# Chinese Amnesia and The Gift of Memory Examining History and Remembrance in Madeleine Thien's Do Not Say We Have Nothing

*Tracey Wang*

***Abstract:*** This article offers an analysis of Madeleine Thien's 2016 novel Do Not Say We Have Nothing to stage critical questions about the politics of narrating Chinese modern history and the figure of the refugee as necessitated by the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Tracing the origins of the concept of "Chinese amnesia," this article describes China's erasure of the Massacre and contests the ways in which this discourse bolsters an orientalist narrative during "the rise of China". By focusing on how the novel refuses to reify the binary of oppres- sion in China and freedom in the US or Canada, this article argues that memory is yet another dimension to the liberal promise of rescue.

In 2008, to commemorate the nineteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Protests, and in anticipation of the Beijing Olympics set to begin in July of that year, exilic Chinese writer Ma Jian diagnosed China with a collec- tive amnesia. Writing for The New York Times, Ma argues that, even though the Tiananmen Massacre was a turning point in the twentieth century, in China it is virtually erased from national history and cultural memory. Chinese people, he writes, are entrenched in a state of perpetual forgetting underwritten by fear: "Watched on television screens around the world, the Tiananmen massacre was a defining moment in 20th-century history. Like Budapest in 1956 and Prague in 1968, it has become a global symbol of totalitarian repression. But in China the subject is taboo. Even in the privacy of their homes, parents dare not discuss it with their children. Blinded by fear and bloated by prosperity, they have suc- cumbed to a collective amnesia."1

Ma's critique of the Chinese government joins a chorus of other famous exilic Chinese writers like Ha Jin, Gao Xingjian, and Liao Yiwu as well as activists and international human rights organizations that see June Fourth as the epitome of the Chinese government's totalitarian rule and necropolitical policies.2 These writers are justified in condemning the Chinese government's brutal suppression of the protests in Beijing and across China in 1989 and its murder of thousands of protestors.3 At the same time, their critiques of Chinese amnesia, undergirded by a disdain for what they observe as Chinese people's disengagement from politics, reinforce longstanding racist tropes in the West. Indeed, the trope of Chinese amnesia, coalescing around the Tiananmen Massacre but extending to other major periods in modern Chinese history, inscribes contemporary Chineseness as a state of unknowing that, this article argues, is another facet of orientalism. Like Edward Said's original conception of the term, the orientalism of Chinese amnesia formulates the West as the authority on modern Chinese history.4 Chinese amnesia institutionalizes modern Chinese history as an area of specialization for Western scholars and exilic Chinese writers, writing historical memoirs, political commentary, and economic analyses outside of China, and designates Chinese people living in China as willfully ignorant. For Chinese diasporic writers, then, to write history is to contend with the anxieties of silence, the ethical responsibilities of remembering, and the entrapments of orientalist rhetoric that circle the reception of their works.

This article examines the production of history in the construction of the Chinese refugee subject, focusing on the popularization of the tropes of Chinese amnesia and liberal rescue during the "rise of China". Studying Madeleine Thien's 2016 novel Do Not Say We Have Nothing (hereafter Do Not Say), this article theorizes the ways that literature centering modern Chinese history mediates a politics of remembrance and discourses of asylum. Specifically, I examine the character of Ai-ming, a young protestor fleeing Beijing in the months after the Tiananmen Square Massacre. I argue that the novel's representations of asylum and Ai-ming's asylum-seeking in the aftermath of the Massacre stage critiques of US liberal rescue and the positioning of the West as memory keeper to Chi- nese erasure (collective amnesia). Building on Mimi Thi Nguyen's arguments on freedom and indebtedness in The Gift of Freedom, I argue that the novel compels us to ask how national history and cultural memory are produced, managed, and refined—and how the discourse on history is a humanizing project in itself. For example, what ideological meaning does modern Chinese history have for conceiving of Chineseness in the contemporary era? How does the transformation of global political and economic regimes in the last decade—particularly with regards to the hegemonic roles of both the US and China in the global economy—regulate the (re)telling of Chinese history, even as Cold War dis- course shapes and makes possible some of these very disclosures? How do the representations, mediations, and considerations of violence in the novel theorize a hermeneutics of nationhood; liberal rights of freedom and citizenship; exile and displacement; along with historical trauma and witnessing? Racial and ethnic identity is critical to the legibility of traumatic memory. Building on Nguyen's The Gift of Freedom,

my conception of the term gift of memory recognizes the precarity and suppression of collective memory through state censorship and historical erasure; at the same time, the gift of memory shows that the conditions of recording and sharing memories of modern Chinese history in the West are manufactured by constructing ideological and psychic borders between China and the West that are sustained by orientalist discourse. The expression of memory, for instance, invokes a subject who remembers—a subject who is racialized and gendered in the process of sharing memory. If the remembering subject can dare to remember and recount traumatic memory only in the West, then the West becomes the only possible site of memory.

In evoking Chinese amnesia, its commentators reduce Chinese people in China to an ignorant, unknowing mass whose potential for critical, liberal selfhood can never be achieved where they are. What originates as a critique of state oppression transforms into a championing of Western democracy.

The trope of Chinese amnesia is specific to the rise of China; the term was coined in 1989 by Fang Lizhi after the Tiananmen Massacre, and it has gained traction with China's economic rise in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. In other words, Chinese amnesia is a new formation rooted in the anxieties of Chinese economic dominance. Ma Jian's comments on Chinese amnesia at the beginning of this article capture some of the ideological stakes for a writer like Thien in writing Chinese history. In some ways, Thien, who is Chinese Canadian, must participate in an older model of Chinese diasporic writing marketed as dissent against the Chinese state. Do Not Say received substantial critical praise upon its publication, and almost all the reviews focus on its remark- able and ambitious chronicling of modern Chinese history. The novel won the 2016 Governor General's Award for Fiction, the 2016 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and the Edward Stanford Travel Writing Award in the UK; it was shortlisted for the 2016 Man Booker Prize and longlisted for an Andrew Carnegie Medal for Fiction. The New York Times named it a Critics' Top Book of 2016. Yet, perhaps despite its critical success, Thien's novel exceeds the liberal frameworks for the construction of subjectivity that rely on ideals of political speech that the Chinese subject can achieve only through exile or escape from China.

Thien begins the story with the narrator, Marie (also called by her Chinese name Li-ling and nickname Ma-li), a second-generation Chinese Canadian, recounting the disappearance and suicide of her father, Kai, in Hong Kong in 1989, when she was ten years old. The novel begins like this: "In a single year, my father left us twice.

The first time, to end his marriage, and the second, when he took his own life. That year, 1989, my mother flew to Hong Kong and laid my father to rest in a cemetery near the Chinese border. Afterwards, distraught, she rushed home to Vancouver where I had been alone. I was ten years old."5 Already, in its first lines, the text foreshadows its vast emotional and spatial topography, a grief that extends from Hong Kong to China to Vancouver and creates a sense of time and space made possible only by diasporic subjectivity. That same year, Marie meets Ai-ming, a young Chinese woman fleeing Beijing for Vancouver after participating

in the student protests at Tiananmen Square. Grief colors her childhood and reaches into her adult life, as she searches for answers regarding Kai's disappearance and suicide, and the connections between her family and Ai-ming's. Throughout the novel, Marie scours salvaged records, secret archives, and family stories to assemble the details of their lives, often referring to a fragmented book called the "Book of Records," whose chapters have been copied and passed down for generations.6

While Marie is the narrator, and it is her narration and story that open and close the novel, it might be more accurate to say that Ai-ming's father Spar- row is the protagonist of the text.7 It is his birth and death that bookend the central plot, and his life spans some of the most important events in modern Chinese history. He is born at the close of the Chinese civil war in 1949, and his childhood in Shanghai is transformed by Mao Zedong's land-reform campaigns of the early 1950s, the Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956), and the Great Leap Forward (1958–62).8 His aunt Swirl and uncle Wen the Dreamer are persecuted as landowners, publicly shamed in violent struggle sessions, and sent to reeduca- tion camps in the desert, and their daughter Zhuli comes to live with him and his family. Later, Sparrow is a composer and teacher at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where Zhuli studies violin and Marie's father, Kai, studies piano. Kai ar- rives in Shanghai from a village outside of Changsha, the only surviving member of his family in the wake of the Great Famine resulting from the policies of the Great Leap Forward. Sparrow and Kai develop a quiet, intimate friendship, and the text suggests a queer romance between them that is ultimately thwarted by the violent upheavals during the Cultural Revolution (1966–67).9 The Cultural Revolution brings turbulent changes to their lives—their school is shut down and their teachers and fellow students are denounced. In an act of betrayal, Kai joins the Red Guards and violently assaults his fellow students, accusing them of sheltering anti-revolutionary ideas, beating them, and destroying their homes. Zhuli becomes a target of the Red Guards, is deemed a counter-revolutionary and a class enemy because of her parents, and commits suicide at the Conservatory. Her suicide haunts the rest of the novel, its shock and sadness burrowing into the people who loved her, both prefiguring and echoing Kai's own suicide later, centered in the first lines of the novel. Decades later, in a China that would be unrecognizable to a young Sparrow or Zhuli, Marie, now a mathematics profes-sor, travels to Hong Kong and then Shanghai to search for the missing Ai-ming and piece together her father's relationship to Sparrow, their creative lives as musicians, and the secrets Kai carried to the very end.

This general synopsis reveals the vast scope of the novel, which eclipses a single national framework for interpretation or analysis. To understand the sites of injury and the sites of memory, one must triangulate the multivalent relation-ships between China and the US, China and Canada, the US and Canada, China and Hong Kong, and Hong Kong and its British colonial legacies. The novel itself suggests—with the American horizon that Ai-ming seeks from Canada—that the US hegemonic position in the world is inseparable from the multivalent relation-ships between its other sites of injury.

## THE GIFT OF MEMORY

The Chinese diasporic literary market in the 1990s and early 2000s reflects the experiences of exiles whose novels and memoirs told harrowing tales of brutal labor camps, struggle sessions, and familial upheavals during the Cultural Revolution. A number of memoirs made their way to bookstores and even elementary and high school curriculums in the US during this period, such as Zi Ping Luo's A Generation Lost: China Under the Cultural Revolution (1990); Jung Chang's Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China (1991); Ma Bo's Blood Red Sunset (1995); Ji Li Jiang's Red Scarf Girl (1997); and Ting Xing Ye's My Name is Number 4 (2007). In fiction, Ha Jin's Waiting (1999) and The Crazed (2005), Anchee Min's Wild Ginger (2002), and Qiu Xiaolong's Years of Red Dust (published in English in 2010) rounded out a political imaginary in the West where China was a place of famine, hard labor, psychological torment, and social distrust as a result of the state's campaigns to enact communist policy and eradicate bourgeois allegiance.10 In what he calls the "postcolonial exotic," Graham Huggan examines how postcolonial works are exploited for commercial consumption by a liter- ary and cultural market craving an "other" that might meet the standards of "marginality" and "authenticity." He argues that the works of these thinkers and writers should be honored, without disregarding their complicity in conventions of exoticism.11 China is not a postcolonial nation, but these exilic writers in their accounts of life under communism often bolster (intentionally or not) exotic stereotypes. In her analysis of Chang's Wild Swans, Chunhiu Peng argues that these stories of tragic loss and traumatic violence testify against communism: "One nation's trauma is borrowed as another nation's catharsis, which, following Eastern Europe's official abandonment of Marxism and socialism, offers a timely closure to worries over the communist threat."12

For this generation of writers, immigration to Europe or the US was frequently represented as the only escape from cycles of violence in China. Peng argues that, in their accounts of leaving China, these authors "symbolically close[] off the historical trauma and consign[] it to a safe distance."13 In Ma Jian's 2008 novel Beijing Coma, for example, the US is presented as an ideological foil to China and the embodiment of democratic values. Ma, who left Beijing for Hong Kong in 1987 and then immigrated to Europe in 1997, depicts China as a canni- balistic wasteland of unceasing injustice. The US, on the other hand, represents a specter of liberal possibility, where the protagonist's father longs to return. He dies from stomach cancer just a year after his release from a labor camp, and his dying wish is to have his ashes buried "in free soil" in America. Like Ma and Chang, many of these exilic writers have firsthand experience of violence during the Cultural Revolution, or were escaping persecution for their roles in student protests against the state. Their immigration journeys to a European city or the US, which often close their memoirs or author biographies, reassure readers of their safety and distance from Chinese persecution. But now, almost sixty years since the start of the Cultural

Revolution and more than thirty years after the Tiananmen Massacre, the conditions for escape and the occasion for disclosure have changed.

A new generation of Chinese diasporic writers, like Thien, who have a different orientation toward the events that unfolded in their parents' generations, must grapple with the challenge of narrating moments in modern Chinese history without reinforcing the orientalist tropes bolstering the call for remembrance within Chinese amnesia. Do Not Say emphasizes how multiple nations conspire to reproduce an oppressive order that simultaneously organizes and disrupts life chances. The novel's representations of the linkages, interconnections, and failures of these regimes challenge liberal notions of freedom and show the fallacies of liberal rescue.

Mimi Thi Nguyen's theorizations of freedom and liberalism inform my thoughts on Chinese amnesia, historical memory, and the cultural imaginaries that delimit memory and censorship. In the Gift of Freedom, Nguyen argues that a logic of gift and debt functions as the ideological grounding for American liberalism. Nguyen focuses on the figure of the Vietnamese refugee to address the coupling of freedom with debt to empire. She describes how the US, from the Cold War to the War on Terror, simultaneously administers violence through war and proffers freedom and safety to the refugees who result from those wars. Following Foucault's theorizations of freedom as the relation between governors and the governed, Nguyen argues that freedom is constantly manufactured by the state. The criteria for calculating freedom, she writes, "require liberal government as the consolidation of apparatuses that underwrite political freedom through state citizen, economic liberty as wage labor and market exchange, and civilization as the education of desire…and also a self-conscious subject as the rationale, and the target, of their governance."14 Nguyen pairs her analysis of Foucault's theorizations of freedom with Jacques Derrida's interpretations of the gift. Derrida argues that the gift inaugurates an economy of exchange and obligation between the giver and the recipient, and through gift exchange, the recipient is designated as debtor. The "gift of freedom," then, is Nguyen's way of describing the manufacturing of freedom through a relation of debt.

That some histories of state violence in China cannot be discussed in public forums or are targeted by government censorship and state revisionism cannot be denied. What I wish to focus on are the imagined geographies of remembrance and censorship that reinforce the long arc of anti-communist state policy in the West and insist on a liberal landscape bifurcating spaces of disclosure and memorial. Ignoring its own zones of exception where historical memories are threatened by erasure and human life remains precarious under forces of state violence—such as maximum-security prisons, Guantanamo Bay, neo-colonies, and indigenous reservations—American liberalism uses China as a foil to fabricate its own benevolence and draw fictional cartographies of freedom.15 In other words, American liberalism insists on the spatial distinction between freedom and unfreedom, on where memory can and cannot be remembered. I offer the term gift of memory to describe this critical dynamic. The gift of memory, as another dimension of the gift of freedom, functions as the ideological antidote to Chinese

amnesia by accenting how race persists as a central determinant in the narrativization and resonance of traumatic memory.

My conception of the gift of memory pairs an analysis of relations of sovereign power with an examination of the function of memory in the pro- cess of racialization. While scholars in memory studies have interrogated the complex relationship between memory, narrative, and national identity, the gift of memory is my interpretation of the occasion for memory to become a technology of racialization. Orientalism plays a major role in my discussion of memory, and in that sense, I contribute an analysis of race to French historian Pierre Nora's original formulation of "sites of memory." In "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," Nora argues that there are sites of memory (lieux de memoire) because there are no longer "real" landscapes of memory (milieux de memoire). Sites of memory, in his arguments, are places like cem- eteries, museums, monuments, archives, and libraries that have become neces- sary because "real" memory has been lost.16 The power of memory, for Nora, is what Walter Benjamin describes as the "capacity for endless interpolations into what has been."17 Nora is deeply anxious about the loss of memory; sites of memory are reservoirs, containers, and portals to memory, which are increas- ingly threatened by the configuration of the past by history. For me, memory and history exist less in direct opposition than in Nora's writings. I agree with Marita Sturken's argument that, while there are important political distinctions between the two, memory and history are intertwined.18 Sturken writes that, unlike history, "memory is ontologically fluid and memories constantly subject to rescripting and fantasy."19 History, produced and sustained by institutions of power, incorporates individual people's memories to regulate a collectively held history that organizes national identity—what Lauren Berlant has called "the national symbolic."20 The constitution of history, as Foucault has argued, has the form of war in that history is about relations of power, not relations of meaning.21 At the same time, because memory is constituted through various mediations, I follow Sturken's arguments that it "acquires cultural and histori- cal meaning when it is articulated through processes of representation."22 The meaning of the past is produced to articulate relations of power. Scholars in memory studies, including the ones I have mentioned, are deeply invested in the question of the nation-state regarding collective memory. Personal and collective memory is suppressed, endorsed, or cultivated in nation-building and the project of citizenship. The crucial difference between my interpolation of the gift of memory and the work of these memory-studies scholars is my contention that the gift of memory (which, again, is the antidote to Chinese amnesia) transcends any one national border to freely circulate orientalist stereotypes about contemporary Chineseness. Evocations of Chinese amnesia do not buttress any one nation-building project, but its flexibility and seeming undeniability makes for an easy target to tout liberal democratic governance in Europe and the Americas. The transportability of Chinese amnesia reveals the foundation of orientalist discourse sustaining the fantasies of national history in the contemporary political imaginary.

Do Not Say's multigenerational and transnational stories of war and immigration policies emphasize the multilayered and mutually constitutive state apparatuses of China, the US, and Canada. The novel challenges the spatial mappings of disclosure embedded in the gift of memory by showing how Ai- ming is unable to find refuge in Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco, or New York. I argue that Ai-ming's immigration story and her eventual disappearance, which remains a mystery at the close of the novel, show at once the profound impact of immigration policy on millions of lives and its systemic unreliability and unpredictability. After the Tiananmen Massacre, both the US and Canada condemned the Chinese government and approved special amnesty programs for Chinese nationals. Although thousands of Chinese citizens, mostly students studying abroad at the time, did receive amnesty, Ai-ming, like thousands of others, fails to qualify because she cannot meet provisions outlined in the legislation. The novel suggests that even the most eligible candidates for asylum fall into the gaps of US and Canadian immigration policies and they cannot be neatly classified or saved as victims of the Communist regime. The liberal promise of rescue, embedded in the gift of memory, is not guaranteed after all.

Ai-ming's serial migration in Canada and later the US shows the incompatibility of border policing with safety and security. Her arrival to Canada after participating in the Tiananmen Protests does not immediately (or ever) free her from danger. She trades the fear of persecution from the Chinese govern- ment for new fears of deportation and imprisonment by Canadian forces. For example, when Ai-ming first arrives at Marie's house in Vancouver in 1991, she is already acquainted with the fear of the police and the risks of deportation: Ma asked her if there was anything she needed, or if there was something she would like to do. Ai-ming put down her bowl. 'To be honest, I feel as if it's been a long time since I had a goodnight's sleep. In Toronto, I couldn't rest. Every few weeks I had to move.'

'Move house?' Ma said.

Ai-ming was trembling. 'I thought…I was afraid of the police. I was frightened they would send me back. I don't know if my mother was able to tell you everything. I hope so. In Beijing, I didn't do anything wrong, anything criminal, but even so…In China, my aunt and uncle helped me leave and I crossed the border into Kyrgyzstan and then… you bought my ticket here. Despite everything, you helped me…I'm grateful, I'm afraid I'll never be able to thank you as I should. I'm sorry for everything…'23

Thien suggests that Ai-ming is the quintessential candidate for asylum (as imagined by Canadian and American amnesty policies) whose inability to gain legal status reveals the realities for refugees whose journey to "freedom" is outlined with other forms of danger. Ai-ming arrives in Vancouver embodying the weary-refugee archetype, "trembling" as she speaks. She is the idealized, "deserving" Chinese refugee figure embraced by Western fantasies of rescue, a

young, promising student who fought for democracy and now faces persecu- tion by a Communist government. She is highly educated and was admitted to the computer science department at Tsinghua University, the most prestigious scientific university in China. Even Marie, at twelve years old, immediately registers Ai-ming's vulnerability and destitution. Marie notices that her suitcase is mostly empty, and she is not wearing a jacket despite the cold. Her gestures and language, especially in this excerpt, are accentuated by uncertainty and palpable trepidation. The ellipses scattered across her speech suggest the simultaneous consideration, desire, and hesitation to share her story. Her apology to Marie's mother is a quiet acknowledgment that, technically, she has implicated them in harboring an undocumented immigrant who has illegally entered the country with a fake passport and does not have a clear pathway to citizenship or legal residency.

Ai-ming's serial immigration is incompatible with the promises of liberal rescue by either Canada or the US. After staying a few months with Marie and her mother in Vancouver, Ai-ming sets her sights on the US. Marie notes that her mother's low-income status prevents her from sponsoring Ai-ming's immigra- tion to Canada.24 The US seems like the only viable option. Ai-ming misses the deadline to qualify for Executive Order 12711, but she is hopeful that another opportunity for amnesty will be passed by Congress. Issued by George H.W. Bush on April 11, 1990, the Executive Order, which later became the Chinese Student Protection Act (passed in 1992), granted amnesty to students arriving to the US after the Tiananmen demonstrations.25 It established permanent residency for Chinese nationals, but only if they had arrived between June 5, 1989, and April 11, 1990.26 Ai-ming misses the deadline, arriving in the US in May 1991. Still, she and Marie's mother are hopeful that, if Ai-ming establishes residency, she will qualify for a new immigration bill being considered in Congress. Marie says, "In America, we all wanted to believe, Ai-ming would have the best chance for a stable future."27 That stable future, however, never materializes. Thien registers the melancholy and disappointment in Marie's reflections as she considers the precarity of Ai-ming's immigration to the US years later in her adulthood. For five years, with a forged passport and counterfeit identity papers, Ai-ming lives in San Francisco, then New York, working low-wage jobs as a waitress, housecleaner, nanny, and tutor. Finally, in 1995, when Congress passes Section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Ai-ming, along with nearly half a million others, can submit her application for permanent residency. However, her application never goes through, and she is never granted an interview. In May 1996, Ai-ming goes back to China for her mother's funeral. She no longer has a Chinese hukou (a residency permit) and her application for US residency is void now that she has left the US. After 1998, Marie loses track of Ai-ming altogether. In the end, Marie can only speculate and hope that Ai-ming is still alive:

In my mind, Ai-ming's story has a hundred possible endings. Perhaps she simply wanted to leave the past behind, and she took on a new identity and a

new life. Perhaps she became involved in something she could not speak of to us. Perhaps her counterfeit papers came back to haunt her. In recent years, this last possibility consumed me, for there were stories of Chinese migrants lost in the maze of detention centres; many had arrived in the United States in the years following the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations and had never obtained proper papers.28

She reiterates "perhaps," "perhaps," "perhaps." As Marie contemplates the mystery of Ai-ming's disappearance, her hypotheses outline actual realities of possibility, uncertainty, detention, and persecution experienced by millions of migrants to the US. Instead of political haven and asylum, what Marie knows of Ai-ming's time in the US is that it is marked by economic hardship and isola- tion. The chilling possibility Marie suggests at the end, that Ai-ming might have disappeared into the American immigration-detention machine, stands in stark opposition to the dream of American rescue and refuge—the gift of freedom revoked. Ai-ming's candidacy for asylum fails not because she fails to fulfill the state's official or ideological criteria; instead, her serial migration is evidence of the larger apparatus of Chinese state persecution and American and Canadian immigration policies. Fleeing Beijing in the aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre, Ai-ming negotiates an interconnected network of border policing and legal restrictions. The novel, then, shows how US, Canadian, and Chinese state policies inadequately account for the victims of state violence, and raises criti- cal questions for the types of events themselves that allow mass refugee flows to be facilitated and actualized. As Nguyen has argued, while the US extends liberal promises of safety and refuge, it simultaneously produces the conditions for precarity and violence under the guise of benevolence.

## ON AND ON WE COPY

The polyphonic structure of Do Not Say draws on multiple languages and visual text to organize its central philosophy about history and kinship—how, in the face of oppressive regimes, what remain and what get passed down are the precious fragments that gesture toward an expansive community of family, friends, and co-conspirators. The novel features a vast array of paratexts—in addition to simplified and traditional Chinese characters, there are mathematical formulas, Western musical notation, Chinese jianpu musical notations, and photographs. Thien includes a section at the end with over fifty notes that cite and elaborate on the references in the novel. Moreover, the novel contains extensive allusions to music by Bach, Beethoven, Ravel, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, Ysaÿe, Scarlatti, and many other famous composers of Western classical music. Integral to its sweeping, expansive worldbuilding are Do Not Say's constant gestures beyond itself. The "Book of Records," the text within a text, and Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variations arrange the form of the novel, reflecting its temporal shifts and historical metanarratives. Thien is greatly inspired by Canadian classical pianist Glenn Gould's interpretation of Bach's work in his album Bach: The Goldberg Variations, whose recordings in 1956 and 1981

bookended Gould's career.29 Underpinning the metatextual elements of the novel, the "Book of Records" is also a central metaphor for the text's meditations on history and collective memory, the impossibility of language, the incompleteness of history, and the enduring desire to remember.

The "Book of Records" represents the incomplete and collaborative nature of writing history, and in turn, it both offers counternarratives to official history and allegorizes the function of history. The novel introduces the "Book of Records" in the opening sections as an incomplete novel that Wen the Dreamer discovers at a bookstore in Shanghai, run by a bookseller called the Old Cat. Wen the Dreamer, captivated by the novel, collects and hand-copies its chapters for Swirl. The text within a text follows the story of Da-wei and May Fourth as they fall in love, become exiles, and traverse the deserts of China and Kyrgyzstan. The story, however, ends abruptly mid-sentence after chapter 31. Wen the Dreamer cannot find the following chapters, but suspects that at least five hundred pages remain of the novel.30 Later, he begins to compose and add his own chapters to the book, hiding secret messages and memorializing real events in its pages. For example, during the Anti-Rightist Campaigns (1957–61), while Wen is held pris- oner at the Jiabiangou Labor Camp, he records the names of his fellow inmates and the dates of their deaths (most died from starvation). Based on accounts of surviving ex-inmates, it is estimated that over 3,500 people condemned as Rightists were imprisoned in Jiabiangou from October 1957 to early 1961, and about 2,500 people died in the camp. The number of prisoners and the death toll remain debated because officials undercounted the number of prisoners and inflated the survival rate.31 Like the real-life prisoners, Wen the Dreamer and his friend and fellow prisoner Comrade Glass Eye suffer from starvation, physical exhaustion from hard labor, and extreme freezing temperatures. Comrade Glass Eye tells Sparrow the following:

> [Wen the Dreamer] would take the names of the dead and hide them, one by one, in the Book of Records, alongside May Fourth and Da-wei. He would populate this fictional world with true names and true deeds. They would live on, as dangerous as revolutionaries but as intangible as ghosts. What new movement could the Party proclaim that would bring these dead souls into line? What crackdown could erase something that was hidden in plain sight?
>
> 'This is my fate,' Wen the Dreamer told me. 'To escape and continue this story, to make infinite copies, to let these stories permeate the soil, invisible and undeniable.'32

The "Book of Records," much like Do Not Say, becomes an unofficial record of Chinese history, obscuring the boundaries between the real and the fictional. Thien suggests that, in fiction, truths can evade detection and subvert governmental erasure. By describing them as being "as dangerous as revolutionaries but as intangible as ghosts," the text brings attention to the spectral, haunting power of these forgotten victims that interrogates the traditional institutions of truth.

Using the language of spectrality—the "ghosts" and the "dead souls" that transcend the Party's reach—the text suggests that the "Book of Records" can memorialize and spread revolutionary ideas that disrupt regimes of official truth. As a writer, Wen uses lies, deceit, and subterfuge—familiar tools of the Chinese Communist Party—to record and disseminate the names of his fellow political prisoners and the stories of their deaths that the government seeks to destroy. He immortalizes the dead "in plain sight" by including their stories in an ever-expanding story and sharing the work in a growing community of readers. The "Book of Records" affects almost all the characters in the novel and links them to one another, from Sparrow to his mother, Big Mother Knife, to Kai to Zhuli to Ai-ming. When Marie collects the chapters and goes to Shanghai, she scans and posts thousands of copies on the internet in hopes that Ai-ming will recognize it and find her way back to Marie. She tells Tofu Liu, "I've made tens of thousands of copies of all the notebooks. With a few keystrokes, it's possible to send files anywhere in the world, instantaneously. I want it to exist everywhere, to keep growing and changing."33 In that way, the "Book of Records" continues its reach as a social text for generations. The history within the "Book of Records" and the history of its composition and circulation epitomize the function of his- tory as an intergenerational project of remembrance. It is a novel with unnamed authors, fragmented chapters that are lost and found, copied and re-copied. This act of writing and copying, which "permeates the soil," enables and naturalizes a history that counters the official narrative and makes a communal space for mourning and remembering.

The novel suggests that the act of copying connects the self to a larger community, one generation to the next. Copying, in essence, allegorizes the interplay between the construction and the inheritance of collective memory. The "Book of Records" survives only because people like Wen the Dreamer and Sparrow copy its chapters, share its contents, and add to its meaning—the "growing and changing" Marie refers to. The original text is not published, and its author(s) remains unknown, but the story continues to reach people because of its copies. I argue that Do Not Say foregrounds the recurring motifs of copies and records to highlight the inherently collaborative and mutually constitutive nature of collective memory. For example, in a conversation with the bookseller the Old Cat and university student Ling (eventually Sparrow's wife and Ai-ming's mother) after their study-group meeting, Zhuli timidly cautions the Old Cat about the dangers of having texts in her shop deemed counterrevolutionary. In response, the Old Cat draws a throughline between personal experiences and inherited memory in the act of copying:

'The things you experience,' she continued, 'are written on your cells as memories and patterns, which are reprinted again on the next generation. And even if you never lift a shovel or plant a cabbage, every day of your life something is written upon you. And when you die, the entirety of that written record returns to the earth. All we have on this earth, all we are, is a record. Maybe the only things that persist are not the evildoers and demons (though, admittedly, they

do have a certain longevity) but copies of things. The original has long since passed away from this universe, but on and on we copy. I have devoted my minuscule life to the act of copying.'34

By saying that personal experiences are "written," the text places language and its construction at the origin of memory. These experiences become, quite literally, part of the body by imprinting themselves "on your cells," uniting living and memory-making with recording. Interestingly, by merging experience with recording and "reprinting," the text creates a dichotomous and cyclical relationship between the inherited (and inherent) nature of memory and the constructed nature of collective memory. The text evokes the language of science and nature—"cells," "the universe," "lifting a shovel," "planting a cabbage," and "the earth"—to suggest that memories are predisposed to rooting themselves in the body and the earth. That is, they are passed onto future generations as part of a naturally occurring cycle. Yet, at the same time, by repeating the im- portance of the "written record" and "copies of things," the text highlights the consciousness of constructing memories and passing them on. The act of copying dislodges memory from place, rejecting the critical promise within the gift of memory that, to remember, we must reach a specific nation. Personal experi- ences become collective memory in the act of copying; the act of copying and the copies themselves are memories and memory-making, not specific nations. The endorsement of copying is the governing ethos of the novel; the act of copying sustains the ongoing construction of collective memory and cultivates relationships across generations. Instead of searching for the gift of memory in any one nation or nationalism, the text suggests that copying fragmented, incomplete records is how we may remember whence we come. Just as the Old Cat states that "[t]he original has long since passed away from this universe, but on and on we copy," the title of the novel is an indirect translation that reflects the complex relationship between the "original" and "copies," and the text's privileging of the idea of copies. The title Do Not Say We Have Nothing comes from an English translation of the Chinese version of "The Internationale," the anthem of the socialist movement and of the Chinese Communist Party, written in French in 1871 by Eugène Pottier.35 (Frantz Fanon's seminal 1961 work The Wretched of the Earth, or Les Damnés de La Terre, also takes its title from the first line of the song.) Qu Qiubai's Chinese translation of the original, which prioritized sonic qualities over literal translation, was popularized in 1923.36 The importance of "The Internationale" in both global socialist movements and Chinese national history complements its choice as a titular reference for the novel. The song was culturally vital to the collective identities of Chinese socialists from the civil war in 1949 to the Cultural Revolution. The song embodies socialist visions of promise and change, and student protestors sang it as they retreated from Tiananmen Square as military forces closed in, in the early hours of June 4, 1989.37 The text suggests that, rather than disparaging what might be lost from the original with the copy of a copy, the double removal in an indirect translation inherently binds multiple languages and cultures together. While "do

not say we have nothing" ("不要说我们一无所有") is not quite the same as the English translation ("we are nothing, let us be everything") of the original French line ("nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout"), it offers something quite beautiful and revelatory as a result. This linking of multiple nations, multiple languages, and multiple generations may in fact be apt for the larger examination of the politics and possibilities of diaspora.

The notion of copying in the novel as a form of collective memory, community, and unofficial history directly challenges the stereotype of China as a nation of piracy, whose copying of tech products and luxury goods is derided by Western corporations as intellectual-property theft.38 In 2010, as China became the manufacturing capital of the world, it was simultaneously cast as the bootlegging capital of the world. Chinese copying, in the forms of piracy, plagiarism, and forgery, elicits a spectrum of ridicule and scorn in the West.39 In critiquing Chinese counterfeits and reproductions, Western commentators also distinguish ancient China from modern China, praising the former's inventions like gunpowder, printing, and the compass over modern China's cheap knockoffs of phones, cars, computer software, designer clothes, and fast-food chains.40

The discursive formation of the Chinese copy—the counterfeit, the fake, the bootleg, the knockoff—reveals the artifice of global hierarchies of wealth, language, and labor. Take, for example, the concept of shanzhai, which describes counterfeit and parody products that harness innovation, creativity, and playful modification.41 Shanzhai shows how the copy destabilizes the primacy of the original and questions the politics of authenticity. Do Not Say's privileging of copying aligns itself with traditional Chinese practices of copying as forms of conservation, practice, and creativity.42 In Chinese pedagogy, for example, reciting and copying classical works are foundational to learning. Creativity is encouraged through the copying and sharing of poetry and art. While Do Not Say does not directly address the stereotype of Chinese copies as inferior Western mimesis, the novel's attunement to globalization suggests that its privileging of copies emerges from considering the denigration of Chinese copy. The novel and its characters must be understood in relation to racialized understandings of Chineseness that circulate across borders. Notions of Chinese copying and Chinese (re)production resonate internationally and speak to deeper beliefs about our contemporary circuits of cultural production, transnational capital, and labor. The devaluation and denigration of the Chinese copy extend a broader semantics of racist caricature and orientalist attitudes toward Chinese labor and production.

As my discussion of Chinese copies demonstrates, analysis of Do Not Say must consider the constructions and negotiations of racial identities in the development and maintenance of global hierarchies. The racialization of Chinese subjects is critical to the ideological project of late capitalism. To not address the organization and enforcement of racial categories in the U.S. and Canada

is to miss something pivotal about the novel. Additionally, the encyclopedic elements of the text, such as the metanarrative of the "Book of Records," its

musical references, and its formal structure, necessitate multiple analytical approaches. The networks of meaning Thien activates in the novel cannot be wholly captured within any one field of critical study, but postcolonial studies, Asian Canadian studies, and Asian American studies are fitting homes for a novel that theorizes the histories of violence modulated within the multivalent state apparatuses of China, the US, and Canada. Do Not Say articulates a distinct sensitivity to the regulatory matrices that index the global politics of immigration and the ideologies of the nation-state, and scholars in these critical fields are attuned to identifying and investigating the discursive formations inhering in the text and surrounding it as a cultural artifact.

To read Do Not Say as a postcolonial novel, Asian Canadian novel, or hemispheric Asian American novel is to center the politics and practice of borders and the formation of diasporic identities under the forces of British colonialism, US imperialism, and Chinese nationalism. Asian American studies foregrounds dynamic theoretical frameworks for thinking about the constructed nature of racial category and regulatory structures that illuminate the transnationalism and racialization projects in the novel. For example, in Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique, Kandice Chuh posits a "subjectless" approach to the field to deliberately reject essentialist claims to ethnic and diasporic identity. She writes, "I mean subjectlessness to create the conceptual space to prioritize difference by foregrounding the discursive constructedness of subjectivity. In other words, it points attention to the constraints on the liberatory potential of the achievement of subjectivity, by reminding us that a 'subject' only becomes recognizable and can act as such by conforming to certain regulatory matrices. In that sense, a subject is always also an epistemological object."43 She writes that the field of Asian American studies engages in comparative racialization projects that de-romanticize the nation-state by advancing a postcolonial, diasporic approach. Asian Americanist critique, then, fortifies the novel's claims against nationalist ideology and unsettles dominant discursive practices for conceptualizing China as a rival to American hegemony. At the same time, Asian Canadian studies scholars like Christopher Lee, Marie Lo, Iyko Day, and Lisa Mar argue that there are national specificities to Canadian history that cannot be absorbed into Asian Americanist critique.44 Transnational continuities aside, these scholars contest that Asian American studies may overlook the specific histories of settler-colonial legacies in Canada and its systemic oppression of indigenous peoples. Lee is more forceful in his arguments about the tendency for Asian American studies scholars to "co-opt" material without emphasizing contextual differences between the two nations.45 He notes, however, that merely emphasizing the differences between the US and Canada ends up reifying the nation-state because "it restricts the appearance of the Asian Canadian to the confines of its national status, its being Canadian as opposed to American."46 My goal is not to declare Do Not Say an Asian American novel or to be entirely satisfied with calling it an Asian Canadian novel—although that designation would certainly be more appropriate given Lee's concerns. I advocate that the novel be read as an Asian diasporic novel, which demands the radical, creative,

interdisciplinary approaches cultivated and sharpened within Asian Canadian studies, Asian American studies, comparative ethnic studies, and postcolonial studies. Chuh's discussion of "subjectless" discourse reminds us of the discursive possibilities of approaching the subject as an epistemological object, and I ground my understanding of the novel in this foundational theory of subjectivity. That is, I see "subjectless" discourse as creating a critical space for recognizing the constructedness of racial and ethnic categories and the shifting dynamics of glo- balized racial politics. Similarly, in "Orientalisms in the Americas: A hemispheric approach to Asian American history," Erika Lee proposes a hemispheric Asian American historical approach to trace the experiences of Asians throughout the Americas together and link them to the global world.47 By broadening our horizon for engaging with multiple histories of Asian migration in the Americas, she shows that we gain a complex understanding of the evolving ideas and dynamics of orientalism. Racialized understandings of Chineseness as economic, social, and cultural threats, then, are critical to our understanding of transnational capital, border politics, and migration networks.48 Through its contemplation of history and memory, Do Not Say shows us the constructedness of the Chinese subject and the Chinese diasporic subject as these characters navigate different terrains. Do Not Say weaves together separate national histories not to foster deeper national memories or national ideologies but to show the intimacies of our histories beyond national boundaries. The novel attends to these differ- ent nation-building projects and to how they deny remembrance and reunion. Reading the novel through a national lens or as a national allegory, then, elides the meanings embedded in its meditations on memory-making and unofficial histories upheld by fragmented records and copies.

## CHINESE AMNESIA

For exilic Chinese writers and dissidents, anxiety about the silencing of the Tiananmen Massacre festers not only as an enduring lament for the victims but also as a call for democracy that has yet to manifest. The Chinese govern- ment's refusal to apologize for the deaths of thousands, and its suppression of memorials during the anniversary of the Massacre are all justifiable grounds for these critiques that—especially for these writers, who escaped persecution for their writings in China—seek to bring attention to the censorship and surveil- lance apparatus that continues to infringe on free speech and outright punish expressions of dissent against the government. Crucially, however, enveloped in this critique of the state is the characterization of Chinese people as willfully ignorant through a diagnosis of collective amnesia. Fluctuating between the poles of memory and forgetting, Chinese people, "blinded by fear and bloated by prosperity," as Ma writes, have chosen the path of least resistance as they opt instead for a life of consumerist excess.49 Until they leave China or rise up against Chinese governance, these writers imply, Chinese people will remain

amnesiacs unable to fully register the oppressive structures of their lives under Chinese rule.

Over the last three decades, as China has become the US's chief economic competitor, the agitators of Chinese amnesia have shifted the target of denunciation to Chinese people, who they argue have traded historical memory and political consciousness for financial gain. It was astrophysicist and prominent dissident Fang Lizhi who devised the term Chinese amnesia, in his article for The New York Review of Books in September 1990.50 Fang and his wife, Li Shuxian, famously took refuge in the American embassy in Beijing in the days after June Fourth, and eventually they were granted asylum in the US.51 In "The Chinese Amnesia," Fang condemns the Chinese government for its explicit erasure and censorship of all media that do not serve its agenda. He writes, "This is the objective of the Chinese Communist policy of 'Forgetting History.' In an effort to coerce all of society into a continuing forgetfulness, the policy requires that any detail of history that is not in the interests of the Chinese Communists cannot be expressed in any speech, book, document, or other medium."52 Fang is hopeful that the world's attention to the Tiananmen Massacre means that the Chinese government's "Technique of Forgetting" has faltered under international pressure and China will "move toward progress."53 Since Fang's first iteration of Chi- nese amnesia, which is directed at the Chinese government, the term has evolved to castigate Chinese people more generally and condemn the condition of the Chinese mind. For example, the Chinese memoirist and fiction writer Yan Lianke, writing for The New York Times in April 2013, asserts that Chinese youth are transforming into "selective-memory automatons" as a result of China's memory "deletion" policies.54 In "On China's state-sponsored amnesia," he writes, "Now, as China's economy grows and the state has an enormous amount of money at its disposal, it skillfully uses financial incentives to entice people into giving up their memories and to compromise with the state."55 The growth in China's economy and in Chinese people's pursuit of financial gain consequently means that people forfeit their freedom of expression. Perry Link, the renowned East Asian studies scholar, notes that young people in China have abandoned national history for frivolous ventures: "College students may have heard vague reports of it, but tend not to care, often preferring such topics as fashions, stock prices, and e-chats."56 Link's references here to fashion, the stock market, and social media scold Chinese youth for directing their attention to ephemeral trends, not the historical significance of the Massacre. While American teenagers and young adults receive similar reproaches, this claim of political inattentiveness, directed at Chinese youth, points to an innate condition of Chineseness and an essential fault in the nation's character. The people are no longer just victims of the Chinese state's censorship; they are now accused of being its collaborators. In The People's Republic of Amnesia, Louisa Lim charges Chinese people with "col- luding" with the government in "embracing" amnesia. She writes, "Forgetting is a survival mechanism, almost second nature. China's people have learned to avert their eyes and minds from anything unpleasant, allowing their brains to be imprinted with false memories—or allowing the real

memories to be erased—for the sake of convenience."57 Lim suggests that Chinese people forgo history for self-preservation and willingly comply with the erasure of historical memory.

Orientalist conceptions of China and a championing of the West through the gift of memory undergird the trope of Chinese amnesia. As my sample of articles on Chinese amnesia shows, Chinese amnesia relies on contradictory logics—first, the trope suggests that Chinese people do not know their history because China imposes a total censorship apparatus that distorts, suppresses, and fabricates information. At the same time, the trope suggests that Chinese people do not care to remember because they are distracted by materialism and greed propelled by the country's economic prosperity. Second, to be awakened from this state of collective amnesia is to understand the totality of their op- pression and fight for the liberal values of freedom of expression. However, the Chinese subject can awaken to memory only by escaping from China and finding spaces of disclosure within Western countries (securing the gift of memory). Denied such rights to access "real history" within China, Chinese people can become fully actualized, thinking subjects only in the West. The psychic invest- ment in the Tiananmen Protests and the Tiananmen Massacre, then, reflects a recurring desire to aggrandize its own project of liberal fantasies of resistance. As Hentyle Yapp argues in Minor China, within the resistance framework, China gains coherence only as the authoritarian order antithetical to the liberal West.58 Do Not Say is not separate from the contemporary literary marketplace that rewards orientalist fantasies, that saturates literature on China with tropes of Chinese amnesia, gifts of memory, and liberal resistance. Thien, however, dialec- tically engages with remembrance and memory by forging critiques of Chinese state surveillance and censorship that cannot be conveniently appropriated for the maintenance of American empire. In addition to its recurring motifs of cop- ies and records, the circularity of the novel's narrative structure illuminates the continuities and overlapping histories that eclipse the isolation of the Tiananmen Massacre as a singular historical moment built on liberal resistance. I contend that the novel rejects the notion of singularity in understanding the Massacre or any other historical event in modern Chinese history to which it alludes. The text, I argue, refuses the flattening of "Tiananmen" or "Cultural Revolution" to bywords for China's authoritarianism and instead stages a broader interpretative framework that implicates the global, transnational networks of influence and insists on a more ethical orientation toward mourning the victims.

Do Not Say's multiple timelines suture the connections between Sparrow and Marie, whose stories of loss and grief interweave throughout the novel so that, by the time we reach the end of Sparrow's life on the night of June 3, we return to the beginning of the novel, to Marie mourning Kai's death in Vancouver. In that way, the temporal structure of the novel suggests that remembrance and memorial are always already taking place. The text's treatment of the Massacre is less a mimetic reenactment of the spectacle than it is an extended medita- tion on ongoing historiographies that shift back and forward in these multiple timelines. The novel does not offer an arc of defiance or a redemptive storyline

of resistance. Because we end the novel temporally at the beginning, we know the days ahead for Ai-ming. Her escape to Vancouver, San Francisco, and New York dislocates the American and Canadian promises in the gift of memory and maps the ideological failures of liberal rescue. And yet Marie continues to search for her, by copying the "Book of Records," by sharing Sparrow's music, and by holding small rituals of remembrance in Vancouver, in Shanghai, in Hong Kong. Thien shows that Chinese history is being quietly remembered in China and elsewhere, too.

## NOTES

1. Jian Ma, "Opinion | China's Grief, Unearthed,." The New York Times, June 4, 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/opinion/04ma.html.
2. For a more in-depth accounting of the protests and interviews with exilic student protestors, see Rowena Xiaoqing He, Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China. 1st ed. Palgrave Studies in Oral History. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
3. There remain large discrepancies between the number of state-reported deaths and eyewitness accounts. He, Tiananmen Exiles, 3.
4. See Edward Said, Orientalism, (Vintage Books, 1979), 86.
5. Madeleine Thien, Do Not Say We Have Nothing. 1st American ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 3.
6. The "Book of Records" is the story within a story that follows the adventures of Da- wei and May Fourth (another allusion here to the anti-imperialist movement in 1919). The "Book of Records" is an allusion to Chinese historian Sima Qian's ShiJi (Histori- cal Records), the first Chinese biographical history. Qian is said to be the "father of Chinese history." Yang Liwen, "Oral History in China," Oral History 15, no. 1 (1987): 22–25.
7. I recognize that given its scale and range of characters, it is difficult to say there is any one true protagonist in the novel. I do think, however, that the centrality of Sparrow's character is evidenced by the continuity of his story from birth until his death.
8. For more information on the Land Reform Movement and The Great Leap Forward campaign, see Alfred L. Chan, Mao's Crusade: Politics and Policy Implementation in China's Great Leap Forward (Oxford University Press, 2001).
9. For more historical context and background on the Cultural Revolution, see Paul Clark, The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History (Cambridge University Press, 2008).
10. For example, in her critique of Chang's Wild Swans, Chunhui Peng writes that Chang's vision of China caters to a Western audience through self-exoticization and promo- tion of Western values. Chunhui Peng, "Writing Women and the Nation in Diaspora Jung Chang's Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China 在海外书写中国妇女与中国历史: 论张戎 的《 鸿: 三代中国女人的故事." Journal of Chinese Overseas 11, no. 2 (2015): 174--98, 194. For further analysis of how Wild Swans serves an orientalist agenda, see Yifan Jin, "This Generation's Wild Swans ? Counter-Stereotyping Self-Creation in Xiaolu Guo's Once Upon a Time in the East: A Story of Growing Up." The

Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 59, no. 2–3 (May 18, 2022), 002198942210923. https:// doi.org/10.1177/00219894221092301.

11. Graham Huggan, The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins (Routledge, 2002), 32.
12. Peng, "Writing Women and the Nation," 194.
13. Peng.Mimi Thi Nguyen, The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages (Duke University Press, 2012) 10.
14. Here, I am thinking of Giorgio Agamben's theorizations of the "state of exception," where the suspension of law has become the dominant paradigm for governance in the aftermath of the War on Terror. Giorgio Agamben, "State of Exception as a Paradigm of Government." in State of Exception (University of Chicago, 2008), 22.
15. For Nora, memory exists in direct opposition to history. History threatens "real" memory, which is social, spontaneous, powerful, and unselfconscious, whereas history is always an incomplete reconstruction of the past: "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past." Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." Representations 26 (April 1, 1989): 7–24, 8, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520.
16. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." in Il- luminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (Schocken Books, 1969), 16.
17. Marita Sturken, "Absent Images of Memory: Remembering and Reenacting the Japanese Internment," in Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s), ed. T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Duke University Press, 2001), 33–49, https:// doi.org/10.1215/9780822381051.
18. Sturken, "Absent Images of Memory," 34.
19. Lauren Gail Berlant, The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life (University of Chicago Press, 1991), 20.
20. Michel Foucault, The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow. 1st ed. (Pantheon Books, 1984), 56.
21. Sturken, "Absent Images of Memory," 34.
22. Thien, Do Not Say We Have Nothing, 18.
23. For a comprehensive history of Chinese immigration to Canada, see Elliott Robert Barkan, ed., Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration (ABC- CLIO, 2013.
24. The Executive Order allowed roughly 80,000 Chinese students and their families to stay in the US. Moreover, the liusi luka (June 4th Green Card) permitted all Chinese nationals who had arrived before the end of 1989 to apply for permanent residency. Peter H. Koehn, and Xiao-huang Yin, eds., The Expanding Roles of Chinese Americans in U.S.-China Relations: Transnational Networks and Trans-Pacific Interactions (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 12.
25. Koehn and Yin, The Expanding Roles of Chinese Americans, xx.
26. Thien, Do Not Say We Have Nothing, 90.
27. 28 Thien, 453.
28. Referencing the structure of Gould's interpretation, which consists of thirty con- trapuntal variations beginning and ending with an aria, the novel is organized into two parts and a coda, with the first part titled "Part One" and the second titled "Part Zero." Part One has eight chapters, ascending from one to eight. In Part Zero, the chapters are organized in descending order from seven to one. By the time we get to the end, like the aria that

ends the Goldberg Variations, the novel returns to the beginning, to Marie's grief, to Ai-ming's disappearance. For more information on the album, see Seth Colter Walls, "Glenn Gould: Bach: The Goldberg Variations," Pitchfork, March 26, 2017, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/23016-bach-the-goldberg-variations/.

29. Thien, Do Not Say We Have Nothing, 45.
30. Yenna Wu, "Cultural Trauma Construction of the Necropolitical Jiabiangou Laojiao Camp." American Journal of Chinese Studies 27, no. 1 (2020): 25–49, https://www. jstor.org/stable/45295246.
31. Thien, Do Not Say We Have Nothing, 180.
32. Thien, 302.
33. Thien, 235.
34. Madeline Thien, "Largehearted Boy: Book Notes - Madeleine Thien 'Do Not Say We Have Nothing,'" January 10, 2017, http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/ archive/2017/01/book_notes_made.html.
35. Chen's writing emphasized "a linkage of sounds" for a cross-cultural understanding. For more historical context on the popularity of the song in China and its significance in Chinese cultural performance, see Xiaomei Chen, Singing "The Internationale," ed. Carlos Rojas and Andrea Bachner vol. 1. (Oxford University Press, 2016), 193–214. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199383313.013.10.
36. Chen, 210.
37. Laikwan Pang, "'China Who Makes and Fakes': A Semiotics of the Counterfeit." Theory, Culture & Society 25, no. 6 (2008): 117–40, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276408095547.
38. For example, in an article published in Forbes in 2014, Michael Zakkour writes, "It is not only fake products, retail establishments, fake Apple Stores and hotels that threaten China's future, but also an educational and business culture that still discourages creativity and innovation. The result is that many Chinese companies, products and services are simply mirror images of ideas developed in the West." Michael Zakkour, "Copycat China Still A Problem For Brands & China's Future: Just Ask Apple, Hyatt & Starbucks." Forbes, accessed January 24, 2023, https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelzakkour/2014/04/30/copycat-china-still-a-problem-for-brands- chinas-future-just-ask-apple-hyatt-starbucks/. For more examples of the orientalist stereotyping regarding Chinese counterfeits, see Jamie Fullerton, "Bathtub Booze and Knock-off Whisky: Inside China's Fake Alcohol Industry," The Guardian, Sep- tember 16, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/sep/16/ china-fake-alcohol-industry-counterfeit-bathtub-booze-whisky; Brad Spurgeon, "Pirates File Patents to Beat the System: The New Chinese Counterfeit Game," The New York Times, November 15, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/15/news/ pirates-file-patents-to-beat-the-system-the-new-chinese-counterfeit.html; Wee, Sui-Lee Wee, "Though Awash in Fakes, China Rethinks Counterfeit Hunters," The New York Times, December 1, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/30/business/ china-fakes-counterfeit-hunters.html.
39. For an analysis of the misconceptions of Chinese copies, see Kal Raustiala and Christopher Sprigman, "Fake It Till You Make It: The Good News About

China's Knockoff Economy." Foreign Affairs 92, no. 4 (2013): 25–30, 25. https://www.jstor. org/stable/23526905.

40. For more information on shanzhai, see Jeroen De Kloet and Lena Scheen, "Pudong: The Shanzhai Global City," European Journal of Cultural Studies 16, no. 6 (2013): 692–709. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549413497697. For more on the materializa- tions of shanzhai in Shenzhen and the invocations of China in popular imaginings, see Cara Wallis and Jack Linchuan Qiu, "Shanzhaiji and the Transformation of the Local Mediascape in Shenzhen," in Mapping Media in China: Region, Province, Locality, ed. Wanning Sun and Jenny Chio. Routledge Contemporary China Series. (Routledge, 2012).
41. For a discussion of the traditional Chinese relationship to copying, see Pang, "China Who Makes and Fakes," 123.
42. Kandice Chuh, Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique. E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. (Duke University Press, 2003), 9.
43. See Iyko Day, "Lost in Transnation: Uncovering Asian Canada," Amerasia Journal 33, no. 2 (2007): 68–86. https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.33.2.954t72724n566632; Iyko Day, "Must All Asianness Be American? The Census, Racial Classification, and Asian Canadian Emergence," Canadian Literature, no. 199 (December 22, 2008): 45–71, https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/canlit/article/view/192897/189402; Christopher Lee, "The Lateness of Asian Canadian Studies," Amerasia Journal 33, no. 2 (2007): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.33.2.c8053m5q76215018; Lisa Rose Mar, "Be- yond Being Others: Chinese Canadians as National History," BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly No 156/7: Refracting Pacific Canada (Winter/Spring 2007/08): 13–34, https://doi.org/10.14288/BCS.V0I156/7.608.
44. Lee, "Lateness of Asian Canadian studies," 6–7.
45. Lee, 8.
46. Erika Lee, "Orientalisms in the Americas: A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History," Journal of Asian American Studies 8, no. 3 (2005): 235–56, 237. https://doi. org/10.1353/jaas.2005.0051.
47. Lee, 238.
48. Ma, "China's Grief, Unearthed."
49. Lizhi Fang, "The Chinese Amnesia," trans. Perry Link, The New York Review of Books, September 27, 1990, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1990/09/27/the-chinese- amnesia/.
50. John Gittings, "Fang Lizhi Obituary," The Guardian, April 8, 2012, https://www.the- guardian.com/world/2012/apr/08/fang-lizhi.
51. Fang, "The Chinese Amnesia."
52. Fang.
53. Lianke Yan, "Opinion | On China's State-Sponsored Amnesia," The New York Times, April 1, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/02/opinion/on-chinas-state- sponsored-amnesia.html.
54. Yan.
55. Jean-Philippe Béja and Perry Link, eds., "June Fourth: Memory and Ethics," in The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. China Policy Series 17. (Routledge, 2011), 15.
56. Louisa Lim, The People's Republic of Amnesia: The Tiananmen Revisited. (Oxford Uni- versity Press, 2014), 211.

57. Hentyle Yapp, Minor China: Method, Materialisms, and the Aesthetic. Anima: Critical Race Studies Otherwise. (Duke University Press, 2021), 2.