Introduction

This book revisits China’s 1949 division from the vantage of many twentieth-century imaginations of a Chinese modernity. It examines the competing, converging, and conflicting modes of envisioning a modern China into being, in Chinese literature on the mainland, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas, across the 1949 geopolitical fault line as well as in the global Cold War context. These investigations suggest how the Chinese divide might be understood and show how unfinished or repressed ideas and ideals of the time resurfaced with a vengeance in politics, literature, and culture of the post–Cold War era. Exploring the intricate relationship between art and politics, nation and narration, I offer a study of social and cultural responses to the Cold War state division in mid-twentieth-century China, which continues to shape political and cultural events to this day.

In 1949, the advent of Communist rule in mainland China and the retreat of the Nationalist government to the island of Taiwan marked a significant turning point. With the Bamboo Curtain sealed along the Taiwan Strait, China was ideologically and territorially divided into various political and cultural entities—the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas—which displaced hundreds of millions of Chinese people. Along with the partitions that occurred in Germany, Vietnam, and Korea, China underwent a Cold War divide. In his study of twentieth-century state partitions, Robert K. Schaeffer identifies two distinct patterns: “those of British colonies—Ireland, India, and Palestine—and those subject to great or superpower
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military occupation at the end of World War II—Germany, Korea, China, and Vietnam." Whereas the former was a unilateral division along ethnic lines, the latter, a multilateral process, was a product of the Cold War.

Although the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) aligned themselves during the civil war (1946–49) along fields of force generated by the confrontation of the United States and the Soviet Union, it was the outbreak of another hot war—the Korean War—that ensured the formation of the Cold War bipolar constellation in East Asia and the antagonism of mainland China toward its offshore island along the Taiwan Strait. The Korean War (1950–53) caused abrupt change in the policy of the Truman administration, which previously had excluded Taiwan from the American West Pacific defensive perimeter. Realizing that a Taiwan occupied by the CCP would allow the Communists to control “sea lanes between Japan and Malaya, thus threatening the Philippines, the Ryukyus, and ultimately Japan itself,” and would therefore be seriously detrimental to the security of the Pacific area and American interests in that region, the United States sent its Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait to prevent CCP and KMT military activities shortly after the U.S. Army went to the Korean peninsula. Although the entry of the newly founded People’s Republic of China (PRC) into the Korean War effectively hampered Mao Zedong (1893–1976)’s plan to start another conventional war to liberate Taiwan, it also

3. Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War*, p. 116. This book provides a detailed analysis of the international political situation in the Pacific area in the Korean War. For the formation of the Cold War confrontation in East Asia, see Gaddis, *We Now Know*, pp. 54–84. There seems to be no scholarly consensus on the periodization of the Cold War either in the study of East Asia or in the more well-studied cases in Europe. Some scholars maintain that East Asia first entered the Cold War in 1948 (see Iriye, *Cold War in Asia*, pp. 164–165), but others suggest a much earlier start to the conflict in mid-1945. Westad, *Cold War and Revolution*, maintains that the start of the Cold War in East Asia begins with the outbreak of civil war in China. For related narratives regarding the situation of Taiwan, see, for instance, Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed*, pp. 396–397. The book was translated into Chinese by Chen Rongcheng, *Bei chumai de Taiwan* (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1991).
postponed Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi, 1887–1975)’s restoration ambition in Chinese mainland. As a result, the U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait not only neutralized and eventually postponed the CCP and the KMT’s direct military confrontation but also imposed a Cold War conception of antagonism between a Communist mainland and a U.S.-backed “free” island along the geopolitical divide of the Taiwan Strait.

A growing body of scholarship has taken greater interest in the cultural Cold War and explores how the governments of the East and the West shaped culture and competed for ideological and cultural supremacy. The U.S. Cold War operation in East Asia in the name of anticommunism went well beyond the military deployment. It also utilized ideological and media warfare—via the Committee for Free Asia (later renamed Asia Foundation), which was funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the United States Information Agency (USIA)—to seek cultural propaganda and domination. Jointly these U.S. Cold War organizations not only contrived to tell a story of America to the world but also sponsored a wide array of literary and cultural activities in Cold War frontier spots including Hong Kong and Taiwan. Across the Cold War fault lines, the Soviet propaganda machine waged an equally fierce war of arts and letters. Moscow’s international political propaganda institutions, including the postwar Communist Information Bureau (COMINFORM), strove to persuade its Cold War rivals as well as other socialist countries that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was the

4. It was after the U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait that the Republic of China (ROC) government in Taiwan started to receive massive economic and military aid, which enabled its economic rise in the following decades. For a discussion of the emergence of revolutionary movements in the early 1950s in East Asia and their challenge to the West in general and the United States in particular, see Hunt and Levine, “Revolutionary Challenge”; see also Westad, “Rethinking Revolution” and Cold War and Revolution.

5. For instance, see Saunders, Cultural Cold War, which investigates the CIA’s covert sponsorship of artists and intellectuals during the Cold War to oppose communism; Call, The Cold War and the United States Information Agency, which provides a full account of the evolution of the USIA and its engagement in public diplomacy during the Cold War years; Rubin, Archives of Authority, which examines how the CIA’s Congress for Cultural Freedom shaped a new canon of transnational world literature by championing certain writers in the name of anticommunism.
wave of the future. In the years of Sino-Soviet alliance, the Soviet model of socialist realism penetrated all cultural realms in the PRC, from literature to music, from design to architecture.

In his report to the U.S. Congress in April 1998, William C. Kirby asserted that China had never been more deeply involved in an international system than during the heyday of the Cold War. The apparent isolation within the exclusive ideological bloc paradoxically fortifies the country’s engagement in world political and cultural configurations. Accordingly, any critical considerations of Chinese politics, literature, and society since the late 1940s must take into account the Cold War discursive framework ingrained in the Chinese context. The Cold War confrontation was characterized by a dichotomous discourse propelled by the Manichaean myth of clash between the forces of good and evil, capitalism and communism, democracy and authoritarianism. Such a relentless dichotomy was amply manifested in the moral of Mao Zedong’s famous New Year speech. On December 31, 1948, on the verge of the Communist victory over the Nationalists in the civil war, Mao Zedong, in an editorial broadcast by the CCP’s Xinhua Press, called upon the Chinese people to propel the revolution to its very end. Adeptly using allegorical rhetoric, Mao resorted to the parable of “the farmer and the snake” to warn against “snakes” spared by working people: “Those snakes who inhabit the vast territory of China—big snakes and small snakes, black snakes and white snakes, the snakes who expose their poisonous teeth and those who incarnated into beautiful women—although they have already felt the threat of winter, they...

6. Caute, *Dancer Defects*, offers an essential historical survey of cultural competitions between the Soviet Union and the West covering theater, film, music, ballet, painting, as well as exhibition. The book has an extensive account of the Soviet performance and cultural activities during the Cold War. For a discussion of Soviet international political propaganda, see also Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*.


are not frozen yet.” Consequently, Mao requested, “Chinese people at the peak of revolution should, in addition to remembering their friends, firmly remember their enemies and enemies’ friends.” 9 His talk stipulated an either/or framework: either stay within this camp, or go on the other side with the enemy. From that moment on, as Qian Liqun observed, children of the “new China” learned to classify people into two categories: “good” and “evil.” When confronted with the evil, they would spare nothing. 10 The world was thenceforth separated into opposing blocs in stark binary terms.

This rhetoric of dichotomy, in which the year 1949 was widely regarded as a radical break in historical time, has taken hold and informed Cold War China studies. In the late 1980s, the dramatic geopolitical changes in the Cold War constellation—including the lifting of martial law in Taiwan and the Tiananmen Incident in the PRC—once again brought controversy over the designation of the 1949 division as the start of the Cold War era to the forefront. Scholarship in history and social sciences has started to question the conventional designation of that year as a moment of complete rupture in the continuity of Chinese history. Many historians and social scientists have ventured to bridge the dramatic breach that 1949 seemed to represent through a reconsideration of twentieth-century Chinese history and society across the whole sweep of the century. 11

In the field of Chinese literary study, the existing paradigm conveniently bisects the trajectory of twentieth-century Chinese literature into a pre-1949 era of modern (xiandai) literature and a post-1949 era of contemporary (dangdai) literature. It regards the divide as bringing an abrupt end to the development of Chinese literary modernity and initiating an epoch of literary aberration brought about by political

9. Mao Zedong, “Jiang geming jinxing daodi” (Propel the revolution to its very end), p. 1377.
11. In history, as Cohen, “Ambiguities of a Watershed Date,” points out, the representative magazine of Chinese historical studies changed its title from Republican China to Twentieth-Century China in 1994 to reflect this trend of rethinking the 1949 divide. Other scholarly attempts include, for instance, Kirby, “Continuity and Change”; Wasserstrom, Student Protest in Twentieth-Century China; Perry, Shanghai on Strike; Philip C. C. Huang, “Rethinking the Chinese Revolution”; Hershatter, Dangerous Pleasures; Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz, Dilemmas of Victory.
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authoritarianism on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Such a conceptualization not only writes off mainland and Taiwan writers of this transitional period as purely political victims but also consigns writers in Hong Kong and other Sinophone regions into complete oblivion. In recent years, scholars have made important efforts to reexamine the 1949 divide in Chinese literature. In the PRC, Qian Liqun and He Guimei brought to the forefront the much-neglected literature of the 1940s. In North American academia, David Der-wei Wang made the initial attempts to overcome the 1949 barrier. In reconsidering 1950s communist and anticomunist fiction across the Taiwan Strait, Wang demonstrates how these two Cold War enemies used similar cultural rhetoric in demonizing each other. The recent anthology 1949 yihou: dangdai wenxue liushi nian (After 1949: Sixty years of contemporary literature), with articles contributed by Chinese scholars in the PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas, seeks to rethink the impact of the 1949 division on the development of post-1949 Chinese literature. However, a comprehensive examination of mid-twentieth-century Chinese literature has yet to be done.

My book shows that it is important to bridge the 1949 divide in Chinese literary study and that Chinese literature of the 1940s and 1950s provides a missing link in our understanding of Chinese literary modernity in terms of the relationship between poetics and politics, nation and narration. It rethinks mid-twentieth-century Chinese literature in the international Cold War context of state partitions such as those in Germany and Korea. By proposing this new framework, I consider Chinese culture beyond the inward-looking focus of national literatures, as something arising out of the global geopolitical and cultural conflict known as the Cold War. Most scholarship on Cold War China looks to the high politics of diplomatic influence and international history. Studies on the sociocultural dimensions of the Chinese divide remain sparse. In examining literary activities on mainland China, in Taiwan, in the British

12. For studies done by the PRC scholars, see Qian Liqun, 1948 Tiandi xuanhuang, and He Guimei, Zhuazhe de shidai. In the field of Chinese literature in North America, see Chi Pang-yuan, edited with David Der-wei Wang, Chinese Literature in the Second Half of a Modern Century.

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colony of Hong Kong, and in overseas Sinophone regions during the high Cold War—the period between the late 1940s and the early 1960s—I suggest that a study of literature better captures the capricious nature of the Cold War than does analysis of history or politics. Ever since its emergence as a modern cultural institution, Chinese literature has been deeply entangled with issues of nation, nationalism, and nation building. At no other time in the entire course of the twentieth century was modern Chinese literature endowed with a heavier political responsibility than during the Cold War. The two opposing Chinese regimes took great pains to wage a cultural and ideological war. Neither was aware that instead of representing political reality and narrating national history, literature embodied those very treacherous experiences—personal, national, and international—we call the Cold War. They are unlikely twins.

In addition, I argue that the Cold War era brings us to reconsider the concepts of nation and narration. The state divisions in China, Korea, and Germany force us to face up to the syndrome of schism and schizophrenia always already embedded in the project of naming the nation and delineating its sovereignty. Taking literature as a weapon to represent their own version of Chinese identity as the antithesis to the Cold War Other, the Communist and the Nationalist regimes are mutually implicated as much as mutually exclusive.

Beyond Cold War Ethical Sentimentalism

In this section, I question the tendency of ethical sentimentalism inherent in post–Cold War narratives of the Chinese division in academic literature as well as the general public perspective. Given their discursive framework of subjugation versus resistance, betrayal versus loyalty, two trends of criticism need to be approached with particular caution. In their reflections on the Chinese intellectual mentality in the Cold War era, these critical undertakings endeavor to overcome the Cold War binary discourse, only to reinforce it in the most unexpected ways. Bound by the same dichotomous rhetoric, they regard Chinese intellectuals at the Cold War divide as either heroic dissidents or tragic victims, or disgraceful accomplices of totalitarian power positioned at the center. I venture to call them the two sentimentalisms of Cold War “if only.”
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The first “if only” hypothesis was implicated in numerous reminiscent writings and academic studies about mid-twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals. A strong sentimental investment is evident in these studies’ reflections on how these intellectuals spiritually and physically survived the ascending political catastrophes in the Mao era—the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Great Leap Forward movement, and the Cultural Revolution, among others. Embedded in the consensus that these intellectuals were regrettable victims of uncontrollable political and historical contingencies is the implicit question: Would these intellectuals have made the same decision to stay in socialist China if only they had known beforehand about what was to happen? Such a question in the pluperfect subjunctive mood has its preset answer: If only they could have anticipated what would confront them after 1949, they would have chosen differently. If only so, their intellectual lives would not have terminated prematurely; if only so, the whole topography of modern Chinese literature and culture would have been redrawn; and so on.

What underlies such conditional “if onlys” is the assumption that there could have been alternative ways out of the political predicament of that time, that there existed an outside space beyond the boundary of communist authoritarianism. With the continuation of their intellectual activities and contributions elsewhere—presumably in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or overseas—the trajectory of Chinese modernity would have been different. This Cold War hypothesis, which seemingly points to time structures in the irreversible past, is in effect projected into the spatial scope: an alternative geopolitical entity, located on the other side of the Cold War fault line. Thus, in an unexpected way, such sentimentalist speculation consolidates the very dichotomous framework it set out to criticize. The practice of contemporary exorcism only conjures up and ultimately perpetuates the specter of the Cold War myth.

Charles J. Alber’s significant monograph about Ding Ling’s experiences in the PRC, *Embracing the Lie*, demonstrates many of the feelings inherent in the post–Cold War hypothesis. Ding Ling, one of the most daring and avant-garde female writers of modern Chi-

Chinese literature before her conversion to communism, has been the favorite “literary dissident” in the study of Communist China.\(^\text{15}\) Provoked by Ding Ling’s radical leftist attitude after her recuperation from a twenty-year-long political purge, Alber writes that “my disillusion with Ding Ling was so profound I was no longer convinced that the writer deserved so much attention.”\(^\text{16}\) Basic to his complaint is the deep perplexity about how such a repressed literary dissident like Ding Ling could reemerge even more enchanted with the Maoist revolutionary discourse, the very ideology that had terminated her literary career and occasioned the most ardent experiences of disenchantment: detention, hard labor, public abuse, and humiliation. After all the ordeals, Ding Ling did not, much to the scholar’s disappointment, turn into a vanguard against the evil of communist authoritarianism, making testimonies to the historical monstrosity or at least composing some sentimental writings of regret or confession, as did many of her contemporaries.\(^\text{17}\) On the contrary, she was determined more than ever “to safeguard her political credibility and reliability, reaffirm her loyalty as a Chinese Communist Party member, and maintain her reputation as an old-line revolutionary.”\(^\text{18}\)

Alber concludes, “The tragedy of Ding Ling is that she traded her own integrity for legitimacy in the Party. . . . No reward can compensate for the loss of one’s integrity; there is no honor in embracing a lie.”\(^\text{19}\) Significantly, this moralistic indictment of Ding Ling’s infidelity masks a more fundamental anxiety that originates in Alber’s own disillusioned presumption: if only she had expected what would be coming, Ding Ling would have done differently. The latter’s ostensible “leftism,” however, smashes this axiomatic hypothesis. As it turned out, Ding Ling would probably not have done differently, given that she chose to remain even more revolutionary in a new

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\(^\text{15}\) One of the finest studies on these dissident leftist writers in Communist China is Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China*. For a study of the relations between literature, literary policies, and political domination in the mid-1950s PRC, see Wagner, *Inside a Service Trade*.

\(^\text{16}\) Alber, *Embracing the Lie*, p. 2.

\(^\text{17}\) The most significant works in this category include, for instance, Ba Jin, *Suixiang lu*; Zhou Yiliang, *Bijing shi shusheng*; and Ji Xianlin, *Niupeng zayi*.


\(^\text{19}\) Ibid., p. 287.
epoch known as a time to undo the past injustice (boluan fanzheng), when she was endowed with relatively more freedom of choice. It seems that there were no alternatives after all—not then, not now. Such hasty blame on monstrous political environments only consolidates the Cold War binary paradigm and justifies the critic’s own position of moral righteousness. Inevitably, it leaves much uninvestigated in mid-twentieth-century Chinese literature.

Although the first type of attempt to deal with mid-century Chinese literature attributes writers’ aphasia to political oppression by the authoritarian state, Maoist socialist or Nationalist, and flirts with a hypothetical outside world, thus overlooking problems intrinsic within literature itself, the second type of criticism betrays another dangerous tendency in recent scholarly undertakings.

The rationale of the second mode of Cold War “if only” is palpably caught in the deliberation by Ye Zhaoyan on the resurrection of Qian Zhongshu’s novel Weicheng (Besieged city, 1948) since the late 1980s. Ye, a writer of the younger generation who arose in the post-Mao era, observes:

While Qian Zhongshu’s giving up fiction writing might have something to do with the transformations in 1949, Shen Congwen was already mired in stagnation before 1949. The good thing is that both of them found substitution outside literary creation in the latter half of their lives. Qian Zhongshu finished his scholarly tour de force Guanzhu bian (Limited views), and Shen Congwen became a pre-eminent expert in archaeology. Ba Jin and Shi Tuo didn’t give up writing, to be sure. Yet they seemed to take more effort to say good-bye to their pasts and to seek to become a new type of writer that they were not familiar with. Why didn’t Ba Jin continue writing down the road he trod with Disi bingshi (The fourth ward) and Hanye (Cold nights)? Why didn’t Shi Tuo continue writing works like Guoyuan chengji (Orchard town) and Wuwangcun guanzhu (A master in the village of no hope)? A simple explanation is that the environment didn’t allow them to continue writing like before. However, Eileen Chang escaped the mainland and had way too much free time to write, yet still she did not produce any good works. During this long period, there did not appear a single writer, like Cao Xueqin, who could have written for ten years in the most arduous times and would die for a work that could reach later generations.20

Ye’s observation provides a useful point of departure. He maintains that political persecution was not the primary reason for dispa-

rate changes these writers went through after 1949: termination of literary life, self-transformation, and conversion to Communist writing, or forced or unforced exile. In doing that, he notably overcomes the discourse of exterior political victimization that informed the first thinking mode previously discussed. However, his reflection betrays another lure of Cold War speculations. After the careful analysis of the dilemma confronting writers after 1949, Ye asserts that “there must be something wrong with the desire and motive of literary creation embedded deep in the minds of our writers.” He continues to conjecture: “If only writing had become part of their biological mechanism, something involuntary, like sexual drive, like hunger, or like shitting, things would have been different.” If only these writers had possessed such a drive to write, they would have continued writing, even in a secret manner as accomplished by Cao Xueqin of the imperial time, for later generations.

Ye thus concludes that the writers deprived themselves of possibilities. Strikingly, he attributes the termination of literary writing to the lack of a certain kind of inner drive among Chinese writers. How to decode the political charge in this mysterious, libidolike drive of writing Ye emphasizes? Anyone familiar with cultural trends of the last decades of twentieth-century China will notice that this seemingly interior drive obviously points to something else than the Freudian drive of eating and mating. Instead, the Freudian terminology masks a deeper anxiety haunting Chinese intellectuals in the post-Mao era that was manifested in various searches for “cultural heroes” launched by the reconstruction of cultural images of Chen Yinke (1890–1969) and Gu Zhun (1915–74) since the 1990s. The ideal men of letters they sought to establish amount to intellectual heroes or martyrs, like Russian writers under Stalinist authoritarianism.
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such as Boris Pasternak (1890–1960) and Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008), whom Ye and his generation strongly admired.

Therefore, Ye’s regret that Chinese writers did not have the inner drive to write can be translated into a more accurate statement: Chinese writers did not have the guts to write. What Ye’s speculation, or, more precisely, expectation, implies is that writing constitutes a way to resist the hegemonic socialist discourse. Clearly, one of the premises hidden in such thinking is that there are only two possibilities for intellectuals confronting ideological hegemony: subjugation or resistance. Inasmuch as that opposition is itself a product of the Cold War Manichaean rhetoric of exclusion, in his criticism of Cold War literature, Ye only reinforces the very dichotomous discourse he seeks to eradicate. As chapters in this book demonstrate, what these writers experienced is more complicated than just oppression or victimization. The strategy of calling on resistance is as damaging as resorting to a political outside: both obscure and even negate the real alternatives and potential agency for liberation that exist within the totality itself. Both these two critical approaches oversimplify by assuming that the intellectual field was a one-way street in which all of the traffic flowed from the hegemony above to the intellectuals below, thus perpetuating a notion of unidirectionality, so to speak.

In both types of ethical sentimentalism, the critics resorted to a simplistic dualism pitting individual moral integrity against a historical process that was presented as demonic and out of control. Ye Zhaoyan’s lamenting betrays the post-1989 intellectual disillusionment prevailing in the post-Tiananmen Chinese mainland, when once again, the very state that Chinese intellectuals considered benign cracked down on democratic practice in promoting a second round of enlightenment and modernization in the post-Mao China. At this low point of morale, PRC intellectuals once again looked at the 1949 divide, when pioneers of the Republican China were confronted with the drastic turning point in the course of Chinese modernization. While they strove to praise virtues of cultural perseverance in these tragic heroes and mourned over their inevitable sacrifice in the repressive Communist or Nationalist statecraft, they might not be aware of their own ethical anxiety as a self-righteous rhetoric of resistance. Such a simplistic dualism could be as revealing as it could be obscuring in addressing issues of Chinese literary and political transforma-
tions of the modern age. This potential of Cold War criticism for turning against its own critical capacity is the foremost danger against which scholars of Cold War studies must be repeatedly warned.

To go beyond the containment of moral antithesis of good versus evil, it is pertinent to examine those elusive yet provocative moments, which were so easily wrapped up in Cold War ethical sentimentalism that the deeper implications about divergent modes of cultural imaginations of a modern nation were often obscured. When China’s quest for modernity and modernization reached its mid-twentieth-century point, the revenge of the past emerged in its most intense and violent form, and resulted in the contestations of various modes of modern imaginations. The following episode occurring at the Chinese divide provides a notable case in point.

It is a story about love at first sight with “our Party” (the CCP). On July 14, 1957, during the heyday of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the architect and architectural historian Liang Sicheng (1901–72), the eldest son of the late Qing reformist Liang Qichao (1873–1929), wrote about his affection toward the Chinese Communist Party in the official party newspaper Renmin ribao (People’s daily).24 In this confessional piece, Liang resorted to his first encounters with the CCP army to rationalize his decision not to leave mainland China in late 1948:

On the third day after Tsinghua University was liberated, there came a cadre. He said if the PLA had to attack the city (Beijing), they would try to avoid destroying historical buildings. So he asked me to mark them on a map, and to make a note of their historical and artistic values. I read Mencius when I was a child; the words “bringing food and fetching drinks, to welcome the army of a benevolent king” were substantiated in my mind on that very day. Previously, I had known nothing about the Communist Party. I “fell in love with it” right away.25

One would hardly miss the moral message this narrative carries. Liang, who had no experience with communist revolution before, started to sympathize with the Communist Party because he was persuaded by its moral integrity. Indeed, during the civil war period, the moral superiority of the CCP and its army over the

notorious corruption of the KMT regime served as an even bigger weapon than anti-imperialist sentiment in mobilizing the masses and winning support and sympathy from the educated class. Ultimately, at the historical turning point in 1949, moral imperative played an inestimable role in drawing the majority of Chinese intellectuals to stay in or return from abroad to socialist China. In this regard, Liang’s story is but one of the legendary sentimental narratives of the 1949 division.  

With the advantages of historical hindsight, it is now easy to point to the Cold War rhetoric of good versus evil forces effectively deployed by the CCP propaganda machine in its moralistic performance. Although bearing the unmistakable imprint of the Cold War ideology, Liang’s story is by no means yet another Cold War moral melodrama. In the post-Mao era, this story of love at the first sight, which had been repeated by Liang himself in his endless confessions during various political purges since the mid-1950s, returned to haunt virtually every work of reminiscent literature and academic scholarship on Liang and his wife, Lin Huiyin (1904–55), renowned poet, fiction writer, architect, and architectural historian.

26. Similar stories appeared not only in confessions made by intellectuals during various political purges engulfing the mainland China since the mid-1950s but also in those of many intellectuals confronted with the same critical decision of staying or leaving at the division of 1949, such as Shen Congwen and Chen Zhanxiang. Chen Zhanxiang (a.k.a. Charles Chen, 1916–2001) was a renowned scholar of architecture and city planning educated at the University of Liverpool and University College London. After witnessing the disciplined Communist army in Shanghai, he tore up the airline tickets to Taiwan the night before his planned departure and remained on the mainland with his whole family. He was famous for proposing and constructing the Liang-Chen project with Liang Sicheng to renovate Beijing while preserving its ancient cultural and historical features in the 1950s. Together with Liang, he was purged for his reactionary ideas. Allyn Rickett, in his famous memoirs of life in prison in socialist China, described an interesting encounter with Chen at a party at the British embassy in the 1950s, which was characterized by the schizophrenic existence of Chen between his Western educated lifestyle and his adjustment to the new socialist ideology. See Allyn and Adele Rickett, *Prisoners of Liberation*.

27. For a discussion of Cold War discourse, see, for instance, Carmichael, *Framing History*, esp. the first chapter, “Cold War Frame Narrative,” pp. 3–48.

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What kind of cultural politics and psychological economy is still circulating in the post–Cold War era? By invoking the moral imperative and emotional investment in Liang’s story, contemporary reflections on the cultural psychology at the critical 1949 transition seek to expose the ominous lure of morality wrought by the Cold War ideology. Yet, the repetitive elaboration of Liang’s moral drama only serves to conjure up the specter of the Cold War ethical antithesis, thus fortifying the very ideology it sets out to exorcise. On the other hand, the dissipation of moral sentimentalism blinds the readers to other important aspects of Liang Sicheng’s experiences and hence precludes critical examination of cultural and aesthetic responses by like-minded Chinese intellectuals to the mid-twentieth-century division.

What is often overlooked in Liang’s story is that his compassion toward the CCP stemmed from his belief that the party paid great attention to the cultural and artistic value of historical buildings and cities, which, according to his previous experiences as an architectural historian, were often neglected by the KMT government. Liang saw the possibility of cooperation with the new regime to preserve and rejuvenate ancient cultural cities such as Beijing on the way to modernization. In his considerations of European and Soviet urban developments around the same time, Liang observed that the totalitarian socialist system might also have advantages for modern architecture and urban planning. Planned by the state at large, a rational urban transformation and modernization would be feasible in the new China and would greatly benefit the modernization of the ancient city of Beijing.

Therefore, what the moral melodrama of good versus evil has displaced is the intriguing lure of modernization: a vision of urban renovation and imagination in the upcoming socialist state. If moral imperative influenced Liang’s choice between the two parties, which I believe was true among the majority of intellectuals of the time, then the politics of modern imagination was of equal, if not greater, importance in his ruminations at that transitional moment. Liang’s

29. In those years, Liang was disappointed with the KMT’s neglect of historical buildings, for instance, in Shenyang, where he and Lin established the first department of architecture in China. See Lin Zhu, Kunhuo de dajiang.
story of apparent moral sentimentality indicates that the socialist discourse, which was itself born out of the process of Chinese modernization, had distinct attractions even for those intellectuals who did not belong to the left wing. Accordingly, the mid-twentieth-century transitional experiences of these intellectuals cannot be simplified as the drama of repression and subjugation. Although the divergence between Liang’s conception of modern urbanity and the Maoist vision of urban industrialization soon became clear in the project of socialist reconstruction and modernization of Beijing, the anticipation at the 1949 turning point of potential, even if only partial, convergence of modern imaginations between the new Communist regime and the nonleftist intellectuals cannot be ignored. The survey of the mid-twentieth-century Chinese literary and cultural topography is incomplete without investigating such moments of convergence, however vulnerable and elusive they may ultimately turn out to be.

Given that Liang’s vision of urban modernization foregrounds the harmonious combination of preserving the historical city and constructing modern urban space, it was bound to conflict with the Maoist picture of industrial urbanity based on a complete obliteration of the past. Inasmuch as the Maoist notion of modern Beijing imagines modernity as constituting a radical break, a tabula rasa, it stands closer to the modern vision as manifested in Georges-Eugène Haussmann’s Paris project in 1848, which “bludgeoned the city into modernity,”31 or to Moscow’s version of squeezing modernity into the present unity of urban traditionality.32 Consequently, it was the clashes between different modern imaginations that led to Liang’s inevitable deviation from the mainstream discourse and the ensuing purges after 1949. Although his dream of modern Beijing was considerably damaged by the Maoist urban planning, especially with the


32. In the 1950s, before the relationship between the PRC and its socialist ally deteriorated, urban planners sent from the Soviet Union played a crucial role in the modernization project for Beijing. For the conflicts between the Soviet and Chinese architects, Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhanxiang in particular, see Wang Jun, *Chengji*, pp. 73–96.
destruction of ancient city walls and gate towers, the legacy of Li-ang’s urban planning found its way back into the post–Cold War modernization plan of Beijing.

Such ambivalent moments when different orders of modern imaginations were in competition or complementation at the 1949 Chinese division are what this book sets out to explore. These intriguing instances of deviations and convergence, which cannot be included in the clear-cut rubric of political antagonism, have been largely overlooked. And they have remained unresolved even in the presumed post–Cold War era. Even today, the prevalent thinking often implies that the overcoming of the oppressive totality or hegemony is a flight to the opposite side, the other side of the shore. As discussed previously, this type of criticism still lingers within the constraints of Cold War rhetoric, which favors conceptualization in terms of binary oppositions and often privileges one over the other. As this book reveals, there has never been any innocent laissez-passer to a better world. Or, to begin with, there exists no better world beyond, nor redemption on the other shore. Instead, efforts can only be made from within. As Walter Benjamin pointed out in his examination of Charles Baudelaire’s lyricism in the late capitalist period, the best means of resistance for intellectuals might be their function as “secret agent” within the existing system: “There is little point in trying to include a Baudelaire in the fabric of the most advanced position in mankind’s struggle for liberation. From the outset it seems more promising to investigate his machinations where undoubtedly he is at home—in the enemy camp. Very rarely are they a blessing for the opposite side. Baudelaire was a secret agent—an agent of the secret discontent of his class with its own rule.” Indeed, these interior fragmented activities do not point to a world beyond, nor do they intend to effect yet another apocalyptical revolutionary turnover. Rather, through political penetrations into the totalizing control, these intellectual agencies render the alleged iron cage a porous space.

The collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989 is generally regarded as marking the end of the Cold War. Francis

Fukuyama’s notion of the “end of history” suggested a universal, liberal democracy instituting the ultimate form of human society. However, socialism as a form of government remains resilient in the People’s Republic of China. Across the Taiwan Strait, the Cold War ideological antagonism along the Bamboo Curtain lingers on. The recent economic growth in mainland China seemed to reinforce the myth of China’s rise, which triggered the debate about a “China model.” From the official government discourse—socialism with Chinese characteristics endorsing a “harmonious society”—to popular culture—such as the mega-epic film The Founding of a Republic (2009), mainland Chinese society seems to indulge in triumphalism about Chinese socialism, which has at least some of the critics in ecstatic rapture. Theories have emerged on the governance of “socialist benevolence” beyond democracy that best epitomizes the Beijing Consensus, which conjures up the specter of a nationalist cultural renaissance à la Confucian ethics, on which the Cold War KMT regime in Taiwan claimed its legitimacy, or a not-so-far-fetched “capitalist Confucianism” prevailing at the peripheries of a “Greater China” in the 1980s. Such praises of socialism seems to differ drastically from the harsh denunciation of Maoist socialist practice (1949–79) by the PRC “Second Enlightenment” intellectuals of the 1980s, which disavowed the experiences of the first three decades of socialist China as a demonic historical aberration and the realization of the worst nightmare of Chinese feudalism. Although their political or cultural positions might be starkly different, both discourses lack serious reflections on Chinese socialist legacy at the political, cultural, or economic levels.

Today, as the ideologues of the Taiwanese independence movement are preoccupied with a mission of desinicizing nation building, the forces of globalization are smoothing over the PRC’s socialist industrial wastelands. None is willing or able to curb the process whereby the two formerly hostile regimes are busy making friends across the Taiwan Strait. How to come to terms with the adamancy of Chinese state socialism in the post–Cold War era? How to approach disintegrated Chinese polities, cultures, and modern imaginaries that

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34. For the conception of “cultural China” as related to a new type of capitalism in periphery states such as Singapore, see Tu Wei-ming, “Cultural China.”
resulted from the Cold War divide and remain severed in a post–Cold War “borderless world”? It is high time to revisit the 1949 Chinese Cold War division, which is not quite history yet, to examine how a modern nation was being imagined and put into practice in disparate political entities across geographical and ideological fault lines.

How did literary narratives of the 1940s and 1950s help ratify or contest the division? How did people deal with the diverse intellectual activities and competing imaginations of a modern nation in the era of ideological despotism? How did unfinished or repressed ideas and ideals of Chinese modernity resurface with a vengeance in politics, literature, and culture of the post–Cold War era? To address these questions, I examine the interplay of multivalent modernities across generic, gender, disciplinary, linguistic, and ideological boundaries in Cold War China. I study writers who had been major figures in Chinese literature prior to the 1949 divide and underwent dramatic changes in their careers during the Cold War era in multiple Chinese political entities: Shen Congwen (1902–88), Ding Ling (1904–86), Wu Zhuoliu (1900–76), Feng Zhi (1905–93), and Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang, 1920–95). By examining their major works of the 1940s and 1950s as well as their intellectual, artistic, and ethical choices at the Chinese severance, I explore how their cultural endeavors revealed disparate visions of Chinese modernity that competed and converged with the overriding political discourses and attested to the poignant and treacherous experiences called the Cold War.

My book therefore considers the Chinese Cold War divide not just as a consequence of domestic or international ideological antagonism but also as an emanation from the unsettled, competing modes of envisioning a modern Chinese nation. This view helps us understand Chinese modernity as an incomplete cause that resurfaced forcefully in post–Cold War politics, literature, and culture in Greater China, manifested in the People’s Republic of China’s socialist triumphalism that heralds a model of “Confucian socialism” as well as Taiwan’s independence-versus-unification controversies.

Chapter 1 examines how the discipline of modern Chinese literature (xiandai wenxue) was invented during the early Cold War years in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, in conjunction with a critical reading of three foundational treatises that informed the political and cultural policies in these divided entities: Mao
Zedong’s 1940 “Xin minzhu zhuyi lun” (On new democracy), the New Confucianists’ 1958 “Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan” (A manifesto to the world on behalf of Chinese culture), and Chiang Kai-shek’s 1953 “Minsheng zhuyi yule liangpian bushu” (Supplementary treatises on education and recreation to the “Principle of Livelihood”). I consider how the ascendancy of modern Chinese literature registered different imaginaries of a modern literature, culture, and nation at the onset of the political division and argue that the notion of Cold War Chinese modernity was produced through various active relations among these diverse loci of modern imaginaries.

Chapters 2 through 6 represent five entry points to explore the multiple modes of imagining a modern nation at the Chinese division. Chapter 2 deals with an aesthetic of the fragment and fragmentation by examining Shen Congwen’s reflections on literature, art, antiquity, museum work, and the discourse of insanity. I seek to interpret Shen’s schizophrenic breakdown around 1949 and his subsequent conversion from fiction writing to research on antiquities and art, and suggest that by conceptualizing a form of history written with artistic fragments and details of the materialist past, Shen presents an alternative vision of modernity to the monumental socialist revolutionary history. In his post-1949 work, including his Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu (Studies on traditional Chinese costumes), Shen turns to the multitude of fragmented historical artifacts and episodic art historical accounts as a means of breaking with the monolithic socialist ideology.

Chapter 3 explores the clashes between feminist consciousness and socialist revolutionary discourse in Ding Ling’s work after the late 1940s. Through an analysis of two socialist realist works—the Stalin literary prize–winning Taiyang zhaozai sangganhe shang (The sun shines over the Sanggan River, 1948), and “Du Wanxiang” (Du Wanxiang, 1979), a belated degendered model work of socialist realism published after Ding Ling’s political recuperation—this chapter examines a woman writer caught between the Communist mandates and her feminist consciousness. Incapable of carving out a feminist space in the socialist discourse of gender and sexuality, Ding Ling fought vainly against her antagonist undead other to prove her leftist revolutionary loyalty.

Chapter 4 inquires into the entangled problematic of colonial modernity, nationalism, and cultural identification ingrained in mid-
twenty-first-century Taiwanese literature, which was repressed by the dominant anticommunist ideology of the Nationalist regime in Taiwan. Taking Wu Zhuoliu’s postwar Taiwan narratives as a point of departure, this chapter first discusses ethnic confrontations in post-retrocession years that obscure more convoluted clashes between nationalistic sentiments and Japanese colonialism, modernization’s prosperity promise and destructive potentiality. It then analyzes various historical and theoretical narratives of the 1895 Taiwan Republic to probe the limitations of modernization theory fashioned in Cold War America and argues that modernity has never been singular. By exploring the political, cultural, and linguistic implications of “orphanization” in Wu Zhuoliu’s novel *Yaxiya de gu’er* (Orphan of Asia) and its criticism, I argue that the concept best conveys a split modern Taiwan subjectivity between Chinese culturalism and Japanese colonialism, between traditional and modern forces. Unresolved problems also resulted in opposition between the independence and unification campaigns.

Chapter 5 focuses on Chinese intellectual endeavors to reconcile the aesthetic and the political, modernist poetry and socialist ideology, European humanism and Maoist class discourse across the mid-twentieth-century divide. Socialist concepts of national collectivity had a strong appeal to writers who sought a positive relationship between aesthetic autonomy and social commitment. To consider this poignant process of reconciliation, I discuss the transition of Feng Zhi, a prominent modernist poet and a significant German literature scholar, from poetry to politics in socialist China. Feng’s disavowal of his pre-1949 modernist aesthetics has often been regarded as a cultural and ethical betrayal. An examination of his ideas of poetic solitude, analogy, metamorphosis, and social engagement formed in his study of Rilke, Goethe, and other European humanists reveals that Feng’s concept of relationality converges with the socialist idea of collectivity. In his efforts to bridge art and politics, Feng forges a notion of affirmative socialist affinity, which enables the bourgeois aesthetic self to overcome its finitude by positioning itself within a larger Whole of socialist kinship.

Chapter 6 concerns the intricate relationship between culture and polity, the left and the right, and enlightenment and entertainment that played out conspicuously in Cold War Hong Kong in the interstices of the British colony and the two competing political regimes
Introduction

across the Taiwan Strait. When anticommunist fiction met New School martial arts romance in newspapers, the arbitrariness in politics and the permeable boundary between ideological rivals found a most compelling manifestation. To consider these issues, I investigate Eileen Chang's post-1949 diasporic, translingual, and cross-media literary and cultural practices, which were deeply embedded in the Cold War history of the East Asian front, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, and of the United States. In her 1950s political fiction and two endeavors to rework the Qing dynasty classic novel *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber) in her late career, I argue, Chang's political and artistic ambiguity and her compulsive rewriting across disparate languages, genres, and media problematized the binary ideological confrontation and provided a way to break out of political domination in the age of Cold War antagonism. The epilogue considers the possibilities of constructing a de-Cold War critical consciousness.

In the main, these six chapters touch upon various moments of convergence and/or divergence in China's modern imaginations across the 1949 divide. Together they attest to the dynamic configuration of Chinese modernities in the Cold War era's literary and cultural productions, thus constructing a special kind of modernity with a Cold War face. The discourses of modernity and the Cold War are mutually imbricated. Like the modernity project, the Cold War is also Janus-faced, enacting and embodying modernity's liberating and destructive potentials. As it excludes the enemy and bifurcates the globe, the Cold War also reconfigures borders, forms allegiances, and opens up new routes of transnational flow. As it furnishes modernity's new stage with a Manichean face-off, this Cold War face obscures issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, colonialism, diaspora, and diverse cultural practices behind the mask of communism or anticommunism. In this petrified, frozen face of modernity, everything about separation, loss, assimilation, or rehabilitation is expressed and, at the same time, concealed. As this book demonstrates, even in the most rigorous period of ideological despotism, those modern visions manifested in Chinese literature and culture never ceased to compete and to negotiate. Such contestations and competitions informed the Cold War binary discourse, yet simultaneously undermined it and anticipated its ultimate disintegration.