CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture
ISSN 1481-4374
Purdue University Press ©Purdue University

Volume 15 | (2013) Issue 2 Article 9

Reinterpreting History and Gujin's (??) Cultural Practices

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Recommended Citation

Liu, Chao. "Reinterpreting History and Gujin's (??) Cultural Practices." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.2 (2013): <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2220>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture

ISSN 1481-4374 <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>

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Volume 15 Issue 2 (June 2013) Article 9
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"Reinterpreting History and *Gujin*'s (古今) Cultural Practices"
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss2/9>

Contents of ***CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.2 (2013)**
Thematic Issue ***Asian Culture(s) and Globalization***
Ed. I-Chun Wang and Li Guo
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss2/>

Abstract: In his article "Reinterpreting History and *Gujin*'s (古今) Cultural Practices" Chao Liu analyzes the moral norms established by *Gujin* 古今 (*Past and Present*), a literary journal that emerged in occupied Shanghai in the 1940s, through the lens of historical narratives and the strategies *Gujin* intellectuals employed to subvert fundamentalist nationalism. Liu argues that *Gujin* created a cultural space between resistance and collaboration which challenged nationalistic imperatives and justified the subsistence of Chinese people under the Japanese occupation by presenting its own principles of social morals and erecting a pantheon of historical figures. Further, Liu posits that the journal manifested a non-cooperative attitude and a form of cultural resistance to Japan's wartime propaganda.

Chao LIU

Reinterpreting History and *Gujin*'s (古今) Cultural Practices

After the eventual occupation of foreign settlements in Shanghai by the Japanese Army on 8 November 1941, *Gujin* 古今 (*Past and Present*) emerged as the first literary journal devoted to 小品文 (familiar essays). With the financial support of Pu Zhu and under the editorship of Li'an Zhou and Kangde Tao, *Gujin* was launched in March 1942 and soon gained great popularity among intellectuals in occupied China. A large number of renowned men of letters, including Zuoren Zhou, Duizhi Qu, and Xingyao Xie in Beijing, as well as Guo'an Ji, Muxun Long, Yusheng Liu, Heyi Feng (aka Qing Su), and Zaidao Wen in Shanghai and Nanjing contributed regularly to *Gujin* and joined its society gatherings, thus forming "a literary network around the magazine" (Fu 135). This loosely organized group of intellectuals shared similar aesthetic values, life interests, moral senses, as well as political agendas and was eager to transmit these ideas through the journal.

Edward M. Gunn and Poshek Fu conducted in-depth analyses on *Gujin*'s narrative strategies, underlying intents, and its contributors' politics. Gunn points out the close relationship between *Gujin*'s nostalgic tone and an evocation of historical accounts (120-22) while Fu went a step further by analyzing specific historical images employed by *Gujin* writers. Considering that the largest part of *Gujin* was composed of personal memoirs, biographies of historical figures, analytical reviews, anecdotes, and travelogues, Gunn's and Fu's emphasis on its inclination for history is insightful and persuasive. Nevertheless, Fu, to a certain degree, oversimplifies the historical accounts presented by *Gujin* and overestimates its remorseful and self-pitying mood, which could only be perceived occasionally in the work of Wen and a couple of essays by other contributors. In order to explain the overarching purpose and the influence of *Gujin*, we have to be aware of the complicated socio-political situation of that period and hence my study to contextualize the journal's and its contributors' importance.

After the fall of Hong Kong and Shanghai, there no longer existed a geographical buffer zone or an area of political ambiguity between resistance and collaboration. This drastic change also took place in discursive and symbolic spheres, with the moral binarism of loyalty/goodness and betrayal/evilness, which had long been adopted by cultural elites in Chongqing and Yan'an. People in occupied China were stigmatized as collaborationists and intellectuals who had to make their living under Japanese occupation received vehement criticism from those 文化戰士 (cultural fighters) and were ridiculed as clowns and "traitorous men of letters" (Tang 228-30). On the other hand, in the wake of the Pacific War the Japanese occupiers intensified the exploitation of Chinese material resources and waged various propaganda campaigns to nullify possible resistance and to lend legitimacy to their rule. It was within this physical and ideological violence that *Gujin* emerged, formulating a new set of moral standards and redefining the discourse of Chinese nationalism in terms of 誠 (sincerity) and 人情 (humanity). Although *Gujin* intellectuals made every effort to foster such a distinctive cultural space, they failed to maintain it in political realities. Under the pressure of the Japanese occupiers and the Wang regime, it was closed down in October 1944 by the Japanese authorities.

In the article at hand I analyze the moral norms established by *Gujin* through the lens of historical accounts and the strategies *Gujin* intellectuals employed to subvert fundamentalist nationalism and to resist Japan's wartime ideology. In his foreword to the first issue of *Gujin*, Pu Zhu defined the objective of the journal as "clarifying the facts, distinguishing the right and the wrong, and seeking truth" (1, 2; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine) and this postulated rationalism. Rationalism, according to Zuoren Zhou — the "patron saint" and spiritual leader of the *Guijin* group — involved a dual cognitive process: the abandonment of the fake and the pursuit of the real, which demands that people should make judgments on the basis of knowledge and sound reasoning and no matter what censures they might incur they should conform to the truth and never give up (6, 7). Zhou went further to argue that the spirit of rationalism was conveyed in the well-known didactics Confucius gave to his disciple Zilu: "if you know, admit that you know; if you don't know, then acknowledge that you don't know; that is knowledge" and in this context the statement constituted the "orthodoxy of Confucianism," the "quintessence of national culture," and the "inherent nature of a modernizing China" (5, 6). The decline of Chinese civilization in modern times, Zhou explained,

resulted from the loss of rationalism in Chinese thought and the Taoist-ization, Buddhist-ization, and vulgarization of Confucianism. The revival of the state and the nation and the development of academic enterprises resided nowhere else but in the regaining of rationalism (48, 4). In this connection, Zhou treated rationalism as the highest moral standard in wartime China. Epitomized by the foreword of *Gujin*, his standpoint was shared and associated with the private virtue of 誠 (sincerity) by other *Guijin* writers. In their opinion, in order to pursue the real and obtain the truth, people needed to enrich their knowledge on the basis of reasoning and as for their personal behavior they had to make themselves as earnest as possible in everyday life. In this respect, Yongtang Hu clarified that "sincere words and deeds are valuable; no matter what words or deeds [people conduct], if they come out of sincerity, they are good; if not, they are bad" (23, 32).

Besides rationalism, humanism was also highly deemed by *Gujin* intellectuals as a supreme moral standard, a doctrine of behaviors based on people's real concerns and a thoroughgoing understanding of humanity. Humanity, as Zhu stated, was the main theme of the *Analects* and the foundation of all social conduct and to know about humanity served as the first step to be an upright person and was far more important than reading books (10, 17). Confucius was glorified by Zhu for his clear knowledge of humanity and his argument that "father and son should conceal crimes for each other" manifested the "spirit of tolerance and honesty of Confucianism" (24, 15) in Zhu's eyes. Ascribing humanity to the teaching of the sages, *Gujin* intellectuals imposed on it an unparalleled importance. On this basis, they went a step further to examine the part humanity played in Chinese history and declared the will to live to be its major substance. As far as Zhou was concerned, the predominant concern with livelihood constituted the driving force of Chinese society and was deeply rooted in Chinese thought. Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and other philosophical schools all originated from it and performed as its variants. Therefore, the most urgent thing in China in terms of humanity was to provide a living chance for common people, the choice of "苟全性命於亂世" ("preserving one's own life in turbulent times") and "明哲保身" ("being worldly wise and making oneself safe") in wartime period. In this sense, Zhou interpreted humanism as "倫理之自然化" ("naturalization of ethics") and "道義之事功化" (pragmatization of morality") in the social context of occupied China (Bitter Mouth 18). The former imperative required that moral judgment should be made in the light of human nature: life should be given priority with no reservation, and all instinctive demands of human body, including the appetite for food and sexual desires, should be satisfied in the first place. For this reason, the callous description of Ji Kang's execution in *世說新語* (A New Account of the Tales of the World) that treated death as a trifling matter was claimed by them to be immoral (*Gujin* 7, 20) and this called for political and social reforms to save China from its extinction as the result of incessant civil wars and foreign invasions in modern times. Resembling a person whose character was defined by a will to live, China viewed its survival and continuation as the ultimate goal. In order to improve the living condition of the Chinese people and to win national autonomy back from the Japanese occupiers, it was necessary and legitimate to take utilitarian actions in occupied China instead of fleeing inland or making sacrifices in vain.

The moral principles of rationalism and humanism formulated by Zhou and his *Gujin* companions provided them with a persuasive excuse to justify their pacifist activities and to neutralize the vehement attacks from nationalist elites on their loyalty and integrity. By proposing these ethical codes, they implied that they constituted an enlightened minority who were able to think rationally and had the courage to reveal the truth that China had been engaged in a hopeless and disastrous war and that in order to save China, peace should be negotiated. In this way, their cooperation with the Japanese occupiers was reinterpreted as a reasonable and expedient choice. Furthermore, to demonstrate their loyalty to China, *Guijin* intellectuals employed humanist discourse placing particular emphasis on the biological needs of common people and the survival of the state. They tried to extricate themselves from the charge of "苟延殘喘" ("dragging out an ignoble subsistence") and rendered their activities a patriotic significance. As they suggested, compared to those "cultural fighters" in Chongqing and Yan'an who shifted away from the responsibility to rescue their compatriots under the enemy's rule, what *Gujin* intellectuals committed to at the risk of their own reputations turned out to be more meaningful and more patriotic. This utilitarian way of thinking based on a tendency for benefits and avoidance of sufferings framed an open-ended space allowing for multiple discourses on morality, in which a certain person was considered upright as long as his/her behavior

arose from human instincts and represented a sincere attitude, thus challenging the either-or mode delivered by moral fundamentalists and freeing the occupied Chinese from accusations of disloyalty. It also opened up a new possibility of patriotism. While *Gujin* intellectuals seldom wrote critical essays on the aforementioned moral issues, they were inclined to engage historical accounts — especially comments on historical figures — to express their point of view.

Among all personages in Chinese history, Chong Wang, Zhi Li, and Zhengxie Yu were selected out and extolled as "three candle lights of the intellectual world of China" (*Gujin* 48, 3). In an essay titled "我的雜學" ("My Miscellaneous Learning") and originally published in installments in *Gujin*, Zuoren Zhou argued that Wang's "論衡" ("Discussive Weighing") manifested a spirit of "疾虛妄重情理" ("detesting the delusive and valuing the reasonable") and so did Li's works. Wang, Li, and Yu risked social ostracism and even death to speak the truth as they saw it and "served as a precious guiding paint" for later generations (*Gujin* 48, 4). Zhou's argument was reinforced by Mo'an and Gong Yao, who focused their attention on Li and produced a series of articles on him. According to them, Li was the most distinguished scholar in the Ming dynasty and as a faithful materialist he "valued practical affairs," "objected to empty talk" and deeply suspected the superstition of Confucian sages (*Gujin* 26, 28). Showing respect for human nature, he advocated free marriage and gender equality between men and women and developed Mencius's statement on the utmost importance of ordinary people. In addition, Li praised Dao Feng as his deeds saved many people's life regardless of the charges that Feng betrayed his lords in succession. The image of Li described by *Gujin* writers obviously corresponded to their moral imperatives and by employing such modifying words as "insightful," "ingenious," thoughtful," and "brilliant" to glorify Li, they shared Li's honor in a metaphorical way.

Historical figures who bore the same unrestrained personality as Li were also included in the genealogy of virtuous men. For example, Shengtan Jin's contempt for 名教 (moral doctrines) was given remarkable prominence by Mo He (*Gujin* 4, 12). Zhong Wang, the most renowned writer of 駢文 (parallel writings) in the Qing Dynasty, was another unconventional personage *Gujin* intellectuals referred to: they claimed that he had a free spirit of "outstanding ideas and rare conduct" (2, 3). Even deceased contemporary celebrities like Taiyan Zhang received broad respect from them. As they portrayed him, Zhang dared to "condemn anybody he felt uneasy, including President Yuan Shikai," and never "stumbled over his own words" (8, 15). Although Zhang's behavior was considered to be savage and violent by many of his contemporaries, *Gujin* intellectuals promoted his virtues of frankness, self-pride, and simplicity. In the light of the doctrines of rationalism and humanism, they admired those heroes who were treated by moralists as 狂人 (madmen or eccentrics) and tried to rescue them from obliteration by official history. At the same time when morality was defined, *Gujin* writers also discussed matters of immorality through historical accounts to explore the other side of their ethical codes. As far as they were concerned, the first step of reasoning was to "detest the delusive" and to abandon the fake, which required an agnostic vision. Little wonder that Zaidao Wen declared himself to be a nihilist being skeptical of "both fate and reality" (22, 17). Nihilism, in Wen's sense, indicated "disrespect for any authorities and disbelief in any isms" (24, 17). For men of letters, it entailed a critical attitude in cultural activities, a spirit of iconoclasm, and a preference for the truth over authoritative powers. Wen established a binary opposition between 真 (truth) and 僞 (disguise), and as truth embodied the predominant virtue of rationalism, disguise or falsehood constituted the essence of immorality. Adherents of nihilism, owing to their project of 去僞存真 (eliminating the false and retaining the true), could acquire a moral superiority over those who engaged in hypocrisy. As a consequence, Wen and his *Gujin* companions undertook this self-imposed mission of "removing foul disguises and restoring the original fact" (24, 17), thus constructing a historical spectrum of hypocrisies.

Notions of 名節 (fame and integrity) held by the gentry class of the late Han Dynasty and the Song moralists, as *Gujin* intellectuals asserted, initiated the tradition of "fakeness" in Chinese history. In their eyes, Han scholars pretended to decline official recruitment to advertise their faith and probity for higher post and profitable reputation and neo-Confucianists of the Song Dynasty, though appearing to be sanctimonious, behaved like thieves and sadists in secret. Their cult of moral dogmatism and the negation of natural desires brought people no decency but a sham of didactics. Influenced by them, various moralists of later generations formulated various disciplines to suppress human instincts "under the mask of religious asceticism" (11, 25). These so-called 道學家 (men of moral integrity) were

no more than "fake Confucians" and "repulsive snobs" (11, 26). According to *Gujin* intellectuals, the aforementioned moralists not only corrupted social values, but led China to a severe political crisis. For this reason, they analyzed the Boxer Rebellion and Songtao Guo's diplomatic mission to Europe and suggested that censures raised by "expelling-barbarian moralists" against Guo prevented him from proposing a reformative scheme and thus deferred the modernization of China (11, 14). In wartime China, nationalism was the utmost standard of social behavior which demanded that all Chinese should sacrifice themselves unconditionally for the interests of the nation. For resistance writers and "cultural fighters," nationalism proved to be the most powerful approach to encourage social morale and to condemn their political dissidents. The *Gujin* group and other intellectuals in occupied China were regularly under attack of such nationalist accusations as selling out China and going over to the enemy. As a counterattack against these rebukes, *Gujin* intellectuals discredited and relativized the imperatives of nationalism, reducing it to mere ideological hypocrisy.

Another well-known *Gujin* intellectual — Guo'an Ji — took the lead to point out that nationalism in the political context amounted to nothing, but an intriguing pretense. The claim of self-sacrifice for the nation was indeed "nonsense" that was fabricated by a minority of social elites: "whereas dignitaries would flee with funds in the crisis, commoners were asked to kill themselves for the sake of the country … The morality was a pitfall assigned to the masses by a small group of people for their own interests": if those who made up nationalistic conspiracies did not die, Ji concluded, all Chinese people would perish for them (7, 22-23). Obviously, the intellectual elites Ji mentioned referred to previous resistance writers who seized the chance of the war and turned into high-ranking propaganda officials overnight. Among them, Moruo Guo, the leader of leftist intellectuals, was the easiest target to be mocked. In a memoir dedicated to his unpleasant association with Guo in the 1930s, Tao recalled that when the chief editor of *宇宙風* (Wind of the Universe) invited him to compose a series of essays on his ten years' life in Japan, the editor remitted 100 silver dollars to him as prepaid remuneration. Nevertheless, Guo stopped writing after several essays without notification and started to criticize the magazine. Confronted with Tao's interrogation, Guo assumed a serious manner, persuading Tao to cease the dispute and consider more about how to serve the country (21, 15). Nationalism, in this regard, served as an excuse for fraudulent deeds and Guo's recourse to it revealed its absurdity and deceptiveness (on Guo see, e.g., Zheng).

Not limited to Guo, left-wing writers as a whole received constant hostility from *Gujin* intellectuals. They were lumped together as a conspiring clique that aimed at a leadership in political affairs. As *Gujin* writer Hui'an observed, their cultural activities were well planned and tightly organized with the purpose to "搶取地盤" ("snatch the literary domain") and to transform it into a "宣傳陣地" ("battlefield of propaganda"). From Hui'an's perspective, this strategy was completely immoral and disgraceful, distorting and undermining the natural development of modern Chinese literature (4, 30-32). Moreover, the nationalist doctrines left-wing writers employed were also viewed by *Gujin* intellectuals as political conspiracies. Man Xia, who had worked with some highly reputed "cultural fighters" like Taofen Zou, Maodun, and Zhonghua Jin in Hong Kong for a couple of years published an essay on wartime Chinese literary circle in *Gujin*, portraying satirically a caricature of them: on the surface, they advocated resistance, sacrifice, selflessness, and solidarity, but in fact they directed their main attention to domestic affairs and went all out to criticize the Chongqing regime. They received orders from the Comintern and the Soviet Union and based their nationalist discourse on communism rather than the national interests of China. In Xia's opinion, they were turning China into a colony of Marxism and Leninism and for this reason they were the real traitors (1, 36). Identifying the fake with the immoral, *Gujin* intellectuals investigated "hypocritical" figures in Chinese history and visualized a historical lineage of immorality that extended to modern times. In this process, they castigated Confucian moralists and the long-existing influence of moral dogmatism, as well as the nationalist appeals of left-wing writers. By this means, they not only cleared themselves of the charge of treason, but also shifted the moral burden to their adversaries.

Modern China had experienced a variety of discourses on nationalism ever since the first Sino-Japanese War. At the beginning of the twentieth century, inspired by democratic theories, many Chinese scholars began to notice the importance of civil rights in the formation of citizenship and national consciousness and emphasized the consensus of individuals as the basis of the legitimacy of a nation-state. Nonetheless, with the aggravation of national crisis, collectivism, self-sacrifice,

communal service, and other aspects of public duties were stressed disproportionately and a nationalism that demanded an uncompromised commitment to collective interests occupied the central place and became the predominant ideology in modern China. The complexity and diversity of personal experiences were reduced to a homogenous formula and any forms of individual choices were either ignored or denied for the sake of the nation. Against this background, the redefinition of social morals and the stress on humanism by *Gujin* intellectuals offered an opportunity to reevaluate the underlying tone of Chinese nationalism. They hereby proposed a new discourse that focused on the maintenance of Chinese civilization and the preservation of Chinese identity by virtue of 文化民族主義 (cultural nationalism).

Witnessing the collapse of the Ming dynasty and the founding of the Manchu regime, Zongxi Huang highlighted the difference between 亡國 (destruction of the state) and 亡天下 (demise of Chinese civilization). "The destruction of the state," in his mind, was another name for dynastical replacement and had nothing to do with ordinary Chinese. By contrast, the demise of *tianxia* 天下 (land under heaven; on *tianxia* see, e.g., Zhu) referred to a total loss of Chinese civilization. Huang implied that preserving Chinese culture under foreign rule was of the utmost importance regardless of who happened to be the ruler and it was compulsory for all commoners to assume this responsibility. His statement was cited and celebrated by *Gujin* intellectuals as the theoretical foundation of their agenda. Since nationalism necessitated the state-culture congruence (see Gellner 2), they believed that notwithstanding the destruction of socio-political institutions, if culture could be maintained, there still existed a possibility of resurrection. For Chinese people under Japanese occupation their foremost task was to carry forward the seeds of Chinese culture. Therefore, Meicen He announced that "undergoing the unprecedented incident … I hope that we were able to pass down the cultural tradition in a serious manner, keep it, and prevent it from being extinguished in any hostile environment" (*Gujin* 54, 1). Muxun Long also appealed to an association of national survival with cultural renaissance, claiming that "because the life of a nation depends on its culture, our chief purpose is to live on so as to perpetuate the cultural life of our nation" (34, 32). In this connection, as Fu points out, *Gujin*'s "writings were filled with allusions to and long quotations from classical texts, its dating followed the lunar calendar, and its columns were lined with discussions of the traditional life style and local customs" (146). Owing to these efforts, *Gujin* articulated a strong sense of cultural nationalism that was also transmitted through historical accounts.

Identifying themselves with the tradition of 遺民 (anachronists) in the late Ming and early Qing period, *Gujin* intellectuals legitimatized their loyalty to the nation and rendered their proposal of cultural nationalism concrete substances. According to Meicen He, the spiritual feature of anachronism was "孤臣孽子之心" ("consciousness of the lone official and illegitimate son"), as represented by Dai Zhang, Qianyi Qian, Fuzhi Wang, Yanwu Gu, and other Ming loyalists. He also mentioned that Dai Zhang in his *陶庵夢憶* (The Reminiscences of Tao'an) expressed a will to live and an emotional attachment to the cultural past even after the "pandemoniac vicissitude" he experienced at the turn of the Ming and the Qing dynasty (13, 26). By contrast, Qian might be the most disputable personage among the anachronists who surrendered to the Manchu regime and became its high-ranking official. However, *Gujin* writers sketched out Qian's covert activities of cultural resistance and exalted him as a patriot and a pioneering practitioner of cultural nationalism. These most significant figures of the anachronist tradition realized that military resistance against Manchu rulers was doomed to failure and the only way to save China rested in the transmission of a resisting spirit in Chinese culture so that people of later generations would draw inspirations from it and fulfill their unfinished mission. Hence their work dedicated to ferocities of Manchu invaders, heroic deeds of Chinese resisters, and patriotic thoughts in careful disguises. As He remarked, "after struggles and failures, they instilled their vitality and conveyed their immortal will in these works, as if spring seeds were planted in a land covered by ice and snow" (54, 3). *Gujin* intellectuals embraced anachronism as a reification of their own political dilemma from an historical perspective: they lived in an age of "passion and blood" and had to make a compromise to survive the inhumane oppression of foreign powers. Receiving reproaches similar to what Qian suffered, *Gujin* intellectuals were eager to identify themselves with anachronism to transform the "consciousness of the lone official and illegitimate son" into a modern discourse of cultural nationalism. They even obtained moral superiority over those who kept silence in occupied China by denouncing their passive act to be selfish and self-righteous. As Tao concluded, "the

passivists mistake the purpose of writing … We should know by now that cultural products are beneficial to our nation and our race as a whole, so there's no reason for us to stop writing under this or that person's rule" (80).

With regard to specific measures of cultural nationalism, *Gujin* writers emphasized writing memoirs about past events, composing plays on current issues, rescuing old books and manuscripts from flames of the war, and most important of all, launching literary and historical journals as opposed to Japanese wartime propaganda. In his review on the cultural environment of China after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Zuoren Zhou admitted that the war had a disastrous effect on Chinese culture and thwarted all cultural activities in the lower Yangtze regions, but he was delighted to see a rapid recovery of traditional culture represented by the publication of *Gujin* and other literary journals (54, 14-15). Other *Gujin* writers agreed with him on the point that their devotion to publishing would contribute to the renaissance of Chinese civilization as they "undertook a series of meaningful tasks within their own capacities for the country and the people" (1, 2). Adhering to the tenet of cultural nationalism, *Gujin* intellectuals fell inevitably into a direct conflict with the Japanese occupiers, who conspired to pacify the resistance of Chinese people via propagandas like "Great Asianism" and "A New Order in East Asia."

No sooner than the occupation of foreign settlements in Shanghai by the Japanese army, more than thirty journals were closed down or taken under "military supervision." In the meanwhile, more than forty state-operated newspapers emerged all of a sudden publishing pro-Japanese news and supportive editorials on 和平運動 (Peace Movement) and the "Greater East Asia War." As Fu concludes, "the mass media were filled with Japanese propaganda or hack romances" before the publication of *Gujin* (127). Against this background, *Gujin* broke through the "foul atmosphere" of the literary world and captivated the mood of occupied Shanghai. As opposed to prevailing "hackneyed peace pieces" and "government-subsidized literature," its essays on historical anecdotes were embraced by the intelligentsia. The first issue of 1,500 copies was sold out within five days and the second issue of 2,000 copies still fell short of market demand (2, 40). That is why Xingyao Xie proudly declared that "after the incident, in both north and south China, all newspapers and magazines were dominated by peace stereotypes; however, with the emergence of *Gujin*, clichés were eliminated, new styles were initiated, and our fellow intellectuals were able to find a proper food for their soul" (19, 29).

Gujin's popularity and success inspired many other publications and there were more than twenty journals launched in a single year, most of which dealt with historical biographies and anecdotes. This publishing business became so prosperous that the year of 1943 was labeled as "the magazine year" (Fu 147). This overwhelming fervor for history triggered by *Gujin* underpinned the cultural landscape of occupied China and wrested discursive power from Japanese ideological apparatus. The main strategy *Gujin* intellectuals adopted to resist wartime propagandas was to distance *Gujin* from political issues, although it bore a strong official background and was closely affiliated with the Nanjing regime. On the whole, they referred seldom to contemporary social problems, let alone political issues. Historical metaphors constituted another important means *Gujin* intellectuals tended to employ. As Yipeng He argued, they held a deep interest in the history of the Southern Song, late Ming, and late Qing dynasties (50, 11). Therefore, a large number of essays published in *Gujin* portrayed the heroic deeds of renowned martyrs during these periods hinting at a similarity between the past and the present. People who served for the preservation of national culture were also considered to be of "great virtue" and "immortal prestige" (1, 3): they prefigured contemporary patriots in wartime China. On the other hand, Japanese occupiers were compared implicitly to the Mongol invaders who brought tremendous disasters to China throughout history. By means of this comparison, *Gujin* intellectuals insinuated the cruelty and illegitimacy of the Japanese occupation, summoning people up to fight against them in a suggestive manner.

Direct satires on the cultural control imposed by Japanese occupation also appeared from time to time in *Gujin*. After his reminiscence of the martyrdom of Ming loyalists, Hongzhi Liang told a story about 网巾, an old-style headband made of silk and worn by men to avoid hairloss: "When Xie Jie was sent [to the Ryukyu Kingdom] as an imperial envoy, he recruited his brother-in-law in the official mission. [His brother-in-law] brought hundreds of *wangjin* for sale; however, because Ryukyu people wore the same hat in summer and winter, there was no ready market for *wangjin*. He asked Xie Jie for advice. Xie accordingly issued an order that since wearing *wangjin* was a respectful act in China, those

who did not do that in the ceremony would be punished for irreverence. Ryukyu people had no choice but to buy it and wear it. From then on, forcible things were called wearing *wangjin*" (*Gujin* 1, 4). What Liang ridiculed was obviously the heavy-handed governance of Japanese occupiers. Suggesting the deceptiveness of "Sino-Japanese goodwill," Liang warned them against future punishments because "any behaviors depending on an abuse of power and impairing other people's benefits could never escape the blame from later generations" (1, 5).

In order to promulgate so-called "Greater East Asian Alliance," the Shōwa government invited *Gujin* editors and principal writers to pay a visit to Japan and requested them to write essays about the hospitality of the Japanese people. However, in their travelogues those who were invited avoided any reference to current political matters, but instead provided bland accounts of everyday life, emphasizing the impossibility of a real communication due to language barriers. The most poignant sarcasm came from Youhai Zhou, who was sent to Japan in 1943 and studied economics there at Keiō University. His visit to Japan, according to Japanese newspapers, represented "an active response to the New China Strategy" (Zhou, Youhai 99). Zhou denounced this deliberate arrangement and published an essay on Japanese culture in *Gujin* as a trenchant retort. In his essay he compared every aspect of Japanese social customs with its Chinese counterparts and reiterated the cultural superiority of China over Japan. Though admitting Japan's remarkable progress in the past seventy years, Zhou insisted that the Japanese culture was nothing but a combination of Chinese tradition and Western scientific knowledge. He then mocked Japanese experts on China for their condescending manners towards Chinese people and accused the cultural industry of Japan of being prejudiced and hypocritical. At the end of the essay, Zhou proclaimed that "if I am forced to give up my Chinese identity, I would rather die" (27-28, 48). Against this background, *Gujin* intellectuals, including Zuoren Zhou, competed to highlight Japan's cultural "inferiority." They pointed out that Japanese people misunderstood the essence of Confucianism and formed an ideological system represented by 武士道 (*bushidō*: warrior code) which was different from a true Confucian spirit (Zhou, Re-understanding 118-20). As a consequence, it was not China but Japan that should be re-guided. They also disproved the notion that China had been poisoned by an overdose of Western culture and ascribed the decline of China in modern times to its seclusion from the outside world. Objecting to a binary opposition between the East and the West and calling for a disinterested commitment to all human beings, they celebrated democracy, liberty, individualism, and other Western ideas as opposed to the imperative of collectiveness proposed by Japanese wartime propagandas (*Gujin* 18, 10). In addition, the grandeur of ancient China was mentioned repeatedly by them to confirm the superiority of Chinese culture over its Japanese counterpart. No wonder that the Tang dynasty, which exerted profound influence on Japan, was rendered utmost importance in *Gujin*. For example, Xiangrong Wang examined the history of 遣唐使 (Imperial Japanese Embassies to China) and focused his accounts on Abe no Nakamaro, who served the Tang court until his death and was scolded by some Japanese Sinologists as a "traitorous subject." Drawing a vivid picture of the unparalleled prosperity of Tang culture, Wang concluded that "Japan was so insignificant in every respect compared to Tang China" (*Gujin* 14, 27). These "reliable old stories" were so widely publicized by *Gujin* intellectuals that Kōjirō Yoshikawa, one of the most influential Sinologists in Japan, complained about the fascination of Chinese people with their glories in the past and wished Japanese experts on China could guide them away from this "dispiriting theme" (Gunn 38).

Gujin's militant attitude and narcissistic tone offended both Japanese occupiers and the Chinese cultural elites. Obeying the order from the Japanese army, Wang regime ideologues went all out to vilify *Gujin* writers for their "escapist" and "individualistic" inclinations. They were said to have "no fixed standpoint, no concern with and no respect for collective goals, writing only for wealth and fame" (Fu 148-49). Eventually, in October 1944 *Gujin* was forced by the Japanese navy to cease publication. Zhu left Shanghai for Beijing, Li'an Zhou withdrew to silence, some other writers continued to contribute lyrical essays to 文史 (Literature and History), a similar journal edited by Zaidao Wen. Immediately after the victory of the Allies in 1945, those cultural fighters who were fiercely rebuked by *Gujin* went back to Shanghai and began to carry out their plan of "moralistic reconstruction." They accused *Gujin* writers who had a close relationship with the Nanjing government of treason and suggested to put them on trial. Tao and Yusheng Liu received a sentence of three years' jail and then took refuge in Hong Kong after 1949. In fear of possible punishment, Zhu fled to the U.S., then becoming a professional connoisseur of Chinese antiquities (Liu 67-68). The rest of them escaped jail,

but still suffered from social ostracism for their entire lives.

In conclusion, *Gujin*'s cultural practices manifested a collective consciousness in occupied China where people viewed survival as their most urgent need and took its justification as psychological comfort. In this sense, *Gujin*'s insistence on humanism and personal demands challenged the essentialist discourse of nationalism. Although unvoiced by the mainstream ideology of national independence and prosperity, their concerns for individual rights remained underground in Chinese society under foreign occupation. *Gujin*'s "cultural nationalism," intellectual and literary subversion, and mediation instead of open confrontation as a strategy signify a specific and special event in modern Chinese history. Indeed, not a few intellectuals and writers are employing the same strategies to resist nationalist imperatives utilized by the state, and on this account, it is relevant and important to reevaluate the historical role of *Gujin*.

Note: The above article is a revised excerpt from Chao, Liu. *Reinterpreting History:* Gujin*'s Cultural Practice amidst a Political Dilemma*. Ph.D. Diss. Boulder: U of Colorado Boulder, 2009. Copyright release to the author.

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