

A Study on Art as a System in the Intervention of the Culture of Remembrance

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Abstract

The commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Formosa Incident was held in the Jing-Mei Human Rights Memorial and Cultural Park, an institution remodeled from the Jing-Mei Detention Center. The Formosa Incident happened in December 1979, when editors, among other staff, of the *Formosa Magazine*, a banned journal, which nevertheless printed and circulated four issues, were arrested from their gathering for the International Human Right Day. The 61 defendants were tried in courts-martial and put in prison (PTS News Network 2010).

In the park, a public art installation by Yu Wen-Fu was vandalized by human right activist Chen Chia-Chun, who asserted that the installation was honoring the White Terror perpetrator Wang Hsi-Ling. Yu's installation was a meadow of white grass with several doves perching over it. This meadow surrounded the housing unit of Wang where he has living under house arrest. But Wang was not a victim like the others incarcerated in this former detention center; he has a high-ranking officer of the secret service and was imprisoned because of a scandalous assassination he had been involved in. The dispute over the appropriateness of such a peaceful-looking artwork drew the attention of artists as well as the public at large. A question was raised: What is the role of art in helping us to understand history?

Keywords: Taiwan; Culture of memory; 228; Authenticity; Fictionality

Introduction

Consequently, the Control Yuan an investigatory agency that monitors the other branches of the government, impeached the Committee for Cultural Affairs (CCA) for concealing part of the history of the detention center while commissioning the artist to represent the "desperation of being detained in isolation" suffered by certain detainees (Control Yuan 2010). The chief of the CCA at that time, Emile Sheng later apologized to the political victims and their relatives as well as to the artist (Loa 2010, Wu 2016).

Since this incident, the public in Taiwan has begun to face the fact that while the memorials to the victims of the White Terror are usually produced by the authorities, individual perceptions of the past oppression that often do not fit in the official version are left out of those narratives. This study looks into those individuals who have different ideas about history based on either their personal experience or their research, and then develops possible conclusions about how history is understood.

Art as an Authentic-Fictional Work

In the following sections exploring how art, being a symbolizing and narrating system, can reflect the official remembrance by simulating or parodying it. The Systemtheorie, originated by German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, offers us a theoretical framework to examine the potentials of art as a system parallel to the generally recognized historiography. Further, introduce some theories of the culture of remembrance, and the realization of these theories through art creation in different countries, as well as his analysis on these artistic practices.

Fictionalization as a memorizing mechanism

With the techniques of mimesis, art can trigger our visual memories and expand our imagination through undefined resemblance of images that make sense to us. The deceitful tricks of visual art must not be a seductive assault on human intelligence, as Grana pointed out, "It was Plato's metaphysical distrust. There was the domain, the timeless

domain of truth, of ideas, and there was the gaining of knowledge when we began to see the shadows of the second in the movements of the first" [1]. These words guide us to question how the equivocality of art can affect collective and individual memorization.

It is appropriate here to review the role of art in society within the theoretical frame of Systemtheorie. According to Luhmann, the primary structure of a modern society is developed in accordance with the functional differentiation of each system such as polity, economy, and science. Besides the primary systems, there are supporting systems, such as the academic system and the art system. Functional systems have developed particular rationalities and specialized modes of observation that help the systems decode the complexity of their tasks through a binary code of decision-making. Examples are affordable/unaffordable in economic systems, true/false for scientific or lawful/unlawful for legal systems. The structure of a system is based on memory, and the system maintains its structural stability by observing the capacity of the system itself during its operation. Thereby the expectations of the future are based on the past structure [2]. The Systemtheorie does not draft a theory to describe the whole society but the society with numerous processes through differentiated systems. The operation of each system requires it to detect its own capacity of decision-making, which means the system must be able to define itself through its observation of itself as well as the observation of the observation the second-order observation. The first-order observation leaves a blind spot, which could be covered only in the second-order

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observation. The Systemtheorie emphasizes the incessant second-order observation¹ as the twofold operation, and it bases upon the observation of the system itself, discerns the differences within and without the system, and manifests the status of the system again and again. Through the continuing second-order observations, the system re-recognizes the memory the structure of the system meanwhile the observation based on last observation activates the dynamics for the further operations of the system [3]. In short, a system exists through its operations based on the systemic observations, which become the memorizing mechanism of the system. At the same time, the reconfirmed structure (memory) forms the legitimizing mechanism for the further systemic operations. As a sociologist with a strong interest in epistemology, Niklas Luhmann saw artistic imagination as a reflective mechanism of a functional social system not unlike the political, juridical, economic systems, etc. [2]. Nevertheless, art systems operate not through immediate decision-making like all other functional systems, but with a postponed and distanced operation. Thus, the blind spot² of the first-order observation could be detected and considered for later systemic operation. Luhmann grounded his theory about art in the historical consistence of being indifferent to reality. While philosophy looks into the nature of things and science dominates the church to explain the world, art continues to be engaged merely as involving the appearances of things. Art systems operate by imitating or replicating things without inquiring about the essence (Luhmann 1997a: 138). Through its own observation, art duplicates or simulates the operations of other systems. Thus, the following second-order observation, namely observation of observation, by art system is fictional, and art system profiles itself thereafter as a parallel system to reality [2]. Art is a supporting system that also operates with the binary code of authentic/fictive, to reflect the process of how a system legitimizes its own operation. Art does not mean to swindle, but to intervene in the memorizing mechanism.

He discussed further how art can inspire readers or viewers to question the authority of given explanations of history as well as a single historiography as the legitimizing mechanism. A comparable method of fictionality has been practiced in visual art as a matter of course. With much less narrative approaches than historiographic metafiction or the revisionist historical novels, visual art applies different strategies³. In the following subsections, he discussed the “interrogating eyes” vivified by visual art with a few examples.

Representation of the haunting past

In 2014, a parody of two Taiwanese men disguised as aboriginal people talking nonsense under a waterfall was made to promote a new TV variety show. The scene was a depiction from the movie *Seediq Bale* (賽德克·巴萊), by Wei Te-Sheng (魏德聖) in 2011, based on the extremely bloody *Wushe Revolt* (霧社事件) in 1930⁴, when Taiwan

was colonized by Japan. Oppressed by the colonialist government for a long time, the Seediq indigenous people eventually launched attacks and killed over 130 Japanese. And the uprising was relentlessly retaliated against by the Japanese government’s counterattack in which more than 600 Seediq people were killed. The initial scene of the movie was the revolt of the leader Mona Rudao (莫那魯道) encountering the soul of his father after the brutal massacre.

As Wei’s film has become a legend and set a record as the most watched movie in Taiwan ever since, the parody gave rise to fierce criticism that drove the producer then to withdraw the trailer. The two actors apologized for offending Seediq people and the sympathetic public, who perceived the movie as authentic memory of the past trauma. The solemnness and unchallengeable belief people have learned from the movie *Seediq Bale* comes from the blurred boundary between authenticity and fictionality in historical representation.

The best-known example in which audiences have confused fiction and reality is most likely the case of the novel *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown, and the film adapted from the novel⁵. These cases show us that in the era dominated by mass media, artistic creation can greatly affect the perception of people. Fictional products become stunningly challenging to the established mechanism of a society to memorize reminds the past. The mass media is not only able to re-narrate history, but also to create mythology from scratch with the most compelling audiovisual technology.

To cite literary and theatrical works of historiographic metafiction, he took the example of the outstanding play *Translations* (1980), by Irish author Brian Friel (1929-2015). The play is set in 1833 in Baile Beag (Ballybeg), a Donegal village in the agricultural Ireland. The protagonist Owen who returns home after six years away in Dublin becomes a translator between the languages of English and Gaelic (Figure 1). The other leading characters are Captain Lancey, a cartographer, and Lieutenant Yolland, an idealistic orthographer, both working on the six-inch-to-the-mile map survey of Ireland for the Ordnance Survey. The plot is about the colonial hybridity that goes under the surface of the loss of Gaelic civilization owing to the English colonization. *Translations* outlines the coexistence of two incompatible cultures and the cross-fertilization of two opposing peoples in the process of Ireland’s Anglicization. The double presence of English and Irish civilizations (phenomena such as names of places, curriculum in schools and languages used) inevitably causes fierce contradictions



Figure 1: Screenshot from *Seediq Bale* by Wei Te-Sheng 2011 (Open resource).

¹To understand things, the first-order observation is sufficient, as if we were dealing with facts. For the second approach, it is necessary to adopt the attitude of a second-order observer, an observer of observers. To hold on to this distinction, we can speak (always with reference to an observer) of a first reality and of a second (or observed) reality. (Luhmann 2000: 4).

²Blind spot occurs in every observation. Heinz von Foerster (1993: 14).

³In historiography, the term *historical revisionism* identifies the re-interpretation of the historical record. The idea is perceived sometimes negatively in Germany especially those implicate the rejection of the war crimes committed by Germans in the World War I and II.

⁴Also known as the Wushe Rebellion and several other similar names, began in October 1930 and was the last major uprising against colonial Japanese forces in Taiwan. The handling of the incident by the Japanese authorities was strongly criticized, leading to many changes in aboriginal policy.

⁵Which even inspired Louvre to arrange a *Da Vinci Code* Tour for the readers: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/routes/da-vinci-code>

and resistance from the Irish people and results in irreconcilable clashes (Lin 2006). Translations audience that the loss of the Gaelic language and Irish identity dated back long before the beginning of the controversial relations between the two peoples while the impacts continue up until today (Figure 2).

Through the staged cartographic research, *Translation* gives out a lively impression of the British Empire's territorial claims and modes of implementing its power. How maps work as political instruments in the service of colonization, and how the external and internal powers combined to coerce Irish society to conform to British rule are revealed, and the consequences continued to the late twentieth century (Leung 2015). By envisioning the political geography with map drawing, the *Translation* has successfully embodied a problematic memorizing mechanism and represented the conflicts between the two countries, cultures, and languages. Such memories have existed for a much longer time than any personal memory.

Similarly, quite a few Taiwanese novels have pointed to the ideas of solidarity, sacrifice, and patriotism, which might be in conflict with the present legitimizing mechanism [4,5]. With the following examples, we see that the art of historical fictionality intervenes in the genealogical or ideological myth-making by inventing an authentic past.

Looking into the founding period of European nations when ethnic diversity, class fission, and religious rivalry were critical issues, Smith discusses the crucial role of myths in the formation of nations or national identity. He explores the symbolism of such myths and their effects, and emphasizes the difference between genealogical and ideological myths. The former adhere to the biological affinities, such as inherited customs, rituals, beliefs, and sign systems, whereas the latter are about spiritual affinity with an "authentic past," such as the problematic efforts to enforce Chinese state power on Taiwan. The fictional 1947 *Lilium Formosanum* (1947 高砂百合), by Lin Yao-De (or Lin Yao-Teh 林耀德, 1962-1996), published in 1990 is about a fictional earthquake that happened on February 27, 1947, one day before the 228 incident⁶. The author attempts



Figure 2: The parody with unintelligible conversation (Open resource).

⁶When the Nationalist Party (Kumintang, a.k.a KMT) was losing battles to the Communists everywhere in China, it began preparing its retreat and power redistribution to Taiwan in the late 1940s. Seeing the high-handed KMT seize private properties arbitrarily and engage in corrupt economic management, Taiwanese people felt resentful to the new rulers. On February 27, 1947, a dispute between a cigarette vendor and an officer from the Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau triggered a large scale riot that lasted several days. The insurgency was put down violently by KMT-controlled military, and Martial Law was imposed, followed by decades of political repression known as the White Terror. It is estimated that during the 228 Incident the population of Taiwanese killed by the KMT regime was from 10,000 to 30,000 and that this marked the start of a long time repression of Taiwanese by Mainlanders. During the White Terror period from 1949 to 1992, around 140,000 people were imprisoned, of which about 3000-4000 were executed, for their real or alleged opposition to the KMT. Soon after the abolishment of Martial Law, the process of transitional justice in Taiwan began to emerge in the 1990s, facilitated by the investigations of the 228 Incident and the White Terror. From 1998 to 2014, in accordance with the *Compensation Act for Wrongful Trials on Charges of Sedition and Espionage during the Martial Law Period*, more than 10,000 cases have been compensated or rehabilitated through the foundation established for this task.

to examine how history is constructed either literally or politically. From the date and perspective of an indigenous Taiwanese, the novel represents the marginalized people whose voice had been routinely silenced in official history. The narration of the past is taken by Lin as a prediction of the coming catastrophes for Taiwan; the earthquake signifies the collapse of the suffering society caused by several systems according to aboriginal beliefs ranging from European invasions, Japanese colonialism, to the repressing imposition of Chinese cultural paradigms on the island of Taiwan (Tseng 1998, Ying 2010: 111).

1947 *Lilium Formosanum* vividly positions an unworldly indigenous young man Gu Wai (古威) in the world history of imperialism and the misfortunes it brought Taiwan. The author picks one day in the long history of Taiwan's constant disturbance from Mainland China. The story begins with a Spanish priest residing in an Atayal (泰雅族) community working to convert the indigenous people to Catholicism. Gu Wai assists Father Andrew in worship ceremonies, and sends or collects letters from the post office at the foothill of their mountain for him. One day Gu Wai receives a letter with the portrait of Francisco Franco on the postage stamp, the dictator who ruled Spain since 1938. Gu Wai was so impressed by the "tattoos" on Franco's face leaving him in awe believing that the man must be a saint of highest ranking. This reaction is because in the Atayal tribe only people with the greatest achievement such as hunting 50 human heads and contributing them to the community were entitled to tattoo their faces with "such delicate patterns." Gu Wai misunderstood the stamp patterns as secret codes of spiritual power and believed the letters contained the most sacred messages, so he stored them in the holy place where his tribal people worshipped their local deities. Gu Wai decided that all the sacred messages coming to and going from Father Andrew must be kept in the celestial place, thus Father Andrew's letter requesting support from Vatican was never sent. In this letter, Father Andrew describes the hardship in the mountain of Taiwan, and he correctly predicted the pending atrocities due to the inevitable conflicts between Atayal people, Japanese colonialists, and European invaders (Figure 3).

With a bitter sense of humor, the author demonstrates how the ruling apparatus is able to change the stuff of memory immediately and thoroughly. The dictatorship in Taiwan is implied through the mention of the remote Spain regime. The rules of Francisco Franco (1892-1975) spanned from 1938 to 1975, and Chiang Kai-Shek (1887-1975) from 1928 to 1975. Both of them rose to power from the military and promoted themselves to the rank of president, thanks to the back-up by



Figure 3: Translations played by Butt Drama Circle, Glenties, County Donegal, 2016 (Courtesy of Butt Drama Circle).

the United States. The United States not only supported the economic development of the two nations, it also helped shape the heroic images of the two leaders during the Cold War (Huang 2014). During their regimes, the two dictators had one another's moral support (Taiwan Today 1965).

The audience and the readers are given different angles by the Translations and the 1947 Liliu Formosanum. The chaos presented in Translations pins down the problems of translation. Yolland and Owen work to translate local place names into English for the map; Owen has no qualms about anglicizing the names of places that form part of his inheritance, and Yolland, who has fallen in love with Ireland, is unhappy with what he perceives as a destruction of Irish culture and language. A love triangle between Yolland, a local woman Máire, and Manus, Owen's brother and a school teacher, further complicates the matter. Yolland and Máire manage to express their feelings for each other despite the fact that Yolland speaks only English and Máire only Irish. Manus, who represents the local Irish culture, however, had been hoping to marry Máire, and ends up infuriated. The play demonstrates the relationship between languages and cultures and the ways we choose to ignore or break down our cultural barriers.

When addressing historical issues, creators are able to make use of commonly known historical facts and transform them with a variety of mediums. Fictionality is a major method for their creation [3]. He convinced firstly that only with the deployment of fictionality, can we repeatedly re-examine the history, even to very remote past, to see how cultural identity has been formed. Secondly, with the model of Systemtheorie, we are enabled to analyze how art, as a system, operates to intervene or reflect other social systems with an unparalleled insightfulness. Art is imaginary and fictive all the time, and it is given the freedom to envision what could have had been in history if an incident did not happen as it had. Utilizing the eternal ambiguity of being art, and by juggling with the binary code of authentic/fictional, art can reveal how our identity is manipulated through fabricating the collective memory of a society. Friel's *Translations* is a perfect example (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Left: Spanish stamps with Francisco Franco's profile, ca. 1940s (Open resource). Middle: The tattooed face of Atayal tribe (泰雅) in Taiwan (Open resource). Right: Postage in 1952 of Chiang Kai-Shek, the president who ruled Taiwan as a totalitarian dictator from 1928 to his death in 1975 (Open resource).

Besides visualizing history through an apparently fictional setting, in the following subsection he discussed another strategy of artworks referring to historical memory.

Fictive-authentic dialectics

There are innumerable artworks deploying fictionality with partial reality. One example is the Turner Prize-awarded artwork *State Britain*, by Mark Wallinger in 2007. *State Britain* is a recreated installation of the scratch pieces originally set up by Brian Haw outside the Palace of Westminster to protest against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. In 2005, his stuff was removed, owing to the enforcement of the Serious Organized Crimes and Police Act, a law passed by the British Parliament⁷ in the same year to get rid of activities around the Parliament unfavored by the authorities. According to the Act, Mark Wallinger made a circle of 1 km diameter on the map with its center point at the Parliament Square, and as it happens, its perimeter neatly bisects Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries a few hundred meters further along the banks of the Thames. Within this circle, any "serious organized crime," including the one-man protest like Haw's, becomes illegal and is subjected to police enforcement.

Mark Wallinger thus reconstructed the posters and placards in Haw's protest at Turbine Hall to represent Haw's long time protest within the circle (Street 2007). Naturally, Wallinger's reproduction of Haw's activities in a different urban context brought up questions of its authenticity. However, he argued that the question Wallinger intends to raise is more about the role of art and what kind of influence it is able to build. In addition, Wallinger wishes to explore the functions of museums inside and outside their conventional social context. With the remake of Haw's protest and the fictional 1 km circle cutting Tate Britain, the artist reflects recursively how the institutionality of art systems are represented in the bigger picture of the political reality.

The deployment of fictionality could be understood as the second-order observation on issues of legitimacy, gender, and ethnicity, among others. In many cases, the second-order observation is applied for the studies on the multifaceted history of past crimes. Quite a few tricks have been practiced in art, such as to blur the border between real and imaginary. Artworks he introduced earlier in this study are examples. And the appropriation of the work of others could activate dialectics across time and space. Bringing back the ghosts of historical figures also is a strategy artists use for their reconstruction of the past. We are referring to the ideas of "paratext" by Canadian literary theorist Linda Hutcheon here: Through these art projects, art systems are operating as parallel systems not only with artworks along but also with the institutionality of exhibiting art since Marcel Duchamp [6]. To practice fictionality within and without the systemic memory (structure) of the art system, which (de)legitimizes art as art, art can, occasionally, intervene in the memorizing mechanism of the functional systems such as historiographic, juridical, or political operations. In the next section, he reminiscing about some prevalently quoted theories of the culture of remembrance and further, in practice, how the memorizing mechanism is reflected through the art system with several examples.

Culture of Remembrance Referred in Art

The process of the reconstruction of the Jing-Mei Human Rights Memorial and Cultural Park mentioned earlier reflects justly what Benedict [7] has pointed out that, during the founding phase of many

⁷The sections 132–138 of *Serious Organized Crime and Police Act* restrict the right to demonstrate within a "designated area" of up to 1 km from any point in Parliament Square. Demonstrators must give written notice to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

nations, the histories of conflicts, such as civil war or even genocide in the past, must be forgotten through the mechanism of fabricating a national narrative⁸. Similarly, in Taiwan, forgetting and forgiving seems to become an ethical imperative during the transformational phase in the Post Martial Law Period. Although the opinions about the measures of Transitional Justice⁹ and the reparation for the past injustices vary, the urge to have a collective “capacity of forgiveness” in Taiwan has dominated the course of indemnification for quite a long time (Han-Yu Huang 2013: 67). In the following text, he questioning who are those involved in shaping a collective memory as well as who are those who stand as opponents against these authorities, and how does art intervene in the official narratives even after a long time.

Competitive memories of history

Benedict Anderson (1991) has discussed that, with the tremendous capacity for outreach inherent to print media in carrying historical materials, people of diverse classes, origins, beliefs, and generations can look back again and again to anchor their positions, and at the same time review how the imaged communities have been sustained [7]. Besides the literal dimension of constructing a united community, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), Pierre Nora (1931~), and many other scholars have inspired researchers to look into how histories and memories otherwise are shared and delivered to us [8].

Halbwachs observed the instrumental presentist appropriation of collective memory. A presentist approach suggests that social constructions of memory are influenced by the needs of the present; hence, “collective memory” is, for Halbwachs, “the result, or the sum, or the combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society” and usually selectively reconstructed by privileged groups within the elite circles (Halbwachs 1992: 39). Pierre Nora expanded Halbwachs’ instrumental presentism by stating that collective memory is used by groups to interpret a past, and yet these memories become detached from the past. Nora claimed that such groups select certain dates and people to commemorate, deliberately eliminate others from representation, and invent traditions to support the collective memory (Britton 2008: 8).

Pierre Nora took note that history and memory are opposite to each other, and the true mission of history is to suppress or destroy memory (Nora 2011: 9). Once the living, collective, and communal memory is

lost, it will be substituted by an ordered archival memory and a single constructed history. Memory is spontaneous, representing life, and is the phenomenon of the past. Since no historical interpretation can ever be comprehensive, fragments of history should be considered and placed into the constructed one.

Nora distinguished *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) from *milieux de memoire* (the real environment of memory). He states that there are *lieux de memoire* such as archives and cultural representations of the past as opposed to *milieux de memoire* in which the past existed but now no longer exists. He argues *lieux de memoire* are always intended by the present society to compensate for the loss of *milieux de memoire* and to maintain historical continuity. Since *milieux de memoire* no longer exists, such an intention will never be fulfilled. Therefore, within *lieux de memoire* there is always a desire for historical continuity that constantly attempts to repress, seize, and destroy the multiplicity of memories for certain national interests or other purposes. Yet, there is always a historical rupture and inconsistency that defies such repression, seizure, and destruction. On the one side, there is a tension between history and memory, and on the other side the gap between historical continuity and rupture in *lieux de memoire* a precious space of critical history is opened up for the resistance against the unifying national historical force and cultural closure.

By quoting Halbwachs and Nora, Chen, Elsa Hsiang-Chun (陳香君 2005) analyzed how art has been summoned to create the imaged unity in Taiwan. Through reviewing the 228 Incident¹⁰ Memorial nevertheless, the discrepancy between *lieux de memoire* and *milieux de memoire* not only opens up the space for individual memories but also for artistic intervention to re-examine the legitimacy of power.

According to Nora, the collective memory is exhaustive and indifferent to time, space, ethnical origins, and generations. Thus another kind of history has been born, which owes its prestige and legitimacy to the new relation it maintains to the past. Thus, history has become a replaceable imagination. A pervasive way to memorize alternatively is the spectacular bereavement in literature (Nora 1989: 24). Memories are delivered further by historical novels, and personalized documents or postponed expressions from the traumatic experiences could be promoted to the center of history.

Art Exhibitions held between 1993 and 2004, Chen explored whether or not the aesthetics of the artworks had the resisting effect to the collective narrative the “transformed nation” intended to create. Borrowing terms from Jill Bennett’s and Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Chen maintained that artworks could open up spaces in which art viewers would empathize with the traumatic experiences of the survivors, and a mechanism of trans-subjective “co-emerging, co-witnessing and co-writing” could trigger the “co-making” of the missed memory (Chen 2005: 233).

Deliberately avoiding art forms associated as Chinese, ink landscapes for example, curators of the 228 Incident Memorial Art Exhibitions engaged only Taiwan-born artists whose art had a distinct flavor of Taiwan to it. However, using general terms such as “Taiwan School” or “Taiwanese Painting” to present certain types of works by artists of certain ethnic origins has limited the qualification of creators, as well as possibly reducing the diversity of the artworks (Chen 2005). From the viewpoint of the autonomy of art, which contends not to serve political purposes, the emphasis of Taiwanese subjectivity through selecting artworks according to the materials and styles, and the origin of the authors, is doubly questionable.

¹⁰See footnote 6

⁸The term fabrication he use here is to cite Peter Burke’s *The Fabrication of Louise XIV* (1992).

⁹Transitional justice is the full range of measures and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to serve justice and achieve reconciliation. It consists of both judicial and non-judicial processes in respect of the right to truth, delivering reparations and institutional reform. The origins of Transitional Justice emerged from the establishment of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg after World War II. The joint efforts to investigate the crimes committed during the war and the various efforts toward de-Nazification in Germany marked the genesis of transitional justice (Cohen 2006). In the 1980s, Transitional Justice was called upon to respond to a set of practical dilemmas that beset the social and political transformations underway in South Africa, the countries of the Southern Cone, Central, and South America, as well as in the Central and Eastern European states after the collapse of communism. In the aftermath of massive human rights abuses, victims have well established rights to know the truth, including who was responsible for the wrongdoing. A history of unaddressed massive abuses is likely to be socially divisive and to generate mistrust between groups; thus, the states have the duties to assure that such violations will not recur. According to the International Center for Transitional Justice, four fundamental measures must be taken to restore justice: (a) Criminal prosecution of those considered to be most responsible, (b) Reparations to those who suffered for the harms caused by the crimes, (c) Institutional reform to prevent the machinery of abuses from recurring, and (d) Truth commissions to investigate the systematic patterns of abuse and the underlying causes of serious human right violations.

Chen's research stopped in 2004. From 2004 to 2016,¹¹ Taiwan went through three power shifts, which significantly changed the process of transitional justice. KMT, the ruling party imposing the Martial Law, had been voted in and out several times. During its rule from 2008 to 2016, any measure for transitional justice was either slowed or bypassed in terms of serious discourse (Figure 5).

Both the art exhibitions of the 228 Incident and the establishment of the Jing-Mei Human Rights and Cultural Park were initiated by the authorities, which heavily relied on the materiality of artworks, archives, and monuments among other objects of ritualistic memorization. There are plenty of chances to manipulate memory with publicly visible materials; make of the culture of remembrance regarding the Holocaust, which greatly broadened the scope of observation in this field (Tang 2003).

Reflecting Germany's inhuman history of National Socialism, Aleida Assmann saw the impossibility of an intact Germany and believed that the memories of German people must not be imprinted with any national symbols, such as the national flag, borders, or images of the landscape of Germany. To German people, only memories buried in trivial affairs of their everyday life could last (Assmann 2007: 29-30). Taking the art of German artist Sigrid Sigurdsson as an example, Aleida Assmann analyzed how the fragments of very personal memories and associations could be reshaped and represented for the unspeakable past. Furthermore, she explained how artworks could represent the entanglement of culpability and victimhood. Through the forms and materials of art, our perception could be shifted from simulation to stimulation of memory, and a mechanism of co-making memory could be triggered (Assmann 2011: 352).

Artistic reentry of the history

By revising and expanding the theoretical frames of Anderson, Halbwachs, and Nora, Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann drafted

a theory with a third dimension the media as the interface of making memories into history, and retrieving materials from the history for commemoration. In the era of multimedia, memorization becomes an incessant process of back-and-forth, in which the competition of various discourses is dynamic. Now, we are equipped with the multi-perspective to look back and determine that the imagined collective memory is even decoded and waiting for interpretations. Seeing the mechanism of memorization driven by social communication and media, Aleida and Jan Assmann considered that the past could have a future [9]. Aleida and Jan Assmann are the first researchers including daily affairs and mass media in the studies make the audience the witnesses while what is exactly to be the culture of remembrance regarding the Holocaust, which greatly broadened the scope of observation in this field [10].

From simulation to fictionality

Since Plato's expression of distrust, the visual arts have constitute cityscapes with different layers of depth, even a basket could look like a power plant. Through the projection of a moving light, the audience are able to witness the whole process of our civilization in a few minutes. As a false reality is happening in front of our eyes, nostalgic memories are summoned.

French artist Christian Boltanski (1944~) has a monumental installation *No Man's Land* crane keeps dropping clothes from high up, until the exhibition venue is covered all over by piles of clothes. Around the artwork, the audience hear the heartbeats of thousands of human hearts. It is to remind us that the essence of a monument is about human being. Intriguingly, this project stirs different feelings in different visitors. Boltanski's other installation with piles of clothes *Personnes* in Grand Palais in Paris 2010 reminds us of the remains of executed people or relics on battlefields (Chen 2010). And for some believers, it evokes God's decision regarding whose life will be taken each day (Hangar Bicocca Foundation 2010). In 2012, one year after the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima, *No Man's Land* was exhibited at Echigo-Tsumari Art Field in Japan, and visitors understood it immediately as a temporary memorial to the remains of the victims (Fu 2010).

These artworks, which he had taken as examples, are all about memorization, although they look like something else. They remind us of catastrophes caused by human actions or natural calamities without suggesting any occurrence in reality or making any direct accusations. By simulating a situation in the spatial context, these artworks the audience the witnesses while what is exactly to be witnessed is been signified by the ability to allure the eyes by creating illusion. "Artistic imagination is engaged in the imitation of appearances, a brilliant and treacherous convincing fraud, a mimicry all the more deceitful because of the lifelike skills used in its perpetration" (Grana 1989: 19). However, visual art is not necessarily more suspicious in producing illusive images than the fictionality in literature owing to its lucidity and visibility in the expressional tricks. He is taking about some examples in this study to show how close the artistic simulation to the reality could be the *Tenth Sentiment* (2011), by Japanese artist Ryota Kuwakubo (1971~), is an impressionistic installation of shadows. A model train with an LED light moves along the tracks and casts shadows of commonplace ambiguous.

He argued here that these artworks are not inventing alternative approaches to memorize history. Not a means of historiographic discourse, art is rather providing a memorizing mechanism intimately close to reality. To recur to *Systhemtheorie*, the art system exists by



Figure 5: Architecture of Memory, by Sigrid Sigurdsson, 1988-2009.

¹¹The Kuomintang's (KMT) ruling time spanned from 1949 to 2000. Then, the Democratic Progress Party (DPP) ruled from 2000 to 2008. In 2008, Kuomintang came to power again and lost the power to DPP in 2016. He intend to define the second stage and third stage of transitional justice 2000-2008 and 2008-2016, respectively.

mimicking other systems to reconstruct the narrative. And as Adorno had maintained, mimesis is a process of human beings to overcome the nature and to develop a subjective relation to it, while the mimicking art offers a place to restore the memories lost in this process (Stein 2008: 3-5). The art system of unremitting second-order observation could create a memorization process to act into and out of the reality repeatedly and timelessly (Figures 6-9).

Surprisingly, the shadows of ordinary things Nobuo Takamori (高森信男) describes ghosts as the spirituality believed by certain social or ethnic groups whose memory and identity are suppressed by the ruling power with excuses of modernization, such as the beliefs and identities

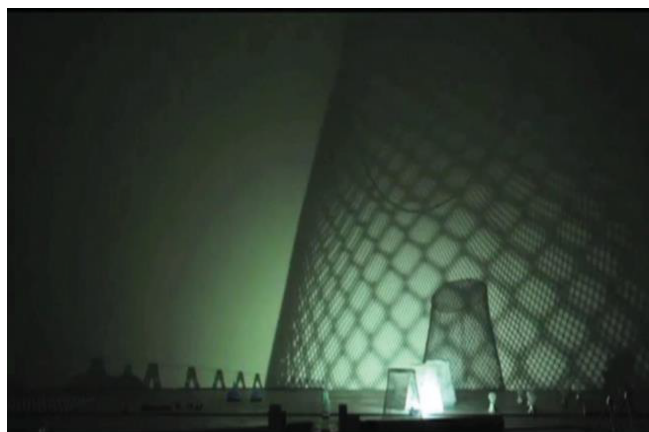


Figure 6: Screenshot from *The Tenth Sentiment*, by Ryota Kuwakubo, 2011 (Courtesy of the artist).



Figure 7: *No Man's Land*, by Christian Boltanski, 2012, Echigo-Tsumari Art Field, Japan (Photo: Courtesy of Fu, Yuan-Cheng).



Figure 8: Left: Illustration in *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* by George Psalmanazar, 1704 (Open resource). Middle and Right: *Museum of George Psalmanazar* by Lin Hongjohn 2012 (Courtesy of the artist).

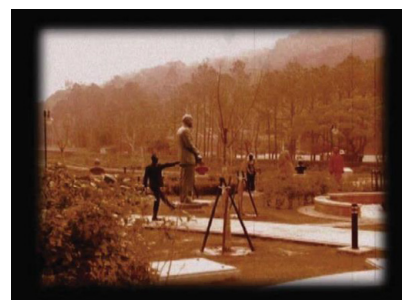


Figure 9: Screenshots from *The Phantom of History*, by Yao Jui-Chung, 2007 Single-channel Video, 2'28" (Courtesy of the artist).

of the indigenous people in Taiwan (Takamori 2014: 20).

Fictional Peace Reflected by Art

Among many artworks of re-investigating historical memories, we come across some cases taking the metaphor of ghost either as the unsettled historical trauma or the unanswered demands for the correction of the past wrongdoings. Kathleen Brogan, who cast the idea of *Cultural Haunting* by analyzing the ghost in American

novels by authors of different ethnic origins, found out that ghosts in contemporary American literary works serve the same purpose: To recreate ethnic identity through an imaginative recuperation of the past and to press this new version of the past into the service of the present [11,12]. Ghosts symbolize unprocessed but insistent historical remains, traumatic pasts that have been erased, and incidents misremembered and scattered. The idea of being haunted by the unclaimed and unwished historical memory has been cited in several dimensions by Taiwanese scholars. In analyzing Chinese literature including the novels dealing returns" because it belongs to nowhere. The metaphor has been used for exiled intellectuals in ancient China: the diasporas during conflicting times such as the wars against Tartars and numberless civil wars as well as the Cultural Revolution in China. Thus, the "writing" itself, responding to unsolved homesickness, becomes an act of exorcism or resembles the summoning of the revenant [11]. Lai Chun-Hsiung (賴俊雄) sees ghost as the absence of ethical imperatives in the modern political system to encounter the injustice resulted in the "others." While investigating how the metaphor is implicated in the political theories of Marx, Derrida, and Levinas, Lai points out that ghosts have been used to symbolize imminent threatening of the dead: as the saying of the ethical language or as a promise of messianic hope (Lai 2013: 3).

Through the following examples by Taiwanese and Vietnamese artists, he expanded the idea of "being haunted" to the unsolved desire to atone for the incision of cultural identity.

Art that makes fiction authentic

The Museum of George Psalmanazar (薩瑪納札博物館) by visual artist Lin Hongjohn (林宏璋), in 2012, investigated the history of Taiwan to an era of oblivion. Lin represents a museum of Taiwan based on the fake journal *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* published, in 1704, by a French man George Psalmanazar. This journal about Taiwan had been circulated in Europe in the eighteenth century¹². By embodying George Psalmanazar's descriptions about Taiwan in with the relation between Taiwan and China, Wang Der-Wei (王德威) induced that the meaning of ghost in quite a few novels is "that which a museological arrangement, including the imageries exoticizing or demonizing the people and the customs in Formosa, a mixed sense of humor and distaste is evoked. The museum is aimed to restore and present the fake Taiwanese history to imply the more recently fabricated official documents and textbooks since Kuomintang's (Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Party) regime. One example was the most known fable about the Han interpreter Wu Feng (吳鳳) who sacrificed himself to educate tribal people not to do headhunting. Wu Feng's efforts to enlighten the aboriginal Tsou tribe (鄒族) was written in *The Comprehensive History of Taiwan* (台灣通史), in 1918, by Chinese historian Lien Heng (連橫), which had been taken as the established Taiwanese history for decades¹³ (Lin 2012). Yao Jui-Chung's (姚瑞中) video work *The Phantom of History* (歷史幽魂) has reflected how Taiwan is haunted. Since Chiang Kai-Shek's ruling until his death in 1975, the whole of Taiwan threw itself into a frenetic rush of idolatry. All types of statues sprang up everywhere to an astounding number of more than 50,000. After the abolishment

of martial law in 1987¹³, many of Chiang's statues were removed, and some of them were relocated to the Cihu Memorial Park (慈湖紀念雕塑公園), which eventually became a popular touristic spot with its amazing collection of Chiang's statues. In the video, Yao dressed himself as a double of Chiang, goose stepping all alone in the park to imply the unfinished democratization and incomplete transitional justice in Taiwan after Chiang's death more than 30 years ago.

The two artworks here reflect the established historiography of memory and history in the frame of a nation. They correspond to the absence of ethical imperatives in the modern political system to confront the injustice resulted in the "others," as Lai has induced (Figure 7). The urge to iteratively question how the collective history is shaped cannot be repressed forever because unrecognizable faces of history appear from time to time like haunting specters, as Takamori said.

To respond to the Taiwanese artists' works mentioned above, he is emphasized again that art can inspire readers or viewers to question the authority of given historical explanations as well as a single historiography as the legitimizing mechanism. The strategy of fictionality has been practiced in visual art even more effectively. With much less narrative approaches than historiographic metafiction or the revisionist historical novels,¹⁴ visual art applies different strategies to vivify the "interrogating eyes."

Metafictionality of art

As aforementioned, the art system plays a reflective role of the society through artistic creation in all kinds of mediums. In literature, we see plenty of examples of historical novels attributed to the genre of Historiographic Metafiction. Readers of historiographic metafiction are kept highly aware of the history the plots are set in (Holl 2003: 61). *Historiographic metafiction* is a term coined by Linda Hutcheon in the late 1980s for the works of fictions combining the literary devices of metafiction with historical fictions. Linda Hutcheon defined the genre as following:

Historiographic metafiction is one kind of postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past event. It also suggests a distinction between 'events' and 'facts' that is one shared by many historians. Since the documents become signs of events, which the historian transmutes into facts, as in historiographic metafiction, the lesson here is that the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted. Finally, Historiographic metafiction often points to the fact by using the paratextual conventions of historiography to both inscribe and undermine the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations. (Hutcheon 1988: 122-123).

¹³According to the popular story, which was not recorded until 1855, Wu Feng (吳鳳) tried to persuade the Tsou tribe (鄒族) to give up their practice of headhunting, but his attempts were unsuccessful. On one occasion, he declared that, on the following day, the aborigines would see a man in a red cloak. He told them that they would cut off the man's head, but it would be the last head they ever took. The next day, the aborigines saw a man in a red cloak and decapitated him, only to find that they had killed Wu Feng himself. Horrified, they gave up the practice of headhunting forever. In 1989, aborigines who had long been offended by their perception of racism in the Wu Feng story protested and the story was finally removed from the school textbooks in Taiwan (Figures 8 and 9).

¹⁴On May 19, 1949, the Governor of Taiwan Province and the Ministry of National Defense, Republic of China (ROC), Chen Cheng (陳誠), promulgated the "Order of Martial Law" to announce the imposition of *Taiwan Martial Law* (臺灣省戒嚴令). Until the order was lifted by the President Chiang Ching-Kuo (蔣經國) on July 15, 1987, Taiwan had been under martial law for more than 38 years, which was qualified as "the longest imposition of martial law by a regime anywhere in the world" at that time.

¹²George Psalmanazar (1679–1763) was a Frenchman who claimed to be, despite his European look, the first native of Formosa (Taiwan) to visit Europe. For some years, he convinced many researchers in Britain, but was later revealed to be an impostor. In 1704, Psalmanazar published *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa, an Island subject to the Emperor of Japan*, which purported to be a detailed description of Formosan customs, geography, and political economy, but that was in fact a complete invention on Psalmanazar's part. The "facts" contained in the book were in fact an amalgam of many other travel reports.

Hsu Chia-Wei's (許家維) *Marshal Tie JiaJingsi Village* (鐵甲元帥—靖思村) and *Marshal Tie JiaTurtle Island* (鐵甲元帥—龜島) is a video work that reflects how the Chinese culture has been brought to Taiwan before and after the Republic of China moved its base to Taiwan [6]. *Marshal Tie Jia*, a god said to have been born thousands of years ago in Jiangxi (江西), China, lost his temple in the Wuyi Mountains (武夷山) during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The god was exiled to Turtle Island, a tiny islet between Taiwan and China that came under the jurisdiction of the former after Chiang Kai-Shek's retreat to Taiwan. Later, the temple of *Marshal Tie Jia* was demolished and relocated to a larger neighboring island, and a bunker was constructed there. At present, the bunker is a ruin and the ownership of the islet has been transferred again to the proprietors of the original temple. After returning from the remote island, people in the hometown of *Marshal Tie Jia* as well as the artist himself believe that they are under his commandment and blessing again.

By creating apparently fictional tradition and belief, Hsu recalls not only the forgotten histories but also how they are forgotten. Through narrating a living myth and how the modern nation-state appropriates memory, Hsu's work reveals the cultural (dis-)continuity between China and Taiwan, as well as the fact that in order to serve a political purpose, cultural identity is very likely to be manipulated (Figures 10-12).

Art system in changing memory

The interrogating eyes of the audience are moved to distinguish the most subtle differences marked in the history. Le Brothers, Le Ngoc Thanh and his twin Le Duc Hai, eminent Vietnamese performing artists, make the twisted memory of the Vietnam War even more explicit by mimicking the state of war. With their nearly identical appearances, the artists remind us that during the war, the people of a country are made hostile to each other without a slightly appreciable difference between them.

Born in 1975 when the Vietnam War ended in the province of



Figure 10: Screenshots from *Marshal Tie Jia—Jingsi Village*, by Hsu Chia-Wei, 2013 (Courtesy of the artist).



Figure 11: Screenshots from *Marshal Tie Jia—Jingsi Village* by Hsu Chia-Wei 2013 (Courtesy of the artist).



Figure 12: Screenshots from the *Marshal Tie Jia—Turtle Island* by Hsu Chia-Wei, 2012 (Courtesy of the artist).

Quang Binh, a region that used to belonging to the Communist North Vietnam during the divided era, the Le Brothers have been using their identities as twins to represent the memory of the Vietnamese of the war that once cruelly split their country. *The Game* implies the Vietnam War as the continuation of their resistance to the colonialist forces, first from France, then the United States. The U.S. government legitimized its involvement in the war as a bulwark against Communist expansion (Mintz 2011). Wearing uniforms representing soldiers from the opposite camps, Le Brothers' performance reflects their unconciliatory society and the unspoken consequences the war left on the country hatred – (Interview with Loredana Pazzini-Paracciani 2016).

Looking closer at the performance, the audience will find that the uniforms are actually remade. The brothers cut off pieces from each other's uniforms and stitched them back to their own as patches. Over the camouflage, the patches constitute patterns of flora and fauna, among forms of air fighters and tanks. The audience cannot tell them apart unless they scrutinize the patterns closely (Figure 13).

The uniformed brothers wander on a motorcycle with rifles on their backs, loaded with plastic flower bouquets that look obviously false. Appearing playful, the artists mirror the ignorance of the Vietnamese people to history. With real brotherhood and indistinguishable looks of the players, the *Game* perfectly demonstrates how the art system can go through reality and intervene in the "settled" memory (Figure 14).

As Pierre Nora's has pointed out, even after a long time, art can still stir historical memories and question the injustice in the past and the consequences left to today. The incited antagonism or fabricated peacefulness, or the memories employed to solidify national ideology, seldom get away from artists' interrogating eyes.



Figure 13: Screenshot of *The Game*, by Le Brothers, 2013 (Courtesy of the artists).



Figure 14: Uniforms of *The Game*, by Le Brothers, 2013 (Courtesy of the artists).

Discussion

This study begins with the question of who is competing in the discourses of the historical memory and with whose interests, through the debates that arose from the clash at the Jing-Mei Human Right Memorial and Cultural Park in 2009. He maintained the competition between different social groups over the memorizing mechanism comes from the problematic formation of a nation, including its territory annexation, at the cost of cultural identity. At the same time, the political operations taken as necessary for a nation often bring injustice and trauma to its people.

The further question he is raised this, which role art is playing in history memorization? With the theories by Benedict Anderson, Maurice Halbwachs, and Pierre Nora, we learn that history and memory could be opposite to each other. History is collective and ignorant of the memories of different perspectives, whereas memories are often repressed and buried for the sake of an imagined unified community. Unfortunately, both the historical narrative and discourse on memories are in the hands of people with certain privileges in the society [13]. Those who care to sustain the existing collective memory are often those who need to sustain the legitimacy of their privileged status.

Nevertheless, Aleida and Jan Assmann point out that the media of memorization could decisively influence the double-sided operations between history and memory. The audience is stimulated to limitless and various imaginations, as the artworks by Anne Sigrid Sigurdsson, Ryota Kuwakubo, and Christian Boltanski have accomplished [14,15].

No matter where their works are exhibited, their audience is inspired to associate their own experience with the concepts the artists wish to carry out.

Art creation is not an alternative to or an interpretation of reality but rather a memorizing mechanism operating repeatedly into and out of reality. With his introduction of several art projects in this study, he is able to assert that by partaking in the memorizing mechanism, art can provide a far-reaching impression with narratives or envision of certain historical scenes. These are the historiographic metafiction such as *Translations* by Brian Friel and *1947 Lilium Formosanum* by Lin Yao-De. Both works provide the audience a system of evaluating and balancing the historical facts as of the causes of today's discontent.

Conclusion

The artworks by Taiwanese and Vietnamese authors he discussed here all imply the injustices resulted from the power struggles and the consequential conflicts that never get settled. He took Systemtheorie as the theoretic frame for this study to understand art as the systemic operation to intervene in the official and the collective memory. Through the *State Britain* by Mark Wallinger, the *Museum of George Psalmanazar* by Lin Hongjohn, the *Phantom of History* by Yao Jui-Chung, *Marshal Tie Jia* by Hsu Chia-Wei, and the *Game* by Le Brothers, we can also see that the theories of Remembrance Culture derived from western cultural discourses have been developed and reflected by the artists from other regions according to the reality they belong to, respectively.

Western colonialism and modernism had great impacts on art in Asia. The influences remain and artists from this region react to the impacts with their differing histories and mechanism of art production. Although their art is not necessarily responding to the theories originated in the West, it is highly recommended to relate them to include the imperial or colonial influences (Turner 2005: 4-6).

The art system legitimates and stabilizes itself by testing the art/non-art boundary. At the same time, the operation is to blur the line between authentic/fictive of the representation of history. In this way, we learn that these artworks question the legitimacy of the political and juridical developments of a country at different stages. The artistic action is not limited in the art domain but crosses over other social dimensions. By deploying the fictionality closely next to the historical facts, art operates as a parallel system to the operations of other social systems and reflects the aftermath of their operations.

Finally, with the artworks taken as examples in this study, he emphasized that the artistic fictionalise can provide us alternative angles for highly sensitive issues and to look into the unspoken memories buried in the grand narrative. Those memories of the "others" and the voices that the official history tries to silence never cease to haunt us. Similar to phantom pain, it still might be contoured by art unexpectedly no matter how much time has passed.

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