

I Want to Be Human

A Story of China and the Human

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In 2009 a Chinese blockbuster, *City of Life and Death* (南京! 南京! *Nanjing! Nanjing!*, dir. Lu Chuan), unexpectedly managed to become a symptomatic representation of contemporary Chinese society. It did so by constructing an allegory of China and the human.

The movie represents the horrendous tragedy of the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, the mass murder of three hundred thousand Chinese within a matter of six weeks.¹ It has a distinct visual style: wide screen, black and white with a brownish hue, shallow focus throughout. It transposes human figures in near and medium shots onto an expansive and depthless canvas, exposing the traces of some unself-conscious allegorical construction. The “human” is projected against the historical backdrop of “China,” but exactly where the human is located in relation to history lacks clarity or depth. Considering the fact that the film was a state-sponsored project through and through (approved directly by the central government,² funded entirely by the China Film Corporation) and its main objective, according to Lu Chuan, the director, was to present a “Chinese style of resistance,” the choice of narrative (the Nanjing Massacre) as well as the film’s style of narration appear to be at once nonsensical and thought provoking.³

The discourse of China and the human presented in this movie reflects the historical entanglement and tension of “China” and “human” in twentieth-century Chinese cultural criticism. The movie also directly engages with issues of historical trauma (the Nanjing Massacre in particular), the politics of memory, and the recuperation of humanity in the Chinese context. What is unique and important about the Nanjing

Massacre is that this historical incident, along with its existing representations, positions the “China and the human” problematic not just along the China-West axis but also in an intra-Asian regional context. The Nanjing Massacre narrated by this movie and other narratives (*The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe* and *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, for instance) testifies to the intricate power relations revolving around the “human” as a concept with a history of unequal and nonequivalent distribution regionally and globally. In this article, I analyze *City of Life and Death* as a text that illustrates this nexus of power, which has shaped the narration of “China” in history and the contemporary moment. I also argue that the movie articulates the desire for the universal human among the emerging new Chinese middle class, which has proved itself to be a formidable force in cultural and ideological production in contemporary China.

Discourses of the Human in Modern China

First, I would like to discuss the historical discourses of the human in Chinese intellectual and cultural histories of the twentieth century. The narrative trajectory of China and the human in *City of Life and Death* is neither new nor original. It resonates in a belated and anachronistic fashion as the leitmotif of twentieth-century Chinese social criticism. At the turn of the twentieth century, the discourses of modernity and social criticism were constructed upon an alignment between the human and a modern China and an opposition between the human and the real China. The genesis of the modern human is coterminous with the birth of modern China, but the historical and real China represents everything that is inhuman or antihuman.

This is why Lu Xun wrote in “A Madman’s Diary” (1918), “I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology, and scrawled all over each page are the words: ‘Confucian Virtue and Morality.’ Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night, until I began to see words between the lines. The whole book was filled with the two words—‘Eat people.’”⁴ Alternatively, we can think of the often-cited incident that has virtually gained the status of a representative case in modern Chinese history: “Lu Xun and the Slide Show.”⁵ A slide show at a Japanese university where Lu Xun was studying medicine depicted the beheading of some Chinese spies, along with expressionless Chinese spectators looking from the sidelines. Lu Xun’s Japanese classmates, who frame the incident, cheered as they watched the propaganda film in the classroom. This is what led Lu Xun, the most important Chinese thinker of the twentieth century, to make up his mind to give up a career in medicine, return to China, and pursue literature instead, as a way to “save the spirit” of the Chinese.⁶

In most discussions of this widely known event, it is conventionally understood that the killer references the Japanese as the forerunners of Asian modernity, and the spectators symbolize the real China (the imperial China of the Qing Dynasty) at the time. However, the true objects of violence at the center of the picture—the beheaded spies—seldom get much attention. In a way, it is this silent center that exposes the hidden connection between this incident and some important characteristics of the self-narration of twentieth-century China. That is, much noise surrounds and reinforces a silent center, a silent object, and this is the location of China and the human.

The subject that is dead—slaughtered and silenced—identifies a site of hopelessness but also a site where hope resides. In the intellectual tradition of the early twentieth century, the human is thus figured both as a bloody corpse and as a fetus waiting to be born. These narratives position the human and a new China against the horizon of the future. The discourse of the human in China is thus a utopian discourse that articulates both the desperation about our condition of existence and the desperate need to resist this sense of desperation.

Even though it is a shared characteristic among many belatedly modern societies and third-world nations to engage in self-criticism and self-negation as a way of jump-starting their entry into modernity, the fact that Chinese intellectuals relied on a deeply felt sense of trauma to define their self-identity and to launch a project of constructing modern Chinese culture configures them as a rather singular case. This has to do with a history of rapid transformation from an ancient empire—the center of world civilization and global commerce—to a battered target of the “fast boats and strong canons” of Western imperialism, all within the last hundred years. This transition has produced a trauma of disparity and the psychology of China as the “sick man of East Asia.”

What needs to be pointed out is that absolute self-negation and debasement have left the subject of modern China—as well as the human subject of modern China—empty and undefined. The two motifs of Chinese modernity, anti-imperialism and antifeudalism, are not only mutually connected but also contradictory toward one another in profound ways. While anti-imperialism seeks the reaffirmation of the Chinese self through programs of “national salvation in pursuit of survival,” antifeudalism implies the total and drastic negation of traditional Chinese culture and articulates a yearning for Westernization throughout the past century. As an invention of modern Europe and a capitalist society, the human is dangled above China, signifying a promise and signified as an object of desire.

The Repression and Return of the Human in Contemporary China

This discourse of the so-called Chinese national character (国民性 *guominxing*) was fundamentally transformed by World War II, of which the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 formed a part.⁷ It took yet another turn after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. If the emergent demands of national salvation during the Sino-Japanese War enabled the formation of China as an imagined community, then the founding of the People's Republic gained for the new China the rights of self-representation even before the Communist Party defeated the Nationalist government's army. Thus it has been widely believed that, with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the Chinese people "stood up" and that if "the old society turned humans into ghosts, the new society will transform ghosts back into humans."⁸

Nevertheless, this radical transformation also implied a suspension of discussions over issues of China and the human, since the category of "the people" now replaced "the human" as a keyword for the new society. In other words, the Marxian ideology of class struggle replaced bourgeois humanism to become the centerpiece of a new hegemonic narrative. Unexpectedly, this substitution exposed a central dilemma in the socialist ideology, a dilemma caused by two sets of intersecting criteria: one aligning the modern with China and socialism; the other connecting the modern with universal notions of the liberal human and humanity. Between these two sets of criteria, a provocative history that plays with the alignment of as well as the contradictions between China and the human is bound to recur repeatedly.

We can see this history manifested in the 1970s and 1980s, when China had just ended its Cultural Revolution and was about to embark on a new era. It was at this moment of transition from the Mao era to the Deng era that the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, along with the entire socialist period, were deemed to be "inhuman," judged from some preconceived standard of the (universal) human. It was also at this moment that a rhetoric of the human replaced the discourse of class struggle in the critical discourses of various intellectual communities. The humanism of the young Marx replaced the Marx of political economy. These shifts effectively launched a series of social-political practices that, while effective, were depoliticizing. At the same time, we witnessed in the literary arts—more specifically, in the "scar" novels and films—the genesis of a term that does not make much sense in the ideographic system of written Chinese: "the human writ large."⁹

"The human writ large" stands in opposition to the real condition of the human in China. It is a utopian construction poised above the horizon of the future, one promising the materialization of some kind of universal value. The relationship between the notion of the human writ large and

that of “the new person of socialism” is of course a relationship of the universal versus the particular, but the former also mutates to underwrite the “person writ small” as the “natural condition” of human beings to desire profit and to avoid danger.

Furthermore, the discourse of the human at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s is associated with death or the dead. However, death here is no longer related to conditions of torture and pillage, as in the early twentieth century and as embodied in the Nanjing Massacre. Rather, death is chosen voluntarily in connection with some determined faith or higher expectations for the promise of the future. In the 1979 short story titled “Who Am I” (我是谁 *Wo shi shui*) by the female writer Zong Pu, the protagonist becomes obsessed with the philosophical question “Who am I?” after enduring much political persecution and psychological torment.¹⁰ When she looks up to the sky one day, she sees a line of geese flying by, creating a pattern that resembles the Chinese character *ren*, or “human” (人). In a sudden flash of light, she becomes aware of the dignity of the human, and she makes a willful choice of death as a protest against political violence—as a strategy to defend her own humanity.

In the same year, 1979, the film script “Bitter Love” (苦恋 *Ku lian*), also known as “The Sun and the Human” (太阳与人 *Tiang yu ren*),¹¹ managed to generate a great deal of controversy, becoming a social and political event indicative of a new era. This movie presents a highly dramatic, vivid depiction of the death of its protagonist, a principled and upright intellectual, who returns home from overseas. This scene shows the dying man crawling his way across an expansive snow-covered plain, under the blazing sun and through the howling wind. With his body, he inscribes the giant figure of *ren* on the exposed black earth. In the transition from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Chinese society and culture repeatedly inscribed the character of “the human” over sky and earth, as if it were a dying wish, a will to mandate utopic expectations for a future generation.

At this historical juncture, what was unique about this particular evocation of the human was its presentation against the backdrop of Chinese social tragedy, in opposition to political violence as well as the violence of state, but not in opposition to “China.” This acceptance of China came from a highly naturalized and depoliticized concept of the homeland—a discourse of China as the homeland. In my view, instead of considering this homeland/China narrative as the emergence of a nationalist sentiment, it is more productive to think of it as the reappearance of early-twentieth-century cultural complexes: love for homeland is “bitter love,” entangled with certain globalist sentiments and imagination as well as with multiple inversions and transpositions of self and other, homeland and alien lands.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the human not only provided an emotionally charged term of protest against political violence but also served as a metonymic figure of internal subversion within socialist ideology. Thus, the discourse of “the human writ large” is a specific landmark in world history. It testifies to China’s participation in launching a project of post-Cold War globalization—indeed, with nearly the same eagerness and pace as those political leaders in Washington, DC, during the last decade of the Cold War (1979–89).

However, when a Communist regime starts a process of wholesale capitalism, there are bound to be disruptions that threaten the continuity of Party principles and power as well as rifts within social structure and ideology. A crisis of legitimacy is bound to occur. Thus, the originally apolitical rhetoric surrounding China and the human, patriotism and cosmopolitanism, was bound to be tolerated, if not appropriated, by reformers within the Communist Party. This is how a discourse of China and the human today has come to occupy a space shared between Communist Party reformers and intellectuals. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, the notion of the human became the seam as well as the fissure of Chinese social culture. After the Tiananmen Square massacre of 4 June 1989, when political ideology collapsed, discourses of the human became a foundation for the reconstruction of mainstream ideology.¹² The discourse of the human writ large has become a symptomatic figure for Chinese society because, whereas this discourse invites self-criticism and a negation of Chinese society and culture (since adopting the perspective of humanity is tantamount to an unexamined identification with the West), what called this figure into existence in the first place was a great anxiety concerning China’s position on the global stage.

City of Life and Death

This history of twentieth-century discourses of China and the human informs the narrative of *City of Life and Death* by placing China and the human in a complex international context, where the two concepts are often at odds with each other. The film tries to resolve this difficulty through fictional means by constructing a representation of a historical trauma—the Nanjing Massacre. Even though the film is supposed to be about China, or Nanjing, in 1937, the dominant figure of the human represented by the film’s main protagonist is not Chinese but rather a young and handsome Japanese soldier, the invading conqueror Kadokawa. The film begins with a shot taken from the perspective of the attacking Japanese army looking up toward Nanjing, the former capital of Republican China. It ends with a Japanese ceremony celebrating the seizure of the city. In what might perhaps be considered a grand concluding gesture,

the Japanese military, clad in native costume, march in perfect unison to the beat of a Taiko drum through a city that has just been reduced to near total ruin. Interestingly enough, according to initial plans of the director, two sets of parallel perspectives were supposed to contrast with one another in this representation of the city of life and death: one provided by the young Japanese military officer, Kadokawa, and the other by the young Chinese officer, Lu Jianxiong (played by the tall, handsome film star Liu Ye).

Originally, the film's main narrative strand was going to be the story of this Chinese officer in the resisting army; moreover, it was supposed to be a love story in the manner of *Titanic*.¹³ But during shooting, the director unsurprisingly could not create a credible form to construct and anchor this romantic story line. Ultimately, Lu Chuan had to kill off one of his two protagonists: Lu Jianxiong expires one-third of the way into the film. In the current version of the movie, Lu Jianxiong, fully aware of the fate lying before him, faces the guns calmly and dies, just like millions of prisoners of war before him, slaughtered by the Japanese army. This major change in the film's plot shows that, even though the director managed to turn this character into a symbol of Chinese resistance, placing him at the center of the film's promotional posters, Lu Chuan could not finally salvage a believable narrative logic for this failed resister, which also suggests that he cannot salvage his humanity. Thus, the Chinese resister has no choice but to be slaughtered, just like countless others who also failed in their efforts of resistance.

After the implicit Chinese perspective of the film is terminated midway, the point of view of the young Japanese officer takes over. A story about the Nanjing Massacre is thus transformed into one about the recuperation of Japanese humanity against this historical backdrop.¹⁴ According to Lu Chuan, it was his deliberate choice to represent the Nanjing Massacre from the point of view of a Japanese soldier. Lu admitted that this was a "risky" move. However, he felt it was the "only narrative trajectory" available to him, "the only way" for China to tell its story about the Nanjing Massacre to the world.¹⁵

In one of the final, emotional scenes of the film, the young and innocent Kadokawa finds himself unable to bear the atrocities of war. After releasing two Chinese prisoners, he shoots himself. This narrative sequence is constructed through a series of contrasting images: after Kadokawa calmly releases two older prisoners, he bids farewell to his friend. Then we see the prisoners running for their lives, as we hear a few crisp and clear gunshots in the background. The terrified prisoners try to find out whether it is they who have been shot. When they discover they are still alive, they turn around to see a boundless plain of yellow dandelions, into which Kadokawa's body has fallen and been buried. The camera then

pans to the happy smiles of the two surviving Chinese prisoners, depicting expressions that reveal no trace of shock, sadness, or misery—despite the fact that the two have just witnessed horrible atrocities of urban slaughter, ones that they themselves have survived.

With severed ropes still dangling from their bodies, the two prisoners walk away with yellow flowers stuck behind their ears. Blowing dandelion into the air, they are apparently jubilant about being alive. The underlying message of the film could not be more explicit: on the one hand, we have a dignified (Japanese) death that enables the human to be animate and redeemed; on the other hand, the undignified (Chinese) live on, vividly represented by the two older prisoners running for their lives out of a sheer instinct for survival.

Indeed, all that the older prisoners of war seem to do in this film is run for their lives, without any strategic regard whatsoever. When the Chinese army, vastly outnumbered, has given up resisting the invading Japanese army, we see one of these older soldiers in a long shot screaming hysterically, tearing away and abandoning his uniform. His shameless cry for help in another scene results in the exposure and killing of the film's female protagonist, Miss Jiang, a teacher at a local missionary school. During the Japanese army's celebration of the occupation of Nanjing, we see this prisoner's face behind barbed wire in the midst of many other stunned faces of prisoners of war. To drag out an ignorable existence and to look on passively: these are the stereotypical images of China in the Euro-American imagination. Ironically, they are now also the stereotypical images of self-representation in twentieth-century Chinese cultural production, as well.

The Nanjing Massacre in Regional and Global Contexts

Although it is not uncommon for war movies to propagate humanistic values, what is unique about *City of Life and Death* is the conjunction of the naming and narration of the human with the historical incident of the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, an incident whose cruelty almost completely destroyed our faith in humanism and left the foundations of modern, bourgeois civilization in shambles. The Nanjing Massacre is a singular and unique episode in the history of World War II, compared with other atrocities of the time. Although Auschwitz, Nanjing, and Hiroshima all bespeak the greatest cruelties of twentieth-century civilization, their difference resides not in scope and degree but in status—the fact that the Nanjing Massacre remains until today a nameless and even ambiguous incident. The massacre has been enveloped in uncertainty and vagueness, with many of the basic facts of this event still hotly debated in Japan and worldwide. Although on 9 January 1946, the Far Eastern Interna-

tional Court confirmed the occurrence of the Nanjing Massacre, some Japanese right-wing politicians, political organizations, historians, and compilers of middle-school textbooks still claim that the massacre is a lie manufactured by the Chinese.¹⁶ Those who oppose this view, including Japanese left-wing political groups, in their attempt to prove the occurrence of the massacre, have been mired in an endless debate themselves on the actual number of the murdered (is it 140,000, 210,000, 340,000, or 420,000?).

Although debates over the occurrence of the Nanjing Massacre have consistently been one of the pressure points in Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations and political exchange since the end of World War II, particularly after 1949, the massacre has attracted little, if any, attention from the international community. In other words, although World War II is recognized as a global catastrophe, the atrocious deeds of the Japanese military invasion, exemplified by incidents such as the Nanjing Massacre or the germ warfare experiments carried out by Unit 731, are but insignificant regional incidents and topics. The emergence of the Nanjing Massacre as a unique case of traumatic memory in the disaster-laden history of twentieth-century China stems exactly from such erasure on the global level.

In contrast to the ambiguous status of the Nanjing Massacre in the global context, the World War II atrocities of Europe have aroused much public attention and propelled the international community to engage in investigations and self-reflection. While the Holocaust has become the emblem of crime against humanity, the international anonymity of the Nanjing Massacre has denied the name and status of the human to its Chinese victims, and foreclosed any reflection on the Japanese military's brutality. While the victims of the nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki are memorialized, and Japan thus gains its place in reflections in the name of the human during World War II, the trauma and anxieties of the Chinese over the nonrecognition of the Nanjing Massacre are intensified. The grotesque historical wound of the massacre is reopened whenever the Chinese and Japanese governments dispute the facts of the atrocity. Moreover, whenever the West and the rest of the world reflect in the name of "history and remembrance" on the memory of Auschwitz and the Holocaust, on the brutalities of World War II, and on their "crisis of witness-bearing," or whenever international courts convict Nazi war criminals for their "crime against humanity," or whenever the German (for a while West German) government memorializes or apologizes in various forms to the Jewish victims, this inexpressible anguish and hopelessness are once again induced among the Chinese.

The discourses surrounding this historical incident—including whether China should seek reparations from Japan—have also been inextricably entangled with the ideological oppositions of Cold War politics.

Moreover, the Nanjing Massacre has been viewed as an incident “internal” to Asia—a dim corner in the history of World War II, where Europe and America played the leading roles. In the second half of the twentieth century, the massacre became an “unresolved case,” suspended between fact and fiction, war atrocities, and Cold War politics. As such, it became a pivotal phrase, frequently invoked, hijacked, and detonated in the realms of Sino-Japanese political, diplomatic, and economic collaboration and competition. Because of its suspended nature, the Nanjing Massacre is repeatedly invoked at the turn of this century, as if a wound still open, ripped, and oozing blood.

Between Iris Chang and John Rabe

In the genealogy of modern Chinese film, there is a history of cinema concerning anti-Japanese militancy, including a long list of movies that deal with the specific subject of the Nanjing Massacre. However, Lu's *City of Life and Death* does not seek to continue this domestic narrative trajectory but rather maintains an intertextual relation with the book *The Rape of Nanking* by the Chinese American author Iris Chang.¹⁷ To be precise, the 1997 publication of this book in the United States and a series of international political and cultural incidents incited by its publication, up to the tragic death of the author in 2004 at the young age of thirty-six, form the social and cultural pretext of *City of Life and Death*. When *The Rape of Nanking* was first published, it unexpectedly garnered such enthusiastic responses in the English-speaking world that it remained on the best-seller list of the *New York Times* for over fourteen weeks, selling over a million copies. Another fact relating to this book is Chang's discovery of historical documents that led to the publication in China of *La Bei Riji* (*The Diaries of Rabe*), which subsequently appeared in the United States as *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*.¹⁸

While China occupied both the center and the margin of the cultural event of *The Rape of Nanking*, it responded to it in a provocatively displaced manner. Even though the Chinese media initially welcomed Chang and her book with great enthusiasm and praise, subsequent reactions to its publication reflected complex and mixed emotions that blended pleasure with sadness and joy with anger. In the Chinese-language world, the success of Chang and her book in the English-language world reopened the never-healing wound of the Nanjing Massacre and stirred up sad memories. The book created a perfect maelstrom, registering the great anxieties and complex emotions that China has toward the world as well as the confluence of a new form of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the formation of mainstream ideology. What made China elated is that “we” (China) finally managed to provoke the world to come to terms with this historical

incident. That is why many news reports as well as Internet coverage of the book heralded Chang as a national hero, a “woman warrior.”

Nonetheless, people had an even stronger and more effusive reaction to *La Bei Riji*. The Chinese translation of Rabe’s diaries was first published in 1997, whereas the Chinese translation of Chang’s book did not appear until 2005. Comparing these publication dates suggests that the diaries were considered a more “authentic” document by a real onlooker, promising absolute objectivity and testifying to our desire for such an act of historical witnessing—a desire that indeed precedes our knowledge of the existence of Rabe’s diaries. Rabe was an outsider to China, a German national who happened to be working in China as the regional leader of the Nazi Party, and thus he belonged to the enemy camp. In today’s global context, his race and gender give him additional power. The fact that his diaries offer an eyewitness account written in German by a white European male lends them more credence than any similar account by a Chinese witness, the testimony of such a witness, or even the detailed historical research of a Chinese American female.

Rabe’s diaries have been used not only to confirm that the Nanjing Massacre indeed happened but also to provide the basis for making a connection between this massacre and genocide more broadly (in particular, the Nazis’ killing of the Jews). Being able to secure this connection elevates the Nanjing Massacre to the level of crimes against humanity and the suffering of humanity. Thus, the Nanking Massacre is no longer just an “ordinary” incident in a region considered by the West as a repeated site of disaster, mass murder, and war. In fact, this elevation of the massacre into world history was the objective and impetus of Chang’s scholarship.

However, the enthusiasm exhibited toward *La Bei Riji* by the Chinese media was not so much a reflection of the historical trauma or memory of the Nanjing Massacre but more a response to Stephen Spielberg’s 1993 movie *Schindler’s List*. In the Chinese media, Rabe is frequently referred to as the “Chinese Schindler.” In mainstream Chinese opinion, the existence of Rabe as a “human witness” not only enables China’s gradual ascent up the steps of power and significance (China, Japan, Europe) but also testifies to the existence of *our* humanity. Thus, Rabe also belongs to *us*. It is for these reasons that “We the Chinese” embrace the “Chinese Schindler,” also known as the “living Buddha of Nanjing.” The figure of Rabe allowed Chinese mainstream culture to see a gleam of light above the bloody darkness of the massacre, finally to recover Chinese humanity through a kind of historical knowledge that bridges the gap between there (Europe) and here (China), the present and the future.

In the United States, *The Rape of Nanking* enabled Nanjing to appear frequently in the cultural representations of Hollywood and in American popular culture. Nanjing has become a new historical backdrop for main-

stream dramas. In the Chinese context, by contrast, the recently revived Chinese film industry has made many attempts to incorporate into their representations Rabe and the recuperation of the human in Chinese history. The figure of Rabe enables the Chinese film industry to make direct connections with the non-Chinese world, largely meaning Europe and America. Both Xie Jin, a leading mainstream director in the Chinese film industry for over sixty years, and Zhang Yimou, the newly crowned cinematic representative of the Chinese nation, have sought to adapt Rabe's diaries for film. But it was not until 2009 that the character of Rabe finally appeared on the Chinese screen, with the release of the *City of Life and Death* as well as a Chinese-German coproduction simply called *John Rabe* (dir. Florian Gallenberger, 2009; produced by Huayi Brothers Film Investment Corporation, a major private Chinese enterprise).

Politics of Memory in an Age of Development

Although Rabe is not the protagonist of *City of Life and Death*, his diaries can be considered an important subtext for Lu's film for two reasons. First, Rabe's diaries provide the historical evidence for the existence of refugee camps set up and managed by European or American expatriates in Nanjing. This detail lends credibility to an otherwise historically flawed narrative such as what we find in *City of Life and Death*. Second, and more important, the fact that contemporary China welcomed and embraced the historical figure of Rabe has prepared the ground for *City of Life and Death* to garner public support for the historical representation in the film.

According to the director, an objective of his film was to debunk some of the existing stereotypical representations of both China and Japan.¹⁹ Placing this comment in conversation with the actual film, we can see Lu's attempt as radically one-sided. It is an amazing accomplishment that the film has succeeded in getting rid of some of the "set ways" in which Chinese culture represents Japan—or the invading Japanese army, to be more precise. It does away with the stereotype of "the hateful Japanese devil," for instance. But the film simultaneously reconfirms and underscores another set of stereotypes about the Chinese themselves. That is, this effort to debunk (Japanese) stereotypes is also a process of reinforcing another set of (Chinese) stereotypes.

In spite of the many subtle and emotionally convincing details in *City of Life and Death*, it is not exactly the case that the stereotypes of the Japanese invading army get rewritten but rather that these stereotypes have disappeared and evaporated from the text, displaced by representations of the (Japanese) human and humanity, which fill in this gap. From the beginning of the film, a set of traits is assigned to Kadokawa through

his dominant narratorial perspective. He is a student-turned-soldier with a missionary school background. This background happens to be shared with the female protagonist, Jiang. If these identity codes have supplied the empirical basis for the couple's ability to communicate with each other in English (language and communication have rich cultural significance beyond the unfolding of events in this film), the symbolic significance of their shared background does not stop at their exchange of "human glances" right before the "slaughtering of the human" is about to commence. What has been exchanged between Kadokawa and Jiang is not humanity in abstraction, but specifically a necklace—one with a cross attached to it.

This exchange is one of the most important scenes of the movie. It takes place in the refugee camp managed by the well-known Nazi Rabe and several other European and American nationals who remained in Nanjing. (In fact, most scenes involving Chinese characters take place in this refugee camp, the exceptions being the death of the Chinese officer and the two final survivors of the film.) In the most significant scene of *City of Life and Death*, the Japanese army demands that the camp release a number of female refugees to serve as comfort women. After a tearful explanation by Rabe and Jiang, one hundred women willingly stand and give up their lives to save the majority of the camp. This scene takes place in the symbolically charged location of a Christian church. The light that shines through the church's tall windows gives the setting the semblance of an oil painting with a religious motif. Thus, transcendence in the religious, as a matter of Christian faith, provides the framing for the definition of the human and humanity and serves as the criterion by which to judge these values.

Indeed, although the director has repeatedly argued that this movie is meant to establish the Chinese subject, the narration embedded in a Japanese point of view facilitates the absence of China and the amnesia of Chinese history relating to the Nanjing Massacre. Furthermore, what fills this void is a giant figure of the human projected against the backdrop of Christianity. The setting of the Christian church as the site of the human can be read as a trace of a political unconscious, or its symptomatic manifestation—one suggesting that the human resides elsewhere, outside "China," in a location that belongs to the higher end of the global capitalistic order (Germany/Japan).

What is missing from Lu's film are the actual atrocities of the Nanjing Massacre committed by the Japanese army toward ordinary civilians—atrocities carefully documented by Chang. In *City of Life and Death*, there are only a few representations of Japanese violence toward Chinese civilians, and these are inaccurate or idealized.²⁰ Most violence against women

in the film, for example, takes place inside the comfort stations. This is a rather different representation from the gang rapes of civilian women that have been documented elsewhere. With Kadokawa's point of view becoming the only available perspective for the film's narration, the audience is encouraged not so much to identify with Chinese civilians in a fallen city but rather to experience the Japanese fear of penetrating the capital of an enemy nation. It is fear that makes Kadokawa shoot blindly at a set of swinging doors after he is ordered to look for Chinese army resisters inside the refugee camps. (The fact that these doors open onto the confessional is in itself a symbolic detail.) As a result of his random act, several girls die, their bodies rolling out from behind the doors, and this incident becomes the foundation for Kadokawa's trauma and sense of sin.²¹

Even if we resist comparing this movie with classic stereotypical representations of the "Japanese devil" or with representations of the Japanese soldiers in Japanese propaganda movies—even if we resist comparing this movie with Chang's book or Rabe's diaries—*City of Life and Death* still cannot be considered a representation of the Nanjing Massacre but, instead, the erasure of its history. This movie does not trace the evisceration of the human or restore our faith in humanism after murder, blood, and blade. It renders the Nanjing Massacre a vague reference, a war that takes place in an unspecified location. This film is not a return to the traumas of the war. It actually blocks the intrusion of reality—the return of the repressed—through its construction of the illusion of the (Japanese/German) human.²²

The books and films about the Nanjing Massacre have become what Gilles Deleuze has called a "folding": they do not merely represent the horrible atrocities of civilization, an ugly face of the many faces of modernity; they explicitly represent a deep crisis of witnessing and the continuous trauma that accompanies the impossibility of naming these atrocities. Wrapped inside this folding also lies the continuous historical entanglement of Sino-Japanese relations, especially the rise of modern Japan in the past century and the shock and injury that two Sino-Japanese wars have wrought upon the Chinese people.²³ There is, in addition, the factor of the significant reversal of the hierarchy between Japan and China today, after China weathered the shock of Anglo-American modernity, not to say imperialism. It is against this historical background that the Nanjing Massacre, or the Japanese invasion of China, becomes atypical, the hard core of a wound that is repeatedly refreshed yet cannot be dissolved by a new Chinese nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Because of this, what used to be a consensus in Chinese intellectual circles, and what later became the basis for a new ideological consciousness—namely, cosmopolitanism—ultimately reflects a certain kind of acquiescence and deep internalization of the hierarchical structures of global

capitalism. The new economic neoliberalism at the turn of this century folds back upon a reversed logic of the Cold War, mutating into a new admiration for hegemonic power.

According to this logic, "China" (an entity made ambiguous by the partitions of the Cold War) defeated Japanese imperialism, yet the rapid economic development in postwar Japan and the esteemed position held today by Japan in the global economic order actually make China look like a failed victor. As a result, Japan becomes a wound, a complex, a mirror stage: the ambiguous status of the Nanjing Massacre becomes one permanently dislocated piece of the jigsaw puzzle of China's modern self-imagination in relation to the world and to humankind. Because of this dislocation, as well as the Chinese imaginary and envy of Euro-American cosmopolitanism, Japan and anti-Japanese sentiment become fissures, touch-and-go points, in the complex nexus of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It is against this larger historical canvas that *City of Life and Death* becomes a symptom: as it wraps itself around the wounded core of the Nanjing Massacre with allusions to the "human," the film consciously and unconsciously fixes a bloody and painful history to questions of cosmopolitanism and humanism in an age of development.

With *City of Life and Death*, Lu belatedly joins a global trend of post-Cold War amnesia, employing the mechanism of forgetting to erase traces of historical trauma. If we examine the viewers' mixed and divided response to the film, the film can be considered either a huge success or a complete failure, depending on one's position in this politics of memory in an age of development. On the one hand, the film was a box office success and received some overwhelming praise after its public release; on the other hand, the film touches some deeply felt anxieties and complexes that I discussed above, so much so that it invited angry denigrations and criticism from both print and new media. Some Chinese "netizens" labeled it "the film by a traitor," and a small group of citizens of Nanjing filed a lawsuit against the Chinese Film Bureau for allowing this film to be shown in public. Between the critics and the defenders of this film, we are presented with an impossible choice, caught in the middle of an opposition between angry and provincial nationalism on one side and the transcendent and vacuous discourse of cosmopolitanism and "the human writ large" on the other.

The New Middle Class and Chinese Nationalism

I have chosen this film as my object of discussion because the new lips that tell the old story of this film nonetheless bring insights about China. If we temporarily suspend the realities internal to Lu's film and consider instead film as a sort of reality, then what we discover here is an instance

in which a supposed art house production suffused with human compassion is, in actuality, a major blockbuster representing the perspectives of the authorities. (Indeed, when *City of Life and Death* was attacked by some Internet media organizations, the vice president of the National Film Bureau, the authoritative government film management and censorship organization, organized a press conference and defended the film through invoking the need to “protect artistic freedom and creativity.”)²⁴ The film has even become an “educational movie for patriotism” recommended for high school students.

It is worth mentioning that when the film was premiered in 2009, China was also celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC’s founding—sixty years being a Chinese century. Moreover, this was the year after the Olympics. If China’s hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games offered the promise of “China’s rise” on the international stage, then the public’s various reactions toward the riots in Tibet, as well as their visible participation in the relief efforts during the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan, all occurring right before the start of the Games, marked an important transition leading up to this anticipated ascent.

These public demonstrations conveyed the message that, after two centuries of turmoil, some kind of nationalist spirit was finally emerging in Chinese society, one that was generated not by overt political means or solely by the reaction toward a condition of crisis. The new middle class—the product as well as benefactor of rapid economic development in China—became the dominant voice in this expression of nationalism. In other words, all the debates about violence in Tibet, the groundswell of support for those suffering in Wenchuan, and the glamorous setup of the Olympic Games collectively prepared the stage for the arrival of the newly minted Chinese middle class. After three decades of reform and change, these performances suggest not only that Chinese middle-class consciousness has become the mainstream ideology but also that a new brand of nationalist identification has replaced older forms of self-deprecation and disgrace in Chinese self-identification.

Some external characteristics of this new middle class: they are mostly urban dwellers, rather well educated, relatively young (usually under forty), have mid- to high-level incomes, and play the role of intellectual, economic, or even political elites in society. While this group makes up only a small percentage of the entire population, it is already sizable enough that its patterns and powers of consumption can influence the Chinese cultural market.

Once again, China’s change has not occurred in the ways in which we had anticipated: economic development in China has indeed produced miraculous growth in gross domestic product (GDP), but during the last two decades of the twentieth century the middle class and civil society

did not become the forerunners of political reform in China, as expected. Rather, they have become the advocates of a new nationalist discourse.

We can think back to some recent self-representations of the intellectual elite who hardly had direct connections with the authorities—for instance, the television series *The Rise of the Great Nations*²⁵ or the social-political commentary published as *China Is Not Pleased*.²⁶ These examples present a clearer picture of the emergence of the new Chinese middle class. The film *City of Life and Death*, considered against these other cultural productions, illustrates the absurdity of our contemporary situation: we must recognize this cultural production (like all productions) as a cultural act motivated by the nation-state, a recognition that might be substantiated by the director's claim that *City of Life and Death* represents a Chinese self-writing. But where exactly "China" is located in the film remains rather ambiguous and suspended, since all of the Chinese in this movie seem to be indistinguishable from one another and lacking likable personalities. In contrast, the death of the Japanese soldier Kadokawa defines the human through his conscientious life and dignified death.

What is most notable here is the public's critical as well as enthusiastic reaction toward the film. On the one hand, many people have uploaded pictures and historical documents of the massacre from their own archives to the Internet to prove that Lu's film was a "disgrace." On the other, the Chinese movie audience, comprising mostly urban youth, rushed to the theater to watch it. The box office receipts for *City of Life and Death* swelled until they finally launched the director into the "Billion Yuan Box Office Club" and into the company of directors such as Zhang Yimou and Feng Xiaogang. In addition, the movie was selected for screening at the St. Sebastian Film Festival in Spain and won its major prize. It seems that the traditional three-way division in the Chinese movie industry among the political propaganda film (the "major-theme movie"), the "entertainment movie," and the "experimental art movie" has been overcome entirely.

This three-way division in the Chinese movie industry has been but a microcosm of the intellectual differences and social conflicts in Chinese society of the past three decades. The major-theme movies represented the mainstream discourse of the state, which used to stand in opposition to both the marketized entertainment films and the art movies, the latter representing enlightened criticism. These three genres offer different responses to the future of China. However, the "happy ending" of *City of Life and Death* is deeply ironic in that it announces the failure of all three genres, with the winner being the logic of global capitalism.

When Lu attempted to respond to some of the criticism generated by the film, he emphasized repeatedly that the movie is not designed to appeal to a Chinese audience but rather to a global audience, a statement that underscores his familiarity with the tastes of the global middle class.

In other words, *City of Life and Death* is not a cultural production in the vein of Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*. It is purely a Chinese version of *Schindler's List*. As a Christian, Kadokawa might as well not be considered a representative of the Japanese army, but more a Westerner located on a higher rung of the ladder of modern civilization. These misrepresentations and misrecognitions seem to be the only way that this film can be successful in the Chinese market yet share the profits of the global market at the same time. Here, the purpose of constructing the (Western) "human writ large" is to guarantee the economic viability of the (Chinese) "human writ small." With the film being entirely funded by a government-owned production agency, this was the only way to ensure the safety of investment while at the same time ensuring that the film would not provoke public complaint and political trouble.

This case of *City of Life and Death* illustrates the changing role of the Chinese government. It has been noted that this consideration for profit drove the film's approval from the highest authorities, as well. Moreover, if China wants to push for regional economic collaboration with Northeast Asia, then Japanese army atrocities during World War II are both a memory block and a roadblock. Therefore, it is strategic to express one's regret (even if it remains unaccepted) and try to achieve some sort of redemption for both victim and victimizer by endowing the conquering invader with a human soul, one through which he is able to express the pain of regret.

The price one pays for such a huge box office success as *City of Life and Death* is exactly what Foucault terms "the historical and people's memory." The debates raised by the film provoke the question of whether the power of capital is big enough to erase the social and psychic traumas of twentieth-century China. Returning to the film as social reality, we find that it proves to be not so much an experience of therapeutic psychological catharsis but rather a psychoanalytic case history still waiting to be treated.

As much as China's double-digit GDP growth is sufficient to support the myth of "China's rise," or the 2008 Olympic Games present to the world a holistic vision of China created through laser light shows, it is the bigger winner — *City of Life and Death* — that reminds us of the heavy debts of the twentieth century waiting to be settled. When people today attempt to invoke the subject of China, they find that the Chinese self is intrinsically empty and undefined. Thus, the subject position of China becomes a suspension of the subject, a performance of displacement and misrecognition of the self and the other, of home and the diaspora.

Two anecdotes provided by the director about this film are thought provoking. The first is the director's statement that the gun pointing at Kadokawa is almost like "a gun pointing at myself."²⁷ The second is the director's explanation of his design for the ceremony celebrating the

Japanese army's seizure of Nanjing. He noted that this glamorous scene emerged from a nightmare: when he was preparing for the film and browsing through materials about the Nanjing Massacre, he dreamt that a Japanese "devil" beating a drum was rushing toward him.²⁸ It is not surprising that, when one attempts to turn Chinese history into a melodrama and continue the "aesthetics of rituals" that one witnesses so often in the aesthetics of fifth-generation Chinese cinema, the subject position of China and the Chinese as human cannot be tenable. The director can only identify with the "Other," the hand of the enemy or the devil, an indispensable ingredient for any melodrama to complete its narration. In an absurd logic, Lu has transformed his own nightmare into a dream to be shared with the public. Depending on the different positions of the viewers, this drama unfolds as an unmitigated nightmare or a touching daydream. This story can be seen as either an exorcism or a ritual of calling back the spirit of the dead. It is not, however, a conscious interpretation of one's own dreams. It takes forgetting as its premise, and thus it will not help people come to terms with their memories.

This narrative, constructed according to the tastes of the global middle class, has not only been endorsed by the St. Sebastian International Film Festival but also embraced by a specific consumer class in China—the new middle class. The Chinese new middle class born out of high GDP and nurtured by the culture of consumption has a very acute level of global awareness in terms of their self-identity. Their acceptance of this movie does not contradict new discourses of nationalism or their self-representations of their class position in social practice. The cheers accompanying China's global rise do not indicate the emergence of self-awareness of Chinese nationalism. Instead, they are cheers for the success of global capitalism in China.

We need to point out that this new Chinese middle class is not only segregated from Chinese history but also segregated from China and the majority of the Chinese. But they are the ones who are the face of "visible China" on the global stage today. They are the legitimate citizens of the world defined by their purchasing power. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, forgetting has become the main theme of memory construction. It is this imperative to forget the sufferings and revolutions of the twentieth century that gives rise to the middle-class revolution and their subject position. Forgetting is a necessary step toward constructing the imaginary community of the nation. *City of Life and Death* is indeed a major-theme movie of China, but its propaganda also makes us reflect on the role of the Chinese nation-state in the process of globalization.

Notes

1. After the Japanese army seized the Chinese capital, Nanjing, it carried out murder, torture, rape, and looting on a massive scale, resulting in the deaths of three hundred thousand Chinese civilians and prisoners of war within the short period of six weeks. The³ horror of this massacre was exacerbated by the fact that many murders were committed in a most primitive manner, using daggers or knives as weapons or burying and burning the victims alive. This incident also involved gang rapes and tortures of men and women as well as the dissection of the bodies of the dead, many cases of which were carried out in Chinese homes in the presence of the elderly and children.

2. For descriptions of how the director sought approval from the Central Government, see Wang Xiaofeng's interview of Lu Chuan. Wang Xiaofeng, "Lu Chuan: Wo xiang pai yige zhanzheng benxing de dongxi" ("Lu Chuan: I Want to Make a Movie That Shows the True Face of War"), *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan*, November 2009.

3. [Translator's note: Lu Chuan's earlier works include *Missing Gun* (2002) and *Mountain Patrol: Kekexili* (2004). *Missing Gun* is a black comedy about a small-town policeman searching for his gun. *Mountain Patrol* tells the story of the heroic efforts of a small group of mountain patrollers to stop the illegal poaching of Tibetan antelopes in Kekexili, a region near Tibet. The film presents a realistic depiction of an existing social issue in a suspenseful and melodramatic style.] The phrase "Chinese style of resistance" comes from an interview of the director by Liu Wei, Wang Nannan, and Wang Xuguang. The director also states in this interview:

One reason that made me want to make this movie is that in all existing historical representations of the Nanjing Massacre, the Chinese have been portrayed as passive and nonexistent. It is not that they truly did not exist, but their existence as individual and collectivity has been neglected and erased. I have tried to restore the historical existence of the Chinese through this movie." The headline on this movie's poster is "We are still alive, because we have been resisting." Liu Wei, Wang Nannan, and Wang Xuguang, "Lu Chuan fangtan: Yi shiyi yu aiqing lai pai Nanjing" ("Interview with Lu Chuan: Depicting Nanjing with Poetry and Love," *Liao Wang News Weekly*, 22 April 2009).

4. Lu Xun, "A Madman's Diary," trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature*, 2nd ed., ed. Joseph S. M. Lau and Howard Goldblatt (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 10.

5. Lu Xun describes the slide show incident in the following paragraph:

I don't know what advanced methods are now used to teach microbiology, but at that time lantern slides were used to show the microbes, and if the lecture ended early, the instructor might show slides of natural scenery or news to fill up the time. This was during the Russo-Japanese War, so there were many war films, and I had to join in the clapping and cheering in the lecture hall along with the other students. It was a long time since I had seen any compatriots, but one day I saw a film showing some Chinese, one of whom was bound, while many others stood around him. They were all strong fellows but appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands bound was a spy working for the Russians, who was to have his head cut off by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to enjoy the spectacle. (Lu Xun, preface to "A Madman's Diary," 4).

6. Ibid.

7. [Translator's note: The discourse of "Chinese national character" refers to a series of discussions among Chinese intellectuals started in the late 1910s about the flaws of Chinese culture and people. Although the aim of these discussions was to seek self-improvement through self-criticism, this discourse bears complex connections with the Orientalist representations of Chinese people by missionary writers and risks essentializing Chinese culture. For further reading on this subject, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, Translated Modernity, China, 1900–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).]

8. [Translator's note: This line comes from *Bai Mao Nu* (*The White-Haired Girl*, dir. Wang Bin and Shui Hua, 1951), a film that depicts the liberation of a slave girl by the Communist Party. The film was adapted from an opera of the same time by He Jingzhi and Ting Yi.]

9. "Scar literature" or "literature of the wounded" refers to a literary genre of the late 1970s that portrays the sufferings of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution.

10. Zong Pu, "Wo shi shui" ("Who Am I?"), in *Zong Pu Daibiao Zuo* (*Zuo Pu's Represented Works*) (Zhengzhou: Huanghe Wenyi Chubanshe, 1987), 88–99.

11. [Translator's note: The film script "Ku lian" ("Bitter Love") was published in the literary magazine *Shi Yue* (October) in March 1979. Director Peng Ning made the film *Tiāng yú rén* (*The Sun and the Human*) based on this script in 1980, produced by Changchun Film Studio. On 20 April 1981, *Jiefangjū Bao* (*The People's Liberation Army Daily*) published an editorial titled "Sixiang jiben yuanze bu yong weifan: Ping dianying wenxue juben 'Ku lian'" ("We Cannot Tolerate Any Violation of the Four Basic Principles: On the Film Script 'Bitter Love'") by the "Special Commentator" of the newspaper. After that, a series of critical articles from official sources was published. This criticism of "Bitter Love" is often regarded as the beginning of a new movement of cultural disciplining and political persecution in the era of the Economic Reform. It even caused social uprising, which was quickly suppressed.]

12. [Translator's note: The June 4 Incident refers to the Tiananmen protest and crackdown in 1989, when protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square demanding political reform and democracy. This movement was repressed on 4 June 1989.]

13. Lu used the phrase "a love story in the style of *Titanic*" in a television interview. Lu Chuan, interview by He Dong, *Fenghuang Feichang Dao*, 23 April 2009, ent.ifeng.com/feichangdao/200904/0423_5223_1122829_8.shtml (in Chinese).

14. See the article on the movie's official website, titled "Nanjing! Nanjing! Ba da miankong: Renxing de huanyuan" ("The Eight Faces of *Nanjing! Nanjing!*: Kadokawa's recuperation of humanity"), <http://ent.sina.com.cn/m/2009-04-13/ba2469496.shtml> (in Chinese).

15. Lu Chuan, interview, "Duihua Lu Chuan: Shi guanzhong jiu le *Nanjing! Nanjing!*" ("A Dialogue with Lu Chuan: The Audience Saved *Nanjing, Nanjing*"), 30 April 2009, <http://ent.sina.com.cn/m/c/p/2009-04-30/06542498213.shtml> (in Chinese).

16. It needs to be mentioned that these acts of violence were widely publicized and severely condemned by Chinese citizens from various social sectors and by the international society even as they were being carried out.

17. Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

18. John Rabe, *La Bei Riji* (*The Diaries of Rabe*), trans. Translation Team (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 1997); *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*, ed. Erwin Wickert (New York: Knopf, 1998).

19. Wang Wenshuo, Bai Ying, and Chang Ailing, "Lu Chuan: Paishe 'Nan-

jing' shi yige qu fuhao hua de guocheng" ("Lu Chuan: Making 'Nanjing' Is a Process of De-stereotyping"), Xinhua News Agency, 24 April 2009, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2009-04/25/content_11252706.htm (in Chinese).

20. One scene of the movie shows a Japanese soldier, Ida, murdering a girl by hurling her out the window.

21. The film's emphasis on interiority can also be observed in its depiction of Ida, a foil of Kadokawa whose hardened exterior and insanelly sadistic psychology contrast with Kadokawa's healthy but sensitive constitution. Ida's sadism leads him not so much to torture Chinese civilians as to torment their souls. For instance, he tries to destroy Jiang's Christian faith and take advantage of Tang, an assistant to Rabe, who desires to protect his family. The implication of this emphasis on the psychological is that it humanizes the murderer. Not only does Kadokawa redeem his humanity in his tormented act of saving the beautiful Jiang by shooting her, but Ida appears to be more humane when he is shown to be having a man-to-man, or human-to-human, talk with Tang after Tang has decided to sacrifice his life for others. He cannot help but wear a lonely and sad expression after he has given the order to execute Tang.

22. The historical figure Rabe has another function, in addition to serving as a direct allusion to the Nanjing Massacre: his presence enables the movie's focus to fall onto the refugee camp, a historically verifiable detail from *La Bei Riji* (*The Diaries of Rabe*). The movie manages to depict this massacre by shuttling between two symbolic settings of "Nanjing": in one setting, we see a panoramic representation of the city, where siege, resistance, murder, rape inside the comfort station, and celebration of the seizure of Nanjing take place; in the other setting (the refugee camp), we see mostly the drama of the Chinese characters and no mass murder or rape. The refugee camp as a zone of exceptionality provides a logical justification for the absence of scenes of mass murder and underwrites the humanism of this movie. We can say that the internal struggles of the Japanese soldier and the setting of the refugee camp both frame the movie's historical representation, turning it into a story about humanism, not mass murder and the collapse of humanism.

23. [Translator's note: The first Sino-Japanese War was fought between the Qing Dynasty China and Meiji Japan between 1894 and 1895. The second Sino-Japanese War took place between 1937 and 1945.]

24. Yuan Lei, "Dianyingju fujuzhang: 'Nanjing! Nanjing!' Jingdezhu lishi he xianshi kaoyan" ("Interview of the Deputy Director of the Film Bureau: *Nanjing! Nanjing!* Can Stand the Test of Historical and Contemporary Realism"), *Nanfang Zhoumo*, 29 April 2009.

25. *Daguo jueqi* (*The Rise of the Great Nations*) is a twelve-episode television documentary made by Channel 2 of the Chinese Central TV (CCTV) in 2006. It depicts the successive "rise of great nations," including Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and the United States.

26. Song Xiaojun, Wang Xiaodong, Songqiang, Huang Jisu, and Liu Yang, *Zhongguo bu gaoxing: Da shidai, da mubiao, ji women de neiyu waihuan* (*China Is Not Pleased: Big Times, Big Goals, Our Anxieties and Challenges*) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 2009).

27. See Lu Chuan, interview by He Dong.

28. Wu Hongfei and Jin Lehao, "Lu Chuan: Pai chu zhongguoren de Kang-zheng" ("Lu Chuan: A Depiction of Chinese Resistance"), *Nanfang Renwu Weekly*, 27 May 2009.

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