Between Temporal and Spatial Transformations: An Ancient Capital City at the End of Time

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ABSTRACT

Narrative unity is often taken for granted. Presumably it is derived from man's desire to listen to a good and complete story. It is also to be expected of any respectable fiction writer. A novel, for instance, qualifies as such only insofar as it comes equipped with chronological and causal dimensions. It has also been argued at a theological and aesthetic level that narrative unity is related to man's anxiety over the impending apocalypse, since both share in common "the sense of an ending." For this reason, narrative unity has all along been regarded as essential in the realist tradition of the West. However, in an age of late capitalism, massive urbanization, and social fragmentation, this realist mode of representation seems to be undergoing a dramatic change.[1] In place of temporal continuity, some sort of spatial transformation seems to be at work. This spatial trend seems to be intensifying as we begin a new millennium. Even the sense of purpose itself (in terms of chronological and causal relations, for example) seems suspect now. A different mode of investigation, therefore, is in order if we are to explore the overdetermined contemporary scene.

Zhu Tian-xin's 朱天心 *Gudu* 古都 (1997) is a good example of such a mode as it foregrounds man's dilemma between tradition and modernity. At the turn of the millennium, the writer is forced to give up the conventional realist mode of representation in favor of spatial transformation. The strategy is necessary as the writer searches for an identity for her native city as well as for herself. Although essential as a means of self-understanding,

the strategy also reflects the writer's will to order, to the point of subjecting the world to her own wish for a utopian state.

KEY WORDS

Zhu Tian-xin
Gudu
representation
Frank Kermode
industrialization
tradition
modernity
memory
urbanization

We live, as everyone knows, at a time of endings. There is, first of all, the end not just of a century but of a millennium: something which has no content, and which is wholly arbitrary—a date on a calendar—which has such a power of reification that it holds us in thrall. Fin de siècle has become widely identified with feelings of disorientation and malaise, to such a degree that one might wonder whether all the talk of endings, such as the end of modernity, or the end of history, simply reflects them. No doubt to some degree such is the case. Yet it is certainly not the whole story. We are in a period of evident transition—and the 'we' here refers not only to the West but also to the world as a whole.

—Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional society"

How can social theory move away from the traditional/modernity narrative? Perhaps social theorists could move away from temporal terms, such as tradition and modernity, and look to spatial transformations as a means of siting of power and community, and identity could be explored as a critical factor in this regulation of social order.

—Luke, "Identity, Meaning and Globalization"

. . . the social process of constructing a postmodern landscape depends on an economic fragmentation of older urban solidarities and a reintegration that is heavily shaded

by new modes of cultural appropriation.

—Zukin, "Postmodern Urban Landscape"

Our age is known for its disregard of origin[2]—and of future—as modernity displaces tradition and people live increasingly in an electronic hyper-reality of one kind or another, often without its referential counterpart, much less depth. Given such a cavalier attitude towards the past, it is only natural that some intellectuals would want to make a special effort to retrieve history or, at least, to revive the narrative activities of approximating the past. For it is only by verifying the past that the present can be ascertained and the future prefigured. Moreover, it is only with such a move that one can have an organic view of oneself and of the world as a whole.

We tend to think of ourselves as autonomous agents, capable of independent thinking, making choices, and acting on our own behalf, but in actuality we enjoy much less freedom than we think. We are often at the mercy of one force or another. One of these determinant forces is the past. The past determines how we think and what we do. Moreover, our dependence on the past is often unconscious, even compulsive. According to Giddens:

> Compulsiveness in its broadest sense is an inability to escape from the past. The individual, who believes himself or herself to be autonomous, acts out a surreptitious fate. Concepts of fate have always been closely allied with tradition and it is not surprising to find that Freud was preoccupied with fate. (67)

The past, in other words, is often personified as tradition and assumes the role of fate, capable of dictating human behavior without our knowing about it. While the past may very well belong to the realm of the individual, tradition generally operates at a collective level and often takes on a social significance of its own. Among other things, tradition is capable of assigning identity to members of a community, something that one's individual past is certainly not ca-

pable of accomplishing. Again, to Giddens:

> Tradition . . . is a medium of identity. Whether personal or collective, identity presumes meaning; but it also presumes the constant process of recapitulation and reinterpretation . . . Identity is the creation of constancy over time, that very bringing of the past into conjunction with an anticipated future. In all societies the maintenance of personal identity, and its connection to wider social identities, is a prime requisite of ontological security . . . Threats to the integrity of traditions are very often, if by no means universally, experienced as threats to the integrity of the self. (80)

Tradition instills a sense of continuity and security. Challenges to tradition are often perceived as a threat to "the integrity of the self." Tradition, however, should not be seen as something out there, transcendental, without having anything to do with the flesh and blood of ordinary people. Quite the contrary, tradition can be compared to the flow of a big river whose energy is dictated by specific geographical formations along the river course. In other words, man's relationships with tradition are in fact rather significant and worthy of some discussion. Kermode focuses specifically on Western man's anxiety caused by the passage of time and his or her response in terms of politics of representation.

According to Kermode, human beings are left pretty much in the dark with regard to God's grand design. Not only are the mortals ignorant about how the universe came into being in the first place. Their anxiety is further aggravated when they meditate on how the world will eventually end. To alleviate the anxiety, human beings take the initiative to reconstruct the middle of human history in terms of realist fiction. To gain control over the flux, realist fiction is made to incorporate a rush toward an ending. With a well-constructed and convincing structure of events, human beings thus gain some symbolic control over the world (Kermode). Although such a model of repre-

sentation with an eschatological concern has a religious overtone, such a realist mode clearly complements the Enlightenment and liberal faith in the individual with regard to his potential for action and observation (Watt 9-37). In other words, by approximating how the world—or things in general—has come to be what it is and will eventually be, what man is doing is to reaffirm his or her ability to come to terms with the world.

However, this "historiographical" trend of thought can often be carried too far, and man's representational enterprise may turn into a will to order built on a utopian assumption. The will to power imposes order upon an otherwise amorphous world, to the extent of creating a wishful version of history. One often resorts to all sorts of alterity mechanisms of being in other's positions to gain insight into things we have no direct knowledge of.[3] Man projects himself or herself unto a world of the other via various narrative techniques, e.g. manipulations of narratee and narrative voices, reification of the world, even the discursive treatment of events within a narrative framework, as in the case of Zhu Tian-xin.[4] Understandably, such a narrative overkill, if I may so call it, is necessitated by man's anxiety over the uncontrollable turn of events. By means of such a high-handed narrative treatment, an authentic view of oneself as well as one's community is presumably willed into being.

Such a version of history (as willed into being by man) becomes especially problematic when a feeling of time coming to an end dawns upon man and induces a degree of apocalyptic anxiety. When it is felt that man has come to an end of time, with no prospect of having the past being extended into a foreseeable future, history-making then becomes imperative. Since history-making is clearly a collective act (often involving a ritual of some sort), the end of a period, e.g. a century or a millennium, seems to offer a good opportunity for such a tour de force. By celebrating the end of a time, one reaffirms one's relation to the past while projecting oneself towards a time that is yet to unfold. Furthermore, such a celebratory act gives people a shared sense of shaping their future. Unfortunately, it is likely, too, that this is done at the expense of time as it presumably is,

full of expediency and unpredictability. One can even say that time gets reified as a result of such human manipulations.

The end of a millennium induces not so much a sense of one value superceding all other values, but rather a nihilistic outlook on all things that have been held up hitherto as coherent and valid. J. Hillis Miller's observations on modernism are enlightening here. As we all know, the Renaissance Period sees the rise of the individual, especially in terms of his increasing ability to take things into account on an individual basis. The trend continues in the age of Enlightenment, but with the objects of human interpretation being expanded into social realms. By the end of the 19th century, man's will to power reaches its height, so much so that man finds it difficult to command all that has been appropriated. Miller cites Conrad's *The Secret Agent* as an example of man's nihilistic turn of mind at the turn of the century. As a result of excessive greed (for wealth and power), man has literally turned himself/herself into a sub-human specimen. Here it would be interesting to take the question one step further and ask what happens to man in a postmodern and/or postcolonial context.

The temporal will to unity aside, there is also a demand for spatial order. In a pluralistic society having yet to go through the process of forgetting what is essential to the making of a nation, as in the case of present-day Taiwan, one of the mechanisms of legitimization seems to lie in how the lived reality is reorganized into a homogeneous unity. Such a unity is particularly in order when a political Tower of Babel, as it were, as seen in contemporary Taiwan, looms large and threatens people with national disintegration. After all,

> Tradition claims a privileged view of time; but it tends to do so of space also. Privileged space is what sustains the differences of traditional beliefs and practices. Tradition is always in some sense rooted in contexts of origin or central place. (Giddens 80)

Some sites are empowered, as it were, and invested with certain significance connected with tradition. A national shrine, for example,

is often taken as a rallying point of national solidarity.[5] It must be added, though, that space is not exactly pre-given, totally beyond the realm of human construction.

> Space does not exist as such; it too must be fabricated continuously in the production and reproduction of society. The apprehension about a pre-given, natural order is, in large part, the sense of loss arising from the disappearance of pre-given, natural borders, as space and its containment of action is rapidly compressed in contemporary society. (Luke 120)

The harder we try to make a place or an environment as natural as possible the more we give away our anxiety over something that has been lost and our eagerness to make up for it with something else. As suggested by Luke, under such circumstances, space is often compressed, even problematized.

One of the favorite versions of social transformation has been to contrast tradition with modernity. One may even be tempted to draw a cut-off line between tradition (1650-1850) and modernity (1850-1965), but such a division is clearly a bit simplistic. For one thing, tradition lives on in our present age in literally all aspects of our everyday life. In course of time, modernity has a way of transforming itself into tradition of one variety or another as a means of self-legitimization. The binary opposition also leaves unresolved the problem of postmodernity as we try to look forward to the future on the basis of the past and the present. One possible solution is to look at spatial problematization and try to find out how nature is transformed in three different stages. Luke uses a narrative to delineate man's relations with space:

> . . . a short story of some fundamental shifts in space could be told . . . in terms of how and where spatial order is housed, by using different sorts of wares as a register of order: the "wetware" of organic bodies, the "hardware" of

> engineered architectures, the "software" of informational telematics. (Luke 122)

Briefly speaking, in the stage of tradition, man's relation with the outside world is mainly organic in nature. In this first order of nature, man's knowledge of the world is mainly through physical or physiological means. For example, man knows about his nation, his village, his family or even himself mainly through physical embodiment. Luke refers to this mechanism as "wetware" (122). In the second order, as man moves from tradition to modernity, "hardware" modifies nature to such an extent that man's relation with nature (or rather city, as in most cases) is mediated by a constellation of architectural signs. By the time we move into the postmodern age, the information technology again transforms man's relationships with the world from something substantive into something close to virtual reality. Software transports us into a virtual reality in which we are interconnected amidst a sea of signs. We live, in short, in a nature of the third order where the rural and the urban as well as the local and the global become no longer distinct.

With the rapid increase in industrialization and urbanization, this near-religious faith in the real seems to have been eroded considerably in modern times. The world is now regarded as unrepresentable in a referential sense, or not worthy of representation at all. It has been pointed out that modernism now seeks to offer linguistic and/or artistic alternatives to reality. Art (or language in general for that matter) assumes an order of its own, quite distinct from that of the life-world. This linguistic turn of the modernist thinking further takes a radical turn in the postmodernist era, with hyperreality superseding its empirical counterpart. The textual world, for instance, takes precedence over the real world. Although the textual world seems to have turned its back on reality, it does offer some effective resistance against the dominant external forces.

In the Chinese context, it has been argued that the past-oriented outlook dictates not only the way we behave but also how our future is shaped (King 50-51). This conventional view not only predomi-

nates in the past; it also gets carried over into the modern times. That Chinese modernization should take a hybrid form, therefore, does not come as a surprise. Apart from an amalgamation of the past and present, certain Enlightenment concepts from the West (e.g. democracy and science) are also introduced and combined with indigenous values, accounting for the lengthy, and often painful, process of transition in Chinese modernization. The confusion is greatly increased as the modern gives way to the postmodern. Given the postmodern claim for a return to tradition,[6] the past also seems to gain in premium in contemporary China. Due to rapid urbanization in Taiwan, it is inevitable that some individuals experience a certain sense of loss. To make up for the loss, tradition is invoked. Yet the tradition thus resuscitated seems to reflect the mental condition of the so-called "guardians" of tradition rather than tradition itself (Giddens 82-85). This is especially true when a period of historical time is about to run out. The sense of loss and attempts to make up for the loss become even more active. Moreover, it is at this juncture that man's sense of confusion over identity becomes acute.

Take Zhu Tian-xin's *Gudu* (1997) for example. On the surface, the story is about the narratee's[7] trips to the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Taipei and her nostalgia for things that were, as a remedy against some of the ills of the contemporary world. Upon closer study, however, one will also find in the text the overwhelming presence of the author's will for order, temporal or spatial. Temporally, the narratee's will to return to the past becomes obsessive, even compulsive, as the narratee makes repeated reference to Tao Yuan-ming's 陶淵明 utopia as if it were real.[8] This willfulness becomes even more apparent as the narratee contrasts this utopian, even mythical, past with a recent chapter of Taiwan's colonial past (respectively under the Manchurian and Japanese rules). Japan is described as a perennial land of beauty.[9] We are reminded that Japan is a symbol of changelessness, and the shrine mentioned in the *Tale of Genji* 源氏物語 remains nowadays as it used to be (192). Likewise, we are assured that the persimmons must have looked the same in the eyes of the Haiku poet, Basho 芭蕉 (Zhu Tian-xin 193). In contrast with Japan's eternal beauty, Taiwan's

status has since its early days been suspect at most. The following passages are worthy of quoting at length to show how undesirable the island used to be.

> Not suitable for people to live in (非人所居 [郁永河])；
> The Taiwanese are rebellious by nature. Soon after they are put down, they rise up in arms again (臺人平居好亂，既平復起 [藍鼎元])；
> Taipei is wet and hence a hotbed for infectious diseases (臺北瘴癘地 [沈葆楨]);
> Birds do not sing, flowers do not bloom; men are heartless Lies, and women equally without love (鳥不語，花不香，男無情，女無義 [李鴻章])
>
> (Zhu Tian-xin 177)

Being so undesirable, the island was at the point of being laid waste or sold, respectively by the Manchurians and the Japanese:

> It was proposed to lay waste the land (廷議欲墟其地 [清])
> A suggestion was made to sell it for 100 million yen (一億元賣卻論[日])
>
> (Zhu Tian-xin 180)

In consequence, "you" (the narratee in the story) are not the first one to be dissatisfied with the island (不滿那地方的，不自你始) (Zhu Tian-xin 177).[10] To cope with the dissatisfaction, one normally seeks to project one's being onto a utopian or mythical past. Normally, to gain solidarity, this recollecting act is done on a collective basis. That is to say, a return to the past is often in the company of one's fellow countrymen. Yet in the case of the narratee, her relations with other people deteriorates since she (and her husband) attend a political rally of an opposition party in the belief that the ruling party is sufficiently corrupt to warrant a radical political change. A speaker in the rally mentions something to the effect that mainlanders, which the narratee

is, should go home to Mainland China.[11] Since then she detects an unpleasant odor in her body. She feels herself unwelcome by both the Taiwanese and the mainlanders alike. In an act of self-defense, she decides to draw a line between herself and the rest of the community.[12] One may even detect some qualitative differences between her and the philistine residents in Taiwan. It is thus natural that the narratee should choose to conduct her "memory-making" all by herself, as others seem completely incapable of the act.

> Therefore you have no intention of recalling the past together with other people, not because new things are too numerous, but because they have the ability not to remember whatever that has once existed. For that reason, they could easily live with both good and bad things (因此你都不願意和別人回憶過往，並非因為新的事情太多…你猜想他們正因為能夠不記得曾經存在的，才能迅速與新的好壞事物相處無間吧). (Zhu Tian-xin 191)

> Recalling one's past certainly makes good sense, but the act could very well be carried too far, so much so that the party in question seeks an easy way out by wishing for things to remain unchanged. The narratee hopes that things will remain unchanged not only in her life but also after her death. We are told something to the effect that once you've been related to a place, doesn't that make your demise less painful since the place lives on after you (唯有在你曾經留下點點滴滴生活痕跡的地方，所有與你有關的都在著，那不定它們就會一直一直那樣在下去，那麼擬訂即將不在的意義，不就被稀釋掉了嗎)? (Zhu Tian-xin 195)

It is quite probable that the wish to cling to things as they were is related to the narratee's death wish. We are told, for example, that it is a good thing to know that after one's death, people would still be lining up for tofu at a neighborhood shop (Zhu Tian-xin 201). We are

assured that the same feeling is shared by a film director who in his autobiography written two to three years before his death talks about the necessity for an old man to face death on a daily basis. It is heart-warming to know that if the deceased should be able to rise from the dead every ten years, they would learn that things have remained the same as they used to be when he was alive (Zhu Tian-xin 201).

Given the narratee's plan to go on a sentimental journey of "memory-making," for the sake of preserving things as they were, some sort of escape is inevitable. The narratee's trip to Kyoto is understandable in this light. First of all, we are told that Taipei, when first built by the Japanese, was modeled after Kyoto, so the contrasts between the two cities now particularly make good critical sense. Kyoto is a city of unchanging beauty that stands for spiritual beauty and is a place where she could find peace despite the fact she is an alien in the city.[13] Kyoto represents not only a spatial entity that embodies beauty and permanence; it also symbolizes personal harmony. Kawabata's 川端康成 novel of the same title is referred to during the narratee's trip to the city. As we all know, Kawabata's story is about two twin sisters' relations. Despite the different courses of life they each pursue, they share love for each other and exhibit the most selfless kind of sibling love even though they are initially unaware of their relations. Kawabata's story, in other words, embodies a kind of selfless love that is almost nowhere to be found nowadays. The narratee's relations with her former college mate are naturally of a different order. The latter lets her down by failing to show up at their appointment, and the narratee's feeling toward her can not be said to be magnanimous, either. Above all, the author seems to be suggesting that Kawabata's model of love can by no means be found in the cut-throat island of Taiwan. It is indeed disheartening to read about the narratee's total alienation in her own land. To slightly modify Kristeva's words, she is a stranger in her own country.

In other words, she finds herself very much at home in Kyoto and does not wish to go home. The reasons are not difficult to find. Even before her journey out to Kyoto, we are told she already finds Taipei changed. Years ago, she wished to show a secret hangout of

hers to her fiancé, only to find the place now converted into an 8-lane boulevard (Zhu Tian-xin 201). But return she must eventually, however reluctantly. What is important is that she does it with a vengeance, as it were. In one of the most innovative acts of alterity, we learn to our surprise that, upon landing in Taiwan, she disguises herself as a Japanese tourist. The excuse she gives herself is that, since her former college classmate has failed to make it to the appointment, she still has a week off, and she might as well avail herself of the opportunity. Subconsciously, of course, we know that as the other of her self, the fake Japanese (who does not speak a word of Japanese) is now intent on juxtaposing the beautiful and the ugly. To do this, she relies on a colonial map, i.e. a map of the Taipei City during the Japanese occupation. Almost randomly, she visits one site after another, making reference to the contrasts between the Japanese prototype and its contemporary dilapidated shape. It goes without saying that the present-day Taipei is several cuts below what it used to be when first built. What is interesting here is not so much the contrast as the narratee's mediation. As a former history major (at National Taiwan University), the author is certainly competent in giving us a picture of what Taipei used to be like. But the elements that give the story its poignancy are not so much its objective depictions of the cityscape. Rather, it is the writer's mental notes of what it used to be in contrast with what it is like nowadays that is disturbing to the reader. On the one hand, the environment has indeed been destroyed, presumably all in the name of progress. On the other hand, one wonders if the narratee, no less than the author herself, may be investing too much in the past—a past that is closely tied to its loss. In other words, the past exists or is invoked precisely because it is now lost. What turns out then is not so much a landscape of the past, but the viewer's nostalgia for it—or, in other words, what I refer to earlier on as "memory-making." A significant shift in the narrative—or lyric, as the story is devoid of a well-structured narrative unity and relies on the powerful emotional evocation of the narrator—takes place as the narratee finds herself at the Xi-men District 西門町. As an ethnologist of sorts, the narratee looks up the district's history and

discovers that it used to be a burial ground and is haunted by spirits. It was not until the 48th year of the Kang-xi Reign, that an émigré from Quan-zhou (泉州, Zayton) was given permission to build a fort here. What follows next in the story is an allusion to Tao Yuan-ming's pastoral piece on the "Peach Blossom Spring" 桃花源. An analogy seems about to be drawn between Taiwan and that utopia, where people could live in a timeless world (without being aware of the changes in dynasties).[14] The allusion clearly speaks to the changeless aspect of life. But, as we all know, of all things, the least likely thing in contemporary Taiwan is permanency. Apart from realizing the fact that Taiwan is precisely the opposite of Tao's "Peach Blossom Spring," we are soon reminded of the role of the fisherman. In Tao's piece, the fisherman is treated with hospitality upon his visit to the utopia. He subsequently returns home, as we all must from a utopia. His second expedition turns out to be a failure, and he becomes totally disoriented, thus extensively negating the validity of the utopia as an alternative to our daily life-world. In that sense, isn't the narratee in Zhu's story cast as the fisherman's counterpart, playing the same mediating role between the utopian and the real? The allusion seems to have been flattened out, deprived of its historical or even temporal dimensions. Shangri-La is, in other words, invoked as a symbolic form, standing for some abstract value that has long since been lost, rather than for something with a historical dimension. In a way, one can even say that the de-historicized allusion is employed as an echoing device pointing to things in the narratee's native land that are not only currently absent but are also non-existent since the beginning of time. In other words, isn't the story more about utopian projections than transitions? As for the mediating party in question, doesn't the disorienting situation put the traveler in some sort of a quandary? On the one hand, he isn't able to make it to the never-never land. On the other hand, he can no longer return to his native land with a story that all can believe in. In the case of Zhu, the narratee cannot quite reach the utopian land. Nor could he come to terms with his home city. The ancient capital as embodied in Tao's pastoral—or Kyoto, or premodern Taipei, for that matter—is a story that nobody can believe in;

hence, a sense of total loss on the part of the returned traveler.

Zhu's story opens, in the very first line, with a rhetorical question on the legitimacy of memory, as the narratee claims:

> Is it possible that your memory doesn't count at all? (難道，你的記憶都不算數…). (Zhu Tian-xin 151)[15]

The validity of memory with its temporal dimension is put in doubt at the outset. Sure enough, the first part of the story is devoted to the narratee's attempts to reconstruct her teenage life to a certain degree of verisimilitude. Nonetheless, due to the cataclysmic changes on the island, after a number of sessions of "memory-making," all on her own, quite without the support of other people, the narratee comes to the realization of the futility of her temporal mission. She is forced to change her course, as it were, from temporal retrieval to spatial mapping. First it was Kyoto, not only as a land of the other, offering an alternative to the hurly-burly world of Taipei, but also as a utopia. Unfortunately, it is after all a stranger's old capital, not to be readily appropriated. Much as she dislikes the idea of return, she must eventually go back, albeit it to a strange city.[16] We are told:

> No matter what a city is named . . . if it is a place where people do not intend to preserve traces of their life, isn't it like a strange city? A strange city is hardly worth relishing, cherishing, maintaining or identifying with (一個不管以何為名…不打算保存人們生活痕跡的地方，不就等于一個陌生的城市？一個陌生的城市，何須特別叫人珍視、愛惜、維護、認同‥‥). (Zhu Tian-xin 187)

A degree of disorientation is induced in the process. Soon the traveler finds herself making desperate attempts to return to her ethnic origin (vs. Japan). She makes repeated forays into Taiwan's colonial past, mainly that of the Qing era. The journey takes her to one of the busiest quarters of the city, only to have it juxtaposed against its one-time wasteland counterpart haunted by ghosts. The desperate traveler is

forced at this moment to look for something stable. The typical Chinese utopia is invoked, and, as can be expected, the temporal or historical dimension is squeezed clean of the pastoral land. It is used as a collage (rather than a leitmotif) highlighting the disorientation of the narratee. It is, therefore, not surprising that the narratee should break down at the end of the story:

> What place is this? . . .You broke down and cried (這是哪裏？…，你放聲大哭). (Zhu Tian-xin 233)

NOTES

[1] ". . . the sign's first state, that of reflection, . . . functions as a 'good appearance' or a faithful image of a prior and independent referent. This is the stage or order of the sign in the classical realist text, for example, such that the narrative as a whole can be taken as a kind of archaeological record of the life-world it accurately and verifiably depicts" (Lucy 50).

[2] Frederic Jameson and Ed Soja, for instance, are fascinated with the dominance of space over time in postmodernity (Zukin 221).

[3] The narratee is taken with an urge to be elsewhere because of the undesirable conditions of Taiwan. We learn that "You could hardly understand why you always had this incessant urge to travel abroad, to be away, far away from your hometown (你簡直不明白為什麼打那時候起就不停止的老有遠意，老想遠行、遠走高飛). As this can not be put into practice just like that, the narratee has to resort to fantasizing. We are told that "You even had to imagine at all times part of this city, certain sections of a road, or a certain street scene, as those of a city you've been or never been to before. Only in this way can you carry on (你甚至得時時把這個城市的某一部分、某一段路、某一街景幻想成某些你去過或從未去過的城市，你才過得得下去)" (Zhu 169).

[4] See Ying-hsiung Chou, "From Sensory Details to the Narrative of Displacement," 從感官細節到易位敘述：談朱天心近期小說策

略的演變 *Writing Taiwan: Literary History, the Postcolonial and the Postmodern*, ed. Ying-hsiung Chou and Chi-hui Liu (Taipei: Rye Field, 2000).

[5] Beijing's concern over the Japanese Prime Minister's plan to attend the annual religious ceremony at the Shrine for the War Dead is a good example of how space is closely connected with tradition.

[6] Paradoxically, the postmodern is known for its rejection of the past on the one hand and its appropriation of tradition on the other.

[7] In most of Zhu's recent stories, the narratee plays an important role. The narrator tells a story in which the narratee is the protagonist. The narrator and her narratee counterpart may be separate but by no means distinct. On the surface, the arrangement brings the narrative to a level of self-consciousness otherwise impossible. Moreover, the very tone of the narrative gives away the narrator's—or even the implied author's—sympathy for the narratee, to a point of identifying one with the other. One may even argue that the phatic device serves a very persuasive purpose of identifying the narratee with the reader. In other words, any reader with good sense is canvassed by the author to see things the way the narratee does—and, by extension, the way the narrator, or the implied author, does (Chatman 253-62).

[8] Admittedly, the references to Tao's text are not faithful to the original, but the rhythm remains the same. As such, the author very skillfully appropriates a myth symbol to underline her criticism of the squalid conditions of contemporary life.

[9] In a flaunting tone, the narratee mentions that she likes Kyoto so much that she would like to breathe her last breath there. "If you are to go home, as a terminally ill patient asks to be brought home before breathing his last breath, won't you come back to this place (Japan)?"

[10] As in almost all of her recent writings, Zhu employs the second-person point of view. Awkward as it is, the voice increases the phatic effect of her story-telling and enhances greatly the story's coherence by means of rhetorical intensity rather than structural unity as such.

[11] 終於有名助講員說了類似你這種省籍的人應該趕快離開去

中國之類的話，你丈夫亂中匆忙望你一眼，好像擔心你會被周圍的人認出並被驅離似的…從什麼時候開始，身上逐漸釀成一股陌生但不好聞的氣味 (Zhu 168)。The sense of being alien in her own native land comes in part from the fact that she is a second-generation mainlander on the island, unlike most Taiwanese who have been here for up to six or seven generations. She realizes that if none of your beloved ones died in a place, you cannot claim that place to be your home country (原來沒有親人死去的地方，是無法叫做故鄉的) (Zhu 187)。

[12] In her childhood days, she used to mingle with her Taiwanese classmates. Even during her teenage days, her careless life was not ruined by the high-handed repressive rule (often referred to as the Reign of White Terror), and she enjoyed her romantic relations—heterosexual, as well homosexual—with her friends. "All is fresh and unknown and thus full of possibilities. Even though there are certain taboos, apart from them you are quite free to do just about anything and enjoy real freedom (一切都是新的未知的因此充滿了無限的可能，儘管有人規定你必須這樣不許那樣，但是規定之外卻全都可以全都自由，真正的自由) (Zhu Tian-xin 157).

[13] The Zhu sisters were under the apprenticeship of Hu Lancheng 胡蘭成, who instructed them on the uniqueness of Japanese beauty and its connections with ancient Chinese ideals. See Zhu Tianwen 朱天文, *Hua yi qian-shen* 花憶前身. In a way, *Gudu* can also be seen as Zhu Tian-xin's tribute to the late mentor, as does her elder sister's work.

[14] The narratee is afraid that if she should concede to change as a fact of life, then she would literally subject herself to another round of "passage" 流逝 over which she would have no control. Hence the invocation of Tao's utopian world (Zhu 191).

[15] Note that the sentence does not end with a question mark, as is expected.

[16] Nor could she identify with its politicians, of the ruling and the opposition party alike. Their behavior is particularly unacceptable during the 1996 missile crisis (Zhu 195-96).

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