the domain of 'psychosocial research' traditions. Clarke and Hogget (2009: 4) suggest how the 'unconscious plays a role in construction of our reality and the way in which we perceive others'. Such research has privileged how the unconscious plays a 'significant part in both generation of research data and construction of research environment' (Clarke and Hogget 2009: 4). A wide variety of psychosocial approaches have been employed in the literature. For instance, Hollway (2000) has employed psychoanalytic perspectives that strongly draw from Melanie Klein (e.g. analyzing cases using terms and assumptions such as 'defended subject' and privileging analysis based on transference/countertransference) in interview-oriented research.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>58</sup> Hollway's (2011) approach seeks a psychosocial method that replaces the 'cold distance' of fieldnotes and simple transcripts, while honouring and better allowing a space for voices to speak. Hollway (2012) continues to experiment with psychosocial methods by exploring 'creativity' with

more recent work by Hollway (2011, 2012) innovated psychosocial methods of writing data, drawing from Bion (1962) and Winnicott (1971/2005) to integrate reflexive poetry and prose written by the researcher that integrates fragments from the interview and also inspired by Lawrence's (2000) 'social dreaming' method.<sup>59</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, Walkerdine and Jimenez's (2012) important work on intergenerational transmission of trauma in the context of Steeltown has also drawn from psychosocial approaches and situates their methodology within different trans-subjective understandings of the unconscious influenced by Kleinian psychoanalysis. Crociani-Windland (2009), however, has suggested a unique psychosocial method that also draws from visual ethnography and employs Bergson's 'intuition as a method' approach to interrogating the unconscious.<sup>60</sup> Within this approach, 'intuition' or an 'awakening' makes 'known' what was previously 'unknown'. This recalls Bennett's (2005: 185) discussion of 'seeing one's not seeing', which describes a particular consciousness and reflexivity to 'see' oneself 'feeling' or 'not-feeling'.

While this account of psychosocial methods is important to keep in mind, my own methodological approach extends this work by developing an approach that 'sees' and 'analyzes' processes concerned with the unconscious in the context of the intergenerational transmission of trauma. In the upcoming sections, I explore diasporic vision through my research design as a way of seeing the data of each chapter that offers a vision of mediated memory. I frame my methodological choices and research design approaches to each chapter 'chronologically'. Specifically, my thesis is performed as my own search through diasporic visions of mediated trauma. This search for visions of the past involved many of my own thoughts, reflections, pauses, and questions along the way—all of which have

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social scientific data.

<sup>59</sup> The social dreaming method can occur from small groups (6 people) to large numbers of people (100 people). The idea is that, through the 'Matrix' or the group-space through which the dreaming grows, each person's dream becomes complicit with another's dream. Together, the dreams can transform into a voice that is shared by the collective group. Social links form, and the collective method is distinctly trans-subjective. Free association (though avoiding Freudian concepts) is used to prompt individuals and the group.

<sup>60</sup> Henri Bergson's 'intuition' as method was based on his primary philosophical assumptions that reality can be understood more significantly through experience and intuition as opposed to sciences and rationality. Crociani-Windland (2009) argues that the 'awakening' that arrives via intuiting is an uncovering of the unconscious and brings 'attention to our perceptions and sensibilities' (Chapter 3, para. 10--This refers to the Kindle edition, which sadly does not have page numbers).

informed my research design and choice of methodological approaches in how I compose a diasporic montage of affective hauntings.

In particular, I explore how a method of diasporic vision might provide a way of seeing distributions of immaterial bodies of affective trauma and haunted histories as mediated through material forms, whether film, written memoirs, documents, photographs, or verbal oral stories across space and time. Specifically, since diasporic vision is an assemblage of distributed, mediated perceptions of memory through the diasporic unconscious, my research design explores my data by re-figuring how such mediated forms of memory are traditionally analyzed and 'seen'. Searching for hauntings through a diasporic vision through the fragments of media that I analyze in each chapter, therefore, extends ways of researching affect, the unconscious, history, memory, diaspora and media.

## **2.5 Starting Points: Subject Peers and Conversational Interviews**

### **2.5.1 Home, Population, Rationale**

One key methodological starting point and aspect of diasporic vision in this thesis involves interviewing my 'friends' or 'subject-peers' who reflect the particular Chinese-Canadian community in Vancouver, Canada (my 'hometown') that I affiliate with.<sup>61</sup> Within the interviews and research design, my diasporic vision of affective hauntings begins by exploring the (dis)connections, links and ruptures in the remembrances of my conversational interviews with my subject-peers.

There are a number of limitations with the method of 'interviews', which is an issue I will address in later sections. Epistemologically, the entanglement of my own autoethnographic experiences with my subject-peers is, thus, a key part of my own story. Thus, my own life context is complicit with those whom I call my 'friends' and who also form the diasporic community I affiliate with. The relevance of this critical autoethnographic epistemology reflexively situates the entanglement of my own autobiographical narratives (or search for histories) along with those of my peers as a *starting point*.<sup>62</sup> My choice to research 'peers'

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<sup>61</sup> By 'subject-peers', I am referring to both the dilemma of 'insider/outsider' as a researcher while also explicitly describing how I am privileging 'peers' as an important part of my (un)locatable 'I' in my autoethnographic approach.

<sup>62</sup> In fact, early on during my thesis research, these conversational interviews and my own

within the place I call 'home' in Vancouver, Canada echoes Kamala Viswesaran's (1994: 104) own re-thinking of (auto)ethnography, where she seminally describes the importance of doing 'homework' as opposed to 'fieldwork'. Whereas anthropological research has traditionally emphasized 'going to the field' (in a distant place), Viswesaran instead emphasizes the importance of going "home", and returning to rigorously interrogate the neighbourhoods and 'growing-up places' within 'home' (Viswesaran 1994: 103).<sup>63</sup>

The population group I am studying (and belong to) can be situated in what Marianne Hirsch (2012) citing Eva Hoffman (2004) describes as the 'postgeneration' (see Preface). In particular, the generation I focus on are the 'second generation' Chinese-Canadians, who are children born and raised in Canada to Ethnic Chinese migrants originally from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Mainland China. Specifically, when I refer to the "post-generation" for the purposes of my thesis (particularly those considered '1.5' or '2nd generation' Chinese-Canadians) I am referring to persons a) born and raised in Canada to ethnic Chinese immigrants originally from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Mainland China or b) born overseas but primarily raised in Canada. Furthermore, I am particularly focusing on the generation of children who were born to a particular wave of immigration that took place in the 1970's and 1980's. Specifically, approximately 18 persons participated in the conversational interviews. However, this thesis highlights approximately 12 subject-peers within Chapter 3.<sup>64</sup> I conducted the

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reflections were key starting points. What was disclosed to me first challenged and humbled me. I realized that I knew a lot 'less' about my familial histories and national histories than I thought I did. Some of my peers knew more than me, even though significant fragments were missing within all of our disclosures (see Chapter 3). These are issues I will discuss more in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.  
<sup>63</sup> What this also brought up for me was how my 'fieldwork' and 'homework' were, perhaps the same thing. That is, I went 'home' to Vancouver, Canada to conduct the conversational interviews, even as I considered London, UK my second home that has been a time that brought me all kinds of life-changing experiences. Thus, paradoxically, doing the fieldwork in Canada felt like homework as much as my doing homework in Canada also felt like fieldwork.

<sup>64</sup> During my field/home research, I conducted 18 face-to-face one to one conversational interviews. However, I have been unable to include them all due to limitations of space. The number of conversation interviews I have discussed in-text (12 interviews) indicates how many subject-peers I have both interviewed and included within the actual text of my thesis analysis. Furthermore, this number does not include 3-4 group screening/discussion sessions or 2-3 group activities which occurred prior to my screening of *Nanking* (2007). Unfortunately, have decided not to include these in my analysis due to making tough decisions about how to frame this thesis and the limitations of space. However, I do have audio/video records of these discussions/activities on my computer, which would be helpful for my future research and publications. Specifically, each of the group screenings presented a different genre of film (e.g. martial arts, historical drama, Hollywood drama of Chinese-Americans, Hong Kong ghost drama).

face-to-face conversational interviews over several visits back to Vancouver, Canada. I conducted them during my visits back home during the summer of 2010 and December 2010 during Christmas break. The remaining conversations were conducted in the summer of 2011. I had allotted under 1 hour to complete the conversation-interview (which I had described to my peers in the invitation). Interestingly, the majority of these conversations exceeded this time scale and would take up to 2 hours.<sup>65</sup> All names have been altered to preserve anonymity. Also, if specific histories mentioned places that risked identifying the speaker due to the high level of detail in the disclosure, I have also changed this to preserve their anonymity.

I chose this particular group located within this migration wave firstly as it reflects my own personal background. Thus, the migration histories are relevant as the parents of the next generation Chinese-Canadians being researched here were those who, in some form or another 'belonged' to this era of migration history. I am a descendant of parents who migrated to Canada during this era, as are many of my peers whom I have interviewed. There is a tumultuous history connected to historical violence and trauma in our parents (migration) stories that has been difficult to access (e.g. traumas during Second World War but ignored in Western books on the War; exile, escape, etc.), and there has certainly been a lack of academic attention on this particular diaspora of forgotten Chinese Canadians (who are now in their 20's and 30's of age) that I want to address. I will speak about these issues in much more detail in Chapter 4 discussing historical archives.

### **2.5.2 Insider/Outsider, Formalization vs. Friendship, and Recruitment**

#### **Process**

The rationale for selecting my peer group was inextricably connected to the form of autoethnographic methodology I have decided to employ. Researching my own circle of influence or community was especially interesting, since, some of those I

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Other group activities also included large group 'card sorts' (using archetypal, traditional Chinese paintings on a deck of cards) to prompt thought, and the development of a narrative. Also, one activity included a collage that we constructed together from ripped poster paper, newspaper and writings.

<sup>65</sup> One individual conversation ended up taking 3 hours due to including all of the additional activities I had conducted (e.g. archetypal card sorts, 'free drawing' exercise; short film clip prompts and follow-up questions). Again, I have left this out due to word count limitations .

have interviewed are among my closest friends. That is, they are friends that have shared some of my most difficult and joyous times, and likewise them with me. This 'connection' and mutually pre-existing comfort-level was one factor of my decision to research this group, as was my methodological decision to employ a form of autoethnography. All interview subjects/conversants are personal friends of mine, many of whom I have known for many years.

While my perspective of (critical) autoethnography assumes a performativity of 'self' and 'other' where the boundaries between such terms collapse and blur, this epistemology nonetheless is set in tension within the physical research process of 'performing' the research interview itself, where issues of power relations can problematize the promise of my critical autoethnographic epistemology. Even within the epistemology of performance, potential intersubjective relations of power suggest a persistent insider/outsider dilemma within the research process, particularly in 'interviews'.<sup>66</sup> Part of negotiating this tension and dilemma is, again, reflexively recognizing the crisis of the 'I' once more within contemporary societal discourse and relations of power. Lebow (2008:93) comments on the insider/outsider dilemma, citing Trinh (1991) in describing the 'I' as 'a deceptive insider and a deceptive outsider', where, 'the very idea of outsidership that is the deception; rather, the attempt to be outside is always also inscribed internally'. My positionality thus reflects an insider/outsider dilemma that connects with the role of observation and collaboration in the data

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<sup>66</sup> The majority of the interviews were 'face-to-face' in-person conversational interviews. However, originally, part of the 'interview' data was collected through an asynchronous internet forum that was topic-driven and directed, but flexible in the range of answers. The novelty of the site (and some interesting question prompts that were exclusive to the online forum) led to some moments of heavy activity and interesting discussions. The types of questions I asked on the forum were similar to the heuristic guide I would ask in-person. However, the forum-setting afforded more opportunities to prompt a more diverse set of questions (e.g. gender issues and ethnicity), and also questions with selected video clips as prompts (e.g. I showed a short 1 minute clip from a film about Nanking or a martial arts television show, and asked an open-ended question about their immediate feelings and reactions). Unfortunately, inevitably, the internet forum was not self-sustaining even with continued prompts by myself, the researcher-as-subject. Part of the issue may also have been the need to 'move' between forums, since I actually happened to lose all of my data in the first forum due to technical website errors. Some more keen subject-peers continued to contribute upon my invitations or prompts, but discussion was not as natural or self-sustaining as it was earlier on in the lifetime of the forum. Other contributions to this attrition were likely due to challenges of commitment levels due to my invitation to all forum members to attend my face-to-face group discussion film groups. Consequently, some of the excerpts from these online contributions are reflected in the subject-peer disclosures in Chapter 3 but integrated together with the face-to-face interview excerpts. The internet forum was also present from the end of Summer 2010. Participation peaked through the Autumn, but rapidly dropped due to the reasons I have mentioned earlier.

collection process. Maydell (2010) tackles the insider/outsider dilemma in her research on Russian immigrants as both researcher and member of her subject group. In particular, Maydell discloses how she particularly wrestled with her positionality and “higher” status as a researcher (“outsider”) versus that of belonging to the very group she studied (“insider”). I, too, face the insider/outsider dilemma during the interviews. I have chosen to address the dilemma in several practical ways. First, as I am demonstrating, a key part of addressing this issue of power is via my reflexivity of this dilemma that involves what Conquergood (1989:87) has described as incorporating a ‘double-voiced discourse’ and ‘shifting points-of-view’. This can be demonstrated both in how I approach the insider/outsider dilemma (which I will discuss more of shortly), and also through how I perform ‘multiple I’s’ within the context of each chapter (which I have already discussed in previous sections). Next, in order to address the position of *researcher-power*, I make several ‘unorthodox’ decisions (compared to traditional (post) positivist or other orthodox approaches to research) regarding the process of recruitment, consent, interview space, style of conversation, and headnotes/fieldnotes that are nonetheless consistent with my critical autoethnographic aims.<sup>67</sup>

### *Formalization vs. Friendship*

I have chosen to encourage my ‘insider’ native positioning within the population group in order to stage the conditions necessary to reflect a ‘natural’ conversational environment, particularly since my epistemology privileges the concept of friendship (e.g. inclusive of rapport, trust, pre-existing bond).

In terms of ‘setting’, the conversational interviews took place in informal spaces that could offer an atmosphere of informality. Some took place in the researcher’s home, in a peer’s own home, or else in public areas such as quiet spaces in coffee shops or restaurants. The rationale for this range of location was

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<sup>67</sup> By ‘unorthodox’, I refer to procedures that may perturb some institutional conventions (e.g. ethics boards) concerning ‘consent’ (as I will discuss later), how it is done, and in precisely what contexts. While these are well-meaning and meant to protect the milieu of school, student and subject, Blake (2007) has argued that such assumptions are problematic and presumptive of harmful implications of research. Nevertheless, I ‘respond’ to potential critics (who may have a more traditional methodological preference) feeling ‘shock’ at my approach (and perhaps unpleasantly ‘taunt’ me) with a commitment to reflexivity.

to emphasize the naturalness and ‘informality’, as these are locations that my peers and I would normally meet to ‘chat’ or ‘hang-out’ as friends/peers for conversations unrelated to research. Again, I reasoned that the informality re-creates a ‘naturalisation’ and better facilitates a mutual and collaborative disclosure and conversation that could best wrestle with my research questions, as consistent with my autoethnographic approach. It was important to allow as many conditions of informality as possible that I hoped could address the problem of researcher-positioning. The inevitable problematic of attempting to perform ‘research’ (while trying to encourage a natural, informal dynamic) involved how I attempted to ensure that the conversations were tape-recorded or video-recorded with permission of my subject peers (depending on their preferences). This was unavoidable but is a factor that I am aware of and acknowledge. Also, during the conversational interview, due to the need to address particular research questions, I brought with me a ‘heuristic guide’ of questions to ask (Moustakas 1990). This served not as a rigid list of questions I would ask but more as a guide to help me ensure that the themes and questions informed by my theoretical approach were tackled during the conversational/interview process, and themes I wanted to remind myself to address. In order to avoid a sense of ‘formality’, significant flexibility and freedom was given to the collaborative process between myself-as-subject/researcher and my subject-peers. Again, the informal ‘space’ was advantageous and conducive to creating a sense of informality. There were different interview ‘versions’; that is, depending on the time and availability of my subject-peers, some conversations were shorter than others. Thus, while all interviews produced some material for transcription, those informal interview/conversations short on time left out other intended discussions (e.g. film clips).<sup>68</sup> In order to thank the participants, I acted consistently with how I typically approach gratitude or appreciation with these friendships; I treated them to a free coffee, snack and/or meal.

In efforts to further encourage informality, informal *verbal consent* was acquired through my invitation in person or via email towards an *informal interview*, that I specified *would be like a conversation, natural and informal*. My

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<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, even with those peers that I did manage discussions involving ‘film clips’ as prompts, I have mostly left them out of this thesis due to issues of space. This raw data must be left for another publication.



invitation introduced the research informally as questions I would ask that concerned my subject-peer's family migration story and his/her experiences as a Chinese-Canadian person.<sup>69</sup> During the actual conversation, I would also re-iterate what types of questions I would ask and also re-emphasize my desire and attempts to encourage a discussion that could be as informal as possible (see Appendix A).

The informality of initial consent and my treatment of the conversational interview process are echoed in Blake's (2007) suggestions to avoid formalising the processes that are intended to be 'natural'. Blake (2007: 7) argues that this could compromise the importance of 'easy camaraderie born of friendship and underpinned by trust' and thus replace it with 'implicit assumptions that the research may lead to harm, exploitation or suffering for those involved'. Thus, I acquired 'verbal consent' (spoken or via email replies) from my subject-peers through their willingness to participate in my research. This was further demonstrated by their agreement to meet me at a pre-arranged time. Thus, this avoidance of 'pre-paperwork' emphasizes the importance of trust and rapport that I consider a key feature of my methodological approach and assumptions in a (conversational) 'interviewing' context. To reiterate, these decisions are based in a critical autoethnographic approach that privileges the importance of my fellow peers in my subjective life experience within our particular localized context of the Chinese-Canadian diaspora. Nevertheless, as an option to address any potential concerns about such approaches, Blake (2007: 8) suggests the option of 'negotiated consent', where subjects are given the opportunity to 'post-participate', and sign consent forms after negotiating with the researcher their preferences of anonymity, and to collaborate how their words have been used within the thesis.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> For example, for Pastor David (see Chapter 3), my email invitation was extremely informal, perhaps a bit 'ridiculous' and perhaps towards the point of 'hilarity'. However, this 'I' reflected the dynamic of familiarity and humour we shared, a friendship which also included mutual trust, pre-established rapport and a number of more 'meaningful' shared experiences with each other within our mutual memories. After some small talk, I mentioned in the email: '...would be great to catch up with you....also, I'm wondering if I can double this catch-up time as a very informal interview thingy for my research. I'm just basically gonna ask you about your family's migration story and your experience as a Canadian-Chinese person etc. So, fun, deep stuff :-)'. After ending that line with an 'emoticon' smiley, I proceeded to invite Pastor David to lunch over sushi, and ended with another more 'humorous' comment.

<sup>70</sup> In response, I created 'Post-Consent/Release' forms for my subject-peers to sign as 'optional' (as opposed to required) indicators of consent that complement their original verbal consent and agreements to meet with me (See Appendix C for a copy of this form). Traditionally, interview methods have been tested against rigour through procedures such as 'member checking' in qualitative research. However, the process of member-checking is not without its problematics.

To further support my 'natural presence' and the notion of *sharing conversation between friends* (instead of as a 'researcher' interviewing a 'subject'), I adapted a form of 'heuristic inquiry' (e.g. Moustakas 1990 as cited in Wall 2006: 4) that involves incubation and immersion in fieldwork. Specifically, I opted when possible to not follow conventional practices of immediately written fieldnotes or journals during and immediately after interviews. Instead, I resorted to allow for 'headnotes' to 'simmer in the unconscious' during the self-imposed incubation period. Then, as I listened to (or watched) the conversational interviews, I wrote down my reflections on these transcriptions in my journal during a 're-immersion' process (Wall 2008).<sup>71</sup>

Then, I attempted a process of *incubation* during the informal interview process as I was trying to ensure as many conditions as possible that could support a 'natural' experience within the collaborative interview/conversation process. This incubation involved allowing myself to naturally process the interview as my mind desired after the interview/conversation (e.g. as a friend 'listening' to another peer during conversation). This method often involved connecting, contrasting, and my *resonating* with the life stories of my peers, embracing moments of learning and insight from these conversations. However, in order to allow my memory to *simmer* (and avoid the 'researcher' mentality), I incubated myself from 'researcher' engagement with the specific interview material until the analysis stage. This simmering was purposed to facilitate the 'I'-as-subject to absorb the thoughts, feelings and personal insights/responses prompted from the informal interview conversations, simulating the response I would take if, in a

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The problematics have created debates about member-checking and how to both weave through the issue while maintaining research rigour. In response to this dilemma, I have adapted Turner's (2006) method and created a Research Summary form (see Appendix D). Thus, the Research Summary form, Post-Consent/Release form, and a copy of my thesis abstract were given to my subject-peers after my thesis' research conclusions were adequately formulated.

<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, Wall (2008) argues for the greater importance of headnotes versus fieldnotes. Wall (2008: 45) continues to suggest how with fieldnotes, there is a problematic of its basis on 'realist ideology' where notes during or immediately after the event suggest observations that can offer the most 'accurate' *factual* descriptions available. Citing anthropologist Margaret Mead, Wall suggests that Mead 'was aware of the importance of her headnotes, observing that it was her long acquaintance with her field of study and her individual consciousness that made it possible to her to perceive and record aspects of lived experience that nobody else could' (ibid.). The author also provides evidence of ethnographies and autoethnographies that have been composed solely from headnotes. One especially interesting study cited by Wall referred to Yang's (1945) ethnography of peasant life in a Northern Chinese village in Mainland China during the years of great war and chaos. Yang was dependent entirely on memory but produced, nonetheless, a seminal and important book regarding village life in Northern China.

‘purely’ friendship setting, I were to engage in a deep discussion with a peer. That is, in these cases, my reflections would take place primarily in my own thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, this simmering also allowed for these responses of mine to settle into my unconscious (as a subject), without the confounding influence of the ‘I’-as-researcher and its positionality.

Then, I *re-immersed* myself during the re-immersion process as I transcribed the data. This allowed me to adopt the sort of ‘outsider’ researcher perspective and aided how I looked at the data and analyzed it.<sup>72</sup> The researcher perspective contrasted myself as an ‘insider’-subject (since being an ‘insider’, or merely a ‘friend’ in conversation before and after the meeting was a preferable method during the actual interview/conversation). For the purposes of this thesis, the dilemma and tensions around this insider/outsider issue can be further situated within my epistemological assumptions of (trans)subjectivity, mutual complicity and the crisis of the ‘I’ that I have discussed earlier. I argue that what is important here is to reflexively open myself to different voices of reflexive critique just as I am allowing myself to fully engage and become an important subject-collaborator through the research process.<sup>73</sup>

In spite of my many attempts to organically create an informal space, I felt that it was difficult to avoid the ‘researcher’ perspective, regardless of my efforts. What I mean by this is that the manner of interaction, while demonstrating strong trust/rapport and friendship, was still carried by my intention to ‘ask’ particular kinds of questions that would, in turn, be answered with specific types of responses. To help address this, I attempted, at times, to disclose my own experiences and vocally reflect on how a particular response by my peer resonated with me in the immediacy of the moment. Furthermore, I found my clinical counselling training greatly advantageous in such cases, as it powerfully addressed any problematics of ‘distance’ that might typically be created with the traditional researcher-subject power dynamic. Importantly, I want to declare that I did not

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<sup>72</sup> I have kept reflexive records of my own written reflections concerning my subject-peers through notes and journals on my computer, this was primarily accomplished in the context of performing my subject-peer conversational interviews.

<sup>73</sup> As I look back at this approach, I am glad I chose ‘informality’ and approaches that supported it due to the types of personal disclosures that could be shared between my subject-peers and myself. The pre-existing trust and rapport from our years of acquaintance and/or friendship was, I felt, a powerful bond that facilitated the discussions and activities performed (which I will discuss in more detail within this chapter).

treat these conversations as clinical sessions, nor were they advertised as such to my peers. Nonetheless, the ‘skills’ of ‘active listening’ and ‘empathic listening’ that were part of my counselling training greatly aided me during these conversational interviews.<sup>74</sup> Significantly, within my everyday conversations and interactions with these peers (or any peer), I also typically utilize these listening skills, as they have become ‘part’ of my natural way of interaction. The strength of these skills was particularly evident in moments when, for whatever reasons, the researcher-subject power dynamic might manifest itself. For example, I would notice this when some peers would appear unusually ‘nervous’, which may have expressed itself through short answers, muscle tensions in their body (e.g. jaw tension; overly straight back; fidgeting), or speak in a tone that was ‘professional’ or ‘distant’ (all of which were quite unusual for me to see compared to our everyday, casual conversations as friends). However, if I am being reflexive, I believe that, I, too, may have unintentionally exhibited signs of a ‘researcher’ that may have affected my approaches to informality and contributed to the problematic researcher-subject power relations. This may have been evident non-verbally in how I introduced the questions, the research or even through my own expressions of nervousness (e.g. perhaps my voice also sounded too ‘professional’ and distant, especially in the beginning with some peers). Thus, in each of these moments when I became consciously aware of such power issues, I found that if I reflexively drew upon more of my learned listening skills/modes, then I could address these issues, and the ‘naturalness’/informality of the conversations would improve. (In Appendix B, I offer the verbal transcript of a sample interview with Pastor David for reference). Overall, while some conversations required me to prompt my peers with questions/follow-ups more than others (e.g. some had more to say than others), the conversational dynamics were consistent with my expectations. That is, how I interacted with my peers during these conversational interviews was generally consistent with how we might converse in everyday life.

The majority of these approaches frame the research design and methods I

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<sup>74</sup> I am basically referring to listening and empathy skills that can effectively build rapport through nonverbal gestures such as purposeful eye contact, head nods and so forth. But beyond that, it involves conveying my understanding of a person’s feelings or summarizing what they just told me (so they feel understood). Also, it involves naturally being able to track the flow of conversation and think of effective questions to ask that can deepen the conversation.

employ within Chapter 3 as I begin to compose my diasporic montage. These conversational interviews offer a key aspect of diasporic vision. In fact, my conversations with my subject-peers (whether one-to-one or in groups) deeply resonated with me (see Chapter 3 for more detail), and significantly influenced the development of my methodology and research design for the subsequent chapters concerning historical archives and aesthetics.

### **2.5.3 Analysis: Discursive Approaches**

One central part of the paradox to analyzing the affective transmission of trauma and beginning a method of 'seeing' invisible histories begins with the potential and problematics of conducting verbal interviews. The potential begins with identifying the discursive, narrative fragments that have persisted across generations, and have found their way into the memories of my subject-peers. The framing of the chapter and its analysis draws from thematic analysis approaches (e.g. Boyatzis 1998; White and Epston 1990). Of use here for my purposes in conceptualizing this approach is White and Epston's (1990) approach to Narrative Therapy, that assumes that each person 'authors their own stories' and also privileged the 'collaboration' and 'co-authorship' of life-narratives plays an especially important role. In the text of the analysis, I supply analyses of multiple key narrative framing devices or 'authored stories' of given discourses. Furthermore, in her exploration of Russian immigrant identity, Maydell (2010) situates her dissertation analysis with Harré's Positioning Theory alongside Burr's (1995) social constructionism. Maydell's approach offers a compelling model through which to expand my own thesis on the Chinese-Canadian next generation diaspora. Positioning theory articulates key discursive practices relevant to my thesis. It can be applied in how a) subjects perceive and 'position' themselves b) subjects consider themselves perceived/positioned by 'others', regarding conceptualizations of cultural identity and identification. These are useful means of exploring subjects' subjectivity and how they 'position themselves' in both their own perceptions and the perceptions of others.

Positioning theory also complements the practice of reflexivity that I am strongly advocating throughout this thesis' methodology and is useful for interrogating essentialised sociocultural discourses and traditional social science

approaches. In the analysis, I engage the implications of positioning theory on the range of essentialist discursive practices and epistemological positioning that my subjects (and myself as research-as-subject) employ within our disclosed life stories and how we speak and conceptualize the identities of the ethnic Chinese diaspora born and raised in Canada. I will demonstrate this further in Chapter 3.

However, in spite of these discursive approaches to analysis, there is also a need to challenge them due to their limitations towards analyzing visible and verbal texts and material forms. Their very *remembrance* offers a clue in my analysis that further opens up the type of inquiry that I speak about in the next section.

Specifically, throughout Chapter 3, I also employ analyses that focus on unconscious mechanisms of transgenerational transmission through these discourses. I begin with an analysis of mental representation that passes unconsciously through generations through a model of deposited representation (Volkan et al. 2002). However, due to the limitations of this approach and model (as I will discuss in Chapter 3), I complement this analysis through Davoine and Gaudillière's (2004) approach of interrogating broken social links. I also further employ the various modes of critical analyses that I have discussed in later sections to analyze what might be happening affectively through the diasporic unconscious. I will describe these particular critical analyses and the others that concern the unconscious in the next sections.

## **2.6 Methodological Approaches to History, Memory, and Migration**

### **2.6.1 Critical Historical Consciousness**

Distributed perceptions of hauntings through diasporic vision involve a variety of other mediated modes of memory in addition to remembered discourses from my conversations with human subjects. These include audio and/or video testimonies, written memoirs or published journals, video documentaries, artworks, photographs, installations, and video installations. Within my research design, how I collected and analyzed this media was significantly shaped by what I learned and personally resonated with in my conversations with my subject-peers (see

Chapter 3). Specifically, what I learned from those rewarding and challenging discussions inspired me to search for a method of seeing that could interrogate ghosts of silenced histories, recover broken links, and contribute an important fragment to my montage of diasporic memory. To do so, I needed to begin with a method that could interrogate archives of trauma, war, survival, and migration at the intersection of history, memory, fantasy and relations of power (see Chapter 1 for discussions concerning power). As a result, I have drawn from Ban Wang's (2004) book, *Illuminations from the Past: Trauma, Memory, and History in Modern China* and method of 'critical historical consciousness'. This method has been seminal in my own intellectual formation (in terms of how I 'see' history and memory), and, in turn, has also challenged me in how I treat archival sources in my research (more on this in the next section), and also how to demonstrate a reflexive analysis of historical material by 'critiquing the critique'. The importance of the notion of 'consciousness' then, in Wang's (2004) approach, implies an awareness and reflexivity that argues for the importance of a means of seeing history and memory as productions of particular narratives (e.g. official histories), particularly in the Chinese historical context and entanglements of nation-state power (see Chapters 4 and 6). Thus, Wang (2004) critically interrogates the problematic assumptions of traditional historiographical approaches that privilege the notion of a 'historical truth'.

With this in mind, I want to spend some time attending to the issue of 'historical archives' through primary and secondary 'sources'. Within discussions of historical research, these are often considered sources in the context of what is a 'reliable' or unreliable source. Specifically, I am referring here to written memoirs, journals, video testimony and historical scholarship as some of the key data that I research in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 (which I will discuss in more detail later). A critical historical consciousness has shaped how I have approached historical archives in my thesis.

### **2.6.2 The Problem of the Primary Source**

Though approaches to studying history have greatly evolved and included wider (inter)disciplinary debates that no longer depend on the primacy of objectivity, the problematics of empiricism persist (Woolf 2006: 72; see also

Brickley 2001; Marwick 2001; White 1995). Historiographical approaches continue to involve a wide range of traditions, whether they continue to privilege ‘empiricism’ and the importance of ‘valid’ sources (e.g. Marwick 1995), postcolonial discussions (e.g.), narratology (White 1995), or emphasized the distinctions between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ historical source materials. Nonetheless, I have found that the legacy of empiricism continues to plague contemporary research, particularly in regards to the primacy of what is considered ‘primary source’ material (see Marwick 2001, 1995). The problematic of such distinctions concerns history, memory, and fantasy, and is an issue that I discuss at length in Chapter 4. Traditionally, primary sources are typically thought of as ‘original’ or ‘raw’ sources, and conceived as more ‘reliable’ than secondary source materials (Brar 2012: 56; Yale University Library 2008). Secondary source materials, therefore, exist only in reference to the primary. Significantly, one of the distinctive features between primary and secondary sources is that ‘secondary sources’ tend to involve analyses (of primary materials), which suggests their distance from the ‘rawness’ of the originals. In many cases, what might be considered ‘secondary sources’ (e.g. a book that is not, in fact, the original, ‘raw’ manuscript of one’s diaries), function as ‘primary sources’ (Yale University Library 2008). This is evident in the case of John Rabe’s journals concerning the Nanking Massacre. The published account is the only available record of his journals available for widespread, public access. However, these published journals are not the original, ‘raw’, handwritten or typewritten (via typewriter) manuscripts that can be considered a primary source in the majority of situations (see Chapter 4).<sup>75</sup> Regardless, John Rabe’s published journals and similar cases are largely considered ‘primary sources’.

While I acknowledge the value of ‘primary sources’, I argue that privileging the primacy of ‘empiricism’ in determining what is/is not a primary source can be problematic, especially in light of issues that concern the production of history and memory that I discuss throughout this thesis. What is ignored then are issues of power and production within the perpetuation of what types of archives are

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<sup>75</sup> Secondary sources can also become ‘primary sources’ depending on their purpose of use. What may more often than not be considered a ‘secondary source’ (e.g. a PhD Dissertation), can be considered primary if one is researching a professor’s influence on multiple generations of students (Yale University Library 2008).



considered 'more reliable' than others. The blurring of fact, fiction, memory, and history is an issue that I interrogate particularly in Chapter 4. However, I want to be 'sensitive' in entering this debate, in order to prevent accidentally 'dismissing' the value of one's voice in speaking through recorded archives. These are key issues I return to in Chapter 4, and I confront these issues and tensions especially from a (critically) autoethnographic perspective that questions this 'blurring' in light of what kinds of archives are available, accessible (and translated in English) for the postgeneration Chinese-Canadian performing a search for histories.

### **2.6.3 Research Design and The Problem of Language and Accessing Sources**

A key part of my research design for Chapter 4 relied on questions of access and language (English materials) while composing a montage of lost histories. In my thesis, my analysis focuses on the English-language written memoirs of individuals who 'remember' some of these histories, that I primarily accessed through published memoirs in print and/or electronically.<sup>76</sup> As I have already mentioned, my research 'started' from what my subject-peers 'remembered' from stories told by our parents, grandparents, or others from their generation. Our elders'

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<sup>76</sup> My overall research process actually involved discovering a large variety of digital, online library archives that included accessing photographs, audio testimonies, and archival videos connected to the ethnic Chinese diaspora in Canada and America have been thankfully part of many other academic projects to transfer these archives online. I consulted a large number of print and digital archives concerning the Chinese in Canada for this project. However, I could not use many of these for this thesis (I will briefly explain why shortly). The physical archives included the Chung Collection at the University of British Columbia. Online digital archives I accessed included the Multicultural History Society of Ontario ([www.mhso.ca](http://www.mhso.ca); this holds a collection of archival photographs and audio recordings of migrant and postgeneration Chinese-Canadian women) and *Multicultural Canada Collection* ([www.multiculturalcanada.ca](http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca); this archive holds a large collection of newspaper clippings, photographs and legal records concerning early Asian-Canadian migrants (not only those of Chinese descent) within Canada. A large number of these stories reveal an incredibly difficult 'early migrant' experience migrating to and living in a pre-Multicultural Canada (e.g. head tax, railroad work, denial of human rights, overt racism). However, as Chapter 3 will show, these 'early migrant' histories were not the ones that my subject-peers 'remembered' hearing about from their own parents and grandparents. This is because our 'postgeneration' (and our parents/grandparents) can be considered to belong to a different 'diasporic group' compared to the early migrants to Canada. Thus, the postgeneration children of early migrants are different from the 'postgeneration' that I affiliate (in fact, the postgeneration children of early migrants are around the same age of my parents or grandparents). Due to my specific research questions and purposes for this thesis, I have decided to focus on searching for written memoirs that discuss remembered experiences about the scars of war or poverty experienced in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, which typically revolve around the period of World War 2 and afterwards. My specific areas and histories of focus will be clarified through Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. The physical archives that I found quite helpful involved my visit to the Hong Kong History Museum, which revealed to me much more about the atrocities in Hong Kong during World War 2, but have been largely ignored (see Chapter 4).

memories typically revolved around themes and discourses including wars, poverty, chaos, and survival (see Chapter 3). Responding to what I heard from my subject-peers, I proceeded to considering how to approach my research design for Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

In this regard, I found that the problem of ‘language’ was quite significant as English-language memoirs (whether written or audio/visual sources) that recorded the ‘memories’ of the specific migrant diaspora I was looking for were not as widely ‘accessible’ and ‘available’ as I had previously assumed<sup>77</sup>. Records are available in Chinese scholarship. However, I am not able to access these since I cannot read Chinese characters. I can only speak and understand Cantonese conversationally. As I will further mention in Chapter 3, this problem of language persists throughout our postgeneration, and within my subject-peers born or raised in the ‘West’. For instance, the memoirs I am analyzing in Chapters 4 and 5 have been published in some form, whether in print, electronic editions of original prints (e.g. Amazon Kindle editions), oral history projects from prior scholarship, documentary film, or in some cases, self-published memoirs. However, my limitations (and those of many of my subject-peers) are also dependent on hoping that elders from my parents’ or grandparents’ generation are a) able to speak or write in English and/or b) participants in audio or video-recorded research for me to find in archives and/or c) be willing to publish or have published their own memoirs or journals (and have them translated).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> During my visit to Hong Kong, I found out that there was a lot more written and digital material archives about the scars of war during World War 2 throughout China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, compared to Canada’s archives (which addressed a different early migrant Chinese diaspora). However, the difficulty of access again had to do with language. As I was searching through the digital archive search at the Hong Kong Library for oral histories, I found a large number of search results that were written in Chinese characters (which I cannot read). I chanced on some archives that allowed me to at least listen to some Cantonese audio testimonies (which I can understand in everyday basic conversation). However, the way that the testimonies were spoken in Cantonese demonstrated a vocabulary that I could not adequately understand with my level of Cantonese ability. Since I had decided to try performing this search on my own without much assistance (from translators), my own ‘search’ was limited to whatever pre-existing, translated English material was available.

<sup>78</sup> The obvious and simple solution, of course, is to leverage my existing Cantonese speaking skills or find a translator who can help me perform the research. However, I did not find this a realistic strategy due to the current length, time and scope of this present thesis. Having said that, for future research, I am currently brainstorming ways to create an innovative documentary that can ‘record’ the remaining voices of this particular elder generation. I am pursuing funding links and brainstorming possibilities with other peers of mine who are studying/working in East Asian documentary film.

Thus, in many ways, my performance of my 'search' for haunted histories simultaneously reveals the hope I hold towards recovering social links (e.g. Davoine and Gaudillière 2004), and reflects my frustration at my incapacity to extend my search beyond English translations. Therefore, until and unless my Chinese language abilities improve (or I decide to rely more on a translator), I will continue to be reliant on English-written or translated memoirs and scholarship (e.g. Lary and MacKinnon 2001; Chan 2005, 1994, 1991).

Therefore, in light of these issues, I argue, that instead of maintaining distinctions based on the 'validity' or 'reliability' of sources, what is more important is the act of assembling diverse fragments (from various sources and types), in order to 'listen' to voices of the living and the dead that must speak. Doing so uncovers a diasporic vision of distributed memory, where ghosts find a way to persist, regardless of whether a source is primary or secondary. Employing these actions, therefore is how one can compose a way of 'seeing' haunted histories through a diasporic montage.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I particularly use these approaches within juxtapositions of memoirs, journals and my research into the overall histories of a 20<sup>th</sup> century China from secondary sources. Specifically, I utilize Wang's (2004) 'critical historical consciousness' approach to interrogate what histories are being *remembered* through the memoirs of the previous generation (our 'elders' who belong to our parents' or grandparents' generation). This approach is helpful in Chapter 4, and I use it there to analyse memoirs and histories that address themes of war, survival and poverty.

The analysis integrates Wang's (2004) approach alongside other methods. In Chapter 5, I further explore links between a Chinese migrant's English-translated memoirs and what my subject-peers remember from elders telling them about migration. These experiments contribute to the 'montage' of fragments, juxtaposing data that may or may not be similar or seemingly connected, in an effort to uncover hidden ghosts and see the gaps between fragments of mediated memory.

Furthermore, in Chapter 4 and 5, in my 'experiments of the impossible', I particularly utilize approaches of Cho (2008), Volkan et al. (2002), Davoine and Gaudillière (2004) and Walkerdine (2013) to explore the intergenerational

possibilities of trauma across chronological time and geographical space. By 'impossible', I am purposely invoking a provocative term to imagine, and also difficult to accept or engage. In Chapter 4, I explore the intergenerational links of historical narratives of survival between one of my subject-peers' remembered stories (from what their elder generations told them) and the memoirs of a person from my elders' generation.

My reflections and critical engagements of written memoirs led me to raise questions about how my subject peers and I might, therefore, engage visual aesthetics that mediate traumatic memory.

## **2.7 Additional Research Designs: Aesthetics, Film, Performance**

As I continued to converse with my peers and widely researched historical archives, I became increasingly aware of the limits of verbal and written memory and information that I already discussed earlier. Specifically, I soon began to 'feel' my inability to 'see', no matter how much I spoke with my peers or searched through archives. In response, I looked beyond what was written to research other diasporic visions of mediated, distributed traumatic memory through visual aesthetics.

Venn (2009: 24) argues that 'the domain of the aesthetic and the expressive...play a key role in the process of formation and transformation of subjectivity and identity'. Thus, in Chapters 5 and 6, I analyze several artworks, artspaces, installations and artistic videos. In Chapter 5, I analyze an artwork (*Looking At History from My Space*) based on available images online by Chen Yifei, and an innovative installation (*Opium Den*) I experienced at the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK) in late 2010 by Canadian artist Karen Tam. I analyze Tam's installation of *Gold Mountain* as well, which I have also only been able to access online. My analysis of *Opium Den* discloses my 'experience' of immersing within the installation. I demonstrate the reflexivity evident within empathic vision and the overall methodologies of my approach in my analysis of *Opium Den*. With the image of Chen Yifei's work and Tam's *Gold Mountain*, I employ 'imagination' (see Walkerdine 2013) to reflexively conjure the immediacy of feelings as I explore the affective, haunting potential of artworks and artspaces. I also conduct this analysis

through ‘a gaze (or of what one hears)—that can for example be that of the critic, the cultural analyst or the excluded other’ (Venn 2009: 11). Firstly, I do this to address the problematic of ‘access’. A gaze that engages through imagination, I argue, lessens the gap that is inherent within my viewing of such art in a photographic form instead rather than its original medium and mode of expression. This approach also reconfigures issues of subjectivity and relationality by blurring the opposition and traditional distinctions between human subjects and objects into an assemblage of bodies that create new visions of the world (Harbord 2012; Johnston 1999).

Furthermore, I also apply *empathic vision* as a method that challenges me to critically and reflexively engage my own aesthetic experience of these mediated traumatic memories (Bennett 2005: 8). Empathic vision is a critical approach that self-reflexively critiques one’s empathy but simultaneously does not invalidate one’s feelings. It is concerned with reflexively distinguishing between one’s feelings or empathizing with mediated trauma (e.g. feelings that could be ‘felt’ while ‘looking at artwork concerning great injustice’, ‘watching theatre or film that reveals testimonies and atrocities of war’, ‘immersing myself in an installation that addresses a forgotten trauma’) and the original, primary experience of trauma (e.g. actually living through or surviving war or poverty).

Throughout her discussion, Bennett is adamant about the dangers and presumptuousness of lacking criticality and reflexivity when engaging aesthetic experience and simply ‘feeling’ without awareness. In other words, for Bennett, this approach asks one to be aware that one’s tears, sadness, and feelings while watching a film/listening to testimonies about the Holocaust, for instance, do not make one an actual ‘eyewitness’ of any atrocious incidents, regardless of one’s ability to imagine. Bennett does not suggest one to be ‘unfeeling’, or to not feel at all, but to be critically reflexive and aware of the distinction between one’s immediate feelings and the experience of those who lived through the trauma one is engaging (e.g. injustice and war). This might, at first, raise questions about my earlier discussions of blurring the boundaries of subjectivity, complicity and trans-subjectivity. However, I do not see these issues in contention. Rather, I see them as necessary and reflective of my overall approach to critical autoethnography, the ‘crisis of the I’ and performative writing. I see it demonstrative of the critical

engagement necessary (and that I attempt to practice throughout this thesis) that aids one's active, reflexive composition of a diasporic montage. I will describe my practice of Bennett's method to explore the potential of 'seeing myself feeling' or 'seeing ourselves feeling' in the context of critically engaging hauntings in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, in Chapter 6, my research design focuses on a group 'performance experiment' in response to a documentary screening. I decided to conduct this 'experiment' because ethnic Chinese film and television (often subtitled) has been quite influential and formative within my own search for histories. I was curious if this was particular within my own experience or whether this might be shared with my subject-peers.

Thus, in the summer of 2011, I invited my subject-peers to participate in a bodily, spontaneous, 'dance' performance that would be created in response to a film screening. I wanted to explore to what extent trauma can transfer affectively through the unconscious and materialize through bodily gestures. We screened the documentary, *Nanking* (2007), which 5 of us, including myself, viewed for an hour. Apart from myself, none of my subject-peers had seen this documentary before. Similar to my procedure with my conversational interviews, I also recruited my subject peers here through email or face-to-face invitations. Instead of exclusively maintaining a group of 'Chinese-Canadians' only, I felt it would be an interesting experiment to include two German-Canadian peers. My 'experiment' was inspired by my knowledge of how the 'Good German Nazi', John Rabe, saved thousands of Chinese during the Nanking Massacre (see Chapter 4). Also, during an earlier conversation with my German-Canadian peers, one had expressed a little bit of regret concerning the cultural association and connection of Nazi Germany to his own heritage, even if this history had nothing to do with him personally (to his knowledge).<sup>79</sup> My Canadian peers of German 'ethnicity' agreed to participate. After viewing the film clip, my subject peers and I together responded to this screening through both bodily movements with verbals, without verbals and so forth (see Chapter 6 for more detail). The choice to explore 'embodied gesture' is

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<sup>79</sup> This might suggest something akin to the intergenerational transmission of a form of 'perpetrator guilt', which Gabrielle Schwab (2010) has discussed and debated in her book *Haunting Legacies*. This could be an interesting future subject to consider at the intersection of affective haunting issues for future research.

an effort to explore to what extent mediations of traumatic memory through the body differ from 'verbal' remembrance or archival material in the distributions of diasporic vision. Thus, this performance is comprised of fragments for diasporic vision, as well as an attempt to uncover what broken links might be recovered amidst an im/material milieu between human bodies, cinematic bodies, voices of the elders in the film, and other spectators who viewed the film in their own place, space, and time (see Venn 2010; Henriques 2010). My analysis involves the reflexivity of Bennett's (2005) empathic vision (e.g. 'seeing myself feeling') as well as privileging the importance of imagination as a way of recovering broken social links (e.g. Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).

In response to this performative experiment, Chapter 6 also involves a post-hoc analysis of the performance in relation to questions of memory production and power. This, then, returns my methodological emphasis to critical historical consciousness in how I shape my research design. This is complemented by Berry and Farquhar's (2006) work on the 'logic of the wound' that complements Wang's (2004) approach by examining how cinematic emphasis on national wounds can produce particular narratives and memories.

Specifically, as I reflected on my own participation in the bodily performance and also reviewed the video, transcripts, and subsequent analysis, I decided that the aspect of diasporic vision provided through affective circulation between im/material bodies through that performance raised pressing questions concerning whether the original prompt (through the documentary) could be considered again, an item of 'historical empirical truth' or whether it could be scrutinized in producing particular memories. This, of course, connects to my earlier discussion of primary/secondary sources at the intersection of history/fantasy/memory. I felt that this question was somewhat troubling, and so I decided a post-hoc analysis was needed to interrogate these issues. I explored to what extent the originary trauma of the Nanking Massacre in 1937 had become produced as a memory or national wound that followed a particular 'logic' of production and power (Wang 2004; Berry and Farquhar 2006). Thus, I spent time viewing a large range of Chinese cinema (many of which I unfortunately had no space to further discuss in this thesis), which included documentaries. I discovered the important work of Chinese director Jia Zhang Ke, and how his

documentaries typically subvert documentary form (see Chapter 6 for this discussion in more detail). I discuss my viewing of his seminal film *24 City* (2008) and how it exemplifies urgent debates concerning the ‘truth’ status of the video testimony. I further explore how Jia confronts the assumptions of fact and reliability, while simultaneously looking for ways to honour and validate the *voice* and *vision of trauma* that haunted the interviewees within the film. I compare my reflections of my viewing *24 City* (2008), in contrast to *Nanking* (2007).

Subsequently, in Chapter 6, my research design continue to pursue my interrogation of the ‘logic of the wound’ of the Nanking Massacre, searching for the quantity and quality of films that had been released about it. I discuss my discovery of the recent film, Zhang Yimou’s (2012) *Flowers of War*, which advertises itself as a poignant, powerful, and star-studded treatment (e.g. it featured *The Dark Knight Trilogy*’s Christian Bale). My screening of this film along with my personal response to it was an integral inspiration for how I proceeded to develop my post-hoc analysis in Chapter 6. Some relatives of mine had praised *Flowers of War*, emailing me to tell me that it was definitely worth watching. The trailers on Youtube looked interesting. Also, with director Zhang Yimou’s name attached to the film, I was excited to view it. Unfortunately, when I screened it, I felt very uncomfortable, somewhat disgusted, and definitely experienced much unease about what I had just seen. My reaction had very little to do with the interpretations and depictions of the actual massacre. Instead, my reaction was concerned with the clear problematics of the film in producing a particular memory and narrative that did great injustice to the original terror of Nanking and clearly demonstrated intentions of marketing ‘trauma’, problematic memory production, and nation-state power.

Chapter 6 then concludes with an analysis of one ‘artistic’ commercial short film called *First Spring* by installation artist Yang Fudong, an intriguing video installation by Yang Fudong called *Fifth Night*, that I experienced in the Vancouver Art Gallery, and another installation by Isaac Julien called *Ten Thousand Waves*.<sup>80</sup> I

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<sup>80</sup> I experienced *Fifth Night* in the summer of 2012 on one of my visits back home to Vancouver. I had heard about *Ten Thousand Waves*, but had just ‘missed it’ while it was displaying in London and later in Amsterdam. Fortunately (though quite imperfectly), I found several versions of the installation recorded on Youtube.com and Vimeo.com. One online version of it had recorded a lecture by Julien at Columbia University that was then followed with a 10 minute clip. I have analyzed this version in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, in spite of this limitation, the difficulty of accessing



chose these installations due to the affective potential they offered. As I will describe in more detail within Chapter 6, I immersed myself in *Fifth Night* following each screen, taking notes, feeling, imagining, and experiencing as I walked around and sat in the dark room for over an hour. It was an incredibly immersive experience for me, which is why I offer it within my analysis. Importantly, my experience of Yang Fudong's work led me to seek out more of his works, which, in turn, directed me to Julien's *Ten Thousand Waves*. In Chapter 6, I discuss how Yang and Julien offer diasporic visions of multiple-mediated forms of memory within one, isolated experience that would not usually be possible if one were to isolate a traditional media form (e.g. a traditional drama film). Thus, in Chapter 6, my analysis discusses these issues in more detail, and in the context of some other archives I develop throughout this thesis. I approach these installations with the full range of methodologies I have developed throughout the thesis, and discuss their potential to offering urgent and important means of diasporic vision for one's montage of histories. The key question concerns what remembrances and forgettings may be perpetuated through these mediated fragments and how to what extent diasporic visions of mediated perceptions might be considered problematic in the collective and individual identification/identity of diasporas.

## 2.8 Analyzing Ghosts and Montage

*I search for a way of seeing, that 'conjures up the appearances of something that [is] absent' (Berger 1972: 10)*

### Montage

My thesis research is specifically *designed to perform* a diasporic montage

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this installation (e.g. I must be in the 'right place' at the 'right time', be somewhat 'lucky' in finding out where/when it is being exhibited, and also able to financially afford travel there if it is out-of-town) reminds me of the problem of 'access' that continues to confront the postgeneration Chinese-Canadian searching for lost histories. While an installation like *Ten Thousands Waves* is in English, it relies on being 'accessible', which is nonetheless a reality of temporary exhibitions. In this regard, I am thankful at the very least for the online availability of it to some degree, even if it is unofficial and imperfect.

through a critical autoethnographic method and reflexively ‘staging’ through my writing and analysis of data. It does so by offering a key way of seeing haunted histories that distribute through mediated forms of memory. While my approach certainly draws from a method of ‘*crystallizing*’ data (which is not new), a diasporic montage, I argue, extends this to a more urgent project than merely data gathering from different sources. Specifically, the important contribution of performing a diasporic montage through an autoethnographic mode is in its *active, critical engagement* of affective memories of trauma, and reflexively interrogating what is both seen (in fragments) and unseen (in the spaces, gaps and silences) between fragments. Its conceptualization as a ‘montage’ is, in its way, also a juxtaposition of concepts and methods (see Chapter 7.2).

Gordon’s (2008) perspective of montage is drawn from her interest in Benjamin’s (1999) ‘modernist montage techniques (Gordon 2008: 65; see also Benjamin’s (1999) *The Arcades Project*). Benjamin’s concept of ‘montage’ is demonstrative of literary modes, photomontage, or the collage of everyday materials (see Dillon 2004: par.2). While montage can be a contested term within film studies, I am epistemologically assuming a more interdisciplinary interpretation that juxtaposes various media forms, including literature, photographs, moving images and oral stories (see Chapter 7.2).<sup>81</sup> Thus, there is a process of collision, defamiliarization, reconnection, and reconfiguration that is at work in efforts to perform a montage of hauntings. This approach also recalls Warburg’s seminal ‘montage-collision’ work with his Mnemosyne project (see Chapter 1.6) and an Eisensteinian view of montage (see Chapter 7.2).

In Gordon’s (2008) interpretations of Benjamin’s work (within the context of her own research into questions of hauntings), montage-based constructionism involves the notion of ‘blasting’. This is a method that ‘blasts through the rational, linearly temporal, discrete spatiality of our conventional notions of cause and effect, past and present, conscious and unconscious’ (Gordon 2008: 66). She argues that blasting ‘depends fundamentally on animation, on being able to demonstrate to others the moment in which an open door comes alive and stops us in our

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<sup>81</sup> According to Dillon (2004), Benjamin’s montage allowed the ‘rags, the refuse...to come into their own: by making use of them’ (Benjamin 1999: 8. Benjamin was likely thinking about ‘collage and photomontage of ticket stubs, pieces of newspaper, and magazine illustrations’ (Dillon 2004: par. 2).

tracks, provoking a different kind of encounter and recognition' (ibid: 66). In other words, an (oppressed) past that is seemingly dead and faintly visible is re-animated into the present, shocking us into seeing it (ibid.: 65).

Employing an empathic vision within my performance of a diasporic montage privileges a key *reflexive* element, as this approach, '[requires] not only attention to the thing thought, but also attention to the thinker's mode of engagement (the flow and arrest of thoughts)' (Gordon 2008: 64. italics original). Such 'thought', however, does not mean reducing such a methodology to cognitivism. Deleuze suggests, '[more] important than thought there is "what leads to thought"...impressions which force us to look, encounters which force us to interpret, expressions which force us to think' (Deleuze 1972: 95). Intersecting Bennett's (2005) focus on empathy alongside critical 'thought' within methods of seeing data thus avoids the problematics of emotional overidentification and cognitive intellectualism. In fact, Bennett's (2005) concept of empathic vision offers an important means of reflexivity as a process that facilitates 'seeing oneself feeling' (see also Section 2.7). Seeing reflexively from the framing of a montage, therefore, offers an active process that *composes* mediated perceptions through an 'animation' of invisible, unknowable and silenced histories.<sup>82</sup> Complementing Gordon's (2008) perspective with Wang (2004), the act of performing a montage permits the composer to:

[blast] out the continuum of hegemonic historiographical paradigms. By splicing, by wrenching objects out of their reified context...[it] assaults the smooth, linear narrative that perpetuates existing social relations. (p. 87)

Thus, for Wang (2004), a montage seeks to 'animate' the ghost to life, and is therefore concerned with my/our act of 'seeing', analyzing, and critiquing the very data and visions of history, power, and memory that we have gathered and juxtaposed together. Significantly, as Chapter 7.2 discusses in more detail, my concept of the diasporic montage did not shape the research design. Instead, my research design *shaped* the development of what I have termed a diasporic montage. As an active,

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<sup>82</sup> Gordon (2008: 67) discusses her understanding of montage through Luisa Valenzuela's magical realist fiction. Gordon describes the novel as 'allegorical, fragmented, narratively, incoherent, and difficult to comprehend in any straightforward way that would easily answer the questions all readers ask'. Thus, the very juxtaposition of elements that do not conform to conventional reason, structure, or understanding is what animates the ghost.

critically reflexive method of engaging affective hauntings, it is also flexible enough to further evolve in new directions.

## 2.9 Conclusion

The methodological approaches and decisions that informed my research design throughout this thesis are directly linked to how I searched for a vision of affective hauntings and histories through the very performance of researching this thesis. I utilize a performative writing approach through critical autoethnography to demonstrate this throughout my thesis. Significantly, the diasporic visions through my exploration and analysis of mediated memories I have discussed so far has been central within the umbrella of my methodological approach that I call this diasporic montage. In other words, this 'diasporic montage' has been an ongoing bricolage of mediated visions that performs my search for histories (see Chapter 7). The concept of diasporic montage intersects a methodology of diasporic vision, critical autoethnography, critical historical consciousness, performative writing and the reflexivity of empathic vision as the basis for my research design and methodology. It offers a way of 'seeing ghosts' or 'haunted histories' by attempting to compose a 'montage' of diverse forms of mediated memory.<sup>83</sup>

Specifically, in the context of my research design and my discussions throughout this chapter, the juxtapositions take place in several ways within how I am composing my montage within this thesis: a) each mediation of memory, whether memoir, video, photograph, artwork, conversation, or installation is a fragment of diasporic vision within my montage of data b) the 'design' of the diasporic montage itself can be considered its own methodological 'montage', in the sense that it juxtaposes multiple methods together (e.g. diasporic vision, empathic vision, critical historical consciousness, critical autoethnography, performative writing) c) the very thesis itself is my composition of a diasporic

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<sup>83</sup> I also want to mention that photographs as archives do form an important part of my diasporic montage, even though they are left largely undiscussed within Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The absence was mainly due to an issue of space and focus for me, as including more photographs would have meant leaving out written memoirs. I decided to keep the memoirs for this thesis' purposes. However, in my proposal for future research in Chapter 7.3, I have managed to offer an intriguing, urgent and important way of incorporating archival photographs in how one can further develop and compose a diasporic montage.

montage. In the next chapter, I begin my empirical analysis through a diasporic vision of affective hauntings in the mediated memory form of verbal conversational interview data.

## CHAPTER 3: VOICES OF THE NEXT GENERATION: INFORMAL CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS

### 3.1 Introduction: Starting With Fragments of Mediated Memory

*"The dominant model of seeing creates both invisibility and blindness, and the disavowal of what cannot be perceived through our usual frameworks of observations generates ghosts as much as it dismisses them." (Cho 2008: 32)*

This empirical chapter is my 'starting' point that 'sets up' my discussions in Chapters 4-6. My purpose in this chapter situates my reflections (and experience as a second-generation Chinese-Canadian) with the *remembered* narratives and discourses of identity that my peers disclosed to me in our conversational interviews.

The discursive emphasis on verbal interview methods does not, of course, adequately offer the necessary fragments needed to assemble a diasporic vision of haunted histories. Nonetheless, it offers an important starting point. For me, composing my 'diasporic montage' by beginning with my peers' remembrances was an opportunity to first 'see' what visions of the past we shared, and what visions of history continued to be forgotten, silenced or simply unknown. Many of the fragmented memories I disclose in this chapter raised questions for me that I explore in Chapters 4-6 concerning history, migration, and memory production.

In many ways, the informal conversational interviews with my subject-peers were of great value to me, as I learned much about some of the common discourses of memory that echoed through our remembrance. While the degree of disclosure or silence in the re-tellings of these stories differed widely across my subject-peers, the fragmentation of these stories, along with the intriguing persistence of Confucian traditions and lessons resonate amongst the many disclosures. Thus, my purpose in this chapter is to 'stage' my own engagement, response and analysis with what my subject-peers have disclosed and reflect on their initial implications in our shared diasporic unconscious and diasporic visions of haunted histories (see Chapter 1 for a review of these concepts). Intergenerational ghosts, however, cannot be contained or limited to any singular understandings. Composing a diasporic vision of unseeable trauma through verbal narratives is an ultimately paradoxical venture that requires multiple understandings. While remembered narratives do offer fragments of mediated

memory for me (or any other second generation person) to identify some of the histories I can never actually ‘experience’ or really know, such stories are left only to words. However, if we apply Volkan’s (1987, 2002) understanding to search for the latent messages behind the stories, one begins to recognize the mechanisms of unconscious and conscious transfer through mental representations from parent to child. Unfortunately, trauma is not always representable, especially if the only remnant of trauma involves the rupture of social links through the milieu of individuals, families, and histories. Therefore, affective hauntings or the affective transmission of trauma persists through these gaps, ruptures, and the unknown. Lastly, this chapter attempts to perform my attempt to engage intergenerational ghosts by acknowledging the (mutual) complicity with the stories remembered by my peers, just as I reveal parts of my own (un)locatable remembrance through multiple vignettes. My complicity, or co-implication with my subject-peers *begins* a process of diasporic vision of haunted histories through mediated memory. Thus, joining my search for haunted histories, and experience as a second generation Chinese-Canadian person with those of my peers begins a key process towards an assemblaged vision. This ultimately articulates our social linkage through the trans-subjective diasporic unconscious.

How to understand the paradox between the unknown and known, visible and invisible is a central paradox for this chapter. This paradox also reveals some of the key limitations of discursive approaches (such as conducting verbal-based interviews), as such approaches typically concern themselves with words and representable meaning. However, though trauma can certainly be representable, it is often beyond representation, and so terrible a remembrance that only fantasy can adequately mediate its being seen (see Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). What is missing is an engagement with the unknown and a way of ‘seeing’ the gaps. Through the next sections, I interrogate the very tension between discourse and what is beyond discourse (e.g. unconscious).

### **3.2 ‘Reflections A’**

*Sometimes, I try to “force” my memory to remember something, anything about my past—like those quirky associations that seem to epitomize my Chinese ancestry in*

*popular culture: the Great Wall, Terracotta Warriors, kung fu, dim sum, chopsticks, and even the invention of pasta.*

*I have been fortunate. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadian from Chinese ancestry, my closest experience with these injustices within my culture-of-origin has been through a mixture of stories told by books and enacted through film. Even if I force myself to “feel” sadness or tears at the images of war or death I see on the moving pictures in front of me, or convince my ears to listen to the machine guns mixed with the screams of hundreds wailing, begging the heavens for justice, my self-imposed attempt to “feel” is fleeting; my connection is much too imperfect, and I am still somehow able to keep an emotional distance; I somehow manage to keep myself “safe”. The dark, thick blood dripping from the bodies, after all, were only screen pixels, protected by the electronic gadgetry of television and the wonders of high-definition technology. I also wield great power and control compared to those who eyewitnessed the actual historical circumstances of what the one to two million pixels per frame are showing me--a stupid power button. ...I can also press mute.*

### **3.3 Cultural Identity/Identifications: The ‘Chinese-Canadian’ Construct**

As the vignette has shown, part of this second generation construction involves the contentious ‘Chinese-Canadian’ *hyphen*. Fred Wah (2006: 54) describes the ‘hyphen’ as ‘provocative’ and ‘noisy’, and Pavlovic (2011: 47) points to its deeper connotations entangled in space, story, and history (see Chapter 1.2.3). Even so, the ‘hyphen’ does not always “sit” pleasantly with those typically “affiliated” with it in Canada. For many, it continues to be perceived as an essentialised term that denies the fluidity of how one prefers to construct themselves. For instance, when I asked questions such as “What does it mean for you to be Chinese-Canadian?” the response was quite varied. Consequently, I often changed the questions, wording and terminology, alternating between Chinese-Canadian, Canadian-born Chinese, or an approach more experimental such as, “Tell me what this means to you: <Name of subject-peer> . Chinese.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> It is interesting that when I mentioned ‘Chinese’ in this question, the response was primarily



Now, I turn to introducing several of my peers: Carson, Jacob, Bruce, Harry, and Martha. In Carson's case, compared to other "Chinese" subcultures, he didn't feel an affiliation with any of them, even the "Canadian Born Chinese" (CBC) label, as he doesn't feel like he exhibits those stereotyped qualities. However, he does see himself as "Chinese" nonetheless. Some other responses include:

Jacob<sup>85</sup>: I don't find that I have to accept Chinese cultural norms of males being the provider--I think a lot of that has sexist and Confucian foundations. I am a curious melange of white and Asian.

Bruce<sup>86</sup>: In fact, the term "Chinese Canadians" can encompass individuals from various backgrounds. You can be a new immigrant from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or a Canadian born Chinese to be considered Chinese Canadian.

Harry<sup>87</sup>: "The idea of being Chinese Canadian is very fluid. There's time when I'm more Chinese than Canadian and times when more Canadian than Chinese".

Martha<sup>88</sup>: I'm more of a 'Banana'....yah..I don't think my life growing up...like my parents--I don't think they enforced super Asian values. Because I tend to think my parents are westernized too. Like they still have the traditional conservative views on things sometimes. But I don't see them as super duper Asian. Maybe that's why I feel like I'm more like a banana, and not like a Mango or a scrambled egg.

Clearly, there are various perspectives regarding one's understanding of their so-called "Chineseness" in relation to their "Canadian-ness". Interestingly, as Martha's response suggests, there are also many who could "fit" as "Canadian born Chinese"

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concerned with culture and traditions as opposed to national or political associations with "Chinese".

<sup>85</sup> Jacob is one of my closest peers whose passions included music, social justice work, and theological study. Compared to the rest of my subject-peers, Jacob's Cantonese or Mandarin speaking ability was the least developed. He was not able to speak or comprehend very well at all. He was also the most vocal about subverting traditional Chinese norms compared to the rest of my peers whom I had interviewed.

<sup>86</sup> Bruce is a peer of mine who works as a public service worker in Canada, and is in his early 30's. Bruce's understanding and knowledge of modern Chinese history is quite impressive and his command of Cantonese language is better than most of his Chinese-Canadian peers.

<sup>87</sup> Harry is in his early 30's and was a classmate of mine during my clinical counselling Master's degree training. He currently works in social services. During our conversation topics outside of the 'research' questions, he disclosed to me that he was uncertain of his career direction. He has been studying accounting as one possible new career direction. Harry has recently, however, informed me that he has further changed his mind and still is unsure about his career direction.

<sup>88</sup> I was much more acquainted with Martha's brother while we were children. However, since Martha's brother moved to America, I had not spoken to him in years. I had gotten to know Martha much better prior to my conversation with her due to personal issues that arose, and which I helped out with. Martha's interests are in mass media.

but don't mind the essentialist containers. In fact, some, like Martha herself, seem to take pride and embrace them, even affectionately embracing labels that reduce ethnic complexity to colour descriptions, such as “banana” (yellow on the outside and white on the inside), in contrast to “mango” (yellow on the inside and yellow on the outside), egg (white on the outside, yellow on the inside), and scrambled egg (blended mix of both whites and yellows). Understandably, such exercises are sometimes deemed pejorative, offensive and discriminatory. However, there are many times we find ourselves embracing, or ‘re-claiming’ such reductive labels. Throughout these responses (whether they concern issues of language, a refusal to being put in a box, or reclaiming a flippant term affectionately), a key underlying strategy deals with the “comparison and contrast” of one's essentialised self with the “other”. This distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’ is typically one made in reference to the narrative of one's parents and grandparents. That is, the postgeneration has constructed discursive boundaries between one's own cultural identity in contrast to the ‘foreign-ness’ of their elder’s ‘cultural identifications’. Particularly, this can be seen through contrasting the upbringing, identification, and worldview of our parents versus our own. To illustrate, I bring attention to a story Martha shared:

Umm...one story that I always remember...details I don't remember anymore because it was so long ago. But I remember my mom telling me. Umm....How like her older sister and younger brother and then my grandma...and grandpa...they were trying to escape communists or government or something...and they had to take a boat and it was at night and secretive and they didn't want anybody to find out and get shot or whatever. I don't know if they were trying to escape the country but yah...that was like the only intense story I remember mom telling. And I remember too...

As a follow up question, I asked: ‘So when you hear that story, why does that strike you?’

I think because like, having been born here, it's so different right? Like culture is so different. We have freedom to go to church and go wherever we want and live wherever and eat wherever, make friends with whoever...  
But it wasn't that feeling back then...Like it seemed they were always being watched or had to be careful with what they did or what they said...makes me think about how different it is now for us living here... We don't have to worry about any of that stuff...or privacy issues or the government infringing on privacy and stuff like that...

This acknowledgement shared by Martha may serve as a construction of cultural identity/identification. Specifically, Martha identifies the distance evident between not only her life and her parents' lives, but also in terms of the 'culture' and history that parents and grandparents represented and signified in contrast to her own. Martha's story and response here exemplifies an interesting question that I pose for my thesis. From such examples, there appears to be both a *connection* and a *disconnection* in how one has "positioned" their cultural identity or identification. For instance, Jessica's life experience has been situated in the context of a peaceful, Canadian upbringing, but this experience has been contrasted with some parental narratives of survival, poverty and hardship.

Another peer, Luke, has demonstrated reflexive awareness of these contrasts as well. He notes how the experiences and life perspectives of his parents are quite different from his due to the issue of suffering and survival.

I am not able to appreciate the same level of tragedy that my grandparents must have gone through. For instance, my father's from Canton in Guangdong province and the province was also occupied by the Japanese. So my parents' views of the Japanese are polarized because of their experiences during those times. My parents obviously see these things with a vindictive outlook, since they suffered personally. But I have never suffered this personal loss, and so it is more an academic exercise. For example, I don't harbour any offense whatsoever with the Japanese, since Japanese people haven't oppressed me, and I haven't oppressed any Japanese.

Thus, Luke demonstrates a clear awareness of the differences between his own life perspectives compared to his parents and grandparents. Furthermore, what Luke's remembrance also reveals are some fragments to the haunted histories I have begun searching for. At the time of hearing this disclosure, I knew there were historical reasons for the 'bad blood' between Chinese and Japanese due to my knowledge of the Nanking Massacre from viewing the documentary *Nanking* (2007), but my knowledge was largely limited to the tragic events of Nanking in 1937.<sup>89</sup> I did not know much about just how far-reaching the Occupation of the

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<sup>89</sup> Even though I took Asian Studies classes in my undergraduate program, I was more interested in 'ancient history' rather than contemporary history. I did take a course in modern Chinese history, and remember reading novels about Chinese traumas such as the Cultural Revolution. However, I largely forgot everything I learned (as I did not care to really pay attention at the time). Viewing the documentary, *Nanking* (2007) re-captured my new interest, along with my chat with an elder

Japanese in Mainland China was (see Chapter 4 for a review of history). This was a particularly humbling realization, especially since I considered myself more 'knowledgeable' than some of my peers. But clearly, I did not know. So this raised new questions in me. What kinds of oppression took place in the past, whether from the Japanese or from the Chinese communist government? What are these narratives of suffering that I had some vague idea about, but never truly 'knew' or understood? What else do my peers know that I did not? Am I the most ignorant out of all of us?

Many of the specific questions concerning historical incidents are discussed in Chapter 4, specifically set in context with oral testimonies and memoirs. Throughout this chapter, I continue to ask: What sorts of remembered narratives have been *told* to my peers? What does this mean in how the postgeneration develops memories? And what fragments of mediated memory are 'visible' for the postgeneration to see? How do the narratives of survival and the history of our parents' lives relate to how we make sense of and connect to both our ethnic Chinese and Canadian constructions of identification?

### **3.4 'Reflections B':**

*Do not think of anything. Just go to sleep, and do not think of anything." From then on, no matter how mom felt, or what else was burdening or saddening her heart, no matter what fears, anxieties, pains she housed in deep secret, she hid it all behind a kiss on my forehead as she tucked me in to sleep. I did not know why she was sad, but my mom assured me all was well with a sweet bedtime tune. But I was a sensitive, empathic 4 year old kid, and I knew there was something more painful behind her sweetly hummed melody, but I did not know what. And perhaps, I knew, I might not ever find out. No matter how much love I felt from the intimacy of her kiss or the serenity of her tucking me in beneath my warm, secure, blanket, a strange, mysterious disconnection kept our hearts apart. I did not know what was happening, but all I heard was a secret silence behind the happy tune that she hummed all too clearly."*

### **3.5 Narratives of Survival: War, Survival, Poverty and Struggle**

One of the key types of initial prompts I asked my subject-peers was to recall what they knew of their parents' migration story. For example, I typically framed the

question as “*What do you know about your parents' or grandparents' migration story?*” or “*What kinds of stories did your parents talk about regarding their past, how they grew up and lived, etc?*” The narrative disclosed by my subject-peers concerning their parents' or grandparents' lives growing up was nearly universal: they involved themes of *poverty, struggle, and war*. However, these stories are fragments of memory and remembrance that raise questions about what other stories remain unspoken, unheard and in the gaps of the unseen and unknown. What is significant about the narratives that are *memorable or remembered*? Poignantly illustrating the context of a world's collapse and the terrors of the scars of war and chaos, Davoine and Gaudillière (2004: 114) describe how direct survivors experience the ‘memory of hell and the hell of memory’.

For instance, Bruce says how ‘typical stories of my mother occurred in urban settings, and also included narratives of her poverty, having small amounts of food, fruit, and emphases on values of hard work, sacrifice, and realities of discrimination’. More dramatically, Ariel<sup>90</sup> shared:

My other grandma was extremely poor, had to feed 11 kids and a husband. They were so desperate for food that at the end of the day, when rice trucks would empty of sacks of rice, my grandma would go in and sweep the floors and clean out the excess in order to feed her family. My parents were poor as well, as my dad had 11 brothers and sisters. He worked in a shop, went to school, and my mom came from a slightly better part—a well-off family. My mom actually lived with wooden walls compared to a shack that my dad lived in, but was not much wealthier. For birthday presents, my mom's family gave two boiled eggs. And for Chinese New Year, one chicken would be killed to feed 10 or more people.

These stories, however, did not necessarily come from her parents themselves. Ariel mentioned how she heard some of these stories through her extended family, from older uncles at large gatherings.

Jessica<sup>91</sup> also said:

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<sup>90</sup> Ariel has been one of my closest friends for the past decade. Also, in her early 30's, Ariel is currently an academic at a Canadian university.

<sup>91</sup> I have known Jessica for over 18 years, and I also consider her one of my closest friends. Jessica is currently pursuing work in the social services. Her understanding and interest in Chinese tradition and culture is one of the most prominent and knowledgeable compared to many of my subject-peers. Nonetheless, she has typically expressed disinterest in blindly following many Confucian traditions.

It applies to every culture...poor times, 50's 60's...but...everything was minimal...you had, and you took what you were given...didn't ask for more...Bare bones I guess...that's why I can understand when she says life is hard. But in our generation...we just get whatever we want right?

George<sup>92</sup> also seemed to demonstrate some knowledge of his family's background and situation. However, in addition to stories of poverty (which more concerned his father versus his recently passed mother), was a clear allusion to the historical circumstances that revolved around his parent's upbringing.

My dad was actually around during the Japanese occupation of China. He talked about having very little food as a kid during the war. Most of the food he ate was food that China received as humanitarian aid from foreign countries. I recall that he said he ate a lot of oatmeal as a kid.

The big historical event that looms large in my mom's mind was the communist takeover of China. She came from a family of well-to-do landowners. The communists took the land, but also pulled up the floorboards of the house to seize the jewellery that the family had hidden there.

Here, George introduces the significance of *survival*, which I explore in more detail in Chapter 4. The significance and danger associated with both the 'Japanese occupation' of China as well as the 'Communist takeover' suggests an archive of history very different than our own, as postgeneration children raised in a multicultural, mostly 'peaceful' Canada. These narratives thus bring up questions about how we make sense of these fragments of history. Within this realm of being part of a generation with shared histories at a generational remove (that is, these narratives of survival were lived histories for our parents/caregivers and grandparents), is a gap where transgenerational ghosts stir. That is, through these tellings of survival and the gaps between their tellings is one means through which the ghost can materialize and be seen, if incompletely. And these places of haunting create implications in how the postgeneration forms their/our cultural identity or identifications. I speak more on these issues throughout the upcoming sections. However, before I continue with this discussion, more needs to be discussed regarding these narratives of survival. Notably, these are stories

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<sup>92</sup> George is a peer of mine who is one of most opinionated about his thoughts on issues connected to Chinese culture and tradition. George has been one of the most eager and enthusiastic amongst my subject-peers in his willingness to participate in my research.

concerning the scars of war and life in times of chaos that echoed across many of the interviews and what stories were *remembered*.

At one point during my conversation with Pastor David<sup>93</sup>, I had shared some of the new understandings about Chinese history that I had learned during the course of my thesis research, especially about the argument of ‘non-stop war and chaos’ (see Lary and MacKinnon 2001).<sup>94</sup> In reply, Pastor David echoed a similar sentiment:

Yah, there's a lot of that. So it's not as generally well-known as say World War 2, but nevertheless, if we dig deep enough, our Asian culture has certainly incidents of trauma...Well the stories that I hear from my parents tend to be from World War 2 and how Japanese treated them with hunger, famine and harsh conditions.

As I reflected on this first part of our conversation, the notion of such incidents of trauma in ethnic Chinese history being less ‘well-known’ than World War 2 stuck with me. Pastor David alludes to an intriguing insight that deserves more attention. That is, that ‘incidents of trauma’ within modern Chinese history are distinctive and unrelated to World War 2. However, the modern Chinese history that Lary and MacKinnon (2001) have discussed comprehensively and in striking detail as the ‘scars of war’ are inclusive of World War 2 and the Imperial Japanese Army’s threat through the Pacific. Thus, what Pastor David’s disclosure made me curious about was whether the issue was concerned with ‘what’ was told and left unaddressed through our education and learnings about World War 2 in Canada’s education system and curriculum. Clearly, if the problematic here indeed concerns what narratives of World War 2 were told and untold in the ‘West’, then the issue concerns what discourses of war have popularly been (re)told concerning the global realities of the Second World War, and which ones have been less emphasized or ignored in our Canadian curriculum.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Pastor David and I have strong positive rapport. His disclosures are recurrent in this chapter, especially due to his deep insight on these matters and his openness to share. Part of this could be due to his being older, in his older 40's, married with three young children. Interestingly, his family's migration story (which will be disclosed in a later section), involved his moving to Canada at 7 years old. Thus he spent a significant part of his developmental years in Canada.

<sup>94</sup> I discuss this war and chaos in Chapter 4 with an overview of these histories and also as articulated through written memoirs.

<sup>95</sup> For instance, in my particular context of education and learning history through primary and secondary school, I do not remember many discussions about the Pacific side of the Second World War, outside of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour and America’s nuclear response with Hiroshima.

I argue that much of the history concerning the violence between Japan and China remains publicly untold even within the Chinese-Canadian diaspora. This lack of public access is compounded by the lack of private, familial access as well. Even the parents and grandparents of the postgeneration have only shared fragmented narratives (if at all) concerning the scars of war. While comparing the Holocaust to the Nanking Massacre is likely a fruitless endeavour (how can one truly ‘compare’ catastrophes?), it is interesting to note that the access and prevalence of Holocaust-related cinema (to the extent that it can be considered its own genre) is much more pervasive than any films concerning Nanking (Berry 2008: 111).<sup>96</sup> While the late Iris Chang’s (1997) book, *The Rape of Nanking* became a New York bestseller (and temporarily increased attention to this history), the attention and knowledge of the Nanking Incident is much greater in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (understandably) than in the so-called ‘West’ (e.g. UK, Canada, America). This raises questions about diasporic ‘access’ for Chinese-Canadians to histories that are tied to ancestry, our diasporic history (whether our ancestors were directly or indirectly involved) and plays a significant part of our diasporic and familial narrative. I argue that the lack of access, and the ‘unknown’ or ‘less known’ nature of these Chinese histories is a haunting ground for ghosts, and epitomizes the break in the social link that Davoine and Gaudillière (2004) speaks of (an issue which I will discuss further in later sections). These trends raise questions about access to mediated memory and questions of the quantity and quality of such cinematic productions for lesser-known (or unknown) histories that I further discuss in Chapter 6.

What these narratives of survival bring up thus far, raise questions about

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Other prominent histories, of course, involved the emphasis on Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust. However, when I spoke to friends raised in the Hong Kong education system many years ago, they naturally mentioned learning lots about the war between Japan and China. I remember feeling surprised about this the first time I heard it. Though, in hindsight, I’m not sure why I was surprised. Is this due to my own ignorance and familial silence? Or is this an issue of wider memory production? These are questions I further explore in Chapters 4 and 6. Aside from the curriculum, the other possibility may connect to the stories told and untold by our grandparents to our parents (when they were children). That is, some stories of war may not be known by our parents as well, since they may have been quite young during wartime or post-war time compared to *their parents*. These important questions and possibilities will be explored further throughout this chapter. More detailed archives and descriptions of modern Chinese history and memoirs of prior generations will also be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>96</sup> In Chapter 6, the questions concerning Nanking-related films, their production, and the moments that they increased in quantity is an issue I discuss further in considerations of nation-state power and memory.



the history and experience of these stories. Why should past stories of the Japanese Occupation, or Communists in China matter to us, the Chinese-Canadian postgeneration? Furthermore, why were some stories of war, chaos, and poverty specially *remembered* and commonly echoed across my many conversations with different subject-peers?

### 3.6 Escape and Exile

The realities of survival narratives persist through a key subtheme that involves stories of *escape, exile and betrayal*.

Ariel said:

My older uncles freely shared the stories of my grandparents with all my cousins regarding the hardships that our grandparents faced in China. For instance, stories were told of how grandma had to flee the house while her brother was kidnapped, leading to grandma becoming a servant in her future husband's home. After that, they both fell in love, they got on a boat and sailed to Singapore to raise a family.

And eventually, Ariel's parents, raised in Singapore, then moved to Canada where Ariel was born and raised. Harry shares another narrative, but in connection to incidents post-war:

Both my parents were born in Hong Kong. Dad is the youngest in the family, and was only born in Hong Kong because his family was chased out of China...Because my grandfather was a high ranking officer in the Chinese army and a price was placed on his head when the Communists took over... World War 2...

My mom was also born in Hong Kong...And my mom's mom (or grandmother) lost her family and was separated during the bombing. My grandma lost her family, was separated and adopted into another family.

...So grandma lost her family when she was young, about 5 or 6 years old when she was separated. Grandma and grandpa raised my mother during her early childhood in Hong Kong...

Significantly, family betrayals extended to the immediate family as well, notably with the phenomenon of 'selling one's children' for money. In Sandy's story<sup>97</sup>, she

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<sup>97</sup> Sandy is in her late 20's and is a fairly new peer of mine, but she is someone I was quick to

discloses:

Well, Grandma from dad's side, the way she came to Indonesia was because (I was doing family tree project long ago), was that she was sold by dad to family in Indonesia because he was an opium addict. But grandma doesn't like to talk about it.

Sandy's brief tale is a striking one, and one of the few from my peer group to mention the story of a family member being "sold". However, the selling of one's own children was a phenomenon that was common due to the realities of the narrative of survival. Sometimes, money was not the issue, as parents and families simply could not survive to feed another child due to their circumstances. Thus, they gave children away to other relatives, which in the child's eyes could have felt like a matter of betrayal.

Such betrayals rupture the social links necessary for recovery from the violence of history. The implications of such betrayal of one's own have to do with the 'collapse of the symbolic bond', the 'collapse of the social contract' and a betrayal of justice, where 'human laws are no longer obeyed' (Davoine & Gaudillière 2004: 152-153). Towards the middle of the interview with my close friend, Jessica, I shared one of my own family secrets that I had not discovered until my mother's passing when I was 25 years old, in order to illustrate the gaps and silences within our family narratives. Even though the 'secret' was extremely shocking for me personally, Jessica did not seem surprised at all when she heard me talk about it. It inspired me to ask a question that was not originally part of my 'heuristic guide' of questions (see Chapter 2). The ability to share deep secrets with some of my peers also affirmed the value of privileging a method that utilizes critical autoethnography and friendship. I prompted Jessica with the question: "*Do you think there's similar secrets in your family, and if so, what they might be?*" Jessica replied:

Yah, lots...Reason why we never talk to Dad's side is because after grandfather died...like when dad's dad died...umm.. I told you they are well off right? My grandfather actually really liked my mom because thought she was smart and capable and all that stuff...

When he wrote the will, he showed it to mom...So mom knows what

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develop a rapport with, particularly in discussions of Asian-Canadian issues. She previously worked as a Managing Editor for a magazine that focuses on Asian-Canadian issues.

the will looks like...But when he died...it's completely different...

So whoever had daughters and no sons got completely nothing... Like so my mom said that's not true...The original will was all their grandkids like us got...tuition paid for up to university...but that totally went...

...My mom is like, it's probably their sisters and family...  
But dad is kinda like 'whatever'--he's like us right?  
So all my dad got when grandfather died was an umbrella with a hole in it...  
Dad said that to this day he still has that umbrella..  
Yup, all because of money... And that's the reason why I actually barely know my cousins from dad's side because mom pretty much cut us off because she was so angry...

Yah, I don't [get it] either...It's just like money, man...I mean, seriously...you die so you can't bring it with you...

From the disclosure, and (from what I interpreted during the actual conversation), this event of betrayal was seen less personally and more in terms of a tragic family narrative that Jessica could 'see' from some degree of distance. For example, the deep anger of Jessica's mother is a stark contrast to Jessica's own responses to the issue. However, part of the very distance between generations and the lack of access is that many of these questions go *unasked*. Jessica said that they (our parents) are 'different from us...or their lives are different from ours. We get whatever we want.'

Even so, this family betrayal concerning money resonated with me, as I was reminded of what my elder on the bus told me about how his own relatives committed such terrible acts of betrayal for money as well (see Preface). Becoming intuitively aware of this 'resonance' was an intriguing experience (see Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). I not only began to 'see myself feeling' (see Bennett 2005), but I also began to imagine and feel a social link form even more deeply between Jessica and myself. The particular history of betrayal due to money was *not* my own. But hearing the story from the elder was a pivotal moment for me, as it sparked my quest to compose a montage of haunted histories (see Preface and Chapter 7). I also began to imagine mental images and representations of these disclosures of betrayal, and what representations were deposited to the subsequent generations (Volkan et al. 2002). I imagined what were their wishes, dreams, fears and anxieties of those who were betrayed and

what that might have meant to Jessica (ibid). In Valerie Walkerdine's (2013) keynote address, she asserts the importance of 'imagination' in one's engagement of the hidden stories of the familial or historical past. Such links through imagining begin to reveal the intergenerational hauntings that persist through not knowing the past and never having seen such tragic histories. Thus, this attempt to imagine and articulate *resonance*, I argue, further enacts a diasporic vision of affective hauntings and traumatic memory.

Discourse therefore, offers first glimpses of affective hauntings that transmit through the fragments of what is visible. Specifically, for Jessica, these fragments can be seen through family (e.g. Jessica's grandparents, or a remembered narrative by Jessica herself). And apparitions can transfer across the entanglements through the diasporic unconscious. Therefore, my complicity with Jessica's story is linked through our bond in the diasporic unconscious. This link that creates affective connections between haunted histories can thus be 'seen' through the immediacy of my (fragmented) resonance with Jessica's tale. Specifically, I recalled my shock at hearing my elder's tale on the bus many years ago (see Preface; see also Section 3.2.3), and connected these feelings with what I felt and imagined in hearing Jessica's tale. However, my imagined 'sight' is nonetheless fragmented. Even so, at least some strands of the cord that binds our diasporic unconscious have been reconnected and recovered through the power of my imagining and fantasy (see Walkerdine 2013). Nonetheless, many questions remain concerning affective hauntings and how intergenerational ghosts might transfer across a diasporic unconscious from this initial way of seeing intergenerational ghosts. These are issues I continue to interrogate in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 as I continue composing my diasporic montage of haunted histories.

In light of the data and collective narratives of survival shared across my peers, one needs to ask how conscious and aware our parental generation could have been? For many of our parents, they would have been "likely" (with exceptions) born somewhere between the 1930's and 1950's. So in the case of my parents as illustration, my father was born in Hong Kong during the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong in 1943, and my mother was born just after in Mainland China.

As young children, perhaps teenagers, how did they 'remember' the

narratives of their societies and lives back then compared to their adult parents? And what was it like to continually face the threat of war, violence, chaos, and exile even as one war supposedly ended (World War 2), but other wars and acts of violence carried on (e.g. Communists versus Nationalist, Cultural Revolution)? The issue of the continual threats of war, 'fear of chaos' (*luan*), continual violence and political and economic turmoil that relentlessly struck ethnic Chinese societies already in deep poverty is one that I explore through further archives and memoirs in Chapter 4.

### 3.7 'Remembrance: Hauntings'

*Our generation has lived in peace; the stillness is unsettling.  
All I see are nameless faces, hungry ghosts, lost in a search for justice.*

*Haunting. Unquenchable thirst.*

*You keep telling me that my generation was born or raised in Canada, so we cannot ever understand what you went through.*

*I want to know more about your poverty. Do you remember much about the war? Maybe you were too young. Maybe your parents never told you how you survived.*

*The ghosts are faceless, nameless. I can't see them. I often forget them.  
But I will try again to give you justice.*

*I see myself feeling. And I see myself not feeling.<sup>98</sup>*

*7 years ago, I ran into my 80-year-old elder on the bus. He's a neighbour who I never really spoke to. He told me of secret, unspoken government-sanctioned genocides that were left unreported and unknown.*

*He told me how his relatives betrayed his parents and took all of their money.*

*I naively asked, "Wouldn't they have been reported by the media or the police?"*

*"Of course not", he replied. "There was so much death that was left unreported and unknown", he told me in Cantonese.*

*All I could say in response was: "our generation really cannot know such difficulty in our peacetimes". In reply, my elder simply replied me once more, "Of course not."*

Haunting words that have never left me.

"Of course not".

Peacetime.

*History tells us that where you were born to live does matter.*

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<sup>98</sup> (Bennett 2005: 123)

*Slavery and the Black Atlantic*<sup>99</sup>. *The Holocaust. Afghanistan. Darfur. The Syrian Conflict.*

*Parallels and repetitions. Possession.*

*Maybe it does matter where you are born. Because where someone is born could tell them how they might die.  
I hope I am wrong.*

*Fragments. Hauntings.*

*I am complicit with these traumas, these voices, these unknown faces, even if most of them resonate through me, but are not mine.*

*Whispers compel me to give you some justice I do not know I can provide.  
I will try. I will try, though I am complicit with forgetting you.*<sup>100</sup>

### 3.8 Migration Narratives from Prior Generations

The migration stories of next generation Chinese-Canadian parents and grandparents both extend and amplify the overarching narratives of survival that have become remembered as part of our familial shared histories. On a discursive level, the themes of migration echo an entanglement of narratives that continue to echo stories of struggle (and survival) that became all too familiar for the prior generation in their places-of-origin. Indeed, narratives that have *led up to migration*--that is, the combined narratives of our parents and grandparents--were often filled with striking themes of loss, struggle, war, poverty, betrayal and political turmoil that is foreign for this current postgeneration of Chinese-Canadians.<sup>101</sup> In many cases, the common narrative likely cited as a reason for migration is the hoped-for promise of 'better opportunity'. Contextually, successful immigration to Canada was only possible for many of my peers' parents and grandparents thanks to a combination of factors<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> (See Gilroy 2003)

<sup>100</sup> Some clarifications of the source of these 'I's' is listed in prior footnotes. In this reflection, the 'I' is both locatable and unlocatable. It describes some of the histories and their fragments.

<sup>101</sup> I discuss the oral testimonies concerning the 'figure of the migrant' and the unknown histories that have led to and influenced the migration narrative throughout in Canada and elsewhere in Chapter 5.

<sup>102</sup> The importance of these migrant narratives and the migrant 'myths' that attach to them are also the subject of Chapter 5. My discussion in Chapter 5 also includes my discussion concerning the attraction of 'Gold Mountain'. This was the mythologized narrative that the 'West' (especially North America) possessed extensive gold mines alongside other great opportunities to achieve wealth.

For instance, anecdotes and narratives cite the importance of a family member that “already made it” here, that served as a link of familiarity and greater motivation for my peers' parents to migrate to Canada. In Pastor David's case, it was the wealth of a “self-made” Uncle. I asked him, ‘*Did your parents say why they came here from Hong Kong?*’ He replied:

Opportunity was definitely one of them. If we see it from a secular point of view, it was by accident. But of course it was divine. Well my oldest uncle came. And established himself and his own business. He developed a bit of wealth and brought the rest of the family over. And it was supposed to be my father's younger brother and family to come over...but he didn't pass some sort of test...Then my uncle, he worked on my father, and so he came.

I followed up with the question: ‘So would your family have stayed if it didn't work out?’ In reply, Pastor David said:

I'm not sure if we would have stayed (in Hong Kong) or if we would have been in the next round?

We would have eventually made it over or something. Because my uncle who couldn't make it over stayed in HK. So I don't know if he could not...I don't know specifics...

So that's how we came but obviously that's an opportunity for the kids to come to Canada and study....

...And I guess they had personal sacrifices, just on immigration experience...their economic situation, their loss of occupation. When we came over here, we took on a restaurant family business.

In Harry's story, a similar case of accident, serendipity or divine intervention also played a role in his family's migration narrative.

I'm not so certain how my mom came over...but she came over here for high school. My maternal Grandpa was an airforce pilot...in the summer, mom went strawberry picking to pay tuition. They had and owned a house. Used milk crates to make desks. My dad was supposed to go to

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Furthermore, the presence of relatives already in the ‘West’ who could offer sponsorship was an important factor as well. ‘Paper identities’ was a specific diasporic narrative that followed migrants to Canada or America. These involved situations where a Chinese migrant already in Canada or America could gather/create fictive papers to create a ‘paper son’. This would allow a nephew or family friend's son to claim the migrant's name and be able to become a citizen without prejudice. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, these are some of the key narratives that did not come up specifically in my discussions of my subject-peers due to the difference in our diasporic generational context. It is, however, an interesting issue worth investigating further in future research. See Estelle T. Lau's (2007) *Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration and Chinese Exclusion* for an intriguing account of such practices.

New Zealand, but answered the immigration questions wrong so they refused him entry...So he came to Canada here because his sister was here.

Amidst some of these detailed stories, not everybody knew (or was told) the details. However, familial or cordial links were not always available. And sometimes, the stories of migration are shrouded in mystery, and left untold by the families.

For example, Carson<sup>103</sup> stated that he 'knew' intuitively that things must have happened to motivate their move to Canada, such as living conditions of poverty, but he was not sure what those 'things' were. This disclosure recalls what Walkerdine and Jimenez have discussed as the 'unthought known', where there is a feeling beyond cognition (e.g. through bodily senses) that suggests 'knowing', but never really consciously knowing what that is. Thus, it escapes speech. Of course, the absence and vagueness of such links suggest also the possibility of a break in these links (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). However, at this point, what precisely the expressions of such affective trauma might be for Carson are still unknown. What is thus far 'known' (as disclosed by Carson) is that his parents had to engage a great deal of hard work and struggle as new Canadian migrants. This is not surprising, and is a discourse that I also resonate with, as my parents also worked tremendously hard to make a living and support the family. The narrative of hard work and struggle as a migrant is a common one among my subject-peers as well, and is also a common phenomenon in diaspora/migration studies. In Chapter 5, I particularly discuss these phenomena.

This narrative of hard work, struggle (and eventual success) was reflected in many ways for my postgeneration subject-peers. My subject peers remembered how, in their parents' perspectives, values of success and education were highly important and emphasized throughout their lives. These parental perspectives model a hardworking narrative of parents that work tremendously hard to provide for the family. At the same time, this work ethic is expected of the postgeneration too, albeit through 'pushing' us in directions that

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<sup>103</sup> Carson is a friend I have known for nearly 20 years. He is in his early 30's and works in career and educational development.



would have us learn as much as possible. For example, in the case of Matthew<sup>104</sup>, he said:

My mom pushed me into learning everything, from piano, to figure skating to learning advanced school material through tutoring. During this time, my dad worked long hours, from around 7am to 3:30am at night, in order to support our family, and my mom's chronic illness.

Though the specifics and details are different in each family, the narratives of being pushed to *learn everything* are pervasive. The pressures of learning are quite diverse even within one child, including some of (sometimes literally all of) the following: piano lessons, ballet, martial arts, swimming lessons, being tutored in English and Math, Chinese school, children's computer summer camps and such things. These pressures placed on us as children suggest a 'push' or 'encouragement' towards a certain construction of 'success', education, and opportunity to 'succeed' and advance in society. These occurred for many of us as children, even as many of our parents toiled daily in sacrifice to provide food on the table and a home to live in.

Similar tales are evident in Jessica's story as well. I had the following dialogue with her.

*Me: "What's it like growing up in your family?"*

J: Horrible.

*Me: Why?*

J: Because mom's really strict. Everything has to be done her way on her time...Things have to be done her way in proper way...I guess it's good...But there's stress going on, have to cook, clean, do homework, get everything done... But now I know how to do lotsa stuff on my own...But as a kid, I don't know why I'm doing all this stuff. So many extracurricular activities: Math class, Piano class, Mandarin class, tutors here and there...I couldn't just go out and play with friends like everyone else. I couldn't go shopping with friends, couldn't talk on the phone or watch TV...just really stressful..

*Me: Why do you think your mom parented you and your sister this way?*

J: She said 'life is tough' and she was just teaching us that life is hard...is what she said..

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<sup>104</sup> Matthew is a good friend of mine in his mid-20's who is currently working as an Engineer. He has a good grasp of Cantonese language and is engaged in ethnic Chinese "culture" as much as Canadian "culture".

*Me: What did she mean by that?*

J: Everytime we go like 'you're treating us bad' to mom, mom is like, well you think I'm treating you bad, well life is even harder. In the real world, you'll be treated worse and have to fight for lotsa stuff...she says she's equipping us, but I don't know how all that stuff--piano classes, swimming classes--helps our future..."

As with Matthew's story, there is a clear expectation and assumption in Jessica's narrative, particularly with her mom trying to teach her that 'life is tough', and that she must be equipped and prepared. Likely, these narratives connect to the impoverished upbringing of our parents, "*who didn't have much*", and so there's a strong desire to provide us, the children with much more, and even as a protective means to ensure we don't live as they did.

From what my subject-peers have revealed of their understandings of such narratives, there's at least an understanding that our generation is one of 'having much' with little true effort, while the previous generation is one of 'having little', but required earning, struggle, and hard work to attain, if at all. There is a sense that many, if not all of the elder generation shared a desire to, as Jessica's mother puts it, to 'equip' us to fight and face a potentially tough life and world. Therefore, within such ways of seeing, all of the piano lessons, swimming lessons, and tutoring begin to make sense. We were being trained to *survive anything*, because, unlike the peace that the postgeneration knows, the prior generation has lived through the war-torn reality that *anything can change*.

As I analyze these narratives as told by my subject peers, a pattern of how the next generation 'positions' themselves begins to uncover through how they, themselves, have *told* these stories. That is, how these stories have been told is also suggestive of how they have been *remembered* by the next generation, *and further raises questions about how they were first told to us* by our parents/grandparents. That is, why were they told to us in particular ways? What are the characteristics of their telling and re-telling?

As the postgeneration, our experience of these particular narratives involves a clear 'push' towards our being highly successful and competent in each of these academic, artistic, and physical activities. Though such pushes might, to some, be dismissed as trivial complaints or 'whinings', the relevance of these

pressures cannot be understated. The ‘push’ is clearly *remembered* by many of our postgeneration, and across the many conversations with my subject-peers, it is a discourse that has become so pervasive that our collective perception of something like ‘taking piano lessons’ (and the sheer array of activities) has formed a shared discourse. That is, these remembrances have formed a common understanding in our expressions to one another that such pressure to learn everything ‘are just what Chinese parents do’. It has become *normalized* across our collective experience as next generation Chinese-Canadians.<sup>105</sup> For many of us, there is some degree of resistance, or perhaps a begrudging or feeling of contempt even if we have been obedient to what was ‘forced’ upon us. For instance, Moses, was forced into taking academic tutoring, ballet, tennis, computer, piano, and violin over the course of his childhood (often simultaneously). He expressed to me a clear ‘memory’ of the experience, and asserted more than 3 decades later that for his newborn child (presently 2 years old), he will ‘never insist or force any of these lessons on her like what happened to him. I’m not going to force her to play piano.’ I found it intriguing, as the declaration was stated with conviction when I heard Moses say it. In contrast, other subject-peers have mentioned an appreciation for these pressures that they once hated (e.g. being forced to take Chinese school), as it has led to some sort of development of a skill that has served its usefulness (e.g. fluency in spoken and/or written Chinese). These narratives are issues that I want to understand more of but must leave for discussion in future research.

In order to analyse the unconscious workings across generations in these contexts, I find it helpful to apply Volkan’s (1987) concept of *deposited representation*. Specifically, the mechanism of this process articulates how our parents’ own developed aspects of self (or collective selves) as formed from the migration narratives, struggles, and (un)fulfilled wishes regarding social status and class have been unconsciously ‘deposited’ into the developing ‘self-representation’ of their children. That is, this process seems especially potent as the child is *developing* his/her self-representation, and influencing the child’s process of identity formation with liminal ‘tasks’ that must be performed (Volkan et al. 2002: 36). Volkan argues that, ‘in the process of deposited representation,

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<sup>105</sup> For instance, any of my fellow peers will ‘understand’ the idea of being put through a large array of activities. It has become commonly accepted within our collective experience and narrative for our postgeneration Chinese-Canadian narrative.

the *active* partner is the other person, not the child (or regressed adult) whose self-representation functions as a reservoir'<sup>106</sup> (ibid.: 36). Thus, Volkan's assertion of the deposited 'image' is likened to a 'psychological gene'. While interesting and helpful as a framework, this perspective is problematic as it suggests that unconscious transmission is determined and cannot be resisted. These problematics of determinism are issues I discuss in later sections and chapters.

Nonetheless, some interesting insights can be developed from applying Volkan's (1987) concepts in the context of what my subject-peers have disclosed. Though the parents could be partly conscious for what they are doing (e.g. they insist on piano lessons for a reason, and may say why), the unconscious forces can be "seen" (if briefly) behind the spaces of parental 'insistence'. That is, Volkan's perspective argues that the conscious discourses of parental expectations (e.g. consciously signing up the child for various lessons) are acts of 'initiating certain tasks that the child is obliged to perform'. The (partly) conscious 'tasks' are evident through the actual activities. However, within the physical manifestation of these tasks are 'unconscious tasks' that are likely left unverbally by parents/caregivers as they are being demanded. These unconscious 'tasks' given to children involve assignments to fulfil parental dreams, the wishes, hopes, desires of social status, success, and associated visions of living a free life that were impossible to do in a time of survival and war. Interestingly, some children, in their unconscious agency, may sense such impositions and respond with antagonism and spite (as demonstrated by some of the resistances of my subject-peers) to repeat the patterns of their parents. Thus, while conscious tasks are being placed upon children, unconscious tasks are simultaneously being passed on as well.

Volkan's perspectives offer interesting possibilities of what might be happening. The potential problematics of these perspectives, of course, concern the determinism and passivity of both the language used (e.g. 'deposited', 'reservoir'), as well as the way that affective transfer through Volkan's understanding of the unconscious occurs. The child's agency sounds quite passive

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<sup>106</sup> 'Deposited representation' contrasts 'identification' (Volkan et al. 2002: 35). Volkan et al. suggest that identification 'refers to a subject's unconscious introjection and assimilation of another person's self-images—and the ego functions associated with them—through interactions with that other person' (Volkan 2002: 35). This takes place when the active partner is the child, not the parent. And that 'true identification is only possible after children separate their self-representations from the representations of others' (ibid.: 35).

in this psychic dynamic. On one hand, I want to retain some value to Volkan's perspectives, as I argue that the overall premise of 'mental representation' that passes unconsciously from one generation to another is one valuable fragment in 'seeing'. I argue that the transgenerational ghost that Cho (2008) and Abraham and Torok (1994) refer to can be 'glimpsed' through its temporary materiality through fragments of discourse. In other words, such discursive approaches offer an important starting point to further engage affective hauntings through immaterial bodies. What is missing from Volkan's perspectives concerns to what extent trauma cannot be represented, which is an issue that writers such as Caruth (1996) have discussed extensively. However, in turn, Caruth has likewise missed how trauma can indeed be sometimes 'representable' or 'visible', in much the same way that ghosts can materialize or dematerialize into visible or invisible forms. When ghosts are rendered visible, I argue that such mediations of traumatic memory materialize through forms such as discourse and unconsciously transfer through mental images (that, while 'invisible' in a way, can still be rendered visible and known through a psychic 'image' that forms consciously or unconsciously). Thus, seeing trauma as both representable and non-representable is the paradox I embrace here in this chapter.

The distinction I wish to affirm with this paradox, therefore, concerns the very nature of the 'transgenerational ghost'. I argue that it can materialize (e.g. through mediations such as narrative, discourse and to a lesser extent, mental representations) and also disappear (de-materialize) immaterially (e.g. through affective memories of unlocatable, unknown, invisible traumas). In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I will further elaborate and develop how I understand this paradox.

### **3.9 Moral Stories and Value Lessons**

Another question I asked my peers involved "*What stories did your parents/grandparents tell you about their lives while you were growing up?*"

Overall, the stories that my peers recalled being told often contained a moral, values-based, or parenting lesson of some sort. While some subject-peers such as Matthew cited hearing parents tell stories with more regularity, there was a wider spectrum in terms of how often or frequently the next generation remembered

hearing stories being told.

Regardless of frequency, a common retort was that the stories that *were* told often arrived with moral lessons, as opposed to stories told informationally, or in a way that some of my peers would learn through classes or readings. Among the fragments of stories told, what are some of these stories, and what kind of purposes and moral lessons are told? Among the stories that my subject-peers remembered most, the “morals” or values lessons were quite diverse. Subject-peer Bruce shared:

Dad’s stories focused on hard work on the farm and the value of being an honest man. Dad talked about his father, my grandfather, when grandpa was a sergeant in the Chinese army. One of the stories about honesty was when grandpa and his troops came across seven big buckets of gold bullion that the Japanese Imperial army stole from China during World War 2. The Japanese hid the gold in caves in the countryside. Dad said that grandpa reported the stolen gold bullion to the generals instead of stealing the gold for himself and his comrades. Grandpa showed some regret for his honesty. However, Dad said that grandma told grandpa he did the right thing in not stealing his country’s gold. Instead, those corrupt, greedy generals stole the gold to fill their own coffers. My grandparents believed that not only stealing the gold bullion was dishonest but also an evil act. They believed in karma. We call it “boa ying” in Cantonese. Grandma thought that if grandpa stole the gold, a curse would come down on his family and all future generations of Chou’s.

‘Boa ying’ refers to a concept reminiscent of “karma”. What Bruce recalls in his story reveals quite explicitly a historical narrative involving the scars of war with a moral lesson. Here, Bruce was taught the importance of ‘honour’ and ‘honesty’. In spite of the clear ties between history, lesson, and what is meant to be passed on to Bruce, unconscious forces are still at work in the gaps and spaces of the story’s context, the background of the gold bullion, the implications and experience of belonging to the Chinese army, and the subsequent questions regarding his role and experience with the pre-war and post-war civil wars between the Communist and Nationalist armies (one of which he likely belonged to, though it is unclear which one).

For instance, housed as a lesson of hard work and honesty, Bruce revealed that this story was passed down from his *grandfather*. Thus, there’s a question of what such a story meant to Bruce’s father, who was situated in his own context when he heard the story. If this is understood from Volkan et al.’s (2002)

perspective, for Bruce, it appears to be a story that embodies a multigenerational unconscious (and partly conscious) transmission of regrets, wishes, images and affects originating from his grandfather that first deposited into his father, and subsequently to Bruce himself.<sup>107</sup> That is, according to Volkan, the unconscious forces being transmitted across generations concern a multiple depositing of internalized object and subject images and wishes. Within the disclosed narrative are images associated with the scars of war and a revelation of a traumatic, collective history across countless ethnic Chinese that was *lived* by Bruce's grandfather.<sup>108</sup> Within this *living*, the grandfather embodies the subject and object internalized representations that also contains any unfulfilled wishes and regrets that can be speculated but never truly 'known' beyond Bruce's telling. But what is significant here is how this story has been passed on with values concerning what it means to be an 'honourable man', and the karmic consequences of failing to do so. Second, it's possible that these internalizations from Bruce's grandfather deposited into his father, integrating with his father's own developing representations as a child, along with memorable lessons of 'honour'. Subsequently, the internalizations of Bruce's father pass to Bruce himself, and manifests somewhat consciously in Bruce's re-telling of what was remembered, embodied in a narrative concerning 'honour' and the image of a man that lives with honour versus fails to live with honour (curses generations of descendants).

Within this illustration, the conscious, visible and representable links to trauma are evident through the passing of a narrative, and a particular moral lesson. Yet, the very aspects that are *remembered*, and remain *memorable*, could be suggestive of latent meanings behind the narratives. Thus, larger unconscious workings, particularly through the notions of 'living with honour' or 'failing to live with honour' could be passed through those image representations from

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<sup>107</sup> That is, perhaps the regrets of grandpa hint towards unfulfilled unconscious wishes that can never be fully known. Perhaps part of the wish revolved around the loss of an opportunity for great wealth that could be provided for his descendants, along with the "what-ifs" and dreams from such a story and the consequences of acceptance of a dooming curse but with momentary reward. But along with it were lessons of sacrifice, honour and "doing the right thing", or else facing some divine punishment. The moral lessons that appear in the narrative can also reveal discourses that concern how "an honourable man does not steal what is not his", and "a man of honour resists great temptation in order to protect future generations". Such discursive constructions are not only suggestive of how Bruce positions himself in context of what he remembers of the story, but also suggestive of how he remembers the story being told.

<sup>108</sup> This 'explorative exercise' with Bruce is explored further in Chapter 4.10.

grandfather to father and inevitably deposited into Bruce. Thus, according to Volkan et al.'s (2002) perspective, Bruce serves as the present 'reservoir' or 'depository' of the transmitted image representations from father (and grandfather), along with the unfulfilled wishes, and tasks that he is asked to fulfil in some way.

### **3.10 Confucian Values**

#### **3.10.1 Filial Piety, Shame, Discipline**

Specifically, underlying many of the moral stories discussed in the previous section were emphases on particular values passed down through the generations. In other stories I have not listed there are discourses that concern the following: relationships between parents and sons, parents and daughters, attitudes towards career, success, choices regarding the degree of emotionality, "gender" norms regarding societal mores of 'males' and 'females', patriarchy and matriarchy, worldviews on discipline, honour, pride, shame, benevolence, good, observing ritual, propriety and tradition, hard work. All of these values play significant roles in the diasporic ethnic Chinese discourse, and certainly within the migrant ethnic Chinese diaspora and their children. These values can often be attributed to Confucian values that have prominently influenced productions of shame, discipline and filial piety; productions that are based in deep historical connections that have persisted throughout time. Confucianism, interestingly, through to its very origins, can be tied to narratives of survival. Significantly, its original mission involved creating harmony and order amidst times of chaos and disorder during a period in Chinese history nearly two and half millennia ago called the Spring and Autumn Period<sup>109</sup>. A more comprehensive discussion of Confucian values in relation to transgenerational haunting is evident in Chapter 5.

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<sup>109</sup> While discussing this history in detail is outside the scope of this thesis, Confucius can be traced back to this period as an advisor attempting to bring order to a land at war due to the fight for supremacy amongst several state kingdoms. It was therefore, meant as a way of creating socio-political order. However, Confucian philosophy was de-emphasized several times across the centuries. Confucianism's most prominent revivals have been through the Han Dynasty (circa 206 BC – 220AD) and later, the Tang Dynasty, where the philosophy's influence influenced the kingdom and common peoples (see Wright 1964). Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Confucianism has been officially criticized and, in recent decades revived during the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. However, through this time, some traditions have persisted (whether intentionally or otherwise), such as filial piety and the power of rulers of the people (Wright 1964).



In my discussion, I will spend time focusing on the significance and intergenerational persistence of key Confucian values in the ethnic Chinese diaspora, as they significantly relate shame, discipline, and the key notion of filial piety, described as the ‘root of all virtues’ (*'xiào' 孝*). Thus, Confucius would assert that shame and humiliation from a *failure* to demonstrate filial piety on a personal and familial level is justified. Furthermore, the significance of filial piety, and its relationship to honour and shame echo subtly behind many of the gaps and spaces between the narratives of survival, the fragmented stories told and left untold, and through the nature of family relationships.

Querying the degree of importance of filial piety in their family narrative, some of my subject-peers humbly disclosed their relative ‘success’ in adhering to/achieving virtues such as filial piety. Matthew expressed how his parents do indeed tell other parents how he is a *good son* to be taking care of his family. I commented to Matthew how I admired his sacrifice for his family, and he reflected on how he actually learned from his parents; specifically the idea of his parents’ mortality. Similarly, Ariel mentions ‘wanting’ to obey, and George states that while he considers himself a ‘dutiful son’ (as per filial piety), he believes that his actions are out of compassionate love for his family rather than duty or obligation. The questions behind filial piety involve its rewards and consequences in how well one follows its ordinance. As cited here, to be a ‘good son’ reaps honour and success and good repute among others that ‘see us’, but failing to be filial leads to a deep shame inflicted in combination by oneself, family, and others who ‘see us’ as well.<sup>110</sup> Corresponding implications to shame and honour, success and failure, family structure, connection with patriarchs and family dynamic conjure the presence of transgenerational ghosts. Here I particularly focus on shame in this context.

For example, from my question prompt ‘*What memories about your parents stick out to you?*’ Pastor David responded:

Overall, memories are of a father working hard to provide for his kids. Memories of being disciplined. One time my mom sent me outside to the porch to pull my ear...Don't know what I did. Musta been pretty bad.. One

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<sup>110</sup> This shame or honour connected ‘seeing’ concerns the importance of ‘face’, or basically preserving one’s respect in the sight of others’ judgments.

of those “Tiger Mom”<sup>111</sup> things...Very strict and humiliating. Not very communicative.

I just assume that by not hearing criticism, I'm doing okay, you know what I mean?

If I get complaints, then I know. That's just how my upbringing is. Shame guilt, discipline, punishment....So...it's always been kind of by the raising of discipline and never affirmation or rewards. It was always if I did something wrong, then I would hear about it. Like the story about being punished outside our house...humiliating...shame. One thing I picked up from Western culture is that there's room for affirmation. Pat on back, good job and those kinds of motivations. Yes, we need balance. We can't just motivate by saying good job, but there's a time for both.

Several points require attention. First, there is the discourse of harsh discipline in absence of emotional affirmation. Next, in Pastor David's upbringing is how he has formed his perception of criticism. To him, the ‘silence’ is suggestive of being ‘acceptable’, though this may not necessarily equate to being ‘accepted’. Furthermore, there is the assumption of patriarchy and matriarchal superiority, and the “filial” expectation to follow whatever the parents say, or suffer the consequences. On a related prompt, I also asked Pastor David concerning his thoughts on his own parents’ experience of shame or guilt. He replied:

I'd imagine just what I'd expect of Asian culture...I didn't see anything particular or peculiar...so....nothing comes to mind...But the thing is, most Asian adults find...pride or shame with kids....if kids are naughty and ashamed then... If doing well, then doing well...So they live through kids...not so much what they do. So there's pressure on offspring to do well and give them honour that kind of thing..

The response affirms not only an identification of a perpetuating style of parenting, Confucian values and living life, but also the acknowledgement and attribution of such values as common and pervasive across Asian (Chinese) adults and families.

Similarly the reverberations of such Confucian values in relation to our parental stories are quite evident as well. Jacob mentions what his mom told him:

I do remember though, how my mom at one point talked about how she had to go across the city in Hong Kong for piano lessons, but she had to give that up because of lack of money. Apparently, mom felt lot of resentment because the money that could have gone towards her piano

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<sup>111</sup> The term “Tiger Mom” refers to a very strict style of parenting. In popular understandings and media, it often conjures up images of ‘strict’, ethnic Chinese mothers.

lessons was instead all redirected to her elder brother. Mom developed resentment from that and does not shy away talking about not having lots of money growing up.

This is significant as the discourse of providing priority to the elder brother over the sister is not only a product of the patrilineal biases of Confucian teaching, but also regarding how narratives of 'survival' and experience of 'betrayal' simmer even within how the family unit acts. Other responses to the query regarding shame include:

Ariel said: "Shame? Well, I guess my parents would 'withdraw love' from me when they wanted to discipline me or my brother. I guess that's shame. But I always knew it was a form of psychological control."

Harry stated: "Well, how I was raised was "Traditional Chinese"...Oh I'm doing this all for you, raising you, feeding you, why can't you just do this?

You know, the whole Marx thing. 95% is the world, where's the other 5%? Lots of Chinese families, not a lot of compliments that come with family~"

Will: I was brought up, such as the expectations laid upon me by my father. Often times, my father would say something reflecting the idea of, "well little johnny can get 95% whatever subject, but you only hit 90%, and if johnny can do it, so can you, and you can do better'.

These intriguing anecdotes of shame allude to the patriarchal values that are also present within the Confucian framework. As demonstrated in Jacob's example of his mother's story, the 'son' receives priority over the 'daughter', and a family is *luckier* to have a son versus a daughter. Connections to the earlier narratives of survival can be made as well, particularly with narratives of daughters being sold or given away beyond what a family could afford. The expendability of the female is a significant trope in modern Chinese thought. Though Confucius never suggested a female as expendable (in fact, he held a respect for women even as he instructed for their subservience), there were regimens, rules, and proprieties that his teachings insisted upon that would ordain their subservience in contrast to patrilineal superiority. Furthermore, in pragmatic practice, the ease of power abuse has been far too prevalent as well.<sup>112</sup> The specific exceptions to the low

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<sup>112</sup> The inferiority of females in Confucian thought originated centuries prior to the infamous 'one-child policy' in China. The one-child policy (or family planning policy) of 1979 was a form of

status of women connect to either age and hierarchal order in the family (e.g. mother, or mother-in-law) or in a recognized marital relationship with the husband (husband-wife relationship). These relationships within family have pivotal ties with Confucian ordinances, particularly regarding the 5 Key relationships (in order of importance) : 1.) *Rule to Ruled* 2.) *Father to Son* 3.) *Husband to Wife* 4.) *Elder Brother to Younger Brother* 5.) *Friend to Friend*. Such relationships and recognition of the ‘gender discourses’ espoused by Confucian values are, I argue, important to acknowledge as they echo latently behind many stories, idioms, family dynamics, and certainly within the narratives of survival. Focusing specifically on discipline's relation to shame briefly, it is interesting how different subject-peers have ‘made sense’ of the issue of discipline and punishment in their own life narratives as well.

Martha: Umm..they would spank for sure.....Spatula...My dad would never use the spatula..Always use his hand...But mom would always grab a utensil...Always a spatula...haha. I think just because my brother was a boy and older than me but he would always be resistant and defiant when it came to spanking for discipline...He still got it though, but he would resist as much as possible....

Trevor<sup>113</sup>: Like from Chinese families, it's usual. Depends...parents change ways depending when they think you're mature enough to think. They always take away what you like.

Harry: Traditional Chinese, spare the rod kinda thing.

Behind such allusions to what is acknowledged as ‘traditional Chinese’, is the acknowledged and accepted harshness of disciplinary punishment. Discretion in discipline is not necessary. More important is the ‘teaching of the lesson’ through whatever disciplinary means are required, as well as a re-asserting of power over

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population control meant to address socioeconomic issues arisen from overpopulation. There were exceptions to the rule (e.g. minorities in China are exempt, but pledging to follow the rule brings ‘incentives’). Disobedience to the rule also meant punishments including heavy fines and state forced abortions. Thus, these limitations along with the privileging of males inevitably led parents (especially ‘poor’ ones) to voluntarily perform female infanticide, abortions, or figure out ways to secretly ‘abandon’ them. I argue, that this male privilege is due to the very persistence and prevalence of Confucian tenets about the superiority of sons versus daughters. Through some of my peers’ remembrances, these problematic gender traditions have been prevalent. The ‘problem’ of gender in modern China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and current day is an urgent and important issue, but is outside the scope of my thesis and best left for future research.

<sup>113</sup> I have known Trevor since primary school, and Trevor demonstrates one of the strongest Chinese language abilities amongst all of my peers. He lived and worked in Hong Kong for two years before returning to Canada due to personal reasons.

any rebellious or unruly behaviour. Thus, while many stories that have been told involve a moral lesson in concert with some hint of guilt or shame (or at least the ones that our generation *remembers*, even those without my specific prompting), it would be unfair to say that all of them do.

Thus, these narratives have implications towards how the next generation constructs our/their cultural identity or identifications. That is, Volkan et al. (2002) might understand this mechanism as how our parental/caregiver's internalized object-images and associated affects--from those very narratives of survival, the distance in relationships, migration, fragmented stories and their imposition of and values, along with the secrets and unspoken-- have 'deposited' into the developing self-representations of the unconscious within each postgeneration person. Therefore, from Volkan et al.'s (2002) concept of mental representation, the fragments of stories told and the latent messages behind the gaps amidst these fragments provide signs of such deposited mental representation. If this is indeed occurring, this perspective may offer a complementary understanding to the transgenerational hauntings and the 'alien' trauma that belongs to the parents, but that the child nonetheless attaches to in order to maintain and *retain a* link with the parent (Abraham and Torok 1994). Continuing this thinking, one could argue that this 'link' can be reconfigured as the 'social link' that bonds the personal and familial (micro-histories) (un)conscious while simultaneously linking to traumatic histories. The madness comes from, of course the breakage in this link. The breakage or ruptures are the unknown gaps of not knowing what is being deposited (e.g. Volkan 1987) and what the 'alien' trauma is, that the child continually attaches to (Abraham and Torok 1994). Thus, as I draw from Volkan (1987, 2002), Davoine and Gaudillière (2004), and Abraham and Torok (1994), then I argue that affective hauntings persist through the paradox of materiality and immateriality, through what is discursive, representable, visible as well as what cannot be represented.

As I compose a montage to see ghosts, I am intrigued at how the persistence of stories that involve the fulfillment or *failure* to a moral duty reverberates through many narratives (e.g. fulfilling duty to honour in Bruce's context; respecting scarcity of food in Pastor David's example). The alternative to fulfilling one's moral obligations to family and even a collective moral expectation, produce

dire, and intense feelings such as shame and fear of failing one's family and collective peoples.

### 3.10 Idioms

The Confucian privileging of shame and honour also finds itself expressed through the least obvious means: through idioms and everyday greetings passed by our elder generations. However, the passing of shame, in such cases, I argue, is connected to haunted histories. For instance, I find interesting how there are several examples of idioms and colloquial greetings that have passed down and become adopted as colloquial greetings rather than actual queries (much like 'How are you?' has become in North America, or 'Are you alright?' in the London). Specifically, I argue that, in our elder generations' discourse, the questions: 'Are you full yet?', 'Are you hungry?', 'have you had dinner?' are incredibly revealing discourses of the narratives of survival. They allude to the questions of poverty that were discussed in earlier sections, and a greeting relevant to one of the most urgent concerns of the past: *the availability of food*. Expressions of 'relating' and 'greeting' bring to mind contrasting idioms that were meant in more disciplinary ways. While 'Have you had dinner yet?' or in Mandarin Chinese, 'Ni chi fan le ma?' ('你吃飯了嗎') as a greeting is absent of guilt or shame compared to the warning of 'Eat all of the rice in your bowl or you will get pockmarks', the discourses share a common narrative foundation. That is, they both connect to the very narrative of *survival* and poverty that binds them (which is further described in more detail in Chapter 4).

For example, Pastor David also shared how the stories he received often involved lessons or were connected to some sort of disciplining. He said:

Of course you know how it is. They tell it in the form of guilt. It's not [told] as narrative to educate me on Asian history but as an 'eat all the rice on your plate' kind of thing. And so when they tell it in that way, you don't get deepest appreciation for true suffering. You just saw it as another way of guilt tripping.

The idiom and importance of 'eat all the rice on your plate' (in addition to the necessity of the parents employing guilt to encourage their children to finish the

plate), is suggestive of, again, the prior way of life for Pastor David's parents. Similarly, Ariel also discussed how her relationship with her grandma typically involved conversations such as 'are you full yet, are you hungry, have you had dinner, how old are you now'.<sup>114</sup> When the postgeneration hears idioms such as 'eat all the rice on your plate', they sound more like demands and merely a demonstration of parental authority. I also remember both my maternal and paternal grandmothers commonly asking those questions 'have you had dinner?' as common greetings. Whether they were making a daily phone call or simply greeting their neighbours outside at times of day unrelated to actual dining hours, such greetings endured.

Thus, ensuring food is not wasted because 'food is hard to come by' are likely the underlying messages behind the tale that Pastor David's father had told. This makes sense if connected to the narratives of survival and poverty that I have discussed earlier. Thus, such discourses raise questions concerning the details of traumatic histories that have required such pervasive survival narratives: Specifically, what happened so terribly in the past that has rendered survival themes into the very ingrained way of daily life greetings and idioms? Indeed, the persistence of these idioms and greetings offered by the elder, migrant generation (whether as greetings, forms of shaming, or discipline) requires a historical link in order to uncover the silences, unknowns, and forgettings that persist and possess us. That is, if such narratives are *remembered* as shaming narratives by the postgeneration, the important questions therefore concern to what extent history has produced the *importance* of such narratives where shame is needed to enforce the message. Thus, if indeed the narratives of war, poverty and suffering were even more brutal than the postgeneration can possibly imagine or understand, then it would begin to make sense how or why such seemingly mundane, odd, remarks such as 'Have you eaten dinner yet?' have embodied hauntings and mediated, verbal expressions of a macrohistory filled with poverty and survival. The links of history and the 'breaks' of these social links are ruptures of bonds that hold individuals and communities together over time (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004; Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012).

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<sup>114</sup> Interestingly, Ariel attributed these conversation topics as due to 'language barriers', which also was a methodological issue that I have discussed in Chapter 2. I argue that the prevalence of questions across the diaspora suggests a persistent narrative of survival through language idioms.

Specifically immaterial affects can materialize through emotions or feelings such as horrors, shames, humiliations, insecurities, fears, hopes, or dreams that persist to the next generation. Thus, returning to Volkan (1987) and Volkan et al.'s (2002) understandings, even if the representations (e.g. wishes, dreams, hopes, fears, anxieties) of the parent are passed to the next generation through discourse and other visible, material means (e.g. behaviours of parents to children, actions, parenting style), the ruptures of trauma that have broken the social link continue to persist. I argue that the gap within what is broken articulates the very rupture of what cannot be easily represented (if at all) through what is unknown, unlocatable, and inaccessible. It is through the enduring gaps and unknowability of histories (regardless of reason or motivation) where ghosts persist to haunt. In Chapter 4, I continue to pursue these questions of history and the importance of such links between this chapter's disclosures of postgeneration's remembrances with memoirs.

### 3.12 'Remembrance: Juxtapositions'

*Fragments. Hauntings.*

Well grandma from dad's side,  
the way she came to Indonesia  
was because (I was doing family tree project long ago)  
she was sold by dad  
to a family in Indonesia because he was opium addict.  
But grandma doesn't like to talk about it.<sup>115</sup>

Why did I never know about these private stories?

Because nobody really wants to talk about it.  
*Of course not.*

For days outside her school my mother saw an emaciated, desperate-looking woman in rags slumped...  
Next to her stood a girl of about ten...  
A stick was poking up out of the back of her collar and on it was a poorly written sign saying 'Daughter for sale for 10 kilos of rice'.<sup>116</sup>

Eat all the rice on your plate.  
I never knew why I got punished if I didn't.

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<sup>115</sup> This disclosure I have included in this 'Reflection' section is Ariel's.

<sup>116</sup> This excerpt belongs to Jiang's published memoirs (2011: 103).



*The ghosts are faceless, nameless. I often forget them. My generation of Canadian-born Chinese do not know how you suffered.*

*Of course not.*

### **3.13 Conclusion**

Significantly, this chapter performs a key starting point to how I am composing a diasporic montage. Specifically, the diasporic vision within this chapter offers the fragments through mediated verbal remembrances of my subject peers as well as my own reflections. I also consider how these remembrances and forgettings of trauma narratives across generations might affectively pass through the diasporic unconscious.

Multiple fragments can be seen through the paradox of im/materiality that is present through verbal interviews. What is the most readily visible are the discourses and values of the remembered narratives. What is readily 'felt' involve the experiences of guilt and shame that are produced due to the failure or fulfilment of values such as success, hard work, honour, and virtues such as filial piety. Fragments of memory can also be seen through the mediations of verbal record. Glimpses of histories that we can never 'truly' experience and know, can also be seen through these fragmented visions (e.g. learning about the Japanese occupation, scarcity of rice through idioms). What is discoverable latently behind the words are mental representations (e.g. Volkan et al. 2002) that uncover the wishes, hopes, and dreams that the previous generation internalized as (un)conscious mental images, but was never able to fulfil due to the realities of a tumultuous, war-torn, and chaotic history. Instead, these mental representations were consciously and unconsciously passed to our postgeneration through mental representations. However, such representations are nonetheless 'representable'. What is not visible and not easily (if at all) representable are the very gaps and chasms that describe the breaks in social links between individuals, families, kin, and certainly to history itself (e.g. Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). The disavowal, silencing or forgetting of histories (e.g. Cho 2008; Gordon 2008) remain unseeable. What has not been spoken, and what has not been (and cannot be) remembered, persist through these broken links to history and each other.

Thus, the importance of this chapter also identifies the complicity of the second generation with *each other*, where we are linked through a diasporic unconscious through our common narratives (in spite of their differences) as well as our common inability to see. Affective transmission of trauma haunts through the im/material paradox of this chapter, but is nonetheless an important start in composing a diasporic montage. Thus, how to understand the relationship between the known and the unknown, the said and the unsaid, and the past and the present is a central paradox for this chapter and for discursive approaches more generally (see Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004; Cho 2008).

Even through interrogating verbal discourses, the importance of performance through the combination of reflections, autoethnographic disclosures and acts of imagination begin to suggest the potency of fantasy to help recover these social links (Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 1994). It also involves recognizing the expectancy of ghosts as they hope and search for a stage to speak and be heard once more. In the next chapter, I continue my composition of a diasporic montage by exploring in what other ways that affective hauntings can persist through the tension of history, memory and fantasy.

## CHAPTER 4: Haunted Histories, Memory, and Fantasy

### 4.1 Introduction: Performing History and Memory

The construction of memory and the construction of history do not take place in isolation from each other...personal memory, shared memory, and narrative (written) history interact in highly complicated ways, shaping each other as versions of the past are constructed and reconstructed... (Watson 1999: 8-9)

Regardless of whether selective rememberings or forgettings are due to official politicized discourses or simply lost and forgotten via personal (or collective choice), the affective transmission of trauma, or hauntings, persist. Davoine and Gaudillière (2004: xxvii) suggest: 'whatever the measures chosen for erasing facts and people from memory, the erasures even when perfectly programmed, only set in motion a memory that does not forget and that is seeking to be inscribed'. This 'non-forgetting'<sup>117</sup>, indeed resembles ghosts, hungrily in relentless pursuit of the links and remembrances taken away for reasons lost in memory. Composing a montage of haunted histories that can offer a way of seeing affective hauntings involves a diasporic vision that sees beyond the discursive limitations of verbal interviews (which I have discussed in Chapter 3). While the interviews were indeed valuable to me, they served as a starting point, offering me (and my fellow subject peers) the fragments of mediated memory that reveal glimpses of the haunted histories unknown to us, whether they were silenced, forgotten, or simply left unknown for whatever reasons. However, the very mediation of memory raises questions about its construction, and its relationship to history.

Thus, in this chapter, I continue my search for haunted histories through engaging the tensions between memory and history through memoirs and testimonies, and my critical autoethnographic perspective. That is, I boldly explore the possibilities of re-locating memory that breaks historiographical conventions of what has constituted space, time, and geohistorical locatability. Thus, instead of promising or guaranteeing definitive 'answers' that reveal the 'cause-effect' passings of traumatic affective memory across generations, I instead work towards expanding possibility and embracing the innovation needed to 'see'

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<sup>117</sup> This suggests the 'specific memory' that has been erased and requires recovering or rediscovery. (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004: xxvii)

intergenerational ghosts through a diasporic vision. This approach demonstrates the type of critical reflexivity and critical historical consciousness that I discussed in Chapter 2.

Specifically, as I will later discuss in this chapter, relations of power are entangled in any efforts to confront (or embrace) the tensions between memory and history, or fact and fantasy. Furthermore, the affective transmission of trauma then, or affective hauntings can then be rendered visible through seeing both what has been unspoken, but also through the very gaps, silences and fantasies behind what was spoken, imagined, and remembered.

## 4.2 Tensions Between Memory and History

My approach through the tensions of memory and history ambitiously echoes Benjamin's method where 'fruitless searching...[is] as much a part of [the process] as succeeding' (Lebow 2008: 3).

The debate and question of memory concerns its own production, and the assumptions of what is 'real' or 'authentic', 'fact' or 'fiction'. To what extent are the memoirs I engage based in imaginings, or fantasy? Significantly, what are the implications of such mediations of memory as I, or another postgeneration person searches for unknown histories?

I begin my own 'working through' of these difficult questions concerning memory by pausing to consider what sorts of memory spaces situate postgeneration Chinese-Canadians. I argue that they/we are situated in a space where access to the past is reliant on what Pierre Nora (1989) describes as *lieux de mémoire* or 'place of memory' (e.g. museums, books, artifacts), versus the *milieux de mémoire* or 'space of memory' that articulates experiencing memory with immediacy (e.g. oral tradition, ritual ceremony). Traditionally, the implications of *lieux de mémoire* versus *milieux de mémoire*, were connected to Nora's fierce criticism of history/historiography and he deeply grieved the loss of 'true memory' (*milieux de mémoire*). If we adopt the dualism of this framework, this creates problematics since the majority of access to past histories is fixed and inscribed

within the limits of temporal space.<sup>118</sup> Such issues would pessimistically suggest that the postgeneration's link to the past is forever ruptured, especially as ritual traditions become diluted (due to the process of modernity) and as oral eyewitnesses pass on, due to the natural passages of time.<sup>119</sup> In response, Wang (2004) and Tai (2001) recommend situating *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire* in 'dynamic motion' with each other.

The importance of embracing the dynamic tension between history and memory is evident in Canadian historian Vijay Agnew's (2005) discussion of memory and diaspora, which I will briefly spend some time discussing. Canadian historian Vijay Agnew's (2005) provocative assertion about memory in her introduction argues:

Memories that are documented in narratives, life writings, and autobiographies represent individuals and groups with a specificity and particularity that eschew homogeneity and generations. Memories recorded in journals, diaries, and life writings are acts of representation, performance, and interpretation...If memory is an act of representation and performance, then we can ask what its relationship is to 'fact' and whether memories are 'real' and 'authentic' interpretations of self, home, and history...Memory is an act of remembering that can create new understandings of both the past and the present. Memories are an active process by which meaning is created; they are not mere depositories of fact (pp. 7-8)

What Agnew (2005: 7) assumes here is the fragmentation and performativity of memory, particularly in how one struggles to make sense of their own identity/identifications. However, Agnew's argument creates uneasy tensions and questions that I must confront in my own contexts. Specifically, I have researched

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<sup>118</sup> Nora's (1989:7) terms (if somewhat pessimistically), differentiate between memory and history, or what he calls *lieux de mémoire* (place of memory) and *milieux de mémoire* (spaces of memory). Briefly, *lieux* is the place of memory, which is exemplified in historical artifacts such as written histories, museums, monuments or objects that recall another time or place. *Milieux de mémoire*, however, is a 'space of memory', which is much more immediate, and involves an 'experience-ing' and 'live-ing' culture in the moment and also within what can be considered the 'sacred' (e.g. faith rituals and spaces). This *milieux de mémoire* is exemplified, according to Tam (2001) in oral traditions, or participating in various forms of ritual or ceremony. Nora's critics such as Winter (1997) and Hue-Tam Ho Tai (2001) have found his terms helpful and useful in understanding memory and history, but have simultaneously critiqued his view as too dualistic, pessimistic and narrow in scope. I also echo these critiques and the value of these concepts if considered in dynamic tension and motion.

<sup>119</sup> While Nora's polarizing distinctions between history and memory are simplistic, I argue that the value of Nora's distinctions is in how it effectively critiques what is often held in high value and regarded as a faithful measure of authenticity (e.g. memoirs, commemorations), while championing memory experienced in its immediacy and heritage.

the remembered disclosures of my subject-peers thus far (in Chapter 3), and will continue to analyze our elder generations' memoirs, journals, and life writings that embody the key 'empirical data' of this present chapter. If 'memory' is brought into question, how am I, as a postgeneration Chinese-Canadian to make sense of the data that I have compiled, analyzed, read, heard, and listened to? How am I to compose a diasporic montage of haunted histories when memory may not necessarily 'reveal' what 'actually' happened? What does all of this mean if, after all of this effort, haunted histories continue to be impossible to see? In turn, what sort of reflexivity is needed as I engage a diasporic vision of histories I find?

Agnew (who can be considered to be of South Asian descent) is particularly thinking of her mother, who died as a refugee. This was due to India's Partition (August 14, 1947) that led to the division of today's Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. It was ultimately a time that involved great fear, violence, and uncertainty that led to refugees fleeing (as in the case of Agnew's family) from the danger of religious violence. Agnew looks at a photograph which she interprets has her mother appear somber and dull. Her father, brother, aunt, and relatives all have different memories of the mother. The brother is adamant that the photograph portrays the mother's vibrancy instead, and that his remembered experience is more 'truthful' than Agnew's. Thus, Agnew interrogates the truth assumptions of 'fact', and instead argues that what is 'real' is less important than the process of understanding, creating meaning and insight from the performance of memory (see Chapter 2 for discussions of performativity). This is an interesting argument that immediately presents some intriguing links between diaspora, history, and memory. Furthermore, the 'imagination' and 'fantasy' of memory that each person in Agnew's family has created through the photograph of their mother/wife/sister recovers otherwise lost 'links' to an important familial history that, in turn, is entangled in a significant social, national, political history of the Partition (see Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). This discussion reminds me of Walkerdine's (2013) keynote address that concerns these very issues of imagination, links, and history. As I continue to develop my analysis in this chapter, I will return to Walkerdine and Davoine and Gaudillière in later sections particularly in my discussion of Benjamin Wilkomirski and an intriguing memoir by an elder, Kwan Loi, who was an eyewitness to terrifying horrors in

China.<sup>120</sup>

Such perspectives that blur (diasporic) history, memory, and fantasy from assumptions of performativity further challenge problematic traditional historiographical models based in accuracy, as they rely on a documentary, positivist perspective of truth claims that can be measured, tested, or recounted narratively in modes of authentication (LaCapra 2001: 2, 5). What is important, therefore, in confronting the tension of history and memory is the importance of performing a critique. Wang (2004) asserts that:

Modern history starts as a critique of tradition and memory, but memory often has to be the critique of the critique, as when nostalgia expresses not the love of the past, but a vital vision against a reigning historical narrative in the present. It is not a matter of choosing one over the other. Rather the point is to put the two components of temporality together and set them in dynamic motion. (p. 5)

This assertion reflects Wang's approach of 'critical historical consciousness', a method of approaching history and memory that I have discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 1, I have also reviewed the importance of history in the affective transmission of trauma.

In the context of interrogating history and memory, critical historical consciousness is 'capable of self-critique from the vantage point of its 'other' and past: the milieu of memory' (Wang 2004: 5).

On one level, it is a work of *locating* memory in the Chinese diaspora, and challenging for a reconfiguration of memory and history beyond chronological time and geographical space. On a second level, it is staging and representing the types of information *accessible* to next generation Chinese-Canadians seeking it, particularly for those seeking to compose a montage of the past. Of course, the types of archives I explore in this chapter emphasize memoirs and testimonies. They are not exhaustive, and have been selected based on a) popularity in scholarly and popular press and literature b) an ability to shed light on the contexts of the *remembered* fragments as expressed by myself and my subject peers in Chapter 3 c) English language or translated works, since a large majority

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<sup>120</sup> Also, in chapter 6, I will further discuss Walkerdine's (2013) keynote discussion concerning the importance of imagination in the context of bodily performance and my group performance screening.

of my subject-peers (including myself) cannot access or read any scholarly or popular literature in Chinese. In particular, what I include are data that has resonated with me, and my search for histories, and also shocked and surprised me in my time of researching these histories over the course of researching and writing for this thesis.

In the next section, I begin with a historical overview of some significant events in 20<sup>th</sup> century history across Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan that performs several purposes. First, it situates the memoirs and testimonies of elder generations that follow afterwards. Second, it also offers a very brief introductory context and summary to the remembered narratives discussed in Chapter 3. Third, it performs the paradoxical problematic of providing a type of ‘encyclopedic’ historical summary that I would find myself ‘looking’ to as a fragment of my montage of some of the key histories (non exhaustively) that may not necessarily be known by the post generation Chinese-Canadian.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, available memories offered through even English-translated archives do offer an invaluable means to crystallizing a vision of a past we could otherwise never know, even as we must reflexively pose the questions I have raised. I also perform an experiment that explores the unconscious links between the remembered narratives of my subject peers and memoirs from the elder generation.

### 4.3 Historical Overview: Scars of Survival

In this century, the scars of war were relentless throughout Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Even for those who were fortunate to be on the outskirts of the most violent uprisings, the compounding sociopolitical strife, economic chaos, and fiercely unstable politics through the majority of the century often meant a life of

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<sup>121</sup> Certainly, within my upbringing within the Canadian education system, these histories were not taught (since they have to do with Chinese, and not Canadian histories). However, these histories do become accessible in university within ‘Asian Studies’ electives, or those pursuing a specialty of such studies. Thus, the lack of knowledge of these Chinese histories for the postgeneration in the West is a striking contrast to the same generation within Asia. While this may not, at first seem surprising, I felt both surprised and ashamed upon realizing that other peers raised in Hong Kong or Taiwan had quite an in-depth knowledge about Chinese histories (or a particular production of them) that I knew nothing about. This raises questions that require further research outside of this thesis (e.g. critically exploring memory production in diasporas born in so-called ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ countries). However, what I do discuss here, are these questions of memory production at the intersection of history and fantasy.



loss, poverty, and escape for the majority of civilians affecting even the wealthy, ruling classes.

Importantly, the authors assert that some of the ultimate scars and traumatic psychic lesions that have plagued generations of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese are characterized by a *fear of chaos (luan)*. It is a fear of chaos that has pervaded the consciousness of the Chinese, and was exploited by governments through state-sanctioned violence and attempts for political/economic reforms. As a result of the scars from this fear, mentalities of *survival* were further ingrained in civilian life and further compounded by conditions similar to *survivor's guilt*. Soon, a production of mindsets such as the importance of family and close, trusted connections (*guanxi*) therefore became an issue of survival compared to being betrayed by unreliable, untrustworthy, and unstable institutions and friends (Lary and MacKinnon 2001: 13). Thus, these scars arise from some deep wounds that have relentlessly haunted in the personal, familial, and national spheres.

if looked at cumulatively as a cycle of officially sanctioned violence that began in the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese experience with the arbitrary violence and destruction of war has no European parallel...[leaving] the Chinese population numb by the mid-twentieth century. Living with war or state-sponsored violence became internalized as a fact of life for the ordinary Chinese family—rich or poor—by the mid-twentieth century. (Lary and MacKinnon 2001: pp. 6-7).

Within the annals of recorded historical memory and narrative, Lary and McKinnon (2001) argue that a collective and national memory haunted by the ghosts of war and violence predated under Qing dynasty rule with the arrival of the British, leading to the onset of the First Opium War in 1839. With Chinese officials attempting to cease and ban opium trade due to its increasingly debilitating narcotic effects on its people and economy, British warships ravaged coastal towns (Worden, Savada, & Dolan 1988).<sup>122</sup> In 1842, 'unequal' treaties between China and the West were signed, resulting in the British colonialization of Hong Kong and a significant number of concessions benefiting the West and deeply disadvantaging China to such an extent that the Chinese would call these 'national

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<sup>122</sup> The references to Worden, Savada, & Dolan (1988) refer to their edited 'online' book published under the United States Library of Congress. Unfortunately, their pages do not contain page numbers. For the record, many parts of this overview owe the wealth of historical information offered from their book.

humiliations'. The significance of these preludes of foreign aggression would play a catalyzing role in some of the further chaos and war that ravaged China and British-colonial Hong Kong for the next century, which I will expand upon shortly.

Unfortunately, foreign aggression was not the only cause of strife within China. Lary and MacKinnon (2001: 6) argue that 'war became a dominant fact of Chinese life' from the onset of the devastating Taiping wars (1850's and 1860's) onwards, a civil war that deepened the scar within Modern China with estimates of over 30 million lives lost in the aftermath. During this period of time, a Second Opium War would compound the chaos that extended within and beyond civil, national, political, and economic factors. Furthermore, droughts, famines, and floods added natural calamities to a country unprepared for such widescale devastation from all sides.

Ensuing wars from foreign aggression led to the first Anti-Japanese war (1894-1895), then the Boxer Rebellion, and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) that destroyed and ravaged the coastal provinces in China (Lary & MacKinnon 2001: 6). The Anti-Japanese War saw China concede territories to the Japanese, including Taiwan, which began its 50 year occupation under Japanese rule. Meanwhile, in China, civil wars continued to deepen the scars of war upon Chinese society, including the violence that ensued leading to the pivotal Republican Revolution in 1911 (and dethroning of the Qing dynasty). 1912 began the rule of the KMT (Kuomintang), commencing the era of the 'Republic of China'<sup>123</sup> thanks to the efforts of Sun Yat-Sen, Yuan Shikai and Song Jiaren.<sup>124</sup> Significantly, civil regional wars involving warlord armies between warlords and feuds over land through the late 1910's and 1920's ravaged the Chinese countryside, leaving many dead. Unmistakeably, the May Fourth Movement in 1919, an anti-imperialist, anti-tradition, anti-elitism protest by students and intellectuals that also protested

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<sup>123</sup> The 'Republic of China' governed Mainland China between 1912-1949. Its governance continued on Taiwan after the KMT was exiled. Though the titles are similar, it is not to be confused with the 'People's Republic of China' that is ruled by the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>124</sup> Yuan Shikai was the strongest regional military leader of the imperial army in Beijing, and after the abdication of the last emperor, Yuan took over as the president of the Republic of China (Worden et al. 1997). Though revolutionist Sun Yat-Sen was inaugurated as the first provisional president for the transformation of China into a republic, there was risk of civil war due to Yuan's military power in Beijing (ibid.). The possibility of war convinced Sun Yat-Sen to concede his presidency to Yuan and allow him to unify China from Beijing. Yuan, however was ambitious and dictatorial. Though Song Jianren, one of Sun's associates, founded the KMT (Nationalist People's party), Song's popularity led to his eventual assassination by Yuan (ibid.).

against further concessions to foreign powers served as another pivotal moment in history. This movement transformed Chinese thought and led to the growth of Chinese nationalism. Some scholars suggest that the ideologies of the May Fourth Movement inspired the rise of the Communist party, and later would lead to a period of civil war and countless deaths (Worden et al. 1988). Soon, these civil wars (often described as the warlord wars) began between the KMT and CCP in the 1920's. Politically motivated violence between the KMT (and new leader, Chiang Kai Shek) and the Communist Party created more scars in a society faced with unending violence and a need to survive. Temporary ceasefire between the KMT and CCP only arrived at the reality of a new militaristic imperial Japanese threat in the 1930's. The ferocity of the Japanese invasion required much more unified Chinese attack and defense as opposed to continual civil war (Worden et al. 1988).

The Japanese bombing of Shanghai in 1932 and the occupation of Manchuria in 1931 would pre-empt what are perhaps the most brutal moments of death and destruction through modern China, reaching new heights of atrocity during the Second Anti-Japanese War of 1937-1945. The Japanese imperial army became dominant during this time. They were vastly overpowering and destructive, occupying major Chinese locales such as Nanjing, Guangdong, and Shanghai. This was the period when the infamous Nanjing atrocities and massacres took place, also resulting in countless murders, raping, pillaging and destruction (Worden et al. 1988). Conservative estimates cite 20 million lives lost during this short period of time across these towns and cities, with 100 million civilians forced to flee (Lary and McKinnon 2001: 6).

Lesser known and spoken occupations and instances of equally brutal murder and rape occurred in Hong Kong. The Japanese occupation here began with the Battle of Hong Kong where resistance forces attempted and failed to oppose Japanese aggression. The British then surrendered Hong Kong to the Japanese on December 25, 1941—a date that became known as 'Black Christmas'. That Christmas then marked the beginning of 3 years and 9 months of Japanese occupation and countless brutalities (Roland 2001: xv). For instance, the St. Stephen's college incident involved the slaughter of injured Chinese recovering in a college (see also Section 4.8.2). In addition, internment camps, martial law and executions became the norm. Economic exploitation also was a reality with the

Hong Kong dollar being untradeable at a terrible rate of 4 HK dollars to 1 military yen. Furthermore, according to Roland (2001), during the month following the full occupation of the Japanese, 10,000 girls and women were raped. Despair, starvation, and sickness also continued to kill many due to the vast war at large.

After British forces finally repelled the Japanese occupation in 1945, the military yen lost all value, likely leaving many Hong Kong citizens with an excess of valueless currency, increased poverty, and little if no governmental support. However, after the end of World War 2 in 1945, and after the defeat of Japan and their retreat from China, Hong Kong returned to British rule, and the Japanese were required to return Taiwan to the Republic of China under KMT rule. However, the KMT's poor governance resulted in poor morale around the country and a depletion of their own military power. The KMT and Communist Party continued their fight for the next 4 years from 1945-1949. The KMT under Chiang Kai Shek lost their battles to the Communists, who grew in strength and soon forced Chiang Kai Shek and the KMT into exile to Taiwan in 1949. In Taiwan, Chiang Kai Shek proclaimed his government as the 'true China'. The Communists ruled most of the country in the Mainland, this inaugurating the People's Republic of China under the rule of Mao Zedong.

Here, a semblance of a brief period of political unity under Mao Zedong provided some measure of hope and some degree of readjustment and recovery, perhaps providing some time for the scars of war to breathe, for the apparitions to rest, and begin a slow healing. With intentions to provide food and improve the country, by 1953, China followed the Soviet model and instituted a 'Five Year Plan' to transition towards socialism in full force. However, with a reported mainland population of 582.6 million in the 1953 Chinese census, growth moved slowly (see Orleans 1957). Between 1958-1962, militant Communist initiatives to speed up economic progress such as The Great Leap Forward began, leading to economic failures and unnatural food shortages (in addition to natural disasters and famines that were also happening), and a continued impoverishment of the citizens, which sabotaged the scar's healing process (Xinran 2009: 365). Murphy (1996: 372) estimates that 30 million people died due to the malnutrition and starvation caused from this initiative. The Great Leap Forward was short-lived, and led to a growing political destabilisation after a brief glimpse of unity and stability. In

attempts to recapture his early victories and dreams of unity and to battle growing capitalistic, antisocialist tendencies, Mao would commence a militant phase of officially sanctioned violence in attempts to purify both his party and the country, which began the infamous decade of the Cultural Revolution, a time that added even more scars to a tortured nation during a time of faint hope.

#### **4.4 'Reflections'**

*The closest visual imaginings I have of what life 'might' have been like for my elders are through film and imaginings.*

*Naively, or foolishly, I review the conflict in Syria. I see myself feel sorrow, anger and, confusion over the death, the violence, the cover-ups, the resistance attacks, and the government-sanctioned violence.*

*I can't help but wonder how different or similar the lives of some of my elder generations in the Chinese diaspora may have been from current affairs in Syria. For my closest identification with the tragedies of the past is through confronting the horrors of the present and the universal experience of death and fear.*

*Oh how unfortunate it is to be born in a place fated to inherit the scars of war, poverty, pain, and tears?*

*And so I continue my montage, for in my life fortune and degree of privilege, I am able to reflect on such things as this. Yet I know I am haunted by similar scars, even as I do not know precisely where they come from or what traumas they involve.*

#### **4.5 Haunted Fragments: Testimonies and Memory Productions**

*I feel compelled to speak for some of these histories, just as I have just discovered them in my own understanding. I must speak for the lost voices, however briefly I am able.*

History, fantasy, memory, and memory production are entangled within the many 20<sup>th</sup> century scars that ethnic Chinese suffered throughout East Asia. On one hand, wars, death, and chaos involving foreign invaders (e.g. the Resistance War) have been the subject of academic attention as much as the scars of war incited by Chinese civil conflicts and domestic terrors. Certainly, within the private, personal sphere, horrific tales within migrant diasporas concerning histories such as the Cultural Revolution are also retold, albeit in fragments. However, popular access

to some histories has become much more uneven for both Chinese within Mainland China as well as diasporas. For instance, film narratives concerning the wounds of war due to foreign invaders, particularly by the Japanese in the Resistance War have seen much more active *remembrance* through mediated moving image productions by the Chinese nation-state (or 'guo jia' 國家).<sup>125</sup>

However, similar narratives concerning the Cultural Revolution have been strangely silent or in rapid decline. I argue that the nation-state's attempts to 'leverage' the 'chosen' wounds of war threatens to exploit the voices of eyewitnesses and the dead who desire to speak and make sense of their traumas. In contrast, these same hegemonic forces that silence histories or create a gradual 'forgetting' of them threaten to re-bury the voices of the dead.<sup>126</sup> Lary and MacKinnon (2001: 11) argue that the discomfort of official and personal memories, sense of shame and humiliation that filled a proud Chinese nation's political and personal spectrums has greatly compromised the production of memory. Contrasting the production of war memory in the West, these authors suggest:

For China, memories of the Anti-Japanese War and the ultimate victory are overlaid with feelings of shame and humiliation, of the knowledge of initial defeat and occupation. There has been no questions, until very recently, of the wallowing in memory that has come to characterize the treatment of the Second World War in the other victor countries—the growth of something close to nostalgia for a time when men were brave, women were plucky, and society was united. In the case of China, memory is partial and segmented. Periodization and self-censorship occur, blocking out painful periods and focusing on happy times. Through repetition, the 'good' memories come to overlay more painful ones, which become increasingly difficult to retrieve. The problem in modern China is that 'bad' memories far outweigh the good. (p. 11)

This tendency for 'happy endings' or very particular types of endings, are particularly evident in films and television shows produced from Mainland China, particularly during the 1950's and 1960's during Communist reign and the

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<sup>125</sup> Many writers of China refer to Mainland China as a 'nation-state', though the English translation misses the subtleties of the original Chinese term 'guo jia', which can be literally translated as 'country, family'. However, far from suggesting any sort of democracy, it merely reinforces the entanglement and enmeshment of the 'national' consciousness within, also the 'family' or 'citizens' of the country.

<sup>126</sup> In Chapter 6, I tackle some of these issues of official memory production within the moving image. Within this chapter, I focus on the fragmented oral stories that may be at risk of being 'lost' amidst these overarching forces of memory production.

Cultural Revolution, when the Communist Party wanted to show their 'triumphs' over sorrows and establish themselves as heroes of the land (Wang 2004: 143; see also Berry and Farquhar 2006). Such trends continue to this day, particularly through film and interactive media narratives 'commemorating' the Nanking Massacre (see also Chapter 6). Thus, within the politics of Commemoration, the 'victory' over the Japanese is still celebrated as a remedy to the 'scars' and 'wounds' inflicted.

At the same time, one gets the sense that the memories that are officially remembered (e.g. 'good' versus 'painful' ones) or forgotten seem inconsistent and continually changed or re-produced depending on the whims of those with the power to produce such memory. In particular, Watson (1994) argues that in modern Chinese discourse, the ordaining of official histories at the expense of all other memories has been at its strongest during the Mao era (1949-1976). For example, considering the impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong (which will be discussed in more detail in later sections), Watson suggests that:

Mao Zedong created the terms of political discourse—created correct thought—by transforming his reading of the past into the only possible reading. He thereby justified his own leadership and that of his party by writing himself into history—by making himself, his followers, and his 'line' the inevitable result of historical forces. (p. 2)

However, such dominance exemplifies a larger trend of historical rewriting and reproduction throughout the last century of modern China. English journalist John Keay (2010) argues:

During the last century alone the history books had to be reconfigured at least four times – to create a Nationalist mythology, to accommodate the Marxist dialectic of class struggle, to conform to Maoist insistence on the dynamics of proletarian revolution, and to justify market socialism's conviction that wealth creation is compatible with authoritarian rule. (p. 2)

In fact, Keay (2010: 4) suggests that this rewriting has been a recurring trend throughout Imperial China's history, as a vital form of government that has been perpetuated throughout ancient Imperial China's *dynasties*. Amidst the realities of survival, war, chaos, and poverty, the memories of the past have become difficult

to understand.<sup>127</sup>

Furthermore, Wang (2004: 6) suggests that various memory efforts since the 1980's via different narratives have re-told and re-shaped the past. These have ranged in a 'search-for-roots' movement, indictment of political atrocities, and nostalgia for the legacies of better Communist days under Mao Zedong and the Red Guards. Wang (2004) argues:

For all the diversity of memory works, they seem to hint at something troubling: the difficulty of modern Chinese culture in adjusting to its past, and hence to the present, from which it needs to re-envision the future. They reveal a rupture in the collectively shared sense of time, a lack of consensus ensuring the figuration of past, present, and future. It signals a serious problem in the understanding of the past and its connection to the current reality as a living, continuous history. (p. 6)

These assertions raise many questions concerning the nature of memory production as mediated through nation-state discourse. I discuss these questions later in this chapter as well as in Chapter 6.

In the next section, I offer a space for some of these lost voices to 'speak' about the atrocities that occurred during this period. This section offers more fragments of oral testimonies concerning this period of history. For Chinese Canadian readers in the next generation, such testimonies continue to offer a way of seeing histories that are told without pedagogical purposes (see Chapter 3).

## **4.6 Anti-Japanese Resistance War (1937-1945)**

### **4.6.1 Nanking Massacre (1937-1938)**

In the West, the 'forgotten tragedy' of the Nanking Massacre in 1937-38 was brought to public attention thanks in no small part to the bestselling book by 2<sup>nd</sup> generation American-born ethnic Chinese writer Iris Chang (1997), *The Rape of Nanking*. Also, I argue that the popularity of this 'wound' is also due to the (relatively recent) phenomenon of large amounts of film, television and interactive media released about Nanking from Chinese studios—phenomena I discuss more

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<sup>127</sup> While such issues of memory production involve censorship in addition to official re-writings, they can also be evident in much more subtle means through 'soft power' (see Chapter 6). Soft power acquires growing importance amidst evolving transnational relationships through media, cultural reach, and information access.



in Chapter 6 (see also Berry 2008). It is possible that such films merely coincide with the commemorative qualities of remembrance (1937-1938 for the Massacre versus 2007-2009 for the release of many films as part of a 70-year commemoration). This trend can also be observed in the types of films being released in 2011. Many of these films commemorated the 100th year anniversary of the 1911 Revolution, an event that ended Chinese Imperial, dynastic rule forever. However, even in such cases, this returns us to some questions concerning official memory.

While the attention to the Nanking Massacre should certainly not be dismissed or minimalized, I feel both fascinated and an 'unease' about how it has suddenly risen from silence and become such a widely large-group trauma in the Chinese nation-state narrative.<sup>128</sup> The wide scope of tragedy, deaths, and scars of war during the Resistance War (across the mainland and Hong Kong) was no less full of terrors and atrocity. Certainly, the Chinese Cultural Revolution resulted in its own share of horrifying massacres of 'Chinese people killing Chinese people'. Yet, the Chinese Cultural Revolution finds its memory silenced by the Chinese government and popular interest wanes on other narratives of atrocity. Why might this be? What is the semiotic value of Nanking in official rememberings and in popular memory in contrast to other atrocities elsewhere in the same era of war? And to what extent have the actualities and realities of the Nanking massacre become 'mythologized' and 'fantasized' by re-tellings, rewritings and re-memorializing? Is it indeed becoming 'chosen' as a trauma that can act as a 'flagship' for the 20<sup>th</sup> century wounds of Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan?

I turn now briefly to John Rabe, who was a German businessman and had been living in Nanking during the 1937 atrocities. Often described as a 'good Nazi' due to his loyalties to Nazi Germany during those times, Rabe was nonetheless instrumental to the survival of many Chinese under attack by Imperial Japanese forces. His diaries have contributed much to 'seeing' what happened in Nanking in

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<sup>128</sup> While Volkan et al. (2002) would likely describe the Nanking massacre as a significant ethnic marker that ethnic Chinese around the world are aware of, he might say it has not yet developed or spread enough to be considered a *chosen trauma* (see Chapter 1). While this trauma cannot be dismissed or minimalised, I find it interesting how such a large amount of attention has been brought to the Nanking massacre while many others during the scars of war between 1937-1945 are 'less' remembered. These concern questions of memory production, which I have discussed so far, and continue to discuss in Chapter 6.

1937, and have been key sources for dramatic portrayals of the Nanking Atrocities (e.g. John Rabe 2008) as well as documentaries (e.g. *Nanking* 2007). For instance, descriptions of the severity of the Nanking massacre are evident in Rabe's (2008) published diaries:

December 17, 1937

Last night up to 1,000 women and girls are said to have been raped, about 100 girls at Ginling Girls College alone. You hear of nothing but rape. If husbands or brother intervene, they're shot. What you hear and see on all sides is the brutality and bestiality of the Japanese soldiery. (p. 194)

January 22, 1938.

Magee has been gathering more ugly reports again. The Japanese soldiers are grabbing up every slaughter-able animal they can get hold of. Of late they have been making Chinese boys chase pigs. A couple of the boys who weren't quick enough, or had no success, were bayoneted. The bowels of one of these bayoneted victims are hanging out of his body (ibid.)

These two excerpts are but a few of the many ghastly atrocities described in Rabe's diaries. They describe atrocious realities of the incident, including rape and brutal murders. The shock of these reports is revealing of the sheer affective force of the originary, parent trauma (the Nanking atrocities themselves). And it is perhaps, unsurprising that this 'incident' has become the chosen trauma of choice for the Chinese nation-state.

#### **4.6.2 Other Voices from the Resistance War**

During the Resistance War, there are also stories from those who lived in areas outside of the infamy and global recognition of the once-forgotten Nanking Massacre, in the south. However, the atrocities are no less brutal, and are reflective of the sheer terror and horror of memories that was evident during the Resistance War.

For instance, consider a short memoir by Yuen Yin-Ping, a Chinese woman who came from a family of wealth. She describes her situation as she moved from Swatow to Hong Kong and Fatshan:

My husband and his friends ran a glass factory in Hong Kong. Later they opened another factory in Swatow and that's where our son was born. Then the Japanese War against China began and I returned to Hong Kong with my little son and a maid. My

husband couldn't get away. He sent me a letter giving advice on what to do if the war grew any worse. He wrote: ' In times of great chaos one should live in the countryside; in times of minor unrest one should live in the town.'

I thought this over and decided to leave Hong Kong to go back to live in Fatshan. But we were cheated and robbed so shamelessly by the people there that we returned to Hong Kong. Eventually I rejoined my husband in Swatow. It was then about 1938 and the Japanese were coming close. They bombed our factory and, although the damage was not serious, we felt it was time to get out. So we left with a few servants and some of our belongings and made what turned out to be a long trip in search of safety. First we travelled across to Kweilin, in Kwangsi Province; and from there we went all the way up to Chungking in Szechwan...There were many people on the move fleeing the Japanese. But at least we had no trouble from bandits. We would stay overnight in peasants' huts in the villages. They would charge us a few coins. In the end we settled in a village some distance from Chungking. We escaped the bombing of the city. When the war was all over we returned to Swatow. (Tisdall 1989: 38)<sup>129</sup>

This excerpt describes not only the fear and danger from an imperial Japanese onslaught, but also the reality of a situation where fellow Chinese have become desperate criminals, cheaters, robbers, and bandits. This reality suggests that the repercussions of war and chaos in China produced a criminal desperation produced from the need to survive. Furthermore, in another memory, Kwan Loi (65 years old), describes her experience in Canton during the Resistance War.

Then the Japanese invaded northern China in 1937 and my aunt decided we should return as quickly as possible to my family in Canton. We went on foot by way of Kowloon and Shumchun. Many others were going the same way. We had no food and eventually my aunt could go no further. I had to leave her by the roadside and go on alone, clutching a picture of my family and asking for directions along the way. I travelled for many days and nights, and my arrival home coincided with another cause for celebration—my father had

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<sup>129</sup> This excerpt belongs to a personal testimony compilation by Tisdall (1989) of men and women who lived in Hong Kong and were supported by an organization called 'Helping Hands'. Helping Hands is a charity organization that offers shelter and housing for homeless elderly in Hong Kong. It housed more than 5000 old people at the time of the book's compilation and managed 15 homes. These were all English translated interviews by individuals associated with the charity. The book itself is a 'primary source' that offers no analysis, except for the direct words of the elders (see Chapter 2 for my discussion concerning sources). The book's sole purpose is to offer a space for the elderly to 'speak' their testimonies that is translated in English for English-speaking/reading readers. For next generation diasporic Chinese like myself who can read little to no Chinese characters and therefore are unable to access Chinese-language oral histories, I find this type of book deeply invaluable.

returned again from Cuba.

But then the Japanese attacked Canton. During the fighting before the city was captured, my mother and father and baby brother and I were hiding in a neighbour's cellar. My brother must have sensed danger for he began to cry. My father said he would go and get him something to eat. But as my father climbed out of the cellar he was shot twice in the back by the Japanese and killed. When we came out of hiding the Japanese wouldn't let us bury the dead. For days we had to walk past our father's corpse—and many others which were strewn on the roads. But I was only fifteen at the time and my father's death just seemed to me like anyone else's.

About a year later it was decided that I should be married.

...[In Canton], the baby was due at about the time Hong Kong was bombed by the Japanese, at the end of 1941. Bombs and shells were falling close to us and it was hard to make a living, even for a family as well-to-do as ours. We had little food and I remember being so frightened by explosions that I was always running into the banana groves and canefields when there was a bang. Late one evening the bombs frightened me so much that I ran out into a field and there gave birth to my baby, on my own. I think I must have become a little mad after that because I remember losing track of where I was. I was cold and hungry and had no food. I was so undernourished that I had little milk for my baby, a little boy, and he died after six days. I almost died from exposure myself and remember swimming across a pond and lying full length on the back of a cow for warmth.

Later I gave birth to another boy who lived until he was five. Shortly after he was born my husband decided we should leave Canton, where we were then living. The war had so ravaged the city that many people were leaving. My husband had little work and decided that we should join some distant relatives in Mui Wo on Lantau Island. My mother-in-law had already died of malnutrition and we had no alternative but to leave.

When we arrived in Mui Wo my husband had to give up being a butcher and he became a market gardener. We joined up with some other families to fix up an old house which we all lived in. The Japanese were still around. I heard many stories about the soldiers raping women. If they resisted, the Japanese cut the lower part of their body in two. We did not stay long in Mui Wo because it was too crowded. We moved to nearby Peng Chau and stayed there for almost thirty years. We had seven children. All but three of them are dead now. I have one daughter who often takes me out regularly for dim-sum (in Hong Kong). (Tisdall 1989: 77-78)

This dramatic memoir reveals much about the danger, pain, and loss experienced during the Resistance War. Also, with memories that cite unusual descriptions such as 'lying full length on the back of a cow for warmth', this particular memoir introduces difficult questions (requiring sensitivity) about how memory, history and fantasy might blur, and the difficulty in critically engaging these issues while

simultaneously honouring the voice of the speaker. These are examples and issues of memory that I address in more detail in later sections of this chapter.

#### **4.6.3 Post Resistance War Era & Memory Production**

Aside from the Resistance War, plenty of tumultuous histories were evident after the Imperial Japanese were forced to retreat. For instance, after the Japanese were defeated and surrendered to the Allied Forces and left China, the ceasefire between the KMT and Communists commenced again as they fought for power over the country. Also, the infamous Cultural Revolution incited by Mao Zedong began a period of atrocity that nearly destroyed the country. In this section, I explore the fragments within modern Chinese history, a trend of official memory that has perpetuated to this day.

##### *Civil War: KMT vs. Communist Party*

*Testimony from an Ex-Kuomintang (KMT) Soldier:* This excerpt is from a man named Lui Man-Chi, who was born in 1911, the year of the Revolution. In this excerpt, he speaks about his experience as a soldier of the anti-Japanese guerilla forces run by the KMT. Originally from a wealthy family, Lui was fortunate enough to be raised well prior to the war. However, everything changed after the war. This shocking transition seemed to reflect many lives in China and Hong Kong, regardless of wealth.

I was raised and went to school in the village. In those days life was better and more comfortable in the countryside. And the rich lived well. At twenty-four I was married. My parents died that year, both within the same month. They were in their fifties. In those days that was quite old—not like now, when we all live on to be seventy or even eighty.

When Japanese invaded China, some two years later, I joined the anti-Japanese guerilla forces in Sunwui run by the Kuomintang. I was recruited by my brother-in-law who was the commander of the KMT forces in the area. I went along to help. During the war what else was there to do?

I was with the guerrilla forces for eight years, in charge of supplies and provisions. Grain, clothing, uniforms, ammunition—all had to be procured somehow. It was very difficult and corruption was rampant. The ammunition given to us by the army often didn't fit our guns. So we had to find other types of guns or different ammunition.

Organizing food supplies was a nightmare. In the beginning, some places were better off for food than others, but in the end all were short. Chungshan was the best place and we went there twice a year to buy grain. The mayor was responsible for finding it for us and we would then give it to the local miller to grind. The villagers kept the husks. Village elders were responsible for the provision of vegetables, fish and meat.

In some areas people had so little that after they had supplied the army they were left with nothing. That's why so many people died of hunger. Tungkwun was the worst, but people were starving everywhere. What could we do? There was not enough food, the Japanese were bombing us and the army went hungry too. Even the Japanese soldiers were in bad shape. We saw them through our binoculars. They dug in on mountain tops, and their clothes were torn and ragged. (Tisdall 1989: 12)

From this excerpt, starvation for both civilians and soldiers are rampant. The memory of impoverishment, poverty, and the scars of war individually and shared with others is evident. A once peaceful way of life for Liu shifted dramatically.

Without reprieve from an end to wars, and instead, facing worsening conditions with a lack of food in impoverished Communist China, people became desperate. Parents selling or abandoning their daughters became a common trend for poor families, who were pervasive in the land. While I do not go into detail on the traumatic implications of these trends in China in this thesis, these are stories that nonetheless echo through the striking narratives from my subject peers. In particular, my subject-peer, Sandy recalled how her *grandmother* was sold by her father to another family in Indonesia (see Chapter 3).

Such histories are reflected in Jung Chang's memoirs as well. Chang is an author who was born in Mainland China in 1952, and belongs to the same generation as my parents as well as many of my subject peers. Chang writes compelling autoethnographic narratives of her family history across three generations. Jung Chang (2003) says:

The economic situation deteriorated steadily through the winter of 1947-48. Protests against food shortages and price gouging multiplied...and in mid-December 1947 a crowd of 20,000 people raided two well-stocked grain stores.

One trade was prospering: trafficking in young girls for brothels and as slave-servants to rich men. The city was littered with beggars offering their children in exchange for food. For days outside her

school my mother saw an emaciated, desperate-looking woman in rags slumped on the frozen ground. Next to her stood a girl of about ten with an expression of numb misery on her face. A stick was poking up out of the back of her collar and on it was a poorly written sign saying 'Daughter for sale for 10 kilos of rice. (p. 97)

Such histories offer a great deal of tragic insight to fragments concerning the scars of war, chaos, and poverty that were discussed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, they also offer possible explanations to the popular greetings and colloquialisms such as, 'Have you eaten yet?' that seem so pervasive in common conversation in greetings between generations and between elders, even to this day.

### *Great Leap Forward*

Shortly after the Communists attained power and exiled the KMT to Taiwan, Mao enacted his ambitious policy of The Great Leap Forward. With this policy, Mao made economic attempts to share or collectivize agricultural resources, promote rural industrialization and prohibit private ownership and supply. These initiatives ended up failing miserably. Virginia Lieu, a hospital worker, was born in 1926 in Hong Kong and then moved to Shanghai. She shares some of her personal experiences living through the Great Leap forward:

During the years of the Great Leap Forward our lives became very difficult. There was no food and my mother ended up eating horsemeat and other such unspeakable things. I was given meals in hospital. The food was poor—but at least I ate. My mother was in a bad way though; she grew thinner day by day. Her face was pale and her hands began to tremble. I was very distressed to see her getting worse without being able to help. (Tisdall 1989: 71)

Thus, the Great Leap Forward also indicated a period full of famine and impoverishment. While this particular event may not have been the experience of my subject-peers' parents directly, it nonetheless offers a comprehensive understanding concerning the difficulties of a post-Resistance War Mainland China, and the types of unseen, unheard stories and voices that continue to be buried in forgetting or silence. With the difficulty of accessing archives of cataclysmic historical traumas in modern Chinese history, how can a postgenerational person make sense of them? In the meantime, I continue presenting fragments with the Cultural Revolution.

These fragments of history continue to expand my diasporic vision beyond the

brief remembrances I heard from my subject-peers in Chapter 3. New links are being created, as poverty is given further perspective, and the important link of 'finishing all the rice on our plate' to the desperation for rice to survive is slowly being recovered in fragments. These mediated visions of memory are gradually allowing me to begin 'seeing' how traumatic memories transmit affectively, immaterially across generations and begin materializing through fragments of remembrances and memoirs.

#### **4.7 'Reflection: Asleep'**

*These fragments continue to open up new connections to my own vague memories...*

*I thought I had learned a lot about the difficulties in China from old textbooks and films that I saw in my undergraduate Asian Studies class.*

*But, I never really paid attention. I fell asleep.*

*I forgot.*

*But finally, I am beginning to remember again.*

*I am awakening to cries for justice I do not know I can offer.*

*I will try.*

*Many gaps between the fragments persist. I see silences between the voices.*

*Yet, I am starting to see, slowly, what I have been searching for: a vision, a memory of haunted histories I never knew.*

*I hear your tears*

*I see your cries*

*I will try. I will try.*

### **4.8 Cultural Revolution, Hong Kong, and Living Conditions**

#### **4.8.1 The Chinese Cultural Revolution**

After defeating the Japanese together with the KMT, the civil war between the Communists and KMT continued as they fought for control over the country. The Communist Party defeated the KMT, leading to the KMT exile and retreat to Taiwan. This new Communist regime began as the People's Republic of China under the rule of Mao Zedong. Brief moments of unity, peace, and hope sadly faded, and soon led to the terrors of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Lary



(2010: 13) suggests that ‘the Cultural Revolution and the Japanese invasion are tightly connected...The chaos of the war can be seen as a direct antecedent of the Cultural Revolution’.

In attempts to recapture his early victories and dreams of unity and to battle growing capitalistic, anti-socialist tendencies, Mao Zedong would commence a militant phase of officially sanctioned violence. This brutal order was made to purify both his party and the country, which began the infamous Cultural Revolution decade (1966-1976), a time that added even more scars to a tortured nation. The brief moment of hope that began with Mao’s new rule quickly faded. Many Chinese citizens became willing followers to Mao and acted on his ordinances. They became his willing ‘hands’ and ‘feet’ in bringing fellow Chinese to Mao’s horrific acts of (in)justice. Author and journalist Xinran (2009: 158) cites that ‘[thousands] and millions of Chinese sacrificed so much for the revolution, they threw themselves into it so wholeheartedly, without a thought for anything else’. Lary (2010: 12) also contends: ‘The upending of all traditional values had something in common with the Holocaust, but with a major difference: The Nazis turned on non-Aryan races; the Chinese turned on each other’. The infamous slogan, ‘My parents may love me, but not as much as Chairman Mao’ was a manipulative but powerful motivator for Mao’s followers (Bagshaw 2012: 54).<sup>130</sup>

Returning to Jung Chang’s narrated memoirs (2003), Chang shares how the fierce hand of Mao began ‘squashing’ independent thought. Chang lived through the Cultural Revolution before migrating to Britain in 1978. She refers to the Cultural Revolution as ‘Mao’s Great Purge’ describing how books were burned publicly and through people’s private homes. The Communist Party, in favour of new revolutionary ideals, rejected ‘tradition’ and ‘old China’. Chang (2003: 9) shares:

My father, who had been a Communist official but had fallen victim,

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<sup>130</sup> Interestingly, during the Maoist period, Mao attacked traditional Confucianism (and manipulatively twisted the concept of ‘filial piety’ as the quote suggests), as Confucius was considered too bourgeois for the Maoist forms of Marxist-Leninist thought. This raises some questions concerning how Confucian values (see Chapter 3) persisted through those that remained in Mainland China. It also raises questions concerning how and why Confucian values also persisted through Hong Kong and Asia. The legacy of Confucianism is far greater than what I have been able to discuss so far in the past two chapters. I do discuss Confucian values more in Chapter 5, but further research into Confucian tradition’s historical scope and genealogy is nonetheless, outside of my research questions and must be left for a future project.

was forced to burn his beloved collection (of books), and this was one of the main things that drove him to insanity. Even writing for oneself was extremely dangerous. I had to tear up the first poem I ever wrote, which was on my sixteenth birthday on 25 March 1968, and flush it down the toilet because my father's persecutors had come to raid our apartment.

Similarly, Ji-Li Jiang, born in Shanghai in 1954 and migrated to the United States in 1984 writes his memoir regarding the Cultural Revolution.<sup>131</sup> He recounts his memoir narratively and recalls, here, a conversation he had with a Communist theatre foreman who was fiercely pressurizing Jiang (here at the age of junior high school) to expose his father as a betrayer of Mao, which would lead to his severe punishment, imprisonment, or worse.

'I am sure you can tell us some things your father said and did that show his landlord and rightist mentality'

'But my father never said anything against Chairman Mao,' I protested weakly. 'I would tell you if he did.' My voice grew stronger with conviction. 'He never said anything against the Party.'

'Now, you have to choose between two roads.' Thin-Face looked straight into my eyes. 'You can break with your family and follow Chairman Mao, or you can follow your father and become an enemy of the people.' (Jiang 2011: 223-224)

Jiang's memoir provides insight into some of the impossible situations that even children were left to face during the Cultural Revolution. Jiang weaves memory, actual experience and some degree of creative license to create a narrative that powerfully conveys the severity, danger, and difficulty that comprised his upbringing in Communist China. All of these narratives provide a disturbing and striking insight into the lives, backgrounds, stories, and larger contexts *behind* the remembered narratives that myself and my next-generation Chinese-Canadian peers recalled hearing about from our parents, grandparents, or older relatives-in-know.

#### **4.8.2 Black Christmas: The Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong in 1941**

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<sup>131</sup> Liang's age of birth is generally consistent with the parental generation of my postgeneration peers. By 'rule of thumb', I consider individuals within my parental 'generation' as those born between 1937 and 1967. These dates roughly highlight the Resistance War, rise of Communist China and onset of the Chinese Cultural Revolution as key historical contexts surrounding our parents' birth and/or upbringing.

In terms of visibility in popular film and even mainstream English-language literature, of particular interest and note to me is the isolated availability of histories related to one of Hong Kong's deepest traumas which took place during the Anti-Japanese Resistance War. As of the moment of this writing, compared to the attention brought to a historical trauma such as the Nanking Massacre or Cultural Revolution (though only 'outside' of Mainland China), Hong Kong's story is much less known and accessible outside of the walls of Hong Kong and its cultural spaces of production.<sup>132</sup>

*Hong Kong and the Occupation: 3 Years and 8 Months*

Thanks to the work of increased scholarship over the 1937-1945 Resistance War in Nanking in the past few decades, there has been much said about its tragedies and atrocities. Meanwhile, lesser-known occupations and instances of further murder and rape occurred in Hong Kong. These were no less brutal according to some records, and like Nanking, also involved the atrocious actions of imperial Japanese soldiers in Hong Kong at that time.<sup>133</sup>

The Battle of Hong Kong began on December 8, 1941 and involved significant British resistance forces with some assistance of some brave Canadian soldiers (the Winnipeg Grenadiers) in early winter months, but they all failed to oppose Japanese aggression (Faure 1997; Roland 2001: 2). By the time Christmas arrived, it was deemed Black Christmas, December 25, 1941, as that day marked the fall of Hong Kong's resistance forces and the official dawn of 3 years and 8 months of Japanese occupation (Roland 2001: xv).

Of the atrocities recorded, the St. Stephen's College incident stands as one of

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<sup>132</sup> The silencing of the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China is an issue of official memory and forgetting. These issues of memory production are significant ones that I pursue in Chapter 6, though I particularly focus my discussion on Nanking. In Chapter 7, I do offer a post-hoc discussion concerning how I have begun to 'see' some of the brutalities during the Cultural Revolution that I never knew about.

<sup>133</sup> Access to this archival material is not as restricting as was the case with The Great Leap Forward materials. Thankfully, for next generation Chinese-Canadians who cannot read Chinese, Hong Kong's British colonial past means English remained one of its official languages of speech and academic study. Thus, there is more access to English-translated materials. However, the memoirs have typically originated from fluent, English-speaking White British who were working in Hong Kong. What is still lacking, unfortunately, are more English-translated materials from ethnic Chinese eyewitnesses.

the 'more horrid' examples (though horror of such magnitude can surely not be compared), as it involved the murder of medical personnel and their defenceless, wounded patients. On the day marking the official beginning of the Japanese Occupation, St. Stephen's College was being used as a 400-bed emergency military hospital to house the casualties of recent battles against the Japanese. According to Roland (2001), on Christmas morning, 65 patients were in the main hall, and another 40 in nearby classrooms (Roland 2001: 36). However, according to Roland,

At 5:30am on Christmas morning, while the fighting was still continuing along the adjacent ridge, about 150 to 200 Japanese broke into the hospital. Col. Black went forward and endeavoured to stop them. He was shot through the head and bayoneted 'dozens of times' as he lay on the ground. The Japanese troops then began attacking the bed patients, driving their bayonets through bodies and mattresses...The massacre continued until more than 50 of the patients in the hall, which had only a single entrance, had been stabbed to death. The others concealed themselves under beds and in dark corners....All the women were wearing nurses' uniforms and Red Cross armbands. Nevertheless, their treatment was atrocious. They were confined first in a small upstairs room in the College. The Chinese nurses were raped repeatedly by Japanese soldiers, then taken away and were not seen again. Three of the British nurses were also taken away at intervals, and their mutilated bodies were found next day. The other four were raped again and again throughout the morning and afternoon, but survived. (p. 37)

Specifically, the names of the dead British nurses were recorded, but according to Roland, the Chinese nurses' names were left unrecorded (Roland 2001: 37). Some sources cite that during the month following Black Christmas, 10000 girls and women were raped by Japanese imperial soldiers (Roland 2001). Despair, starvation, and sickness also continued to kill many due to the vast war at large. While atrocities such as the St. Stephen's College incident were occurring, there was also a great deal of economic exploitation happening concurrently with the enforcement of the military yen on the local Hong Kong people (see also Section 4.3).

David Faure's (1997) collection of memoirs (and translated into English) retells Hong Kong's fate in the Second World War. This memoir below (translated into English by the book's authors), was left by an anonymous writer, and found by

Faure's colleague, Dr. Hayes at a second-hand bookstore in Hong Kong.<sup>134</sup> Faure states that the original title (translated) of the anonymous manuscript is '*An account from memory of my escape from the fire of war*'.

The people of Hong Kong were fast asleep. The next day, that is 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1941...at 7.30 in the morning, Japanese planes suddenly attacked Hong Kong. I was just awake and had risen from bed to go to the toilet. Suddenly I heard the air siren and the sound of gun-fire. I came out of the toilet and went in to the sitting room. My family were all frightened. I told them this was only an exercise and that they did not have to fear. After a short while, I heard the sound of bombing that was like thunder.... I went out to the verandah, saw people running about in fear in the street and the air-raid wardens having been mobilized. I raised my eyes to the sky and saw Japanese planes about in the air, their silver wings reflecting a blinding glare from the sun but showing the red sun insignia on the underside. I dared not tell my family the truth for fear of adding fear upon fear...

...Halfway home, Japanese planes came again to bomb. I took shelter in a staircase and quickly went home when the alarm ceased. However, I saw that in the war situation, with so many children, I had to have some food ready. So I went to the Garden Biscuit Co., and bought some cream crackers and tinned food. As I was going home, I saw people fighting to purchase rice. The place was very rowed. The police had come out to maintain order. Only then did I remember we did not have much rice at home. It was rumoured that Kai Tak Airport had been entirely destroyed by the bombs. I looked up and saw that in the distance, black smoke went up to the sky and did not disperse for a long time. So I took the food home, had dinner and slept till midnight when the air raid siren worked me. When I heard the sound of aeroplanes, I quickly got out of bed and went with my family down the stairs to take shelter in the Shun Tak Co. At the time, the wind was cold and pierced into the bones. It was a pitiful situation. People were trembling and had nothing to say. This was the first time in my life I had experienced something like this. (December 8, 1941) (Faure 1997: Chp. 5, para. 26, Document V.a2)

Of the civilian memoirs available, Faure (1997: Chp. 5) states that many recounted these first bombings, recalling their uncertainty, food shortage, anguish and sense of loss. However, Faure asserts that this chapter of Hong Kong's history has been

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<sup>134</sup> Dr. Faure of the University of Hong Kong compiled a set of rare, archived memoirs as part of this collection and painstakingly translated them into an academic publication in English for other scholars and public to see. These memoirs (originally in Chinese, which I cannot read) were gathered by Dr. James Hayes' in an old Hong Kong second-hand bookshop and published by Professor Faure (1997) from a series of translated anonymous war diaries manuscripts, as reproduced in Faure's edited volume. Thankfully, though it was difficult for me to find a hard copy of it, the publishers were keen enough to publish, surprisingly, a Kindle e-copy of it. However, there were no page numbers, so, I have resorted to the Harvard method of listing chapters and paragraph numbers. Faure's collection of memoirs can be considered a 'primary source' (see also Chapter 2) as he explicitly mentions his desire to 'keep his own voice at minimum', allowing the collection to speak for itself (Faure 1997: 'Introduction Hong Kong, Colonial Society', para. 37).

largely left unwritten, with only 'snippets' of fragmented material available to piece together all that occurred in these times (ibid.: Chp. 5).

Wong Kan-Shing said:

I've been in Hong Kong for almost fifty years. I was here during the Japanese occupation. All business stopped and we had hardly anything to eat. It cost about four hundred dollars in occupation money for a catty of rice. My uncle had to close his factory and I tried to make a living by selling second-hand clothes. After the war I worked in a small wig factor in KwunTong. But I was no good at it and had to leave. Then I became a watchman on building sites. When I was sixty-four I fell ill and was taken to hospital. By then I had used up all my savings. (Tisdall 1989: 37)

In her short memoir, *A Bowlful of Rice*, Teresa Ng also recalls her experience as a 7 year old girl in 1942 during the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong.<sup>135</sup> Ng's age in this period situates her in the same generation as my parents. Here, she discloses a terrible memory:

As if Heaven was deaf and blind, Fourth Brother did not live beyond the first year of his young life. One day, we were playing with him inside the living room and sat him up on a rocking horse. Suddenly, a Japanese soldier busted open our front door and searched frantically for escaped prisoner. He did not find his prey and before leaving our flat, angrily kicked our baby brother off the rocking horse. Light-of-China never recovered from that brutal blow, and he died quietly the next dawn. I could never forget how pale his little face looked in the black cream checkered nightgown Ma-ma dressed him in, his tiny mouth bluish in death. That was the very first time I felt hatred against a people that was capable of producing such monstrosity as that murdering soldier. But as maturity began to set in, I realize there will always be the good and the evil among each people or race, and one cannot in fairness blame all the good and decent folks for the evil deeds done by some of their kindred! (Ng 2005: Chp. 7, para. 2)

Thus, the brutality during the Hong Kong Occupation is evident as are the living conditions and difficulties of the time. While some memoirs have

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<sup>135</sup> In what seems to be a growing trend not just due to market demand but perhaps also competitiveness of acquiring a publisher and public interest, Teresa Ng has published this memoir as an e-copy only. I found this via Amazon.co.uk's Kindle store. And, perhaps harkening to a new age of finding dusty memoirs in the back of an old bookstore, the availability and accessibility of the internet offers a double-edged opportunity for independent or indie authors desiring to speak their voice. On one hand, there is easier accessibility and an easy platform to promote their works. On the other hand, advertising a small e-book like this amidst an ocean of other, competing ebooks may be akin to 'sneaking-in' one's personal book into a local bookstore in order to sell/advertise it. It can still be bought and read, but it may still gather dust until some 'destined' reader picks it up. For me, I was glad to become one of these 'destined' readers to find it in the back, dusty shelves of the Kindle e-store.

been made available thanks to the efforts of academic researchers, these are hardly 'popular' and accessible texts, despite their ease of access now in the digital age and the savvy of these (academic) authors, publishers, to find a space for their distribution.

*Living Conditions & Daily Experiences*

Briefly, these oral stories describe some of the living conditions experienced in the post-war era. These convey some of the 'poverty' that many of my subject-peers and myself have described in what we have remembered from parental (and grandparents') tellings of their impoverished conditions. Wendy Wong, born in the 1950's was raised in Hong Kong as well. Wong (2009) states:

My twenty-four-year-old father and eighteen-year-old mother started life in a four-hundred-square-foot windowless storage area with a bare concrete floor, behind my maternal grandfather's fruit factory. It had no separate bathroom (we used the facilities in the factor) or kitchen, but at one end of the large room, there as a wood-burning stove and a water tap with a basin underneath. A large footbath would be filled with water for bathing. All drinking water, however had to be boiled, but this was typical of Hong Kong at the time. At the front door of the warehouse, the only door marked this so-called residence as Number 12 Square Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong. Just inside the front door were boxes and boxes of prunes and preserved fruit, the fruit factory inventory. The factor nearby had a telephone and a radio, but they were considered luxury items, and my family would wait for years to acquire them. Our home which was rent-free, was in the back of the warehouse, on the ground floor of a four-story wooden building that housed ten separate families on the upper floors, also living with minimal accommodations. The residents were mostly adults who worked long hours and paid low rent. With only one kitchen/bathroom per apartment, bathing was a shared activity. The men would take a shower together at the same time, followed shortly after by the women. The building was a firetrap and home at night for countless cockroaches, rats, worms, and lizards.

In the Central District of Hong Kong there were many four and five-story wooden buildings; they had been built before the war and jammed together with no thought for landscaping, much less trees or flowers. These buildings were also highly susceptible to fires. My brothers and I were shaken awake one midnight when I was six; there was a fire on the third floor and the black smoke poured out into the night. We watched in fear as fireman brought out the casualties: one of them was a young friend of mine. We escaped everything but water damage from the fire hoses, but there was no insurance to cover our losses.

....As a baby, I slept in a rusty old crib beside my parents' double bed in the makeshift bedroom, but soon graduated to a folding canvas cot when the next baby was born. The cots occupied the space designated

as a dining room, which had a table and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. There were crude wooden partitions to divide our home into four small rooms. (Wong 2009: Chap. 1: para.1- para. 3)

Yuen Win-ping in his testimonial stated,

After the Communists took over in China my life changed completely. My husband and I came to live in Hong Kong with our son. But soon after 1949 my son, with other students, returned to the mainland for a university course in engineering. We had one letter from him and that was all. No more news, no more contact. I have never discovered what became of him.

After my husband died I went to stay with another branch of our family. But even though it was family I was harassed and abused. This made me ill and depressed and I was admitted to hospital. (Tisdall 1989: 40)

These fragments further provide a poignant context and description to our understanding as postgeneration Chinese-Canadians. We have an understanding that our elders' upbringings were difficult and poor, but they were often told in contexts of lessons to us (see also Chapter 3). Such oral testimonies, however, offer a telling perspective of the histories lived by the previous generation. And they compel me to pause in reflection and remembrance of the resilience demonstrated by my parents and grandparents in the face of their own difficulties.

## **4.9 Oral Fragments and the Question of Authenticity**

### **4.9.1 Memory and Authenticity**

Amidst all of these oral fragments, many more questions need to be discussed. For instance, what does 'authenticity' mean in terms of these memories, and how important is it? This question ties into my discussions of performativity in Chapter 1, and returns to the questions I asked in the opening sections of this chapter.

Andrea Reiter (2004: 132) describes an example of an autobiographical memoir by Swiss author Binjamin Wilkomirski, called, 'Fragments'. This narrative retold a poignant and compelling tale of how he, as a child, survived various concentration camps during the Holocaust era against all odds, and how he integrated into Swiss society after the war was over. It was highly acclaimed and even inspirational,



until, at some point, it was discovered that, in fact, the memoir was not what it seemed: Wilkomirski had made it all up (Reiter 2004: 132-134). In fact, Wilkomirski's real name was Dosseker, the same name as the wealthy Swiss couple who adopted him. The combination of its autobiographical style and reliance on child-as-victim and survivor therefore recruits sympathy and emotional investment from readers. Also, its fragmented presentation style includes memories retold in in-cohesive fragments rather than a logical narrative.

That is, at least, Dosseker had made up the historical facts, and had been so informed of the tales because of his deeply involved, personal reading of the Holocaust stories. Reiter (2004: 133) describes that Dosseker went through 'what sounds like a severe midlife crisis, together with some unexplained physical ailments, promoted him, encouraged by his psychotherapist friend Elitsur Bernstein, to identify with the plight of the Jews, which he did to such a degree that he eventually assumed a Jewish identity'.

This recalls the tragic real-life story of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Chinese-American Iris Chang, author of the book *Rape of Nanking* (1997), which I briefly mentioned earlier. The book (almost) singlehandedly brought popular visibility to the once silenced Nanking Massacre. Chang and her family had no known direct connections to the Nanking Massacre<sup>136</sup>. Nonetheless, Chang's passion, sensitivity and relentless engagement and obsession of the Nanking Massacre archives, memoirs, and interviews in Nanking itself manifested into what was diagnosed by traditional psychologists as severe nightmares, bipolar depression, paranoia, and possible symptoms somehow resembling Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (see also Chapter 1). Tragically, these conditions led to Chang's eventual suicide. Typically, in traditional clinical psychological discourse, PTSD only manifests itself in actual survivors of a given traumatic incident, though there is research that suggests secondary traumatization in the children of these survivors.<sup>137</sup> Amidst this tragic personal history, Chang's account of Nanking has also been criticized by academics

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<sup>136</sup> Both of Chang's parents were university professors in China and emigrated to America, but there are no known direct eyewitness links between her family and the Nanking Massacre.

<sup>137</sup> This has some connection with transmission of trauma across generations, but much of the psychological literature on this issue discusses examples of children of survivors (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> generation children of Holocaust survivors). But here, there is the existence of traumatization despite having no originary relation to trauma survivors or the incident itself outside of mediated forms.

for some problematics, including her lack of fact-checking. The question I want to raise here concerning these issues is: how important are these 'facts' or 'truths'? For instance, was it 'fact' or 'truth' that destroyed Chang or brought Dossekker to madness?

In turn, these questions raise further challenges. For instance, if fact/truth is privileged, what does this say about the oral memory of Kwan Loi (65 years old in 1989)? Earlier in this section, her testimony mentioned how, in 1941, she was in Canton, and became scared while the Japanese were dropping bombs nearby. Then Kwan (and I mean to quote Kwan's memories with the utmost respect and no pejorative intents) testifies to running out into a field, starving alone with no food, giving birth to a child on her own, to which the child dies after 6 days. Then Kwan 'almost [dies] from exposure...and [remembers] swimming across a pond and lying full length on the back of a cow for warmth' (Tisdall 1989: 78).

For better or worse, it is easy to take a skeptical stance at the so-called 'authenticity' of this memory. Without meaning any disrespect, the improbability of lying on a cow for warmth is enough to garner a few cynical, secret chuckles followed by likely feelings of guilt at judging someone's heartfelt disclosure of extreme trauma, and then a focused return to what is truly important behind the words. That is, here, Davoine and Gaudillière's (2004) assessment of such situations of fantasy in light of severe historical trauma is relevant. The authors argue:

In Greek, non-forgetting, is literally, a-letheia: This is the very name of truth, at stake in this specific memory as in the scientific approach. Hence we do not have to choose between the minute detail and the global fact. Sometimes a fit of madness tells us more than all the news dispatches about the leftover facts that have no right to existence. (p. xxvii)

Thus, if, a skeptical stance towards the 'authentic facts' behind Kwan's oral testimony is correct, then these 'facts' are not as important as the very *necessity* of *fantasy* in what is remembered. Perhaps such fantasy can be thought of in an archetypal, dream-like fashion, necessarily symbolic and embodying a larger collective vision of otherwise unmanageable horrors? Undoubtedly, such questions of myth and fantasy in light of 'authentic' history and memory are charged with tension and certainly difficult to resolve.

To briefly illustrate the debate and tension between memory, history and the question of authenticity, it is helpful to consider what the controversy revolves around. Reiter (2004: 140) suggests, for instance, that if a text or oral story/history lacks ethical authenticity, the issue is a moral *expectation* such that the reader feels 'betrayed' from the 'broken relationship' from a text that has proven itself to be 'non-truthful' in its asserted claims of truth. Thus, the issue is fundamentally one of relationship, as the reader discovers that the text they invested in is not consistent with the 'facts' it claims. Aesthetic authenticity simply refers to the 'artistic' or 'literary' sensibilities it is able to accurately portray as a textual work. Psychological authenticity refers to the creation and documentation of the person named Binjamin Wilkomirski, 'who constructs himself in and by it. It is in this process of construction that he assumes a name. Dossekker is also said...that he himself remembers coming from Wilkomir.' (Reiter 2004: 140). Thus, Dossekker could be said to 'misremember' where he comes from. In light of this controversy, Reiter (2004) suggests about memory:

Incidentally constructed-ness of memory is not in itself a measure of authenticity, as even genuine memories are constructed to a certain extent. Memory does not ever seem to be an exact mirror of what happened, but is always shaped and influenced by events and experiences that come afterwards and is also guided by concerns the person who remembers holds at the time of remembering. (p. 140)

Thus, memory, by its nature depends on 'connections' and 'links' for its very existence. It is inherently relational, whether to individuals, persons, 'historical' antecedents, time or space. This importance of social links to history and the varying expressions of 'madness' in Kwan Loi, Dossekker or Iris Chang have much to do with the very 'breaks' to these social links (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).<sup>138</sup> Therefore, restoring these social links to histories, heritage, and to one's mutual complicity and connectedness with another's story (thus avoiding isolation and the

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<sup>138</sup> For Chang's suicide, it is impossible to know for certain what ruptures within the social link led to 'madness'. One can only problematically speculate. I wonder if her very pursuit of Nanking's horrors (and thus a 'link' to these histories), in fact, brought to her (un)conscious attention just how disconnected she is from these histories, the surviving eyewitnesses she talked to, and the lost voices of the dead in the pictures she found. Her madness, I am speculating, may have been produced from the guilt and shame she felt from these new disconnections, even as she created new links. I am not the first to speculate on this. An interesting biographical film (*Iris Chang: The Rape of Nanking 2007*) echoes these theories through interviews with Chang's parents and peers, and reveals Chang's journey to writing *The Rape of Nanking* as well as the aftermath on her health. Further investigation or research is warranted on this matter.

sense of being ‘alone’ in one’s experience of trauma) can help one compose a montage of memory that stages a space of justice for the ghosts of war, poverty, chaos and terrible histories.

In spite of all these questions, it needs to be said that I am in no way intending to dismiss or ‘forget’ the magnitude and meaningfulness of historical traumas by my questioning issues of authenticity and memory. Quite on the contrary, my very engagement in these issues, beyond the critical academic engagement, aims to bring attention to *milieu de mémoire* (see Wang 2004; Tai 2001; Nora 1989), and create/engage a performative space of both remembrance and simultaneous experience.

#### 4.9.2 Performativity and Memory

Tilmans, van Vree, and Winter (2010) suggest that identity, memory and history are all *performative*,

[and] imbedded in cultural practices that individuals and groups fashion and in which other individuals and groups participate, either directly or over time. It is an activity, something that happens in time and place, and that on every occasion when we come together to do the *work of remembrance*, the story we fashion is different from those that have come before. (p. 7, italics mine)

I echo the importance of these assertions, especially in the context of this chapter (and as also discussed in Section 4.2), and the importance of ‘coming together’ with others to assemble social links between immaterial and material bodies through a diasporic unconscious. The performativity of history, identity, and memory (see also Chapter 2) can also be seen in Cecilia Sosa’s (2012) discussion of Argentinian theatre, which I will briefly spend some time on. In the play, a woman, ‘Vanina’ discloses a testimony of her experience as a 3 year-old girl witnessing a baby-bath from her parents (Sosa 2012: 225). The story is autobiographical even if it is not personal due to the entanglement and complicity of the broader public audience and other actors on stage to Vanina’s story (ibid.: 222). According to Sosa, there is one scene where a photograph of this image flashes behind Vanina in the play as she speaks and discusses the photo. Vanina discloses that in the photo of her watching her brother’s bathing, she says, ‘In the photo you can see that I’m happy

but confused, I don't quite understand where my brother came from, because I don't remember seeing my mum pregnant' (Sosa 2012: 223). What is fascinating is that the adult Vanina discloses how, when she was 21, she learned that her father stole the baby from a detention camp after the baby's activist parents were murdered (ibid.: 224). The baby was not her real brother. From my understanding of Sosa's discussion, what is interesting about this example is how, firstly, Vanina participates in the act of *remembering* within the *immediacy* (see Davoine and Gaudillière 2004) of the performance in the play. However, the 3-year-old girl in the picture (her younger self) does not 'know' this, even as she observes with puzzlement and joy at the arrival of a new family member. What the 'adult Vanina' remembers is different from what the 'younger Vanina' remembers in the photo, and the social link that Vanina imagines and performs connects her not only to a traumatic history, but to differently aged "Vanina's" across chronological time, with varying degrees of knowledge about the histories. Furthermore, Sosa (2012: 230) argues that Vanina is not alone in the staged performance, as other actors participate in this remembering, as do the viewing publics. Thus, this entanglement of performance brings attention to the entangled milieu of the theatre, the stage, within the photo, and those referred to by the photo (e.g. Vanina's father, the histories) through the performativity of identity, history, and memory. Nonetheless, the performance is a work of remembrance even when, (as the journal article title itself suggests), it is a 'performance of blood' (relationships). That is, the story performed in remembrance is different than what was remembered in another period of chronological time and space.

My interest in Sosa's discussion in this chapter, then, is to further articulate the tension between memory and history, and how the tension between them need not be seen from a perspective of opposition and conflict if seen from a lens of performativity (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2). Performing an imagining or fantasy, therefore, can actually *recover* broken links, particularly within their immediacy and expectancy (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004; Walkerdine 2013; see also Chapter 3). In this way, my performance of this thesis and the inevitable imagining that must take place in the act of performing a diasporic montage of fragmented ethnic Chinese histories, is, I argue, an essential 'invention' (in the Guattarian sense) of seeing what cannot be seen, and uncovering hidden histories

(see Guattari 1995). Thus the immaterial affective hauntings that transfer through the diasporic unconscious are rendered visible through a diasporic vision--an assemblage of mediated memory (see Cho 2008). It is through the materiality of such mediations such as interview narratives, memoirs, historical accounts, or artworks, photography and videos, that momentary, fragmented glimpses of haunted histories can be seen. Together, immaterial bodies (e.g. the nameless, voiceless unburied dead; or unknown, lost micro/macro histories) are linked through a diasporic unconscious where memories of trauma were once rendered invisible due to injustice. The transmission of affective memories of trauma through im/material bodies, therefore, can be seen through performing a diasporic montage.

#### **4.10 Affect and the Unconscious Through Memory and History**

To continue on with this discussion of affective hauntings and the unconscious at the intersection of memory and history, I ask: how does trauma pass through a diasporic unconscious affectively, and how does the trauma from the original historical incident persist across generations? These questions have implications towards how the past is remembered by prior generations as well as the postgeneration Chinese-Canadian. To further aid my development of a diasporic vision that searches for links to histories through the collective unconscious of my diaspora, I return to a discussion of Davoine and Gaudillière (2004) and Volkan et al. (2002), and how they perceive the links between memory and history in intergenerational transmissions of trauma.

Amidst the fragments of history that are told and left untold, a collective traumatization passes on relentlessly across generations. Such collective trauma appears to ignore the rules of time, and dismisses the need to be anchored to an authentic historical 'truth'. Why might this be so? How is this possible? As discussed in earlier sections, one important possibility can be found in the work of Davoine and Gaudillière (2004: 11), who suggest that such transgenerational transmission of trauma depends upon the very *social links* formed and connected with historical memory. And even if such links are seemingly absent, one's

*madness or expression of trauma* 'goes in search of an echo, in this improbable other, of what official history has marginalized or trivialized'. These social links can refer to, for instance, connections to family, national memories, and certainly to historical antecedents 'frozen in time' within the psyche of a person. These social links, regardless of attempts to forget, are tenaciously redeveloped even if they are severed by one's own personal preference to 'forget' a difficult past and 'make a fresh start'.

For instance, Davoine and Gaudillière (2004) tell of a patient named 'Gilda'. (Gilda, herself, was a psychologist seeking therapy). In her 'madness' (the DSM-IV might label her condition as 'psychosis' under traditional clinical diagnosis), Gilda truly believed she was the embodiment of ancient goddesses. She disclosed that she literally was 'the goddess: Isis, Kai, Lilith. I was the devil, the fallen angel Lucifer' (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004: 30). However, when Gilda finished her therapy 5 years later, she 'claimed her delusion as her most precious instrument' (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004: 22). The madness or 'psychotic' fantasies that Gilda experienced actually helped her recover the important 'feelings' she needed, to 'bring back together the separate pieces' from all that she was slowly understanding over the course of her life. Regarding her embodiment of gods and goddesses, Gilda adds, 'Let no one say that this experience was nothing. Let no one erase this experience with medication. I got more out of it that I could bear. And I drank, to stimulate myself. I was a zombie, but I never changed my name, Gilda' (ibid.: 30). What is revealed through the tale of Gilda is how 'madness is more a device than a destiny' (Fritz 1992 as cited in Davoine and Gaudillière 2004: 22). Madness, thus, serves as an important form of imagined memory or fantasy that brings immediacy to feelings that originally disappeared within the gaps and chasms from trauma's rupture of the social link. For Gilda, her feelings of 'shame' that came with her madness therefore, were more precious than her not feeling anything at all (ibid.: 22). In fact, the 'actual' histories that were ultimately linked to Gilda's madness involved the silence that surrounded a massacre in Libya. Her father was the sole survivor (having not been on work duty on the day of the massacre). He was subsequently forced to experience the pain of becoming a messenger of death, reporting the tragic news to the many surviving families of the deceased (ibid.: 31). Thus, similar to Kwan Loi and Dosseker who I discussed in

the previous section, Gilda's fantasy also becomes an act of remembering, revealing more about the severity of the originary trauma than what mere facts alone can say.

The insights I have discussed thus far can be complemented by Volkan et al.'s (2002) conceptualisation of a 'chosen trauma', as I have discussed in Chapter 1. I have also found this concept particularly helpful in 'seeing' how memory might be produced (whether from official, national, political or familial sources) through a diasporic unconscious.<sup>139</sup> Similar to Davoine and Gaudillière, the links of 'chosen trauma' to historical events are also important, and also concern the traumas from historical conflict or struggle that can spread intergenerationally through a 'large group'. Within this large group, such traumas can potentially become unconsciously 'chosen'. This word, 'chosen', is termed by Volkan et al. to refer to a definitive trauma that (re)defines and intertwines with the unique 'core identities' (or internalised self and object image representations) of individuals within the group and potentially passed within respective familial generations<sup>140</sup>. That is, regardless of the 'reality' of what happened, a traumatized group maintains their own 'unique core identities, sub-identities, and personal reactions to trauma', but 'all members have mental representation of the tragedies that have befallen the group (Volkan et al. 2002: 44). Thus, since each individual in the large group has integrated the mental representation/images of a given trauma of choice, it becomes 'shared' across the whole group. Boldly enough, Volkan et al. do not suggest a size restriction to such a group, and it can certainly suggest a whole ethnic peoples.<sup>141</sup>

In this context, if the unconscious traumatization of peoples continues spreading, the shared (massive) large-group trauma has the potential to become so pervasive that it becomes intertwined and entangled with (almost) every

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<sup>139</sup> Specifically, the mechanism of chosen trauma offers an interesting perspective in terms of how individuals within the ethnic Chinese diaspora (through various geographical regions) negotiate their national or collective identity/identifications, an issue I will return to in Chapter 6.

<sup>140</sup> This process is much like how Volkan's (1987) 'deposited representation' works, as I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 in the context of the discursive remembrances of my subject-peers. The unique quality of the development towards a 'chosen trauma' here, though, is how each person and family 'shares' a given mental image and representation of a particular historical trauma. While each person can see the trauma with his/her own unique perception, meaning and value, the commonality of the historical traumatic trigger is what is shared.

<sup>141</sup>In fact, Volkan's work and examples in ethnic/political conflicts has utilized their theories to aid in regional and national conflict diplomacy and reconciliation.



individual and unique core identity and self-representation within the group *globally, and* regardless of geographical distance from one another. Thus, according to this concept, diasporic peoples around the world, in whatever region, space or locale would unconsciously 'choose' this trauma as a defining one in their people's histories and memories. Therefore, when such a massive, global, shared trauma becomes *unconsciously* 'chosen' as I have described, Volkan suggests that it can fittingly be called a '*chosen trauma*'. It can transmit across generations if it is *unresolved*, and it is certainly not easily detectable.

'Chosen trauma' is also descriptive of an evolving process when ancestral trauma becomes so widespread and pervasive in a large-group ethnic identity that a mental representation of the trauma, along with associated feelings such as shame and other defensive responses to the traumatic event become intertwined with the original group's collective identity, and, if unresolved, passes to subsequent generations (Volkan 2004; Volkan et al. 2002: 42).

...[It] reflects the traumatized past generation's incapacity for or difficulty with mourning losses connected to the shared traumatic event, as well as failure to reverse the humiliation and injury to the group's self-esteem...inflicted by another large group... (Volkan et al. 2002: 42)

In comparison to Davoine and Gaudillière (2004), Volkan also shares an emphasis on the importance of links to history. For Davoine and Gaudillière, 'social links' are often spoken of in the context of the trauma of an individual and how their condition seeks out a recovery of the 'social links' that have been broken due to the ruptures of trauma. However, Volkan offers an alternative understanding to the transmission of historical trauma that is quite different due to the framework of 'deposited representation' (see Chapter 3). According to Volkan et al. (2002), the social links to the shared 'chosen trauma' are important and contributive to transgenerational transmission.

Volkan et al. (2002) adds:

As injured self-and internalised object-images pass from generation to generation, the chosen trauma they carry assumes new functions, new tasks. The historical truth about the event is no longer of psychological moment for the large group; *what is important is the sense of being linked together by the shared chosen trauma*, which usually becomes

highly mythologized. (p. 43; italics mine)

Volkan's insights add a complementary perspective towards historical links through mental representation. In the spaces where such large-group traumas or chosen traumas are also forgotten or silenced for whatever reasons, according to Volkan, they can also lay dormant, but will eventually be deposited across generations until they are resolved.

This way of conceiving transgenerational transmission is interesting (but also limited as I have already discussed in Chapter 3) due to the problematics of mental representation within a deposit-reservoir model of intergenerational transmission. In spite of these limitations, Volkan et al.'s (2002) 'chosen' trauma concept is interesting due to the notion of conscious and unconscious 'choosing', as if there is an active consent and persistence. These 'choices' that produce particular mental representations of trauma through large groups or even the whole diaspora, is an issue concerning memory production that I further explore in Chapter 6.

Clearly, the large claims of Volkan et al. (2002) are certainly interesting but can also be critiqued for being too homogenizing, even as it privileges individual processes of psychic transfer. This issue re-iterates the very problematics of diaspora and ethnicity that I discussed in Chapter 1 (e.g. where local contexts and particular people in specific situations are missed). However, reflexive of these issues, I want to embrace the tension of such problematics and re-configure this concept of 'chosen trauma' within an understanding of diaspora and history that demonstrates a 'critical historical consciousness' that can further interrogate issues of power such as the problem and performativity of ethnicity (See Chapter 2), reflexively honour the localized contexts of specific diasporas (e.g. the particular population of postgeneration Chinese-Canadians that I affiliate with), but is also bold enough to critically engage possible productions of memory through the transnational, global diaspora (micro and macro). Specifically, in Chapter 6, I consider the issue of 'choice' and 'choosing' in light of cultural framings of hegemony (e.g. Gramsci), familial and national memory production, and the consent of public to the dominant and the prevalence of power (see also Zylinska 2005; Foucault 1991).

Thus, I am gradually discovering that my original search for my own

haunted histories has, in turn, become a quest for justice for the unseen voices, unheard faces, and uncovered gestures of the lost dead throughout the histories I have begun to 'see' through this chapter. Thus, my act of performative writing is too, an attempt to offer a 'stage' for justice.

#### 4.11 A Case Experiment in the Transmission of Affect

In light of the debates I have discussed concerning memory, history, fantasy, authenticity, their entanglements and their tensions, I want to performatively explore here the possibility of how concepts of transgenerational transmission of affective trauma can cross generations as well as space. This is an experiment in exploring memory and historical tensions, as well as putting to test some of the concepts of the unconscious I have discussed in this chapter so far; such as large group traumas that can lead to 'chosen traumas'. In this experiment I will compare and contrast the translated memoir of Chong Chan-Yee and also my own interviews with Bruce (see Chapter 3).<sup>142</sup>

Chong Chan-Yee is an overseas Chinese born in Java in 1912 who moved to Hong Kong. Born into a fairly wealthy and prosperous family (his grandfather was a prosperous landowner and his father received a good education), Chong Chan-Yee speaks from different life upbringings, but nonetheless reflects on the horrors that he saw during Japanese-occupied Hong Kong.

...when the Japanese first attacked Shanghai, I was forced to leave university and return to Java. It was then that I had a difficult time. I had adapted to city ways and wasn't suited to the rough life of the countryside.

It was for the reason that I left Java to come to Hong Kong. My two

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<sup>142</sup> *Bruce's story from Chapter 3: 'Dad's stories focussed on hard work on the farm and the value of being an honest man. Dad talked about his father, my grandfather, when grandpa was a sergeant in the Chinese army. One of the stories about honesty was when grandpa and his troops came across seven big buckets of gold bullion that the Japanese Imperial army stole from China during World War 2. The Japanese hid the gold in caves in the country-side. Dad said that grandpa reported the stolen gold bullion to the generals instead of stealing the gold for himself and his comrades. Grandpa showed some regret for his honesty. However, Dad said that grandma told grandpa he did the right thing in not stealing his country's gold. Instead, those corrupt, greedy generals stole the gold to fill their own coffers. My grandparents believed that not only stealing the gold bullion was dishonest but also an evil act. They believed in karma. We call it 'boa ying' in Cantonese. Grandma thought that if grandpa stole the gold, a curse would come down on his family and all future generations of Chou's.'*

brothers left as well. My elder brother went to Singapore where he died during the occupation. I don't know under what circumstances. My younger brother followed me to Hong Kong. He was killed by Japanese soldiers. How did it happen? As you must know, it was the rule in those days that you had to kowtow if you passed a Japanese soldier on the street. My brother failed to do so. I don't know whether it was because he didn't see the soldiers, or whether he objected to the rule. Anyhow, they hit him and kicked him viciously. He died a few days later. They were very cruel, the Japanese soldiers.

I knew how cruel they could be. You see, I had been conscripted by the Japanese and forced into hard labour—building roads and digging tunnels. Then they found out that I was an educated man. It was obvious, even to them, that I was different. From the way I spoke and moved, they could tell that I was not the ordinary type. (Tisdall 1989: 100)

Chong also describes an interesting incident that parallels a story told by Bruce in Chapter 3, referring to the temptation of acquiring unattended gold. While there is no relationship between Chong and Bruce, it is of value to consider the different situations as described by different generations.

Let me tell you about one strange incident. It was towards the end of the war, and, as many things were being stolen, the Japanese ordered me to make an inventory of the storeroom at the YMCA. And do you know what I found there? I found a gold bar! It must have been left there by the British and I wanted to keep it. But my wife scolded me. She said: 'Are you crazy? The Japanese are merciless. We have survived so long—why risk our lives now for a single bar of gold? Give it back to them.' I returned the bar. It was not an easy decision.

When the war ended, I found work as a printing broker. I had lots of customers. Later, when I had some capital, I established my own business: a packaging and printing factory. ...

In 1982 there were several days of heavy, continuous rainfall. My workshop was flooded. Everything I had—my machines, raw materials and finished products—were washed away in the river. I was not insured against natural disaster. Overnight I was destitute. (Tisdall 1989: 101)

While the stories between Bruce and Chong are obviously different and based in different circumstances, Chong's description of a similar temptation as what Bruce had described regarding the gold is representative of the discursive tone behind remembrances. On one hand, the next generation heard stories of survival with attached moral messages, affect and perhaps deposited representations of unfulfilled wishes, regrets, and hopes. On the other hand, the remembrances and

tellings of these testimonies are wholly descriptive of *survival*, the experiences of surviving, and the traumas and tragedies of *remembering* a time of deep suffering. Compared to the narratives that Bruce and the postgeneration remembers being told (see also Chapter 3), there are few, if any moral lessons in these memoirs that these witnesses have found when asked by the interviewers to reveal their personal stories. Instead, the stories presented are raw, authentic, and unrelenting in imagery.

However, this does not mean that affect does not stir. Instead, what is revealing through these stories, and certainly through Chong's memoir are perhaps the very origins of unfulfilled desires, wishes and regrets that spawned a ghostly haunting. His mere mentioning about the gold bar and the difficulty of the decision is quite evident in his desire to instantly rediscover his lost wealth (that he had while growing up) and reclaim a life away from hardship. However, the need for survival from the Japanese (and after convincing from his wife) led to his giving up this wish and dream. Interestingly, Chong's wife in his account plays a significant role in his choice. And while it is unclear what role Bruce's grandma played with his grandpa, her being mentioned might suggest a role as well. However, to this end, this is mostly speculation.

But what is also interesting in Chong's story is the narrative of brief capital success and then fall into subsequent poverty. While I must note my speculation here, I do, on a textual analytical level (since I did not interview him, translate the Chinese, nor compile the collection of unanalyzed memoirs), find it intriguing how Chong speaks about his brief success at starting a business before falling into poverty and destitution after experiencing a natural disaster. This is stated right after his description of the gold bar.

Chong's shift in tone in his testimony is clearly suggestive of his discontent with his life situation in poverty. Though he expressed appreciation for *Helping Hands* in providing him a space to live, his wish and desire for the life he previously had is transparent throughout his story. It is possible that beyond the desire to acquire wealth and escape poverty, a heavier self-expectation to *succeed and be a success*, not just for oneself, but also for the family and the legacy of the family as a migrant, is driving his disappointment. These migrant expectations are discussed more in the next section.

Lastly, these stories can be read on a collectively unconscious level. Recalling the importance of social links to Davoine and Gaudillière (2004) as well as Volkan et al. (2002), there is an intriguing generational social link that crosses generations. First, there is a large-group trauma that Chong lived through as an eyewitness, which was connected to a conflict with an oppressor. This was specifically the Japanese oppression and occupation in Hong Kong, reflective of the larger Japanese dominance during the Anti-Japanese Resistance Wars. Bruce's grandpa was also an eyewitness to this Anti-Japanese War era. And there is strong reason to believe that the affective intensity of this historical era was enough to intertwine with the core identities of both Bruce's grandpa and Chong. For Bruce, his link to the Anti-Japanese resistance war was through stories-with-lessons told by his dad. This particular re-telling of the story was then, somehow passed down from Bruce's grandpa, the eyewitness, and to the son (Bruce's dad) as well.

Thus, particular mental representations (Volkan et al. 2002) in Bruce's grandpa transmitted to his dad, and then to himself. From Bruce, his mental representations are shared with a war more than half a century ago, along with the regrets, lessons, wishes and fears that became entangled with his grandfather and father's own representations. These mental images and representations, though fragmented, are connected to those of Chong's own regrets, wishes, and dreams.

Thus, Chong and Bruce are therefore socially linked. However, this link is not just through mental representation, but also to the traumatic ruptures of history (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). Furthermore, there is some 'unconscious' choice made in Bruce's decisions to share this story of trauma, as well as Chong's decision to share that story of trauma, which further links them together across time, space, memory and history. Therefore, Chong and Bruce are connected within the diasporic unconscious, just as I now am gradually recovering my link to them as well, through my own search for histories and my complicity to my peers. I am also complicit and linked through my act of performance, within this very case study and personal journey to 'feel' and 'imagine' these haunted histories of fear, threat and war through my own fantasy, memories and feelings that resonate with their tale (Walkerine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).

As I consider these stories, I am reminded also of how powerful it felt to first learn about the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong and its connection to my

familial narrative. It shocked me, but also, strangely, made a lot of my questions about my own cultural identity/identifications 'make sense', even as I continued to ask more questions. It felt as if the silences and spaces of my history that I could never quite understand but was seeking out began slowly uncovering. As such, I have always felt that I had (unconsciously) 'chosen' the traumatic incidents throughout the Anti-Japanese War as a dominant ancestral wound (which may perhaps be evident through this thesis). Thus, I too am linked to this trauma, and also socially linked to Bruce, his dad, his grandfather, and also to Mr. Chong in the most mysterious of ways, across chronological time, geographical space, and memory. This further demonstrates an important insight to what Cho (2008) describes as the assemblaged body, connected through a diasporic unconscious, and contributing to a diasporic vision of haunted histories.

Regardless of 'truth' behind the historical antecedents, the 'facts' are not so important as the affects that transmit powerfully and unconsciously throughout a collective diaspora, and what has become significant enough in our identities and identifications to be *remembered*. For some of my subject-peers, as well as myself, there are still many questions about the spaces and silences and forgettings between the stories we know and do not know. And in this strange space, this is where memory and history entangle.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

The fragments of memory through oral histories that I have included thus far are important in crystallizing a 'way of seeing' haunted histories. For the next generation, Chapter 3 showed how memory of the past was visible, but often within the context of parents 'teaching a lesson'. Thus, part of crystallizing a diasporic vision, or 'seeing' histories that have been forgotten, requires a reflexivity concerning how memory is produced. However, these familial forgettings are further entangled with memory productions mediated by factors including the difficult question of 'authenticity' within the person remembering, as well as issues of nation-state power or 'official memory productions'.

What stories are chosen for remembrance or chosen to be forgotten raises questions concerning *why* some historical 'events' remain attended to in lieu of others. These are key issues that raise urgent concerns about how diasporic vision can be 'blocked' or 'obscured' in its visibility due to mediations of fantasy as well as power. Certainly, these issues also raise questions about how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation can make sense of mediated memory in their/our process of looking to see lost histories. I continue these discussions in more detail by considering the transnational production of the moving image within Chapter 6.

In this chapter, I have attempted to stage an engagement with fragmented histories and memory, posing key tensions and questions concerning fantasy, authenticity, and affect. These tensions have been discussed in relationship to space, time, and (unconscious) 'choosings' of large-group traumas. I have also made these arguments while exploring how official rememberings and forgettings can influence the production of memory. In addition, I presented fragments of oral stories that reflected accounts from some of the key historical events I overviewed as a means of searching for the personal memories that agreed or differed from the stories often told in history texts. I also introduced Volkan's conceptualization of large-group traumas that can form into 'chosen traumas'. This conceptualization has opened up questions and new possibilities concerning how significant historical traumatic events can be spread not only within a familial generation transgenerationally, but across a whole collective of an ethnic group. Significantly, I have also discussed the importance of Davoine and Gaudillière's (2004) argument concerning the importance of recovering social links that have been broken due to traumatic ruptures. Throughout this section, I have also written a case experiment to explore the possibilities of transgenerational haunting being 'seen' across time and space, memory and history and recovering broken links through imagining, immediacy and my resonance to common histories (see also Walkerdine 2013).

In complementing oral stories, memoirs, historical analysis, and my own experiences, I have aimed to create and simultaneously *stage* an archive that sheds light to the *remembered stories, narratives*, and transgenerational transmission of affect that I analyzed in Chapter 3. Methodologically, I have attempted to continue crystallizing a diasporic montage by providing an archival 'method of seeing' the elusive and invisible transgenerational ghost through the histories presented, the



memoirs offered, and taking a critical historical consciousness approach that reflexively interrogates these histories, particularly, in relationship with official, personal, and collective memory. The discussion in the next chapter concerning migrant hauntings intersects with the discussions of this chapter as both tackle oral testimonies in reference to haunted histories. Thus, the next chapter discusses these migrant hauntings, and also concludes with an analysis of artworks that consider the tensions between history, memory, fantasy and migration. Specifically, I discuss the connection of myth and migration. This has contributed to the ways I have begun to understand the types of seeing necessary to situate the affects of transgenerational haunting in our Chinese-Canadian postgeneration.

## CHAPTER 5: TRACING MIGRANT HAUNTINGS

### 5.1 Introduction: Figure of the Migrant

In this chapter, I continue discussion of the tensions between history and memory, in the context of the figure of the migrant. I argue that the Chinese migrant is an important figure that embodies affective hauntings across generations.<sup>143</sup> I draw from Cho's (2008) conceptualization of 'figure' in her discussion of the 'yanggongju' and its embodiment of hauntings linked to a milieu of im/material bodies (see also Blackman 2012). While the term yanggongju referred to the Korean comfort woman, yanggongju became a diasporic spectre that 'carried' and embodied an im/material milieu of hauntings. The figure of the yanggongju is a ghostly assemblage of the present and past voices of living and dead comfort women; the (broken) links to forgotten histories (e.g. the Forgotten War); the voice-hearing in Cho's mother; the silences of history; and Cho's own hauntings as a postgeneration Korean-American (see Chapter 1).<sup>144</sup> Drawing from these understandings, this chapter explores what affective hauntings transmit intergenerationally through the figure of the migrant in the Chinese diaspora. I explore to what extent the migrant figure carries hauntings that are entangled in a milieu of historical trauma, cultural shame through Confucian legacies, and generational transmission.

The migrant is entangled with the *remembered and forgotten fragments of the past*. The fragments, I have argued in Chapter 4, are representative of a pervasive, shared and wide prehistory filled with common narratives of survival and poverty. These are narratives of survival (and a desire to live beyond mere survival and one's life limitations) that have likely led to significant exile and/exodus of the ethnic Chinese to lands such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and North America. As Mary Chamberlain (2009: 250) suggests, "To understand migration,

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<sup>143</sup> The migrant is not the 'only' figure that carries hauntings, of course, but is one that has become rendered increasingly visible through my montage of histories.

<sup>144</sup> Ahmed (2004: 44) has also discussed the term 'figure', but in terms of racial White supremacist 'hate' that can distribute through a milieu of 'figures' (e.g. figure of aliens and foreigners) that embody the 'threat of loss: lost jobs, lost money, lost land', as well as 'impurity'. For Ahmed, the 'figure of hate' circulates or moves between signs and bodies'. What I find helpful about Ahmed's conceptualizations that I adapt here is a link between the politics of the emotion of 'hate' (e.g. its links to power, racism) and its affective circulation.

we must recognize that each migrant arrives with a prehistory which determines the nature and meaning of their journey'. These key prehistories that articulate a 20<sup>th</sup> century of war and chaos which are carried by migration have been discussed in the last chapter (see also Chapter 1 for a review on migration literature). Significantly, I argue that the act of migration has accelerated the affective transmission of trauma across generations. I ask in this chapter if these silenced or (un)consciously remembered large group traumas are, in some of the next generation, dormant in the unconscious due to family forgettings? And if so, might any possible resistances, indifference, or simply lack of access, contribute to this temporary dormancy? And would any temporary ignorance to these traumas prove to be an occasion for it to be carried through subsequent generations until it is resolved? Thus, I consider here how the 'migrant' can be configured as a carrier of (un)conscious affective trauma.

While Canada's migration history with ethnic Chinese involves multiple streams of history, namely early Chinese railroad workers, for instance, I focus this chapter on experiences of migration prior to migration, and expand it to any migration, regardless of Canada, China or elsewhere, particularly in relation to the scars of war throughout East Asia. The purpose of this is to further consider the connections between the lost histories discussed in the previous chapter and the experience and motives of migration and its pressures.

My approach to considering these questions and purposes in this section continues my autoethnographic approach by creating a dialogue between a mixture of primary and secondary sources of the 'migrant experience'. In particular, I have found helpful Chan Kwok Bun's (2005, 1994, 1991) foundational work on migration and entrepreneurship. While the interviews he conducted for his research largely revolve around migrants who left China in the 1920's and 1930's to go to Singapore, Hong Kong, and North America, his analyses and insights have been seminal in my own montage of haunted histories. In fact, his analyses have prompted me to consider how generational traumatic affects persist across diasporas. Despite the geographical and temporal disparateness between the conversational interviews I conducted in Chapter 3 and the ones that Chan conducted, I contend that there are striking affective and thematic resonances that are important to note. Significantly, both sources offer *fragmented* diasporic

visions of *common* haunted histories (albeit ‘fragments’ from different processes) and both reveal themes that emphasize the heavy influence of Confucian legacies and its values on family, one’s present and future. In addition to this chapter’s dialogue with Chan’s works, I also continue to situate them alongside some intriguing primary source testimonies. Again, as I discussed in Chapter 2, the issue of language continues to limit what sorts of oral testimonies are available for access to the postgeneration diaspora. Thus, while I am aware of methodological critiques in ‘citing’ some of Chan’s interviews, I am also arguing that there is an important ‘space’ here in this chapter to do so, especially as I aim to juxtapose them alongside some of the primary sources I have found in English (see also Chapter 2 for my discussion of sources).

Throughout this chapter, I assemble a fragmented (diasporic) vision of the migrant and seek out the possibilities of how memory and history entangle in this figure and further ‘stage’ the process of what it takes to do so through another experiment of the impossible. This experiment explores to what extent two individuals, separated across time and space can share links to histories.

The next section explores the ‘myth’ and fantasies attached to the actual life and outlook of migrants, and explores how these myths collide with the values, expectations, and associated affects that end up becoming *carried within* them. The fantasies of aspiration and wealth, achievement, ending poverty, and changing social status are explored in relation to haunting narratives of war, poverty, famine, pain and their *forgetting*.

## 5.2 Migrant as Carrier of Confucian Legacies

I begin by exploring how the ethnic Chinese migrant can be considered a ‘carrier’ of Confucian legacies. I consider how embodying generations of Confucian understanding in one’s core identity (e.g. Volkan et al. 2002) and family narrative contribute to the weight of expectation, pressure and associated affects on how the migrant sees themselves and others. Significantly, this section recalls the potent values and affects that were attached to our postgeneration’s remembered stories in Chapter 3. In staging a reading of this section and interrogating the links between generations (and an associated link to transmitted large group traumas),

here, I may occasionally reference Chapter 3's section (Section 3.8) on Migration Narratives. That is the chapter where my subject-peers begin to reveal how they have been '*pushed*' towards success.

### 5.2.1 Carrying Honour, Shame and Making A Name

With the strong patriarchal system in Chinese Confucian tradition, the son was a specific figure that became charged with automatic expectations towards 'bringing family glory'. The shame of failing to fulfil the expectations placed on him was heavy indeed, as failing is to fail the family. In contrast, the daughter began from a standpoint of shame for 'not being a son', and needed to prove her honour (see also Chapter 3.10). For migrants, whether male or female, they faced the burdens asked of them from kin and families that often meant honour and potential for wealth, status change for families, the honour and glory of parents, or otherwise deep shame.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, ancestry, kinship, and lineage have all been essential concepts in Confucianism and together embody a familialism that continues to pervade throughout the collective consciousness of ethnic Chinese across the world. Ideally, under Confucianism, it was more desirable and demonstrative of *xiao* or filial piety for the son and/or daughter to stay at home. In the oral stories in this section, this burden of 'the migrant' was most often left to sons who migrated elsewhere in Asia or North America in the 1920's or 1930's and, notably, from families that were poor.<sup>146</sup> There is a distinct narrative of survival. In particular, the pivotal importance of *xiao* and *li* is evident through such narratives.

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<sup>145</sup> I also want to briefly acknowledge that there is a very large range of debates on shame and guilt that is currently outside the scope of my research questions. For instance, Ahmed (2004: 103) invokes Silvan Tomkins' perspective of shame and argues that shame is always involving an experience of the 'other', as shame is felt and intensified through one's shame being witnessed and being 'seen' by others. She argues that 'if we feel shame, we feel shame because we have failed to approximate 'an ideal' that has been given to us through the practices of love. What is exposed in shame is the failure of love, as a failure that in turn exposes or shows our love (Ahmed 2004: 106). In opposition, Leys (2007) has already written a genealogical analysis critiquing 'survivor guilt' and challenging Tomkins-related perspectives of shame (e.g. it is conceived as part of Tomkins' '9 affects' theory, where 'shame-humiliation' is a continuum). The critical problematic with Tomkins' concept, Leys (2011: 443) argues, is that Tomkins' paradigm of affect is in of itself reliant on Paul Ekman's (1999, 1992) widely referenced but simplistic and problematic 'basic emotions' paradigm (e.g. sad, mad, happy, surprised) (see also To 2008 for an example of my Master's research applying this theory from traditional psychology).

<sup>146</sup> Indeed, gender inequalities from both Confucian tradition as well as much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West led to many of the problematics and choices to send sons and males overseas to 'work' as the breadwinners of the family.

As Chan and Chiang (1994) suggest, the son lives:

'under the ancestors' shadow' ...bound by and bonded to family, society, and history and culture. His achievement and glory would be his family's; his shame and downfall would be his family's as well. The desire to protect the name of the family was his top priority. In so far as this 'Family phantom' continued to hang, shame and remonstrate him, it became a powerful ideology, an effective means of social control, an unyielding source of outer motivation. In the Chinese tradition, the living and the dead locate the individual in his culture and history--the migrant carried 'the family phantom' with him and his responsibility would always be familial rather than personal. (p. 166)

The suggestion of the migrant carrying the 'family phantom' is striking, but quite indicative of the affective hauntings that persist through the Confucian legacy. Such stories are evident in my subject-peer Sandy's memory of her own father who migrated to Canada.

Then my parents moved to Canada to Vancouver from Indonesia, but dad didn't find it good work in Vancouver...so moved there around 1976, because my older sister was born in [1975]. So dad moved to Indonesia back to start his own business and moved back and forth between Indonesia, and 3 kids were born in Vancouver.

A great deal of movement occurred in this family, and the father was often overseas earning money to send back home for the kids. His situation seems descriptive of the importance of 'wealth' and its tie to migration as an indicator of success alongside these expectations of success.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> While I am arguing about Confucian burdens concerning the migrant search for wealth in the specific intergenerational diasporic contexts of this thesis, the connections between wealth and motivations for migration are not, of course, restricted only to my discussion. According to some statistical research (which must be critically scrutinized), achieving wealth is more correlated with motivations to improve one's socioeconomic status. Basarir (n.d.) utilized data from the Indonesia family Life Survey (IFLS) (similar to the national census) to examine 14 of 27 provinces in Indonesia for his statistical analysis. Basarir (n.d.: 1) found in his quantitative research (the database held records gathered over the past 2 decades) examining national census data from Indonesia in the late 1990's, that men would be more likely to endure the risks of migration and be willing to temporarily sacrifice their 'absolute wealth' (e.g. existing assets, material possessions), if they felt like their 'relative wealth (hoped-for, estimate of improved wealth) would increase. He found that this was especially the case for those with a low income (low amounts of 'absolute wealth'). Chiang, Hannum and Kao (2013) also found that young men (aged 18-21 years old in the rural area of Gansu China) in the past decade were more motivated to migrate due to economic indicators (e.g. starting a business), while women were more included to focus on supporting families. Both men and women were motivated towards migration for personal development as well. I mention these studies to raise questions concerning a pattern of 'wealth' and 'migration' that may be quite pervasive. While such quantitative research must be examined with a critical eye, what is interesting here is the narrative of 'dominance of wealth' and its power in the context of migration motivation, which is not exclusive to Chinese contexts.

### 5.2.2 Carrying Expectations of Success and Wealth

These myths are significant as they add weight upon the shoulders of migrants, who carry the aspirations, hopes, expectations and family dreams that arise from a fulfilment of the most hopeful sides of the migrant myth. Aspirations towards success were requirements, and required a value set of hard work and ambition. The weight of expectations for the migrant, to singlehandedly bring the family out of poverty and change the social status of the family, was heavily on his shoulders. And while failure was possible, it would lead to shaming oneself and one's family; the migrant would be 'letting down' all those that counted on the migrant to change their situations. Accountability through regular remittances and letters back home was a *li* demonstration of *xiao* (e.g. obligatory, ritual acts to demonstrate one's filial devotion). Failure to do so was shameful. Thus, part of the expectations concerning wealth is connected to changing the social position of one's family and kin.

For instance, one of my subject peers, George (see Chapter 3) offers some theories of his own. He shared:

Firstly, my parents have always said, 'Make sure you end up getting white-collar office jobs that require university education - so that you won't end up like us.' The whole idea that our parents didn't want us to end up like them implied that there was something shameful or embarrassing about who/what our parents were. My brother seized upon that idea and never let go. I, however, just thought my parents were being overly humble.

This is an interesting lesson passed down to George, and he is also reflexive of the odd expression of self-deprecating shame or embarrassment that his parents heaped upon themselves. The quote also suggests George and his brother both responded to these lessons differently.<sup>148</sup>

Interestingly, the striking importance of money and wealth in the ethnic Chinese migrant legacy is also evident in the memoir of an Island Immigrant detainee in San Francisco, between the 1910's and 1940's. Mr. Wong, who was 12

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<sup>148</sup> George would reveal that his brother responded by exerting distance, avoidance, and cutting contact with his family due to these issues of seeking 'wealth' at cost of his familial connections. George, however, felt that his parents were just being 'humble' and, in this case, may not have recognized the Confucian legacy upon his parents. Issues related to the postgenerational response from my different subject-peers have been discussed in Chapter 3.

years old in 1933 said that his family:

told me that anyone who comes to Gam Saan (Gold Mountain) will make money fast and go home a rich man. Anyone who comes to America is well respected in China. My family pushed me to come. They wanted me to make a better living. They couldn't send my older brother because he was too old to match the age of my uncle's paper son...I studied... (Lai, Lim and Yung: 44)<sup>149</sup>

The importance of the 'Gam Saan' (or 'Gold Mountain') 'myth' is further echoed in Chan's (1991) own interviews and analysis with migrants to Singapore.<sup>150</sup> That is, those who returned home to build big houses were very few. If they indeed managed that, their social status would be higher, of course, but only a few succeeded in doing so. Chan states:

Villagers...who went overseas and returned to their villages were of course respected. The village I was born in was poor, so those who returned with a lot of wealth would be very comfortable. Even those who did not make that much money could at least throw a feast for the villagers. Whatever it is, they were respected as 'Nanyang Guest'--most people respect them.<sup>151</sup> (p. 150)

Therefore, both primary and secondary sources that involve my own subject-peer interviews, my assemblage of oral memoirs, as well as Chan's own analysis suggest that common narratives or 'myths' persist. Significantly, such myths of migration persist regardless of whether one was sent to America, Singapore, or Canada.

What is interesting here is that there are clearly contextual, generational and geographical differences between George, Mr. Wong, and Chan's (2001) respondent. Yet, I find it striking that their narratives of migration reflect common themes reflecting the importance of 'achieving' and the importance of 'wealth'. In fact, the importance of such wealth extended beyond merely escaping one's 'lower'

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<sup>149</sup> This interesting book by Lai, Lim, and Yung (1991) offer rare archives of a number of Chinese poems inscribed on the walls of some rooms where immigrants were detained and held for detention between 1910-1930 on Angel Island in San Francisco. They have been translated into English and thus offer a unique perspective of historical remembrance through poetic means. This publication minimizes the voice of the authors aside from the introduction, and primarily allows the voices of the poems to speak. A historical analysis of this data is also found in Lee and Yung's (2010: 71) *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America*, where part of the original excerpt also appears.

<sup>150</sup> Gold Mountain, of course, refers to not only the actual 'gold rush' that sparked much imagination, but more often refers to the notion of the 'West' as a place of opportunity and inevitable wealth, and glorious success.

<sup>151</sup> 'Nanyang' typically refers to the Southeast Asian nations of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Brunei



socioeconomic situation. The importance of such wealth was reflected in how George's parents framed their value lessons (e.g. self-shaming, self-disappointment) that expresses the heavy burdens of Confucian teachings/expectations on them. The 'dream' of wealth-as-success and the haunting of Confucian legacies expressed through honour or shame can also be seen through what Mr. Wong was told as a 'child' (e.g. going to 'Gam Saan'). Mr. Wong was told about the honour and status attained by '[going] home' a rich man, being 'well-respected' by virtue of migrating to the 'West', and the dream of 'better living'. Of particular note are the dedicated and determined efforts for the family to send the son to 'glorify' the family name. That is, Mr. Wong was given the identity of his Uncle's son on legal documents (the phenomenon of 'paper son') (see Chapter 3.8). The Uncle was already established in America, and his own son was likely dead. This situation opened up a 'golden' opportunity for the family to send another son to glorify the collective (village) unit: Mr. Wong. In spite of these opportunities, a cynical, pessimistic myth can be represented through this rhyme that Chan (1991) presents:

*Even in poverty do not go overseas  
Life is even harder on alien soil  
Working for somebody as sinkheh (newcomer)  
How to endure three years of toil?  
Tell our clansmen and friends not to go,  
Rolling waves, powerful and strong,  
Seasick, earth and sky overturned,  
Hell it felt like, lying there at the bottom of the boat. (p. 157)*

This narrative comments on the journey itself and the risk of even venturing to travel. That is, those who try to leave home to travel abroad risk death from travels. And the reference of hard work and a more difficult life without the support of family or familiarity also adds to this rhyme. Clearly, this narrative not only outlines some of the realities of the Gold Mountain 'myth', but also the realities of 'shame' that inevitably coexist with the potential for great honour, through the persistence of the Confucian legacy across generations throughout time and space.

While some migrants ended up living with such difficulty, the pressure and weight to succeed *persisted*. Too much financial, emotional, and familial investment from the family, relatives, and village went into seeing the migrants

succeed. For instance, according to Chan (1991: 32), sending home remittances to family was not only a means to show filial piety and loyalty, but also to 'to maintain or enhance his own reputation and his family's status in the eyes of his fellow countrymen back home'. His preoccupation was, thus, more centred on his social position back home, than on where he was socio-economically situated in the host society' (ibid.).

### 5.2.3 Unpacking Confucian Legacy and Persistent Hauntings

One might ask, how is it possible that millennia-old Confucian teachings and legacies are connected to my present discussion of generational ghosts across diasporas, and throughout different time periods? Understandably, the pervasiveness of Confucianism as a way of passing hauntings through generations may, at first glance, seem strange. This is understandable, especially given how 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnic Chinese and certainly 21<sup>st</sup> century Chinese diasporas are less bound by the hundreds of rituals and books characterizing what it means to follow *xiao* and *li*. For instance, some of the original writings in the Confucian books may, at first, sound old-fashioned. However, I argue that the teachings are strikingly 'persistent' within familial mindsets, and certainly the migrant myth. The pervasiveness of key tropes is evident through the collective unconscious mindset of ethnic Chinese around the world, regardless of political or geographical boundaries. There is a strong collective imagining that persists and repeats through the affective circulation of the diasporic unconscious within ethnic Chinese diasporas, including my autoethnographic group of postgeneration subject-peers. Chan (1991) suggests,

[With] the virtually uninterrupted domination of Confucianism in Chinese society for over two thousand years, tradition to a Chinese is almost synonymous with Confucianism.

...In intimate interpersonal relations, the family is an absolute value by itself; as a collective entity, it holds precedence over and above the individual family members. On the basis of this spirit of collectivism, the lifestyles of an individual must accord with the direction of the collective, or be judged as deviant, calling for criticism and censorship. The older members of the kin network as well as the family heads are given, by society and tradition, the authority and obligation to train and discipline youth. Chinese society often blames parents and holds

them responsible for the mistakes of their children. To the children, following the directives of their parents and other older members of the family is a natural and benevolent behaviour. (p. 25)

Chan's own analysis of the Confucian problematic here can be seen echoed through the original Confucian texts and principles. For instance, in an English translation of the *Classics of Filial Piety* (thought to date back to 400 BCE), translated by renowned late 19th/early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholar James Legge (1899), he cites the significance of filial piety among all virtues.

The Master said, '(It was filial piety.) Now filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching. Sit down again, and I will explain the subject to you. Our bodies—to every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety. When we have established our character by the practice of the (filial) course, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, this is the end of filial piety. It commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character'. (p. 466)

Yin (2004) says:

Filial piety in the past did not refer only to serving your parents when alive and mourning after death. The important thing is to make a name for your parents. Serving when alive and mourning after death are certainly filial acts. However, if a son can study and establish himself, transfer filial piety to loyalty and win great renown, so that people can trace his virtue to his parents and say, 'how lucky to have a son like this,' this is called making a name for your parents and the greatness of filial piety. (p. 150)

Thus, the key statements in these foundational texts suggest glorifying one's parents and making the family name famous, thereby accomplishing great honour and living up to one's obligations of filial piety.<sup>152</sup> While this literature stress the importance of the son fulfilling these duties, these were certainly required of daughters as well. In addition, daughters would be further subservient and required to fulfil other duties demonstrating her *xiao*, in spite of her inferiority to males in Confucian understandings.<sup>153</sup> Filial piety can be expressed through *li*,

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<sup>152</sup> This also recalls the incredible Buddhist folktale of 'Mu-lien'. The basic plot in the tale involves a monk, Mu-lien, who must undergo arduous tasks through hell in order to save his dead mother from eternal torture. She has committed grave sins and been cursed to become a hungry ghost (perpetual hunger and thirst regardless of any food or drink partaken) in the deepest levels of hell. Mu-lien demonstrates great devotion as a son, even as the mother, at first does not appreciate it (see Eoyang 2008).

<sup>153</sup> Gender inequalities that have perpetuated into my discussion of the 'migrant' and the burden on

which is the greatest principle of living complementing *xiao* as *the root of all virtue*. *Li*'s range is extensive and performative of expressing filial piety and also guides one's context of living.<sup>154</sup>

Thus, Confucius would assert that shame and humiliation from a *failure* to demonstrate filial piety on a personal and familial level (though, even, the concept of 'personal' was undeniably collectivistic by definition in relation to the family) would mean shame and humiliation to the nation. Thus, these messages are applicable in all spheres of private and public life. Certainly, the migrant is not only filled with values expected of him/her to fulfil, but also embodies the affective rewards or consequences of fulfilling or failing his/her duty.

However, while a historical discussion of its legacy is also beyond the scope of its paper, these brief passages suggest instructions that can certainly be seen in modern day Chinese diasporas and family expectations, and offer insights into why the Confucian legacy can produce migrants as carriers of particular hauntings.

### 5.3 Migrant as Carrier of Collective Change

Thus, in light of these Confucian mores and examples described thus far, the migrant is clearly a complex figure, carrying affects that not only involve himself, but also the weight of a family, a whole village, as well as the need to fight for survival in a 20<sup>th</sup> century of chaos, war, and disaster. That is, the expectation on the ethnic Chinese migrant and its associated Confucian pressures and desires

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sons versus daughters reflect strong Confucian expectations and mores that have passed down through generations. In Confucian tradition, there is a clear patriarchy and subordination of females, where their duty often revolves around subservience to males (age and status can, however, 'improve' a woman's standing).

<sup>154</sup> Thus, *li* is relevant due to its closely knit connection with *xiao*. Small shrines that emulate ancestral halls demonstrate how such practices have been adapted to accommodate living conditions and smaller spaces of Hong Kong, Canada, and China the sacredness of 'li' carries on through how one conducts oneself with family in manners, attitudes, gift-giving, conduct at meals, festivals, obligations to family or relatives, and honouring traditions such as 'cleaning the tomb' (Qingming). There is a sense of 'sacredness' to *li*, in its authority in society and is divine ordinance (Heinz 1999: 240). And the man of virtue fulfils inner benevolence (or *ren*) and demonstrates it through its ritual propriety. There is a great expectation regarding *li* as it is meant as a self-governing ritual, that one must learn and be aware of, as outlined in the *Liji* text (3000 minor and 300 major rules of ritual). The order of ancestral worship, as evident within the *Zhuxi Family Rituals* (circa 12<sup>th</sup> century) book, according to Heinz (1999: 262), followed a similar mode of ritual order as liturgical books such as Anglicanism's Book of Common Prayer. However, while both command a sacred intention and space for collective worship, the similarities end at the logic of ritual as each serves very different content and intentions within their purposes of worship.

were not merely based on the mores of tradition (though these are significant) but are expressed in hopes, dreams, and wishes for the migrant to become the 'change' needed for a family (or village) stooped in poverty, chaos, war, and survival.

For instance, this connection to some of the historical scars discussed in Chapter 4 can also be seen in relation to issues of remittance and these migrant obligations. The memoir of Mr. Dea who was age 26 in 1939 was also found written on the walls of the Angel Island Immigration processing centre. He said (translated in English):

The Japanese took Gwongjau (Guangzhou) and the country went to pieces. We did not want our communication lines abroad cut, which would have meant no more remittances from my father in America; we would have starved to death. So I wrote father to make arrangements for me to come to America. First we escaped Macao by sampan, my mother, aunt and others. (Lai, Lim & Yung 1991: 20)

Of course, Mr. Dea's discussion of the Japanese and escape refers to the invasion of the Imperial Japanese army during the Resistance Wars (see Chapter 4.5). Such oral testimonies continue to offer glimpses of a world where choices from migrants continued to be made in light of issues of war, chaos in East Asia as well as a hope for a better future for present and future family. In particular, these oral histories are also situated, at least for Mr. Dea and other Angel Island immigrants, during an incredibly difficult migrant experience, having been detained at Angel Island in San Francisco.

Such analyses provide some intriguing insights, as the connections between what the migrant 'carries' and what the next generation shared from their experiencing (and perhaps resisting/rebelling against, as noted in Chapter 3) are both complex and entangled in multiple histories across time, space, and memory. That is, the affective transmission of traumatic memory through fragmented stories and Confucian values, moral lessons in the second generation, along with being 'pushed' to succeed, 'equipped' for hard times, and so forth, can be 'seen' more comprehensively in the figure of the migrant.

#### **5.4 Analysis: Migrants and Affective Hauntings**

I have discussed the Confucian legacy in terms of how its stories, myths, and values

have been produced (and perpetuated) across generations. These narratives and myths of migration can be understood in the context of how the unique self-representations of our parents, grandparents and ancestral generations have intertwined with the next generation (e.g. deposited representation), and how these representations have entangled with the wider, shared, large-group trauma birthed from conflict. That is, these large group traumas (e.g. Anti-Japanese Resistance War, Opium Wars, Concessions to Foreign Imperial powers) have intertwined with the family and individual-specific representations of given families who lived to experience such traumas. For the ethnic Chinese migrant, affective transmissions of trauma within the diasporic unconscious is made even more complex from the Confucian legacy, and its associated weight of affects that have led to all sorts of family expectations. Certainly, the hope that comes from the myth of migrant success, attainment of wealth and status, or the myth of fear of migrant failure and avoidance of shame, all motivated from an impoverished life situation of survival, poverty, chaos, famine, or war. These histories have created every reason for migrant parents to tell the 'value-tales' that they do for the next generation. Thus, many of these unconscious productions carry on and persist through affective transmissions of historically-linked trauma manifested in feelings of shame or guilt. For instance, Chan (1991: 33) further asserts that for the migrant, 'one judged (and was judged by others) his moral conduct in terms of how much and how often money was sent'. Interestingly, Chan asserts that it served a 'psychologically cleansing experience. It purified the soul, relieved guilt, and reaffirmed one's sense of responsibility to his woman, children and parents, and therefore, one's ethnicity and continuity with tradition and the past' (Chan 1991: 33).

In Confucian tradition, the 'simple' act of remittance is of dire importance. It embodies *xiao* (filial piety) through this act of *li* (ritual/propriety) in sending money back. Also, the act of remittance might also be seen to supercede the actual migrant himself, since his practical evidence of 'success' (or failure) through remittance carries the weight of Confucian obligations, expectations, family dreams, and a resultant shame or honour. Interestingly, acts of remittance can also involve literally 'haunting' implications. These acts are so vital that the migrant is also required to send family members in his hometown/village remittances

posthumously. Specifically, the migrant only fulfils his Confucian traditions and expectations of *filial piety and ritual propriety* when he continues to send his dead relatives or 'ghosts' both money and letters (ibid.: 33).

## 5.5 Reflections: Connections Across Time and Space

While exploring all of the various readings, research and texts, I have found it particularly interesting how many of these excerpts in the prior sections involving Chan's interviewees seem, in some ways strikingly similar, yet contextually different. For instance, those who migrated to Canada and Singapore as young adults belonged to our grandparents' generation, and likely migrated much earlier than the grandparents of myself and my subject-peers. Our postgeneration's parents were the first in their families to migrate to Canada. Thus, our grandparents stayed in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan until our parents could afford the opportunity and finance to bring them over into Canada with us to fulfil the traditional Chinese dream of '3 generations in one home'.

Then, considering again the bold theories of Volkan et al. (2002), the notion of 'chosen trauma' can be helpful. The concept of 'chosen trauma' is helpful to understand how traumatic events (even centuries-old ones) are unconsciously chosen and intertwined with the core identities of individuals and families. Thus, as such traumas are commonly identified across generations as a shared, collective, and chosen wound, the question that arises concerns issues of *connecting and connections*.

Though a traditional analysis of all of these differences may dismiss any connections due to the disparity of data, I argue that to do so is premature and misses a 'method of seeing' the unconscious in unforeseen new ways, especially across the ethnic Chinese diaspora. Indeed, how powerful is the transgenerational ghost that effortlessly weaves through memory and history, traumatic events, myth, and fantasy?

### 5.5.1 An Experiment: Explorations of the Impossible

Here, I again attempt to stage an analysis that attempts to 'explore the impossible' (see Preface for my introduction of the term). This embrace of the impossible opens ways to see diasporic links, and assemble these links within one's montage

of haunted histories (see Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004; Cho 2008). Thus, the ‘impossibility’ of this experiment, indeed, further interrogates the questions of memory and history that I have asked throughout this chapter as well as in Chapter 4. I do this by staging the possibilities of transgenerational transmission not just between family members, but also across two individuals that represent different eras, times, and geographical space. I should reflexively note that I am more heavily citing Chan’s (2001)’s own interviews here for the specific purposes of this ‘experiment’. My rationale to do so is reflexively autoethnographic in terms of my ‘own’ subjective experience in this case. Since researching ‘migrant figures’, I have found Chan’s research foundational in helping me better understand the legacy of Confucian traditions across ethnic Chinese diasporas past and present, and the significant connections between an ethic of ‘achievement’ across diasporas and this very millennia-old philosophy of human relationship. Significantly, this was especially insightful for me, since Chan’s descriptions, historical analysis and thoughts were devoid of ‘moral lessons’ that so often fill any pedagogical narratives of haunted histories passed down to our postgeneration by our well-meaning elders (see Chapter 3).

Nonetheless, this experiment will focus on one of my subject-peers (see also Chapter 3). Here, I explore transgenerational traumatic memory across time, proximity and space, which will raise some interesting questions. But what will this experiment yield? What new possibilities and insights into the workings of the hungry transgenerational ghost across generations might arise from this experiment in exploring the seemingly impossible?

As an example of analysis, I consider the disclosures of Chan’s (1994) interview (originally in Chinese and translated for his text) with his respondent recalling his youth in the 1920’s and 1930’s (when he migrated to Singapore), and also my own subject-peer, Trevor (born in 1980), who I have already spoken about in Chapter 3. In Chan’s work (1994), he presents another example that describes how shame becomes a motivation to succeed:

Because of me, my father spent a lot of money. He was so afraid that I would be conscripted. That was why he wanted me to leave and come to Nanyang. He had to sell our only buffalo and two portions of our farmland to get the money for my passage (besides the costs of paying another male child to stand in for me in military conscription). It was my father’s blood



and sweat which supported my passage here. I thought to myself at that time: I must be ambitious and become worthy. (p. 140)

This response from Chan's interviews bring to mind my own interviews. In particular, Trevor's words echo in my mind, as he answered my question, 'What kind of circumstances were your parents raised?'

Dad was raised in wealthier environment. But obviously had to get out of war-torn places.

But mom raised in average wealth environment...not really low, but average...so that's why I really admire their success...the way they are able to raise me and my sister and obviously living in a better more than average situation...That is an old adage saying...'got to work hard to get dividends...no free lunch.' 'Pay your dues...so hopefully when I'm someone's husband or father, I want to provide same stewardship...so not just shifting through jobs or searching through meals.

Trevor's disclosure has clear ties to being raised in an environment that has enforced success through being 'self-made' to a large extent. As discussed at length, such attitudes likely have connections to the narrative of survival that exists across almost all of the parents' and grandparents' generation. The notion of 'pay your dues' implies value attributed to the skills learned for the parents to 'survive' and become self-made, that they insist on passing onwards. In addition to the usual gaps, the transgenerational ghost can further simmer behind the 'expectations one places upon oneself', in a desire to fulfil the pressure of 'paying your dues', so strongly enforced from the powerful influence of the family patriarch. On a textual surface level of analysis, it's obvious that the geographical contexts, generational removes, socioeconomic status, and life stories are different, as are the life situations between the two individuals. Chan's respondent recalls his story at the onset of departing for another land. While Trevor, at the time of our conversation had just returned from overseas work and moved back to his birth home in Canada. There is recognition of 'war' in both, in fears of conscription and Trevor's recognition of war-torn places. The war traumas refer to a larger contextual historical narrative and memory of the widespread chaos across China, even though the specific historical antecedents may differ. However, what may be shared across mental representations and reflective of the possible development of a chosen trauma across space, time and generations, is this collective traumatization via constant war, fear, and chaos. Returning to Volkan et al. (2002),

I argue that it is this collective, shared traumatization of an era filled with poverty and war that has become so intertwined with what they would describe as the core identity self-representations of the individual within the collective.

Furthermore, it is interesting how both excerpts are *re-told* to the respective interviewer, and the respective stories have been *remembered* in a specific way. From this, the feeling that drives both of these disclosures is evident: shame. Therefore, I argue, shame persists as a powerful feeling that persists from the unconscious transmission of mental representations (Volkan 1987) that are produced from the personal, familial, and cultural milieu of Confucian heritage/tradition; a tradition that insists upon an ethic of 'hard work', 'ambition' and aspirational success. This production of shame feelings was evident in Chapter 3, when I analyzed the perpetuating discourses within my subject-peers' remembered stories. Here, across the seeming impossibility of time and space, shame resonates here as well between Trevor and Chan's respondent. The internalized self-image of becoming 'worthy' with Chan's subject can align with Trevor's own self-image that has internalized the importance of 'pay your dues...so hopefully when I'm someone's husband or father, I want to provide some stewardship...so not just shifting through jobs or searching through meals'. The desire to prove oneself and become worthwhile arises from the desire for success. And shame is both a motivation and consequence of failing one's ambitions, and potentially betraying parental sacrifice. However, it is interesting that the pressures of the migrant weighing on Chan's respondent seem strikingly resonant in Trevor.

I find it interesting how Confucianism has become such a pervasive ideology, such that, I argue, its legacy extends through nearly all ethnic Chinese. If we accept Volkan et al.'s (2002) understanding, then it makes sense how the intergenerational transmission of Confucian values persists and can source its origins from an originary 'chosen' trauma (or series of chosen traumas) that first occurred centuries ago.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, what this argument suggests then, is how

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<sup>155</sup>While a bold assertion, according to Volkan's theory of 'chosen trauma', the connection of centuries-old 'chosen trauma' that are still relevant to modern times is neither irrelevant nor impossible. He cites various examples from a Serbian chosen trauma in the Battle of Kosovo (which has beginnings in 1390 AD), through the trauma of how some Christian large groups find their chosen trauma back in 1453 unconsciously, from the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. Thus, from this understanding, it's possible that theories about the pervasiveness of Confucianism

the intergenerational transmission of trauma can persist through family units and diasporas that have continued to 'internalize' and (un)consciously 'choose' their collective identifications via Confucianist teachings, especially filial piety (*xiao*). The weight of these expectations of one's known *ancestral lineage* rest on the shoulders of the youngest male meant to carry responsibility. Thus, I argue, that for both Trevor and Chan's respondent, the intergenerational affective transmission of trauma is intensified and entangled with the unconscious distributions that come with the legacy of Confucianism in the ethnic Chinese collective (un)consciousness.

Of course, with the transmission of affective trauma, temporal time and space become quite complex. On one hand, Trevor's shame and filial desires can find a kindred spirit in similar shame and filial desires from Chan's respondent, even though these two subjects are two generations apart, making temporality and geographical space insignificant. On the other hand, in today's calendar, Chan's respondent likely 'belongs' in the same generation as Trevor's grandparents would, and would be his senior. And though their families are not related, Chapter 3 has shown how feelings such as (fear of) shame experienced by grandparents can pass to their grandchildren (my subject-peers) through mental representations of Confucian myth, expectations and familial legacies. Still, there is also the collectivity of the ethnic Chinese (diasporic) collective unconscious regardless of blood relation, that shares not only historical trauma from the scars of war and survival, but also the embodiment of Confucianism within the way of life. In this way, Trevor and Chan's respondent carry a far more potent relationality through the recovery of social links to each other and to the unknown myths perpetuated through history (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).

Ghosts, therefore, persist between the gaps of these visible representations, remaining invisible and unidentifiable until one begins juxtaposing fragments of mediated memory (e.g. memories of Trevor and Chan's respondent) as I have 'performed' here. In other words, while some of the broken social links begin to

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across nearly all ethnic Chinese globally (and other ethnic groups too, such as Korea or Japan) could range from Confucian origins during the Warring States period, the first unification of China in the Qin dynasty or the trauma of the fall of the Tang Dynasty and the rise of the Song dynasty when Confucianism resurged in influence. These are interesting arguments, but do not fit the primary purpose of my thesis, so must be left for another discussion.

re-form and recover through this performative writing of imagining, diasporic vision and act of montage, there are still many 'unknowns' and historical gaps within the mentions of historical trauma. Specifically, these issues concern the persistence of the Confucian legacy and the resulting, recurrent possession of the migrant figure between two individuals from very different periods of time, life experiences, and families. That is, I argue that these issues continue to raise what I want to term as 'undecipherable questions' that persist and possess me/us from one's very position of 'not knowing' and sensing that there is an inexplicable 'something' that needs to be seen or asked, but is nonetheless confined to silence. This recalls parallels to what Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012: 156) has discussed as the 'unthought known'. These experiences, I argue, continue to reveal the presence of ghosts and hauntings that are nonetheless invisible, unrepresentable and unseen. Only through continuing with a diasporic vision within one's active composition of a (diasporic) montage (that juxtaposes im/material memory), therefore, can hauntings be seen. As I have discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, there is an invisible mutual complicity to each other's subjective, affective hauntings. When such ghosts at the sites of trauma are finally rendered visible (e.g. when broken links are gradually recovered), then renewed connections across time and space become possible.

Therefore, in this experiment, exploring the seemingly impossible, time, space, and proximity were less significant than the unconscious forces at work and across generations and time through migrant and diasporic memory. Significantly, transmissions of affects were pervasive, due to large group traumas of war and Confucian expectations to bring glory to parents, and its associated pressures of wealth, success and the shameful consequences of failure. While this experiment raises more questions, it also opens up new possibilities and creative, unexpected directions through which to explore the workings and nature of transgenerational haunting across generations and new ways to see via diasporic vision. To this end, I turn the discussion to an analysis of three visual works that further stretch the range of possibility, time, and space, in discussions of memory, history, myth, fantasy, affect, collective trauma and the unconscious, and the haunting presence of transgenerational ghosts.

## 5.6 Visual Artworks and Generations

Watson (1994) asserts:

Shared memory and history tend not only to represent but also to transmit the past in characteristically different ways...[In] situations where alternative understandings of the past are tantamount to treason, shared memory expressed in oral and visual forms provides a particularly adaptive medium for expressing disagreement, dissent, opposition, and resistance. (p. 9)

I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of one artwork and two art installations. The aesthetic is an important mediation of memory in diasporic vision and is helpful within my attempt to compose a montage of hauntings.

First is a painting by a Chinese-artist, Chen Yifei who at the age of 34, migrated to America in 1980 from post-Mao China. He painted this work, '*Looking at History from My Space*' below in 1979 (see Figure 5.1). Here, Chen paints a realistic figure of himself and an empty chair in contrast to a backdrop portraying sketches of various historical events between 1910's and 1920's in China. (Recall in 1910's and 1920's, China underwent chaos regarding the end of Qing imperialism in 1911, further submission to foreign powers, and the May 4 student and intellectual protests which included (failed) attempts to remove Chinese traditions, and thought to foreshadow the dawn of Communism.)



Figure 5.1: Chen Yifei: Looking at History from My Space

In the eyes of an artist who would belong to my parents' generation, this piece explores multiple gazes (e.g. Venn 2009: 21) amidst its ambiguity. On one hand, there is the obvious gaze of the self-portrait with the artist-in-the painting, reflecting on the collage (perhaps a mental collage) of significant turning points in Chinese history. The empty chair also appears firstly as an invitation, perhaps to

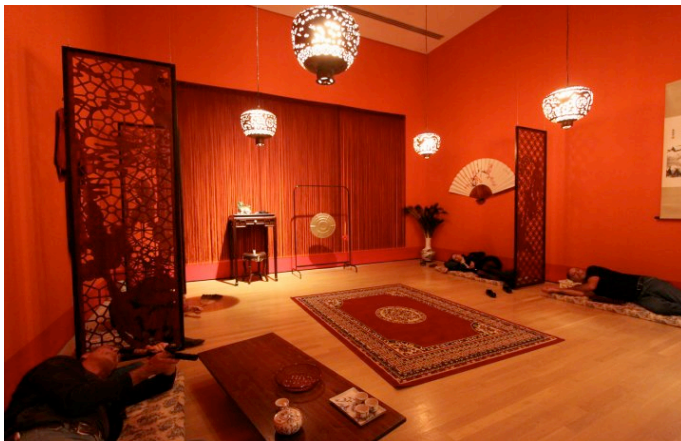
the artist, or other viewers, to engage in the introspective process as the artist is. Yet, the clear distinction of the 'real world' of the artist-in-painting and chair, that contrasts the flashbacks in the sketched collage draws a boundary between the artist's present space and history. He is, after all, 'looking at history from [his] space'. Nonetheless, the strategic ambiguity given to this work amidst what, on the surface, seem to be clear artist intentions, bring whole new possibilities to engaging this work.

As a second-generation Chinese person, I contribute my gaze to this work, and begin by considering the artist's own generation (which belongs to my parents), and query the unspoken words and thoughts that mysteriously seem to be filling the artist-in-painting's mind. I *long* to accept the invitation of the empty chair, in order to participate and join the artist across time, but realize simultaneously my own present space. My distance as flesh and bone in my space, gazing at the painting itself creates a recognition of my distance from the artist's generation, a place of silence and fragments that is all too clear to myself and my subject-peers. Furthermore, the distances to these sketches of history bring a further alienation of my experience from that of 1910-1920's China. At once, I am dismayed, as the painting points out the very condition of myself as a second-generation Chinese-Canadian. There is a haunting from the striking collage of remembered history that harkens to historical happenings, but glimpses fragments of perhaps what the artist-in-painting and artist himself remembers and recalls as significant. And despite the invitation from the empty chair, as much as I long to sit in and participate in a gaze of the past, even at least, in the realm of the artist-in-painting at the very least, the desire is ultimately left to my *fantasies*, imaginings and remembrances of family stories and secrets that resonate with me. But ultimately, I am left gazing at the empty chair, as representative of what I can never experience, haunted, by a ghost that is ultimately invisible. I am left, as I started, with experiences of shame and guilt for 'not-knowing', and never truly knowing why. My experiences recall Venn's (2010: 23) discussion of Bracha Ettinger's (2006) Eurydice paintings and concept of the matrixial gaze that 'try to intimate or 'transcript' this space, where the imprint of the other, and the imprint of trauma remain as unworked-through space'. My engagement with this artwork co-implicates me with Chen, as I am not just an 'outsider' gazing, nor is Chen, even

as he paints himself as one. Chen is the other-in-me, and we are 'partners-in-difference', complicit with one another in our connectedness (Ettinger 2006 in Venn 2009: 23). In spite of my reflection to Chen Yifei's brilliant artwork, I turn now to another piece that, instead, offers an opportunity of 'seeing' and even experiencing a space beyond time and generations, memory and history.

Here, I focus on two works by Karen Tam. Karen is part of my diasporic generation, and is a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation ethnic Chinese person born in Canada as well. Currently, she is a doctoral student at Goldsmiths. Her work that I have displayed here focuses on memory and history of the Chinese diaspora. In the first picture is her installation called Pagoda Pads (also known as Opium Den in other exhibitions. See Figure 5.2). Karen's own description of the work is as follows:

*Opium Den* is a site-specific installation that uses a combination of artificial and authentic borrowed objects to examine how Chinese stereotypes such as Dragon Ladies, geisha girls and drug-addicted Asian men continue to be perpetuated in Western society. Inspired by images of the exotic, opulent and strange, and set against a musical backdrop of 19th- and 20th-century racist tunes reinterpreted as punk instrumentals, the exhibition challenges viewers to understand and re-evaluate their personal preconceptions.



5.2 Opium Den/Pagoda Pads:<sup>156</sup>

Tam's work here begins with a Said-ian interrogation of the 'other-ing' and 'orientalism' of East Asia by Western dominant racial discourses, particularly in reference to the Opium Wars, ceding of territory to foreign powers, and to the

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<sup>156</sup> Photo: Ann Purkiss. *Couriers of Taste Exhibition*. 1 April-31 October 2013. Danson House. Retrieved 13 September 2013. <http://www.artfund.org/what-to-see/exhibitions/2013/04/01/couriers-of-taste-exhibition>.

opium trade that spread throughout China.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, it also comments on the diasporic past and experience of migrants, and the injustice and racism that occurred from that era. Further, it comments on a modern era of 'fear of Chinese' (e.g. China as rising superpower) and the continual exoticism and orientalism of East Asia.

Powerful and poignant as Tam's intentions are, my entrance into this installation's invitation has spurred an entangled array of significance that I see echoing through the walls of the room. Another ghost is present here. And I wonder if Tam's intuition and artistic mastery has created an opportunity for us to conjure an encounter with the transgenerational ghost? And I also wonder if the sheer potency of this work has erupted from Tam's connection to our diasporic collective (un)conscious?

Perhaps Tam's work also embodies an opportunity for experiencing 'diasporic vision' for all those willing to engage in a collective 'seeing' unconsciously and consciously. In this case, Tam's artwork here is also particularly relevant to my discussion in Chapter 4 and this present chapter, as it offers itself as a unique form of 'archive' that rests omnipresently across time. In this way, it embodies both the *lieux de mémoire* as well as the *milieux de mémoire*, and the tensions in between (see Chapter 4.2). It is altogether an entanglement of the relationality between history and (cultural) memory, and 'memory' from multiple perspectives. Let me describe a few of them: On one hand, there are the 'historical happenings' or 'facts' of records of opium use, abuse, and the colonial controversies that Britain played in opium trade with (diasporic) Chinese. From these so-called 'facts' are multiple memories: There are 'official' memories from the People's Republic of China's political discourses that strongly remember this past as humiliating, shameful, and ultimately wounding for both China's citizens as well as the nation proper (see also Chapter 6). Other memories involve those diasporic Chinese migrants that have experienced the very difficulty and struggle from working long hours with low pay. Another memory arises from those viewing this, who are very much aware and may certainly be able to relate and identify with the memory that taps into Tam's argument with her installation: that

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<sup>157</sup> I am, of course referring to Edward Said's (1994) seminal concept of orientalism, which has become a subject of much debate in contemporary writings and responses to his work.



is, a memory of orientaling and exoticizing East Asian tropes. And other memories arise from those of us that accept this installation's invitation to walk in, remove our shoes, and lay down, 'enacting' what 'could have been'. These demonstrate our entangled milieux and co-implication in the social links that connect our diasporic unconscious (see also Sosa 2012).

Prior to our entrance into the space, the installation emanates a vision of an artifact that harkens to a time past (*lieux de mémoire*). However, once I walk in, within the moment of experiencing, I engage a space of *memory*, and *experience-ing* of this memory: my memory and subjectivity, as well as all of those affective energies that lay charged within the walls, mats, and opium pipes of the den. In my own 'memory' and affects, I experience manifestations of familiarity, longing, understanding, hurt, distance, exoticising, and identification, and questions of what was, and my relationality with that past, just as I am enacting it in the present within the installation. The feelings from the experience of sitting, laying (laying down in the Pagoda Pads installation), bring immediacy to my/our imaginings. My imaginings, in such cases, are no longer invisible, but materialize both within our own minds as well as within what we can see and feel. I 'feel', within my immediacy of experience and imagining (see also Walkerdine 2013). I am also reflexive of 'seeing myself not feeling', especially in the presence of voices, apparitions, and histories I cannot see (Bennett 2005). I feel the haunting possession of an 'unthought known', as my body experiences the presence of lost histories; but I cannot see them nor hear them; I cannot touch them (Walkerdine 2012: 156). They are simply 'there' within me, around me, before me, and simultaneously apart and distant from me. These ghosts persist, and I am complicit with them. What ghosts rested upon cushions like the ones I am here? What thrill, joy, or curse did this opium pipe bring to this ghost that I can never know?

Similarly, Karen Tam's work with restaurants enacts the affective potencies, but shifts the temporal and spatial reference to the Chinese restaurant in Canada. While I did not have the opportunity to experience this 'Gold Mountain Restaurant' exhibit (see Figure 5.3), Tam states that her intentions in designing these sino-restaurants are 'a metaphor for Cathay or the idea of China in the minds of Westerners.' In her installations, she 'deconstructed and reconstructed the Chinese restaurant to see which elements signify meaning for the public and, thus,

play a role in influencing Western perceptions of the Chinese'. Tam argues that these restaurants are representative of 'immigrant cuisines' in Canada and embody a 1940's to 1960's old-style restaurant that has shifted over the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present day.



Figure 5.3 Gold Mountain

Much of the affective transmission and ghostly hauntings in this display are as present as they are in the Pagoda Pads. I argue that much of the temporal-spatial omnipresence and multiple memories evident in the prior example can be found here as well, in relation to the context of this creative artspace. The 'reality of displacement', 'dislocation', and 'dissonance' that is experienced within one's participation in such spaces that are outside yet within 'chronological time', encourages an important 'emotional-cognitive' engagement (Venn 2009: 6). Such artspace/installations, Venn (2009) argues, 'try to give form to feelings and experiences that are difficult, if not impossible, to convey through other registers' (ibid.: 6). What is particularly interesting from this installation is that Tam was raised in a family that owned a Chinese restaurant, and so the subjective investment seems particularly personal and perhaps reflective of her own transgenerational story. Furthermore, this installation connects to this chapter's discussion of the migrant experience, and the myth of the 'Gold Mountain' and all the dreams, and wishes, expectations and hopes that arrived with it. It certainly also arrives with the familial and village expectations, Confucian ordinances of *xiao* filial piety and *li* as well, and the affective hauntings that manifest into honour and

shame that come from a successful migrant entrepreneur.

Thus, in addition to this display's critique of colonialism, there are also questions of diasporic memory, and the remembrances that could be conjured regarding Karen's own parents' migrant experience and memory (including her own, as a second generation Chinese person born in Canada). Further, the *invitation to remembrance* from the open space (and permission for visitors to sit and truly see, feel, touch, hear, and engage the chairs, menus, cash registers etc., of this space) creates opportunity for a montage of memory at any one time, just as it could also create an opportunity for diasporic vision for a group of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadians engaging this space. Thus, the *performativity* allowed, created, and welcomed by Tam's work not only offers a historical archive (*lieux de mémoire*) to history, but also an opportunity to experience that very memory in the moment of (re-)living it (*milieux de mémoire*). And the transgenerational ghost weaves through this space, briefly animated, for us to both see back into and simultaneously experience a fragmented past of memory. Tam's magnificent installations of the *Gold Mountain Restaurant* embody one next generation person's own narrative and subjectivity, just as they welcome others into the space that is inherently relational or trans-subjective and public. Tam's work provides a space that allows visitors (or restaurant customers) a method of seeing a glimmer of the transgenerational ghost in ways impossible from traditional conventions as it works across time, space, memory and history.

## 5.7 Conclusion

In light of the figure of the migrant as a carrier, the pressures of being 'pushed' towards success, 'making it', and being 'equipped' because 'life is hard' seem to perhaps 'make more sense'. That is, the migrant himself/herself, carries the pressures of his whole family on his shoulders. Significantly, even though odds were against him, failure was unacceptable, and would lead to great shame. There was a deep fear of shame and failing family, one's duty, and inability to bring 'glory to the family name', as Confucius would require. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, despite the best intentions, the hidden spaces in these stories, and the weight of the past behind them, carry powerful unconscious forces and affective

transmissions expressed through feelings of shame, along with the wishes, hopes, expectations and pressures and dreams that the original migrants, themselves were burdened to carry. And so, the hungry ghost stirs within these spaces across time, memory, history, and space. Affective hauntings persist through the figure of the migrant, materializing through him, and carrying traumatic memories affectively across generations. The power of artworks and art installations also offer any willing participant an invitation into a space that is entangled within a milieu of im/material memory that offers powerful diasporic vision of hauntings that are not possible through verbal text or written words alone. All of these efforts are important acts within one's composition of a diasporic montage and contribute new ways to seeing ghosts. In the next chapter, I consider diasporic visions in relation to the screen in more detail.

## CHAPTER 6: AESTHETIC VISIONS

### 6.1 Introduction: New Diasporic Visions

In the last two chapters, I began implementing new ways of ‘seeing’ hauntings through a diasporic vision of haunted histories mediated through oral testimonies and questions of memory, history and fantasy. In this chapter, I continue staging a ‘montage’ of data via Cho’s concept of ‘diasporic vision’ by particularly focusing on the moving image. However, even within the previous chapters, we have begun to see where diasporic vision may risk becoming compromised by issues of memory production. Thus, in this chapter, I continue this discussion and ‘stage’ how I would seek to further evolve the concept of diasporic vision into one that embraces its affective potentialities and is simultaneously critically reflexive of what exactly is being ‘seen’ and mediated into memory. Here, I particularly interrogate diasporic vision’s affective potentiality and problematics in the context of my performative group screening case study, and further analyze the production of moving images and articulations of history and memory on screen. In spite of these problematics, I argued that the notion of historical ‘facts’ in oral testimony, for instance, may reveal less about the actual trauma versus one expressing it through fantasy. Thus, methodologically, my discussion and analysis in this chapter ‘performs’ my own experiences of ‘diasporic vision’ and the questions I raised while reflexively critiquing its practice (as consistent with my critical autoethnographic approach). With the case study, I screen the American documentary film, *Nanking* (2007), and perform bodily gestures unique to our personal ‘responses’ to envisioning mediated visions of trauma from the Nanking Massacre.

Significantly, I consider our individual and collective role in mediating a vision of (un)conscious awareness and memory through embodied gestures.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, my decision to explore ‘gestures’ was also ‘sparked’ by my readings of Bennett’s (2005) discussion of ‘puppets’ that perform stories meant to confront trauma and inspire peace for the *Ubu Truth Commission*. This connection between puppets and human gesture may sound odd at first suggestion. However, this work with puppets inspired me to consider that our human gestures are not much different either. That is, if affective memory circulates through material and immaterial bodies and blurs subjective boundaries, then why might one want to restrict what one considers animate or inanimate (as one’s initial thought about puppets might be tempted to think) or human versus non-human? Earlier on in my thinking, I was also intrigued from Pasi Valiaho’s (2010) discussion of gestures in relation to early cinema and how spectators (un)consciously

Furthermore, the performance also returns my discussion to the importance of imagination and fantasy in bringing an immediacy of historical links to one's present experience, which I also discussed in Chapter 4 (see also Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). That is, I explore in the group performance how the very 'feelings' that are experienced reflexively (e.g. Bennett 2005) also participate in creating new im/material links that help compose a diasporic montage. My research questions in this chapter ask: How might the moving image offer a diasporic vision of lost histories for the postgeneration ethnic Chinese? Significantly, what are the affective and (un)conscious dynamics of engaging moving images and oral testimonies that articulate haunted histories? Furthermore, how can the next generation reflexively engage films when forces of memory production may render diasporic visibility problematic? How might the concept of diasporic vision evolve, and what would this look like in practice? Therefore, again, I intend for this chapter to once again stage my own embrace and challenges in 'seeing' mediated memories of haunted histories.

Following the group case study, my chapter discusses the following:

- a) several/posthoc analyses of this case study are conducted from my own post-study reflections of the case study itself. Here, I 'perform' the type of analysis I might make to interrogate problematic memory productions, and look for strategies that can aid the concept of diasporic vision. I extend the discussion of memory production by critically analyzing the production of *Nanking 2007*, in light of official memory productions. Thus, pragmatically, my purpose is not to debunk the emotional potency or affective potential of *Nanking (2007)*, but to create a further way of 'seeing' that is also capable of reflexively seeing the forces of memory production behind its production and surrounding it.
- b) explores oral testimony and memory through forms of cinema, which extends conversations concerning oral histories from Chapter 5. I do this through a comparative analysis of *Nanking (2007)* and the innovative documentary form of Jia Zhang Ke's brilliant film *24 City (2008)*.
- c) a discussion of moving image installations and the opportunities they offer in

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'mimic' what is being screened. I wanted to explore whether gestures connected to trauma were merely 'mimetic' (e.g. Leys 2000), and what new insights the activity might bring in light of affective hauntings.

'seeing new diasporic visions' that, in their very creative mode are able to critique their own entangled modes of memory production. There, I explore moving image installations and artworks that subvert the conventions of common filmmaking mode and are doubly reflexive of the modes of memory production surrounding their development and the issues they address.

### **6.1.1 Nanking and Me**

*Nanking* (2007) is an intriguing documentary. My viewing of *Nanking* on a cable movie channel was meaningful and revealed to me revelations and poignant reflections about a past history I never knew within my parents' and grandparents' generation. This film was important in revealing to me an experience of my disconnection from the histories surrounding the previous generation, and was foundational for my own search for histories. It was a watershed film that was a key contributor to my original interest in this PhD thesis concerning the past generations, as the images, newsreels and testimonies shared in the film opened up an emotional and affective engagement of a shocking history I had heard about, but did not know very much about. I began to become aware of intergenerational ghosts calling out to me. Many questions echoed through me at that time. What is the relevance of this history? What is its connection to my own family's difficulty? Was my family part of this? If not, what about other families? Was my family then, surely safe from all difficulties? As I have discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, surely the scars of war, political turmoil, and a country at chaos along with famine and poverty, did not allow anybody an escape or reprieve. These are stories I never knew, histories I knew nothing about. And the documentary began my search, and questions. And I wondered, whether it might possibly do something similar with my fellow subject-peers. If so, how? If not, why not? The importance of this film inspired me to create a performative group case study to explore the affective potential of this film in crystallizing a diasporic vision for some of my subject peers. I continued to contemplate about the affective potential of this particular documentary.

## 6.2 Nanking Case Study: Performing Visions Through Bodies

On a conceptual level, I sought to explore how unconscious trauma might express itself in the next generation through gestures and movements in the body. To do this, I wanted to share the knowledge I had (at the time) about the Nanking Massacre, which was significantly formed through *Nanking* (2007). I felt it was urgently important for my peers to understand the magnitude of the severe atrocities that occurred in this lost history. I thought that the documentary did a competent job at conveying these histories in an 'objective mode' of filmmaking. Thus, I thought that *Nanking* offered an accessible, insightful means of diasporic vision of an unjust history in our past. The documentary included Hollywood stars (e.g. Woody Harrelson) set up in a panel, and each would 'act' out the memoirs of a real person who had been an eyewitness to the Nanking Massacre in 1937.

The film interspersed the actor narrations with black and white film newsreels and pictures of the atrocities that took place in Nanking. Testimonials of child and teenage survivors (who were well into their elderly years in the film) recalled their traumatic recollections and experiences of life in Nanking during the invasion of the Japanese Imperial soldiers. In designing the case study and how my subject-peers might engage *Nanking* (2007), I wanted to ensure I prevented the common criticisms of Claude Lanzmann's 9.5 hour Holocaust documentary, *Shoah* (1985).<sup>159</sup> Specifically, I wanted to ensure that the screening of such an intense film provided multiple means of 'processing' the affective and emotional intensities of film. Usually, a 'debriefing' conversation is sufficient for spectators to voice their feelings and process the film. While I did include a verbal debriefing at the conclusion of the activity, I find that such conversations alone, while useful, are often restricted to the 'verbal'. So I also wanted to facilitate an embodied space where bodies, voices, gestures, and movements could become the modes of response and processing. This mirrored affect and 'image of the force of trauma' through the cinematic body actually enables us to 'see' transgenerational traumatic

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<sup>159</sup> Criticisms against Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), have revolved around concerns for generating in viewers an 'overidentification' or 'shallow', 'crude' empathy. These suggest an uncritical response from viewers that absorb the emotions and affects from viewing such an intense film without processing. Also, the empathy experienced is shallow or crude due to its fleetingness and lack of critical engagement (See Bennett 2005 for discussions about *Shoah*).



hauntings without experiencing the sheer affective force of the direct representation of the parent event (Bennett 2005: 69; Leudar and Thomas 2000 as cited in Cho 2008: 181). Thus, I engaged the group in two performative exercises to encourage a reflexive bodily affective engagement of the material (see Chapter 2 for methodological details of my subject-peers).

### **6.2.1 Warm-up: Spot Exercise**

For this particular session, I de-emphasized verbal responsiveness and encouraged more performative ones after the completion of approximately a 1 hour clip of the documentary. The purpose was to create an embodied, performative space to 'absorb' whatever reactions and feelings each subject-peer had towards the documentary. My techniques were adapted from Eva Leveton's (2010) book, *Healing Collective Trauma: Using Sociodrama and Drama Therapy*<sup>160</sup>. I began with an adapted version of Leveton's 'Spot technique', which was a warm-up intended to begin processing and focusing their/our affects and/or emotions. Each person (including myself) was asked to find a random 'spot' on a nearby wall, and then begin reflecting on and processing their affective and emotional reactions. After that, I asked each of us to slowly raise one arm and finger and point at that spot, channelling all of our reactions towards the spot. Then, everyone was to slowly walk towards the spot, while letting out a vocal 'grunt' or sound that they thought could best express how they felt. When everyone reached the wall, I asked everyone to continue holding their affective and emotional experiences in their whole body, and let out their 'grunts' for a little while longer.

### **6.2.2 Main activity**

After the Spot activity ended, I commenced the main activity. Each person was asked to create 3 body 'movements' that they would find interesting and express their reactions to the film. I demonstrated my movements as an example. I

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<sup>160</sup> My rationale to adapt this method was to create an opportunity for the body to avoid a premature 'dissociation' that might occur after clicking the 'stop' button on the video player. At least, in my experience, I tend to dissociate from what I view in this way. Therefore, in order to prevent that, the way I adapted this activity could bring immediacy to whatever responses and feelings each subject-peer experienced from screening the film in to the body while also mediating a mirrored affect that does not expose us to the sheer force of trauma. Again, while the techniques may have been adapted from therapeutic approaches, I did not adapt their clinical utility. The activity I applied was not employed for purposes of seeking what clinical approaches would consider 'therapeutic intervention' or 'clinical change.'

instructed each person to ‘create’ the movements first and think of the feeling behind it first without worrying about the words (thus trying to prioritize the *embodying* of their feelings). How I am thinking of movement here is beyond the mere mimicry of gesture, and also as an important way of synaesthetically seeing affective hauntings through the very movement of bodily gesture (see also Chapter 7.2). The intention is to privilege the primacy (and primal origin) of movement to create a new space of ‘knowing’ that frees us from our preferences to cognition, thought, and the mind; concepts that tend to arise in verbal interviews and discussions (Sheets-Johnstone 2010: xvii, 304). This is not to say that ‘thought’ is unimportant, as the reconfiguration of it is concerned with ‘thinking in movement’ (ibid.: xvii). Thought also plays an important part in the process of reflexivity and becoming aware of/seeing one’s feelings (e.g. Bennett 2005). Thus, what I am interested in is the immediacy of kinaesthetic movement, towards experience, and to the affective potential of an imagined space that attempts to recover broken links with lost histories (Sheets-Johnstone 2010; Walkerdine 2013; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). Doing so, especially in relation to our group of peers, creates a distinctive dynamic relational space that attunes us kinetically, affectively, and cognitively in what Sheets-Johnstone (2011: 117) would describe as ‘synergies of meaningful movement’. This is a distinctive space, argues Sheets-Johnstone, where ‘[movement] is the change itself, the dynamic happening’ (Sheets-Johnstone 2011: 121).<sup>161</sup>

After the first movements, the partners in a pair would teach each other how to perform their movements and verbally explain the meaning to them, so that each person would therefore know 6 total movements: 3 of their own, and 3 of their partner's, with an experimental intention to create an embodied space for affects to circulate im/materially.<sup>162</sup> Each pairing was not far away from each

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<sup>161</sup> While meaning-making may indeed be invoked from movement, this does not suggest merely understanding movement in terms of interpretable meaning and representation. As I have discussed at length throughout this thesis, while hauntings may manifest through the representable and material, the ghosts also stir through what cannot be represented and the immaterial. This is the very paradox of affective haunting; a paradox that is important to embrace in order to juxtapose the fragments of both affective and visible mediations of memory that are invisible and unknowable through a montage collision (e.g. Michaud 2007; see also Chapter 7.2). Thus, through this experiment in performance, I continue with this composition of a diasporic montage by exploring a diasporic vision of hauntings through bodily gesture.

<sup>162</sup> In hindsight, it might have been more interesting to reduce the amount of verbal ‘explanation’ in these initial stages when my subject-peers were paired together.

other, and they could 'see' and 'hear' the other pairing in discussion.<sup>163</sup> I encouraged their own expression and creativity without rules, and supporting their own freedom. After learning the movements, each pair was asked to 'perform' the movements in the form of a 'free narrative' for the rest to see. I expressed that they did not need to make sequential or narrative sense and their performance could 'happen' in anyway, as freely as desired, but merely had to relate to their own (collective) responses to the film and experiences of it.

Lastly, I asked all of us to do one more activity that would combine each of our movements together. We teamed with the same partners and movements and created a scenario or story (without needing to make any narrative sense). This was done at first without words, and then with a verbal description of their movements. But this time, we would select just one of the 3 movements we had originally created to share with the other 5 members of the group. So, the idea was that each person would learn (as best they could) 5 other persons' movements and we would need to perform them all together in any order of our choice. First, we each performed a single movement without explanation, one by one. Then we explained them verbally. I began with my movements (I 'cheated' and did 2) outlining my narrative, and then others began to naturally follow suit until we ended up performing our movements together. We performed together several times. The first was the rehearsal, followed by the 'real' performance that included verbal narrations of our movements. Then we performed one more time without narration and solely implemented movements. The final time, we performed our movements as slowly as we could together, with slow words. *Eventually words left us and we performed in silence without verbal words and just grunts.* At the conclusion of these performances I began a verbal debriefing of the experience as well as a debriefing of our film screening as well.

The descriptions and verbal meanings (these are italicized) inscribed to the gestures are described and indented below:

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<sup>163</sup> At first, I thought to do this mainly for practical reasons due to the lack of space in the room. But upon reflection, I found that set-up interesting, as it created an interesting group energy and visibility to see how the other pairings were thinking and doing, and they could adapt their movement depending on the other pairing. For instance, Jacob was about to create one expression (with hands covering face) until George from the other pairing expressed that first. I did not restrict repeated movements, but I found it an interesting observation. Nonetheless, others also performed some form of 'face palm covering the face' gesture--an intriguing repetition.

George: George's gestures included holding his hands along the top of his head (*'This is too much to take in'*); covering his face with his palms (*'I don't want to see this'*); raising both hands to the sky (*'Raising my hands in prayer to God'*). He also attributed feeling helpless, that it can't be prevented.

Luke: one pose was putting his palms along his cheeks (*'A shock expression'*); Head down looking at the floor and looking away, looking down (*'I'm looking away'*), and a 'thinking man's pose' (*'I don't know how to represent this, because we have German heritage and so there's some similarities. Like the extermination. I'm interested in World War II era, but I have no idea about that era, like place or time...didn't learn in history class. Once I got over shock, interesting to learn about it.'*)

Jacob: the first pose involved holding his stomach with both hands and turning away of head (*'A revulsion'*) to left a 'nod' (*'like I understand'*), and another facepalm on face (*'Like try to shield myself from it. From participating in it. But now that I've seen it, it's like I'm a part of it now. It probably demands a response of some sort'*).

Henrik: he held his hands to cover the sides of his head (*'I can't understand it..now I'm starting to understand a little more of the enmity for others against the Japanese. But then, I ask are we Chinese people any better? How much of the hate is just nationalism?'*) Lifts his hands to cover his face (*'I don't want to see'*), and fell to his knees (*'Accepting that it happened, can't make it go away...it's a reality, so I feel helpless..surrendering to it, no way to make it right'*).

Myself: I did this swinging movement of my arms and hands back and forth (*'wanting to feel connected to the story, but also wanted to feel far away as well, because don't want to be part of the story'*) outstretched my hand and circled in the air (*wanting to feel far away as well, but also wanting to embrace some figures like John Rabe, that despite Nazi disrepute, really helped to save people. So I embraced them'*) and raised one arm in air and spun around (*'It's all crazy, don't know where to put myself in all of it'*).

Thus, themes of being overloaded with trauma, shock, looking away, understanding, shielding, awkwardness in emotion, aversion to the incident, learning and understanding resounded within this experiment.



Figure 6.1 'Fathomless'.

In one of the paired performances, George and Henrik both came up and both put hands on their heads (an 'aching head' position), because they felt as if their 'head wanted to explode' due to the sheer unfathomable inability to verbally express or comprehend the trauma of the atrocity. Henrik covered his eyes, but George covered his whole face. George expressed feeling 'ashamed to be a human being, don't want to see or smell, but it's right there in front of me so I can't ignore it'.

Henrik covered his eyes and explained, 'I can't watch, it's so horrible, I just want to forget and think about something else'. Even within the narrative they created, there was a distinct distance from the scene, in expressions of an observational mode in both pairings. Their verbal descriptions of the scenes are as follows:

Henrik & George: 'Looking out the window, see Japanese coming, see people being killed, we cover our faces because can't bear to look at it, we are so confused because can't take it in, don't understand what looking at, so last resort is to pray with hands up and kneeling.

Jacob & Luke: Black blob could be mangled dog/mangled human maybe...mysterious thing on ground that is shocking (represented as jacket).

What is evident from the first disclosure by Henrik and George are the sheer affective intensities that are passing through the very unspeakability and incomprehensibility of what they are imagining from the images they saw in the

documentary. The last resort of 'pray' on 'knees' reveals a final gesture of desperation to express intense affects we find inexpressible. From these perspectives, we can 'see' just how severe the originary trauma may be, for even our engagement of its mirrored images brings us to 'our knees' in desperate prayer.

Interestingly, what is evident from Jacob and Luke's disclosures are how such movements are visualized with a degree of violence that analogizes the brutality of the original massacres. For instance, the description of a 'mysterious thing on the ground' that could be a 'black blob', and could also simultaneously be seen as a 'mangled dog' or 'mangled human' is an absolutely striking image that evokes much feeling and emotional intensity. Therefore, the affective intensity amidst those imaginings resonates within both the potency of the image(s) as well as within the very difficulty of communicating their response. That is, the continual shifting (perhaps 'shapeshifting') of the imagined image and its very incomprehensibility suggests an affective circulation of traumatic memory. Specifically, the inability to definitively create a 'formed' image black blob/mangled dog/mangled human out of their response/experience suggests a ghostly materialization that desperately hungers for recognition. Its own shapeshifting articulates its desire to 'form' and be 'seen' after having been denied this in the originary trauma. Thus, it is particularly interesting that as the description was being offered by Jacob and Luke, they not only described the horror of 'the black blob', but in the performance, they also gestured their description by physically throwing the jacket on the floor and then stomping on it with their feet. These actions, I argue, therefore suggest a sort of *possession*, where the ghost's desperation to be seen/formed/materialized, can only enact its very justice/voice/sight through possessing others and re-enacting their original injustice. Such actions also suggest what LaCapra (2001) might suggest as an 'acting out' and a 'working through' the imagining (as cited in Bennett, 2005: 57). Furthermore, the very performative (and performance) aspect of it creates a reflexivity and ability to what Bennett (2005: 123) describes as 'seeing oneself feeling' and catching oneself in the act of acting. Jacob and Luke both possessed and were complicit as willing mediums who stage the vital (perhaps even liberating) see-ing of desperate, hungry, and once forgotten dead.

Moreover, the affective memory of trauma also materializes through *un/conscious* body gestures (where the ‘backslash’ describes how conscious gestures become indistinguishable from the unconscious processes that produced such gestures), and audible speech (where gestures are verbally described). The *inaudibility* and *unfathomability* of the sheer affective force of the original trauma is ‘seen’, ‘heard’, and ‘felt’ through materializations of audible sounds from the vocal grunts and noises that were voiced upon the inadequacy of representable language. Yet the gestures and imaginings cannot be isolated to belong to the singular subject alone, as the gestures are performed with the rest of us (as human subjects), and also within an entangled milieu. I argue, here, that the affective transmission of haunted histories can be seen through its *mediation through subjective, human, and technological bodies*. This trans-subjectively is linked through a diasporic unconscious that entangles the local milieu of the performance and its im/material mediations to the voices on the screen. Furthermore, these links also connect others within the diaspora who may have screened the film in another time, and another place (Davoine and Gaudillière 2004).

The group performance recalls Bennett’s (2005) unique example of human and puppets as part of the Ubu Truth Commission. Puppets are controlled by two human ‘manipulators’ who stand side by side. One is concerned with gesture and puppet movement, while the other is concerned with speech and vocal inflection. Bennett suggests that even in these examples, affects are infused in gestures. As humans and puppets enact stories of trauma together in her example, Bennett suggests ‘it is their expressions and their gestures that infuse the ensemble with an affective intensity’ (Bennett 2005: 119). The embodied remembering from such performative engagement with cinema also accesses the affective through what Bennett describes as ‘sense memory’, and overcomes the limited scope of what she critiques as ‘common’ memory.<sup>164</sup> This common memory can be more readily accessed within the ‘cognitive’ and perhaps most easily engaged through a casual or lackadaisical viewing of such cinema. However, ‘sense memory’ has the capacity to engage the unconscious forces that are hidden and silenced—this is the very

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<sup>164</sup> Common memory describes a ‘social or popularly understood discursive framework, designated as the site where history is written’ (Bennett 2005: 25). Sense memory describes the registered ‘physical imprint of the event’, that is ‘always in the present, although not continuously felt’ (ibid.)

space where the transgenerational ghosts I am concerned about in this thesis thrive in their hauntings. Thus, I argue that the embodied performance accesses sense memory through the embodied space of gestures with affective intensities.

Furthermore, this group performance also argues for the importance of fantasy and imagination in creating (or recovering) intergenerational links of histories that have been lost, or fragmented (see Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). This importance of imagination reminds me of Walkerdine's (2013) argument in an intriguing and recent keynote address that I have discussed in relation to issues of imagination and fantasy in Chapters 3 and 4. I will spend some more time on it here in light of Walkerdine's (2013) discussion of movement/gesture and the intergenerational transmission of trauma. In her efforts to recover an understanding of her grandmother through seeing her in a photograph, Walkerdine engages in bodily performance and 'acting' to 'perform' the pose that her grandmother is positioned within the photograph. Walkerdine discloses learning about a very different grandmother compared to the one she remembers from her childhood. This grandmother in the photo has had an affair and is bearing the child who would be Walkerdine's own mother. While the exact facts, details, and histories are impossible to gather in their entirety, Walkerdine attempts to create affective connections through mimicking her grandmother's gestures in the photo. Then, she also employs 'method acting', which is a technique that requires Walkerdine to remember an event from her own life experience that could parallel the emotional and affective severity of her grandmother. By doing so, Walkerdine imagines, and recovers key social links to a familial history that reconnects her to a grandmother she knew as a child, but never 'really' knew at all. The reason I mention this example is to further emphasize the importance of fantasy and imagination in engaging traumatic histories that we do not understand. Thus, if indeed fantasy reveals more about the original trauma than any facts could, as Davoine and Gaudillière argue, then, the fallacy of only relying on 'fact' is evident. That is, a strict adherence to engaging in mere 'fact', accuracy, and history can, I argue, rely on restricting oneself to the very problematic idea of *lieux de mémoire* that fed Pierre Nora's (1989) very pessimism about 'history' and his view of it as a distant, disconnected engagement with an unrecoverable past (see Chapter 4.2).



However, as I have discussed throughout this chapter, as well as in Chapters 4 and 5, embracing this tension offers intriguing opportunities to recover links to histories otherwise lost, and opens up a stage to bring justice to the voices that were left forgotten and killed due to the very injustices of their death.

Thus, for my subject peers and myself, the embodied performativity further adds to a diasporic vision that creates a connection with the lost voices left unspoken from the Nanking Massacre, as well as a space for the oral eyewitnesses to be heard. While the actual eyewitnesses may soon fade and pass away due to their age, their voice and story can be heard, remembered, seen and embodied by those of us who view the mediated visions of such memories. In the next section, I turn to another important part of composing this diasporic montage. It involves 'critiquing the critique' and further engaging possible problematics of memory production and power (see also Chapter 4).

### **6.3 *Post-Hoc*: Performing Reflexivity of Group Screening and Productions of Memory**

Thus, it is tempting to rest 'contentedly' upon noticing the affective potential of diasporic vision seen in and through the performative case study. Indeed, Cho's (2008) concept of diasporic vision can be commended for the possibilities it also offers for ethnic Chinese diasporas, especially through the moving image.

However, what is missing from Cho's discussion of diasporic vision is a more reflexive, critical engagement concerning the forces of memory production that may render problematic the very mediated perceptions that are offering such potent possibilities of lost histories for 2<sup>nd</sup> plus generations.

In light of the data from the performative case study, a pressing question is: As a person seeking to find lost histories through cinema, what sorts of problematics/obstacles/obscurities/may I unconsciously encounter through viewing historical documentaries? Are traumatic memories produced consciously and unconsciously through media productions, particularly cinema? Also, what historical traumas are 'chosen' or silenced through the moving image distribution? In this section, I stage my exploration of these issues through a reflexive post-hoc critique analysis of the film that was selected for the group screening. This

incorporates both a textual analysis as well as a discursive one concerning memory productions.

### ***6.3.1 The Taboo of Critiquing Oral Testimony and Documentary***

However, in Chapters 2 and 4, I have already discussed the potential problematics of oral testimony. Thus, the question that I repeat from prior chapters explores how the actual 'fact' is less important than fantasy. 'Fantasy' may reveal more about what happened than what 'facts' could describe in and of themselves. These issues continue to be worthy of attention, especially in the context of *Nanking* (2007), a documentary that offers oral testimony and archival footage. Since *Nanking* (2007) was a significant part of the case study and my search for histories, a critically reflexive approach requires me to further examine it in light of these issues of fact and fantasy. In particular, my posthoc examines *Nanking* in contrast to a film that subverts documentary convention: Jia Zhang Ke's *24 City* (2008). Through the next section I show how Jia's work blurs conventions between fantasy, memory, and history and how it contrasts with *Nanking*.

#### *Questions of Oral Testimony: Blurring Conventions*

In such films created via the 'documentary' mode, especially those involving eyewitness oral testimonies and containing archival images (e.g. news journalistic footage), allowing ourselves the liberty to offer a reflexive critique of the 'testimonies' themselves can be a self-conscious affair. Compared to *Nanking* (2007) and its conventional approach as a work of memory, Jia Zhang Ke's documentaries blur aesthetic conventions and how they address issues of memory.

<sup>165</sup> Thus, Jia Zhang Ke's *24 City* (2008) can be considered 'docufiction' in an approach to documentary conventions and subverting Guttentag and Sturman's approach with *Nanking* (2007). My intention is for this critique to be both performative and demonstrative of an empathic vision (see Bennett 2005) that critiques *Nanking* and its problematics, just as the film simultaneously invites a

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<sup>165</sup> This debate between 'fiction' and 'nonfiction' is not new in documentary debates. Michael Renov (2004) and Bill Nichols (in Renov 2004: 22), have both referred to the debate of fiction and non-fiction in historical representation within the documentary realist mode. In particular, Jia Zhang Ke's work recalls Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool*(1969). Renov describes how Wexler interspersed 'actual' footage of riots at the Chicago Democratic National Convention with fictional characters.

diasporic vision of lost histories.

The difficulty for me, especially regarding a documentary as formative and important as *Nanking* (2007), is in ensuring that I am respecting and honouring the traumatized voices that are speaking as opposed to a more academic, 'colder' analysis critiquing oral testimony itself. Demonstrating this empathic vision does not diminish the affective potency of the diasporic vision that so powerfully revealed lost histories to my subject peers and myself. It does not eliminate diasporic vision's affective potential nor compromise my efforts in composing a diasporic montage. Importantly, I must also add that demonstrating a critical approach vis-à-vis empathic vision that concerns oral testimonies, is not meant to dishonour the voices of the speakers nor the lost cries of the dead. On the contrary, through this space of critical inquiry and analysis, I am hoping and aiming to create, and discover a space for silenced voices of Nanking's murdered, killed and raped to indeed speak. My intent is to create an unobscured stage for these ghosts to recover some claim to justice, away from the silencing forces of memory production or hindrances to diasporic visibility.

The oral testimonies from the documentary form of *Nanking* (2007) raises questions about what affects are being distributed across the collective (unconscious), what memories are being mediated through transnational diasporas, and where intergenerational hauntings may occur. Specifically, in spite of the important diasporic vision that was offered by Guttentag and Sturman's *Nanking*, the perception of historical memory is nonetheless mediated, and presents urgent questions regarding its documentary mode of memory production through oral testimonies. These questions of memory production are concerning, especially in light of my later discussions about China's investment in Nanking as a 'chosen trauma' that can be transnationally marketed. Thus, in order to address these questions, an empathic vision is needed to critically engage this film even while it offers a powerful diasporic vision of lost histories for postgeneration Chinese Canadians.

In *Nanking* (2007), innovations were made in the manner of presentation (incorporating Hollywood actors and actresses to enact diaries, journals via spoken word), but it nevertheless held closely to Grierson's (1947) documentary conventions. For example, oral eyewitness testimonies were interspersed with

newsreel footage of the massacre, and its intentions clearly sought to teach, inform, and subtly spread a particular ideology (ibid.). The ‘benefit of the doubt’ needs to be given to the director. If we honour his words, we can see that the film sought to present the facts ‘objectively’ as per documentary conventions. Nonetheless, viewing *Nanking* reveals a distinct sense of bias that favoured the victims and a clear moral judgment on the perpetrators and the filmmaker's search for a resolution to the answers (a remedy to the ‘logic of the wound’, discussed in Chapter 4).<sup>166</sup> This bias was evident in the case studies, when we could ‘feel anger’ towards the Japanese. Subject-peer Luke mentioned during the debrief how the Japanese soldiers, while offered a brief platform to speak their point and confess, were still clearly identified as perpetrators. I concurred with Luke and mentioned that this reflexivity is important as we watch films. Though I am in no way denying the atrocities that occurred, the point of my critique is in the simplification and reductionist portrayal of the perpetrator-victim motif, even if indeed the narrative could be described as the oppression by the Imperial Japanese army against innocent Chinese. Nonetheless, such biases might compromise the notion of ‘objective fact’ holding a cinematic gaze that conventional documentaries such as *Nanking* (2007) try to adhere to. This point raises an interesting question about the form of memory production within documentaries. In contrast, I argue that a stronger sense of ‘objectivity’ or ‘presentation of facts’ can be found within director Lu Chuan's *City of Life and Death* (2009) compared to Guttentag and Sturman's *Nanking*. *City of Life and Death* was a historical fictionalized account of the Nanking Massacre, but its way of telling by weaving fact and fiction ‘told more’ about the actual trauma than the documentary did. While violent portrayals and massacres were not ignored nor played down, he also offered a humanity amidst the monstrosity of the imperial Japanese army. Lu Chuan, who is an ethnic Chinese individual born in China, said that he just sought to ‘tell a human story’. It is this human story that is vital within the critical reflexivity I am advocating. In later sections, I will discuss this film in more detail.

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<sup>166</sup> This recalls Lebow's (2008) critique of Lanzmann's Holocaust documentary *Shoah*. Lebow (2008: 29) critiques Lanzmann's ‘unquenchable thirst for answers’ and finds a dead end as Lanzmann's aggressive, obsessive (9 hours), and ‘let no one off the hook’ interviewing/interrogation method of searching for ‘answers are simply inadequate and the unfulfilled (and unfulfillable) need for resolution and closure too deep’ (see also Bennett 2005 and Chapter 6.2).

In contrast to *Nanking's* (2007) documentary form, *24 City's* (2008) aesthetic mode of documentary offers not only whole new ways to consider the aesthetics of documentary, but opens up important discussions concerning both the productions and conceptions of memory, time and affective transmission of trauma. In particular, Jia's *24 City* delves within these questions in the context of constructing a documentary with 8 oral testimonies regarding the lives of former factory workers of Factory 420, a secret state-run aviation engine manufacturer that is being sold, demolished and redeveloped as luxury high rises (Xiao 2011).<sup>167</sup> After gathering hundreds of hours of footage, ingeniously, Jia weaved together 4 actual oral testimonies with 4 fictionalized testimonies that were constructed from fragments of others' words. This approach echoes Grace Cho's (2008) work in *Haunting the Korean Diaspora* with fictional vignettes constructed from a weaving and blurring of different testimonies and fictions, allowing affective traumas or ghostly hauntings to speak. For instance, one (cheekily) reflexive testimony in *24 City* involves the famous Chinese actress, Joan Chen. She testifies as someone who 'looks like' the famous *Joan Chen (herself)*. The reflexive parody is that, 'in the film, Joan Chen's character is nicknamed 'Little Flower' because of her resemblance to Chen Chong, the actress who played the title role in the 1980 film *Little Flower*. Joan Chen is Chen Chong's English name' (Xiao 2011). This is not made obvious, as Joan Chen's character in the film nostalgically reminisces about the 'irony between the tragic but interesting theatrical role she plays on stage and the disappointing life she lives by herself off stage' (ibid.).<sup>168</sup> In an interview, Jia Zhang Ke said of his decision to weave 'fact' and 'fiction' within his film;

There wasn't such an arrangement at the beginning, because I only planned to make a documentary to record the worker's oral history. Nevertheless, every interviewee gave me the urge to imagine the rest of his story. There were words unspoken, and sentences half finished. I thought I could only fully comprehend these real people's feelings through imagination. I'm not a historian writing history; I'm a film director reconstructing experiences incurred in history. (Jia Zhang Ke, as

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<sup>167</sup> *Senses of Cinema* is an online HTML journal citation without page numbers.

<sup>168</sup> Though I was aware that some testimonies were rendered as fictional (or composites), I relied on mostly trying to guess which ones they were. Interestingly for diasporic audiences like myself, I had no idea who 'Joan Chen' was, as I was unfamiliar with her works, especially given that her film, (*Little Flower* 1980) that was referenced was released in the year of my birth. Interestingly, my partner who was watching with me knew Joan Chen's legacy very well, and pointed it out to me.

interviewed by Lee, n.d.. *Timeout Magazine interview*)<sup>169</sup>

Jia's approach is a stark contrast to *Nanking* (2007). Thus, Jia's films present an invitation to both a diasporic vision and empathic vision. That is, the very critical reflexivity of *24 City*'s own mode of documentary realism invites the spectator's own critical engagement and reflexivity of produced memories and histories. Clearly, what is more important to him is the affective voice within the testimonies of unnamed oral histories that can be compiled and organized into a representative whole and channelled into a (collective) voice through one speaker. Jia argues that:

more extraordinary stories of memory must have submerged into the silence, into the moments when these people finished telling their stories...those silences are the most important. (Jia Zhang Ke, as cited in Xiao 2011)

Alisa Lebow (2008: 30) asserts the importance of film to 'bear witness to the work of time, whether of healing or covering over, neither trying to arrest it nor trying to avow its allegedly progressive flow'. As Lebow continues to suggest, 'the past never reveals itself in full, and what it does show, it shows indirectly' (Lebow 2008: 30). This indirect searching contrasts the type of search that Lanzmann enacted in his 9-hour Holocaust film *Shoah* (1985). This indirectness of revelation epitomizes the very space of encountering the transgenerational ghost that I have explored throughout this chapter. Whether between images, the absence of images, the spaces between frames, behind the melodrama, within the mythic, or the spaces of silence, there is a distinct indirectness in the search through the past.

Jia Zhang Ke, however, is certainly innovative in using his talents and directorial vision to tackle the subject matter with precision, but they are certainly not the first films to subvert documentary traditions. Therefore, these films could be considered a distinct critique of Grierson's (1947) own evolving principles of envisaging documentary as factual, realistic, used for instructional or recording use, or spreading social democracy. For Grierson, documentary here is limited to the confines of pedagogy, political commentary, realist-form aesthetics, and limited to accurately articulating facts and recording them. Therefore, in the context of ethnic Chinese films, documentaries such as *24 City* (2008) subvert the

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<sup>169</sup> Retrieved online January 25, 2013.

very forms epitomized so efficiently and precisely implemented in films such as *Nanking* (2007).

### 6.3.2 Critiquing Popular Historical Trauma Cinema

While it may sound easier to reflexively engage trauma cinema dramas (e.g. historical dramas that portray documentary traumas fictionally or semi-fictionally), the difficulty in doing so concerns the importance of such films versus its problematics in production. That is, the importance connects to the value of bringing such unspoken stories into consciousness, popular accessibility, and hopefully a wide distribution. On the other hand, the very aesthetic of such trauma films is only 'marketable' usually by its degree of ability to 'appeal' or 'entertain' the spectator in a deeply involving, trigger-response emotional reaction, and, at times through the use of special effects.

#### *Logic of the Wound*

Fundamentally, these reflexive questions concerning production and how images on the screen are conveyed has much to do with the ethics and aesthetics of memory production, and the problematics such film may raise for generations mobilizing a 'diasporic vision' to see lost histories. Significantly, issues of memory production are entangled within a combination of hegemonic official productions of memory, the drive of profitability, and the appeal of such films to wider, transnational markets (which certainly connect with issues of profit).

I continue my discussion on the Nanking Massacre, as this is a traumatic incident in history that evokes many questions about how it is articulated through the moving image. For instance, some modes of 'official memory' production can often evoke an ideological stance that particularly purposes towards 'speaking bitterness' (*suku*), as an attempted means of national (collective) recovery from the wound (Berry and Farquhar 2006: 18)<sup>170</sup>. That is, the very problematic of attempting recovery through such national-modes are 'undercut by the tendency

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<sup>170</sup>The 'cause-effect' view of modern national history as a 'narrative of progress', has meant that the relevant material that 'fits' stays within this narrative, while those that do not, are left out (Berry and Farquhar 2006: 21).

of different regimes to speak bitterness according to their particular political needs' (ibid.: 18). Specifically, such official narratives thus follow the 'logic of the wound' -- a way of remembering blood, tears, humiliation, and the scars of war in a way that inevitably produces some sort of remedy or redemption of that very wound (ibid.: 22). As Berry and Farquhar suggest, the logic of the wound through film often 'draws attention to the parallels between the individual subject and the collective national subject as constructions of modernity' (ibid.: 21). This 'need' to speak bitterness, remember blood, and seek recovery for some political need can therefore be articulated through mediated portrayals of atrocities. I argue that such 'needs' are exemplified within films concerned with the Nanking Atrocities in 1937. To clarify these issues, I survey various cinematic productions of Nanking and offer a focused analysis on Zhang Yimou's problematic melodrama, *Flowers of War* (2012).

It is striking that in the past 6 years (2006-2012), there have been countless films and media produced about Nanking. Of the ones with titles that are readily available for the casual, English-speaking researcher, the following list is evident, each involving very different directors with varying ideologies and intentions. These include, *Flowers of War* (2012), *Torn Memories of Nanjing* (2009), *John Rabe* (2009), *City of Life and Death* (2009), *Children of Huang Shi* (2008), *Purple Mountain* (2008), *Nanking* (2007), *The Truth about Nanjing* (2007), *The Diary* (2007), and *the Tokyo Trail* (2006).<sup>171</sup> Other predecessors included the American propaganda documentary film *The Battle of China* (1947), Wu Ziniu's historical fiction following a family during the massacre called *Don't Cry, Nanking* (1995), Mou Tun Fei's *Black Sun* (Hong Kong's 1997 exploitation production of the massacre), and the biographical documentary *Iris Chang: The Rape of Nanking* (2007).<sup>172</sup> Clearly, a quick observation of the film release dates suggests that there was a period where production of Nanking-themed film was less pronounced.<sup>173</sup> However, the

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<sup>171</sup> Michael Berry (2008: 111) also notices a similar trend in cinema, and also notes the growth of scholarship and writing about the Nanking as well.

<sup>172</sup> I avoided watching *Black Sun*, since reviews of this film suggested that its portrayal of torture and the Nanking atrocities entered the territory of gratuitous exploitation, fully epitomizing what Julia Kristeva (1982) would describe as 'abject'.

<sup>173</sup> Berry (2008: 11) also notes how films about the massacre were non-existent for 5 decades. However, between the periods of 1987 and 1995, numerous films and documentaries appeared as well. The 'trend' also suggests a 'Commemorative' event as 1987 would have been the '30<sup>th</sup>'



Commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Massacre towards 2007 likely has something to do with the amount of media produced.

Nonetheless, it is interesting that, in Chinese-language television and video gaming media, there is even a larger amount of persistent narratives concerning Nanking. For instance, there was also a Hong Kong television soap opera set in a fictionalized character drama set before and during the events of the massacre called *War and Destiny* (2007). Furthermore, there are popular online video games in Chinese language that are situated within the Anti-Japanese War era. Across Chinese visual media, there is a clear demonization of the Japanese as the 'enemy', with deep sorrow often later eliciting great jubilation upon victory over the enemy; a process descriptive of what happens in the logic of the wound. While this is arguably less so the case in transnational cinema, there are still elements of such polarized memory productions that exist, in even more popular trauma films, such as *Flowers of War*.

### ***Reflexive Critiques on Flowers of War***

Significantly, under a reflexive approach, I have experienced Zhang Yimou's *Flowers of War* (2012) as epitomizing the very problematic of trauma cinema that mediates memories by exploiting the actual lost voices for reasons of hegemonic gain. However, my argument here is in the minority, as many ethnic diasporic spectators of all ages strongly adore and recommend this film as 'required viewing' for all ethnic Chinese people. So, what would such responses suggest about how the images of trauma are being produced on screen? And what does this mean for diasporas in our formations of memory about haunted histories? In this section, I stage my own reflections on my viewing of this film. I also consider the type of questions that next generation diasporas might consider asking reflexively as they compose their own montage of haunted histories.

For instance, *Flowers of War* appears to straddle a fine line of well-intentioned hopes to build awareness about the Nanking atrocities. However, their clear inclusion of 'Hollywoodized' entertainment sensibilities threatens to open itself to critiques like mine concerning its market/profit incentives. As a serious

drama it produces particular (trans)national memories in the collective (un)conscious due to its problematic portrayals of possible events during the massacre as well as some Hollywoodized imagery and 'glossy' special effects. The cumulative production evokes strong identifications of pathos from spectators. While this is not in itself necessarily problematic, and simply demonstrates the director and cast's relative degree of competency, the issue to consider is how its visual aesthetics intentionally seek to 'entertain' viewers. This inclusion of entertainment value in trauma cinema like *Flowers of War* leave me experiencing an 'unease'. The film clearly articulates a polarized demonization of the Imperial Japanese perpetrators while posing Chinese soldiers as sacrificial heroes.

But, reflexively, as a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadian Chinese distant from this history, I am concerned also about the potency of the images of *Flowers of War* (2012). For instance, what images of memory might such productions contribute to the already existing images about the Nanking Massacre already in my (un)conscious memory? Significantly, the inclusion of 'glossy' special effects and Hollywood motifs (e.g. a 'love scene' that had an irrelevant bearing on the narrative) suggests a profit-motivated exploitation of a horrible atrocity. Even as I continue to reflexively critique the diasporic vision offered by *Flowers of War*, I am curious about the implications in how a number of ethnic diasporic Chinese lauded and recommended the film to others. Thus, if Hollywood A-list film stars such as Christian Bale are chosen for a film like *Flowers of War*, what does this suggest about the motivations of transnational productions? That is, does the inclusion of a 'big star' raise awareness of lost histories, or does it compromise and obscure diasporic visions?

From these queries, I am arguing that a particular discourse about the Nanking Massacre is being promoted. The motivations may very well be due to hegemonic forces of the nation-state, or it could also be entangled with market sensibilities and the dispersal of a particular discourse about the Nanking incident to create particular national identifications across local and transnational ethnic Chinese diasporas. Of course, such concerns raise questions about how the next generation Canadian Chinese person can engage such a film and what sorts of memories from imagined, mediated images of actual history are being reinforced. This will have to be left for future research.

However, by implementing an active critique of my experience (e.g. observing how I feel 'entertained' and 'uneasy' about the clichéd Hollywoodization of some scenes), I can raise questions from a standpoint of critical historical consciousness (e.g. Wang 2004) that interrogates hegemonic influences of the nation-state and market. Thus, my reflexivity offers me a space to 'see myself feeling' and 'not feeling' (e.g. Bennett's 2005) and demonstrate an active confidence during the process of viewing the film and considering its mediated images.

Without implementing a critical reflexivity, merely utilizing a 'diasporic vision' by itself in searching for unseen histories could risk acquiring an 'awareness' that is, in fact, informed by a problematic 'memory' of lost histories. While I do not oppose entertainment, of course (as I quite enjoy 'entertaining', 'touching' films), what I am concerned about is how a film such as *Flowers of War* (2012) appears to offer a marketable and profitable sort of trauma. That is, the trauma is being sold, packaged, and transnationally distributed. If my initial diasporic vision is complemented by my reflexive critique that 'sees myself feeling' (e.g. complementing Bennett's empathic vision), then I can question the types of images that are persisting from problematic cinema, especially films that attempt to articulate potentially sensitive and tragic histories.

Interestingly, *Flowers of War* and its positive response among many members of the ethnic Chinese community suggests, I argue, a desire for 'diasporic visions' and seeing 'unseen' histories, or even dramatized portrayals of them. I can understand this desire to 'see' such fragmented histories. Furthermore, the sheer pervasiveness of multi-media portrayals of the Nanking massacre alongside the Anti-Japanese War in local Mainland and Hong Kong markets suggests that this urgency and desire to see lost histories is not isolated to select individuals.

However, considering that assertion from another perspective, the pervasive production of some histories raises questions about how some fragments of history are remembered so widely on screen, while others are forgotten. This absence of mediated production is evident in a significant absence of discourses concerning, for instance, the Chinese Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 4.7). That is, 5<sup>th</sup> generation directors such as Zhang Yimou once tackled the injustice of their experiences of the Cultural Revolution frequently in the

1990's, perhaps as an exercise of their own autoethnographic impulses (which led to their being banned from China at the time). Such films, for those seminal filmmakers were works of memory, awareness, and a cry for justice.<sup>174</sup> Thus, it is striking that apart from independently produced and directed films such as *Though I Am Gone* (2006), there is an absence of mediated memory through film or television concerning such forgotten atrocities.<sup>175</sup> It further raises questions about the degree of nation-state influence (e.g. censorship), versus market forces, or to what degree such remembrances of haunted histories persist (or fade into the shadows of the unconscious) in current and future generations.

Therefore, I am attempting to articulate here how I complement my application of Cho's (2008) diasporic vision alongside Bennett's (2005) empathic vision and Wang's (2004) critical historical consciousness. Furthermore, if I continue to add Volkan et al.'s (2002) reading to complement this critically reflexive practice to aid diasporic vision, one has a strong case to argue how films such as *Flowers of War* (and the absence of contemporary popular films about the Maoist era), indeed echo attempts to distribute a *particular, produced*, remembrance. In the case of Nanking, it suggests an (un)conscious desire of the nation-state to articulate the Nanking atrocities as a chosen trauma that can persist and repeat through future generations. The social link (e.g. Davoine and Gaudillière 2004) binding the national-diasporic collective (un)conscious to such chosen traumas, then, transmits persistent hauntings. Thus, the Nanking Massacre becomes produced as an official commemorative event of *the* collective, national wound, around which ethnic Chinese diasporas can globally 'unite'.

Future research could further consider the post-hoc analyses and questions I have raised in this section, particularly where the *persistence, repetition*, and *prevalence* of multimedia productions concerning the Anti-Japanese War might indeed suggest multiple spaces of relentless hauntings.

### ***City of Life and Death* (2009)**

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<sup>174</sup> Unfortunately, I must leave discussions about the important 5<sup>th</sup> generation Chinese films for another discussion. An excellent discussion of them can be found in *China on Screen* (Berry and Farquhar 2006).

<sup>175</sup> *Though I am Gone* is an independent documentary that discusses the officially silenced incident of a vice-principal being beaten to death by students during the Cultural Revolution. The film is banned in China.

In spite of all my concerns about the portrayal of the Nanking Atrocities, I am encouraged by daring directors such as Lu Chuan, who persist in making films in spite of the 'censorship system' of Chinese restrictions. For instance, his semi-historical rendition, *City of Life and Death* (2009), was also released in 2009 around the same time as *John Rabe* (2009). However, it took a much more 'independent' route compared to many of the other films I have mentioned in the previous sections. In some scenes of mass killings of the Chinese, Lu has his actors 'perform' their deaths in ways that emulate their original documentary source. That is, the framing, angle, and scene in his film duplicates and perform actual documentary footage. Furthermore, utilizing a black and white film aesthetic, the spectator is in fact, invited to follow a Japanese soldier, the main protagonist, and develop a sympathy with him as he finds himself accidentally complicit with the brutal actions of his fellow comrades.

The Japanese soldier witnesses the very process of being himself both perpetrator and victim of his own nation's military regime and the destruction of innocent people. In fact, Lu encountered a great deal of initial censorship from state regulators due to his sympathetic portrayal of a soldier that has typically been completely 'demonized' in portrayals. While it could be described as a 'Chinese' production, it initially created significant public uproar (e.g. serious death threats, cancelled Chinese film awards nominations) in Mainland China precisely because it offered sympathetic portrayals of 'perpetrating soldiers'. Thus, through the diasporic collective unconscious, it did not follow the conventional route of the 'logic of the wound', and in fact threatened a particular framing of national identity<sup>176</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, Lu has expressed his desire to simply make a 'human' film. That is, the director avoided clear expressions of heroes and villains (e.g.

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176 For instance, the film actually met some resistance and criticism from State censors, taking 6 months for script approval and another 6 months for the film itself to be approved. It also met much criticism for portraying a Japanese soldier sympathetically and great resistance from Chinese citizens who sent online death threats and accusations of treason to the director. Chinese authorities and the studio felt pressure from the public to pull it from various film festivals and saw threats from angry Chinese citizens. Its nominations from awards from the Huabiao awards were all also suddenly cancelled. Thus, the film clearly struck a wrong chord with many people who had internalized the importance of the 'wound' within their national identities. Eventually a Communist party official public approved of it, and it has since become supported as a Commemorative film and shown in school curricula.

Chinese heroes, Japanese villains), but instead opted to articulate the realities of 'life' and being *human*. While it certainly articulated a documentary realist-mode in its representation of the 'massacre' (thus suggesting the director was in no way a sympathizer with ultra-nationalist Japanese historical revisionists and deniers as some have accused), the film nonetheless challenged the national identities of individuals who had relied on the 'official remembrances' of the Nanking massacre in China. In this way, Lu Chuan's film was in itself reflexive, and offers a promising hope for cinema that can offer reflexive and valuable diasporic visions of haunted histories, compared to productions such as the *Flowers of War* (2012). Therefore, Lu's films may even offer and promote opportunities for critical reflexivity among diasporas to engage in new visions of such atrocities that can truly listen to the lost voices of the dead and provide a space for the unseen to be seen once more. In the final section of this chapter, I examine video artworks and installations that continue to exemplify the various types of ways that the next generation can seek as resources that extend diasporic visions in powerful ways. These video installations also offer further directions and possibilities to evolve their/our application of 'diasporic visions' and the persistence to look for 'new ways of seeing' lost histories and the persistence of affective hauntings.

#### **6.4 New Visions of Hauntings**

In this final section of the chapter, I explore and analyze innovative video artworks and video installations that are critically reflexive of their capacity to distribute a diasporic vision transnationally. These works thus actively invite one towards an empathic vision just as it offers diasporic vision. Such active, critically engaging visions are essential for one to compose a diasporic montage of haunted histories. In particular, I focus here on works by Mainland Chinese artist and filmmaker Yang Fudong and British artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien.

##### ***Yang Fudong's First Spring and Fifth Night***

In my journey of 'seeing' the affective forces of trauma across generations, I have also looked to video installations or film productions by visual artists and filmmakers. Thus, if Jia Zhang Ke works to subvert documentary conventions, then

artist and filmmakers Isaac Julien and Yang Fudong readily subvert the very conventions of ethnic Chinese cinema itself. I briefly discuss here one short film and two video installations that allude to various ways of seeing the affective potential of trauma. These three works reveal different ways of encountering the transgenerational ghost that conventional film may not be able to do. All three similarly tend to comment on issues of China's rapid shift from tradition to modernization, questions of generational change and hauntings, and the blur between reality, fiction, memory and history.

### ***First Spring***

I begin with the most 'conventional' of the three works I discuss here, which is Yang Fudong's *First Spring* (2010). Fudong's visions tend to be far from conventional, but his short film *First Spring* was a (curious) commercial commission by the clothing manufacturer Prada, as a means of showing off their more 'vintage' clothing lines. (This short film is also readily available by digital streaming media such as *Youtube*). Thus, while Yang may not have enjoyed the complete artistic freedom that he typically demonstrates in his other works, the artistry and creativity he enacts certainly stretch whatever restrictions or guidelines he may have been bound to. In spite of *First Spring*'s commercial aesthetic as an advertising work that utilizes 'pretty/handsome' actors and actresses in every scene (where nearly every single frame of the short film could be extracted as a striking, still image for advertising), the work, 'First Spring', in a black and white cinematic mode, nonetheless evokes a reflexive tension between a mythic dynastic past (without a particular, chronological specification) and its representations of tradition, in contrast to modernity (at least in the sense of a vintage-based, early 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity).



Figure 6.2 Yang Fudong's *First Spring*

While there are frequent cinematic distractions from the 'beautiful people' and the self-awareness of its own commission, I argue that it nonetheless evokes hauntings through its very surrealistic qualities and the slow, ghostly movements they make. Characters from past dynasties dine together with others from the 1960's. Visible too, is a shot of two women reclining in a demure yet provocative, trance-like position, and in a ghostly, seductive pose recline on an opium bench. Another provocative scene has some of the male models slowly ascend in flight towards the telephone wires, with the director reflexively revealing the very wires holding them up. These very actors then walk along those wires, immediately confronting and embracing the very stigma of enmeshing fantasy and reality, and rendering distinctions of fiction and reality as needless.

One particularly ghostly scene involves a 3/4-eye view of a city circus block. In the foreground, we see the flying umbrella models from the 1960's walking along the tightwire and later dropping their umbrellas. Along the city street, in the background, we see the dynastic officials, princesses, and officials walking along, and later some carrying carriages in a procession, contrasted by motor vehicles. Towards the short film's conclusion, we see a traditional procession, as it continues to evoke a ghostly following. It also chases after a 1960's couple on a train, thus evoking a commentary on tradition chasing modernity. There is a combination of a timelessness while evoking particular aesthetics of time periods through the fashion and setting choices.

Opportunities to see the transgenerational ghost here reflexively reveal hauntings and brief glances towards various mythic visions of the past, while being reflexively self-conscious of the flaws of its very own myth. Its interest and



affective potential, I argue, involves the very juxtaposition of time periods (as represented in fashion), the slowness of movements, its embrace of spectacle and a mythic perception of 'Chineseness'. However, there is a subtle reflexivity on the part of Yang Fudong throughout the whole film (and all of its beautiful, immaculately dressed people). This reflexivity invites--albeit less effectively than his non-commercial works-- the spectator to gaze at the spectres of passing time. For the next generation gazing upon this, if one manages to wade through the distractions of its commercial purposes, the affective potential of this short film offers an intriguing window to gaze into (and critique) a multitude of layers: the layers of mythic perceptions of 'Chineseness' through time, and from various gazes. These gazes include both the eyes of its own people, the eyes of 'foreigners', and ethnic Chinese diasporas.

### ***Fifth Night***

In contrast, *Fifth Night* exercises the artistic freedom that Yang Fudong had less of in *First Spring*. *Fifth Night* was screened across 5 wall-sized monitors along the wall at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The whole 5 monitors conveyed a fragmented panorama of one long, 10 minute scene, where all screens are occurring in the same cinematic time and space with a 1936 Shanghai as its setting, with period costumes reminiscent of Wong Kar-Wai's (2000) *In the Mood for Love*, but in shades of black, white and grey.<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, each screen depicted the solitary journey of one or two characters in silence, as they literally crossed screens and made their way across the world depicted across the 5 screens. Yang's filmmaking approach manifested itself in using 5 cameras simultaneously and the 10 minute film across 5 screens was shot in a single take. He took 4 takes in total via this method, and picked only one take in its entirety (He did not mix and match the best visuals from different cameras). The reflexivity was due to a subtle situating of the scene that at once evoked both a 'real' Shanghai city block and also could be

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<sup>177</sup> Wong Kar-Wai's *In the Mood for Love* (2000) is a haunting drama set in an older 1960's Hong Kong and Singapore (at some points). While it revolves around the romance of two characters, and their affairs, Wong does not appease the viewer with pleasant relations. The film is beautifully shot, yet mise-en-scènes invite the viewer into a voyeuristic gaze through the intimacy of the frames. The pace of the film is slow and meditative, rarely tempting the viewer with spectacle and speed. Distance, longing, silence, seduction, betrayal, regret, and timelessness are themes continually circulated through this film.

evidently identified as a fictitious film studio (with the only indexicality of the film's own reflexivity being evident through its own surreal presentation of the installation itself). Gazes, unidentifiable memories, and silences were pervasive



Figure 6.3: *Fifth Night*. 7 channel video installation. Vancouver Art Gallery.

through this film, as each 'character' could be followed crossing the screens. Yet in their crossing, they would disappear, for a few moments in the void between channels, lost in the rupture between fragmented visions/screens. As they re-appeared, they could be seen gazing at his or her surroundings, curious about the various happenings around them. For instance, one scene involves a young woman walking slowly, looking almost awestruck by the happenings around her. She sees people doing construction, a man she may or may not recognize (paralleling perhaps the elusive encounter in *In the Mood for Love*), gazing at the ghostly figures of two old men sitting on a couch on a stage who do not move and do not offer any emotion to engage. Eventually, she walks up a spiral staircase and surveys her surroundings.

This scene evokes a strong commentary on China's modernity versus tradition debate. Of course, Yang opens up a space for further engagements as well. In my engagement, I experienced both disconnections and connections with the images due to the 'mythic' nature of a period I could identify in my memory of watching film, but with a history otherwise unfamiliar to me. I could connect, particularly with the experience of one of the characters who gazed around, and gazed at the old people, noticing the changing of generations and the passing of others as if they are ghosts, but continue to be present. Old relics of 'Chinese'

furniture, bottles of Chinese herbs and eels, demonstrate mundane everyday objects that on the magical cinema screen demonstrate an affectively inscribed power and as Moore (2000: 74) might suggest, a fetishistic meaning. These objects, when they first appear visible on screen, initially command a power that suggests, perhaps a sense of tradition and also brings an organic contrast to the inorganic studio setting of the film. However, once one of the characters walks slowly towards it and gazes at these objects, the fetishistic meanings of these objects, strangely, shift, as a new relationship between person and thing briefly begins at that moment (Moore 2000: 107). The person's gaze at the object immediately invokes a sense of 'passing' as if he is viewing the final remnants of a past rendered irrelevant by modernity.

A similar gaze is evoked as a girl passes a dinner table seated by the elderly. Many of the characters walking slowly from one screen to the next enact such a gaze, a gaze that articulates a sort of confusion or surprise at the juxtaposition of change in modernity and the remnants of old ways of life that are slowly fading. They look, as if they have 'missed' a lost or fading opportunity to engage the past (as affectively materialized within the elderly, old furniture, old food and herbs). Any interactions between characters point to their elusive nature, and all of the characters are solitary, isolated, and alien to all that their eyes catch hold of.

As a second generation person gazing upon this installation (that clearly evokes a past I cannot know) I am also invited to follow a given screen and its character, and walk along with him/her. As they pass between monitors once more, their brief disappearance between the monitors provides a brief separation, and reminds me of my own alienation and separateness from the scenes unfolding in front of me. I consider not only how the character is observing the passing of time, but I also reflect on how, I too, am witnessing the passing of time across these screens. Just as the characters reminisce in their unspoken ways about old objects, the elderly, and the change in front of them, so I, too, am engaged to consider all that I hope to connect to, just as I am made aware of my disconnections and significant distance from the world of *me*.

### ***Ten Thousand Waves***

To conclude this chapter, I would like to offer an example that 'performs' a way of

'seeing' hauntings pragmatically. In its very design, it brilliantly 'stages' a critically reflexive way of seeing hauntings through a diasporic montage. British artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien's intriguing and haunting installation, *Ten Thousand Waves* (2012) weaves together images that 'combines fact, fiction and film essay genres against a background of Chinese history, legend and landscape to create a meditation on global human migrations'. As he does, Julien flashes images of historical archives, documentary images, and even scenes from another Hong Kong documentary about a very tragic incident. Julien, in *Ten Thousand Waves* offers a powerful space for the lost voices of Morecombe and their ghosts to speak. Specifically, this installation was motivated by the Northwest England's Morecombe Bay incident on February 24, 2006, which involved the unnecessary drownings of 23 ethnic Chinese migrant cocklepickers, due to exploitation by gangs/gangmasters.<sup>178</sup>

In terms of its design, *Ten Thousand Waves* has been shown in multiple forms. In gallery settings, it often is set up across a number of screens (e.g. 9 screens) spread throughout the room. The effect of the screens in this version resembles a mosaic in some ways. The number of multiple screens is meant to 'frustrate the ontological gaze of the spectator' (in Julien's own words) (Goh, *Daily Serving*, February 15 2012). There is also a single screen adaptation—*Better Life (Ten Thousand Waves II)* (2010) of the video installation that was submitted for the Venice Film Festival in 2010, that incorporates the 'spirit' of the installation through editing and traditional cinematic montage. There is also another version that, while on a single screen, actually emulated the gallery experience of its fragmented screens by instead presenting 'fragmented moving image channels' within a single channel (many 'picture-in-pictures' at once). The effect resembles a

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<sup>178</sup> The tragedy of the story is how these immigrants, struggling to survive, were employed by Chinese gangs/gangmasters who exploited their desire to stay in England. They were neither trained nor experienced, and could not read the warning sign on the beach indicating the dangerous tides. Since they were 'illegal migrants', they were particularly exploited in abhorrent conditions. The cocklepickers found themselves trapped. They tried to alert emergency lines, but the authorities did not recognize the severity of their situation. Cocklepickers with mobile phones tried to say their final goodbyes to their families, waiting to drown from the rising tide. The surviving families have received no assistance and are now in huge debt to family, friends, and relatives. From this story, Julien created *Ten Thousand Waves*, that 'combines fact, fiction and film essay genres against a background of Chinese history, legend and landscape to create a meditation on global human migrations. Through formal experimentation and a series of unique collaborations, Julien seeks to engage with Chinese culture through contemporary events, ancient myths and artistic practice.' ('Ten Thousand Waves Press Release')

mosaic in some ways. I will discuss this version.

In *Ten Thousand Waves*, one clip begins with images of histories, from Maoist Communism era and 1930's Shanghai. It then shifts to scenes of water, suggesting the Morecombe drownings. Soon, we see Julien contrast these images to the distinct idyllic, mythic gaze associated with the costumed *wu xia* knight errant, played by Maggie Cheung, and then interspersed with flashes of other memory.<sup>179</sup> Here, she is, interestingly, *Mazu* the goddess. Her presence and image recalls the mythic spectacle and 'mythic Chineseness' that 'leaves' to survey the scenes of time and space represented in the images.<sup>180</sup>

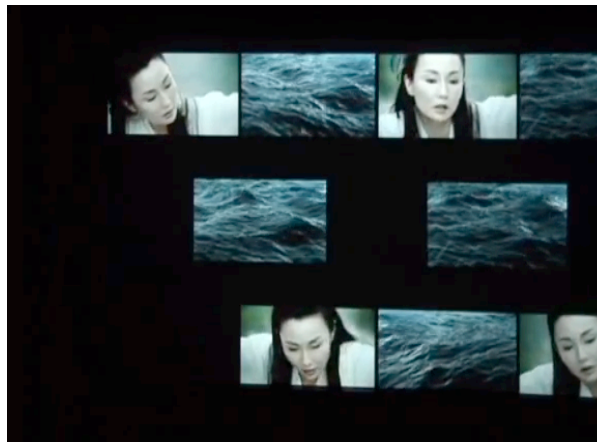


Figure 6.4: *Ten Thousand Waves*: Single Screen-Multiple Images Version

Thus, Julien explores immaterial bodies of haunting by contrasting the image of the costumed knight-errant, detailed with Mazu's long, flowing ancient robes in the wind as she soars the skies. Within the narrative, moving images of Mazu as an ascended knight-errant show her reflecting on the scene of the waters, representative of the site of the drownings, and her passing throughout time. As Mazu surveys the landscape for memory, it vaguely recalls Akerman's *D'Est*, and her '[meditation] on images of the landscape as a bridge for memory...[witnessing] the work of time, whether of healing or covering over, neither trying to arrest it nor trying to avow its allegedly progressive flow' (Lebow 2006: 30).

<sup>179</sup> *Wu xia* refers to martial arts cinema and is exemplified in popular films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (1999) and *Hero* (2002).

<sup>180</sup> 'Mythic Chineseness' refers to an apolitical, cultural China that may be simultaneously historical, semi-historical or fantasy and create a common 'myth' that dispersed, diasporic Chinese can find connection with. Chinese Costume dramas often evoke this sense of myth. The 'mythic Briton' reflected through King Arthur's legend might be a similar comparison.

As a participant or spectator, we can see Mazu as a manifest body of mythic tradition and idyllic ancient past, and see how she crosses time and space. Her presence and vision of histories known and unknown, of haunted histories from a 20<sup>th</sup> century past like the Maoist era and more recent past like the Morecombe Bay incident, allows her to become an embodied 'carrier' of memories, voices, histories and the dead. We are also brought to reflect on urgent questions posed about the implications of Mainland China's rapid modernity.

Also, by reflexively interspersing 'behind the scenes' takes or green-screens within the image, Julien also demystifies the 'magic' he creates, raising questions about the production of the 'mythic' image of the costumed knight-errant and its role in the collective imaginings of ethnic Chinese. Doing so subverts the problematics of memory production and market agendas.

The installation almost 'dances' within the silences, gaps, and spaces as images appear and disappear interspersing visibility with invisibility and void. These gaps of images also direct us to immaterial hauntings of what is visible and rendered invisible in our mediated visions of memory and history.

Therefore, the costumed knight errant in this installation ingeniously stages a haunting space that invites spectators and participants to reflexively consider a way of 'seeing' the immaterial bodies of affect circulate through time and space, and transmit traumatic memory across generations. This invites any who are willing to become eyewitnesses of the many visible images, remembered histories, and forgotten ones, and to also bear witness of hauntings that stir within the moments of pause, void, and darkness, that may suggest the very gaps of invisible histories, lost voices, and the dead. Julien also creates a collective space for other lost voices from haunted histories from the Cultural Revolution, the scars of war, or perhaps the unforgiving pace of modernity itself. He also creates a space for mythic engagement, just as he reveals the very histories surrounding them.



Figure 6.5: *Ten Thousand Waves*: Multiple Monitor Installation View

## 6.5 Conclusion

Much of this chapter has concerned itself with reflexively ‘staging’ or performing the process of ‘diasporic vision’. In other words, I consider this a ‘diasporic vision’ in action’, so to speak. I attempted to demonstrate this through a critical autoethnography exemplified by a group case study. Then I staged my own post-hoc analysis of ‘critiquing’ my/our very own diasporic vision of the Nanking Massacre attained from the powerful documentary, *Nanking* (2007). Afterwards, I suggested new ways of evolving diasporic vision, by maximizing its affective potential and minimizing issues of diasporic visibility due to memory production issues. I considered all of these discussions by considering the implementation of many theorists (e.g. Cho 2008; Wang 2004; Berry and Farquhar 2006; Bennett 2005) who I have already engaged with throughout my thesis. Furthermore, I offered examples that powerfully perform a critically reflexive diasporic vision. Notably, Isaac Julien’s (2012) powerful work, *Ten Thousand Waves*, invites participants-spectators to see a montage of histories, moving images, and the gaps and silences in between the fragments of the visible. In Chapter 7, I offer my concluding discussions and consider all of these arguments in the frame of what I describe as a ‘diasporic montage’.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

My journey of 'seeing' transgenerational ghosts has involved listening to the scars, wounds and traumas of lost voices. As I have discussed throughout this thesis, the sheer force of affective intensities from a war-torn, chaotic 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history transmits across ethnic Chinese diasporas through (un)conscious silences and chosen remembrances. The affective trauma produced from these haunted histories is persistent across generations, especially within diasporas where the disconnections and distance between immigrants who lived during the era and their 2<sup>nd</sup> generation progeny (with little knowledge about such pasts) are evident. To reiterate, my research has tackled the following research questions: How do affective memories of trauma transmit across diasporic generations across time and space? That is, what is the nature of intergenerational haunting? Furthermore, what 'methods' can diasporic ethnic Chinese employ to 'see' these spectres of traumatic affect? Significantly, how can Chinese Canadians engage problematic, mediated visions of the past and develop a reflexivity that both 'sees' haunted histories and critically *defies* the power problematics within memory production?

### 7.1 Summary: Intergenerational Haunting of the Chinese Diaspora

#### 7.1.1 Thesis Summary

To address these research questions, I have explored new 'ways of seeing' the previous histories, experiences, and past of my parents' and grandparents' generation within the ethnic Chinese diaspora. I have argued that if we can 'see' and critically engage more of our past (and our previous generation's own history), then the subsequent insights can create a space of healing, reconciliation, mutual understanding and connection between our Chinese-Canadian postgeneration and our elders. The juxtaposition of mediated memory assembles an intriguing vision of histories otherwise unknown, silenced, forgotten or invisible to us. Ultimately, performing a diasporic montage through the critically autoethnographic mode is an affective methodology that defies the very injustices of history. Such injustices persist, however, through the very production of silences and forgettings.



With my critical autoethnographic approach, each core chapter not only critiques the problematic of the 'I', but also is inclusive of a wider collective, diasporic experience. For instance, this collective subjectivity involves 'my' subjective, affective hauntings becoming entangled with the hauntings of my peers within my personal circle. Furthermore, I challenge autoethnographic conventions further by exploring how my/our hauntings can be further entangled within a wider collective, diasporic unconscious across generations and geography. I have examined these issues by 'staging' the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Canadian Chinese experience (see Chapter 2). My thesis, therefore 'reconstructs a lifework by following the scrambled trail the ghost leaves, picking up its pieces, setting them down elsewhere' (Gordon 2008: 66). One way of doing this was by crystallizing an assemblaged vision of the *ghost* through mediated forms of memory. Therefore, I juxtaposed mediations including the informal interviews of my subject-peers (Chapter 3), written/video oral testimonies of elder generations whom I do not know, from archives (Chapter 4), aesthetics such as film/television (Chapter 6), and artworks/installations (Chapter 5, 6) d) and a performative group case study involving embodied gestures in response to a documentary screening of the 1937 Nanking Massacre (Chapter 6).

In Chapter 3, I began by exploring the questions and disclosures that my subject-peers (whom I know personally as friends) and I raised in our conversation-interviews that concerned what we *remembered* from fragmented narratives told (often with moral lessons), or silenced and how these remembrances and (limited) access to generational stories of our ethnic Chinese past might connect to how we, as the next generation construct our cultural identity/identifications. My conversational interviews with my subject-peers in Chapter 3 revealed persistent and key themes of historical trauma and memory that I further investigated in Chapters 4 to 6. These disclosures included narratives of survival such as poverty, struggle (due to times of war, post-war, and economic struggle/turmoil), war (e.g. Japanese invasion, WW2), escape and exile (e.g. betrayal by family), and constant fear (e.g. Chinese Cultural Revolution). Migration stories were also persistent through my subject-peers' disclosures, including narratives concerning the challenges of adjusting to issues of social class, status, pursuit of wealth and success, and the phenomenon of 'Gold Mountain' (see

Chapters 3 and 5). I began exploring the possibility of how the challenges of migration (and the memories of a difficult history in our elders) might have led to the pervasive postgenerational experiences of being ‘pushed to succeed’ through education and extracurricular activities (e.g. piano, tutoring classes etc.) (See also Chapter 5).

In Chapter 4, I searched for the unspoken histories and hauntings revealed from the fragmented remembrances in Chapter 3. I discovered many different official and unofficial oral stories and memories from eyewitnesses in our parents’/grandparents’ generation that poignantly revealed the sheer force of suffering, death and the scars of war within 20<sup>th</sup> century China and Hong Kong. These discoveries however, raised questions for me about the tension between history and fantasy through the mediation of memory and what traumas are *remembered*. I emphasized the importance of critically engaging such tensions with sensitivity and care in order to respect the voices of these eyewitnesses courageous enough to disclose their traumatic experiences and memories in written/video record. My so-called questions and arguments about the ‘authenticity’ of memory, however, were not meant as mere critiques, but to honour the lost voices of haunting histories. For example, I challenged critics of ‘authenticity’ by arguing that fantasy and memory must be held in tension in order to render what is inexpressible into a space of the expressible. I also performed an analysis that introduced yet another experiment of the impossible that created possibilities of reflexively engaging the transgenerational ghost through aesthetic works; I highlighted visual art and installations. I also tackled issues of memory production, which began to express my concerns in Chapter 6 concerning some productions of memory mediated by expressions of ‘power’, hegemony, or market forces, that produce specific national identities within both Mainland Chinese and global ethnic Chinese diasporas.

The figure of the ethnic Chinese migrant was the focus of Chapter 5. This chapter continued to reveal insights about many of the disclosures remembered by my subject-peers in Chapter 3. I also further investigated how the burden and expectation of a successful and wealth-producing migration for our parents and grandparents persisted in our postgeneration’s experience of being ‘pushed to succeed’. For instance, Chapter 5 delved more deeply into the oral histories of

migrants and brought further attention to the question of *why* some narratives were particularly *remembered* by my subject peers in Chapter 3. I argued how such narratives, in fact, belonged to a Confucian legacy that continued through familial generations and collective ethnic Chinese diasporas across time and space. Significantly, I discussed how this legacy of Confucian tradition became a persistent space of affective haunting through the (un)conscious passing on of values and discourses. Such hauntings involved honour or shame for one's filial piety and ability to meet familial expectations of entrepreneurial success, and the burden of being responsible for the 'glorification' and raised status of the familial collective.

In Chapter 6, I experimented with Cho's (2008) assertion of a 'diasporic vision' where the transgenerational ghost 'joins forces with media technologies that enable it to be seen in order to create alternate ways of reading both the silences surrounding an unspeakable trauma and the hallucinatory voices that speak' (Cho 2008: 166-167). I focused my discussion here around a performative case study involving my subject-peers where I screened a documentary about the 1937 Nanking Massacre. Here, affective hauntings could be pragmatically identifiable through demonstrations of a reflexive awareness of 'seeing oneself feeling' or 'not-feeling' (see Bennett 2005). For example, the entanglement of affects through the visible, material realm could be 'seen' through embodied gestures, physical movements and vocal grunts. Also, affective spectres considered invisible, unconscious, and immaterial could be 'seen' through their being 'not-seen' and 'not-felt' by the absence of gesture and inability to voice one's indescribable response to engaging mediated, moving images of trauma on screen. Thus, my analysis showed that what was unperformed and undisplayed through the terror of silence in fact said more about the very sheer affective potentialities of the parent trauma than what was visibly seen (see Blackman 2012; Leudar and Thomas 2000, as cited in Cho 2008: 181; Bennett 2005; Davoine and Gaudillière 2004: xxvii). Furthermore, I continued this chapter with a discursive reading of power or 'soft power' that can be understood in terms of the 'logic of the wound' that requires a national (collective) recovery (Berry and Farquhar 2006: 18). Therefore, my thesis has offered a critical strategy to offer new 'ways of seeing' intergenerational hauntings that are entangled in the tension between the visible

and the invisible, material and immaterial, past and present, self and other (see also Blackman 2012).

### 7.1.2 Further Reflections on The Intergenerational Ghost

Wherever possible in this thesis, I have pointed to and described the areas that are most revealing of haunting forces at work through the (un)conscious. These are typically the 'latent' meanings and significations that drift behind words, sentences and stories. Hauntings are most clearly represented in what is 'unknown', 'silenced', or inaccessible amidst what can be spoken and shared. However, as I have stated repeatedly over the course of this thesis, the method of seeing an 'unseeable' ghost is a paradoxical venture. This is where the methodology of what I have called a 'diasporic montage' becomes an urgent approach to implement (and further develop). It demands a critically engaged, reflexive approach to crystallize a variety of data that offers multiple mediated visions of traumatic memory.

Throughout this thesis, to help illustrate some of these unconscious mechanisms of the spectre, the work of Volkan (2002, 1987) has been helpful in articulating how the transgenerational transmission of trauma can be 'deposited' through the 'image representations' of multiple generations. Perhaps the very nature of transgenerational haunting (and all associations, images and affects that transmit together with the ghost) suggests that such unconscious workings (and constructions) pass on through generations to maintain the ghost's own survival (Davoine and Gaudillière 2008: 33). That is, perhaps the ghost must haunt in order to stay alive. Thus, *remembering* is not merely traumatization, but fulfilling an unconscious task assigned to us: bringing life to the dead, fulfilling unfulfilled wishes, recovering broken social bonds, and reconnecting with the lost.

However elusive the transgenerational ghost may be, 'something' unspeakable and unseeable regarding the nature and madness of the transgenerational ghost is revealed through the fragments of memory. At the very least, reflexively interrogating the spaces where I am 'seeing our not seeing' (Bennett 2005: 185) in both a personal and collective sense, grants me the privilege of locating possibilities of how to 'see' the 'unlocatable'. The moments that are provided are often filled with a fleeting moment of insight. And within the brevity of such moments are often the occasions I point toward the type of archive

that can further shed light on the gaps and animate the past. In the next section, I focus on the 'diasporic montage' and how it has developed as a natural, innovative product of my autoethnographic journey and research outcomes.

## 7.2 Developing A 'Way of Seeing': The Diasporic Montage

### 7.2.1 A Montage Formed from Method and Experience

In this section, I explain why the diasporic montage is important and how it has developed as an important, innovative outcome from my personal journey and research process. Specifically, I first discuss its organic formation as a product of method and experience. Then I detail its formulation as a result of the interdisciplinary influence from filmmakers/theorists like Sergei Eisenstein and other scholars from disciplines such as literary theory (e.g. Chow 2012; Wang 2004).

The frame of the 'diasporic montage' not only sums up my experience of writing this thesis, but also offers a new 'way of seeing' the intersection of diaspora, memory, trauma, affect, history and hauntings in a critically reflexive way. Significantly, the notion of 'diasporic montage' organically developed during the actual *process* of writing and researching the draft to this Conclusion. As a result, my detailed discussion of the diasporic montage is situated here because it originally developed from a personal epiphany and process that occurred while writing *here*. Thus, the 'diasporic montage' was formed from method: it developed from the *immediacy* of my performative writing and autoethnographic methodology (see Chapter 2). Specifically, I began to see links to the haunted histories I had begun to compose together with my subject-peers and through my engagement with various mediations of memory (see Section 7.1.1). My diasporic vision of these links manifested visually through incredibly vivid juxtapositions within my mind's eye. In those moments, I began making sense of what I was seeing as a type of *montage*. I realized that this juxtaposition of colliding (moving) images was being composed from my diasporic experience of writing each chapter (e.g. Chapters 3-6), and performed my process of 'working-through' my autoethnographic experience.

Despite my personal experience and strong reference to 'visual' language in

my discussion of juxtapositions, I do not intend to rigidly ordain a primacy of visuality. That is, I am using the language of the visual (e.g. montage) because it is inextricably and fundamentally connected to my own experience and autoethnographic performance of this thesis (see also Chapter 2).

My visual bias has been, undoubtedly, influenced by Cho's (2008) work, as she also embraces the language of visuality in her own autoethnographic experience and formulation of key concepts (e.g. diasporic vision). It has, of course, been a very helpful and foundational reference for my own work (see Chapter 1). What is interesting from Cho's work, however is that it also argues for the necessity to understand 'visuality' in *synaesthetic* directions.<sup>181</sup> For Cho (2008: 174), *diasporic vision* is composed of an 'assemblage of eyes, tongues, and other parts distributed through time' (see also Chapter 6). That is, the affective potential of this assemblage to 'seeing' hauntings is considered *synaesthetic* as there is a *re-distribution* of 'senses' to (trans)subjective bodies such that voices are seen, photographs are heard, and written testimonies can incline touch (Cho 2008: 187; see also Blackman 2012). The *synaesthetic* possibilities of diasporic vision were explored in my performative case study in Chapter 6.2. My subject-peers and I performed our 'vision' (even a montage) of haunted, invisible, and silenced histories through multiple senses in the body that collided an unknowable past with the immediacy of the everyday present.

I wish to emphasize, however, that my reference to 'visuality' and 'montage' in seeing hauntings is not meant to be a generalizing principle for others seeking to perform a juxtaposition of their/our (diasporic) histories and mediated memories. It is not *prescriptive*. Instead, the innovation of the diasporic montage is *descriptive* of my own profoundly visual experience of composing haunted histories regardless of their original sensory stimulus. That is, my senses also reflect a (moderate) degree of *synaesthesia*. I think, feel, touch and hear in ways that are strongly (and sometimes overwhelmingly) optical, which has also influenced how I

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<sup>181</sup> For example, some individuals may *synaesthetically* 'see' or juxtapose mediated memory through music or sound. In these cases, musical terms might be more appropriate. Perhaps diasporic '*interpolation*' (a term in music referring to the juxtaposition of contrasting musical elements), or even '*counterpoint*' (refers to independent but harmonious musical elements or lines) might fit. Interestingly, in Eisenstein's (1949: 6) theorizing of the montage (which I discuss more later), he actually uses the musical term 'counterpoint' to analogize 'visual' counterpoints through montage.

have composed my own juxtapositions of mediated memory.<sup>182</sup> For some individuals, however, the preference may be less rhetorically visual/optical, and more ‘tactile’ or reflective of performing a so-called ‘collage’ instead.<sup>183</sup> This primacy of the ‘tactile’ is evident in Laura Marks’ (2000: xi) appeal to the ‘haptic’ visuality of cinema, where ‘the eyes themselves function like organs of touch’ (Marks 2002: 2). This way of reading cinema then subverts the dominance of the ‘visual’, and opens up new, multisensory ways of engaging film through other senses such as touch and smell, alongside the synaesthetic (Marks 2000: 22-23). Haptic looking opens itself up to ‘discern texture’ instead of form, and an inclination to ‘graze than to gaze’ (ibid.: 162). For Marks, film ‘touches’, and film, therefore can be both understood and felt much like organic ‘skin’ (ibid.). Thus, through the possibilities of the synaesthetic, juxtapositions of memory can be indeed framed in a number of ways that best reflect one’s own way of reflexively experiencing (and performing) a multisensory exploration of hauntings and diasporic experience.

### 7.2.2 The Language of ‘Montage’

In addition to a rationale of experience and method, further clarifications are needed to answer the question: why a language of ‘montage’? This section articulates the interdisciplinary scholarship that have influenced why I have chosen this cinematic, visual language to frame my innovation of the *diasporic montage*.

#### *Eisenstein*

In the moments I began to see myself juxtapose and collide haunted histories together, I realized that my process of composition resembled Sergei Eisenstein’s principle of montage. I felt surprised about this at first. But upon closer reflection, I realized how I have been drawn to and intrigued by Eisenstein’s

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<sup>182</sup> My description of synaesthesia here is not referring to the ‘clinical diagnosis’ of it in neurology. Within the problematic limits of clinical diagnoses, my experience would not be diagnosed as synaesthetic no matter how strongly visual my associated experiences are as it does not fit the required criteria. Thus, my use of the term in this chapter is more ‘open’ and echoes Cho’s (2008) approach to the concept.

<sup>183</sup> For instance, I am thinking of individuals who understand the act of juxtaposing collections of photographs, testimonies, video clips and artworks as more akin to the tactile practice of creating a ‘collage’ or ‘scrapbook’.

soviet montage since I first learned, several years ago, how he theorized and applied it. Significantly, I began to understand that my own experience of juxtaposing mediated memory actually resonated with what Dancyger (2011: 20-21) delineated as Eisenstein's 'intellectual montage' and 'overtonal montage' theory (see also Eisenstein 1949).<sup>184</sup> What followed, however, was also learning differing perspectives of the montage that debated and complemented Eisenstein's method.

For instance, Eisenstein's soviet montage, while foundational in film history, inevitably encountered both disagreement and subsequent innovation from various filmmakers and theorists. For instance, his most notable contemporary, Vsevolod Pudovkin (1954) disagreed with Eisenstein's approach. Instead, Pudovkin advocated a different type of montage that edited together linking shots in order to provide a continuous and smooth narrative of storytelling (which were closer to Hollywood conventions) (see also Wang 2004: 86).<sup>185</sup> In his defence of montage, however, Eisenstein (1975: 4) asserts the wonder that arises in both concept and the moving image when physical pieces of film, any 'two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition'. For Eisenstein, 'the juxtaposition of two separate shots by splicing them together resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot—as it does a *creation*' (ibid.: 8. italics mine). I mention these accounts because, for Eisenstein, the montage is a creative act that opens new ways of seeing cinematic images. Similarly, I also understand the diasporic montage as a creative act and performance that, too, offers new ways of seeing

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<sup>184</sup> For Eisenstein, *overtonal montage* incorporates the time length/size/time (metre) of the shot, its rhythm, and the emotional tone to create a desired effect (Dancyger 2011.: 20). This is evident in the famous 'Odessa Steps' sequence of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), as moving images of intimidating soldiers are juxtaposed with those of vulnerable, weak citizens (ibid.) *Intellectual montage* makes a 'point' about a particular sequence by introducing different images or ideas into an intense sequence (thus, the timing, pace, tone, and emotion from the 'overtonal' montage may also be present in such sequences). Such montage is demonstrated in *October* (1928) where moving images of a Russian Revolution leader's ascension to rule is juxtaposed with a preening peacock hence expressing Eisenstein's opinion on the issue (ibid.: 21).

<sup>185</sup> In later decades, Andrei Tarkovsky's brilliant films demonstrated resistance and opposition to any form of montage. Tarkovsky (e.g. *Mirror* 1975) favoured much longer takes, and avoided colliding or linking images like traditional montage. In America, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) innovated continuity editing to create narrative links between images that facilitated emotional impact and reflected an individual's experience of reality. Within the French New Wave, Goddard's innovative experimentation with montage and editing produced innovative and compelling 'jump cuts' in *Breathless* (1960).



haunted histories through juxtapositions.

### *Interdisciplinary Views of Montage*

Within film studies scholarship, however, filmmakers/theorists have often read the 'idea' of montage (regardless of filmmaker) differently and with greater contention. For instance, Jean Narboni, Sylvie Pierre, and Jacques Rivette (1977) debated the 'cinematic' montage (as demonstrated in filmmaking practice) as different from the 'idea' of the montage as an abstract idea or metaphorical term.<sup>186</sup> Pierre, in fact, differentiates the two by reserving the term 'montage' within practice, while preferring 'collage' in metaphorical or conceptual discussions. What these contentions suggest, are understandable attempts to create a common language amidst scholars and filmmakers that protects the term 'montage' for specific visual practice instead of confusing it with an abstract, theoretical discourse that might render the original meaning of the term futile. In contrast to these perspectives, this section explores contemporary debates that have moved beyond the limitations of cinematic practice and traditional notions of montage.

While I recognize and appreciate the rationale behind reserving the language of montage for specific purposes, my understanding, theory and practice of (diasporic) montage arrives from an alternative, interdisciplinary perspective (see Chapter 1).<sup>187</sup> Interestingly, this interdisciplinarity can also be found in how Eisenstein formed and articulated his montage principle. Eisenstein (1975: 5), for instance, himself applies literature and even riddles as metaphors and examples to communicate how one can understand and create a cinematic montage.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, through other texts, one can find this transcendence of the montage terminology over both its rhetorical and disciplinary limitations. For example,

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<sup>186</sup> The original debate was found in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1969. The 1977 date cites Milne's English translation of this text.

<sup>187</sup> As both the Preface and Chapter 1 discuss, my analysis throughout this thesis has drawn from traditions including media and cultural studies, sociology, psychology, and Asian Studies in my analysis. Also, Gordon (2008) was trained in sociology, and uses this lens to discuss her perspective of Benjamin's understanding of montage (see Chapter 2.8).

<sup>188</sup> Eisenstein (1974) explains cinematic montage through some entertaining and interesting examples from as diverse as Lewis Carroll literature to international folk-lore riddles. Conversely, one can find a semblance of Eisensteinian montage within literature such as Marinetti's (1912) *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* (see also Strauven 2009).

French Film curator Philippe Alain-Michaud (2007: 285) subverts conventional art historiography by discussing the ‘montage-collision’ that Aby Warburg (himself, a cultural theorist and art historian) composes in his *Mnemosyne* (see Chapter 1.6). Michaud (2007: 285) uses the language of montage here to interpret Warburg’s work as a juxtaposition of memory ‘images’ (both in their material and immaterial affective forms) through photographs to articulate haunted histories. Michaud’s argument, in fact, illustrates Warburg’s work alongside Eisenstein’s montage of attractions to argue for new ways of seeing history, theory and film (Woodfield 2004). Interestingly, these experiments by Warburg have been cited as relevant examples of differential montage that can inform film theory and culture, and the analysis of cinema (see Valiaho 2010).

I have also found helpful Ban Wang’s (2004) understanding of montage, which is influenced from his own background in comparative literature, history and Chinese language studies. Wang’s preference for analysing trauma in Chinese film was insightful to me, as he privileged Eisenstein’s approach of a juxtaposed, fragmented ‘collision’ over Pudovkin’s ‘smoother’ montage (ibid.: 86). Wang (2004: 60) argues for a critical historical consciousness (see Chapter 2) through an analysis of radical Chinese film that opens urgent and important ways of seeing the haunting traumas within China’s history. He argues:

Eisensteinian montage does not present a static, alluring image; it aims to offer a crucible of suffering and becoming, and it experiments with conflicting options and ideological positions. It touches history at a moment when it is shaken with shocks, frozen into a dialectic image at a standstill... The broken mirror that montage holds up to history is a veritable experience of flux, fragmentation, destruction, and reconstruction, a history going to pieces, broken to its foundation with catastrophe, war, and revolution’. (Wang 2004: 87)

Here, Wang sets the Eisensteinian montage in dialogue with the inherent tension of Benjamin’s dialectical image that is rendered visible through the very silencing and shattering of history through unjust relations of power.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, Wang

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<sup>189</sup> According to Mueller (1987: 474-475), Eisenstein’s principle of montage is similar to Marx’s ‘genuine investigation’, as the different shots (or members in Marx’s case) unite towards a result, theme or purpose. This differs from Barthes and Benjamin’s perspectives, as Benjamin’s view is closer to Barthes’ idea that each image is autonomous and meaningful in of itself, even if juxtaposed together (e.g. tableaux). In the context of his quote, Wang (2004) also uses the term ‘dialectic image’, with a reference to Benjamin’s understanding of it. Within the context of my discussion here, I find Dillon’s (2004) interpretation of ‘dialectic image’ useful here. For Dillon, ‘dialectical

(2004: 87) uses the language of montage to transcend itself as a cinematic device by discussing it as a way of both revealing and engaging the brutal realities of tragic history. In this way, Wang's understanding of montage that is situated at the intersection of history, trauma, and film analysis has helped me see montage as more than a filmmaking technique that is, in fact, capable of encountering haunted, diasporic histories.

Moreover, Rey Chow also approaches the montage from an interdisciplinary approach of literary theory, critical history and cultural studies. Chow (2012: 3) offers a Brechtian understanding and application of montage cuts, partitions, and the estrangement of old orders of thinking in order to 'suture' together revolutionary ways of thought. Fascinatingly, for Chow, montage can be 'rethought not simply as an event in the history of cinema but also as a key operation in twentieth-century theoretical thinking' (ibid.). In fact, Chow develops this argument by translating the word, *montage*, from its literal Chinese language meaning, *jianjie*, which literally means 'cutting-reconnecting' (ibid.). She argues:

This is the operation of scattering a (purported) previous continuum into fragments, which are then soldered or sutured together and distributed anew. We perform *montage* whenever we move things around from one context into another in the realm of thought, producing unanticipated, unsuspected relations—oftentimes triggering a crisis and a new situation—through the very gesture of juxtaposition. (Chow 2012: 3 italics mine)

Thus, a principle of diasporic montage, if understood from Chow's Brechtian perspective, can create a new way of 'thinking' and 'seeing' by first 'alienating' one from the variety of emotional responses that can arise from a diasporic vision of fragmented histories. By 'interrupting' the development of (crude) emotion and the spectacle, one can more powerfully engage the juxtaposed vision of mediated memory that he/she has composed. This, of course, recalls Bennett's (2005) use of empathic vision--which is also an important part of my diasporic montage conceptualization--that encourages this very brand of critical agency that estranges crude emotion in favour of a deeper, more thoughtful engagement (see

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images' therefore offer a new way of writing history. These images 'push us to a deeper grasp of the forces at play in the world', and challenge one to reflexively 'look beyond and behind what was said', amidst the visible fragments and juxtapositions from a montage (ibid.: par. 18, 30). There is a wide tradition of debate on these issues that persists, but my participation in this discussion is outside the scope of my thesis (see Leslie 2007, Dillon 2004, Penksy 2004).

also Chapter 2.7 and Chapter 6.2). In summary, I have pointed to these brief interdisciplinary accounts in order to communicate why I have framed the juxtapositions of mediated memory performed in this thesis through a language of montage. It has quite literally formed as an innovative outcome of my own thesis' process of researching interdisciplinary scholars who are open to subverting the conventions of their own (and other) disciplines.

### **7.2.3 Diasporic Montage: An Integration of Approaches**

Overall, my discussion of the diasporic montage as a product of method, experience, and interdisciplinarity illustrates how it has developed within the immediacy of performance. That is, my engagement of autoethnographic experience, diasporic hauntings, and key theoretical texts has produced an intriguing, powerful method of (synaesthetically) staging a different way of 'seeing' intergenerational ghosts and haunted histories. In fact, the diasporic montage is performed as an integration of the strengths of multiple seminal theories. This incorporates multiple critical approaches that juxtapose various mediated memory forms, and critiques its potential problematics (e.g. positivist critiques of 'reliability' and memory productions). These approaches include 'diasporic vision' (as a way of 'seeing' haunted affects), 'empathic vision' (a means of 'seeing oneself feeling' and not-feeling), and the machinic assemblage (the entanglement of (im)material bodies) (Blackman 2012; Cho 2008; Johnston 2008; Bennett 2005).<sup>190</sup> While I have argued that diasporic vision is the 'only way of seeing ghosts' (which has been foundational for my research), I have found that it does not address the 'mediated' nature of memories and the ensuing problematics. I have, of course, discussed these problematics notably in Chapters 4 and 6 (e.g. official memory production). In this way, the diasporic vision of haunted histories could be critiqued for its passivity in its 'vision'. Thus, I have complemented it with reflexive critical approaches such as Bennett's (2005) empathic vision and Wang's (2004) critical historical consciousness that challenge ways of seeing aesthetics, artworks, the moving image as well as the power discourses throughout historical

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<sup>190</sup> In this way, it could be described as a concept, process, or framing, as it expresses features from each of those definitions.

narratives. Complementing these approaches with diasporic vision evolves one's act of 'seeing' haunted histories towards a critical engagement that is reflexive and persistently 'active' in juxtaposing mediated memories from various sources of empirical data.

Despite my own autoethnographic experiences and (inter)disciplinary biases to the juxtaposition of mediated memory (whether visually, aurally, kinaesthetically, etc.), what persists are the social links that call the diaspora to join in the very (dis)connections of a collective diasporic unconscious and the opportunity to encounter forgotten histories through the immediacy of our most vivid senses. The affective potential of this assemblage points to the wondrous complexities of our human experience even as the transgenerational ghosts that dwell in the remaining gaps and silences persist to haunt us. Such innovative ways of juxtaposing mediated memory offer promising opportunities for future research directions and applications. In the next section, I perform one such opportunity by modelling a visual way of engaging haunted histories through a diasporic montage of gesture, photograph and moving image.

## 7.3 Future Directions: Costume Dramas and Lost Histories

### 7.3.1 Costume Dramas As a Staging of Haunted Histories

What I have found of particular interest to me are analyses of Chinese *costume* dramas or *period fictions*.<sup>191</sup> There is some argument that this indeed, may be a worthy area of future study, as such films and television offer a particular, unique staging of the past that can strangely invite and engage the spectator. Visual artist and filmmaker John Akomfrah (2012) argues that:

Costume dramas are a staging of history. It is one of the first genres going back to Méliès and the Lumière brothers. Moving images came alive as a way of staging the spectacular, and one of the spectaculars is the past; the necessary fiction that an audience is offered so that in watching an image you are in the past. Cinema tells you all sorts of lies, such as the persistence of vision, which is a delusion that we buy partly because of our complicity with it. And costume dramas are to a certain extent the same; they offer this idea, this fiction, that one can have an unmediated access to the past. (p. 8)

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<sup>191</sup> Such dramas can be expressed through fantastical, realist (or even 'magical realist') modes.

Therefore, according to Akomfrah, costume dramas (or period dramas) *perform* history by staging the spectacle of the past itself. Thus, the virtual, or perhaps ‘mirrored’ image that film offers is only ‘unmediated’ within our encounter and our complicity with its staging. That is, both the visual image and the affects behind/within the image offer a staging, a virtuality, a vision of our own encountered affects and lives. This mirrored affect and ‘image of the force of trauma’ through the cinematic body actually enables us to ‘see’ transgenerational traumatic hauntings without experiencing the sheer affective force of the direct representation of the parent event (Leudar and Thomas 2000, as cited in Cho 2008: 181; Bennett 2005: 69). However, in some particular period films, the very screen of film does not yet completely help one avoid the risk of overidentification and secondary trauma.<sup>192</sup> In these cases, possessing an approach of critical engagement is certainly necessary.

Interestingly, in a public lecture, Akomfrah (2012) argued that costume dramas suggest a fascination with ‘death’ itself. This is an interesting assertion, and under such a framework, the affective potential of period films dwell within persons on screen who have, indeed passed on or fictional persons who serve as vessels for lost voices that have died. Thus, those who have passed on are revived as blood-and-flesh figures draped in garments of another era, evoking the ghosts of persons (or archetypes of persons in fictions) that once lived or could have lived. For the next generation Canadian-Chinese spectator, seeing such visions of the past may create encounters with multiple ghosts that evoke a loss and disconnection with family myth—that is, the imaginings and (fragmented) memories of how our family histories, our parents and grandparents' past, and perhaps, questions concerning our very cultural identifications.<sup>193</sup>

For instance, one striking example offers the critically reflexive spectator a way of seeing fragments of haunted histories. This is staged through the costumed knight errant within the *wu xia* genre, or ‘swordplay-fighting’ within cinematic/television productions of martial arts media.<sup>194</sup> The *wu xia* staging, in

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<sup>192</sup> I am thinking of Bennett (2005) and Lebow's (2008) critiques about Lanzmann's *Shoah* (see Chapters 6.2 and 6.3).

<sup>193</sup> See Chapter 3 for discussions of cultural identity/identifications.

<sup>194</sup> This fantastical ‘swordplay’ genre of *wu xia* is typically filled with action, melodrama and

this example, involves a moving image adaptation of Jin Yong's *Xiao Ao Jiang Hu* (also known as *Smiling Proud Wanderer*, *Laughing in the Wind*, or *Swordsman*) which Jin Yong wrote as a serial in Hong Kong during the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976) in Mainland China.<sup>195</sup> It has been popularly adapted through a wide range of television and film over the past several decades.

According to John Hamm (2005: 164), Jin Yong says that he intended 'to employ characters within the novel to depict certain universal phenomena from three thousands years of Chinese political life' and that due to the actual history taking place while he was writing novels, it was natural that his text would reflect his own reactions to the events.<sup>196</sup> Hamm (2005) cites one fragmented reference that alludes to the brutal 'public shaming sessions' during the Maoist era, that I'll discuss here.

The scene involves well-respected knight-errant, Liu Zhengfeng, who is performing a 'hand-washing ceremony', which is attended by a large number of other acclaimed knight-errants. This ceremony signifies a sort of 'retirement' away from the violence, politics and world of the martial arts (*jianghu*). His desire is to retire, create and perform music with his good friend from the 'Evil' party, Qu Yang. However, due to his association with 'the evil enemy', his glorious ceremony is turned into a public humiliation session by the ruling leadership of all the various martial factions. There, the leadership, all of Liu's peers and a crowd of witnesses (also costumed knight errants) turn against him and demand that he recant his ways and renounce his ties/friendship with the enemy. They demand he declare his loyalty to the 'purity' of their own factions. Subsequently, the leadership even demands that Liu's youngest son (threatened under death, humiliation and torture if his father will not recant), betray his own father. They

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costumed knight-errants evoking a mythic, apolitical Chinese tradition (e.g. *House of Flying Daggers* 2004). See also Chapter 6.4 and my discussion of Julien's *Ten Thousand Waves*.

<sup>195</sup> To reiterate, the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a terrifying part of Chinese history where Mao Zedong and his brand of Communist China imposed anti-tradition policies, extremist anti-bourgeois actions involving mass murders, and literal millions of dead. See Chapter 4.3 (historical summary) and 4.8 (analysis and oral histories) for more detail.

<sup>196</sup> Nonetheless, Hamm discourages any of our attempts to read its written or visual form as allegory or even from an auteurist perspective. As he argues, 'vast stretches of narrative bear no discernible reference to specific contemporary events, and even those characters and incidents that do, fail to cohere into any comprehensive or consistent allegory' (Hamm 2005:164). And certainly, in the context of cinema, we can add further layers of complexity through the whole creative production process of its transfer to the moving image.

threaten the whole family. Liu, refuses, and is about to kill himself, but Liu is stopped by the primary antagonist of the series (Linghu Chong), and also aided by his demonized friend, Qu Yang who makes a grand entrance and intervenes. What is interesting about this scenario is that Hamm argues that clear portrayals of this scene alludes to the *public struggle sessions* developed by the Maoist Communists over its decades in power (and more heavily practised during the Cultural Revolution). Public shaming/humiliation of struggle sessions were regularly employed against dissenters accused of being disloyal to Maoist policies or leadership. The accused were tied up, humiliated, and labelled with demeaning signage, and beaten in front of a large crowd of witnesses (see Figure 7.1).



Figure 7.1: Public Shaming Session during the Cultural Revolution era

From this example, future research could apply many of the methodologies used in this thesis and perform a 'diasporic montage' that juxtaposes different media or images together concerning similar originary/parent trauma events. Thus, if a fantastical martial arts scene as I have described alludes to such a history, what are the affective potentials of such opportunities?

In the case of the golden bowl scene, it could be interesting to explore the diasporic visions possible for diasporas who see, side-by-side, the fantastical scene playing alongside documentary/archival images of the public shaming sessions. Alternatively, the fantastical scenes from the Mainland Chinese television adaptation, *Xiao Ao Jiang Hu* (2001), could also be juxtaposed alongside melodramatic historical dramas that portray such sessions as well (See Figure 7.2). Perhaps a variety of 'image' media could be considered together in actively



composing this particular silenced history from the Cultural Revolution, and attempt to listen to the lost and forgotten voices. However, amidst fantastic spectacle, issues of memory production (e.g. market-economic based incentives), glossy special effects, and expensive production values can ‘get in the way’. Even if unconscious hauntings stir behind the image, ‘flashy’ production values may make it quite difficult for passive viewers of the golden bowl scene (or another relevant scene) to engage what it might mean or what histories it could (subtly) reference. Thus, this further suggests an opportunity to research the importance and possibilities of mobilizing a ‘diasporic montage’, in order to critically, reflexively, and actively consider the complexities of the moving images and its affective potentials and connections to haunted histories.



Figure 7.2: ‘Hands’<sup>197</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Here, I attempt an experiment of montage (see Dillon 2004). I attempt to render the word ‘Hands’ as a neutral description that tries to encourage spectator engagement while minimizing the ‘shock’ value of these juxtapositions. I am trying to re-direct spectators’ attention away from the immediate ‘crude’ emotional elements that are visible. This challenges the spectator/reader to ask critical questions such as ‘why’ and ‘what’ that hopes to challenge engagement on the issues of history, power, and haunting behind and beyond what is visible (even as the immediate emotional responses may be inevitable). In my autoethnographic analysis, I see Liu’s reflection as he attempts to ‘wash his hands clean’ in *Xiao Ao Jiang Hu* (2001). The gesture of ‘leaning’ between Liu’s shaming and the archival image of public shaming offers an intriguing resemblance to reflect upon. Of interest, I had developed this idea to juxtapose these two scenes together for a conference paper I presented at the *Bodies on Screen* conference at Goldsmiths, University of London. In the Q&A session, Dr. Pasi Valiaho offered an intriguing observation about how the gesture of ‘Liu’ reaching down into the golden bowl mimicked the gestures of those being publicly shamed (or they mimicked each other). Even though I performed the juxtaposition of scenes, I had not realized the resemblance of these particular (moving) images at the time of preparation or presentation. However, I was grateful for the observation as it continued to open up ‘new ways of seeing’, even as I was presenting about that very topic. Thus, I offer this footnote of credit to Dr. Valiaho where it is due.

These experiments intentionally reflect similarities with my Chapter 6 discussion of Isaac Julien's *Ten Thousand Waves*. However, as I mentioned in that chapter, Julien's installation is a gallery-based initiative, and so causes issues of access for any diasporic spectators interested. Thus, what I propose would be to further Julien's approach into popular television of cinema and accessible (moving) images of histories by popular publics (e.g. Google Images, books). Therefore, a future screening with postgeneration diasporic subject-peers could involve screening this clip of Liu from the *Swordsmen* drama, and concurrently juxtaposing its moving images with others. This 'vision' actively engages spectators in an act of critical reflexivity and participation of the diasporic montage co-performed on the screen itself (similar to the invitation offered by Julien's *Ten Thousand Waves*). The analysis could involve looking at gestures (e.g. the bodily position of Liu washing his hands and any similarities with how shamed individuals are gestured in the photos/dramatizations), as well as a vision of how mediated memory could be layered to reveal further mediated memories from official histories typically left unspoken or unpublicized.

Thus, 'lost histories' can be seen by looking for the ghosts that *persistently* articulate and *repeat* themselves through the *wu xia* costume drama. Likewise, such ghosts likely persist within other genres of costume drama as well, including period-realist genres (albeit in different ways) that require different constructions of a diasporic montage. Through such juxtapositions, affective hauntings can be seen through im/material bodies. How such ghosts *persist* and *repeat* through moving image production, as well as through images themselves, is worthy of future research. This is especially so, given the possibilities that what was once rendered invisible, might acquire a 'stage' to be visible, seen and heard. And perhaps such apparitions can find willing eyewitnesses, and a hoped-for justice through the *persistence and repetition of* (moving) images and their productions.

Regardless, the possibilities for such processes for diasporic spectators nonetheless points to other 'unseen' images and 'unknown' histories that continue to haunt. For instance, even as costume dramas direct me to 'see' glimpses of history in (moving) images that might animate spectres, such ghosts remain nameless. In the example of public shaming sessions, these are terrifying experiences of humiliation and shame that I cannot imagine. And the individuals I

see suffering in those archival images of shaming sessions are sadly nameless and unidentifiable to me. These individuals are also, literally, but a few of the millions of people that have been subjected to similar experiences of humiliation/shaming, and a great deal of other atrocities during a Cultural Revolution narrative being increasingly forgotten. Nonetheless, countless numbers of them remain forgotten, unfound, unseen, and unheard in the injustice of it all.<sup>198</sup>

### 7.3.2. Other Lost Histories

While my thesis research offers new ways of ‘seeing’ haunted histories through ethnic Chinese diasporas across time and space, there are many histories I have, with regrets, left out. These include traumatic histories such as bound feet in early 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnic Chinese women, 1989’s Tiananmen Square incident, and devastations passed on from the forces of nature such as famine, disaster and earthquakes. And in Canada’s narrative, I have left mostly undiscussed the history of ethnic inequality, slavery, and injustice for ethnic Chinese in Canada regardless of their generational ‘position’ (e.g. migrant, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation).<sup>199</sup>

Of course, my thesis also focuses on a particular generation of ethnic Chinese-Canadians in a particular time, and with a particular autoethnographic connection to me. Thus, while my research has contributed a unique discussion to the fields of affect, trauma, memory and generational hauntings, its arguments are not meant to be ‘generalized’, at least in the ‘positivist’ understanding of the term. On the one hand, I have indeed argued about generational hauntings that spread across the ‘collective’ (un)conscious through the ethnic Chinese diaspora. On the other hand, this study must be read and understood within its particular context. It should not be haphazardly generalized to different ‘ethnic groups’, ‘diasporas’ or even other ethnic Chinese Canadians. Instead, this thesis was meant to offer a

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<sup>198</sup> The ‘forgetting’ of the Cultural Revolution has been a subject discussed in Chapter 4. Also, this possibility for future research is also relevant autoethnographically, as I was only vaguely aware of ‘punishments’ from those disloyal to the government. However, I had never seen the archival photos and had not learned (or at least failed to remember) any narratives that taught me/told me about such horrible, torturous articulations of shame. Thus, when I first attempted this ‘diasporic montage’ (to perform my own search), my own experience was certainly filled with pathos. However, I could also ‘see’ my ‘not-knowing’ and ‘not-feeling’ by my not truly understanding any of these histories. Here, I could see invisible, immaterial affects of trauma circulate through the gaps of what was unknown, untold, and unrevealed through my own inability to see.

<sup>199</sup> While I have not discussed them here, these issues are also widely and pervasively researched by scholars in Canada.

voice to those who must speak, and for those who are no longer able to speak. I have hoped that the value in this thesis has prompted new possibilities, different 'ways of seeing', and modelled a methodological tool through the diasporic montage (via visual approach of juxtaposing memories) that can reflexively engage intergenerational ghosts through mediated memories.

#### **7.4 Final Remarks**

Through this journey of explorations, experiments, and possibilities in search of intergenerational ghosts, I have begun to see how 'the ghost is distributed across the time-space of the diaspora in order to create another type of body, an assemblaged body whose purpose is to see and speak the traumas that could not be seen and spoken by those who directly lived them' (Cho 2008: 166). For instance, even within the possibilities of future research that I have suggested in this concluding chapter, hauntings continually persist and repeat through any mediated 'body' available. Thus, for the postgeneration, new ways of 'seeing' (e.g. through visual juxtapositions such as this diasporic montage), must continually evolve (just as it has even within the space of this chapter). We have considered the urgency and importance of this through many examples, as immaterial bodies of traumatic affect continue to circulate amidst the chosen official remembering of atrocities like the Nanking Massacre, or the preferred official forgetting of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Even amidst these 'macro'-histories, are countless other unknown individual or familial histories of those who suffered and died amidst a chaotic and war-torn 20<sup>th</sup> century in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Across generations, through migrations, and transcending time and space, these immaterial bodies of affective trauma continue to circulate, until they are somehow, somewhere made visible and heard.

My own desire and research has hoped to meet this challenge through experiments in autoethnography, diasporic visions, and an evolving diasporic montage, implementing a number of different critical approaches to haunted histories. These approaches invite any who are willing, to become witnesses of the many visible images and remembered histories. Juxtaposing mediated memories (whether visually, aurally, or kinaesthetically, etc.) of traumatic memories

transmitted intergenerationally involves a challenge for ethnic Chinese diasporas. We are challenged to bear responsibility to hauntings that stir within the moments of pause, void, and darkness; immaterial bodies of affective trauma that may suggest the very gaps of invisible histories, injustice, and the dead. And we are also challenged, as next generation ethnic Chinese towards a reconnection with our elders should we engage their pasts. Of course, we are also challenged to demonstrate a critical reflexivity and willingness to defy the problematics of power in productions of mediated memory, and perhaps participate in creating and performing a space of recovery for haunting spectres. Ultimately, however, my thesis hopes to embody a liminal 'stage'; a platform that not only connects voices throughout time and space, but serves as an urgent space of justice that honours the forgotten dead, listens to lost voices, and remembers silenced pasts.

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## APPENDIX A: HEURISTIC GUIDE TO CONVERSATION INTERVIEWS

(Note: These questions are not exhaustive, and are meant to be 'guides' rather than required interview questions. The questions have taken many forms during actual conversations)

1. What do you know about your parents and/or grandparents migration story?(e.g. the what/why/how of leaving HK to come to Canada)
2. What stories do you know about your parents' courtship with each other? (or if you don't know, what do you think happened?)
3. A. Some of my in-person interviews have brought up themes of 'personal loss' & 'suffering' among some of our parents/grandparents. What kind of role (if at all) did these themes play in your own parents'/grandparents' lives?
4. Think back to your childhood through your adulthood. What are some of your most "memorable" or "forgettable" memories in regards to your relationship with your parents and grandparents?
5. As best as you can remember, what was the role, if at all, of shame, guilt, discipline, punishment, and such things within your family and how you were raised?
6. How do you perceive your cultural/ethnic identity or identification? (e.g. Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, Chinese descent, none of the above, etc.) What motivated the development of this perception?
7. What kinds of joys and challenges have arisen due to your cultural/ethnic identity? (e.g. special treatment, oppression etc.)
8. What would you say are some of the joys and challenges regarding how you interact with those of the previous generations? (e.g. new or landed immigrants to Canada, parents/grandparents generation)

**APPENDIX B: SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW  
TRANSCRIPT**

(Here is a raw transcript of one of the conversational interviews. My voice is in bold)

**N: (I speak a bit about the history and what I know etc.)**

**D:** So it's not as generally well-known as say World War 2, but if we dig deep enough, our Asian culture has certainly incidents of trauma. You know what this reminds me of...Jack Sze did a bit about thanking his father....very articulate...And he digs back to some things with own story....It's where he thanks and appreciates his father...

Well the stories that I hear from my parents tend to be from World War 2 and how Japanese treated them with hunger, famine and harsh conditions.

**Where were they living at the time?**

They would have been in Hong Kong. Maybe in a China village. Along the New Territories...Village back then, which is what they called Hong Kong...to visit the village. I've been back there. And I guess that's what they've experienced just on a larger scale. And I guess they had personal sacrifices, just on the immigration experience. Their economics, their loss of occupation. When we came over here, we took on a restaurant family business. Sweet and sour chicken balls. (laughs out loud)

I've gained a deeper appreciation for that now that I'm older, especially now that I have kids. It was quite instrumental. When my #3 son was 7 years old. It hit me more than ever. Because I was 7 when I came over. Joseph, 2 years ago was 7. And I thought, I was at that age when my family came. This is what my dad was thinking about.

And to think about leaving all the securities of North America, but to somewhere where I don't know the language. What a huge sacrifice that would have been. It came full circle during that time, and I gained a deeper appreciation.

**So were your parents in their village during the Japanese occupation they were there?**

They probably would have been in village of Yuen Long during that time.

**I didn't even know Japan had occupied HK until like 4 months ago...**

Those are some of the stories I vaguely remember...Those national traumas that affected all of Cantonese HK.

**So your parents mostly told you of those kinds of stories, or were there other things?**

Mostly those and of course you know how it is. They tell it in a form of guilt. Not as narrative to educate me on Asian history but as an "eat all rice on your plate" kind of thing. And so when they tell it in that way, you don't get the deepest appreciation for true suffering. You just saw it as another way of guilt tripping.

But you talk about movies and how that affected me. Joy Luck Club. It was one watershed mark for me to deeply appreciate in a narrative and dramatic form what they went through.

Well just hearing through 3 generations and seeing for example, how hard it was in China for 1 husband and 2 wives...because it was one stream of the storyline. And lo and behold, my grandfather had 2 wives..And surprisingly as I talk to more people, we're only 2 generations away from polygamy. So in that story, I saw...the kind of tension and competition between #1 and #2 and it clicked for me because my father is a son of a #1, and we have apparently an aunt who is a daughter of #2...and so, now I begin to understand...there might be some weird feelings, call it a tension. But my father wasn't in competition so much. But on the street we saw the pain of the war, and they went through that in Joy Luck Club... And the scenes. And I think wow, my parents went through that, and now I understand why they are the way they are...And I sort of went through a shift from being a teenager asking why parents do this...sort of a blaming thing to, well now, I understand why...And so I gain a deeper appreciation. If we all had the wisdom we had when we were 15, we'd be perfect teenagers...But typical teenager right?

**How old were you when you saw Joy Luck club?**

Mid 20's...that's one watershed mark....

**Can I ask you what it was like, before that watershed mark?**

Typical Asian home, functional, not a lot of emotional availability. Love was demonstrated by tangible things and just the opportunity to study here. Love was never spoken but just in acts.

**And you said you felt, not lots of contempt but.....tension**

It was very distant, functional at best...Our conversations were just for things...can I have the car...Never really heart-to-heart about life and what do you value, and those kinds of important conversations and being emotionally available. And the truth of the matter is that it's still kind of like that...Because the #1 thing is language...I don't have the language to express myself in Cantonese..and he doesn't have the language to express himself...Not that a typical Asian 65-75 year old would be that vulnerable. So language was definitely one thing. It is why it is functional at best. But there is no way I could have vocabulary to talk back.

**That connection is missing right?**

Yah,..yah, so very functional, and I would say distant...not close.

**What memories about your parents stick out to you?**

Overall memories of father working hard to provide for the kids. Memories of being disciplined. One time my mom sent me outside to the porch to pull my ear...Don't know what I did. Must have been pretty bad...One of those tiger mom things...Very strict. Humiliating. Not very communicative. The kids had to work. Family business. At that place we had to work a lot. In the same kitchen. But it was actually quite hard. It was more like....Have you had any experience working in the kitchen?

Usually cooks yelling at waitresses... If you are in the family unit all the time...father as head cook yelling at mom, because I thought... ordered this way, and slow...so not really a very relational kind of environment.

**Not a very relational environment. Makes me think in terms of how, you're thinking now...Now you value relationship and community. Did that grow over time? These views of them and the importance? Was that always there or did it shift?**

I think it did gradually shift. Obviously there's times when you push back against all the negative ways raised. Once I was cognizant of how, families can be different, and a lot closer and love and support one another. You kind of long for that of what you didn't have. Of course my faith community shaped my need for relationship as well, and having my own kids was another signal or mark that I would love to have things differentially where we are close and we can talk and support each other. I would say gradual transformation. Not easy. Because not having seen it done in my family of origin it's hard to still...it's a trial and error thing.

**And trial and error, and I wonder if our parents had to go through trial and error off of their grandparents which is another time as well...What do you know of your grandparents?**

Umm, not much...I think my grandfather died really early, and so and so my father's siblings had to fend for themselves...He was 3rd or 4th and older brother took care of younger ones. Grandfather passed early but grandma survived quite late, even into Canada. I have memories of grandmother living with us...

**Did she come with you guys to immigrate?**

I forget the order but later on in my late teens, she lived with us...So I don't recall when she came...was she already here when she came...But there came a time when 3 generations lived in the house.

Yah, so that was a big time for immigration in HK in the 70's.

**Did your parents say why they came here?**

Opportunity was definitely one of them. If from a secular point of view, it was an accident. But of course it was divine. Well my oldest uncle came. And he established himself and his own business. Developed a bit of wealth and brought the rest of the family over. And it was supposed to be my father's younger brother



and family to come over...But he didn't pass some sort of test, my uncle. Then he worked on my father, and so he came.

**So you guys would have stayed if it didn't work out?**

I'm not sure if we would have stayed or if we would have been in the next round? We would have eventually made it over or something. Because my uncle who couldn't make it over stayed in the HK. So I don't know if he could not...don't know specifics...

So that's how we came but obviously that's an opportunity for kids to come to Canada and study....

So we all just took it in stride...Probably any early memories a year after when I tried to integrate and go to school...Not a lot of Asians. Just me and this other girl. So in the 1980's and 90's it was a different demographic for such a cultural group. But racial discrimination, I've been called names...it's part of my history...But once I got acclimatized and acquired language, and made friends...all my friends I grew up with were non-Chinese.

My closest 2 high school friends...one was Yugoslavian, one Canadian... Also had a Greek friend.

It was not until the Chinese church scene until I became acculturated in this little ghetto. Maybe it's a sort of coming home of sorts to identity...because now I long for cultural diversity.

**So how did you overcome those challenges? It was more culturally balanced at Trafalgar (primary school) for me...**

Back then there wasn't as much educational awareness about anti bullying and racial discrimination and I just took it as it is. So just realized I am different, I am odd. So I just kind of endured it. I didn't fight back to push back. What made a world of difference was 1 or 2 good friends. A non-Asian who stood by your side. I remember in the time of my life in Grade 7, and I hope what Christian young people and youth group would do is keep an eye out for the guy who is odd or not accepted...So one guy did that for me in grade 7, and he was quite reputable and so that bought me some credits..because now I'm a friend of his and he brought me to his house, and that lessened teasing... It happened again around Grade 9 and now I look back on it and learned he was a Christian. So he took me under his wing per se, and I hung out with him and so that provided a bit of safety.

**Those connections go a long ways...**

Yah, power of connections...

**And how about in terms of how your parents were challenged or not challenged racially?**

I don't think there was a tremendous amount of racial discrimination for adults per se. We did our own thing. They didn't have to fight for raises or promotions in the marketplace...There was a small Asian community in Ontario, in Windsor. And there was a faith community there too and we got connected there. I didn't

observe much discrimination about my parents. I found it novel they had a few Chinese restaurants with Chinese food. Not much of a social circle. Worked 10-12 hours a day and worked 6 days a week. That's about it...

**In terms of...let me switch gears a bit...In terms of how much history you know about the past...When did you learn about the history of what happened in China or even Canada in early 20th century etc. How much do you know now?**

I don't consider myself too knowledgeable about history or communism etc. Just once in a while I come upon it in books, movies, curriculum that kids have to go through and I learn as well. I don't think I know a whole lot about Asian history. I know some things...events, but not very deep. Haven't explored the complexities of those things.

**So movies, like Joy Luck Club are significant to you...So were there any other movies or books that influenced you?**

Nothing comes to mind specifically...My wife, Rebecca reads a lot more. Jann Wong...some of her writings. I haven't read too much of those kinds of novels or those books...

So very superficial, whatever I come across. Articles, newspaper headings, movies...To me, movies are most the abbreviated way about finding out about history...It is why I wanted to watch the recent one about Nanking.

**Yah...**

Well there's that classic novel...The Rape of Nanking...Iris...

**I learned that Iris Chang committed suicide and how she had bipolar disorder...because she felt she acquired survivor's guilt and wished she was there...Sad but interesting, and through all that, she over-connected...it was so connected that it totally affected her so deeply.**

That's the one I heard about but never read...Seems like that's the watershed one that people refer to.

**Another good one is City of Life and Death. It depicts the Nanking Massacre from the perspective of a Japanese soldier and expresses how he became sympathetic to all the tragedy that was happening around him and that he was participating in...**

You should compile a list of Top 10 movies that help understand Asian history that every North American raised Chinese should watch....

**At the same time I wonder if some of these films, it's the director's vision as well. Like Zhang Yimou, in his vision he grew up during the Cultural Revolution. Or Wong Kar Wai, he was writing about the 1997 takeover of HK...**

So always the director's eyes or the writer's eyes..

**When I went to Hong Kong for the first time, well, you know I grew up on HK kung fu martial arts films and thought...wait, there's no flying people here!**

Isn't it the part of the task of history though to always get at it...You can't read history without someone's biased lens. Always. Good to know bias of other and the director..So having 2 angles at it....

**There's always a mix of what is fantasy and reality...and interpretation..**

One person's interpretation...

You mentioned kung fu movies...we watch it for entertainment but we find out a little bit about how village life was like or what competition is like...and you know, I just watched a couple of them...Bruce Lee's master... Ip Man. Embedded in them, there's a bit of history of the Japanese coming in...where they had guns and Chinese people had kung fu.

We assume it's somewhat accurate... Even the story of Ip Man and the people of that time can challenge us to appreciate how there's so much in the past... So the things you have researched. So that helps.

**The mix of...Growing up and watching different TV series, it was very formative for me...in terms of how they portrayed family relationships like honour, sacrifice, romance and love...they all really stuck with me about how things could have been.**

Now that you mention it, there are implicit values about right and wrong...and you can see it versus in Western culture.

When you watched the Bruce Lee series, what did you pick out?

**Watching it younger and now it is different. When we were younger it is very much us against them...Chinese vs. other, us vs. them..**

Yah, even the whole movie is set up that way...Chinese guy kicks everyone's butt. So before that genre, kung fu within China and Asia... I'm wondering if at that point, if there's some sort of psyche about competing against the Western to be better than them.

**Because Bruce Lee was a HK thing...a very anti-British mentality, us Chinese fighting against colonial powers...always the oppressed versus oppressor.**

I wonder how that generation recognizes the whites...Academically, it's always a competition...If we can keep up with Westerners...competing, competition, us and them...Making things. Rising to fight, bottom up to become accepted... All cultures reveal something about who we are...

You did ask how you see yourself now as Chinese Canadian etc?

I think I've come to the point where I see myself as Chinese-Canadian...and was once at a point about putting myself at arms length to Chinese culture...but as I matured...and grew up a little bit, I began to value some of things we value...and kind of hoped to take the best of both cultures...I like to think I have...but not sure...so pretty sure and at ease about being both Asian and Canadian.

**It's interesting when I hear stories about people who reject one or the other (rejecting either being Asian or being Canada)...We are rarity (to try and integrate both)...**

Maybe it has to do with our faith too...What I understand of Christian faith..It tells me that some of these values transcend culture...So, it comes through culture, but...and it says community is good, but values about pride and saving face and not being vulnerable is not what scripture espouses...Vulnerability and the need to depend on one another and trust one another...it is. Christian faith has taught me to look for things beyond and above what culture tells us. Yet to appreciate that particular culture is to embrace certain things that are also consistent with Christian faith and heritage.

## APPENDIX C

### **POST-PARTICIPATION FINAL CONSENT/RELEASE FORM**

#### ***Research Project Title: “Affect, Media, Diaspora: Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma through Visions of Distributed, Mediated Memory in 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Canadian Chinese Experience”***

*Thank you for your willingness to participate in Nathan To’s research.*

#### **SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY:**

In Nathan To’s thesis research, he employed a form of ‘autoethnographic’ methodology. This is a common method of research (usually qualitative) typically found in sociology, anthropology, and media and cultural studies. One key assumption of this approach is that the identity/identifications one has developed over time is intertwined and interdependent with the meaningful friendships formed within his/her circle of relationships. Thus, research questions of the thesis are intentionally addressed through a spirit of peer collaboration and authentic relationship. You were asked to participate due to the unique history of your existing friendship with Nathan and your meaningful role in your mutual, collaborative identity/identification and life narratives. If you perceived Nathan’s invitation to participate in his research unusually informal compared to other ‘research projects’, the informality was wholly intentional in order to better enact this particular methodological approach.

That is why your conversation likely took place in an informal space (e.g. coffee shop, residence) that could be considered casual, relaxing or ‘natural’ for you and Nathan. *One intention* was to create as informal an atmosphere as possible. Doing so hoped to convey the notion that you are discussing these topics as a) conversations rather than formal ‘interviews’ and as b) “friends” or “peers” as opposed to the power problematics between a “researcher” and “subject”. Of course, I recognize that some unavoidable research structures, activities, and specific questions I asked may have possibly made it difficult to perceive these experiences as simply an informal “meeting-up” as friends. This difficulty was not intentional, and is an acknowledged limitation of this type of research. Rest assured, to the best of my ability, every effort was made during the actual conversational interviews to make it seem as ‘natural’ and ‘informal’ as is possible for a research project such as this.

#### **Purpose of This Form:**

Your original ‘pre-participation’ and ‘participation’ consent was given through your willingness to help Nathan with his research and agreement to meet through friendship-based informal correspondence. This form serves as the sole required formality to finalize the research process and offer an official record of your consent to the release of research information. Specifically, this is called a “*post-participation*” *final consent form that gives Nathan To, of Goldsmiths, University of London*, a formal, written record of final authorization to use material from your informal conversational interviews in his research dissertation, as titled. A summary of overall thesis interpretations from the data collected should have also been presented to you for your review/comments. Should you wish to also review your video/audio taped transcripts, *this can be done upon your request*. While this form offers your authorization and consent, continued discussion with Nathan To about your informal conversation interview materials is encouraged and welcomed, should that be of interest to you.

Please feel free to raise any questions about the research at any time with Nathan To, even after your signed declaration.

Reminder of Confidentiality:

All personally identifying information collected in a private setting (whether audio, visual, or written) has been, and will be kept strictly confidential and protected. Your name will remain anonymous under a pseudonym, and any identifiable information will be removed or altered to protect your identity. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information about you without your signed permission.

**Declarations:**

*I confirm* that informal conversation interviews have been conducted in a spirit of peer collaboration with Nathan To. Therefore, I acknowledge that should I wish to partially or wholly withdraw my consent to the conditions explained in this document, I will first notify Nathan To in order to negotiate and collaborate as peers towards a resolution that can protect both my wishes and the integrity of the research. After this process, should I still decide to partially or wholly withdraw my consent. *I confirm* that I am able to do so without prejudice. *I agree* that any information obtained from this research may be used by Nathan To in any way thought best for the purposes of this research study and future proceedings and publications, with respect to my rights to confidentiality.

*Thus, I hereby grant Nathan To* the right to use information from any audio or visual recordings from informal conversational interviews and/or research activities for purposes of his PhD dissertation research. I confirm that these interviews and/or activities were conducted with my full consent. I understand that the informal conversational interview records and related materials are required to be kept by Nathan To for at least 5 years.

*I confirm* that the interpretations, findings of this study, and excerpts from the recorded interviews may be published in an academic journal, presentation, proceedings, or book to be made available to the general public under the conditions of confidentiality as stated in this document. I understand that any questions or concerns I have about this will be negotiated, upon request, with Nathan To. I acknowledge that should I request these future negotiations, they are subject to a *separate* agreement of verbal or written consent different from this present document.

*I certify* that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to any of my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters.

***By signing in the signature box below***, I am confirming my agreement and consent to the declarations stated in this document:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Peer-Interviewee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Peer-Researcher  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

# Research on “Intergenerational Affect”

**I would be very appreciative if you could read this brief summary of my findings and interpretations from my research project regarding Intergenerational Affect. You will also have an opportunity respond if you wish to.**

**Note:** This summary primarily summarizes parts of my research that directly involved your participation. There is a wordy, academic abstract of my whole thesis I am passing around. This is optional to read but available for your interest if you enjoy such things. Note that this research is not designed to ‘prove’ anything from an objective standpoint. Instead, my purpose and design preferred to explore, observe, and research the many questions I had. Then I embraced my ‘subjective’ position to interpret various phenomena.

**Point of Whole Thesis:** The objective of the *whole thesis is*: to explore and offer new ‘ways of seeing’ the previous histories, experiences, and past of our parent’s and grandparent’s generation. I suggest that if we can ‘see’ and understand a bit more about our past (and our previous generation’s) past, then we can also see and understand ourselves a bit better. Hopefully this can help our relationships with our parents and previous generations, and prepare us better for our present, and even the younger generation after us. So, this thesis was meant to be ‘performative’, in the sense that it’s very structure was meant to model and suggest a method for anybody interested in ‘searching the histories of the past’.

**Assumptions:** I make the assumption that for those of us who care to know, much of this previous generation’s past is hidden, unspoken, unknown (or ‘vaguely’ known), and silenced for a whole bunch of different reasons that range from personal discomfort, to the traumatic memory is too painful, or perhaps because the powers of nation-state memory production (e.g. censorship) is also playing a role. Of course, sometimes, the case about our parents/grandparents’ past may be that we just plain don’t know much about it, or don’t care to. Or maybe we don’t have time to, or it’s just not a priority. In other words, while the previous generation’s past is visible in some way through books, writings, memoirs, film, and documentaries (e.g. histories, film portrayals about World War II as-it-happened in East Asia, Cultural Revolution, or Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong) it may or may not be something that is necessarily on our priority list of things to spend our time on. So, for the past 4 years, my whole thesis research actually looked at a bunch of different data forms. One chapter involved my subjective interpretation of informal conversation interviews with you, and another involved historical and archival research. My analysis of film, television, artworks, and installations was scattered throughout. And another chapter discussed some of you and your participation in that performative ‘dance’/movement activity after we screened the documentary, *Nanking* (2007).

**Research Questions:** How do we ‘see’ a past we do not know? How might memories of a time we have never lived pass on between generations? And how do historical portrayals that we watch in film or television help us (or don’t help us) understand the previous generation’s past (e.g. our parents and grandparents)?

So far, I’ve thematically summarized some highlighted themes that resonate through many of our memories and remembered stories. These are merely thematic summaries I have interpreted based on what I have heard from the *collection* of interviews. This interview portion was one part of my thesis (see Thesis Abstract for a more comprehensive summary). Some common themes include:

1.) **Narratives of Survival:** Many of the stories you told to me concerning what your parents/grandparents/relatives told you involved a lot of survival-related stories. They range amidst the following themes (themes can be separate, or also combined):

- Poverty, struggle due to times of war, post-war, economic situation of that time
- War-times (e.g. Japanese invasion)
- Escape & exile, betrayal by family);
- Constant fear (e.g. Cultural Revolution)
- Migration Stories included stories about challenges of belonging to a particular social class & status, pursuit of wealth and success, aspirations to be and do more, Gold Mountain.
- For some of us, our being ‘pushed’ to succeed, or being taught a whole bunch of different lessons (e.g. piano, dancing, ballet, swimming, computer class etc) is reflective of our parents’ own upbringing, which is directly connected of these narratives of survival.

2.) *Fragmented Stories & Silences:* There is a lot of history we don’t know about the 20<sup>th</sup> century across China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, especially during World War II. Sometimes we’re told fragments of stories, sometimes stories are completely silenced, or just plain not told to us for whatever reason.

- If a small fragment of narrative is told (whether a sentence, paragraph, or Chinese idiom) Whatever the case, there’s usually a ‘value’ or ‘moral lesson’ involved. A lot of times these are Confucian-based values (e.g. filial piety, who to obey, rituals of propriety)
- We learn many Confucian-based values or virtues through these many told narratives. We even learn these values somehow through what is *untold* and left *silenced*. Basically, the silence has the power to ‘speak’. (imagine ‘unspoken expectations’, or self-pressures one places upon oneself. Where did we learn that?)
- Shame, Discipline is also expressed through stories. Discipline is sometimes physical, or again, sometimes it is through what is *unspoken*. Shame is indeed a common theme in terms of ‘how’ we tend to be taught particular lessons about the past of a Confucian-related value from previous generations.

*Nanking Screening and Performance Activity:*

After responding to a clip from the documentary *Nanking (2007)*, about the Nanking massacre, some very powerful expressions of identifiable emotion and unidentifiable feelings were expressed through our conscious and unconscious ‘bodily gestures’, physical motions, and sounds we made or did not make. We could ‘see’ ourselves feeling, but there was also lots of ‘feeling’ within the unconscious that was happening (because the terror of Nanking Massacre was so brutal), that perhaps was inexpressible, that we could not find words to describe. My interpretation is that the activity revealed what was ‘not performed’, ‘inexpressible’, and ‘undisplayed’ actually said more about the original trauma (e.g. the actual massacre) than what was visibly seen or expressible.

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**Your Response (Voluntary/Optional):**

Do you agree/disagree with these many different interpretations?

Whatever the response, I’d definitely welcome hearing why.... Feel free to speak to me in-person, write down you answers, or if you want, online/email is also welcome.

Thanks for your time and for the opportunity to share.

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