CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture
ISSN 1481-4374
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Volume 17 | (2015) Issue 3 Article 8

"Being Singular Plural" in Chi's ??? (The Great-Flowing River)

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Recommended Citation

Su, Tsu-Chung. ""Being Singular Plural" in Chi's ??? (The Great-Flowing River)." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 17.3 (2015): <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2911>

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CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture

ISSN 1481-4374 <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>
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Volume 17 Issue 3 (September 2015) Article 8
Tsu-Chung Su,
"'Being Singular Plural' in Chi's *巨流河* (The Great-Flowing River)"
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss3/8>

Contents of ***CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 17.3 (2015)**
Thematic Issue ***Life Writing and the Trauma of War*. Ed. Louise O. Vasvári and I-Chun Wang**
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol17/iss3/>

Abstract: In his article "'Being Singular Plural' in Chi's *巨流河* (The Great-Flowing River)" Tsu-Chung Su explores the way Pang-yuan Chi organizes her life stories in her 2009 autobiography. Born in Mainland China, Chi is a renowned Taiwanese editor, scholar, and writer who started her autobiographical novel at age 81. In her text Chi describes life stories in a war-torn era, features her migration from the north to the south (1930 to 1950), her experiences in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950) culminating in her successful academic career in Taiwan (1950-). Chi's life stories are infiltrated with patterns of what Jean-Luc Nancy terms "being singular plural." Su employs Nancy's concept in her life writing to define a co-existential ontology of life and a state of being with all its attributes of singularity and plurality.

Tsu-Chung SU

"Being Singular Plural" in Chi's *巨流河* (The Great-Flowing River)

Life writing as a genre exposes complex workings of human feelings and calls into question the nature of life and the function of memory. Pang-yuan Chi attempts to capture this complexity in her 2009 autobiography. Chi's life writing is infiltrated with patterns of what Jean-Luc Nancy terms "being singular plural": Nancy rethinks and rewrites Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology of *Being and Time* by focusing his interpretation on a figure of thought — "being-with" — from Heidegger's work. As Nancy argues, "the understanding of Being is nothing other than an understanding of others, which means, in every sense, understanding others through 'me' and understanding 'me' through others, the understanding of one another … Being singular plural means the essence of Being is only as co-essence (27-30). By highlighting the significance of "being-with" Nancy attempts an existential ontology of "being-with" or the so-called "co-existential analytic." Explaining the title of his book, Nancy (28) writes that "being singular plural: these three opposite words, which do not have any determined syntax ('being' is a verb or noun; 'singular' and 'plural' are nouns or adjectives; all can be rearranged in different combinations), mark an absolute equivalence, both in an indistinct *and* distinct way. Being is singularly plural and plurally singular as if Being is or has a certain number of attributes, one of which is that of being singular-plural — however double, contradictory, or chiasmatic this may be" (28). Thus my aim in this study is not only to heighten our awareness of the layout of Chi's text, but also, following Nancy, to reveal her "being-singular-plural" engagement with life through her life writing.

In her autobiography Chi narrates her life in a war-torn era of the Chinese modern history, her migration from the north to the south (1930 to 1950), her experiences in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950), and her successful academic career in Taiwan (1950-). To a certain extent, Chi's life is an epitome of Chinese and Taiwanese twentieth-century history. As the book title and structure suggest, one can detect that the motifs of "river" and "flow" recur throughout the whole work. Chi particularly likes to follow the flow of the river water or the ocean water and reflects on life journey and life events, as well as questions the ultimate value of life. Chi's autobiography covers roughly the whole of the twentieth century and functions as commentary on society, history, and politics of both China and Taiwan, as well as the writer's own diasporic life, her father's story, and multi-faceted relations of her family with the war-torn era in both China and Taiwan. The motif of the river, especially the Liao River, is the archetypal image in Chi's text. Also, in spite of the fact that the work is a single-volume memoir, Chi attempts to achieve and capture the entire cycle of her life, which symbolically flows from the Great-flowing River in northeast China to the Dumb Mouth Sea at the southern tip of Taiwan. As Chi notes in her prologue, her epic life writing in the end comes full circle and is a story about two generations of people who wander from the Great-flowing River to the Dumb Mouth Sea (8).

Both places — the Great-flowing River and the Dumb Mouth Sea — have implications both historically and politically, as well as personally for Chi herself. The so-called Great-flowing River is the old name of the Liao River in the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911 CE). It has its origin in Inner Mongolia and the Hebei region and is called 母親河 (Mother River) by the local people in Liaoning Province in northeast China. The Liao River region, where Manchuria is located, was deemed by Japan as a region for its expansionism, a limitless supply of raw materials, a market for its manufactured goods, and a protective buffer zone against the Soviet Union. On 18 September 1931 Japan used a staged event, the so-called Mukden or the Manchurian Incident, during which Japanese soldiers sabotaged a rail section and then blamed Chinese troops for having caused the disturbance thus a pretext to launch an invasion of the northeastern part of China known as Manchuria, which eventually escalated to the full-scale Second Sino-Japanese War. As for the Dumb Mouth Sea, it is a bay full of sea currents under the Eluanbi Lighthouse, located at the southern tip of Taiwan, an area of which it is said that the pounding seawater dies down when the waves reach it. In Chi's novel, this bay and its natural phenomenon are utilized to exemplify her father's silence and state of mind during the final stage of his life. Chi's father Shi-Ying was a noble-minded patriot and a devoted party member of the Kuomintang (KMT), who in his youth risked his life fighting against the Japanese invasion. After settling in Taiwan in 1949, he strove for the betterment of his country in the areas of social welfare, democracy, and human rights. Nevertheless, in 1954 he was expelled from the KMT because of his opposition to the government's decision to raise the electricity tariff and his resistance to the undemocratic rule of the KMT. Along with Zhen Lei (雷震) and several others in 1960 he attempted to found an opposition party entitled "The Chinese Democratic Party," but was brutally suppressed by Chiang Kai-shek, President of the Republic of China (ROC). Even so, he still joined the so-called Tangwai Movement, a political movement against KMT's rule in Taiwan in the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Shi-Ying Chi's silence in his old age was derived from his guilt-ridden and conscience-stricken feelings for his dead comrades who sacrificed themselves for different causes, as well as his grief for his wife's death in 1983. Chi's story of war and life is a manifesto against totality or ideological / ontological being-in-the-world.

Chi shows her "being with" by situating herself in the narratives of her birth and family background. By narrating the life stories of her family members including her father, mother, and grandparents, she reveals gradually to her readers the life and the historical background of the northeast in China and she reveals the contradictory, fragmented, and chaotic state of China in the early twentieth century. She makes an ironic comments on the absurdity of war, especially the Russo-Japanese war and as Chi's narrative moves on, all the bits and pieces of Chi's life stories bring out more and more local, national, and even international stories. Chi's narratives make known to us again and again the

recurring war tragedies in war-torn China, wars which followed one-another since the end of the nineteenth century. From the first Sino-Japanese War, the last unsettling years of the Qing Dynasty in the early twentieth century, the Xinhai Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen in 1911 and the founding of a new republican China in 1912, the Warlord Era (1916-1928), the Manchuria Incident in 1931, the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) to the Chinese Civil War (the Kuomintang vs. the Communist Party of China 1927-1950), the social unrest has no end in sight, even after the unconditional surrender of the Empire of Japan on 2 September 1945 or after the complete retreat of the Nationalist government from China to Taiwan.

As mentioned previously, Chi tells stories drawn on her own life and observations rather than from official histories by describing plain details or characteristics of a particular matter, event, or person. For example, when she was ten years old, she was seriously ill with pneumonia and in order for her to receive the best care, she was sent to a sanatorium far away from home where she had to sleep alone for a whole year, experiencing nyctophobia (fear of the dark) and witnessed many people pass away around her because of pneumonia. She stopped complaining about this arrangement when she realized that her cure was a luxurious retreat possible only owing to her father's love because the monthly fee was one third of his salary at that time. We can also say that Chi's writing is a critique of metanarratives which only serve the colonizers' will to power and the warlords' ambition. All her stories are told from a subaltern or co-existential point of view contrary to grand narratives told from a hegemonic, official, or ideological perspective. One of the most admirable attributes in Chi's autobiography is her attempt not only to commemorate diasporic moments of her life, but also to imbue historical narratives with a personal affective touch. One of the primal examples is her platonic love affair with Da-Fei Chang (張大飛 1918-1945). Six years older than Chi, Chang was a son of a police commissioner of Shenyang City who assisted and released many anti-Japanese underground fighters and was eventually captured and burned to death by Japanese soldiers. He and other students were invited to dine at Chi's house and in the period of 1936 to 1937 in Nanking Chang had close and regular interaction with Chi's family.

On 7 July 1937, the so-called Lugouqiao Bridge or the July 7th Incident broke out, a battle between the Republic of China's National Revolutionary Army and the Imperial Japanese Army marking the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Starting with 15 August, the Japanese air raid in Nanking had become more and more severe and Japanese troops captured Nanking on 13 December 1937 and Chi's family and other citizens of Nanking fled. In Hankou, Chi saw Chang again who told her that he had joined the Chinese Nationalist Air Force as an air fighter pilot. They started their eight-year correspondence exchanging ideas about war, life, and religious beliefs, but suppressing any direct expressions of love for each other. For Chi, she and Chang were like two parallel lines which would never cross because Chang was risking his life in war and their common goal was to drive the Japanese invaders out. On 18 May 1945, Chang, in an attempt to cover his fellow air fighters, sacrificed his life in an air battle with the Japanese. In his last letter addressed to Chi's older brother Chang wrote that "when you receive this letter, I am already dead … Please forgive my love to Pang-yuan, a love that I am unable to accept or let go … How can I end up saying I love her? In the last few years, I kept telling myself that this love is simply a love between brother and sister. Otherwise, I will do harm to her when I die; I will do harm to her even when I am alive" ("你收到此信時，我已經死了…也請你原諒我對邦媛的感情，既拿不起也未早日放下…我怎麼會終於說我愛她呢？這些年中，我一直告訴自己，只能是兄妹之情，否則，我死了會害她，我活著也是害她" [211-12; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine]). The words in this letter were everlastingly inscribed in Chi's heart, disturbed her emotions at that time, and exerted a lifelong haunting effect on her. Near the end of the book, Chi dedicates a special section, entitled "Martyrs' Monument" to Chang in which she mentions her visit at the age of 75 to the Aviation Martyrs' Monument in Nanjing in 1999 and her mixed feelings when she located Chang's name on the Monument. She then sat in front of the Monument for some time reflecting on those most cherished moments in her mind (576-84).

As Fang-ming Chen writes, Chi's text is indeed "a book of time, and not of abstract time, but a book exploring the way time circles around in the form of a circular current by way of feelings, emotions, and surging forces" (43). Chi's historical narratives do not seek to justify any political authority or regime. Chi writes in a redeeming tone at the end of the book when she describes her trip to Dalian to view the ocean that flows to Taiwan from the shore of her hometown. For two days in a row, she went to a seaside park and sat alone on stone stairs, watching the Bohai Sea. She imagines the Bohai Sea flowing into the Yellow Sea, then into the East China Sea, merging into the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, and finally flowing for over 2000 miles to Taiwan, going around the island and reaching the southern tip of Eluanbi. Chi then ends her writing in an affirmative voice: "few miles under the lighthouse is the Dumb Mouth Sea. The bay water is of azure blue, quietly beautiful. It is said that the pounding of the surging sea water dies down when the waves reach here. All ends in eternal calmness" ("燈塔下面數里即是啞口海，海灣湛藍，靜美，據說風浪到此音滅聲消。一切歸於永恆的平靜。" [586]). No matter what kind of emotions Chi has experienced, in her writing she always presents them in an understated tone and yet invests them with unreserved empathy and it is this tug of war or tension between restrained words and emotional events which makes her writing so intensely subdued and so moving to many. In the end she offers us a perspective into not just her "being-singular-plural" life, but also a history of war. Another feature of Chi's writing is the co-existence or being-with of things, people, and events exemplified by the motif of binaries. For example, the intertwining doubling between the Great-Flowing River and the Dumb Mouth Sea, between war-torn China and bloodthirsty Japan, between the left and the right, between the Communist Party and the Nationalist government, between the Kuomintang and the Tangwai (and later the Democratic Progressive Party), between her family's (especially her father's) life and her own life, between the public and the private, between diaspora and re-anchoring, between war and peace, and between an elegy and a eulogy of life.

According to Zhen Jian, Chi uses what she calls a "double-wing writing," mainly derived from her father's life and others centered around her life: "this double-wing writing gathers together the flow of the two 'Great-Flowing River' generations and straddles across almost a hundred years of struggling history ranging from Mainland China to Taiwan. Epic in its scale, this double-wing writing, embedding arguments in its narratives, uses modern history as its skeleton and fleshes it out with deeply moving stories" (22). However, Chi portrays life in her memoir in terms of the doubling and not in terms of a stark opposition between the Self-Same and the Other, for instance, in the oppositions of China against Japan, the Chiang's Nationalist Government against Mao's Communist Revolt, the Tangwai against the KMT. She narrates, instead, a primacy of relation, a life in layers, episodes, events, and details, a life "in-common" and in "being-with." She devotes herself to the writing of the irreducible plurality of a coexisting life that can never become a self-same historical or political ideology. After the First Sino-Japanese War, most Chinese harbored a sense of hatred toward the Japanese invaders. However, for Chi and her family this was not a black-and-white situation in which one could take sides easily because her family members had close tie**s** with Japan. Her father, in particular, was often considered a knowledgeable person about Japan given that he had his secondary school education and even military academy training in Japan. When the Manchurian warlord Zuolin Zhang (張作霖) was after him in the wake of quelling the coup of Songling Guo (郭松齡), it was Shigeru Yoshida (吉田茂), then the consul general for Japan at Shenyang, who in 1926 saved Chi's father's life, treating him as political prisoner and trying by all possible means to protect his and his comrades' lives. After several twists and turns, at the end of 1926 her father eventually joined the Kuomintang in Shanghai.

Chi's political stand becomes also evident in the doubling of the Communist movement and the Nationalist rule or the rivalry between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang. Quoting her father, Chi writes that "an intellectual who has never been obsessed with communism before he reached the age of twenty is lacking passion, whereas to become a communist after age 20 is naïve" ("一個知識分子，二十歲以前從未迷上共產主義是缺少熱情，二十歲以後去做共產黨員是幼稚。" [238]). Chi uses these words to question the fervor of Yiduo Wen (聞一多), a political activist who sided with the communist movement at the time. Chi does not comment on Wen's assassination by secret agents of the Nationalist government, but instead focuses on expressing her confusion and indignation about her personal experiences of being forced to take part in anti-government parades she thinks are rooted in unreflective hatred and nonsensical discontent. Her purpose is to critique Wen's blind passion because Wen, as a role model for young people, has not only misled the young, but also caused more social turmoil, life losses, and eventually a full-scale civil war (238). Chi's political stance and her attitude toward the tumultuous student activism in the 1940s are revealed by a decision she made in her last university year, namely the decision not to take the popular and "progressive" course "Modern Culture in Russia" offered by Lang-shan Miu (繆朗山), but to sign up instead for the ignored course "Dante's *Divine Comedy*" taught by De-wang Tian (田德望). Refusing to give in to the satires and demands by her fellow classmates to join the student protest and declining to do what is asked of her beyond basic student responsibility, Chi acted against the current and self-consciously took the road less traveled. Chi's remarkable decision to take the course on *The Divine Comedy* is not only an example of her "active resistance" to the thoughtless popular left-wing student movement and blind passion, but also her "passive challenge" to communism and populism at the same time.

An important incident that marked the turning point of the student activism at Wuhan University was The June 1st Massacre in 1947. In order to oppress the students' protests and demonstrations, the local Wuhan government sent out armed forces to arrest instructors and students and in the chaotic situation three students were killed and many wounded. Chi, who was shocked at the campus violence, was nominated to draft an elegy for the three dead students in which she stresses the importance of going beyond hatred and expressing good will toward each other. The elegy was well received by most of the students except for some radical ones. Chi writes in her memoir that the words she wrote in her elegy foreshadowed her life attitude, that is, to be compassionate and forward-thinking rather than radical and extreme when facing critical historical turning points. Chi also employs the motif of singing as a life metaphor to express bittersweet moments of life, songs which make her life stories engaging and touching to readers. Her songs draw readers in and unsettle them with conflicting emotions, while at the same time creating a kind of estranged familiarity. Two typical moments which occur in the beginning and end of the work exemplify the bittersweet paradox of life through the motif of singing. In the Prologue of the First Chapter, entitled "The Homeland in the Midst of Sound of Singing," Chi mentions three songs which accompanied her from diaspora to diaspora, from river to river. These songs, sung alone or in chorus, characterize moments of life that are, in David Der-wei Wang's words "so sad, so pleasurable, so unique" (58) mixing pain with pleasure, always poignant, nostalgic, and sentimental all at the same time: "they recalled the river in their hometown, the Yongding River, the Yellow River, the Han River, the Huai River, the Gan River, the Xiang River, the Gui River, the Yi River, the endless stories of the beautiful rivers" ("每個人心中想的是自己家鄉的永定河、黃河、漢水、淮河、贛江、湘江、桂江、宜江，說不盡的美好江河。" [Chi 19]).

In the final episode of the book entitled "The Mooring of the Soul" Chi remembers a moment of singing when she went with her older brother and two younger sisters to Shenyang to attend the opening ceremony of The Chi Shih-ying Memorial Library on the date of the seventieth anniversary of the so-called 918 Incident when Japan invaded northeast China. During the ceremony, the young students of Zhongshan High School sang a new school anthem first. However, when the old alumni sang together, their songs awakened the deep-buried wartime memories of hardship and bloodshed in her and other alumni: "This white-haired generation went through thick and thin together. Along with the soughing of the white hair, their singings were all tears. In the water of the Songhua River lingered the sobs of the Jialing River, and yet we can still find unyielding persistence in the sobs" ("生死與共的白髮老人，白髮颯颯，歌聲中全是眼淚，松花江的水中，仍有嘉陵江的嗚咽，但嗚咽終有堅持的剛強。" [586]). Chi's

approach is to adopt different personae under different circumstances, that is, to consider the possibility of being herself and saying "I" as well as to assume the moments of being "One," "Other," or "others," and saying "we," "they," "he," or "she." In other words, Chi essentializes the first person "I" that functions as the center of gravity in her autobiography and from this vantage point she writes about or around the self. It is worth noting that the "I" in her narrative does not stand aloof from the "we," "they," "he," "she," "others," but functions in a relationship between them. The "I" and many pronouns and proper nouns weave together an exquisite and yet touching tapestry of history. As Nancy writes, "being in touch with ourselves is what makes us 'us'" (13). What Chi has practiced and achieved in her work is exactly what Nancy terms the "paradoxical 'first-person plural'" (5), through which readers see Chi making sense of the world. In this first-person plural Chi is being-in and being-with, she offers the reader an intertwining network of many wars, events, stories, histories, worlds, and lives. Yet another interesting aspect of Chi's style is that she intersperses into her work other genres such as literary allusions, quotations, poems, letters, and anecdotes. This characteristic writing style has something to do with Chi's profession as a scholar specializing both in English and continental European literature, as well as in Chinese and Taiwanese literature.

In the second half of the book, from Chapter 6 to Chapter 11, Chi focuses on describing her "new-found" life in Taiwan. She graduated in 1947 at Wuhan University following which she became a teaching assistant at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of National Taiwan University. In 1948, after getting married to Yu-Chang Luo (羅裕昌), who was later to be honored as Father of Taiwan Railway Electrification, Chi had different careers as a teacher and scholar: she was invited three times to teach either Chinese modern Literature or Taiwanese literature at different universities in the USA and in Germany, she served as founding Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and literatures at National Chung Hsing University 1969 to 1971, she was the Director of the Humanities and Social Science Division at The National Institute for Compilation and Translation in 1972 and finally retired in 1989 as Professor Emerita from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of National Taiwan University. After her retirement from university teaching, she assumed the position of Editor for *The Chinese PEN Quarterly* from 1992 to 1999.

In her scholarship, Chi revised extensively secondary school textbooks by including many contemporary works in Taiwan and directed projects to translate "Taiwanese literature" to English so as to share with the English-speaking world outstanding works by Chinese and Taiwanese authors who have been writing in Taiwan since 1949. As Te-hsing Shan notes, while the first effort benefits young students in Taiwan, the second effort promotes readership and scholarship among foreign readers and scholars alike. Chi's 1975 *An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature* published by the University of Washington Press is a 700,000-word two-volume compendium with poems, essays, and short novels from 1949 to 1974. Also, in her capacity as Editor of *The Chinese PEN Quarterly*, she organized a group of English translators both domestic and abroad including Nicholas Koss, Daniel J. Bauer, Edward Vargo, Howard Goldblatt, John Minford, N.G.D. Malmqvist, Michelle Yeh, John Balcom among others to continue her "Taiwanese Literature English Translation Project" (Chi 512-21). In addition, together with Malmqvist and David Der-Wei Wang, Chi serves as an Editorial Board member for the Modern Chinese Literature from Taiwan translation series published by Columbia University Press. Both in her scholarship and in her life, for Chi literature is a matter of "comfort": "when we come face to face with literature, there is no 'they' nor 'you' but only 'we'" ("在文學面前，沒有'他們'，'你們'，只有'我們'。" [512]). As the title of Chapter 10 in her autobiography — "Taiwan, Literature, We" — indicates, literature and Taiwanese literature in particular always teems with the sense of place and is inevitably tinted with local color. Typical Taiwanese literature often offers particularized and singular visions, which are colorful and irreplaceable. In the name of "we," readers come to an understanding that one of Chi's literary enterprises is to find a position for Taiwanese literature in world literature. All of her aforementioned ventures are derived from her vision for Taiwanese literature and her sense of mission to promote Taiwanese literature. In addition, one more visionary effort accomplished by Chi is her proposition to find a home for Taiwanese literature by founding a National Museum of Literature (later this name was changed into National Museum of Taiwan Literature). She proposed the idea in 1991, but the museum was not established until 2003 after many years of delay. Chi's argument is that literature alone is impartial in Taiwan and can keep away political or economic disturbances. As she explains, naming the literature museum National Museum of Literature is the best way to safeguard literary dignity regardless of Taiwan's political future be it unification with or independence from China (530). In a letter to Yang Xiang (向陽), Chi writes that a museum of literature "is not just a dead archival space. Rather, it engages visitors in a lively conversation. One can gain inspiration, stimulation, and more thoughts after entering the museum door. At any rate, one is not meant to walk out of the museum empty-minded" ("[文學館]不是一個死的收藏所，而是一個活的對話!進此門來能有一些啟發，激盪或更多的思索，至少不空心出去。" [532]).

Chi's focus is on the founding of an independent literature museum, her conceptualization of literature is similar to Nancy's notion of literature: "'literature' is language stretched out [*en tension*] toward birth and death, exactly because it is, and insofar as it is, striving toward address, understanding [*entente*], and conversation. And it is stretched like this since it occurs as recitation, discourse, or singing. (Each of these, in turn, forms the dis-position of language itself, language's exteriority to/in itself; each forms language's sharing, not only the sharing of languages, but that of voices, genres, or tones; it is a multiple sharing without which there would be no 'as' in general.) 'Literature' means the being-in-common of what has no common origin, but is originarily in-common or with" (90). For Chi as for Nancy, literature is a heritage, a means to expand one's horizon and engage conversation with other people. It preserves thoughts and languages which transcend boundaries. Extending out of itself, literature is always a site of sharing, an original way of being with those who have no common origin — a sharing regardless of one's race, gender, and class and always impartial, in-common, re-

sisting to conform to a mere partisan viewpoint. In *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life Writing*, James Olney writes that "in the course of *Memory and Narrative* I call the kind of writing I am looking at by various names — confessions, autobiography, memoirs, periautography … autography… and — the most frequently employed term — life-writing … What I like about the term 'periautography,' which would mean 'writing about or around the self,' is precisely its *in*definition and lack of generic rigor, its comfortably loose fit and generous adaptability, and the same for 'life-writing'" (xv). Writing about or around the self, Chi's life writing is exactly a kind of "periautography," which has become her quest in writing to realize the state of "being-in-common." This state is not the ideal state of the communist nor that of the nationalist, but as Nancy puts it "being-with-one-another" (50). As Chi indicates at the end of her Preface, the completion of the whole book is like drawing a circle of her life: "yes, the cycle. Before I started this book project, I followed my parents' souls to make a homecoming journey. From the Dalian coast line, I looked toward the island that I have rooted and then returned back to Taiwan to write down my life story" ("是的，the cycle，書寫前我跟著父母的靈魂作了返鄉之旅，從大連海岸望向我紮根的島嶼，回到台灣，寫下這一生的故事。" [15]).

In conclusion, Chi's autobiography is full of genuine and sincere affects which resonate with her remembrance of things past and her being-with-many and memories of moments and memories of losses and sufferings in a war-torn age. In her life writing, her "I" is not prior to "we" but always co-exists with "we," along with wars, people, and life. Moreover, her theme also co-exists with or accords with her style. As Chi moves through the exposition of her life, she always shows us the symbiosis of life events. The fundamental message of Chi's autobiography is that being is essentially "being-with" in relations. Chi's memoir helps the reader to reflect on war and history and to rethink one's tie to literature. Her memoir about her diasporic experiences in wartime and her life-long commitment to promoting Taiwanese literature through translation has garnered warm response, admiration, and respect. Readers are touched by her philanthropic vision of life, her affirmation of life, and her embracing of life's suffering and destiny without remorse.

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