Remembering in Memoirs: Collective Memory and Cultural Trauma in Red Guard Autobiographies

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Guangzhou University (China), 2018

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) deeply wounded the collective identity of the nation's population, as it caused dramatic chaos and violence in every social arena, bringing the country into a decade-long crisis. In the 1980s and 1990s, a wave of autobiographical works was published in China and overseas, commemorating the authors' (mainly former Red Guards) participation in the Cultural Revolution and post-1968 Rustication Movement (1968-1980). Focusing on the Red Guards, the main participants of the movements, this research inquiries how autobiographical works reflect the impacts of their direct engagement in the history on their self-identification. This study applies a theoretical framework combining Maurice Halbwachs's insights into collective memory and Jeffrey C. Alexander's conceptualization of cultural trauma, with trauma and identity as the cores of textual analysis. This research analyses two selected works in each region to observe how the different cultural and social contexts in China and North America affect former Red Guards' self-identification and their navigation of the traumatic past.

Textual analysis of the four selected works shows that Red Guard autobiographies embody the nexus between individual memory and the social framework of the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement, as the latter

reveals itself in the forms of narrative chronology, verbal conventions, and recurring scenes in the texts. While the social framework of collective memory shapes the Red Guard writers' textual representations, the Red Guard writers engage in the collective remembering process and construct a victimhood-oriented narrative of the two movements through concentrating on the narrator or other characters' tragedies.

In social and practical aspects, Red Guard autobiographies have multiple roles in the trauma process of the events: the channel for emotional catharsis, the discursive field for former Red Guard writers' exploration of their memories, and the medium through which the former Red Guard writers articulate their identities. Published in distinctive cultural and political contexts, China and North America, the Red Guard autobiographies embody authors' different claims: the domestic Red Guard writers remain ambiguous in attribution of the undesired outcomes of the two movements and provide no clear identity of the victims, whereas the expatriate Red Guard writers in North America claim the movements' experimental nature with stress laid on the inner-party struggles and identify the generation of the Red Guards and educated youths as the victims.

Concentrating on collective memory and cultural trauma, this thesis provides new angles to understand the relations among personal narratives, social and cultural contexts, and national history. This study analyzes Red Guard memoirs' functions in the working-through process of the two unsuccessful mass movements, showing how literary representations assist individuals and collectives with trauma healing and self-reflection.

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Dedication

To my Mom & Dad, and maternal grandmother,

whose love and kindness I will never forget.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Launched by Mao Zedong in 1966, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is an important mass movement in modern Chinese history. Its tremendous damage in the nation's governmental apparatus, historical and cultural sites, and social order left inerasable marks in the national memory and identity. Students and teenagers across the country actively self-organized to partake this movement, naming themselves "Red Guards." In the name of revolution, they caused irreversible destruction to the country's infrastructure and inflicted enormous pains on the targets of purge. While the rich legacy of the Cultural Revolution calls for further discussion, critical reflection on the dynamics between representations of the Cultural Revolution by different social groups and the distinct socio-political elements in Chinese and Western contexts is lacking. Nor has sufficient attention been paid on the memory construction and meaning production through textual representation. This thesis focuses on Red Guards' autobiographies and their construction of collective memory and identity. By interrogating and analyzing Red Guard writers' autobiographical works, it reveals the connections between collective and individual memories and this type of writings' roles in negotiating the traumatic effects of and responsibilities for the Cultural Revolution.

1.1 Research Questions and Research Significance

As the destructive consequences of the Cultural Revolution ebbed in the 1980s and

1990s, fictional and documentary narratives concerning it created a spectrum of representations, showing the event's powerful impacts on people's life track and identity formation. Among these narratives, autobiographical writings are special in that their representations of the Cultural Revolution locate on the juncture of History and personal narratives. My research inquires how autobiographical writings about the Cultural Revolution and the successive Rustication Movement (1968-1980) articulate the impacts of the two movements on the participants' collective identity, how this type of narratives portrays individual identity transformation or construction, and what is the relation of the Red Guards' autobiographies, memory construction and meaning production.

My research addresses three questions. First, it examines the dynamics between textual representations and identity articulation. In particular, I investigate how portraits of self-image with adroitness in language and selection of evidence co-operate to facilitate authors' identity articulation. Identity is fluid: people's identity is always in tension with socially assigned images, their recognition of themselves, and their ideal selves, thus being continually formed. With the authors as the described subject, autobiographical works show how one's identity flows in such tensions. Second, my research also asks how memory is constructed and meaning produced in Red Guard autobiographical writings and the socio-political elements affecting this process. Finally, my research inquires the transpacific relations between the texts written and published in China and North America. Transcending national and geographical boundaries, how memory construction and the meaning-making process interact with

local cultural values?

By addressing these questions, this thesis will contribute to Chinese studies and transcultural literature by providing insights into Red Guards' collective memory and identity articulation. This research complements existing research on the trauma of the Cultural Revolution which currently focuses more on the side of the intellectuals. Moreover, it has practical significance for Chinese and North American societies, as it discusses how Chinese mass movements affected its young population in their self-identification and provides concrete examples on how Chinese immigrants in the late twentieth century navigated trauma in North American societies. As the population mobility between China and North America continues, the issues of immigrants' integration and identity crisis will persist.

1.2 Sources

1.2.1 Rationale of Choosing Sources

Based on one's personal experience and memory, autobiographical writings reflect the person's trajectory of development and mediation with the past self. On the blurry boundary of representing personal memory and the national history, Red Guard memoirs and autobiografictions record the disruptions of life plans and losses in important relationships during the Cultural Revolution, through which a collective trauma can be observed and examined. [1]

[1] Antobiografiction, first coined by Stephen Phillips in 1906, refers to works featuring both standard

Information on the selected works is presented in the following table (Table 1). I selected two works for each category: domestic and North American. The reasons for choosing them as representative Red Guard autobiographical writings lie in the popularity and values that they offer to the comparative analysis in this research. I placed priority on the latter, for popularity can be contingent, depending on the marketing strategies, readers' preference, and recommendations by reviewers, which are not the main concerns of this research.

Table 1 Basic Information on Authors of the Selected Works

Works	Author	Author's Year of Birth	Author's Year of Entering Colleges	Year of Publication	Country of Publication	Language
Confessions of A Red Guard	Liang Xiaosheng	1949	1974	1993	China	Chinese
Blood Red Sunset	Ma Bo	1947	1977	1989	China	Chinese
Spider Eaters	Rae Yang	1950	1979	1997	America	English
Red Flower of China	Zhai Zhenhua	1951	1971	1992	America and Canada	English

The two domestic works are both popular in China with multiple reprints. First published by Workers' Publishing House (Beijing) in 1987, *Blood Red Sunset* stirred the book market with its surprising popularity. Till now, it has three different versions from the author's revisions from 1987 to 2010 (H. Xu 121). According to Lingchei Letty Chen, *Confessions of a Red Guard* was first published by Sichuan Literature and

autobiographical writings (such as memoirs, diaries, and autobiographies) and fiction (Baldick). This term effectively conveys the combined features of *Confessions of Red Guard* as an autobiography and a fiction, as the author creates this work based on his personal experience and with literary imagination.

Arts Publishing House in 1985 and republished by Shaanxi People's Publishing House in 1993 (L. Chen 224). However, for unknown reasons I could not find its first-published version in library or online database. It was introduced to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan because of its popularity. In comparison with their original Chinese versions, these two works went through some slight changes by the same translator Howard Goldblatt. For *Blood Red Sunset*, Goldblatt substituted the narrator's name (Lin Hu) with the author's (Ma Bo) and reorganized the 62 chapters in the Chinese version (published in 1989 by Workers' Publishing House) to 53 chapters without large curtailment. For *Confessions of a Red Guard*, Goldblatt kept the same chapter number but curtailed the description about conflicts in the CCP and Chinese government in Chapter 6.

Spider Eaters and *Red Flower of China* were published in North America in 1997 and 1992. Although they are not as famous as *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (Jung Chang 1991) and *Life and Death in Shanghai* (Nien Cheng 1986) according to their ratings and reviews in *Goodreads*, Yang and Zhai's works are informative and meaningful for this research because they focus on Red Guards' experience and cover approximately the same period of time from a teenage Red Guard's perspective.[2]

By and large, they represent the dominant trend of "New Era Literature": the openness in criticizing China's political apparatus, the sharpness in exposing the cultural reasons behind the problems, the strong advocate of reappraising the values of

[2] Launched in 2007, *Goodreads* is the largest online platform for book recommendations. On this website, there are 428 ratings and 30 reviews for *Spider Eaters*, 76 ratings and 10 reviews for *Red Flower of China*. For Jung Chang and Nien Cheng's memoirs, there are 100,154 and 12,349 ratings and 6070 and 995 reviews respectively (*Spider Eaters*; *Red Flower of China*; *Life and Death in Shanghai*).

human and emancipating literature from serving politics, which are the features of "New Era Literature" (Li and Tam 439).[3] These four works are epitomes of the subgenre of Red Guard memoirs in their areas and epoch, as they embody the Red Guard writers' urges of voicing the wounds and exploring the legacies of the newly concluded communist movements in China. This representativeness is meaningful for this research in that it enables the examination of former Red Guards and educated youths' reactions and responses to the reappraisal of the Cultural Revolution and their self-identification in the trend of the "New Era Literature." Furthermore, the reevaluation of the movements in the new age urged them to rethink their actions, motivations, gains and losses, inspiring their thoughts on how their self-knowledge and awareness developed during the movements.

These four works carry specific values for this research, as they address the interrelated issues of collective memory and trauma by making distinctive claims in which self-identification is combined with reconfiguration of memory and construction of the cultural trauma of the Cultural Revolution. First, they are all from the perspective of Red Guards and published during the 1980s and 1990s when the Cultural Revolution was newly concluded and Reform and Opening Up Policy initiated the information exchange between China and the West, which forms the foundation of comparative analysis.[4] Meanwhile, their differentiated contexts of creation, which are China and

[3] In the Fourth National Congress of Literary Representatives Conference (1979 Oct.), Zhou Yang, the associate chair of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, announced that a new era of socialist literature and art had come, with its success shortly ("回顾社会主义文艺的战斗历程 阐明新时期文学艺术光荣任务 [Looking Back on the Development of Socialist Literature and Arts and Expounding the Glorious Task of New Era Literature: Zhou Yang's Report on the Fourth Congress of Chinese Writers and Artists Titled *Carry on the Past, Open up the Future, and Prosper the Literature and Arts in the New Era*]" sec. 1). From then on, "New Era Literature" was generally used to refer to literature after the Cultural Revolution till the late 1980s (Li and Tam 439).

[4] Reform and Opening Up Policy is launched by the Dengist regime in 1978 to revive economic development and

North America, enable observation on the transcultural relations of the trauma process happening in the two different regions.

Second, the selected works serve for discussing the research questions about Red Guard and educated youth writers' identity articulation, as the domestic works focus on different phases of the Cultural Revolution and the overseas ones are consistent in their covered time, indicating a possible disparity in their self-identification. In terms of content, the two domestic works tell a fuller story of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement together, presenting the movements' initial ferocious stage and its later decline, which are associated with different political identities (Red Guard and educated youth). In this sense, these two domestic works offer inspiring examples of Red Guards' self-identification and thus help realize the research goal of interrogating the Red Guard's self-identification. *Spider Eaters* and *Red Flower of China* cover approximately the same time from the 1950s to the late 1970s and the same events. Comparing these two works inspires insights into how memories of Maoist China are alike or unlike and how identity changes along with political movements and positionalities.

Third, the authors' different family class backgrounds (cadre, peasant, and middle class), current nationalities (i.e., Chinese, American Chinese and Canadian Chinese) and residential locations allow a close examination of the interrelations of class, diaspora, national identity, and traumatic memory. Domestic and North American Red Guard writers, located in distinctive positions in the social structure and cultural

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international communication. It opened the Chinese market to Western investment and boosted economic, cultural, and academic communication between China and the rest of the world.

contexts, react differently to the shaping forces of identity. Created by writers in various classes and regions, these four works encapsulate the post-Cultural Revolution memory construction from the 1980s to the 1990s. Examining these works provides the ongoing conversation on the Cultural Revolution with concrete case studies of the transcultural trauma process of the movement and the obstacles in this process.

The distinction in authors' gender is evident in works of domestic and North American categories, but gender is not my criterion of selection. The two Chinese Red Guard writers are male, and the two expatriate ones are female. The gender difference may cause an impression that in China memories of historical moments are written by men and in developed Western countries female Asian immigrants actively voice their traumatic past. In fact, there are Cultural Revolution memoirs written by women in China (e.g. Yang Jiang's *Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School*) and by men overseas (e.g. *Gang of One* by Fan Shen). While gender distinction is not my focus, I acknowledge this difference and its impacts on the authors' identity formation.

1.2.2 Main Plots of the Selected Works

Confessions of a Red Guard (1993) by Liang Xiaosheng

Confessions of a Red Guard depicts the first year of the Cultural Revolution, covering from Spring 1966 to the narrator's return from the Great Link-Up. As the movement unfolds, Liang and his peers participate in on-campus and community activities such as writing big-character posters, eliminating counterrevolutionary

slogans, and attacking hooligans.[5] In summer 1966, Liang becomes a Red Guard when his best friend Wang Wenqi remains a "red outlier." [6] Their friendship is broken when Wang tries to kill Liang out of a sudden rage in the warehouse storing items from home ransacking.[7] Not long after his assault, Wang is sentenced to death for his rape and murder of a girl who used to be a hooligan's lover and is under Red Guards' imprisonment after being arrested.[8]

After Wang's incident, Liang joins the Great Link-up and Mao's mass rally. On the way to Beijing, Liang is startled by masses' frenzy and the cruelty of Red Guards' violence.[9] In winter, he returns from the Great Link-up but finds that his neighbours are in utter misery. Uncle Lu is accused of being "counterrevolutionary" and imprisoned. Auntie Ma's son is missing. Back home, Liang is intensely attracted to a local Red Guard faction "Cannon Shots," dreaming about sacrificing for the revolution.[10] Liang's story ends after Cannon Shots is eliminated, which disenchants him from the revolutionary idealism.

Blood Red Sunset (1989) by Ma Bo

The storyline of *Blood Red Sunset* focuses on Ma Bo's (or Lin Hu in the Chinese version) criminalization and his efforts to prove clean. Eager to contribute to the socialist construction, Ma and his friends volunteer to Inner Mongolia with a blood-written application.[11] Life in Inner Mongolia is carefree until Ma quickly gets involved

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[5] As described in Liang Xiaosheng's *Confessions of a Red Guard*, Chapter 4, 5, 11 respectively.
[6] Ibid., Chapter 8.
[7] Ibid., Chapter 10.
[8] Ibid., Chapter 11.
[9] Ibid., Chapter 16.
[10] Ibid., Chapter 20.
[11] As described in Ma Bo's *Blood Red Sunset* (Workers Publishing House 1989), Chapter 1.

in conflicts with local people and a cadre named Wang Lianfu.[12]

In 1970, Ma is denounced as an counterrevolutionary in "One Strike, Three Anti" for his criticism against local leaders in "Open-door Party Rectification" and the fighting with Wang.[13] Since then, Ma suffers physically and mentally from hard labour, abuse, friends' betrayal, colleague's discrimination and loneliness until 1975, when his accusations are finally withdrawn.[14] Ma goes through a long and tough journey to prove his innocence: He writes to his mother for help but is rejected and disowned.[15] He appeals the verdict but is neglected by local cadres.[16] When he is near the edge of despair, his application for re-examination is accepted and in progress. In 1975, he is finally free from the allegation of being an counterrevolutionary.[17]

Spider Eaters (1997) by Rae Yang

Yang's life story is a mixture of personal growth and history. Growing up, she constantly struggles over self-doubts about her revolutionary resolution in activities like "Recalling Bitterness Big Meetings" and "Exposing the Third Layer of Thoughts." [18] Meanwhile, she fantasizes about a charming, brave, and decisive revolutionary hero who is selflessly devoted to emancipating peasants and workers.[19]

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[12] Ibid., Chapter 3 and 7 respectively.
[13] Ibid., Chapter 10 and 14 respectively. "One Strike, Three Anti" is a campaign launched by the Party leadership in February 1970. It aimed to eradicate the "counterrevolutionary destructive activities" and targeted on "graft and embezzlement," "extravagance and waste," and "profiteering" (MacFarquhar & Schoenhals 302). Although the campaign mainly targeted on "counterrevolutionary elements," the majority of exposed cases were not political offences but financial (MacFarquhar & Schoenhals 303).
[14] Ibid., Chapter 49.
[15] Ibid., Chapter 28.
[16] Ibid., Chapter 33.
[17] In the Chinese version published by Workers Publishing House in 1989, these two plots are located in Chapter 49 and 62 respectively. In the English version translated by Howard Goldblatt, they are in Chapter 44 and 53 (Penguin Books 1996).
[18] As described in Rae Yang's *Spider Eaters* in Chapter 11.
[19] Ibid., Chapter 12.

In the beginning, the Cultural Revolution liberates Yang from the depressing self-doubts and provides her with the freedom to think independently.[20] Yang and her peers voluntarily become Red Guards and partake in destroying "four olds" and mass rallies in Tiananmen Square.[21] However, Yang soon perceives negative emotions from Red Guards' violence against class enemies and social outcasts and is haunted by fear and guilt.[22] In 1968, she volunteers to the Great Northern Wilderness for bridging the gap between urban and rural regions, but only finds out the reality in the countryside is different from what she knows from propaganda. Three years later, Lin Biao's sudden death in an aircraft accident after his failed attempt to assassinate the Chairman shocks Yang and disillusions her about the revolutionary idealism.[23] In 1973, Yang returns to the city and reunites with her family with her parents' help.[24]

Red Flower of China (1992) by Zhai Zhenhua

Red Flower of China is a straightforward and chronological narration of Zhai's experience from the 1950s to the early 1970s. Overwhelmed by the sudden breakout of the Cultural Revolution in May 1966, she is involved in it by being elected to lead the movement in her class when the revolutionary committee on campus proposes to set up "Cultural Revolutionary Small Groups."[25] As the leader of the Cultural Revolutionary Small Group of her class, Zhai is at first confused but quickly adapts to her role and

[20] Ibid., Chapter 13.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., Chapter 14.
[23] Ibid., Chapter 20.
[24] Ibid., Chapter 23.
[25] As described in Zhai's *Red Flower of China*, Chapter 13.

conducts revolutionary activities for her class. In August, Red Guard organization is established in her school after copies of Mao's supportive letter and positive commentaries on the Red Guards are circulated among students. Because of her excellent leadership, Zhai is named by her classmates to join the Red Guard organization and is given important posts in the Revolutionary Committee on campus.[26] Zhai ransacks homes, destroys "four olds" and joins in the Great Link-up until the PLA is sent to the school to take charge temporarily. Overnight, the Red Guards and the working group become the targets of the revolution for "pushing a new capitalist line" (Zhai 119). Turning from the active force to the target of purge, she feels disappointed for the Chairman and the Party, losing her faith in revolution.[27]

In 1969, Zhai departs for Yan'an. There, Zhai works in a stone quarry and does agricultural labour for work points. In 1970, Zhai sees chances for continuing education as universities are working on reopening. A year later, through fierce competition for a limited student enrollment quota, Zhai is admitted by Zhongshan University and leaves Yan'an. In the end, she gains the opportunity of studying abroad and comes to Canada after China's Reform and Opening Up Policy.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

With memory and trauma as the two entries from which I scrutinize Red Guards' portrayal of identity transformation, the theoretical framework of my research is a combination of theories on collective memory and Jeffrey C. Alexander's

[26] Ibid., Chapter 15.
[27] Ibid., Chapter 23.

conceptualization of cultural trauma with collective identity threading between them (Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* 1980; Halbwachs, *On Collecctive Memory* 1992; Alexander, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 2004; Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 2012).

On the first layer, my theoretical framework focuses on memory—people's fluid concepts about what they experienced, where they have been, and what they are planning to do. Subject to the force of forgetting and susceptible to exchange of information with people or entities, memory is flexible and constructable, just as identity is always going through formation under the psycho-social tension created by various forces in society, such as class, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. Memory is central to individual identity as well as collective identity, telling the history of the past and providing hints of the future (Eyerman 24). To understand how memories are used to articulate identities and how Red Guards' collective memory relates with individual writers' textual representations, I need a theoretical perspective that enables the identification and analysis of the mutually corresponding parts between collective memory and individual members' perception of their experiences. Halbwachs's collective memory theory can serve this purpose. His viewpoints of memory were not restricted by the common notion of memory as collections of personally owned cognitive images about the past; instead, he viewed memory as a social construction and emphasized the social and collective foundation on which individual memory relies to exist. He proposed that remembering is accompanied by discoursing, which is the cognitive act of associating memory with systems of ideas and opinions, not only the

personal ones but also those from the person's circle. In other words, remembering cannot be detached from social thoughts and ideas, as "[o]ne cannot in fact think about the events of one's past without discoursing upon them" (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 53). Therefore, memory has social and discursive dimensions.

Halbwachs's perspectives help me analyze the relations between individuals' textual representations of particular past events and the social framework constructing these narratives. Autobiographical writing, as a genre, intensively involves one's life experiences and memories, presenting the most inside thoughts, secrets, and conflicts in front of the readers. Red Guard memoirs and autobiografictions show a self-centred nature inherited from the genre but simultaneously feature collectiveness, insofar as there is an impulse for the authors to speak for other individuals in the collective of former Red Guards and educated youths. In this sense, textual representations of the experience in the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement transcend the scale of individuals and become a vehicle of shared memory. Halbwachs argued "there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory" (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 38). This argument reminds us that individual representations of memory can be rooted in shared memories of the collective and the social frameworks. In analyzing descriptions of historical events by individuals, Halbwachs's collective memory theory offers an inspirational way of considering the relations between individual narratives of memory (about the past) and contemporary social conditions (about the present).

However, Halbwachs's definition of collective memory remains vague: he defined collective memory as a collective's cognitive bonds while merging it with

commemorative activities. In other words, collective memory is the collective's shared memory and simultaneously the commemorative activities carried out to strengthen that shared memory. Therefore, confusion arises in distinguishing memory and remembering. Olick points out this ambiguity. In Halbwachs's work, the term "collective memory" can refer to two different phenomena: first, individual memories shaped and framed by the society and the representations of memory; second, mnemonic activities on the collective level (Olick 336).

This ambiguity warrants a clear demarcation between collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and practices to remember the movement. The consistency between the theoretical framework of this thesis and Halbwachs's opinion is that collective memory is interpreted as an artifact constructed by social discourse. Based on Halbwachs's conceptualization, my framework further defines collective memory as not merely a social construction but also a discursive site where diverse memories are in a battle of dominance and legitimacy. The relation of collective memory and collective remembering thus becomes clear: collective memory is the locale of collective remembering that is viewed as a process. This revision of Halbwachs's theory facilitates analysis of collective memory and the collective remembering process. It informs the dynamic nature of collective memory and avoids essentializing it to a monolithic entity of memories. Members in the collective may have different views and interpretations for a particular event, as in the case of selected works' interpretations of the Cultural Revolution's nature and explanations of why the narrators suffer.[28] By

[28] The selected works interpret the Cultural Revolution differently: Rae Yang concludes it is an unsuccessful political movement bringing treasurable lessons for the next generations and the world (R. Yang 284-285). Another

presenting their different views, members discuss and debate the events and remember their shared past together.

On the second layer, trauma conceptualizes the influential and long-lasting shock of the Cultural Revolution and the successive Rustication Movement in the Red Guards' sense of self and sense of belonging—the confidence of believing that they know who they are and where (or what community) they belong. My research applies the conceptualization of cultural trauma by Neil Smelser, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman and other sociologists (Eyerman 1). The classical model of understanding trauma disapproves of the possibility of representing trauma; therefore, instead of inspiration, it imposes restrictions on my analysis. Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory conceptualizes the historical events that largely undermine society's foundation, damage social fabric and unsettle social members' identity as *cultural trauma*. It notes the constructive side of trauma, denying the concept of trauma as a natural occurrence after the shock. When a society undergoes a traumatic event (be it a natural disaster or an economic crisis), media, culture, ideology, and individuals all take part in establishing the notion of trauma.

Cultural trauma theory facilitates the examination of cultural and communicative factors in the construction of collective trauma, providing a model of signification in which meaning is produced through representation. The representations of the event, outcomes, causes, and the future generate historical and cultural meanings about the

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overseas writer Zhai views it as a failed social experiment by Mao (Zhai 124). As for the rationale of their sufferings, Ma Bo blames his aggressive personality, while Yang thinks it is retribution for her deliberate damage of Daoist temples and violence (B, Ma 502; R. Yang 226).

event. In order to understand how Red Guard autobiographical narratives participate in the process of meaning production, this perspective amplifies the importance attached to specific literary representations of the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, cultural trauma theory sharpens investigation of Red Guard writers' articulation of the movements' impacts on their collective identity, insofar as it defines trauma as a constructed notion only when the collective members perceive and believe its powerful and inerasable damage in their collective identity. In my analysis of Red Guard autobiographical writings, the authors' subjective feelings and emotional perception of how the event undermines their self-awareness will be the key factors in indicating authors' claims in the meaning-making process.

In the theoretical framework of this thesis, the two fundamental theories feature constructionism. Halbwachs suggested memory is a socially constructed artifact, and cultural trauma theory argues trauma occurs from signification. In addition to memory and trauma, a third concept needs to be contextualized, which is *representation*. The concept of representation consists of the dynamic procedure of creating and relating a certain set of meanings with social reality and the products of such attempts (for example, literary portrayals of history, places, or figures). Reality does not come with a fixed meaning. An event's meanings and interpretations are produced through social communication involving various interested groups, institutions and individuals. In social communication, power relations intervene in meaning production, as the representing actors are located in different positions of the power relations. In the Red Guard autobiographical writings' case, domestic authors and expatriate authors living

in North America are in distinctive power relations, resulting in different self-representations and portrayals of the Red Guard collective.

In a constructionist view, identity and reality are similar in that they need to be represented to gain meaning. Representation can reshape personal and collective identity. By portraying oneself or a social group, one can promote an image of oneself or the group. Self-portraits in Red Guard autobiographies associate the authors with the first-person narrators, reshaping the authors' public image. Meanwhile, these narratives about the Cultural Revolution promote a preferred understanding of life during the movement.

In summary, the theoretical framework of the thesis is built on Halbwachs's conceptualization of collective memory and the social theory of cultural trauma, with collective identity as the core concept and representation as the means of reshaping identity and signification. This framework efficiently serves for my research questions centred on the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement's irreversible impacts on Red Guards' identification and the working-through process of the trauma.

1.4 Methodologies

My primary methodology is textual analysis based on close reading and comparative studies of the selected four memoirs. For collective memory, I will read the selected texts comparatively and pay close attention to overlapped plots, events, and expressions, which reveal the episodes that members in the Red Guard collective attach

important meanings. The rationale of this method is that the recurring or overlapped factors in narratives can show what the Red Guards, as a collective, share in remembering and representing the movements. For cultural trauma, I will analyze the first-person narrators' traumatizing occurrences then proceed to the Red Guard autobiographical writings' roles in working through the trauma of the Cultural Revolution. The criterion I use to measure the occurrence's traumatic effects is how the event undermines or destructs the narrator's self-cognition and belief as one of the external forces affecting one's identity. Destruction and deterioration brought by the occurrences in self-cognition can be observed in self-expressions in texts, as well as the authors' attempts to reconstruct what has once been damaged.

1.5 Background Information on Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement

The span of the Cultural Revolution is not the focus of this thesis, but it is worth clarifying. Although the revolution is officially regarded to have lasted from 1966 to 1976, and this definition is also academically recognized (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 2006; Dikötter 2017), there are opinions that the Cultural Revolution lasted only for three years, from 1966 to 1969. Liu Guokai, in his *A Brief Analysis of the Cultural Revolution* (1987), views the Cultural Revolution as a three-year movement that ended in the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 in which a new Central Committee and a new Party constitution were set up (G. Liu 1987). Liu's Editor reiterates that the Cultural Revolution, in Liu's work, refers to the initial three years and further clarifies that the

official demarcation of the revolution of Deng's regime in 1981 was to "merge in the public's thinking the 1966-69 period and the repressive seven-year period that followed it" (Chan Editor's Introduction 13). Bonnin shares Liu's opinion, seeing the "ten-year of the Cultural Revolution" as the Deng government's strategy to reevaluate and redefine the history (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 4).

This thesis shares the official view that the Cultural Revolution lasted for a decade from 1966 to Mao's death in 1976, with several stages with Red Guards playing different roles. As for the Rustication Movement, in this thesis, it refers to the mass mobilization of city youth (especially the Red Guards) to go to the countryside and receive reeducation from the peasants after 1968. About ten years before the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government had been encouraging the urban population to relocate to rural regions to reduce the urban-rural divide in human resources and infrastructure. The reason to make this clarification is to focus on the Red Guards' relocation.

The Cultural Revolution can be divided into several different stages. In each stage, the generation of the Red Guards, whose identity formation is the focus of the thesis, had different roles. Therefore, to concentrate on the Red Guards' experience, roles and identity formation, this thesis divides the decade of the Cultural Revolution with events that directly affected their trajectory of life or might change their attitudes towards the revolution. It is noteworthy that the Red Guards organization referred in this thesis is high-school Red Guards, who acted and developed very differently than their university counterparts (Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* 123).

(1) The Beginning of the Cultural Revolution

As Stalin's successor Khrushchev criticized him in a secret speech three years after he died and the relation between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated in the 1960s, Mao was anxious that the remaining exploiting classes and revisionists would weaken the proletarian dictatorship in China.[29] To prevent this situation, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966 to eradicate revisionists in the Party, collide the existing bureaucratic system, and cultivate revolutionary successors for preventing China from repeating Soviet's failure (Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* 205).

The year before its formal launch, Yao Wenyuan published his review of Wu Han's *The Dismissal of Hairui* (*Hairui Baiguan*), a Beijing opera with a Ming official as the main character, criticizing its distorted class relations and the weakened class struggles (Yao "On the New Historical Play Hai Rui Dismissed from Office"). Yao Wenyuan's critique triggered a barrage of criticisms and questions for Wu Han, which persisted to May 1966, the eve of the revolution. Other historical dramas, such as Tian Han's *Xie Yaohuan* and Meng Chao's *Li Huiniang*, were also criticized (Yun Song "Tian Han's *Xie Yaohuan* is a Big Poisonous Weed"). In May 1966, *Evening Chats at Yan Mountain* by Deng Tuo and *Three Family Village Reading Notes* (*Sanjiacun Zhaji*) by Wu Han and Liao Mosha were accused of anti-socialism and anti-party.[30] Liang Xiaosheng's

[29] In April 1966, Mao wrote a note about whether revisionism would appear in China. He noted that if precautions were taken, revisionism would not be able to seize power (Mao "On Whether China Will have Revisionism").
[30] Several editorials in People's Daily vehemently criticized Deng, Wu and Liao's works, blaming them for defaming the Party and supporting the rightists and the opportunists (Yao "On the Reactionary Nature of 'Three Family Village,' *Evening Chats at Yan Mountain*, and *Three Family Village Reading Notes*"; Gao "Fighting on the Anti-Party and Anti-Socialist Black Line").

memoir depicts the on-campus criticisms and denouncements against their works.

In mid-May, 16 May Circular, an inner-party document, suggested Mao's intention of a purge of revisionists in every corner and level of the country's cultural and bureaucratic system (Harding 171). On 25th May, Nie Yuanzi of the Philosophy Department in Peking University and her colleagues pasted a poster titled "What Did Song Shuo, Lu Ping, and Peng Peiyun Do During the Cultural Revolution?" and accused the Party leadership in the university of misguiding the movement and being revisionists (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 56-57). In June, the Cultural Revolution rapidly expanded in universities, especially Peking University and Tsinghua University in Beijing.[31] Educational institutions' recruitment of new students was suspended to give priority to the revolution, assuring the students enough time to engage in the movement (CCP Central Committee and the State Council "Circular of the CCP CC and the SC on Reforming College Admissions' Testing Methods and Postponing the 1966 College Admissions for Half a Year"). Thousands of big-character posters were displayed on campuses, offices and factories, as more and more students, workers, and citizens joined the revolution (Dikötter 60).

(2) Red Guards' Establishment and Mao's Support

High-school students of the middle school affiliated to Tsinghua University established the first Red Guard organization on May 29, 1966 (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 87). In June, work teams were dispatched to universities to supervise the

[31] The process of how the Cultural Revolution transformed from a political scheme to a mass mobilization is unknown, but it was sure that Peking University was the venue where the transformation began (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 54).

movement, but conflicts between radical students and work teams broke out frequently due to the former's resistance in universities (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 71-72). In the high schools in Beijing, work teams could hardly discipline the student Red Guards or maintain order due to the difficult relations between the work teams and the students: many student activists and leaders were children of officials with a party membership before 1949, whereas the work teams consisted of mostly low-ranking officials (Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* 124 & 135). However, for some students, work teams were considered as a resource. As Zhai stated: "To ordinary people like me, working groups were necessary and helpful … But to the radicals, the working groups were obstructions" (Zhai 66).

High-school Red Guards were divided over the issues of "class origin as a qualification for membership in and leadership over the red guards" and "the proper conduct of red guards, especially the use of violence" (Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* 136). The first issue of class origin was in nature a debate on how to interpret the Party's class line and which element should be prioritized: performance or family class status (ibid. 136-137). Although the dissent over this issue became so severe that physical conflict and injuries occurred between Red Guards from Tsinghua High School and Beijing High School No.47, it did not cause factional divisions because during this time the Red Guards from revolutionary families dominated the Red Guards' activities (ibid. 138, 142 & 155). However, the second issue, Red Guards' violence in the movement, resulted in "the first clear factional split" among high-school Red Guards (Walder, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* 215).

On 1st August, the Chairman expressed his strong support for Red Guards' accusations and attacks on revisionists in a letter to the Red Guards, boldening these young students to achieve their revolutionary goals, namely to wipe out the capitalist roaders and revisionists (Mao "Mao's Letter to the Red Guards of the Middle School Affiliated with Tsinghua University"). In the August and September of 1966, Red Guards carried out various actions against revisionism, capitalism, and traditional conventions. They renamed the streets that did not have a revolutionary name, urged barbershops and salons not to offer fancy haircuts, and ransacked capitalist roaders' homes and confiscated their property. Red Guards outside of Beijing came to the capital in large numbers to communicate revolutionary experiences.[32] Although some of the Red Guards' activities were mild, the Red Guard movement produced violence ranging from destroying private and state property to physical harm on their targets (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 102). In early August, Red Guards' violence became starkly fierce, as the Red Guards inflicted humiliation and corporal attacks on teachers and school principals. Bian Zhongyun, the vice-principal of the High School of Beijing Normal University, became the first death in Red Guard activities (Dikötter 73).

From August till November 1966, Mao held eight mass rallies on Tiananmen Square, in which 12 million Red Guards saw him in person (Dikötter 108). Mao's mass rallies significantly boosted Red Guards' morale and attracted students across the country to join this festival. Except for Ma Bo whose memoir begins from his rustication, the other three memoirists depict their exciting moments of seeing the Chairman.

[32]According to the Central Cultural Revolution Group, in mid-August, the number of out-of-town students staying on the campus of Tsinghua University reached 7,000 (qtd. in MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 107).

(3) Red Guards' Rustication Movement and the End of Cultural Revolution

Red Guards' Rustication Movement started in 1967 with fluctuations in the numbers of sent-down youths and scales. In the beginning, it was a small number of city youths volunteering to Inner Mongolia and Northern East areas who started this movement (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 79). However, it became a strategy for the government to restore normal urban functioning in 1968. As Red Guards' activities continued to intensify, social order and commercial activities in cities were seriously disrupted. Red Guards thus became a threat to social stability. To resume the social order and stabilize the society, the government mobilized the urban youths (mainly Red Guards) to move to the countryside for reeducation from peasants and workers (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 37; P. Chang 87).[33] In December 1968, Mao called on the new graduates to rusticate, which was quickly responded by an optimistic news report from Xinhua News Agency (Mao "Call for the Educated Youth Go to the Countryside"; Xinhua News Agency "Enthusiastically Respond to Chairman Mao's Great Call to be Re-educated by the Poor and Lower-middle Peasants"). The number of sent-down youths across the country from 1967 to 1969 was enormous, reaching 4,670,600 in total (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 89).

From 1970 to 1972, Rustication Movement experienced dramatic declines in the quantity of sent-down people.[34] There were economic and educational reasons behind this decline: For one thing, since 1970, high schools and colleges began to recover and

[33] In addition to political reasons, Red Guards' rustication also had economic motives, including the unemployment and overpopulation in cities (P. Chang 87).

[34] Both Bonnin and Gu Hongzhang notice the fall of the rusticated population from 1970 to 1972. According to their summary, the total number of sent-down youth from 1970 to 1972 was 2,486,200, slightly above 50 % of the sum of sent-down people from the previous three years (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 93; Gu 95).

recruit students, providing educational opportunities for new graduates from elementary schools and high schools. For another thing, the government launched the fourth "Five-year Plan" in 1970, which created large needs for human labour in cities (Gu 95-96). With educational and job opportunities, youths and their parents were less willing to rusticate. Moreover, horrible news about unfair treatment even persecution against sent-down youths were common, increasing people's resistance.[35]

In 1973, the rusticated population rose from 673,900 in the year before to 896,100; from then on, the number of sent-down youth climbed up steadily until 1976, the year of Cultural Revolution's end (Gu 258). This revitalization was associated with Mao's reply to a letter from Li Qinglin, a sent-down youth's father in Fujian Province (Gu 98). Li expressed concerns about his son's living conditions, petitioning solutions for sent-down youths' difficulties maintaining self-support. Mao's reply raised other Party leaders' close attention to sent-down youths' hard situation. A meeting was held to "solve this problem through overall planning" the day after Mao's reply (Gu 103). Provincial and municipal governments were urged to strengthen self-examination for better conducting educated youths' rustication (CCP Central Committee "Transmitted by the CCP CC: Letter from Li Qinglin and Chairman Mao's Reply"). As a result, although educated youths' living difficulties had not been thoroughly resolved, the Central Committee's resolution of improving revived the movement. Rustication Movement did not end with the Cultural Revolution in 1976. After 1976, youths in

[35] In the countryside, sent-down youths were vulnerable, especially the female. As cited in Liu Xiaomeng's *History of Chinese Educated Youths: High Tide 1966-1980* (*Zhongguo Zhiqing Shi: Dachao*), an investigation report exposed 73 cases of persecuting sent-down youths in Jiutai County (Jilin Province), in which the majority was sexual assaults on female youths (X. Liu 191).

cities were continued to be motivated to join rustication and settle down in the countryside, but the scale of mobilization shrank dramatically (Gu 258).

The Cultural Revolution ended as Mao passed away on 9th September 1976 and was followed by the arrest of the Gang of Four in October. The educated youths finally saw the chances of returning to cities, though some managed to return before 1976 through "backdoor" relations or bribery. In November 1980, the Highest People's Procuratorate accused the Gang of Four (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen, and Yao Wenyuan) and other culprits of the chaos in the Cultural Revolution of a series of crimes, including seizing power, persecution, and assassination attempts (Highest People's Procuratorate "Indictment by the Special Procurator of the Highest People's Procuratorate").

In conclusion, the ten-year Cultural Revolution is divided into three stages according to Red Guards' roles which transformed along with the shifts of the movements. In the early stage from its establishment in May 1966 to 1968, high-school Red Guards actively engaged in the Cultural Revolution and conducted city-based activities with strong support from Mao. During this stage, division and factionalism were common. Dramatic dissents occurred on the issue of Red Guard violence, dividing the high-school Red Guards into different factions (Walder, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* 215). During the Rustication Movement from 1968 to 1976, Red Guards were mobilized to relocate in the countryside. The government's sometimes forceful mobilization of Red Guards going to the countryside significantly changed how the sent-down Red Guards considered their roles in the first three years of the

revolution, while the widespread persecution of sent-down youths rendered them victims of the movement. For one thing, the harsh living conditions in rural regions broke their illusion of idyllic and self-sufficient country life in the socialist China that was planted by the revolutionary education they received (X. Liu 393). For another thing, Lin Biao's death in 1971 was a heavy blow on their faith in the leaders, as Lin was Mao's appointed successor whom the Red Guards also respected (X. Liu 394). His mysterious death and betrayal of the Chairman shocked the sent-down Red Guards and made them doubt the nature of the Cultural Revolution as Rae Yang did (Yang 217-218). In this sense, the educated youths were witnesses to the series of movements in the Mao era.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of two parts. Its first part (Chapter One to Three) provides information on research design, existing literature, and contexts for creating Red Guard autobiographical works. Chapter One introduces research questions, significance, methodologies, and rationale for source selection and provides background information on the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement. Chapter Two summarizes the existing conversation on collective memory and trauma concerning the Cultural Revolution. Chapter Three compares the political, social, and cultural contexts in China and North America from the late 1970s to the 1990s. Comparison and overview of the contexts in these two regions strengthen my textual analysis of the four works in the following chapters by presenting the contextual factors contributing to the distinctive

identities articulated by the authors.

The second part (Chapter Four and Five) demonstrates the interrelations of memory construction, meaning production, and identity articulation in Red Guard autobiographical works supported by in-depth textual analysis. Chapter Four examines the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and its interplay with literary representations in Red Guard memoirs and elaborates on how is memory constructed and meaning produced through Red Guard autobiographies. Chapter Five analyzes Red Guard autobiographical writings' roles and social functions in constructing the cultural trauma of the Cultural Revolution. The thesis ends with a conclusion where I acknowledge limitations and make observations for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is a critical movement in modern Chinese history due to its nationwide and persistent impacts on the country's development and the formation of the national identity. The movement involved millions of people from different walks and ages and thus is associated with various memories and emotions by the people who experienced it in person or vicariously. The memory of this movement is thus a contest where different versions of memory compete for credibility (L. Chen 6; Zhong, et al. Introduction xx-xxiii). This literature review provides a synthesis of the existing research on the literary narratives (including fiction and non-fiction) related to the Cultural Revolution from the perspectives of memory and trauma, focusing on the narratives by former Red Guards and educated youths.

2.1 Research from the Perspective of Memory

Memory studies is the multidisciplinary field covering studies of memory's biological mechanism, social functions, and impacts on individuals and communities. It originated in the late nineteenth century and proliferated in the twentieth century when the two world wars and a series of influential events marked the history of humanity (Hacking 198; Kattago 8). In China, studies of collective memory and *social memory* started to play a role in academia after Shanghai People's Publishing House translated and published Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* (1989) and

Maurice Halbwachs's *On Collective Memory* (1992) in 2000 and 2002 respectively, introducing the memory theory from the West to China (X. Li 9).[36] From then on, collective memory and social memory became important perspectives to consider historical events (especially those in the twentieth century), providing scholars with methods to examine how past events affect people's minds and collective sense of self. The annual number of articles on or about collective memory published and recorded in China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) has been steadily increasing from only seven articles in 2001 to over 400 in 2020, with a noticeable ascendent trend after 2010, encompassing a variety of topics in literature, sociology, history and communication studies.[37]

Research on Cultural Revolution memory was initiated at about the same time when the theoretical framework of memory studies was introduced to China in 2000, maintaining its vitality to the present day. Viewing the Cultural Revolution memory as a collective memory punctuated by diversity, contentions, and publicity, researchers examine a wide range of manifestations of the Cultural Revolution memory, including Cultural Revolution-related literary narratives (Zhang 1999; Z. Xu 2000; L. Li 2016; L. Chen 2020), virtual museums on the Internet (G. Yang 2007), and nostalgic items (such as Mao badges, posters, and stamps) (B. Xu 2006). While scholars in this field share the fundamental understanding of the Cultural Revolution memory as an open

[36] Social memory is a concept used in memory studies to discuss how people's memory of a shared history shapes their social identity. It differentiates from the term "collective memory" in that they emphasize different dimensions of memories shared in groups: social memory stresses the social contexts where people develop group identity, while the latter emphasizes the group members' self-identification as part of the collective (French 9).

[37] China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) is an online database where Chinese journal articles, MA and Doctoral theses are kept. The statistics about the published articles on collective memory were gained by searching the keyword "collective memory (*jiti jiyi*)" in CNKI.

discursive process where divergent memories overlap, complement each other and contest for legitimacy, they have different interpretations of how Cultural Revolution memory is *collective*. For some, collective memory is more closely related to a collective's present interests, needs, and desires than the past per se (Z. Xu, *The Collective Memory That is for Forgetting: An Analysis of Fifty Cultural Revolution Fictions* 223; Zhu 93-94). Others such as Deng argues that this present-oriented approach restricts people's understanding of the movement (Deng 175-176). In Deng's opinion, the present-oriented approach that considers the Cultural Revolution memory a collective memory constructed for specific current needs neglects the fact that the ways of thinking and feeling, discourse, and interpersonal relations formed during the Cultural Revolution persist today, so that the movement cannot be separated from the present, nor can the memory of it be based entirely on current needs (Deng 176). While there is a general agreement that "collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present," scholars debate over the question of to what extent "the light of the present" interferes "reconstruction of the past" (Coser 34).

Another area of debate is the diversity inherent in Cultural Revolution memory. Individual memory about this complicated movement varies due to the wide variety of social groups involved (such as intellectuals, Red Guards, citizens) who had different occupations, beliefs, and interests. Aware of the tensions between history as a hegemonic narrative and popular memory as unofficial narratives, Sebastian Veg argues that the popular memories of Maoist China went through three stages of evolution from the 1980s to the present with the first (the 1980s) and second (the 1990s) stages

punctuated by “traumatic but closely controlled narratives” and “nostalgia and social protest against marketization of the economy” respectively. However, each of these stages is defined by contentions among the popular memories (Veg, Introduction 1-9). Xu Zidong regards the diversity of the Cultural Revolution memory as expectable and normal, arguing that different or even conflicting representations and interpretations of the movement in the fictions manifest compromise and discordance between different ideologies (Z. Xu, *Xu Zidong's Notes: Rereading the Cultural Revolution Vol.1* 6). Zhu and Deng consider this diversity significant for memory studies and call for further research (Zhu 95; Deng 177). However, some researchers are anxious about the divergence shaped by the market and consumerism. In his study of nostalgic items of the Maoist era, Xu Ben expresses his concerns about remembering the days during the movement as an everyday life, which is included in the collective memory as one way to remember this movement. Xu sees this trend as a threat to the Cultural Revolution memory as “a memory of suffering (*kunan jiyi*),” for it distracts people’s attention from damage and victimization brought by this movement and fabricates a memory of peaceful life in the past (B. Xu 312-313).

With reference to Suleman’s definition of “a crisis of memory” as “a moment of choice, and sometimes of predicament or conflict, about remembrance of the past, whether by individuals or by groups” (Suleiman 1), Lingchei Letty Chen regards the “diverse and divergent” memory of the Maoist era “a crisis of memory” to mark the tensions among the multiple voices in the collective memory (L. Chen 6). She considers this divergence from a problem-solving perspective, noting that competition between

the government, media (especially literature and films), and the individuals' memories of the Maoist past is so fierce that "a new interpretive frame" is needed for further examination (ibid., 6-7). On the diversity in collective memory, Guobin Yang and Ching Kwan Lee understand it from the perspective of the relation between memory and power. They suggest the collective memories and official history are in tension. Official history promotes a legitimate version of memory, but "[m]emories are histories as they were lived, felt, thought, and interpreted" (C. Lee and Yang 3). Personal feelings, experiences, and perceptions are important in memory. Therefore, memories are diverse. Incorporating in education (textbooks) and cultural infrastructure (museums), official history builds a foundation of remembering that is challenged by the collective memories formed from the below (ibid.). Lee and Yang's view specifies the relation between official history and the divergence of collective memory, bringing the perspective of power relations into memory studies. Yang, in his more recent discussion on the Cultural Revolution memory, notes that the memories of this movement in China are "fractionalized," "broken and fragmented" due to the very different social changes and political climate in each decade since the movement ended (G. Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* 164).[38] Due to the fast social change, the identity of the Red Guard generation was strained (ibid. 172). In addition to the changes in social and political contexts, the "same class line" of the Cultural Revolution

[38] In the 1980s, "the victors of the Cultural Revolution, represented by Deng Xiaoping at the top and by conservative Red Guards at the grassroots," monopolized both the hegemonic narrative and the popular narratives of memory of the Maoist era, promoting a "condemnatory and negative" tone (G. Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* 165). In the 1990s, the Cultural Revolution memory proliferated, which Yang considers as "a critical response to the social consequences of the marketization of the Chinese economy" (ibid. 168).

is another determinative shaping force of the Cultural Revolution memory (ibid. 4). Consequently, the memory of the Cultural Revolution is "fractionalized" according to the same rival forces during the movement (ibid. 5-6). In his analysis of the interview with Lu Xing'er, a former *zhiqing* novelist, Yang points out that for the Red Guard generation who once again face the rapid and unpredictable social changes and "renewed struggles against disruptions of identity," "the past becomes a vital source for coping with the present" (ibid. 174). Yang's argument suggests a new perspective, distinct from that of cultural trauma, to approach the issue of the Red Guard generation's identity formation. Memories of the eventful and difficult time during the two movements can, in some cases, provide the former Red Guards comfort and peace when they feel lost in China's rapid reform and social development. The impacts of memory depend on various factors including the events' nature and the present situation. In Yang's analysis, the latter is more impactful than the former one. The Red Guard generation's situation in the 1980s and the 1990s and their location in the social structure influence their identity formation and memory construction, thus cannot be neglected in this thesis.

Existing studies on the Cultural Revolution memory note the diversity of memory and the factors contributing to this diversity, including the ones rooted in the event per se (namely, its complicated nature) and those in the social context (such as the market-oriented economy and consumerism). To further reveal how the collective memory is constructed in society by different groups and institutions, scholars conduct research based on particular groups directly related to the Cultural Revolution, such as the

inflictors of harms (i.e., Red Guards) and the inflicted (i.e., intellectuals). Closely connected to this thesis's research questions, studies on former Red Guards and educated youths' Cultural Revolution memory offer insights into how they make choices between what to remember and forget.

In specific research on former Red Guards and educated youths' narratives, scholars pay close attention to their roles in shaping the collective memory and the interplay between remembering and forgetting shown in this type of narrative. They are well aware of the relation between remembering and forgetting: memory is about what people remember and what they forget. Based on this fundamental idea, Xu Zidong examines the narrative structures and plots in fifty fictions that feature the background of the Cultural Revolution and concludes that these fictional narratives of the Cultural Revolution are created to forget rather than to remember this movement in its historical truthfulness (Z. Xu, *Xu Zidong's Notes: Rereading the Cultural Revolution Vol.1* 3). In his view, Red Guard and educated youth narratives have a fixed structure in which the protagonist's social status in the beginning keeps unchanged when the story ends (Z. Xu, *The Collective Memory That is for Forgetting: An Analysis of Fifty Cultural Revolution Fictions* 209). The core of Red Guard and educated youth narratives is to defend the value of narrators' experience to him/herself. In other words, to prove that the narrators have not wasted their youth in political movements but gained treasurable lessons by doing so (ibid.). For this purpose, the former Red Guard and educated youth authors select, organize, and present their memories. However, Xu does not clearly explain why the authors have to prove the significance of their past, nor does Xu fully

define the positive significance the authors mean to prove.

Li Li and Lingchei Letty Chen further develop Xu's line of inquiry, suggesting identity is of critical importance in shaping the former Red Guards and educated youths' representation of memory (L. Li 2016; L. Chen 2020). In her study of popular Red Guard memoirs' production and consumption, Li emphasizes seeking personal identity as the authors' internal motivation of writing memoirs (L. Li 34). In her interpretation, Red Guard and educated youth narratives have a clear aim: to search for or establish a new identity (ibid.). The significance that the Red Guards and educated youths are eager to prove thus has a specific content: the years of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement are not meaningless for the participants because those years shaped their characteristics, personalities and whom they currently are. On establishing a new identity, Chen doubts the possibility of creating a brand-new identity without traces of the previous one (L. Chen 194). "Underneath this new identity construct, however, remnants of old identities remain that bespeak the use and abuse of memory" (ibid., 194-195). Chen argues that through strategically presenting one's memory, the person can build up a new identity, but the person can never erase the old identity. An example of Chen's argument is her analysis of Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* (1991). Featuring a victimhood narrative, Chang seemed to succeed in building up a new identity as a survivor of a totalitarian government and erasing the old one. Nevertheless, the dramatic contrast between the good and the evil in her story manifests that Chang is still thinking in the typical way people during the Cultural Revolution did (ibid., 210-213). Chang's simplified demarcation of good and evil shows the unerasable traces of

her old identity as a Red Guard.

Beyond searching for an identity in new environments, expatriate Red Guard and educated youth writers also reflect on their roles in history (Zhao 118-119). According to Zhao, "overseas scar memoirs," the autobiographical works by the former Red Guards and educated youths living abroad, are personalized versions of history that manifest the tension between national history and personal narratives (ibid., 119). Through the personalization of history, these former participants of the Cultural Revolution found out their roles in history, which Zhao concludes as "political tools" (ibid., 121). However, questions about how these authors think and feel about their roles, such as do they accept this role or regret not realizing it earlier, remain unexplained in Zhao's study.

The notion of "collective" is contextualized differently as a resilient concept in the existing research. Halbwachs noted the importance of space and time in defining groups that support their collective memory (Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* 84-85). As aggregations of individuals, groups continually change because the members join and leave. Space can influence the maintenance of a group because it can limit the members' in-person contact and information exchange. In his examination of the collective memories of three different kinds of groups (i.e., family, religion, and social classes), he contextualized the notion of collective as an abstract concept in dichotomy with the individuals. Collectives can be formed through familial relations, religious orientation, and social division. Since subdivisions and mobility of members occur in collectives, *collective* is conceptualized to have porous and resilient boundaries. In some cases,

collectives may overlap. For example, a couple is a group bonded by marriage. The two members in this small group are simultaneously members of two larger groups formed by blood lineage.

In the recent research on memory of the Cultural Revolution, "collective" is contextualized to specific groups involved in the Cultural Revolution (i.e., the intellectuals, the Red Guards and educated youth, the cadres) and "Chinese people" as an imagined community which is the actor of remembering the movement. Xu Zidong defines the Red Guards and educated youths as a collective, seeing *Red Guards* and *educated youths* as two identities of the same generation of people and two stages of the same thought's evolution. In contextualizing "collective," he pays attention to the unchanged qualities, or in his word "spirit (*jing shen*)," inherent in the group (Z. Xu, *The Collective Memory That is for Forgetting: An Analysis of Fifty Cultural Revolution Fictions* 206). Subdivisions can be defined within the collective of the Red Guards and educated youths by further differentiating it with generational distinction. "Three old classes (*lao san jie*)," namely the graduates of high school students from 1966 to 1968, is a collective in this sense. Lingchei Letty Chen contextualizes "collective" in both ways, as specific groups defined by generational distinction and the national subject of "Chinese people." According to their generational distinctions, Chen argues a "first generation" and a "1.5 generation" of survivors of Maoist movements, categorizing the direct witnesses and "child survivors" (L. Chen 37-38). Their collective memories thus are generational memories passed from the parents to the young. When Chen comments on the "national amnesia" in China, which she specifies as "a pervasive denial of

individual involvement in the Maoist atrocities and the widespread ignorance of Chinese youth about the Maoist era," she stresses "Chinese" as a national community whose members bear the obligation of remembering the national history to connect the notion of collective and that of nation, thus nationalizing the history of the Cultural Revolution (ibid. 27). Her view of a nationalized memory of the Cultural Revolution suggests the intimate relation between the memory of this movement and the formation of national identity. As the Red Guard generation keeps constructing memory and articulating identity through writing and other forms of creation, they are continually playing an important role in the remaking of national identity. The diverse versions of memory that they create, such as *zhiqing*'s nostalgic narratives and victimhood-oriented narratives, reconstruct the Chinese national identity differently, as these memories represent and interpret the Maoist history in various ways.

How "collective" is contextualized is of significant importance in collective memory studies, as collective memory is "a socially constructed notion" (Coser 22). Society consists of various groups from family and company to army and government. The distinctions of the groups, such as size, time of existence, and social functions, introduce differences in their ways of constructing collective memory. Consequently, when the discussion of collective memory moves from a particular group (e.g. former Red Guards and educated youths) to a bigger group (e.g. Chinese people), not only does the scale of "collective" get extended, but also the complexity of its memory increased. "Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time" (Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* 84). The signifier of collective needs to be clearly

defined because of the intimate relationship between the group of remembering and its collective memory.

My thesis focuses on the particular collective of the Red Guards. However, in what sense can the Red Guards, a self-established student organization consisting of members in many subgroups over the country, be considered a collective? My conviction of Red Guards being a collective develops from Red Guards' collective participation in the Cultural Revolution and the social activities related to this movement. Individual and collective are relational concepts: individuality and personal traits reveal itself in the sameness of the collective, and the sameness of collective is constructed through individual members' united actions, principles of action, and purposes. In their activities, they acted for a communal purpose that was suggested by their organization name "Red Guards," which means "protect the red of China" with "red" as a symbolic signifier of communist ideology (though it was a general indication of purpose). Red Guards' actions, though various in practice, were guided by the Proletarian revolutionary route represented by Chairman Mao and the Sixteen Points (Red Guards of the Middle School Affiliated with Tsinghua University "Oath of the Red Guards"; J. Li "Chairman Mao Leads the Red Guards to Charge Forward").[39] Their collective participation, which demonstrated unity in the principle of action and purpose, was crucial and contributive to the formation of a collective sense of "we,"

[39] The Sixteen Points refers to the instructive document "Resolutions of the CCP CC Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" published on People's Daily on 9 August 1966. It contains sixteen principles of carrying out the Cultural Revolution, regulating various dimensions of activities in the revolution. The Sixteen Points directly affected Red Guards' participation: for example, it forbade denunciating with physical violence and set up Cultural Revolution Groups, Cultural Revolution Committees, and Cultural Revolution Congress, which consisted of students and faculty ("Resolutions of the CCP CC Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" 1966).

because it enabled a continual construction of collective identity. Although factionalism was a serious issue in the Red Guards organization due to the split between Rebels and Royalists, a collective sense of "being a Red Guard" remained in their self-awareness.[40]

Therefore, this thesis contextualizes the notion of collective as a social category in which shared experiences that they go through during a certain time connect its members. The change in political identity from "the Red Guards" to "educated youth" indicates not disbandment of the collective but a shift in the focus and locale of activities. The thesis examines how the former Red Guards and educated youths represent experiences and changes in self-identification during the Maoist era, how the commonness in their narratives and the framework of collective memory relate, and Red Guard memoirs' contribution to reflecting on the legacies of the Cultural Revolution.

2.2 Research from the Perspective of Trauma

Building on the foundation of works by Sigmond Freud and other psychologists (such as Pierre Janet and Sandor Ferenczi) from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, trauma studies intersects with a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and humanities (Kaplan 25; Mucci et al. 75).

Domestic and overseas scholars have been conducting studies on China's traumatic history during the twentieth century. Trauma studies in China has been developed in

[40] Within Red Guard organizations, members held different views towards the local leaders. "Rebels" were those who challenged the leaders, while "Royalists" or "Conservatives" were the ones defended for the confronted leaders (Dikötter 116).

two main areas: The first aspect focuses on introducing and examining trauma theories from Western scholars (for example, Tao's translation of Assmann's work and Wang's review of trauma psychology theories). The second concentrates on analysis of actual cases or texts (for example, Zhang's insightful analysis of traumatic memory's role in building modern Chinese philosophy) (Tao and M. Wang 2017; Tao 2018; X. Wang 2012; Zhang 1999). These two streams of trauma studies laid a solid base for future studies in the field. Examining how the Red Guard memoirs write about the national crisis and its traumatic impacts on the authors' life, my thesis builds on the second stream of trauma studies. At the same time, its application of Alexander's cultural trauma theory will make contribution to the adaption of western theories with the Chinese reality.

Domestic studies of the Cultural Revolution from the trauma perspective have established that this political disturbance traumatized the nation's population on social, cultural, and individual levels (Zhang 38; Qiu 84; M. Li 93-94).In a comparative study of Lu Xinhua's *Scar* (1978) and Lin Jinlan's *Ten Years of Hysteria* (1986), Li Min asserts that in the 1980s, the traumatization of the Cultural Revolution was completely constructed, crystalizing this movement to a "symbol of national trauma" (M. Li 93). The completeness of the traumatization that Li argues is based on the shift in the focus of the 1980s Chinese writers' literary representation of the movement, which turned from a general and collective "scar" in Lu's *Scar* to a persistent "trauma" rooted in the individual's psyche in Lin's work. The traumatization of the Cultural Revolution first sought for a wide acknowledgement of the movement as a collective and national

disaster in the society, then turned to specify the psychological damage on an individual level, thus completing a full trajectory from general to specific, and from collective to individual (ibid., 96). However, Li seems to neglect the Cultural Revolution's unique quality as a traumatic memory in the Chinese context, applying the constructionist theory uncritically. More importantly, what this traumatization brings to the working-through process of the Cultural Revolution remains unexplained.

Zhang and Qiu, specializing in traumatic memories in the Chinese context from philosophical and cultural perspectives, respectively, note the distinctions in Western and Chinese traumatic memories and develop their arguments with these distinctions in mind (Zhang 1999; Qiu 2014). Qiu suggests that Chinese traumatic memories are different from Western ones in that the former were acquired during the Chinese society's very initial stage of modernization and thus reflected an insistence rooted in the twentieth century, which was that continual revolution could reform Chinese society (Qiu 85). In the Chinese context, understandings of traumatic memories (including the ones from the nineteenth century to the present time and the ones in pre-modern times such as the perpetration of Confucius scholars in the Qin Dynasty) are limited by the traditional way of thinking formed in China's long history of feudal autocracy and patriarch system (ibid.). One of the manifestations of this limitation is that the reflection of the Cultural Revolution is centred on national psychology and social reform (ibid.). Qiu's argument can be backed by the Red Guard memoirs in which authors reflect on human tragedies during the Cultural Revolution from the angle of national psychology (e.g. Liang's reflection on Chinese people's habit of "being an onlooker" in *Confessions*

of a Red Guard). Zhang emphasizes the restriction imposed on the modernization of Chinese philosophy by traumatic memories, suggesting that traumatic memory is the threshold of modern Chinese philosophy (Zhang 5). He proposes that traditional Chinese philosophy lacks approaches to reflect on the nation's traumatic memories, while the unsolved traumatic memories hold back the modernization of Chinese philosophy (ibid., 19-24).

Zhang and Qiu's inspirational studies link the trauma of the Cultural Revolution with China's history and cultural tradition. In particular, Qiu emphasizes the internalization of the traumatic memory of the Cultural Revolution in the nation's collective consciousness, which is shown in the nation's rejection of violent, radical, and aggressive means and its embrace of a non-violent and gradual reform after the Cultural Revolution (Qiu 85). The unpleasant collective memory of the Cultural Revolution propels the population to rethink the legacies of modern China's intellectual enlightenment and reforms since the twentieth century (ibid.). Zhang and Qiu's analysis indicates the gaps between pre-modern traumatic memories and those acquired during China's modernization and between the traumas perceived in the Western and Chinese context. Their contextualization of traumatic memories in the particular historical background and cultural setting suggests traumatic memories as an inseparable part internalized in the nation's collective consciousness, mindsets and national identity. Therefore, one must not separate memory from its historical and cultural contexts or omit the distinctions among traumas that are perceived in different cultures.

Overseas, research on traumatic memories of China resembles Holocaust Studies in

that intergenerational transmission and psychoanalytic approaches are frequently used (Plänkers 2014; Markert 2014). In addition to contextualizing the memories in modern Chinese history of fighting against external threats and domestic instability, scholars are looking for new perspectives for examining the Chinese traumatic memories in globalization (B. Wang 2004). The contentiousness in Chinese traumatic memory can be seen in the comparison between domestic and overseas research. Domestic scholarly research stresses the contribution of victimhood-oriented literature in the 1980s to the working-through process of the trauma of the Cultural Revolution (M. Li 2010), whereas a study by Gentz shows how the monopoly of narratives from the victims' side "obscures the complexity of the real struggles," preventing the individuals from interrogating their roles and responsibilities in those "struggles" (Gentz 15). Touching on the variety of Cultural Revolution narratives, in an overseas dissertation, Ma argues that alternative narratives "that 'detraumatize' the Cultural Revolution" expands the options of identity that particular groups and people (such as former educated youths) can forge through reconstructing memory, enabling them to articulate identities other than "victims" (Y. Ma 166-168).

Among the contentions, agreement and consistency can also be seen in domestic and overseas research. Seeing the process of China's modernization as a series of "traumatic encounters with imperialism, colonialism, and, in recent decades, the new powers of global capital," Wang Ban incorporates "the 'internal' political catastrophe of the Mao era" into the chain of traumas associated with China's modernization, interpreting it as a bitter fruit growing "from numerous hasty modernization campaigns"

(B. Wang 9). Wang's argument of Chinese traumatic modernity appears to stand on the other side from Zhang and Qiu's view that modernity is absent from the nation's trauma and its way of working through it. However, they share the logic of framing the events into the sequence of Chinese modernization, suggesting that the trauma of the Cultural Revolution is closely intertwined with the tough and grievous road of modernization that China walked through. Furthermore, how the nation's population and intellectuals resolve this painful past plays an important role in modernization (Zhang 1999; Qiu 2014; B. Wang 2004).

As for research on the former Red Guards and educated youths' narratives, a wide variety of issues including identity formation (Z. Xu 1989), traumatization (Zhao 2012), and cultural transmission from the Third World to the West (Shih 2004) has been addressed. However, very few studies scrutinize the trauma manifested or performed in the Red Guards and educated youths' autobiographical writings, compared to the special attention on the persecuted intellectuals' traumatization. In the relatively small entity of literary studies on Red Guard narratives from a trauma perspective, there are two main focuses: trauma and its manifestation. Focusing on how trauma is depicted, a domestic study of Ma Bo's *Blood Red Sunset* and its later versions points out the extreme personalization of trauma in Ma's memoir (H. Xu 124). Xu Hongjun argues that the writer's exposure of his private life and his obsession in the task of writing personalize the pain and unease, which distinguishes this work from others *zhiqing* stories that aim to represent the generation as a whole (ibid., 124-125). Xu further claims that this quality of personalization shapes the first-person narrator as an image

with whom *zhiqing* readers can identify and externalize their traumas (ibid., 126). While Xu Hongjun assumes the narrator in Ma's memoir manifests a deep trauma caused by his life as an "counterrevolutionary," Xu Zidong addresses Ma's painful encounters not as trauma but as the mental status of feeling wronged (*weiqu*), for the narrator's claim for his innocence and pleading for understanding show that his faith in the revolutionary ideology remains intact (Z. Xu, "Cultural Attitude of the Youth in Contemporary Literature: An Analysis of a Character's Mental Journey" 69-75). I agree with Xu Zidong's view, for the narrator shows no signs of wavering in his core identity. Throughout the text, the narrator believes he is innocent and thus has no doubts about his identity as a socialist successor (earlier as a Red Guard, later as an educated youth).

Outside of China, studies on Red Guards and educated youths' narratives concentrate on the nature of trauma. For example, in her study of "overseas scar memoirs," Zhao inquiries the causes for the traumatization and specifies the Red Guards' trauma as results from the alienation of teenagers' mental health due to class education and violent environment (Zhao 119). However, the prevalent view is that the so-called trauma in Cultural Revolution narratives of this type is a commodified form of a painful past for exchange of either a new identity or financial profit (Zarrow 1999; Shih 2004). The sufferings in the Cultural Revolution, Zarrow argues, are rephrased and expressed in "the putative universal language of the social sciences and psychology," thus becoming "commodities" in the international cultural market (Zarrow 167). With careful word choice to avoid arbitrariness, Shu Mei Shih categorizes "[s]ome of the sensational trauma narratives about China's Cultural Revolution written in English by

first-generation immigrants" as "deliberate national allegorical narratives with an eye to the market" (Shih 21). Based on her categorization, the traumas depicted in graphic details in the abovementioned narratives are in fact allegories with "predetermined signified" that "is produced by a consensus between the audience in the West and the Third World writer or director" (ibid.).

To sum up, there is a wide acknowledgement at home and overseas that the Cultural Revolution has traumatized not only the generation that witnessed and participated in it, but also the next and the third generations, psychologically and culturally (Zhang 1999; Plänkers 2014; Markert 2014). Contentions happen in the nature of this trauma among scholars. Given the complicated trajectory of China's modernization, can the trauma of the Cultural Revolution be understood in the same way of thinking about the Holocaust (Zhang 1999; Qiu 2014)? Under the context of globalization and international cultural communication, how does Western capitalism affect the expression of victimhood and sufferings in overseas Red Guard memoirs (Zarrow 1999; Shih 2004)? Undoubtedly, these studies formed a comprehensive and firm foundation for future discussion, but there are still noticeable gaps in this field of research.

One of the gaps is the lack of literary studies of Red Guards and educated youths' manifestation of trauma. There is abundant research on the depiction of physical pain, damage in interpersonal trust, and long-lasting anguish and fear on the intellectuals' side. Representative examples include Zhang Zhiyang's analysis of Ba Jin's *A Collection of Random Thoughts* (1981), and Li Min's study of Lu Xinhua's *Scar* (1978) and Lin Jinlan's *Ten Years of Hysteria* (1986). On the one hand, as Gentz points out,

sole reliance on the victimhood-oriented narratives risks oversimplifying the movement (Gentz 15). Therefore, it is necessary to include the narratives from the Red Guards' side in the research. On the other hand, given the insufficient clarification of the signifier of "collective" in the earlier research, studies on the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution remain ambiguous over how the contesting memories of different groups affect the collective remembering process.

This thesis aims to bridge the abovementioned gaps, namely the underarticulated definition of collective and the insufficient attention on Red Guards and educated youths' trauma, and to present a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the framework of collective memory and individuals' representations of their shared past. Positioning the former Red Guards as a collective with subgroups, my research examines their autobiographical narratives' influences on the working-through process of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement and studies the interplay between the framework of collective memory and former Red Guards' narratives by analyzing the four selected works.

Chapter 3 Domestic and Overseas Contexts for Red Guard Autobiographical Writings

Due to the many differences in the People's Republic of China and North America's economic, political, and cultural systems and ideology, Red Guard autobiographical writings in these two regions show distinctive features in narrative modes, narrators' self-portraits, and themes, which I will further discuss in textual analysis in the next chapter. Knowing these distinctions enables one to better understand how the autobiographical memory of the two movements interacts with the contexts and is represented differently in China and overseas. Before diving in the detailed textual analysis, Chapter Three will clarify the domestic and North American contexts of the four selected works' creation.

3.1 Domestic Contexts

3.1.1 The Domestic Political and Social Contexts for Red Guard Autobiographical Writings in China during the late 1970s to the 1990s

Since the Cultural Revolution concluded in 1976, the Chinese Communist Party published documents and made decisions that significantly affected the literary creation of the newly past decade. The criminalization of Lin Biao and Gang of Four in 1976 provided safe and specific targets for the creators to vent their negative emotions such as anguish, rage, and disappointment. "Bulletin of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh

CCP CC" noted that the errors and mistakes during the implementation of the Cultural Revolution should be summarized as experience and lessons at the proper time (CCP Central Committee 1978), allowing reflection and thoughts on the huge disastrous impacts caused by the revolution. In 1981, "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the PRC" officially denounced the Cultural Revolution, noting that it caused enormous damage to the Party, the country, and its population and setting the denial tone in the discussion of the Cultural Revolution (CCP Central Committee 1981). These decisions and documents reflected the state's attitude towards the revolution and offered an official attribution of the responsibility, setting the tone of how the movement would be formally recognized.

Meanwhile, the government's policies on culture and academia relaxed the restrictions on creation and research. After the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee in 1978, "Doubled-hundred Policy (*shuangbai fangzhen*)," a policy first launched in 1956 to boost artistic and literary creation and academic research and assure creators and researchers' freedom in their work, was brought to normal function, while during the decade of Cultural Revolution, it was invalidated (Cao 67-68).[41] In the Party's forum of theoretical work in 1979, the implementation of "Three No's Policy" was emphasized (Cheng 13). This policy literally means "no picking braids, no imposing hats, no hitting with sticks" and aims to protect democracy in politics, academia, and art (Q. Chen 151).[42] These two policies lifted the barriers preventing

[41] The "Doubled-hundred" in the name of this policy symbolically means "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." The freedom approved and protected by this policy is the sort of freedom that is led by the Chinese Communist Party and Marxism rather than anarchism (Cao 67-68).

[42] The contents of the "Three No's Policy" may be confusing for non-Chinese speakers. "No picking braids, no imposing hats, no hitting with sticks" is the colloquial expression of "no holding against others with misdeeds that

literary creators from writing about the movements, though the freedom that they enjoyed was not infinite and remained under censorship. Additionally, as the Party and government worked on "Setting Wrong Things Right (*boluan fanzheng*)," namely rectifying wrong judgements during the Cultural Revolution, the political environment and cultural atmosphere became less restrictive. In this political context, the initial trends of scar literature (*shanghen wenxue*) and literature of reflection (*fansi wenxue*) strictly aligned to the official view of treating the historical problems left by the movements in question, drawing lessons from the imperfect implementation of the Cultural Revolution and bringing them to the public sight.

However, the Cultural Revolution is still a sensitive topic at the time and continues to be such in the present, despite the relaxation on policies and political atmosphere, which can be noted in governmental instructions and publication regulations in the 1980s and 1990s. In the People's Republic of China, especially in the mainland, writing about historical events and Party leaders is under governmental control. In 1979, CCP Central Propaganda Department implemented instructions to regulate journal and newspaper articles that include descriptions of persecution and deaths in the Cultural Revolution to deemphasize the cruelty and mercilessness of victimization and persecution by "Gang of Four" and Lin Biao's followers (Schoenhals 566). The reason for avoiding concrete details about persecution, noted in instructions issued by CCP Central Propaganda Department, was the concerns of the possible negative effects on people's trust in the socialist system (qtd. in Schoenhals 566).

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they once had, no imposing labels forcefully, no attacking vehemently."

During the 1980s and the 1990s, regulations discouraged and even prevented in-depth discussion on the legacies of the Cultural Revolution. In 1988, the CCP Central Propaganda Department and State Press and Publication Administration issued a regulation that publication of Cultural Revolution-related dictionaries or handbooks was forbidden "from now on and quite some time", nor was publishing research on the topic allowed (qtd. in G. Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* 171). It was unknown whether this regulation is cancelled now, but the government's discouragement of addressing this history was very clear. Based on instructions from the Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee, publication regulations were reinforced to ensure professionals' and writers' compliance with the Party's attitudes to its leaders during the 1980s to 1990s. For example, in 1990, the Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee and State Press and Publication Administration published a regulation about description of the Party and country's main leaders (such as Mao, Zhou, Liu, etc.) in monographs, biographies, memoirs, documentary literature (*jishi wenxue*) and report literature (*baogao wenxue*). This regulation required the description of the leaders to be historically accurate and consistent with the official opinions in "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the PRC" (1981) and "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions in the History of Our Party" (1945). Furthermore, only several publishing houses in the country had the permission to publish literary works describing important leaders (The Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee

and State Press and Publication Administration 225).[43]

The publication regulations outlined a map of "the forbidden areas" of what could not be publicly expressed, but it was a very rough map without explaining to what extent dissent could be tolerated. Nor did it provide a complete list in the written form of events forbidden from public discussion. In addition to regulations, state power sets boundaries of what can be written, published, and circulated and what cannot through self-censorship. Although there is no explicit regulation on writing about historical events in literary works, writers, editors, and relevant professionals are aware of where the boundaries are. It is widely understood that writing about the Cultural Revolution is acceptable but not encouraged, whereas the 1989 Tiananmen Protest remains a taboo in the mainland's public field. Simultaneously, the state power allowed certain kinds of narratives, as long as they did not violate the regulations or touch on "the forbidden areas." As in the case of the Cultural Revolution, the state power allows survivors' complaints about being misjudged and wrongly treated but forbids ascription of responsibility to the core leadership in the Chinese Communist Party.

These regulations on publishing accounts about the Cultural Revolution revealed the high sensitivity of this topic and the Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee's cautious attitudes in dealing with publications describing or discussing this movement. This sensitivity is first rooted in the close relationship between the

[43] These publishing houses include People's Publishing House, Central Party Literature Press, China Youth Publishing House, History of Chinese Communist Party Publishing House, Central Party School Press, People's Liberation Army Publishing House, and the People's Publishing House in provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities (The Publicity Department of the CCP Central Committee and State Press and Publication Administration 225).

images of the main figures in the Party leadership and the image of the Party. Any inappropriate descriptions of the Party's main figures risked negative influence on the image of the Party. Also, it lies in that this movement caused atrocious struggles between the people belonging to the same nation, even to the same family in some extreme cases. Amplifying the traumatic brutality and violence happening in this movement could threaten the nation's internal stability and trust between individuals that the nation most needed for recovery. Even though this sensitivity has not been made explicitly, it is widely perceived by the writers and editors and reinforced by the censorial regulations.

In the social aspect, the former Red Guards and sent-down youths gradually regained their ownership of lives after 1976. Most of the sent-down youths returned to cities, though the opportunity of finding a job was remote. By the end of 1980, there were only 960,000 educated youths stayed in the countryside in comparison with the total number of 4,670,600 sent-down youths in countryside from 1967 to 1969 (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 177 & 89). In 1977, the college entrance examination was resumed. The door to higher education was finally wide-opened. Back to city and campus, former Red Guards and sent-down youths acquired more accessible chances to study professional writing skills and network with people who might help them publish their works.

Despite the positive policies in cultural and academic fields and the official documents negating the Cultural Revolution, the environment of public opinion was not entirely open for discussion regarding the movements in the Maoist era. As noted

in *Mao's Last Revolution* (2006), research for academic purposes on the Cultural Revolution "was strongly discouraged" and this history was excluded from university curricula (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 457). In the aftermath of the June 4th Tiananmen Protest, the control over media and publication was reinforced for social stability: though the market economy brought the amounts of publications to a new height, media was under the tight control of the propaganda authorities (Bonnin, "The Chinese Communist Party and 4 June 1989" 35).

Overall, writing about the newly concluded revolution was permissible in the political and social contexts in the quarter-century after the Cultural Revolution, depending on whether the writing was aligned with the official attitude and how it attributed the responsibilities for the undesired outcomes of the movement.

3.1.2 The Domestic Cultural Context for Red Guard Autobiographical Writings and Major Works Relevant to the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement from the late 1970s to the 1990s

Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the domestic cultural context showed no signs of the popularity of autobiographical writings by the Red Guards or educated youths. During that time, scar literature (*shanghen wenxue*) and literature of reflection (*fansi wenxue*) dominated the literary realm. Launched by intellectuals who gained their reputation before the Cultural Revolution and were once its targets, scar literature and literature of reflection had a preference for fiction as the primary genre and focused

respectively on individuals' sufferings and critical reflection on social issues exposed in the disordered society in the movements (Li and Tam 439).

Under the prevalence of these two literary trends, the days during the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement were described as a horrendous, traumatizing, and nightmarish "dark age." Consistent with the official attitude of a thorough negation of the Cultural Revolution, dark age narratives dominated the Cultural Revolution-related discourse, circumscribing alternative narratives (Zhong et al. Introduction xx). In this context, the former Red Guards and educated youths hardly had the cultural space to speak up in the forms of memoirs or autobiographies. Memoirs and autobiographies by Red Guard writers were rare due to the monopoly of the two literary trends, the restrictions in publication, the sensitivity of the topic, and Red Guards' complicated roles in the movements.[44]

In contrast to the silence of the Red Guards, intellectuals and officials voiced their thoughts and reflections by publishing memorial works in the early 1980s. As the political pressure on this topic began to relax since the Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh CCP Central Committee (1981), autobiographies and collections of reminiscent essays started to appear in the book market. Early recollective works were written by officials who held important positions in the Party and intellectuals who had high achievements and renown before the Cultural Revolution. Famous examples include *The Memoirs of*

[44] As demonstrated in Chapter One, the Red Guards had multiple roles in the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement. On the one hand, the Red Guards' violence in attacking "class enemies" and "destroying the four olds" in the breakout of the Cultural Revolution rendered them "perpetrators" in hindsight from the nowadays moral criteria. On the other hand, they were displaced in the countryside (often involuntarily) in the Rustication Movement, making them "victims."

Marshal Nie Rongzhen (Nie 1983), *Six Chapters of Life in a Cadre School* (1981) by Yang Jiang, and *A Collection of Random Thoughts* (1982) by Ba Jin. As Yang Guobin notes, Cultural Revolution memory in the late 1970s and the 1980s was dominated largely by socially privileged groups such as senior Party cadres and intellectuals, who were the targets of the Cultural Revolution (G. Yang 15). Red Guards and ordinary citizens largely remained silent at this time.

In the 1990s, the agents of representing the Cultural Revolution and its relevant memory expanded from socially privileged groups to participants and witnesses among ordinary people, which shaped a more relaxed and open cultural context for former Red Guards to write. *Memoirs of Chinese Educated Youth* (1996) edited by Jiang Kun, Xiao Yanshi and Li Xiaohua and *A Decade of One Hundred People* (first published in 1987) by Feng Jicai were both collections of personal narratives of the Cultural Revolution from ordinary people who lived through that time. The previous trend of focusing only on the victims' sufferings (mainly the intellectuals') became less dominant. Alternative narratives emerged and provided different angles to understand and reflect on that history.

It is notable that the Red Guards and sent-down youths' recollective works, such as collections of diaries, short essays, and poems, introduced nostalgia as a new theme to the collective remembering of the two movements, especially the Rustication Movement which was less violent and somewhat idyllic. *A Record of the Great Northern Wilderness* (1990) and *A Record of the Revelation of Grassland* (1991) are typical examples. Both of these collections include over one hundred recollective

essays by sent-down youths in the Great Northern Wilderness (where Rae Yang was sent down) and Inner Mongolia (where Ma Bo spent eight years as an "counterrevolutionary"). Although a great proportion of the essays recounted the hardship and bitterness of being a sent-down youth, many essays in both collections were characterized by a nostalgic tone in narration.

During the 1990s, when the economic reform allowed greater freedom in the market and the military suppression of the Tiananmen Protest in 1989 deterred direct expression of sharp opinions about the protest and previous movements, the Cultural Revolution-related literary works featured divergence in emotions and themes, as the victimhood-oriented narratives in the late 1970s and early 1980s were joined by the Red Guards and sent-down youths' nostalgia of their simple and idyllic youthhood in the countryside.

3.2 North American Contexts

3.2.1 North American Political and Social Contexts

After the Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States gained unprecedented political and economic strength in the 1990s (Cumings 271; Cox 168-171), while Canada was experiencing relatively slow growth in economy in the late twentieth century due to the noticeable changes and events in the international and its domestic market from the 1970s to 1980s (Anderson 121). The ideological victory of the capitalist West over the communist Soviet Union reinforced

the image of the West (especially the United States and Canada as countries of immigration) as a shelter in the eyes of those who suffered from warfare or persecution in their home country.

As for the United States, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 significantly changed the United States' immigration policies, neutralizing the factor of race and opening chances for Asian people to obtain legal citizenship in America (Chin 12-13). Although the United States had a history of excluding the Chinese from the immigration system, this systematic discrimination was reduced in the 1970s alongside the normalization of US-China relation.[45] In response to the Tiananmen Protest in 1989, the American government implemented immigration policies that granted privileges (such as suspension of forced departure and work permit) to Chinese nationals and immigrants who were present in the United States at the time (Orrenius et al. 456-457). As cited in *Chinese Student Protection Act of 1992* (1993), an article studying the Act and its impacts on Sino-American relations and societies, among the 150,000 Chinese students who studied overseas since 1978, only one-third of them returned to China (Himler 121).

In Canada, the percentage of immigrants from Asia noticeably increased in the 1970s. After the preference for European migrants was eliminated in 1967, Cantonese immigrants from Hong Kong became one of the major components of migrants in

[45] An example of the United States' exclusion of Chinese immigrants is the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 repealed in 1943. The number of Chinese immigrants to the United States shrank dramatically from more than 39,000 in 1882 before its implementation to 279 in 1884 because of this Act (Soennichsen 68). The Act affected newly arrived Chinese immigrants and Chinese communities in the United States: as the Act failed to completely ban Chinese immigration to the United States, the state strengthened its control over Chinese ethnic groups through arrest and deportation (E. Lee 221).

Canada (Yu 116). During the 1970s, the number of Chinese immigrants arriving in Canada doubled from 5,377 in 1970 to 12,072 in 1980 (Ng 122) with a surge following Deng's Reform and Opening Up Policy in 1978. In the 1980s, thousands of entrepreneurs from Hong Kong and Taiwan immigrated to Canada through Business Immigration Program. As the Tiananmen Protest in 1989 undermined social stability in the capital of China and put Beijing under global attention, immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan occupied 43 % of the immigrants in this program, and this percentage increased to 50 % the next year (P. Li, "Asian Capital and Canadian Business: The Recruitment and Control of Investment Capital and Business Immigrants to Canada." 373). In 1989, similar to the United States, Canada qualified Chinese students from mainland to apply landed immigrants, which resulted an increase in the number of Chinese migrants to Canada (P. Li, "The Rise and Fall of Chinese Immigration to Canada: Newcomers from Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Mainland China, 1980–2000." 16). From 1991 to 1996, the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong occupied two out of five countries or areas where 33 % of the Canadian immigration population came from (Boyd and Vickers 9-10).

Concerning the readership of the Red Guard memoirs, it is reasonable to imply that the large groups of Chinese students and immigrants in the United States and Canada in the last two decades of the twentieth century provided the Red Guard memoirs a large and increasing readership, as more and more Chinese relocated to North America. In addition to a keen interest in reading, the immigrants might be interested in creating memoirs themselves. The practice of reading or creating literary works about their

shared past could strengthen the cohesion of the collective of expatriate Chinese. However, the specific details about the composition of the readership of the autobiographical works on the Maoist era are unclear due to the lack of relevant data and research. Future studies can investigate or compare the Red Guard memoirs' readership in overseas countries and China to examine the readers' specific features (such as ages, generations, nationalities, educational backgrounds, purposes for reading, reading expectation). It can benefit both creators of literary works related to the Maoist era and researchers, illuminating what the readers want from the works of this type, and the researchers can know about who are the readers and why they are reading.

3.2.2 North American Cultural Context

In North America, autobiographical writings are indissolubly related to the ethnic, social, gender roles or sexual minorities' self-representation and claim-making. This close relation between autobiography and its "functions" can be dated back at least to the eventful 1960s, when the United States was undergoing a wave of movements including the Civil Right Movement, Antiwar Movement, students' protests, and Feminist Movement that were organized for certain groups' interest. These movements increased the public's awareness of social inequalities formally structured in power relations infiltrated in governmental apparatus and families. In this context, efficient ways to discuss selfhood were needed and autobiographical genres seemed to fit this need. Thus, during the 1960s, autobiographical writings were instrumentalized for

speaking up the interest of the minorities and the people in marginal social positions and claiming “a new identity” which is “different from the American mainstream” (Hornung 1241). Since then, autobiographical writings have played an essential role in identity politics, bringing marginalized groups’ dilemma to the public sight.

The public’s awareness of socially assigned and stereotyped images about certain groups pushed the interest in self further. People began to pursue their uniqueness as human beings and at the same time a sameness with particular communities that they wished to identify with. The 1970s was a decade when the focus on one’s self increased to such a new height that in 1976, Tom Wolfe, a magazine journalist, called the 1970s the “Me Decade” to indicate this concentration on self and the gradually decreasing interest in public events (Shipley 851-852). Under this surging indulgence in self and increasing recognition of social inequalities, autobiography and memoir became the ideal instruments for the marginalized groups to destruct stereotypes assigned to them in a hegemonic society. Autobiography and memoir not only attracted individuals to write and read but also scholars with academic interest: James Olney’s *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (1980), a collection of essays discussing various aspects of autobiographical texts, attested to the significance of this genre in 1980s American cultural context.

By the time the opportunities of study abroad opened for the former Red Guards and educated youths, memoir was gaining an increasing share in the English book industry. Since the early 1990s, a memoir boom has been steadily developing in the English cultural market (Yagoda 62), which could be noticed in the triple ascendancy

in the amount of new Anglophone autobiographies or memoirs published from the 1940s to the 1990s (Gilmore 1). Although in comparison to fiction, the share of memoir and autobiography in the book industry is marginal; as it was shown in the disparity in the number of book titles published in 2004: there were 25,184 fiction titles produced, whereas non-fiction titles were merely above 7,000 (Rak 8). Despite the subordinate position of memoir compared to fiction, the durable increase of memoirs over the 1940s to the 1990s demonstrates its growing popularity and acceptability, which encouraged not only celebrities and professionals but also amateurs to create autobiographies or memoirs. Some former Red Guards in North American countries, especially the ones who received local postgraduate education, joined this wave of memoir boom and managed to create influential works that were heatedly discussed in academia and selected into university courses' reading lists (for example, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang and *Spider Eaters* by Rae Yang). In this way, the Red Guard writers' memory and experience were connected with the memoir boom in North America.

In the different social and cultural contexts in North America and China, the representation of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement in Red Guard autobiographical writings differed, which could be understood with Stuart Hall's interpretation of how representation works. According to Stuart Hall, "[r]epresentation is the production of meaning through language" (Hall 16). Meanings beyond the texts can be produced in representation that operates in a context with its audiences, media, and cultural industry. Red Guard writers immigrating to North America were located in

different contexts and thus surrounded by distinctive power relations, cultural symbols and conventions from the domestic ones. Their signification involved not only a switch of language but also adjustment in contents and styles. One of the apparent results from the distinctions in contexts is the orientalist "Chineseness" that North American Red Guard writers represent by introducing Chinese traditions and cultural uniqueness. Oxford English Dictionary defines *Chineseness* as "the quality or state of being Chinese, or of displaying Chinese characteristics" ("Chineseness").

In the case of Red Guard memoirs, which is closely related to cultural production and consumption, Chineseness features a deliberate display of Chinese culture, traditions, language, and history. More importantly, this Chineseness characterizes an image of China that stands on the opposite side of modernity. An orientalist view is embodied to this Chineseness in these overseas Red Guard memoirs in the process of creating, editing, and publishing under the combined influences of the audience's expectation and creators' marketing strategy. For example, both *Spider Eaters* and *Red Flower of China* mention the tradition of feet-binding and female's lower position in a family when introducing female relatives from the older generation (see Yang Chapter 3; Zhai Chapter 1). Long quotations of Mao and Su Dongpo's *ci* (a genre of ancient Chinese poems) are cited in Zhai's memoir (Chapter 30 and 41) to indicate the Zhai's emotion at the spot.

In Chapter 3 of *Spider Eaters*, Rae Yang introduces her Nainai's ancestor who was a "minister of punishment" in the Qing dynasty with graphic details of the procedure of beheading execution in imperial China. Afterwards, Yang describes a dream she has

as a new Red Guard, in which she is sentenced to death by the revolutionary masses and carried to an execution ground for death penalty (Yang 20). Yang's horrific dream suggests an intense tension in her recognition of national identity. The national identity tied with China's thousand-year imperial history and the one reconstructed during the twentieth century and Maoist era are incompatible and thus cause mental pressure for Yang, especially as class struggle was emphasized during the Cultural Revolution. The collective memory of China's imperial era deeply impacts the remaking of national identity after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, as it is shown in Yang's nightmare, as the revolutionary ideology dichotomizes the proletarian identity and the identity formed historically in China's past.

The disparity in power relations between expatriate Red Guard writers and local audiences caused the urge to present this "Chineseness" for acceptance in the Western market. The descriptions and quotations of ancient Chinese literature confirmed the orientalist view of China that stands on the opposite side of a modern and civilized nation. By including information consistent with the Western stereotype of the Orient, they catered to the Western audience, and as a result, the inequality in power relations between expatriate Red Guard writers and other agents of power (i.e. audience, publishing houses, media) in the Western context was reinforced.

In the social aspect, the memoir boom showed how writing and publishing autobiographical works can rewrite or create identities for the authors. Noticing this strategic use of autobiographical works, the expatriate Red Guard writers reshaped their experience during the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement to promote

new identities (such as victim and survivor). These new identities could facilitate their settlement in the unequal power relations in which they were situated in a disadvantaged position either for their immigration status or being an racial minority in foreign countries. It is noticeable that the expatriate Red Guard writers were aware of autobiographical genre's advantages in making claims and reflections on one's past, shown in the frequent confessions and self-reflections in the selected texts.

In conclusion, the distinctions between the domestic and North American contexts are powerfully influential in Red Guard writers' creation. In China, what and how to write the history of the Cultural Revolution were largely regulated and restricted by the government's detailed and strict instructions and policies. Consequently, domestic literary works commemorating and recording the Cultural Revolution revealed consistency in emphasizing its disastrous outcomes and weakening its political dimension namely, the Party's role in the event. In contrast, there were fewer restrictions in the North American context on describing the events, while the unequal power relations between expatriate Red Guard writers and the Western audiences and the writers' imagination of expectation from the Western audience affected the creation process. With an inclination to cater to the Western market, an orientalist "Chineseness" prevailed in overseas Red Guard autobiographical works, manifesting in the introduction of Chinese traditions and cultures.

Chapter 4 Collective Memory of the Cultural Revolution and the Representation of Memories in the Red Guard Autobiographies

In this chapter, I examine the interplays between Red Guard autobiographical writings and the social framework of collective memory about the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement. Applying Halbwachs's insights into the social framework of collective memory, I discuss how the Red Guard autobiographical works are related to the fundamental elements in collective remembering, and how this type of works impacts the collective remembering of the two movements.

4.1 Red Guard Autobiographical Writings and the Social Framework of the Cultural Revolution Collective Memory

This section concentrates on the interplays between the four Red Guard writers' representation of autobiographical memory and the social framework of the Cultural Revolution collective memory with textual analysis as supportive evidence in the next section (4.2). Autobiographical memory includes episodes of personal experiences and knowledge acquired through learning (Cohen and Conway 21-23). These two kinds of memory with very different contents merge and blur, because recollections often involve events and knowledge simultaneously.[46] People's viewpoint of their past changes as their cognitive capability and knowledge develop or deteriorate. Society is

[46] For example, the memory of working at a field as part of the reeducation involves scenes of planting seeds in the soil and knowledge about reeducation as one of the purposes of the Rustication Movement.

the locale where people accumulate knowledge, exchange information, and culturally interact with other individuals. In this sense, the construction of memory and a society's meaning-making system are inseparable.

Social frameworks consistently condition people's memories, as "[o]ne cannot in fact think about the events of one's past without discoursing upon them" (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 53). Environing cultural codes, moral values, linguistic symbols and other elements in the societal meaning-making system are manifestations of the social framework of memory. Although new and influential occurrences often bring changes in social norms and cultures, how societies and collectives remember the occurrences relies largely on the social framework established before the events. The social framework of collective memory is prior to the remembered events. It is not the products of collective remembering process, but rather instruments to assist this process (ibid., 40).

Red Guard autobiographical works, the story-telling of a Red Guard's life span during the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement by oneself at present, manifest the nexus between autobiographical memory and the social framework of collective memory (which takes forms of sets of symbols, codes, conventions, and knowledge). The interplays between this collective memory framework and the literary representation of autobiographical memory are most observable in the verbal conventions, narrative chronology of the texts, and the scenes recurring in the narratives. To convey a complex memory through texts, a memoirist must utilize intelligible languages and organize the events in a comprehensible order, which can be a

chronological sequence or a non-chronological sequence based on the author's arrangement of choice. The memoirists' choices of which language and linguistic style to present, how to organize the contents, and what scenes and plots to highlight are not entirely results of individual volition. Since remembering, no matter it is individual or collective, takes place in society, there must be traces of cultural mediation, social discourse, and power relations left on the memories.

4.2 Textual Analysis

This section will demonstrate how individuals' literary representations interact with the fundamental elements in the social framework of collective memory.

4.2.1 Verbal Conventions

From his studies of aphasia and dreams, Halbwachs noted that there are two distinct and separable elements composing the social framework of memory, which are language and time. Lack of words or sense of time can diminish one's ability to retrieve or recall memory in differentiated ways.[47] In comparison, language is the more essential factor. "Verbal conventions" are the most fundamental and stable framework of collective memory (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 45). The predetermined ways

[47] Lack of words limits an aphasiac's ability to recall complicated memories that require language or narrative to construct meanings (such as knowledge, theory, notions). An aphasiac recognizes people and places but cannot think of their name. He remembers simple experiences, though unable to convey them clearly. Lacking sense of time reduces one's ability to remember the chronological sequence of events (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 43-45).

of verbally discoursing the remembered subjects give expression to its mnemonic practices, such as commemorating the events through writing and discussing. Verbal conventions here include but not limit to people or places' names, linguistic signs and common expressions. Verbal convention and linguistic convention differentiate in that the former stresses on the usage of words and language expressions, whereas the latter includes a more extensive range of signs. Verbal conventions unavoidably accompany the collective remembering process in the literary realm where meanings are generated from narration, playing an essential role. This framework of verbal conventions is unbreakable in that it continues to function even in dreams (ibid., 44).

Verbal conventions featuring the social framework of remembering the movements in question manifest themselves in the indicative and figurative usages of terms in the Red Guard autobiographical writings. In indicative usage, words or phrases, such as "Chairman Mao," "class enemy," "red fives," "red outliers," "black sevens," refer to specific figures or groups and, more importantly, indicate their political identities (as active supporters or unwanted elements holding back the movement), drawing a clear-cut line between each rank and creating tensions between characters in different factions. These labels shape the interactions and relationship among characters by imposing a hierarchical mindset on them. As in *Confessions of a Red Guard* by Liang Xiaosheng, Wang Wenqi and Liang Xiaosheng's friendship wavers, as Liang joins the Red Guards in the first group and Wang remains as a "red outliner." Their cordiality completely collapses, and the tension between them reaches its highest point as Wang attempts to strangle Liang in the warehouse keeping the confiscated property from a "class enemy"

(X. Liang 149). Hierarchy in political identity takes control over personal relations at the moment when the difference in political identity distinguishes the erstwhile friends.

The tensions between characters positioned in different ranks by this labelling system in effect result from the class consciousness that was continually promoted by the CCP during the Cultural Revolution. Although these labels exited daily communication, they fostered a worldview and social relationships that broke China's long-practiced familial relationships based on kinship (H. Lee 23-24). These labels are deeply entangled with the public impression of Maoist China, as they are ubiquitous in literature and films about the Maoist era. Strong feelings are associated with these labels. People were taught to hate exploiting classes and love the proletarian class. In the Red Guard autobiographical writings, this labelling system facilitates the representation of how class feelings determine people's interpersonal relationships, as the class consciousness encourages respect to the people in proletarian class and justifies discrimination against those who were once in the exploiting classes. The differentiated treatment reveals a mindset of evaluating and judging people according to their class identity and "elemen" (*chengfen*). Liang's earlier entry to the Red Guard team triggers Wang's jealousy, anxiety, and frustration, eventually destroys their cordiality. Both of Liang and Wang act according to the class feelings and class consciousness suggested by this labelling convention: Wang surrenders to his negative emotions by acting violently because he feels inferior as a "red outlier" in front of Liang who is an acknowledged Red Guard.

Examples of indicative usage of verbal conventions and their impact on characters

can be found in other selected texts. Ma Bo's label of "counterrevolutionary" distinguishes him from other sent-down youths in the Inner Mongolian crop, placing him at the lowest level of the hierarchy. The label of "class enemy" justifies Rae Yang and Zhai Zhenhua's brutality on social outcasts and even classmates. Their violence is acquiesced and exempted from legal liability, as the "class enemies" are viewed not as "humans" but "cow ghosts and snake spirits." Zhai's monologue shows this explicitly: "[t]hese are class enemies, bad people" (Zhai 96). She eases her sense of guilt when beating people by drawing a clear line between herself and the suffering people. She uses "these" rather than "they" to denote the non-humanness of "class enemies".

Figurative expressions in the selected texts are grounded on the entrenched connection between the cultural meanings of the topic ("subject of the metaphor") and the vehicle ("the term used metaphorically") (End 327-345). Figurative language conveys meanings by assuming similarity in the topic and the vehicle's property. Metaphorical language often appears in the title of the Red Guard memoirs. Rae Yang uses the term "spider eaters" as her title, which was coined by the modern Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881-1936). It refers to the people who tried things out for the future generation. By doing so, Yang emphasizes her argument that "I and my peers are the ones who ate spiders" and "[l]ong before we did, my parents and their peers had eaten spiders too" (R. Yang 284). The topic "Yang and her peers" and "Yang's parents and their peers" and the vehicle "spider eaters" share the property of trying something unknown to see what will happen. The comprehensibility of this metaphor requires knowledge of what "spider eaters" culturally stands for and what Yang and her

generation go through due to the Cultural Revolution and neither is dispensable. The collective memory of the Cultural Revolution's disastrous implications, which literarily manifests as the dark age narrative and the official statement of "ten-year chaos (*shinian dongluan*)," provides a strong notion of the movement as an experiment bringing unwanted consequences, while Yang's narrative conforms to this consensus.

The colour red, or terms with the semantic meaning of "red colour," is widely used as a vehicle. Zhai Zhenhua titles her work "red flower of China," whereas her narrative unfolds without demonstrating what it refers to, leaving the space for readers' contemplation. In "Part Three: Life as a Peasant and Worker," she hints at the potential connotation of "red flower" by depicting a scene from her autobiographical memory in which her former landlord sings a song about a love tragedy titled the heroine's name "Blue Flower" (Zhai 176-177). The lyric tells the simple story of Blue Flower's life: Blue Flower, the prettiest girl, is matched up with the wealthiest man in her province, which breaks her heart because this man is not her love. The next year, Blue Flower runs away to her lover to be with him. The insufficiency of explanation causes confusion about this metaphor. "Red Flower" can stand for Zhai herself, because she and Blue Flower are similar in their experiences of being involved in unwanted events: while Blue Flower marries a man reluctantly, "Red Flower" performs as a Red Guard unwillingly (especially after Zhai becomes the target of the movement in Chapter 23 "Purging the Red Guard"). The adjective "red" in this phrase suggests the figurative meaning of "revolutionary," hinting at Zhai's political identity as a Red Guard during the movement. "Revolutionary," as the signified of "red," refers to an extreme leftist

attitude of destructing the old orders and building up a new China according to communist idealism.

"Blood red sunset," in Ma Bo's work, carries a double-layered figurative meaning. The phrase literally means a setting sun as red as blood, centering on the noun "sun" with three descriptive words "setting," "red," and "blood." This image appears in the scene that Ma works hardly in exhaustion and illness, anxiously waiting for the sunset when he can stop working. In Ma's representation, the visual image of the sunset is associated with "a [bleeding] vibrant heart" of a youth, which creates the link between the red setting sun and blood (B. Ma 246).[48] The pivot of this metaphor lies in the image of the sun, which frequently appears in Maoist propaganda. Such as Mao's famous statement of "You young people are like the eight or nine o'clock sun in the morning" (qtd. in Zhai 156). Incorporating the Maoist propaganda and Mao's quotes, the social framework of collective memory attaches the image of the sun with figurative meanings of "hope," "energy," and "brightness." The complement ("setting") on the first layer of this metaphor suggests a connotation that the storyteller is in pessimism and fatigue. On the second layer, the metaphor of blood-red sunset aligns with the convention that red colour symbolizes the revolutionary ideology in Maoist epoch which encourages devotion and prioritization of collective interest over personal interest. The image of blood-red sunset reappears in the last chapter when Ma obsesses in thoughts at dusk. In the depiction, he contrasts the trivialness of the lonely sun that

[48] In Ma's Chinese original text, he compares the radiance of the sunset to blood drops from "the vibrant heart", connecting the setting sun with blood (B. Ma 246).

tries to warm the land with its weak radiance with the vast, cold, and dark steppes to emphasize the selfless devotion of the setting sun (B. Ma 635). Ma, taking advantage of the established convention, parallelizes his unrewarded and unacknowledged devotion with the red setting sun whose warmth does not make any change to the cold steppes either. On top of that, "blood" adds an emphasis of sacrifice to the figurative meaning of red as devotion, as blood symbolically associates with life.

As the fundamental and stable element constituting the social framework of collective memory, verbal conventions give shapes to the representation of autobiographical memory in two levels. At the indicative level, it provides names and phrases for the Red Guard writers to refer to specific people or groups. The verbal conventions referring to certain people or groups distinguish characters of different political identities with clear-cut boundaries, intensifying the tension among characters and dramatizing the dichotomy between Red Guards and "class enemies." The predetermined cultural connections in meanings of certain terms (e.g. "sun" symbolizing hope) frame the Red Guard writers' figurative usages of language, offering the cultural grounds for comprehending their metaphors and implicit connotations.

4.2.2 Narrative Chronology

Textual representation of complex experience often appears as narratives in which specific episodes of the general picture are sequenced in a linear, directional, and continuous chronology. One must have a conceptual understanding of the past, the

present, and the future to represent experiences that involve complicated cause-and-effect relations. In other words, the concept of time is indispensable for comprehending and reconstructing memory.

Except for Rae Yang in *Spider Eaters*, the other three first-person narrators' experiences are unfolded in a temporal order, beginning from a chosen time and moving towards the static point in time called "the present." In representing their autobiographical memory, the four Red Guard writers chose certain events (such as leaving hometown for the countryside, seeing Chairman Mao in Tiananmen Square, and the September 13th Incident, etc.) as the start, end, or turning point of their narratives, which shows the subtle impacts of the social and collective understanding on autobiographical writings. This section argues that the chosen events signifying start, end or change in the story serve as "landmarks in time" dividing the continuous and linear narrative to different phases (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 175). "Landmarks in time," according to Halbwachs, not only function as signs to "divide up the passage of time" but also "nourish our thought," insofar as these landmarks facilitate the remembering process by providing a set of chronological reminders and stimulate reflections on the events (ibid., 175-176). People use chronological landmarks to localize themselves in the sequence of past events as if spatial landmarks remind people of their location in a city.

The emphasis of the 8/18 Reception and other mass rallies in 1966 is one example of a temporal landmark in structuring memory. Except for *Blood Red Sunset* that starts from the narrator's life after relocation to Inner Mongolia, this episode is graphically

depicted in the other three texts. For Yang and Zhai, seeing Mao revitalizes their revolutionary enthusiasm. In Yang's narrative: "Seeing Chairman Mao added new fuel to the flame of our revolutionary zeal. The next day, my fellow Red Guards and I held a meeting to discuss our next move. … We must do something" (R. Yang 123). Similarly, Zhai notes that this reception significantly motivates the Red Guards. "The 8/18 Reception gave the Red Guards the impetus to continue the Cultural Revolution, which had reached a low point in schools" (Zhai 91). A causal link between the meeting and the revitalization of the Red Guards' revolutionary zeal is established. In Liang's narrative, it serves as the temporal landmark dividing his Big Link-Up to two phases: the early phase is his trip from hometown to the capital, and the latter is from Beijing to Chengdu, where Liang's father is under attack for his past religious devotion. Meeting Mao in person is a typical shared experience among the generation of the Red Guards. Although not every Red Guard saw Chairman Mao in person, they could indirectly experience the series of mass rallies in 1966 through the media. Meeting the Chairman was a rare encounter transcending the boundaries of daily life. It left unforgettable impressions in Red Guards' collective memory by invoking strong excitement. The strong emotional involvement of the meeting qualifies it to be a temporal milestone of Red Guards' participation in the revolution. By depicting it as a landmark in time, the Red Guard writers collectively create a mode of Cultural Revolution-related narratives in which meeting the Chairman is an essential plot. Essential as it is, its specific meanings differ from case to case, depending on authors' intentions, audience's reaction and discursive context: for the two expatriate writers,

this moment is attached with a crucial meaning that it revitalizes their revolutionary enthusiasm, and for Liang, it means a switch of the travel route.

The time of joining the Rustication Movement also features the usage of chronological landmarks. In *Confessions of a Red Guard*, going to the countryside is the end of Liang's story, whereas in Ma Bo's case, it is the departure point. In Zhai's memoir, participation in "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages" stands out as one of the three stages of Zhai's life in China ("Part Three: Life as a Peasant and Worker"). For Rae Yang, departure to the Great Northern Wilderness is a turning point from which her mind and body begin to change significantly. In the selected works, the moment of departure for Rustication Movement divides the narratives into different stages. It is more than a necessity that these four Red Guard writers need such a temporal landmark. Red Guard writers' choice of this particular moment as narrative milestone shows the transformation in their individual and collective identity.

Red Guards' complicated experience warrants temporal landmarks to facilitate their collective remembering. The Chinese government's deliberate relocation of city youths to the countryside has a history that began a decade before the Cultural Revolution in 1955 (Bonnin, *The Lost Generation* 3). In 1968, Chairman Mao called on the urban educated youths to receive reeducation from the poor and lower-middle peasants. Compared with those who volunteered to the countryside before the Cultural Revolution broke out, the educated youths who were once the Red Guards have a more complicated experience involving participation in the revolution in the urban setting and later displacement in the countryside. The complexity of their experience requires

a collectively intelligible chronological structure to preserve, retrieve, and communicate the relevant memory. A set of temporal landmarks is thus needed for this end. The year of 1968 when the Red Guards were systematically mobilized to rural areas, because of its signification of a turning point of the movement, is established as a valid landmark in the collective remembering.

Through establishing this moment as a temporal landmark, Red Guard writers relate personal meanings of leaving the cities with Red Guards' transformation in political identity. The time point of the departure for reeducation bears personal meanings for the Red Guard writers, which are shown in the narrators' experience. From the moment they join the Rustication Movement, they leave their family and enter a new stage of life in which they need to live independently. The focus of their daily routine changes as they become sent-down youths, from urban-based activities to physical labour in fields or farms. For individuals in the collective of Red Guards, joining the Rustication Movement brought personal transformations in their lifestyles and understandings of the reality in China. Red Guard writers, as members of this collective, create meanings for this moment through setting it as essential elements in narratives. The meanings created through this practice lie in the transformation of identity. As they leave the cities for rustication in large numbers, their political identity changes to educated youths. However, one's self-identification can be asynchronous with alteration in one's political or social identity, which is attributed by other social members or institutions. In other words, it is possible that the Red Guards do not self-identify as sent-down youths immediately after being rusticated, as Ma Bo refuses the

political identity of an “counterrevolutionary.” By dividing their narratives with the temporal landmark of joining the Rustication Movement, the Red Guard writers consent to the enormous distinction between experience before and after rustication. In the new stage of life with peasants, they gradually reshape their identify as sent-down youths. In representing the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement, they manifest the change in self-identification and expand it to the collective scale, as they are at the same time speaking for other members in the collective of former Red Guards.

The above two examples show how representations of autobiographical memory are structured with the application of temporal landmarks in the social framework of collective memory. In addition to calendar time and clock time, there exists a conceptual time signified by specific events and dividing the sequence of narrative into distinctive phases. Seeing Mao in person and the departure for the countryside are events of this type. They facilitate the process of commemorating and communicating the experience of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement, as the collective of the Red Guards localizes themselves in memory with these landmarks. Moreover, these landmarks show the junction of individuals’ meaning production.

4.2.3 Recurring Scenes

It is noticeable that scenes of typical events (See Table 2. on pages 59-61) keep appearing in the Red Guards’ autobiographical works. Red Guard writers’ emphasis on them and their recurrence constitute the interplay between the social framework of

collective memory and the representation of autobiographical memory.

In this section, I examine how the representation of former Red Guards' autobiographical memory penetrates the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement. I argue that these scenes reconstruct memory and allow oblivion simultaneously. Memory is in itself highly selective and susceptible to changes in perspective and rationale. It preserves episodes and information that are attached significant meanings and leaves out trivialities and meaningless details. Remembering (namely, preserving) and forgetting (namely, leaving out) are the two distinct sides of memory, which seem opposite but in effect function with interdependence to shape what we believe to be our memory. The selectivity and recurrence of the listed scenes (Table 2.) suggest the reconstructive and meaning-making nature of the Red Guard autobiographical writings: through selectively and repetitively presenting certain scenes, Red Guard autobiographical writings strengthen the association between these scenes and the remembered subject, whereas at the same time circumscribe the range of the collective remembering process with their literary representation focusing on a few aspects of the events. However, it is important to clarify the contents of the recurring scenes before the demonstration of the reconstructed memory and its inclinations.

Table 2 Contents of the Recurring Scenes

Works / **Scenes**	*Confessions of a Red Guard* (1993) by Liang Xiaosheng	*Blood Red Sunset* (1989) by Ma Bo	*Spider Eaters* (1997) by Rae Yang	*Red Flower of China* (1992) by Zhai Zhenhua

Scene 1: Denunciation meetings and Red Guard violence	a. Liang's imaginary "flash struggle" against himself (Chapter 5) b. Public denunciation against a woman before the yellow building (Chapter 8) c. Denunciation meeting against two capitalist-roaders in Sichuan (Chapter 16)	a. The narrator ransacks a local herdowner's home (Chapter 2) b. The narrator is publicly denounced (Chapter 23) c. The narrator recollects his home raid of his own home (Chapter 51)	a. The narrator witnesses Red Guards' violence on her campus (Chapter 13) b. Red Guards' violence against "bad elements" on a train (Chapter 14) c. Red Guards' violence on an alleged rapist (Chapter 14) d. The narrator's cruelty to a class enemy who is her erstwhile classmate (Chapter 20).	a. The narrator denounces her former teacher-in-charge in front of the classmates (Chapter 14) b. A woman dies after the narrator and her peer Red Guards ransack her home (Chapter 18)
Scene 2: Chairman Mao in Tiananmen Square	a. Narrator sees Mao in Tiananmen Square (Chapter 15)	N/A	a. Narrator's exciting meeting with Mao (Chapter 13)	a. Narrator's meeting with Mao which greatly revitalizes her morale (Chapter 18)
Scene 3: Family/Friends seeing the urban youths or the narrator off to the countryside in train station	N/A	a. People see their family/friends off to the countryside (Chapter 1)	a. Her family sees the narrator off in train station (Chapter 16)	a. The narrator's father sees her off in Beijing train station (Chapter 29)

Scene 4: The narrator sitting on train/car/tractor leaving the countryside	N/A	a. The narrator bids farewell to the steppes on the bus heading his home city (Chapter 62)	a. The narrator sits on the train leaving the Great Northern Wilderness (Chapter 22)	a. The narrator boards the bus for home after her friends see her off at the bus station (Chapter 44)

Table 2 shows the contents of the recurring scenes in the selected works with chapter numbers for reference.[49] It is evident that these scenes reappear not only within one particular work (as the scene of public denunciation meeting appears three times in Liang's work) but also in the four selected Red Guard memoirs. The overlapping of the memoirists' choices of which scenes to present indicates more than personal preference but the consensus among these four writers in what to remember and what to leave out from memory, though the consensus here only refers to the contents of being remembered and thus not relates to the attitudes or interpretations of them. Under the conspicuous recurrence of these scenes, there is an inclination of reconstructing the Red Guards' Cultural Revolution-related collective memory to narratives centred on victimhood and displacement. "Scene 1" places the hardship and anguish inflicted on the denunciated and ransacked people under the spotlight, contrasting the intensity of Red Guard violence with the targets' lack of power to resist. Except for "Scene 2", the other three scenes focus on the characters' sufferings or the narrators' perpetration ("Scene 1") and the narrators' hardship of being displaced ("Scene 3" and "Scene 4").

With focuses on sufferings and displacement, these recurring scenes reinforce the

[49] The chapter numbers for Liang and Ma's works in Table 2 are the ones in the Chinese original texts, which may differ from the chapter numbers in the English translated versions.

government-established impression of the Cultural Revolution as a national disaster and Rustication Movement as a policy that failed to bring the desired outcome for the nation's population. The recurrence and ubiquity of these scenes suggest the collective approval of their great importance in the remembering process of the movements, though the specific significance attached to each scene differs from one to the other.

Choices of what to remember always come with the ones of what to forget, as "remembering and forgetting always proceed together" (Esposito 182). The recurring scenes reiterate the described events and consolidate the impression of these spectacles in the collective memory. Simultaneously, they underrepresent even exclude other events from the site of collective memory, which does not function as an archive for restoration but features dynamic and debate. It is difficult to know which particular events are absent in history, but memories of different collectives and classes sometimes complement each other's perspectives. Events excluded from one collective's memory may be remembered by other collectives. Through comparing different collectives' memories about the same historical period, we can find hints about what is left out by certain collectives. The results of underrepresentation or exclusion can distract the audience's attention, which brings about forgetting. Brought by the distraction of attention, forgetting indicates a disappearance or alteration in the frameworks related to those unmentioned and unrepresented episodes (Halbwachs, *On the Collective Memory* 172).[50]

[50] A concrete example of alteration in the framework of collective memory of the Cultural Revolution is the mnemonic works that are opposed to the dominant dark age narrative and the prevalent nostalgic narrative (representative work: *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* by Zhong et al.). The appearance of

4.3 Recurring Scenes and the Meaning-making Nature of the Red Guard Autobiographical Works

In specific works, depictions of these scenes vary in perspective and focus, so do the strategies of reconstructing memory and attaching meanings to them. The following textual analysis aims to demonstrate how recurring scenes in each selected work show the reconstructive and meaning-making nature of the texts with Scene 1, which recurs in specific works and overlaps in all four selected works, as an example.

4.3.1 *Confessions of a Red Guard* by Liang Xiaosheng

In Liang's autobiografiction, public denunciation meeting recurs throughout the text. Except for "Scene 1.a" that takes place in Liang's imagination, the other two happen before Liang's eyes. All of the three scenes of public denunciation meetings are literary representation on basis of the author's retrievable memory and mastery of literary art, focusing on the tension between the denunciated and the denunciator. Liang does not conceal the reconstructive nature of his narrative but takes advantage of the vast space and freedom allowed by this nature. In the depiction of his imaginary "flash struggle," in which an accusation is suddenly imposed on a person, and this person is harshly denunciated for this alleged accusation, he uses the second-person pronoun "you" to invite readers empathize with the narrator and vicariously experience the "flash struggle." In doing so, he reconstructs his autobiographical memory of

works outside of these two main trends indicates a change in the collective remembering process, insofar as new contents are introduced to the discursive site.

witnessing spontaneous denunciation meetings in the perspective of a sensitive and self-reflexive teenage Liang and presents the narrator's panic and doubt in the form of vicarious experience.[51]

Liang associates the spectacle of public denunciation with the persistent habit of being a bystander on street struggles which, in his opinion, is built within the Chinese national characteristic. Liang comments: "[w]e Chinese never shed that habit [of watching a public execution]." He further criticizes: "[s]ome of these habits made the masses more terrifying than jackals and hyenas" (X. Liang and Goldblatt 60). His comment and criticism connect the collective memory of the brutal side of the Cultural Revolution with the habit of being a bystander which has been deeply bond with Chinese national characteristic by intellectuals and social activists in the early 1900s such as Liang Qichao and Lu Xun.[52] In this sense, the scene of denunciation meeting is situated in the junction of the framework of the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and the social cognition of Chinese national characteristics. It can be a representative example to present the occasional ridiculousness and caprice of the masses' action during the movement, and it can also be interpreted as an exposure of the ugly side in the Chinese national characteristic. New meanings are generated from this connection, as it suggests a causal relation between the masses' excitement during

[51] The spontaneity and intensity of "flash struggle" terrify the narrator Liang to the extent that he begins to doubt his family background. "Was my red background absolutely secure?" Liang cannot help asking himself after witnessing several "flash struggles" on the street (X. Liang and Goldblatt 63).

[52] In 1900, Liang Qichao published an article criticizing Chinese people's apathy towards domestic affairs and politics (Q. Liang 6). Lu Xun, a writer and activist in the New Culture Movement (1915), is famous for sharp insights into the Chinese national characteristics. In 1925, he satirized Chinese's morbid interest in watching conflicts from the side line in his essay 观斗 ("Watching Conflicts") (Lu, *A Fake Book About Freedom* 7-9). His short stories such as 示众 ("Showing to the Masses") also included satire on the bystanders (Lu, *Wandering* 62-67).

the movement and the habitual indifference towards misfortunes happening on the others.

4.3.2 *Blood Red Sunset* by Ma Bo

The reconstructive and meaning-making nature of memory is manifested in Ma's choice of portraying the first-person narrator as a victim, while the narrator is actually a perpetrator and a victim, which is shown in his behaviours. He is a perpetrator in Scene 1.a and Scene 1.c in which he ransacks the herdowner's and his own homes, whereas he is a victim in Scene 1.b in which he is publicly denunciated as an counterrevolutionary. However, Ma presents the narrator only as a victim who is mistakenly labelled as an "counterrevolutionary" and unfairly treated by almost everyone around him and organizes the narrative based on this claim.

To portray the narrator as a victim, Ma reorganizes his autobiographical memory into a narrative with certain scenes recurring and overlapping with those in the other Red Guard memoirs. Scenes in which violence is applied for the revolution appear throughout Ma's narrative, shaping the narrator's image as a victim. In Scene 1.a and Scene 1.c (in which the narrator is in the side inflicting harm to the others), although the narrator participates in home raid against "class enemies" and uses violence to make them obedient, the narrator justifies his acts by concluding that ransacking the herdowner is "forging our way boldly to the front line of class struggle" and raiding his own home is because he cannot resist his "spirit of blood and steel" (B. Ma and

Goldblatt 14 & 320). By establishing rationale to explain the narrator's acts, Ma reconstructs his autobiographical memory: the episodes of his home-ransacking reveal the narrator's thoughts and characteristics, portraying him as a person who is once obsessed with his revolutionary idealism and thus becomes impulsive and ferocious. In short, a good person who behaves violently for "justifiable" reasons.

Scene 1.b that the narrator is fiercely denounced by his erstwhile friends and colleagues in public serves significantly to Ma's self-portrayal of a helpless victim, insofar as this scene graphically and vividly depicts the narrator's dilemma that he is totally on his own to survive through the hardship of being an "counterrevolutionary." The vehement verbal insults and humiliations on the narrator reveal a dramatic change triggered by the narrator's label of counterrevolutionary in his interpersonal relationship, from friendship and cordiality to indifference and hatred. Such a change further reinforces the narrator's image as a sufferer.

The meaning-making nature of Ma's autobiographical writing lies in Scene 4.a in which the narrator bids farewell to the Inner Mongolia steppes. As Xu Zidong notes, the narrator gains nothing from his eight years in the corps. His political status keeps unchanged at the end of the narrative, except for his days as an "counterrevolutionary," he is still one of the masses when he leaves (Z. Xu, *The Collective Memory That is for Forgetting: An Analysis of Fifty Cultural Revolution Fictions* 210). As the narrator sits on the bus driving out of the steppe, he speaks to himself: "[f]rom 1968 to 1976, eight long years, I endured unrelenting criticism and suffered miserably. Yet I loved the steppe, and hated to leave her" (B. Ma and Goldblatt 371). This strong emotional

attachment is the strategy of Ma's signification of his life as a social outcast. Emotional attachment for a place usually comes from pleasant experiences and memories, but Ma's life in the steppe is by no means easy or happy. His love for the steppe and the Inner Mongolian Production Corps is created to romanticize his eight-year hardship into a priceless treasure (B. Ma 622-624; B. Ma and Goldblatt 362-363).

4.3.3 *Spider Eaters* by Rae Yang

As in the other three selected works, Red Guards' violence is recurring in Rae Yang's narrative. The four scenes (Scene 1.a to Scene 1.d) depict Red Guards' violence in different situations and include Yang's different emotional reactions, showing a gradual change in Yang's attitude to the brutality for revolutionary aim. These four scenes outline the process of how Yang draws to the conclusion that "I and my peers are the ones who ate spiders" which "tasted bad" and are "poisonous" (R. Yang 284), as in each scene, she has increasingly strong antipathy and intense conflicts with her morality toward the cruelty in the revolution, which guides her to the conclusion.

When first witnessing brutality against "bad element" (Scene 1.a in Chapter 13), she is perplexed by her reaction, "suddenly felt sick" to her stomach, to the scene (ibid., 118). She finds it out afterwards that she "was shocked by the ugliness of the scene," while in her imagination, torture in revolutionary novels and movies is "always so heroic, so noble" (ibid., 119). The second scene (Scene 1.b), in which she witnesses a female Red Guard inflicts physical harm on an old woman, arouses a conflict between

her rationality and emotion. Rationally, she believes "violence was both necessary and inevitable to a great revolution," but emotionally, she cannot help from sympathizing with that sufferer (ibid., 134). The distinction between her first and second reaction (confusion and conflict, respectively) reveals that she begins to recognize the gap between ideal and reality and between revolutionary doctrine and conscience.

The third scene in which her side of Red Guards directly causes the death of a man is a turning point for Yang's perception of Red Guards' violence, as she represses the unsettling memory of the murder to avoid the horror and pain triggered by witnessing the death. As she confesses: "[s]o after we killed this man in the evening, I killed him once more at night, in my mind, I killed him because I had to, or else I would not be able to sleep" (ibid., 139). Her memory repression suggests the overwhelming horror she feels in the scene, which would cause her insomnia if not being "forgotten" timely. In the fourth scene, she recollects the Red Guards' violence against "class enemies" at the outset of the Cultural Revolution after a once-forgotten memory about Zhang Heihei (the victim of her brutality) reveals itself in her dream. In the retrospective scene, Yang is calm and self-reflexive, remembering her feelings when beating Zhang: "Uncomfortable and scared. That was how I felt" (ibid., 231). With her real feelings unraveled, she bitterly realizes her acts cannot be justified by the revolutionary aim that she is taught to pursue.

These four scenes outline the process of how Yang gradually comes to see her actions during the Cultural Revolution as "eating spiders" in Lu Xun's metaphor. Each time she recollects scenes of Red Guard violence, this conclusion becomes more valid

for her. These violent scenes show the reconstructive nature of memory in that they are sequenced not in the order of happening but in the one of recollecting, and they serve to specify and strengthen Yang's claim that "I and my peers are the ones who ate spiders" (ibid., 284).

4.3.4 *Red Flower of China* by Zhai Zhenhua

Recurring scenes in *Red Flower of China* depict the narrator's denunciation meeting against her teacher-in-charge (Scene 1.a) and the home raid that she is in charge of (Scene 1.b). The reconstructive nature of the memory lies in the scenes' deemphasis of the narrator's feeling in her conscience and the matter-of-fact style of depiction. The deemphasis of the narrator's reaction in conscience to her cruel behaviours brings two outcomes: First, it portrays Zhai as an apathetic Red Guard who remains an indifferent attitude to other people's pain. Second, it supports Zhai's central claim of her memoir, which is that she is drawn to the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution unwittingly and thus should not be responsible for its consequences (Zhai 124). The matter-of-fact style, which involves little emotional expression, strengthens the narrator's indifferent image and alludes to her claim of her exemption from responsibility.

Scene 1.a is centred on the interaction and dialogues between the denunciated (the teacher) and the denunciators (the student Red Guards). This scene is bland compared to those in the other three texts, lacking strong tension between the two sides. The only mention of feeling is her relief by the end of the meeting: "[o]ur class had finally held

a denunciation meeting" (ibid., 71). In Scene 1.b, the narrator expresses her rage and antipathy against the victim, and after the narrator is told that the victim dies after the home raid, her feelings change. At first, she is shocked by this sudden news. Then, she becomes nervous and tries to convince herself it must be a joke or misinformation. Finally, when she fails to convince herself it is fake news, she reasons that the deceased is not a victim but a casualty on the battlefield (ibid., 98). Neither in the depiction of the scene nor her later psychological activity does the narrator mention the impact of this murder on her conscience, which is significantly different from Rae Yang's narrative. The deemphasis of her moral reactions to this death and the depiction of the changes in the narrator's emotion manifest the reconstructive nature in Zhai's memory: the episodes and details are selected and reorganized according to whether it supports her exemption of responsibility.

4.4 Recurring Scenes and the Generation of Red Guard and Educated Youth's Self-identification

In Table 2, Scene 1 and Scene 2 happen when the narrators are urban Red Guards, and Scene 3 and Scene 4 after the narrators are rusticated. While the two expatriate Red Guard writers present scenes of their activities as Red Guards as well as the ones of their *zhiqing* life, the two domestic writers made a choice between presenting only the scenes of Red Guard life or *zhiqing* life, as Liang's story ends before the narrator goes to the countryside and Ma's begins right at the moment when the narrator sets out to

Inner Mongolia. This section argues that domestic and expatriate Red Guard writers' different self-identification is shown in their different choices in presenting scenes in which political identity—the Red Guard or educated youth. By highlighting scenes of being a Red Guard or an educated youth, they show inclinations of identifying with the role of Red Guard or the one of educated youth. In the recurring scenes, the characters' thoughts and actions represent their class identity, class consciousness, and class feelings. The representations of these three factors have distinctive connotations in works by the domestic and expatriate writers: the expatriate writers nationalize the experiences of class struggle by intertwining cultural memory with their narratives. The domestic writers incorporate the post-Cultural Revolution denial, even abandonment, of class struggle as the nation's major task, and the remaking of a national identity with an emphasis of the proletarian class to their representations of class struggle.

Yang and Zhai's encompassment of the scenes of Red Guard activities (such as holding denunciation meetings and ransacking homes) and the ones of *zhiqing* life indicates that, in their perception, the political identities of Red Guard and educated youth are in consistency rather than in conflict: although Red Guard and educated youth are different identities, they originate from the one ideology, which is Maoist revolutionary idealism that the writers learned in education. Because the two identities are consistent in the ideology that they signify, they are not in conflict or dichotomy. Therefore, for Yang and Zhai, there is no need to choose between presenting only scenes of Red Guard activities or only those of *zhiqing* life. In their situation (namely, starting a new life in the West), the tension in self-identification primarily comes from the shock

of Western culture rather than the difference between the identities of Red Guard and educated youth—the former as participants of the Cultural Revolution and the latter as a group being arranged and reeducated. By including their stages of life as a Red Guard and an educated youth, Yang and Zhai argue the consistency in the two identities' ideological connotations. Meanwhile, they nationalize the experiences of class struggle in Maoist China by intertwining the memories of the events, which are encapsulated in the recurring scenes, with the cultural memories that they gain first hand in their home country. By claiming that herself, her generation and their parents are "spider eaters" who have tried unknown things, Yang incorporates the legacy of Chinese intellectuals' attempts to reform China in the twentieth century into her representation of the class struggle. Zhai skillfully blends her narrative of the Mao era with her cultural memories by slipping revolutionary songs and Su Dongpo's *ci* into her story. By doing so, the two expatriate writers make their experiences of the two movements as "Chinese."

However, for Liang and Ma, the difference between the identities of the Red Guard and educated youth is of important significance, which can be observed in the selectivity of the scenes and the presenting roles. Liang chooses to focus on scenes of Red Guard activities in the role of a Red Guard, whereas Ma chooses the other role and presents the scenes happening in Rustication Movement (except for Scene 1.c). The separation of the two identities suggests a discontinuity in the transmission of the revolutionary idealism, which is the core ideology integrated into the identity of Red Guard. Liang's detached profile in scenes of Red Guard violence also suggests a contradiction in the narrator's role as a Red Guard: being a Red Guard, he is supposed

to actively engage in revolutionary activities, while what he does in the two scenes (Scene 1.b and Scene 1.c) of Red Guards' violence happening before him is mere witnessing. When representing notions of class and class identity, Liang incorporates the post-Cultural Revolution denial of class struggle's role on guarding the nation's socialism and improving the nation's bureaucratic system, which was documented in the Party's "Resolution on Certain Historical Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the PRC" (CCP Central Committee 1981). This shows the shaping force of hegemonic history on the post-Cultural Revolution memory. Under the influence of official history, notions of class and class identity are represented as the cause of tragedy. In the scene of Liang's imaginary "flash struggle," the extreme importance placed on one's class identity and the dreadful consequences of sliding to the wrong classes cause people endless and nerve-racking doubts on their class identity, even that of their family members. In addition to the "flash struggle," Liang depicts Wang Wenqi's tragedy to consolidate his critical attitude towards class struggle and the over-emphasis on one's class identity, showing consistency with the official verdict.

In Ma's *Blood Red Sunset*, the scene of bidding farewell to the steppes (Scene 4.a) includes the narrator's internal monologue which reveals a deliberate breakup with the socially imposed identity of Red Guard:

> Red Guards, …, were forced to make the agonizing transition from people who bruised their knuckles on the bodies of others to people hands grew callused from manual labor. No longer were they fanatics who yelled "To rebel is right!" while beating their victims and raiding their homes. (B. Ma and Goldblatt 368)

In the monologue, the narrator emphasizes the significant shift in behaviours and

transformation in identity happening in the educated youth: from "yelling 'To rebel is right!'," "beating," and "raiding" to "manual labor," and from Red Guards to labourers. His pride in this change alludes to his yearning to dissociate from his erstwhile identity of Red Guard (which is more associated with violence and the role of perpetrator) and his current identification with educated youth (which is less violent and closer to labourer). As Ma reshapes his identity by identifying as a labourer, he underrepresents the notion of class overtaken by the social category of labourer. Ma's claim of the Red Guards' transformation to labourers is far from a manifestation of the proletarian class consciousness, as his identification of a "labourer" in effect represents his denial of Red Guards' brutality and aggression. However, Ma's claim suggests the remaking of a national identity with an emphasis on proletarian class through bridging the gap between the identity of Red Guards and educated youth and the one of labourer.

On class identity's role in the formation of national identity, Guo Yingjie makes an observation that the "nation" determined by the Party's ideology is the "people" encompassing four classes, which are "the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie" (Guo 38-39). This implies that Chinese people outside of these classes do not share the same national identity with the ones included in these classes, as they are not considered as part of the "core nation" (ibid. 39). The underplayed "proletarian class consciousness" in the Red Guard memoirs suggests that in the remaking of the national identity in the post-Mao China the class identity is one of the various factors (such as race, ideology, and culture) forming the national identity, rather than the only and the most significant one. Friedman points out

that the Leninism adopted by Mao and his Party excluded petty bourgeoisie from "the people," which resulted in a cease of creative literature (Friedman 75). The narrators of the selected works are of different class backgrounds including peasantry (Liang), intellectual (Ma), and official (Yang and Zhai), while the image of characters of exploiting classes (for example, the herdowner Gonggele in *Blood Red Sunset*) are over-simplified. The over-simplification of characters belonging to exploited classes reflects the preclusion of these classes from the collective of "people" in the post-Cultural Revolution remaking of national identity.

In conclusion, Red Guard writers' autobiographical memory and the social framework of the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution are in a reciprocal relation: the latter provides verbal conventions, symbols, and chronological sequence to communicate and remember the specific events and people; at the same time, the former brings new materials for collective memory, produces meanings for particular scenes in the memory, and participates in the collective remembering of the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement. Presenting certain scenes repetitively, the Red Guard autobiographical works strengthen the impressions of those scenes in memory of the two movements and simultaneously narrow the range of the collective remembering process; because when those scenes are highlighted, other scenes and plots are underrepresented. This interplay between recurring scenes and collective memory reflects the dynamic of remembering and forgetting. As the textual representation constructs memories, there are usually some episodes omitted or left out. Additionally, these recurring scenes reflect the Red Guard writers' self-identification

shaped under various social forces: their choices of highlighted scenes reveal domestic writers' dichotomous interpretation of the identities of Red Guard and educated youth, while the expatriate writers consider the two roles are derived from the dominant ideology of that time with a continual consistency.

The emphasis of class as an important factor in narrators' identity formation during the movements is obvious in these Red Guard autobiographical writings. However, this proletarian class consciousness, integrated to the Red Guards generation's motivation during the series of Maoist mass movements and the revolutionary education, is underplayed in the Red Guard writers' self-identification after the Cultural Revolution. In their articulation of identity, proletarian class consciousness is underrepresented. The two expatriate writers localize themselves in dimensions other than classes when claiming an identity, as Zhai articulates her identity in terms of nationality and Yang refers to the historical context when claiming she and her generation are "spider eaters" (Yang 284-285). The two domestic writers depict the narrator's unsettlement caused by the possibility of being expelled from the proletarian class and the hardship of being categorized as people's enemy, but the role of class in the narrators' identity formation is underrepresented as Liang keeps focusing on other characters and Ma is obsessed in defending his innocence. Meanwhile, Red Guard memoirs' over-simplification of the image of characters belonging to exploited classes reveals an exclusion of exploited classes from "people" as the core members of the collective of "Chinese."

Chapter 5 Red Guard Autobiographical Writings' Roles in the Construction of the Cultural Trauma of the Cultural Revolution

5.1 Trauma and Collective Trauma

Since the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, themes of scar, trauma, and pain have been recurring in literary works related to this history. In the four selected texts, the potentially traumatic experiences of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are represented in various tones and from perspectives of victim, perpetrator, and witness. This chapter delves into the representations of trauma (personally experienced or witnessed by the authors) relevant to the movements in question by analyzing the depiction of the traumatic experiences during that history to examine the construction of trauma through literary representing.

5.1.1 Trauma

It is necessary to address what is "trauma" before looking into the texts. Trauma in this thesis is by no means the one in clinical psychology, which causes actual damages to the patient's nerves or brain. Instead, it refers to an exogenous event that is so overwhelmingly unpleasant and drastic that it irreversibly changes a person's life, breaking it into before and after. In this sense, the experiences of living through the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are potentially traumatic, insofar as some individuals' life tracks were intervened and disturbed by these two movements. Thus, some individuals might develop traumatic symptoms such as dissociative

memory and repetition of nightmares, while some were not traumatized by this experience.

The concept of trauma is based on the assumption that "all excitatory processes that occur in the other systems leave permanent traces behind in them which form the foundation of memory" (Freud 18). Thus, trauma is one of the traces of the external world on a person's inner world. Focusing on the inexpressibility of trauma and the conflicts that it arises with the function of language, Caruth proposes that trauma is incomprehensible and repetitious (Caruth 6). According to Balaev's observation on the literary trauma theory trends, trauma is unspeakable and unrepresentable in the classic trauma model (Balaev, *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* 1). As a traumatic event strikes, the consciousness fails to assimilate or understand it. Consequently, the event is excluded, repressed and dissociated from the victim's known experiences. As Caruth suggests in her analysis of Freud's speculation of the compulsive repetition of traumatic experiences in dreams, trauma is caused by "a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind's experiences of time" (Caruth 61). A "break in the mind" appears when people encounter a sudden fright of a fatal situation (such as a railway accident). Simultaneously, the victim's consciousness misses the chance to grasp what just happened. The victim fails to fully perceive the threat of death, which causes the victim repetitive dreams of the encounter (ibid. 60-62). Therefore, in neither Caruth nor Freud's interpretation, can the sufferer represent trauma. Unrepresentability is a crucial feature of trauma.

The classic theories restrict trauma studies to a very narrow field, as the classic

model of trauma denies suffers' capability of representing trauma. Trauma studies in literary criticism would not flourish if researchers were following only the classic trauma theories. Beyond the classic model of trauma, critics (such as Balaev) engage in establishing alternative trauma models that allow spaces for different opinions related to trauma's impact upon social, semiotic, and cognitive spheres (Balaev, *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* 2). By applying Jeffrey C. Alexander's cultural trauma theory that extends beyond the classic model, this thesis builds on the belief that trauma can be represented and spoken by the victims and witnesses, and transmitted to other people who were not there. The representations of the experiences in autobiographical writings are neither precise description of the authors' memories nor an authentic reflection of the reality. However, they show how the agents of remembering represent their youth during the Cultural Revolution and the displacement in the countryside (volunteer or coercive), how they cope with the potentially traumatic experiences, and what values they assign to their past. Based on the representability of trauma, textual analysis in this thesis examines the narrators' traumas or the factors that prevent them from being traumatized in cases that they are not traumatized.

5.1.2 Collective Trauma

The characteristics of trauma as transmittable, timeless, and intergenerational suggest that trauma goes beyond the individual level. Trauma is infectious in that it can be transmitted within the same community or race and be passed down from generation

to generation (Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory” 152). People absent from the time or space where the incident took place can also be affected by it and inherit the traumatic memory related to it. Different from individual trauma, collective trauma requires membership (namely, being a part of the collective) to share and carry the trauma.

To be shared within the affected collective, an event must shake the collective from the root. In other words, it must interrupt the core values and cultures of that collective. Factors such as cultures, ideology, religious beliefs, sets of values, and the nature of the event conjointly contribute to the process of identifying a collective trauma. For example, natural disasters are less likely to be considered a trauma in the cultural environment where religious explanations of the catastrophe are available, whereas disastrous events due to human origins are more likely to result in collective trauma as the events disrupt even disintegrate the cultural values that the collective is dependent on (Mucci 58). If the trauma of an event is a result of negotiation, then questions such as the following arise: are the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement collective traumas to the Red Guards (the later educated youths)? What core values did the movements undermine, wounding this collective?

Red Guards’ experiences during the two movements need to be examined to clarify how the two movements in question can traumatize the Red Guards and what are the core values of the collective they undermine. The traumatic nature of their youthhood lies in the unsettled identity and the disruption of the sense of belonging. Being educated to convince in the revolutionary ideology dominant in the Maoist era, the Red

Guards were made to believe "[t]he world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. … The world belongs to you. China's future belongs to you" (qtd. in Sorace, et al. 10). When the reality of the two movements weakens their ideological faith, their identity as "revolutionary successors" is unsettled. For instance, Zhai Zhenhua complains in her memoir that "[the Cultural Revolution] was nothing but a poorly contrived social experiment Mao Zedong was carrying on, in which all Chinese were his specimens" (Zhai 124). By claiming that the Cultural Revolution was a social experiment and the Chinese population (including herself) were the specimens, Zhai shows negation of the whole movement and her low self-evaluation. The question "who we, the Red Guards, are?" thus became unsettling or led to a negation of their role during the movements.

In addition to the unsettled identity, displacement also disturbed their sense of belonging. Relocating to a new place, their bonds with their hometown or birthplace were cut off, for their registered residence (*hukou*) would be moved to the new location as in Rae Yang's case. The disruption of the sense of belonging in the collective of "educated youth" can also be seen in the literary trend of root-seeking in the 1980s, in which a large number of leading writers were rusticated during the 1960s and 1970s. This is attributable to the cease of their education, which significantly reduced the chances of learning the pre-revolution Chinese cultures and history (Li and Tam 455). The Red Guards and later educated youths could be culturally and mentally traumatized by the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, for the movements disrupted their self-identification and sense of belonging by large-scale displacement and

unsettling their identity.

5.2 Cultural Trauma and The Trauma Process

5.2.1 Jeffrey C. Alexander's Cultural Trauma Theory

In the last section, I addressed trauma as the central concept that refers to an extraordinarily unpleasant shock on the victim and introduced its personal and collective dimensions. In this section, I will examine trauma's cultural dimension by applying Jeffrey C. Alexander's cultural trauma theory to the analysis of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement's traumatizing influence, whose subjects include but are not limited to the participants, direct witnesses, and the Chinese (expatriated or at home) who think their ideological beliefs are undermined even destroyed by the two movements in question.

In Alexander's theoretical system, cultural trauma is, first and foremost, a sociological concept, referring to traumas that occur as members of a collective believe they have been negatively affected by a horrible shock that marks their collective consciousness and memories irreversibly and renews their identity (Alexander, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 1-6). Since trauma does not naturally occur, a gap exists between the event (as a factual reality) and trauma (as a perception). The event, no matter how disastrous its impacts are, is not necessarily felt as a traumatic experience by the collective. Its harms on a collective identity need to be represented, performed, and spoken, or it would not cross the gap and be perceived as a trauma.

"The gap between event and representation can be conceived as the trauma process" (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 15). The concept of cultural trauma provides new perspectives of considering the relationship between the shock and the trauma, because it stresses the perceptive premise of the cultural trauma, which is the members' conviction that they have been hurt by this shock. In this sense, Alexander opens an alternative way of examining trauma as an artifact in addition to the naturalistic notion of trauma, and his emphasis on "trauma process" warrants attention and examination on how symbolic and literary representations function in building up the collective cognition of being hurt by the event.

In Alexander and his colleagues' opinion, cultural traumas are a result of social negotiation and mediation. Participation in the discussion engenders empathy with victims and affected groups within people who have not experienced the horrendous shock in person. Such an effect enables the collective and individuals outside the collective to share the sufferings and increase social solidarity (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 6). Ron Eyerman, Alexander's colleague in the Center of Cultural Sociology at Yale University, notes the dynamic and discursive aspect of cultural trauma by suggesting it as "processes of meaning making and attribution" (Eyerman 5). Similar to the case in collective remembering, cultural trauma, in Eyerman's perspective, is a combative debate in which various ideas are exchanged among individuals, institutions, and social groups as they compete to define the shock. Emotions and interpretive attempts compose the two sides of cultural trauma, insofar as the shocking occurrence triggers emotional changes and demands explanation. The

shock breaks taken-for-granted values, structures, identity and everyday routine. Such a blow emotionally challenges collective members' sense of self and cultural confidence, urging interpretations and attribution of the causes and responsibilities. The negotiation or debate resulted from this urge creates a "discursive field where well-placed individuals can play a determinate role" (ibid., 93). In constructing the cultural trauma of the two movements in question, Red Guard writers play an essential role in the discursive field where individuals from various backgrounds compete to interpret and define the shock, namely the Cultural Revolution.

The traumatic effects qualifying the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement as cultural traumas to the collective of Red Guards and educated youths extend beyond the disruptive effects that I have covered in the last section (5.1.2), namely the ones on their sense of belonging and self-identification. For the Red Guards and the educated youths, the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement are culturally traumatic, because they threatened their absolute loyalty in Mao and the proletarian revolutionary culture that dominated their actions, choices, and faiths. Examples can be found in the selected texts. *Spider Eaters* by Rae Yang provides an example of how the narrator's belief in revolution and illusion of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are destroyed by the reality that she perceives in her campus and the Great Northern Wilderness. While the bloody scene in her campus repels her during the early stage of the movement, the situation in the Great Northern Wilderness disenchants her from her naïve ideas and passion for revolution and communism, undermining her belief fundamentally. Rae Yang volunteers to leave

the capital for her conviction that “it was not fair for some young people like my schoolmates and me to enjoy all the privileges China could offer” (R. Yang 3). However, she finds out the educated youths “[ha]ve been turned into peasants” whose limbs and lives “are worth nothing,” when she witnesses a regiment commander who refuses to take a fatally injured educated youth to the hospital in his jeep (ibid., 222). What Rae Yang witnesses challenges her expectation that “[i]n new China everybody should be equal” and makes her feel regret that her sacrifice and volunteering are unworthy (ibid., 3).

Yang’s encounter is a typical and personal example. Studies on the Red Guards’ culture provide hints of why the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are culturally traumatic for their participants. Historian Gu Xiaoming contextualizes the Red Guard Movement in the cultural background of the global anti-establishment in the 1960s. Gu notes that the Red Guard Movement was consistent with the worldwide trend of “anti-establishment,” as the Red Guards believed in the dogma of “to doubt everything and overthrow everything” in their activities (X. Gu 43). The spirit of “to doubt everything and overthrow everything” drove the Red Guards to mass demolishment of Taoist and Buddhist temples, ancient literary works, and traditional customs. But when they realized their passion and actions of destroying the old things had not created the world they were dreaming of, just like Rae Yang finds that her volunteering would not increase the equality in the new China, their faith in the revolutionary ideology wavered. The enormous damage to the domestic economy, social stability, people’s sense of security, and traditional cultures brought by the

movements significantly threatened the Red Guards' ideological beliefs and cultural confidence. Furthermore, suspicion and denial of the traditional cultures trapped them in a tight corner with no alternative cultural support to rely on. In this sense, the Red Guards and the educated youths are culturally traumatized by the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement, as their belief in the revolutionary culture was smashed by the tough reality.

5.2.2 Trauma Process

Cultural trauma theory interprets trauma not as a natural result from a sudden and horrendous shock, like a bruise after an injury, but as a result of the unsettling pain right in a collective's fundamental understandings of their identity, origin, and future (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 15). An event needs to be culturally signified to reflect its destructive effects on the collective's core values and identity. This signification enables members in the collective and the broader audience to perceive that unsettling pain. The process of signification is the social process of cultural trauma. It starts with carrier groups' articulation of being traumatized and ends with the internalization of the trauma to the collective identity.

In Alexander's theoretical model, the trauma process starts from carrier groups' claim-making, who are "the collective agents of the trauma process" (ibid., 16). Carrier groups are the interested groups located in special places in a social structure and thus have resources for making claims publicly (ibid.). They reconstructively proceed the

factual events to representations that convey meanings. They conduct trauma process in various institutional arenas where they have differential access to material supports and social connections (ibid., 25). Through creating symbolic, literary, or visual representations of the events, carrier groups make claims about the current situation, the past, and the future of their collectives, communicating with the audience on how the events traumatize the collective sense of identity (ibid.). In addition to carrier groups, audience and context are also important, functioning as the resources available to the carrier groups in promoting their ideas (ibid.). Depending on the carrier groups' geographical locations and social positions, their audience and context differ, providing them with different sets of resources and options for performing the claim-making step.

In the core of this representational process, four questions play an essential role in carrier groups' construction of trauma as a new theme to understand particular past events, which are "[t]he nature of the pain," "[t]he nature of the victim," "[r]elation of the trauma victim to the wider audience," and "[a]ttribution of responsibility" (ibid., 17-19). These four questions suggest the causal relation among the pain, the victim, and the audience, functioning as a framework through which the events can be constructed to narratives. They are indispensable in that they interrogate the core elements of a trauma narrative, which are causes of pain, identity of victims, allocation of responsibility, and its relation with humans not directly involved. The first two questions are focusing on the cause of sufferings and the actors who are undergoing the hardship: the first question addresses the horrendous discomfort, asking what exactly had happened, the second question stresses the sufferers immediately affected by the

pain. The other two questions aim to promote retrospective reflection of the pain, engendering empathy with the victims and clarifying the group of victimizers. To make a persuasive and compelling claim, carrier groups must relate the event to a wider audience —not just those directly involved in the event but also people who are seemingly exempt from its influences. By inviting people outside the directly affected collective to understand and experience the events' traumatic effects, carrier groups communicate the lessons learned from the events to a wider audience and amplify the values of these lessons.

The trauma process will enter a new stage if carrier groups effectively establish a causal relationship between the event and the irreversible damage in the collective identity. In this new stage, trauma and its lessons will be routinized in new orders of social life, becoming parts of institutions (i.e. museums) and rituals (i.e. Memorial Day). A new collective identity will substitute the previous one (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 26-27). When it comes to this stage, the event can no longer cause the previous acute pain in the collective sense of identity, because the trauma has been mediated, the identity of victims is clarified, the relationship between the victims and ordinary people is established, and the responsibility is attributed during the trauma process. Through the process, the collective pain has been experienced and shared within not only the affected groups but also the wider audience (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 28).

5.2.3 The Trauma Process of the Cultural Revolution

In the 1980s, some of the Red Guards and educated youths succeeded in their career and gained a high social reputation, thereby gaining social and material resources. As the participants or witnesses, they began to represent the two life-changing movements and create narratives based on their personal experiences. By transforming their autobiographical memories of that history into published literary works, they became one of the carrier groups in the trauma process of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, together with other carrier groups such as the intellectuals. Through literary creation, they make new meanings out of past events and communicate the meanings to the audience.

In the case of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, the trauma process widely takes place in the arts and social sciences. In the literature realm, an enormous body of literary works commemorated and reflected on problems exposed during the political movements in the Maoist years from the late 1970s to the 1980s. Scar literature and literature of reflection were the two main trends dominating the post Cultural Revolution literary field. Depicting personal misfortunes and family tragedies related to the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, the works under these two trends channeled regret, anger, disappointment and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, as they created and published literary and imaginary representations, the *zhiqing* and Red Guards writers communicated to their readers how they positioned themselves in those special historical moments, thus making claims about the nature of the victims and the pain. In the socio-scientific field, research on the Cultural Revolution and the

Rustication Movement as traumas appeared in the late 1990s when scholars began to juxtapose the two movements and trauma (such as Zhang Zhiyang's *Traumatic Memory: The Threshold of Chinese Modern Philosophy* in 1999). Recent works include *The Great Leap Backward* (2020) by Lingchei Letty Chen, who dedicates her work to examine the relations in memory, traumas, and mnemonic representations, and *Landscapes of the Chinese Soul: The Enduring Presence of the Cultural Revolution* (2014) by Tomas Plänkers, which addresses the Cultural Revolution as traumas intergenerationally transmittable (Plänkers 121-142). In differential institutional arenas and social strata, the resources available to the carrier groups show unevenness in distribution (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 25). Depending on the social stratum, factors such as regulations in publication, local government's attitudes to the subject matter, and ideological tendency vary, influencing the strategies and medium through which the carrier groups broadcast their claims. In the fourth section in this chapter (5.4), I will further examine how the differences in such factors affect the literary representations and claims made by the *zhiqing* and Red Guards writers, with the authors of the selected texts as examples.

In the cultural trauma process of the Cultural Revolution, it can hardly be said that the stage of internalization and routinization has come. The only museum in mainland China for commemorating the Cultural Revolution is in Shantou, Guangdong Province. It was built in 2004 and opened to the public next year (Gong 44). Although this museum is available to the masses, its function is limited by the government's surveillance and control. Right before the 50th anniversary of the launch of the Cultural

Revolution, the museum went through a forced rectification which significantly undermined its commemorative function: the names of the victims on concrete tablets were smoothed, and "Socialist Core Values" banners were hung around the main exhibition hall (Tatlow 1). With harsh governmental control over the collective commemorative institution, the routinization of the trauma of the Cultural Revolution still has a long way to come.

5.3 Textual Analysis

5.3.1 *Confessions of a Red Guard* by Liang Xiaosheng

The first-person narrator Liang Xiaosheng in his autobiografiction is simultaneously a witness of other characters' catastrophic experiences and a survivor. On the one hand, he graphically depicts the characters who are deeply traumatized: for example, his classmate who genealogically related to Confucius and is severely denounced by her peers and eventually agonized from a nervous breakdown, Auntie Lu who becomes insane after her husband (an "counterrevolutionary") fell off the chimney and died from it when prison guards chasing after him, and the crazy man who calls himself a ghost and squats at a public toilet at nights. On the other hand, he keeps a distance from his own emotions and avoids emotional expressions but goes deeply in sociological observance and reflection, thereby eschewing the realization and relevance of his trauma, which is the survival from the disasters.[53]

[53] Broadly speaking, by "disaster," I refer to the chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution. To be specific, I refer to

The Crisis of Surviving

As Caruth points out in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, the crisis of life and the crisis of death are often intertwined at the core of traumatic narratives. The traumatized person is haunted not simply by the fear, anxiety and loss left by his near encounter with death but also by the "unbearable nature of its survival" (Caruth 7). According to specific situations, the nature of survival and the sufferer's response to the crisis of survival differ. In Liang's confessions, survival's core significance and the trauma of living through the disasters were manifested as the responsibility of recording the lives of the deceased, which he expressed at the end of his autobiografiction:

> All of this happened in the past, a part of history. It was finally over, but has it really become a part of our history? Where can we find a record of it? Nowhere. The Cultural Revolution, on the other hand, was recorded in history, perhaps because it was, after all, started by a great man… I hope this confession of mine can be an addendum to history, as an unofficial commemoration of those who died during those ten years, and a provisional, though likely shallow, admonition to tens of thousands average Chinese. (X. Liang and Goldblatt 349)

Although Liang does not directly connect his aim of making this confession with his survival from the decade-long chaos, he does emphasize his willingness to record those who died in the revolution but are not recorded in any formal form of history. Identifying himself as a witness and survivor, he feels the urge to leave the "traces" of the deceased, so that they would not be entirely forgotten. The formation of Liang's obligation of recording is a gradual process under the influence of the consistent

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death, which is the fate of many characters such as Uncle Lu, Wang Wenqi, and the leaders of the Cannon Shot.

witnessing of the people to whom Liang has a close relation.

Witnessing the death and suffering of the people closely connected to him leaves important impacts on his recognition of the significance of survival. There are two types of connection between the deceased or sufferers and the narrator: The first type of connection is that they are tied together by kinship or friendship, such as the case of Wang Wenqi and Uncle Lu. The other type of connection is that Liang finds what he is pursuing in them, which makes him sympathetic and regretful for their fallings. In this type of connection, Liang and the other party are tied by his belief that he may realize his yearning for a tragic but heroic sacrifice by fighting for them. Liang's sympathy and passion for the Red Guard factions "August Eighth" and "Cannon Shots" are typical examples of this type of connection. Depending on the type of their relationship, people's sufferings and deaths invoke distinctive effects on Liang's comprehension of survival.

First, in the cases that the deceased and Liang are linked by friendship and kinship, witnessing their deaths invokes self-reproach and a sense of losing control over life, which intensifies Liang's worship of tragic heroes such as the Russian Decemberists, the Italian Carbonari, and the English Whigs (Chapter 20). Tragic heroism, in Liang's view, is the noble spirit of challenging hegemony when knowing the impossibility of success. The unfortunate encounters of his friends and neighbors in the compound repeatedly remind him of the destructive effects of the Cultural Revolution over his and other individuals' daily life. Moreover, as a Red Guard, Liang is not exempted from the responsibilities of what happens to his peers and neighbours, because the Cultural

Revolution is the direct reason for their traumatic experiences and misfortunes. While his political identity requires him to be an active participant in the revolution and to act as a model for the masses, the fact that he can hardly direct the development of the revolution in his school or compound, let alone prevent misfortunes from happening, makes him recognize how trivial his power is and how helpless he is in the chaotic situation. As a result, Liang is too disappointed to bear any hope for the future. He believes scarifying himself to the revolution is the only way out of this mixture of self-reproach, sense of guilt, and deep disappointment.

He passionately pursues tragic heroism, hoping someday he can make a sacrifice for the sake of revolution, insofar as life is filled with accidents and misfortune, sacrifice for revolution is the noblest way of falling. When he witnesses the ruin of Lu family and Ma family (whose only son gets lost in the Great Link-Up), he realizes that he has completely lost control over his life and his perseverance in a heroic sacrifice becomes stronger. In this stage, his philosophy of continuing life is tragic heroism. "[W]herever I detected a whiff of tragic heroism, I headed for it, fully prepared to sacrifice myself" (X. Liang and Goldblatt 330). Liang is looking for chances to satisfy his yearning for dying in a tragic and noble way. He continues to live only to wait for such a chance.

As Liang's complex of tragic heroism grows stronger, he urgently needs a subject to project his yearnings of a tragic end. Cannon Shots, a marginal Red Guard faction suppressed by the dominant Red Guard organization, timely enters Liang's vision and irresistibly attracts him. The marginality of Cannon Shots and the severe suppression

against it are the very qualities that draw Liang and his peers towards this faction. As Liang confesses in Chapter 20, “It was a sense of a tragic heroism, not justice, that prompted me to join [Cannon Shots]” (ibid., 329).

Though Cannon Shots’ complete annihilation meets Liang’s expectation of a tragic end, the moment when he feels “a real tragic sense” is not when he witnesses the attack from the dominant Red Guard organization and faces a fatal threat under the attack (Chapter 20), but when he looks at his insensate face in the mirror, with a yin-yang haircut by his mother to prevent him from going out (ibid., 346). In this moment, he recognizes that he is unable to give up his role in the family for his pursuit. When listening to the results of the trial and announcement of death sentences of the Cannon Shots leaders on the radio, Liang buries his yearning for sacrifice deep inside. He gets to know that if he is arrested and accused of joining Cannon Shots, how destructive it would be for his mother and the whole family. His responsibility to look after his family makes him compromise; however, Liang is subsequently haunted by his sense of guilt and shame for surviving.

Survival thus becomes his trauma, prompting him to react to the fact that he succeeds where others have failed and to bear the sense of guilt that grows from this fact. On the one hand, his survival signifies his escape from the collective punishment for once supporting Cannon Shots, the marginal Red Guard faction that the dominant faction tries every means to eliminate. On the other hand, the fallings of Cannon Shots’ leaders and comrades give rise to a sense of loss for him, as the names and the stories of these people are excluded in the history of the Cultural Revolution, no matter how

influential they are among the masses. It is this sense of loss that transforms Liang's understanding of survival into the responsibility of recording other people's traumatic experiences and those who are left out of the official history. For Liang, prolonging their existence in memory is his duty as the one who is spared from the fatal misfortune, for this task can only be accomplished by someone alive.

In conclusion, Liang's *Confessions of a Red Guard* represents the first-person narrator's struggles of witnessing people's deaths while having little power to change the overall situation and his crisis of survival. His experience of witnessing deaths gradually shapes his understanding of survival. As his acquaintances leave the world one by one before his eyes, Liang develops a sense of responsibility of filling the blank of history on the deceased people's behalf. His self-identification as a witness and recorder results from his frequent witnessing of other characters' misfortune in the situation that he can hardly help them avoid their tragic ends. In other words, Liang, cornered by his inability as a teenager, his blind worship of tragic heroism, and the out-of-control circumstance, becomes a witness and recorder involuntarily. His identity as a witness and recorder is shaped by the combined effect of the social upheaval and personal quality rather than his free agent's choice. Taking recording what has happened as his task, Liang adopts a calm tone throughout his autobiografiction. Moreover, in demonstration of his retrospective reflections, his tone becomes even more objective, which indicates that he situates himself as an observer when he recounts. As a result, Liang's self-portrait remains detached and remote from the text, whereas the traumatic experiences of others and the final falling of Cannon Shots are revealed with

extraordinary vividness.

5.3.2 *Blood Red Sunset* by Ma Bo

Among the first-person narrators in the four texts, Ma Bo (or Lin Hu in the original Chinese version) is the only one criminalized as "counterrevolutionary," whereas the other three maintain their political identity on the side of "revolutionary" throughout the movements. During the "One Strike, Three Anti (*yida sanfan*)" campaign in 1970, Ma is denounced to be an "counterrevolutionary" due to his many "crimes," including his criticism against the local leaders, listening to foreign broadcast, and participating in fights (B. Ma 175-176).[54] As an "counterrevolutionary," his days in Inner Mongolia (where he stays during the Rustication Movement) are full of unjust. However, his experiences as an "counterrevolutionary" are not represented as a trauma. While Ma frequently expresses his anger and resentment to his encounters, the shock and fright indicating a trauma are absent from the narration. Therefore, it would be misleading to claim that he is traumatized by being treated as an "counterrevolutionary." This textual analysis will focus on the author's representation of these experiences and the limitations of the text.

(1) Ma Bo's Representation of His Experiences as an "Counterrevolutionary" and His Attribution of the Unjust Label

[54] See page 9 for details about the "One Strike, Three Anti."

In comparison to the other selected texts, *Blood Red Sunset* is special in that the narrator is the only focus of the narration, while the other three often include detailed descriptions of political affairs, reflections on the social and cultural roots of the public craze, and the historical role of the Red Guards. In this way, Ma Bo represents his experiences from a personal perspective.

Focusing only on himself, he represents his sufferings and hardships as personal misfortune that happens in the historical backgrounds of the two movements in question. Since Ma's narration is centred primarily on experiences, reflections on his encounters are sparsely located in the text. However, it is apparent that he attributes his misfortunes to his weaknesses in character rather than the abuse of power in the "One Strike, Three Anti" campaign. In Chapter 38, for the first time, Ma reflects on the weaknesses in his personality. After a local Mongolian defeats him in wrestling, he reflects on his obsession with this sport and realizes that he makes a big mistake by over-depending on his physical power: in a civilized society like the one he is in, one must abandon one's worship of violence and belief in physical power. He concludes that "whether a person can be successful in society […] depends on his political direction and his intelligence [translated by the writer]" (B. Ma 384). He associates his failure (namely, being labelled as an "counterrevolutionary" and becoming a social outcast) with his lack of political and intelligent talent. In other words, he blames his over-dependence on physical power and aggression for being labelled as an "counterrevolutionary."

In conversations between Ma and other characters, Ma's flaws in personality are directly criticized for his misfortune. When Ma finally redresses his "crimes" and gets

rid of the "counterrevolutionary" label, Company Commander Wang comments on Ma's easy failure: "Your [Ma's] standoffish attitude had a lot to do with it. … You've got a tough exterior, …, but deep down you're weak. Why? Because you're all alone, because you've got no one. Standing with the masses would have given you the strength to resist" (B. Ma and Goldblatt 316). According to Wang's words, Ma's weakness lies in his isolation from the masses. Without solid relations with the masses, Ma is open to attack from the superior local officials. Wang's words reveal the reason with which the protagonist himself agrees sincerely. Deputy Commissar Liu holds a similar opinion, saying that the root of his mistake is his arrogance and carelessness for other people (B. Ma 502). Ma's agreement on their comments shows his approval of their attribution of the unjust treatment he receives to his impulsive and aggressive personality and his lack of reflection on the nature of his "crimes."

(2) *Blood Red Sunset*'s Limitations

In Ma Bo's representation, his sufferings under the label of "counterrevolutionary" come from his own flaws, and the nation's loss during the movements is the fault of the Gang of Four (especially Jiang Qing). After regaining reputation, Ma visits his friend Xu Zuo who is tortured to serious illness during his imprisonment and hospitalized in Beijing. As Ma tells him he has redressed the "crimes," Xu Zuo reminds Ma that he is lucky to get rid of the label because of his resourceful parents, while thousands of "anti-revolutionaries" are still stuck. They vent their anger on the Gang of Four, especially Jiang Qing, blaming them for wrong judgements, low salaries, and the shortage of

necessity (B. Ma 506-507).

As the scholars Tao Dongfeng and Xu Zidong note, Ma Bo's limitations lie in his uncritical attitude to his criminalization of being an "counterrevolutionary." Ma Bo's focus is to prove his innocence (namely, he is not an "counterrevolutionary" but a loyal follower of Chairman Mao). This shows he never doubts the nature of "being an counterrevolutionary" (Tao, "The Antirevolutionary Who is Cultivated in Revolutionary Culture: the Limitations of *Blood-Red Sunset* or Lao Gui" 25; Z. Xu, "Cultural Attitude of the Youth in Contemporary Literature: an Analysis of a Character's Mental Journey" 71-73). Unlike Rae Yang or Zhai Zhenhua who hold critical views on the series of movements in the 1950s to 1970s, Ma does not doubt the revolutionary ideology he inherits from education and propaganda, which is perhaps why he is not traumatized from the experience: because in his recognition, being labelled as an "counterrevolutionary" is not something unnatural. The only thing wrong is labelling him as an "counterrevolutionary" while he is not. Consequently, the chaos and disasters during his eight years in Inner Mongolia are not as overwhelmingly shocking to him compared to the other three narrators. The crime of being an "counterrevolutionary" has solid ground in his rationale. As a result, he fails to notice that the nature of his "crimes" is problematic, and all his efforts are aimed to show he does not commit any "counterrevolutionary" crimes. He tries his best to deny he is an "counterrevolutionary," but the doubt of whether there is such a crime never comes to his mind (Tao, "The Antirevolutionary Who is Cultivated in Revolutionary Culture: the Limitations of *Blood-Red Sunset* or Lao Gui" 27).

To conclude, Ma Bo's representation reveals the potential reason why his nightmarish experience in the "One Strike, Three Anti" movement is not a trauma for him. Since he internalizes the rationale of criminalizing someone for being "counterrevolutionary," he perceives the tremendous hardships and sufferings as parts of "normal" life. Therefore, neither his identity nor understanding of the society and world is disturbed or destructed, thus saving him from being traumatized.

5.3.3 *Spider Eaters* by Rae Yang

In her memoir, Rae Yang blends her bitter memories of the decade-long movement with recounts of her dreams during that period. *Spider Eaters* is special among the four selected texts in that it reveals the memoirist's inner world where the subconsciousness and the long-forgotten memories come to the surface of consciousness. It is hard to tell whether the narrator Rae Yang is traumatized by her experiences of the Cultural Revolution. Although she records the symptoms of mental trauma in her memoir, which include repetition of the traumatic experience in dreams and memory loss, there is no way in the text to confirm the specific causes for these symptoms. Whether they are results of a guilty conscience or an overwhelmed mind (or both) is a question with no answer from her recounts. Nevertheless, there is one thing sure about her writing of the memoir: she is mediating between her teenage self as the Red Guard and her mature self as the author. Through this mediation, she not only recovers from the shock of the nightmarish experience and makes new significance for it but also reshapes her identity

in the adopted country, which I will demonstrate in detail later in “The Fluid Memory and Dreams.”

The textual analysis of Rae Yang’s *Spider Eaters* thus focuses on how Rae Yang recovers from the shock through mediation between her two selves (one of the previous days and the other of the present day). It is necessary to examine Rae Yang’s “memory loss” and the repetition of her dreams to clarify this process. These symptoms are the responses of her consciousness to the events, which are the root of her symptoms, and in the dreams and during the belated remembering of the traumatic experiences, Rae Yang meets her previous self, whose existence was once blocked by her consciousness.

(1) The Fluid Memory and Dreams

In his book review for *Spider Eaters*, Mark Elliott argues that Yang’s typographic tactic results in a literary feature that “as though the author is carrying on a conversation with herself, or rather, her memory of an earlier self” (Elliott 845). Rae Yang is aware of the limit of memory, which is that one cannot precisely recall everything. A distance between herself as the author and herself as the subject that she writes about is unavoidable (ibid.). In the text, Yang uses two different typefaces to distinguish her thoughts at the spot and reflections in retrospect, manifesting the differences between her present and previous selves. Elliott’s argument reveals the dialogic nature of Yang’s autobiographical text, which is worthy of further examination. By distinguishing the two selves and conducting conversation between them, Yang takes advantages of the distance between herself as the author and herself as the subject. In effect, her memory

appears to be fluid and selective, as her explanation of the rationale behind her experience changes when the narrative perspective switches between her previous self and the later mature self. This distance creates a space where the two selves communicate on the past.

On some occasions, mediation is achieved by admitting the feelings in the first place and discharging the emotions that once are repressed. For example, in Chapter 20, doubts of the nature of the movements grow violently in the author's mind, stimulated by the September 13 Incident.[55] As Yang recollects her memories when writing, her disbelief is exclaimed fiercely, even shows a sense of despair.

> *We are trapped in this swamp! Judging from the propaganda, I can tell that some leaders in Beijing have bet their political future on this campaign being a great success, no matter what price we'll have to pay. We have become their bargaining chips in a political game.* [italicized in the original text] (R. Yang 219)

Whether the content of her statement is historical truth, she reveals disbelief towards the politicians and propaganda in an emotional expression and with a strong resolution. By discharging the suspicion and sense of being abandoned straightforwardly in recollecting these experiences, the author affirms her feelings at the spot. Similar examples are ubiquitous in the text. Such affirmation not only shows the nature of a memoir as the text written in retrospect but also reveals how the mature Yang discharges her emotions developed in youth.

One of the topics that the two selves of the author mediate on is the causes of her suffering in the Great Northern Wilderness. Though Yang does not feel wronged for

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[55] In Rae Yang's explanation, this incident refers to Lin Biao's attempt to assassinate the Chairman. On September 13, 1971, Lin Biao died from an aviation accident, which ended the incident (R. Yang 217).

being in the countryside at the age when she ought to be in school, she is lost in finding why she must go through all these ordeals. Except for the reasons that are stated in her suspicion of politics, she thinks of other reasons for her hardship when writing diary in the Great Northern Wilderness, which is "*yinguo* (causes and results)" and "*baoying* (retribution)." Following the logic of *yinguo* and *baoying*, the forgotten memories are awakened, returning to her mind and appearing in her dreams. She thinks of her raids of the Taoist temple in 1966, placing big-character posters at her teacher's home, and ordering the imprisoned teachers to sing the "cow ghost and snake spirit song." As she admits, "[o]nce my mind was on this track, there was no end to it" (ibid., 226-227).

Among the memories associated with unpleasant experiences, some manifest to her in dreams, causing nightmares. The dreams of Laomizi, Zhang Heihei and the night shift in the pig farm are examples of this type of dream. Yang repetitively dreams of her experiences, which resembles the situation that patients of psychic trauma repetitively experience the moment of the shock that traumatized them, whether they experience it in dreams or flashbacks. As Caruth suggests, "[t]he return of the traumatic experience in the dream is not the signal of the direct experience but, rather, of the attempt to overcome the fact that was not direct, to attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place" (Caruth 62). From this perspective, the repetition of the dreams about her past experiences is her attempt to understand what she fails to understand when things happen. The dreams remind her of important events during her days as a Red Guard and later as an educated youth, prompting her to seek the meanings behind the experiences. At the same time, the repetition of the dreams is also a narrative strategy:

it enables the author to switch her narrative between different chronological lines and reveals the complexity of the author's inner feelings towards what she has done before going to the Great Northern Wilderness.

Through mediating with her teenage self, Yang reshapes her identity in America where she begins her new life. Upon her arrival, she brings with her the old memory of Maoist China. Living a difficult life in an unfamiliar country, Yang finds the old memories reassuring and simultaneously painful (R. Yang 1). This ambivalent attitude to her old days, stated in the beginning of her memoir, shows her uncertainty in self-identification: she is unsure about where to situate herself in the new environment, who she is in this country, what connections her current self has with the previous self. Besieged by these uncertainties, she encounters an identity crisis. Among her numerous concerns related to identity, the tension between her previous self as a Red Guard and the current one as an expatriate Chinese in America is the most obvious, as she cannot leave her past behind and continues to be haunted by the old memories (ibid.).

Back in the days of the Cultural Revolution, Yang becomes a Red Guard out of her individual choice and belief in revolutionary idealism (ibid., 122). However, after she is sent down to the countryside and hears the news of the September 13th Incident, doubts in the Cultural Revolution waver her belief in the revolutionary ideology, thus deconstructing her Red Guard identity. Although Yang no longer identifies herself as a Red Guard after she abandons her revolutionary belief and moves to America, the impacts of her Red Guard actions (such as "destroying the four olds" and ransacking homes) on her cognition of self continuously bother her, causing her identity crisis. She

turns herself into a Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution, but the Cultural Revolution turns her into someone whom she does not know. In recollecting the Red Guard actions that she conducts during the revolution, Yang confesses: “I had no mercy in my heart. All I had were malice and self-righteousness” (ibid., 227), while before the revolution, she is only “vicious” in a child’s way to attract her parents’ attention and to vent her jealousy to her younger brother. As the mature self of Yang realizes how the Cultural Revolution and the Red Guard identity change her characteristic, she (the mature first-person narrator Yang) feels the lingering sense of guilt that prevents her from establishing connections with her new life and developing sense of belonging to the adopted country.

Yang’s mediation with her younger self helps cultivate self-awareness and reshape her identity in America in two ways. First, the mediation enables her to experience and discharge long-repressed negative emotions (such as doubts, anger, regret, and disappointment). Releasing these emotions from suppression, she becomes fully aware of her personality and strong emotional reactions to the situation of being deprived of freedom and trapped in the countryside. Second, the mediation helps her admit the responsibility for her Red Guard actions. In dialogue with her teenage self, she comes to realize the huge damage of Red Guards’ random violence and uncritical loyalty to one person. Thus, she knows the necessity of informing the world of this cost. As she internalizes the obligation in her life philosophy, she builds up an identity of a survivor from human disasters and shares historical lessons. In the end of her account, Yang states:

> *And I believe as a human being, Chinese or American, I have responsibilities beyond ones to make a living for my son and myself. Part of these is to make the lessons we learned with such tremendous sacrifice known and remembered by people in the world, including the younger generation in China*. [italicized in the original text] (ibid., 285)

In the end, Yang finds her obligation to make the people and young generation aware of the lessons of history. Her spontaneous undertaking of this responsibility indicates that she chooses to play a new role by which she can transform her old memories into something contributive for herself and the world.

To sum up, the fluidity of memory and dreams both play important roles in Rae Yang's account. While the fluidity of memory shows the mediation between her teenage self and mature self that significantly helps reshape her identity in America, the repetitive dreams manifest how the memory in her subconsciousness surfaces to her consciousness and causes changes in her understanding of her experiences. Furthermore, these two factors facilitate the representation of the author's meaning-making process, from which the author concludes she and her generation along with her older generation are the "spider eaters."

(2) The Meaning-making Process

Rae Yang's *Spider Eaters* represents the journey that she goes through to build up the significance of her experiences in China. The construction of significance is the core of this memoir: it connects the memoir's different aspects, which include the depictions in the memoirist's political activities (e.g. her actions as a Red Guard), personal affairs (her relationship with her Aunty and her first love), and social

observations (e.g. her reflections on the movements). Through recollecting and representing these aspects of life, the author is making meanings about her past.

She constructs multi-layered meanings for her past, which covers a personal level and a historical level. Yang's account of her first love in the Great Northern Wilderness is a typical example of her meaning-making process on the personal level. In Chapter 22, Yang describes her struggles and the lessons that she learns from her first love. She concludes that this experience "opened her eyes," enabling her to see "traps in the ground, webs in the sky, poison in sweet chitchat, daggers in hearts" (ibid., 256). Although she is always seeking significance for her experiences, there are still some occasions when she finds no meaning in them. For example, when she tries to think of the significance of the physical labour that she and her classmates are required to do in their middle school, Yang fails to see any benefit from it. Exclaiming that it is "a waste of time," she even doubts her faith in the revolutionary ideology (ibid., 94).

On the historical level, she focuses on the broad meaning of her participation in the movements. She starts and ends the memoir with statements related to the term "spider eaters" which was coined by Lu Xun to refer to those nameless heroes who take the risk to eat something that nobody tried before. Yang suggests that they and their older generation are "the ones who ate spiders." For them, the revolutionary education, the Cultural Revolution, and the Rustication Movement are the spiders, and they "tasted bad." From this perspective, their experiences are the historical lessons that Yang thinks should be passed to the future generation: "The spiders tasted bad. They were poisonous" (ibid., 284). This is the information that they earn from their own trying. By insisting

this, Yang denies the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement as movements that successfully brought significant material benefits for the participants. Simultaneously, she gives her personal experiences historical meanings, as she places her experiences in history, which continuously repeats itself. Therefore, she argues not only she and her generation but also the older generation and their parents are "spider eaters."

Throughout the text, the meaning-making process on these two levels is often intertwined. When Yang states the historical meanings of her past, she also points out the personal meanings of her experiences. Therefore, *Spider Eaters* is neither totally personal nor entirely political. It presents the memories from various aspects, building up the significance comprehensively. On the one hand, it represents the memoirist's life during the 1950s to the late 1970s, in which personal decisions often compromised with political movements. Therefore, the political life and personal life are inseparable in her recount. On the other hand, it shows how the author merges her experiences into history, thus constructing historical meanings for her and her generation's roles in history's evolution.

5.3.4 *Red Flower of China* by Zhai Zhenhua

Red Flower of China by Zhai Zhenhua chronologically represents the author's life from her childhood until her departure for Canada in 1980. Her account covers most of the important events and movements in the Maoist period. Like Rae Yang's *Spider*

Eaters, *Red Flower of China* is also a memoir recording the authors' early age in China, youth in the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, and part of adulthood when they busy themselves studying and preparing for study abroad with their eventual departure to the West as the end of their stories.

Given the similarities of these two texts, I would thus like to make a comparative analysis of Yang's and Zhai's memoirs, aiming to illustrate their core distinctions in their representations. The comparison shows Zhai's attribution of her "wrongdoings" to the external world and the self-serving nature of her narration, which is drastically different from Yang's meaning-seeking purpose of her writing.

Comparative Analysis of *Red Flower of China* and *Spider Eaters*:

While the stories are similar, their narrations are different at the core. Yang's story emphasizes the long-lasting traumatic effect (repetition of nightmares and disassociated memory) of her encounters and her self-reproach for the violence and harms that she did to other people, whereas Zhai's recount deemphasizes the author's inner struggle of her "wrongdoings" by portraying the first-person narrator as a teenager who is driven to the political movements unconsciously due to her inexperience and ignorance.

For Zhai, as she looks back on her recollections, she believes that her participation in the revolution was an unwitting involvement rather than an active engagement. Although she voluntarily even enthusiastically takes part in home raids and attacks on "class enemies," she insists she is deceived and induced by the revolutionary ideology and the peer stress to be revolutionary and progressive. As a result, in her representation

of her experiences, she seems to be sucked in the whirlpool of revolution, which she equals to violence and aggression against the enemies. By the time when she realizes her dilemma, she has already done enough things to regret:

> Despite telling myself that I was only fifteen years old at the time, that I had been pulled into these excesses unwittingly, that it was not my fault, and that I should not have to take responsibility, I realized I had done some very bad things. The victims of the home raids may all have been innocent. (Zhai 124)

The above quotation shows her attempt to escape from taking personal responsibility. She reasons that she does not need to take responsibility because she does these without clear understandings and at a young age. However, her making up the excuse proves that deep down she thinks she should take responsibility. She would not feel the urge or need for such an excuse if she thinks she is not responsible at all. Contrary to Zhai, Rae Yang admits her responsibility for her violence.[56]

By attributing the responsibility to external forces, Zhai constructs her new identity as a victim of the political craze during the Cultural Revolution, centring her memoir on her victimhood. Leave aside whether her construction of the identity is successful or not, traces of her old identity as a victimizer remain under the new one, as Lingchei Letty Chen suggests. "A memoir writer […] writes a new identity over the previous narrative to replace the old one, which is partially erased and partially covered up, though with discernible palimpsestic traces" (L. Chen 194). The construction of her new identity as a victim prevents her from recognizing the obligation to take personal

[56] For example, in Chapter 20, Rae Yang feels deep remorse for beating Zhang Heihei. "What's done cannot be undone! Henceforth remorse will be mine for as long as I live. When I die, I will drop to the eighteenth level of hell. I deserve all the punishments!" (R. Yang 232). Through carrying the remorse for a lifetime, Yang takes responsibility for the violence during the movement.

responsibility. As she constructs this identity, her narrative becomes self-serving and is centred on her victimhood (which is also a product of construction). This makes her too immersed in her role as a victim, thus deemphasizing the responsibility.

Red Flower of China also shows that the Cultural Revolution mnemonic narratives sometimes serve for fashioning the author's new identity after the movements ended when the social and cultural environment changed dramatically with increasing voices from the persecuted intellectuals and "class enemies" published. By filtering the past with the perspective of victims and representing their experiences as traumatic, some Red Guard memoirists construct trauma and victimhood in their autobiographical writings and eschew the responsibility of their previous actions. Their construction of victimhood and trauma serves mainly for building up their new identity thus less related to the collective interest. The trauma and victimhood in self-serving memoirs thus have a different quality from the cultural trauma, as the former are constructed for individual's aim to exempt from obligations, and the latter is to indicate a breach in the collective identity. While they are distinctive in the purpose, self-serving memoirs and carrier groups' narratives are both part of the diverse and fluid collective memory of the movements in question. In the site of collective memory, these different narratives engage in the dynamics between remembering and forgetting, cooperatively shaping the memory.

5.4 Red Guard Memoirs in the Cultural Revolution's Trauma Process

In the ongoing cultural trauma process of the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards and educated youth's engagement of writing mnemonic or autobiographical works is the claim-making step. Through transforming their lived experiences into literary works open to the public, the Red Guard writers participate in the contentious debate of the nature of the events and their impacts upon the generation who went through them. In this section, I will examine how Red Guard memoirs function as an effective medium by which the carrier groups (namely, Red Guard writers) broadcast their claims, a discursive field where they explore and make new meanings of memories, and a channel for emotional catharsis. The focus of my analysis is the features of memoir as a memory-based, supposed truth-telling, and self-exposing genre. Additionally, I will also compare the claims between domestic and overseas carrier groups with Liang Xiaosheng and Ma Bo as the examples of at-home Red Guards writers, and Rae Yang and Zhai Zhenhua as expatriate writers. Recognizing the distinctions in their claims can reveal how the memory and experience of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement are utilized to reshape authors' claims about their identity and how the contextual distinctions affect the construction of the two movements as a cultural trauma. The audience and the local context will also be taken into account.

5.4.1 Red Guard Memoirs' Roles in the Cultural Revolution's Trauma Process

First, the Red Guard memoirs in the Cultural Revolution's trauma process serve as

an effective medium for the carrier groups to communicate their claims with the audience. The efficiency of this medium can be attributed to memoir's generic specialness. On the one hand, memoir has traditionally revealed "an interior, memory-bound sense of self" (Bartkevicius 134). With this tradition, from the readers' perspective, memoirs are supposed to be truth-telling, self-representing, and exploring what is deep inside the author's memory. Reader's expectation makes autobiographical writings an effective genre for the Red Guard writers to advertise and commercialize their claims about particular events depicted in their texts, because the claims would be taken as the writers' thoughts that they personally believe instead of arguments that they attempt to transmit. On the other hand, the self-expression in a memoir is in the blurry area where the author's personal memory is often intertwined with literary imagination. Metaphors, myths, dreams, and flashbacks frequently appear in works of this type as the narrators tell their stories. This specialness enables the memoirists to skillfully craft their claims into narratives of their personal stories without risking the textual literariness.

Furthermore, the memory proliferation of the Cultural Revolution memory in China and the "memoir boom" in America, both occurring in the 1990s, suggest a large supply of mnemonic, retrospective and reflective works in the book market (G. Yang, "Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke: Three Hypotheses on Collective Memories of the Cultural Revolution" 13; Yagoda 62). The multiple publications of the selected works show the popularity of Red Guards or educated youth memoirs. *Spider Eaters* by Rae Yang was first published in 1997 by University of California Press, and its 15th

anniversary version came out with a new preface in 2013. Liang Xiaosheng's *Confessions of a Red Guard* was published by Sichuan Literature and Art Publishing House in 1988 with an impressive print run of 233,000 copies (X. Liang 1). After its publication in mainland China, it was translated and published in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and America.[57]

Second, Red Guard memoirs function as a literary space where the authors explore their memories, develop new meanings for their experiences, and, in some cases, establish new identities. Due to the disruption in their sense of belonging and unsettlement in self-identification caused by the two movements in question, the Red Guards and educated youths need to resolve the unsettlement, redevelop their senses of belonging, and reshape their identities in cases that the ideological inclination shown in their identity of former Red Guard does not fit the ones developed in their adopted countries or the new circumstance in the reform age in China. In writing and reviewing their past in Maoist China, they are mediating with their past selves, remembering their personal history, and inventing new significance from their past to build new identities. As I demonstrated previously (in 5.3.2) Rae Yang's *Spider Eaters* is an obvious example of negotiation with one's past self over the events that she goes through during those years. By doing so, the Red Guard writers are trying to figure out what happened (namely, the nature of the event), what role they played in the event (their relation with

[57] In Liang's preface for *Confessions of a Red Guard* (published in 1993 by Shaanxi People's Publishing House), he thanked Cosmos Books Ltd. (Hong Kong) for publishing *Confessions of a Red Guards* in Hong Kong with three reprints by the time when he wrote this preface. In 1989, this work was translated and introduced to the Japanese book market (X. Liang 1993 1). In the preface for the version by Culture and Art Publishing House in 2006, Liang expressed his gratification for the publishment and popularity of this work in Taiwan (X. Liang 2006 1). Its English version was translated by Howard Goldblatt and came out in 2018.

the victims or the perpetrators), and attribute the responsibility. These elements compose the claims that they broadcast to the audience, showing their traumas and the relation between their traumas and the general public.

Third, the Red Guard memoirs serve as a channel for the writers to express, discharge, and communicate their complex emotions towards the events. In the four selected works, the narrators' complex emotion is an important component in narration, vivifying the story-telling and generating empathy within the audience. The first-person narrators often have very complex emotions for their experiences and memories, insofar as the emotional changes due to personal growth and loss are inseparable from their attitudes toward the movements. For example, in *Spider Eaters*, Yang's emotions for her past contain not merely the negative such as regret and anger, but also relief and even gratitude. She feels regretful for the waste of time that the movements do to her, but at the same time, she concludes that her experiences in the Cultural Revolution and the Great Northern Wilderness teach her treasurable lessons. "Because of them, I cherish freedom and value human dignity. I have become more tolerant of different opinions. Lies, big and small, cannot easily hypnotize me" (R. Yang 285). Her acquisition of skills and new values brought her positive emotions towards her bitter experiences during the two movements, intertwining with her intense regret and anger caused by the personal loss and family misfortune during that time.

In writing, Yang introspects her emotions and feelings aroused by the recollections of the past and expresses these complicated emotions in words. Through literary expressions, she releases her complex emotions that mix with regret for wasting time,

triumph for learning something from the movements, and relief for ending her *zhiqing* life. As the audience (particularly those of the same generation as the authors) read these texts, they experience these emotions vicariously, which enables emotional communication between the writers and readers.

5.4.2 The Distinctions Between the Claims by Domestic and Expatriate Red Guard Writers

In constructing of cultural traumas, literary representations of the events in Red Guard autobiographical writings are the textual manifestation of the carrier groups' claims. Alexander believes claim making is the initial step to construct a cultural trauma (Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* 16). A close examination of domestic and expatriate North American Red Guard writers' claims will reveal their differences. Understanding the differences in claims allows a more comprehensive insight into how the carrier groups utilize resources in societies with different cultures and ideologies to initiate the construction of trauma and public discussion on a horrific past. The divergences in claims are important for an in-depth examination of the trauma process: they unravel not only the authors' predispositions that are determined by their class statuses but also how the carrier groups, located in different cultures and societies and speaking about the same events, strategically negotiate with the local audience and authorities to amplify the effects of their claims and build up connections between the events and the broader audience, by making adjustments or compromises. Being a

crucial part of the meaning production, these divergent claims in turn significantly impact the former Red Guard collective and the broader audience's perception of the events, as the claims interpret the events and allocate responsibilities differently.

In the following analysis, I will compare the claims in the four selected works in four aspects that are essential and critical in representing trauma and creating it as "a new master narrative," which are: the nature of the event(s), the identity of the victim, the relation between the victim and the audience, the allocation of responsibilities (ibid., 17).

(1) The Nature of the Event and the Allocation of Responsibilities

Both domestic and expatriate North American memoirists depict their participation in the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement as unique experiences that made their generation special. As the individuals who succeeded in competition for higher education almost right after universities restarted recruitment and became intellectuals afterwards, these four writers chose literature as the vehicle to transmit their memories about the movements. The difference between their representations of the events' nature lies in the attribution of the causes. While domestic Red Guard memoirists tend to deemphasize the events' political causes but focus on what they witnessed, experienced, and reflected, the overseas counterparts provide graphic details and stress on the political struggles within the Party. By deemphasis of political elements, domestic writers underrepresent the Party leadership's responsibility for the undesired outcomes and strengthen personal reasons for the tough life. In the two

domestic Red Guard memoirs, narratives are centred in first-person narrators' encounters and interactions with other characters, as shown in the chapter titles. For instance, in *Blood Red Sunset*, the chapter titles are named by the main plot of that chapter, such as "Old Shen Gets What He Wanted" (Chapter 14) and "This is What Hard Work Got Me" (Chapter 30). Words such as "revolution," "movement," or "purge" never appear in its titles, nor are they the main clue. *Confessions of a Red Guard* also eschews the political side of the events. Although Liang depicts the local conflicts among Red Guard factions and mentions the editorials in dominant governmental newspaper in Chapter 19, these depictions and editorials serve as a strategy of suggesting the setting instead of explanations of the main plot. Their deemphasis of the political causes of the events is consistent with attribution of the responsibilities. Liang remains ambiguous in who should be responsible for the loss and pain but insists he has the responsibility to record, confess, and remember as a witness. Ma blames explicitly the Gang of Four, especially Jiang Qing for specific social issues such as shortage of commodities, low wage in the city, and mistrials caused by the policy of rusticating urban youths, but as for the tremendous damage of the movements he fails to allocate the responsibilities with lucidity (B. Ma 506-507). Their claims are vague regarding the nature of events and allocation of responsibility but centred in self-identification as a witness of history or justification of the value of experiencing the movements.

In contrast, the two works by expatriate writers show more vividness and straightforwardness in representing the nature of the events and attributing responsibility. In Zhai's *Red Flower of China*, the author provides a detailed

explanation of the origin of the Cultural Revolution in her chapter "The Origin of the Cultural Revolution," which is the conflict between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi (Zhai 55-56). To eliminate Liu's "revisionist forces" in the Party, Mao "decided to use the force of the people… What followed was the nationwide disaster of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (ibid.). Zhai's emphasis on the causal relation between Mao's ambition of reinforcing his power within the Party and the Cultural Revolution suggests that the events, namely the Cultural Revolution and the later Rustication Movement, serve Mao's aim to win the political struggles within the Party leadership. The generation of Zhai was the affected groups who were driven into the movements involuntarily. Rae Yang shares a similar claim with Zhai but crafts it skillfully as doubts rather than a confirmed belief. The September 13th Incident makes Yang suspicious about the nature of the Cultural Revolution, doubting that it is in effect a power struggle rather than a world-changing revolution (Chapter 20).[58] To Yang and Zhai, the September 13th Incident gives factualness to the Party's inner struggles, especially the split between Chairman and his heir apparent. The idea of " 'our most revered vice-commander in chief Lin Biao' to assassinate 'our most beloved great leader Chairman Mao' " significantly shakes their belief in the purity of the Cultural Revolution as a glorious revolution for constructing an ideal society and disenchants the illusion of China as a peaceful communist country (R. Yang 217; Zhai 228).

[58] On 13 September 1971, a Trident collided in Mongolia and eight male bodies and one female body were found in this aviation accident. Among the eight deceased victims, there were Lin Biao, his wife Ye Qun and son Lin Liguo. The truth behind this accident is still unknown. Rumours that Lin and his family attempted to escape after a failed assassination of the Chairman quickly circulated after the incident broke out (Dikötter 249).

This distinction is associated with the social and cultural environment where the writers created their works. Both domestic writers mention the difficulties and their worries about publishing such works under strict censorship and regulations that are demonstrated in the last chapter. In the preface of the version by Shaanxi People's Publishing House, Liang mentioned an "unwritten law" that "works related to the Cultural Revolution (including report literature, memoirs, films and TV dramas) are not allowed to be issued or published" (X. Liang 1993 2). The publication of Ma Bo's *Blood Red Sunset* was full of obstacles. Due to the lack of literariness and the restrictions in publishment, this text was rejected by seven different publishing houses (B. Ma, "The Difficult Publication of *Blood Red Sunset* (Part.1)" 35-40 and "The Difficult Publication of *Blood Red Sunset* (Part.2)" 27-32). Compared to the domestic writers, the expatriate Red Guard writers enjoy a more open cultural and social atmosphere of discussing the events in the United States and Canada during the 1980s and 1990s. They were not restricted by strict governmental control on publicly communicating on Mao's mass movements and had audience curious about their stories and willing to help. In Zhai's case, she was helped by a local educational institution and editor, while Yang's inspiration for creating her memoir came to her when she shared the stories with her host family (Zhai Acknowledgement; Yang, Preface to the Fifteenth Anniversary Edition xiii-xv). However, they were in unequal power relations where they were read and judged by the local audiences with western cultural and moral criteria and knowledge of Maoist China.

The distinctions in claims are important to the trauma process in two aspects. First,

as a significant step towards the construction of cultural traumas, they affect other commemorative attempts for incorporating the historical lessons to collective identity. For example, Ma Bo's claim of Red Guard generation's complete transformation from revolutionary fanatics easily resorting to violence to ordinary labourers enjoying a peaceful life reinforces the movement participants' identification as educated youths and downplays the historical lessons of Red Guards' random violence (B. Ma 634). Educated youths' commemorative activities duplicate this reinforcement and deemphasis as they promote a nostalgic attitude towards the movement. Second, distinctions in claims manifest the differences in the social, cultural and political elements in the locale where the trauma process takes place. Knowledge about these differences and elements helps identify the barriers and resources, thus facilitating the design of specific measures and commemorative events to better understand the legacies and incorporate them into the collective identity. Zhai and Yang attribute the unsuccessful implementation of the Cultural Revolution to the Party leadership. Their claims, which are arbitrary and one-sided, inspire contemplations on the relation between inner-party power struggles and mass movements and consolidate the international impression of mass movements in communist countries during the twentieth century as traumatic.

In summary, the domestic writers tend to efface the political factors but stress their experiences, observations, and reflections in their attribution of the damage by these two movements. Their claims focus on self-identification as witnesses of historical movements or proving the value of spending their youthhood in the movements. In

contrast, the expatriate writers make solid causal connections between the power struggle in the Party and their unfortunate encounters, suggesting the former is responsible for their misery. Distinctions in claims are of great importance, insofar as they affect commemorative practices and embody the differences in social, cultural and political factors influential to the construction of trauma.

(2) The Identity of the Victims and Their Relation to the Broader Audience

In the at-home memoirs, the identity of victims remains unclear or unstated, but the overseas ones make a clear claim that the generation of the Red Guards and educated youths was collectively victimized. In Liang's autobiografiction, the first-person narrator witnesses and records his friends and neighbors' misfortunes, but never states that they or a particular group are the victims of the movements, though they may be deeply traumatized by the overwhelmingly shocking chaos. In Ma Bo's case, it is clear that the narrator himself is a victim of the "One Strike, Three Anti" movement, and the local officials such as Old Shen were the victimizers. However, he represents his encounters as troubles caused primarily by personal flaws and partly by the social and political situation, undermining the dichotomy between victim and the victimizers. Therefore, in his representation, Ma's sufferings do not appear as a typical example of an innocent person being politically victimized by those who are in the higher stratum over him but a story of a young person whose ignorance, arrogance, and immaturity constantly get himself in troubles. In the two domestic works, the classification of victims is not addressed with lucidity and certainty. The ambiguity in the identity of

victims, especially in Liang's text, suggests that everyone could be included in this category, insofar as all of his characters were negatively affected. In this sense, the wider audience is connected to the victimized in that they could be victimized if they were situated in the same environment as the narrators.

Unlike the domestic writers, the expatriate writers are more straightforward in identifying the victims. Describing the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement as power struggles, they categorize themselves and their generation as victims of these disastrous movements. Yang states in her memoir, "[i]f the Cultural Revolution was just a power struggle, it meant that we were deceived and used by a bunch of dishonest politicians" (R. Yang 217-218). Yang uses "we" instead of "I" to refer to those who are misguided and manipulated for politicians' ambitions. This suggests that the victimized is not individuals but a group, namely the Red Guards and educated youths who actively respond to the politicians' call to join the revolution and movement. In Zhai's claim, the range of the victimized group is more extensive. After she is expelled from the Red Guard team and officially criticized, Zhai develops hatred towards the revolution, asserting "[i]t was nothing but a poorly contrived social experiment Mao Zedong was carrying on, in which all Chinese were his specimens" (Zhai 124). In her statement, all Chinese are the victims of this nationwide and unsuccessful experiment.

The relation between the victimized groups and the general audience shown in the memoirs published overseas are different from the domestic memoirs, because of the distinction in audience. Published in America and Canada respectively, *Spider Eaters*

and *Red Flower of China* targeted primarily at the Western readers who might have little background knowledge about the events but might be curious about the Maoist China, which was a different type of audience compared to those with orientalist images of the communist China. The relation between the victims and the audience claimed by these two works is therefore the relation between two different or even irrelevant collectives. The carrier groups, namely the expatriate Red Guard writers, must "culturally translate" their stories to the ones showing values that are widely acknowledged in the Western society such as liberty, respect to human right, and equity so that the Western audience understand and empathize with them. Both Yang and Zhai show their eagerness of pursuing freedom and equity, which runs through their texts as a theme. In this way, the relation between the victims and the audience is established, insofar as the sufferings of the victimized could be shared by the audience.

The distinctions in claims regarding the victims' identity and their relation with the broader audience are important, because they are in effect divergences in claim makers' recognition of the events' nature, which is the basis of their claims. A clear identification of victim acknowledges the damages and sufferings that the events caused to specific individuals or groups, thereby facilitating the rehabilitation of victims' interests and rights. In contrast, vagueness and ambiguity in identifying victims may become barriers to reconstruction after traumatic occurrences. The depicted events remain the same ones in domestic and expatriate North American Red Guard writers, namely the Cultural Revolution and Rustication Movement, while their claims show different inclinations and focuses. The differences in claims are significant because they reflect the carrier

groups' disadvantaged position in both contexts defined by the different sets of socio-political elements and power relations. Domestic writers' deemphasis of political elements is a compromise to the governmental control over writing about Maoist era.[59] Similarly, Yang and Zhai's emphasis of the Party's roles in the unproductive implementation of two movements is an expedient strategy for attention from the audience to accelerate the trauma process. The distinctions in claims reveal the carrier groups' subjection to stronger authorities or locally acknowledged cultures. They are inspirational for close examination of the negotiation between carrier groups and the social resources and barriers in the contexts.

In conclusion, this chapter argues that the Red Guards' works on experiences during the movements function as an effective instrument for the carrier group, namely the Red Guard writers, to make their claims known and discharge their complicated emotions to their youthhood. In addition, the literary creation of autobiographical works enables them to justify their time spent in the movements and construct specific meanings for the past. Due to the distinctive cultural and social contexts in China and North America, their claims diverge in the interpretation of events' nature, allocation of responsibilities, the identity of victims and victims' relation to the broader audience. Domestic writers' claims feature avoidance of stressing political factors about the movements and focus on personal experiences and reflections. In contrast, North American writers are more straightforward in making causal relations between the inner-party struggles and the damage of these two movements. The differences in

[59] For specific details about governmental control, regulations, and censorship, see Chapter Four (4.1.1).

claims indicate carrier groups' dilemma of being placed in a disadvantaged position in both Chinese and North American contexts.

Conclusion

Appearing in the late 1980s and proliferating in the 1990s, Red Guard autobiographical writings preserve and transmit memories of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement; they are also instrumental in articulating and negotiating identities in China or overseas. In the site of collective memory, Red Guard autobiographical narratives diversify the Cultural Revolution-related memory and compete with other narratives, such as scar literature and literature of reflection, for domination and legitimacy.

Intermingling life experience, national history, and the development of self-awareness, Red Guard autobiographies reveal a fundamental interplay between the social framework of collective memory and autobiographical memories. This thesis illustrates the interrelations between Red Guard autobiographies and the social framework of the collective memory of the Cultural Revolution and the Rustication Movement, which are embedded in the autobiographies' verbal conventions, narrative chronology, and recurring scenes. On the one hand, the social framework of collective memory shapes Red Guard writers' identity articulation and memory construction, as Red Guard writers' representation of individual memories is based on the two elements provided by this social framework——verbal conventions and "landmarks in time" (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 45 & 175). On the other hand, Red Guard writers participate in the remembering process of the two movements and construct their collective memory through certain recurring scenes in their autobiographical narratives,

thus strengthening the association between the remembered subjects and the themes expressed in the scenes. Red Guard writers strategize their identity articulation by concentrating on the represented memories in the recurring scenes. By presenting particular memories (the memories of Red Guard activities and the ones of *zhiqing* life) and underrepresenting others, they show what they identify with and what they differentiate from, thereby bridging the gap between themselves and the social groups or cultures that they would like to be a part of. Both the domestic and expatriate writers underrepresent the proletariat class consciousness in their self-identification after the movements.

Red Guard autobiographies feature a victimhood-oriented narrative and a meaning-making nature, which lie in their foci of the narrator or other characters' misfortune and articulation of an identity. Red Guard writers' claims about the events and the victims indicate their role as a carrier group, namely the claim-makers who are positioned in special places in a society and thus have chances to speak up publicly, in the trauma process of the two movements. Red Guard writers identify the damages caused by the movements in their collective identity and sense of belonging. In this process of creating traumatic connotations with the purpose of healing, the Red Guard autobiographies function as a medium to amplify claims, a literary space for signification, and a channel for emotional catharsis. In the different contexts of China and North America, Red Guard writers make distinct claims: while the domestic writers make no explicit arguments in the victim's identity and remain vague in claiming the nature of the events and attributing responsibilities, the expatriate Red Guard writers

are straightforward in claiming the Party leadership's responsibilities for the movements' failure. However, due to restrictions in the Chinese and North American contexts, Red Guard autobiographies have limited healing effects for the collective of former Red Guards and educated youth. In China, the Red Guard writers remain ambiguous in the attribution of the undesired outcomes of the two movements and provide no clear identity of the victims because of strict regulations and governmental control. In North America, Red Guard writers claim the movements' experimental nature with stress laid on inner-party struggles, and identify the generation of the Red Guards and educated youths as the victims, but are situated in a disadvantaged position in the power relation with other agents of power such as local audience and publishing houses. Red Guard writers in the two regions contribute to the trauma process by providing insights, reflections, observation, and testimony; however, only when they diminish vagueness and compromise in their claim-making can the cultural trauma be constructed and the legacies of the Cultural Revolution reflected and internalized in the collective identity.

There are limitations in my research. First, by focusing the textual analysis on only four selected works, I might neglect other works which are also meaningful and insightful. The quantity of Red Guard autobiographies is huge, created by authors in different gender roles, from various regions of the country, different classes, and educational backgrounds. These factors affect authors' understanding of the movements, the ways they remember the history and the formation of their identity. My sample size of four works narrowed my observation, because this small sample size was insufficient

to grasp the comprehensive connections between the social framework of collective memory and individual memory. The main challenge of my study is the collectiveness of the former Red Guards community. While this community of Red Guards shared revolutionary goals, separated from other groups (such as work teams, “red outliners” and “black elements”), and had emblems showing the sameness within the group, factionalism and fierce physical conflicts among factions indicated there were disparate even incompatible beliefs and principles in the Red Guard organization. As they believed they belonged to different factions, the Red Guards might not develop a shared notion of “we” that acknowledged membership of their counterparts in other factions. When the Red Guards became educated youths in Rustication Movement, the entity of the Red Guard organization no longer existed, substituted by the community of educated youths. This change might reduce the inner conflicts of the Red Guard organization, undermining the factional demarcation. Seeing the Red Guards as a monolithic and invariable whole risks essentialist concept of collective identity and neglecting the differences in Red Guards’ experiences caused by their geographical locations and class status. However, given the fact that they were distributed over the country and lived in different regional cultures, it is difficult to consider all these factors’ impacts on Red Guard (and later educated youth) community’s collectiveness.

For further study on the construction of collective memory and trauma of the Cultural Revolution in Red Guard autobiographies, I would suggest investigating the influences of the unequal power relations on authors’ textual representations, attribution of responsibilities, and rewriting of identity. Inequality in power relations, visible in

disparities in resources distribution and discursive power, punctuates the activities in cultural consumption such as the creation and circulation of cultural products. My study reveals domestic and expatriate North American Red Guard writers' disadvantaged positions in the power relations but stops before examining power relations' effects in depth. It is worthy and significant to scrutinize how the Red Guard writers' disadvantaged or marginalized positions in front of governmental controls and the local cultural values affect their claim-making and self-identification. Examining the inequality in power relations facilitates a fuller comprehension of memory construction and solutions of practical problems of how to commemorate humanitarian catastrophes while not silencing marginalized and unprivileged groups.

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