戰爭中的常態韻律、反式韻律、及複合韻律：以聶華苓的《桑青與桃紅》為例

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摘要

戰爭摧毀人類垂危的生命，並造成文明史上難以忍受的損失與災難。我們都強忍著深不可測的失落，生命與資源的浪費，且心中都深深地烙印著備受戰爭折磨的創傷記憶。本論文以聶華苓的《桑青與桃紅》為例，探討在日本侵華、國共戰爭、台灣的白色恐怖統治，及越戰期間，日常生活中的常態韻律、反式韻律、及複合韻律。小說中，戰爭記憶的深層意義，將被充分的討論。而且，律動學的理論，也會被完全的分析。既然常態韻律是平時生活中社會規範的產物，且反式韻律是因戰爭中受到的迫害，而產生的異常事物，那麼，經歷戰爭後的複合韻律，是在其日常生產與遭戰爭破壞的兩相衝突下，創造出的另類及不同的韻律。

在聶華苓的《桑青與桃紅》中，提及四大戰爭：即第二次中日戰爭、國共戰爭、台灣的白色恐怖及越戰。小說中，女主角桑青受苦於不安的政治環境，及戰爭的陰影，並擔心被共產黨或國民黨、甚至是被美國移民調查局的官員所逮捕等。她經歷了歷史的四個關鍵期：第二次中日戰爭末期，共產黨在中國大陸的勝利，五零年代台灣的白色恐怖統治，及美國動盪不安的六零年代末期，與七零年代初期。同時，她也經歷了她一生中的四個轉捩點，其分別都交織在常態韻律、反式韻律、及複合韻律之間。統觀整部小說，我們得知桑青的一生，已完全被毀。她的過去，她的傳統價值，還有她的道德意識，已全然粉碎。相反地，桃紅是桑青的另一自我。她侵入桑青，改變其個性，成為一個身在美國，到處流浪，言行舉止散漫的放蕩女子。

桑青/桃紅一生（包括性愛、結婚、通姦、懷孕）的逃難與躲藏，事實上是多種韻律（包含常態韻律、反式韻律、及複合韻律）的交替行為。經歷不同時期的各種事件後，桑青/桃紅逐漸發展出她自己的韻律，同時也創造出屬於再現她自己的複合韻律。

關鍵字：列斐伏爾、律動學、常態韻律、反式韻律、複合韻律

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Eurhythmia, Arrhythmia, and Polyrhythmia during the Wars in Hualing Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*

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Abstract

Wars destroy the precarious existence of humanity, and cause unbearable loss and devastation to human civilization. We endure the unfathomable loss, the waste of lives, and resources, and bear traumatic memories of being afflicted with wars. This paper takes Hualing Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China* as an example to discuss the phenomena of eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia during the Japanese invasion of China, the Communist-Nationalist Civil War, Taiwan’s White Terror, and the Vietnam War. The profound significance of war memories in the novel is fully explored, and the theory of rhythmology is completely analyzed. Since eurhythmia produces things in peaceful social norms, and arrhythmia destroys things through wars, polyrhythmia after the wars creates the alternatives and differences within the conflicting dualities of productions and destructions.

There are four major wars mentioned in Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, i.e., 1. The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), 2. Chinese Civil War (Communist-Nationalist Civil War, 1938-1949), 3. White Terror in the 1950s in Taiwan (1949-1987), and 4. The Vietnam War (1955-1975). The protagonist, Mulberry, in the novel, suffers from the uneasy political environments, the shadows of wars, fears of being caught by Communists or Nationalists, and even by the US Immigration Service agents. She encounters four key periods of history: the close of the Sino-Japanese War, the Communist victory in mainland China, the reign of White Terror during the 1950s in Taiwan, and the turbulent late ’60s and early ’70s in the USA. She also encounters four turning points in her life which is interactions among eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia. Throughout the novel, we see that everything in Mulberry’s life has been destroyed. Her past, her traditional values, and her ethics have been shattered. On the contrary, Peach is Mulberry’s other personality. She plunges Mulberry into a life of promiscuity and adventure. Mulberry/Peach’s escaping and hiding, actually, is composed of diverse rhythms among eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia, including her sexuality, marriage, adultery, and pregnancy. Through these different events in time and space, she gradually develops her own rhythms, and, finally, creates her unique polyrhythmia.

Keywords: Henri Lefebvre, rhythmology, eurhythmia, arrhythmia, polyrhythmia

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I. Introduction

Hualing Nieh is a Chinese novelist who was born and grew up in China. She began her writing and teaching career in Taiwan, and now settles in Iowa in America. In most of her lifetime, Nieh experiences several wanders, and witnesses the turmoil during the war time, such as the desperate situations in China, White Terror in Taiwan, and the problems of national identities in America. When she escaped from Taiwan and moved to America, she wrote the book, *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*. Interweaving historical events, familial affairs and sexual performativities, she, from feminine viewpoints, not only describes how a woman ironically gains rebirth through mental breakdown in difficult situations, but also reveals the extremely complicated fortune of China. The book, *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, mainly depicts the transformation of a Chinese woman who, in the first place, acts as a traditional Chinese woman, Mulberry, pure and conservative in sexuality, but, in the end, turns into another woman, Peach, a licentious prostitute in America.

In Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, several themes of “nostalgia, longing, and loyalty to a Chinese homeland and culture” have been presented, and some topics of “domestic-centered representations of immigrant assimilation, the minority condition, and ethnic hybridity” have been discussed (Amato 32). I-chun Lin’s thesis explores “the issue of mobility both horizontally (geographically) and vertically (socio-economically)” (2). In particular, she finds out that, as a Chinese American immigrant, Mulberry/Peach is inclined to develop such a disintegrated condition after she relocates to America because she has the double consciousness of both Chinese and American cultures. Monica Chiu in her article “Trauma and Multiplicity in Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach*” addresses the topics of immigration, trauma and psychosomatic pathology. She argues that *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China* can be a postmodern reading that would categorize it as a successful and bifurcated, border-crossing book in an age of transnationality (Chiu 1). Juei-ling Feng’s thesis discusses the issues of space and identity. She probes

the potentials of empowerment through displacements/border-crossing, and [she] elaborates the subversive writing techniques to demonstrate the limitedness of the traditional literary classifications and to question the domination of boundaries. (Feng 49)

Jean Amato, further, raises the problems of dislocated texts, naming, and canon formation in her article. She points out that Mulberry

maps out the fluid movements across temporal, geographic, and cultural boundaries to demonstrate that exile can open up dislocated and relocated narrative spaces beyond the immediate conscription of nation states and Eastern/Western binaries. (Amato 33)

Jenny Edkins, too, observes that in the novel
trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced to protect us and give us security become our tormentors, when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us, or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger. (4)

She views that Chinese American immigrants particularly encounter their dual cultural identities. These Chinese American immigrants, like Mulberry/Peach, endeavor to relinquish their past memories and dismiss their ancestral histories; nevertheless, the repressed experiences, emotions, and disjointed, fragmentary images still dwell subconsciously in their minds. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, further, elucidates that, for Chinese American immigrants, the psychological disorders not merely are impinged by internal struggles, but also by the mutual cultures in their sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts (78). Within the hegemonic power of Western countries and the superiority of political and economical advancement, the white men’s prejudices against Chinese American immigrants, in the case of Mulberry/Peach, often lead to the minority groups’ entrapment and predicament in the foreign countries. In the novel, accepted by neither sides--Mulberry/Peach cannot go back to China nor dwell in America, this is a dilemma what Amy Ling delineates in Between World: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry that “being between worlds can be interpreted to mean occupying the space between two banks; one is thus in a state of suspension, accepted by neither side[s] and therefore truly belonging to nowhere” (177). In other words, being a nonconformist who is unwilling to succumb to the social and cultural heritage of both inferior and docile female in China, Mulberry/Peach has also intended to discard the patriarchal constructed identity in America.

Except for the above-mentioned themes, in this paper, we aim to take Mulberry/Peach and the wars in her life as examples to explore the theory of rhythmology. We hope that our careful interpretations of rhythms in time, space and events can contribute alternative perspectives of life to view characters in other novels. In this sense, we, particularly, examine that the protagonist, Mulberry/Peach, suffers from the uneasy political environments, the shadows of wars, fears of being caught by Communists or Nationalists, and even by the US Immigration Service agents. She encounters four key periods of history: the close of the Sino-Japanese War, the Communist victory in mainland China, the reign of White Terror during the 1950s in Taiwan, and the turbulent late ’60s and early ’70s in the USA. Her life also has four turning points which correspond to the above-mentioned history. First of all, in the novel, we find out that Mulberry/Peach’s journey is under the backgrounds of social unrest, including China’s battle against Japan during World War II. Mulberry escaped from her home and parents during 1945-47. Secondly, in the Chinese Civil War followed between “two Chinas”—the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC)—Mulberry flew to Peking in 1949 when the city was under siege by Communists. Thirdly, while the Nationalist government’s dictatorship was in Taiwan, Mulberry was forced to stay in an attic in Taiwan, but snuck away from the attic during 1950-55. The fourth moment comes when Peach found herself pregnant in USA in the ’70s after she followed the demonstrations against the Vietnam War. She disappeared in a
car accident with the baby in her womb. No one knew where she planned to go.

Mulberry/Peach’s escaping and hiding, actually, is composed of her sexuality, marriage, adultery, and pregnancy. Mulberry/Peach’s schizophrenia is induced by her constantly traumatic experiences of involuntary exiles and wars. In the theory of rhythmology, the rhythms of eurhythmia prevail in Mulberry/Peach’s daily life. Arrhythmia occurs in irregular occasions and wars. Polyrhythmia is created after arrhythmia. Therefore, in this paper, we discuss the phenomena of eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia during the Japanese invasion of China, the Communist-Nationalist Civil War, Taiwan’s White Terror, and the Vietnam War. Particularly, there are four major wars mentioned in the novel, i.e., A. The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), B. Chinese Civil War (Communist-Nationalist Civil War, 1938-1949), C. White Terror in the 1950s in Taiwan (1949-1987), and D. The Vietnam War (1955-1975). These four wars are interpreted by the theory of rhythmology. Besides, we argue that Mulberry/Peach possesses eurhythmia, including her daily needs and desires. The wars bring arrhythmia. However, she urges to let her body become polyrhythmic, i.e., the possibilities of reproducing various rhythms in the perfect harmony of polyrhythmia. She gradually develops her own rhythms, i.e., her own preferences, references and frequencies. For Mulberry/Peach, in the end of the novel, she builds her own rules, and, finally, creates her unique polyrhythmia.

II. The Theory of Rhythmology

Rhythmology is a science, a new field of knowledge, i.e., the study and analysis of rhythms. It combines the word rhythm with the suffix logy. The definition of rhythm comes from Greek ῥυθμός — rhythmos. According to Longman dictionary, it is the “regular repeated pattern of sounds or movements, symmetry” (897). It is also the “movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions” (Wikipedia). The suffix logy is used with words originally adapted from ancient Greek language ending in -λογία (-logia). It is the combining form used in the names of sciences or bodies of knowledge, e.g. theology or sociology, etc. The suffix logy has the sense of “the character or department of the study of [a certain subject]” (Wikipedia). Therefore, combining the word rhythm with the suffix logy, rhythmology means the study of rhythms.

The main framework of rhythmology is followed by Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space and his concept of rhythmanalysis. Lefebvre reads widely in German philosophy, finding particular affinities with Friedrich Nietzsche. Thus, this new literary theory can be traced back to Lefebvre’s concept of time, space and rhythms, Nietzsche’s concept of eternal recurrence in The Gay Science and Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Carl G. Jung’s analytical psychology and synchronicity, Gaston Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space, and Michel Foucault’s aesthetics of existence in The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality. Succeeding to this framework, the theory of rhythmology has three characteristics, i.e., eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia. It can also be divided into three dimensions, i.e., temporality, spatiality, and life rhythms.

In the dimension of temporality, eurhythmia includes the linear time and the cyclical time. Days
and nights, the hours and the months, the seasons and the years are linked to the linear time. The cyclical time exists in the cosmos: waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, and the millionths of seconds in the cycles of galaxies, etc. Arrhythmia refers to the time of disasters and wars. Polyrhythmia is found in the concepts of eternal recurrence and synchronicity. In the dimension of spatiality, eurhythmia refers to daily routines between houses and cities as well as going forward and backward among places. Arrhythmia presents the destroyed and redesigned spaces during and after the destruction. Polyrhythmia can be viewed as the poetics of space. At last, in the dimension of life rhythms, eurhythmia can be explained that linear and cyclical rhythms of bodies follow the monotony of bodily movements and regular routes of actions. Arrhythmia shows the traumas of bodies. Finally, polyrhythmia appreciates the aesthetics of existence in the bodies.

A. The Dimension of Temporality: Eternal Recurrence and Synchronicity

In the dimension of temporality, we often divide up time into clock time and lived time, i.e., the linear time and the cyclical time. This linear time is introduced by the time of everydayness: the hours of sleep and waking, meal-times, and the hours of the routine life. Days and nights, the hours and the months, and the seasons and the years are linked to the linear time.

However, the cyclical time originates in the cosmos and nature: days, nights, seasons, waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, the millionths of seconds in the cycles of galaxies, and the hours in the months and the years, etc. It also belongs to cyclical movements, vibrations, and rotations through the beatings of the hearts, the blinking of the eyelids, the alternation of days and nights, months, seasons and years, etc. In other words, eurhythmia embodies cyclical repetitions of time through linear repetitions of time.

In Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the moment is a gateway where the past and the future collide. It is the image of the eternal recurrence. Nietzsche’s concept of eternal recurrence appears in aphorisms 285 and 341 of The Gay Science and the main ideas of Thus Spoke Zarathustra. In Nietzsche’s view, eternal recurrence is seeing the past and the future in terms of their contributions to the immediate experience of the present. In other words, the past and the future are both connected with the awareness of the present.

Besides, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition of synchronicity is “the phenomenon of events which coincide in time and appear meaningfully related but have no discoverable causal connection” (471). Jung explains that synchronicity simply means “meaningful coincidences” (Jung, Synchronicity iii). It happens that an inner psyche meets an outer occurrence. That means that the past and the present produce unexpected results which cannot be predicted, but coincidently the present meets the past as the anticipations.
B. The Dimension of Spatiality: The Poetics of Space

Lefebvre’s theories of space include the triad concepts, i.e., “spatial practices,” “representations of space,” and “representational spaces” (The Production of Space 33). This triad tends to distinguish professional practices such as planning (representations of space) from spatial patterns of everyday life (spatial practices), and from the symbolic meanings enacted in spatial form (representational spaces) (Lefebvre, The Production of Space 38-39). First of all, spatial practice embodies a close association between daily routines and urban routes as eurhythmia. Secondly, representations of space which are designed and rebuilt by scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers are defined as arrhythmia. At last, Lefebvre’s concept of representational spaces is

the space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of “inhabitants” and “users” as well as of artists and writers to seek and create their own spaces through appropriation of the environments. (The Production of Space 39)

These representational spaces can be interpreted as polyrhythmia. They belong to spiritual and imaginary spaces. The sizes, shapes, and tastes of these spaces are always inscribed on people’s minds. Bachelard further explains that inside space and outside space are both intimate. Through poetic expressions, we open up the dialectics of inside and outside spaces.
C. The Dimension of Life Rhythms: The Aesthetics of Existence

In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, Lefebvre identifies two kinds of rhythms: cyclical rhythms which involve intervals of repetition and alternating rhythms, such as days and nights, seasons and years, waves and tides; linear rhythms which are the monotony of actions, movements, heartbeats, and watches. Lefebvre, further, describes eurhythmia as constructive interactions between cyclical and linear rhythms. It means “[r]hythms unite with one another in the state of health, in normal everydayness” (*Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* 16). Arrhythmia is abnormal when cyclical and linear rhythms are discordant. Lefebvre states that “[t]he discordance of rhythms brings previously eurhythmic organizations towards fatal disorder” (*Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* 16). Then, polyrhythmia suffices one’s body with linear rhythms and circular rhythms. It includes eurhythmia and arrhythmia, and shows the interrelations with one another in everyday life. Moreover, polyrhythmia is continually producing and reproducing itself anew through transformations and differences. Polyrhythmia has always been constructed, reconstructed, transformed, and reassembled. Through polyrhythmia, each of us has our preferences, references and frequencies. “[Polyrhythmia] purifies life in the acceptance of catharsis. It brings compensation for the miseries of everydayness, for its deficiencies and failures” (Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* 64-66). Polyrhythmia, ultimately, pursues the aesthetics of existence.

Foucault in his *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality* defines the aesthetics of existence that “the cultivation of the self means the art of existence, the care of the self: the idea that one ought to attend to oneself, and take care for oneself” (43). He states that “in the *Apology*, . . . Socrates presents that the god has sent him to remind men that they need to concern themselves not with their riches, not with their honor, but with themselves and with their souls” (44). In other words, we must give attention to ourselves because it is the form of an attitude, a mode of behavior, ways of living, exchanges and communications among individuals, and a mode of knowledge. Polyrhythmia aims to carry out the aesthetics of existence.

Furthermore, according to Jung’s archetypes, the anima is the feminine side of the male self, and the animus is the masculine side of the female self. Our personality always has two sides. The anima (feminine) is yin and the animus (masculine) is yang. Both are the substances of collective unconscious. Since yin and yang are mutually dependent, in order to reach the aesthetics of existence, the anima and the animus must be kept balanced in the rhythms of polyrhythmia.

![Anima (Yin) and Animus (Yang)](image)

**Fig. 3** The aesthetics of existence
To sum up, eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia are intertwined with one another. In the daily practices, we, unconsciously, follow the circular and linear time, space, and rhythms in the peaceful life of eurhythmia. However, sometimes, within certain specific time and space, we encounter incidents and accidents. That is the condition of arrhythmia. Finally, we have to overcome the difficulties, and strive for the better life of polyrhythmia after practicing eurhythmia and encountering arrhythmia. We comprehend the concepts of eternal recurrence, synchronicity, the poetics of space, and the aesthetics of existence to reach the harmony of polyrhythmia.

III. Eurhythmia in Peace

When we live in the present time and space, we grasp the past experiences and hope that the future is planned to cope with the present moment. In the rhythms of eurhythmia, we happily enjoy the peaceful time and space. In Nieh’s *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, she describes the harmonious beauty of natural scenery at Chu-tang Gorge on the Yangtze River in mainland China. “The Yangtze River has been flowing for thousands of years, these things are still here. This country of ours is too old, too old” (Nieh 38). Mulberry narrates:

The village of Tai-hsi is like a delicate chain lying along the cliffs. There is no quay along the river. When you disembark, you have to climb up steep narrow steps carved out of the cliff. (Nieh 14)

In this natural scenery, Tai-hsi presents a stone-paved road that runs up the cliff with tea houses, little restaurants, and shops for groceries, torches, lanterns, and tow-lines. Some are shallow bars, and some are flooded rivers. There’s also a stream in the valley, and the waters are roaring. The sound of water is breaking on the rocks. Mulberry and Lao-shih get through Tiger Whisker Rapids, Whirlpool Heap, Black Rock Breakers, White Salt Mountain, and Red Promontory Peak. From both sides, the mountains thrust upward towards the sky. The river mist is white as salt, and the water plunges down from heaven.

In the rhythms of eurhythmia, Mulberry is taught that women must submit to their husbands, and serve their husband’s parents with the same attention. On the wedding night, Mulberry makes up her mind: Even if Chia-kang has to roll down the Mountain of Knives, she will roll down with him, and if Chia-kang dies, she will be a widow all of her life. Mulberry carries out the rhythms of eurhythmia in her peaceful life. Later, even when she wanders several places in America, she still sticks to the principles of eurhythmia and regards them as joyful and pleasurable memories.

Before the wars, people all live in their familiar places, and follow their routines of habits. Nieh describes the repetitive movements in the attic that Chia-kang hides in Taiwan, “The time on the clock in the attic is still twelve thirteen. It makes no difference if it’s midnight or noon. The humidity and the heat are the same” (Nieh 121). In the epilogue of the novel, Nieh even applies the story of “Princess Bird and the Sea” to implying the rhythms of eurhythmia with repetitive routines and
movements. It goes that:

Princess Bird wants to fill in the sea and turn it into solid ground. Carrying in her beak a tiny pebble from Ring Dove Mountain, she flies to the East Sea, and then drops the pebble in the water. She flies back and forth, day and night; each trip she takes another pebble. . . .To this day, Princess bird is flying back and forth between the Sea and the Mountain. (Nieh 201)

Based on the experiences of eurhythmia, we are consistently familiar with our working places and habits. Without any changes, we live our usual lives peacefully. However, things are not so smooth. Within the specific time, we encounter accidents in the rhythms of arrhythmia.

IV. Arrhythmia during the Wars

Except for the everyday life’s repetitions, we meet unforeseen events. These are the rhythms of arrhythmia. Arrhythmia is abnormal when the rhythms are discordant. Irregularity happens to interfere with our routine habits and rhythms. In terms of arrhythmia, there are four major wars in Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China. We see the natural disasters, economic collapse, social disorder, warfare, and improper customs in wartime to disrupt humans’ lives.

First of all, Nieh describes the war disasters during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). From 27 July 1945 to 10 August 1945, Mulberry’s father had become impotent as the result of a wound received in a battle between rival Chinese warlords. Lao-shih’s father was suffocated in the huge tunnel in which people hid from the Japanese bombing of Chungking in the summer of 1941. Refugee Student’s father worked for the Japanese in Nanking which was scolded by Chinese people. And the Old Man had been in flight from the Japanese since they occupied Peiping in 1937. At that time, “China and Japan coexisted uneasily for several years, until an unplanned clash near Peiping on July 7th, 1937, finally escalated into all-out war” (Mitter 17). When the Japanese troops found that Chinese troops fought bravely, they became even wilder, laying bloody waste to the areas they conquered. As the Chinese troops retreated, “Japanese troops murdered huge numbers of Chinese civilians, as in the notorious Nanking Massacre (Rape of Nanking) of December 1937-January 1938” (Mitter 17). Micah S. Muscolino observes:

The [Second] Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45 subjected China to almost unfathomable levels of violence and brutality, giving rise to one of the largest forced migrations in Chinese history. By displacing large segments of China’s population, the war curtailed economic productivity in many areas and damaged the health and nutrition of vulnerable segments of society. (471)

Charles Horner describes:
Of the various theaters of World War II, the Second Sino-Japanese War can be likened only to Europe’s eastern front in its intensity and destructiveness. It was, of course, a rather one-sided ferocity. Beyond the brutal hands-on war crimes of every description, Japan’s War in China caused enormous collateral damage, compounding the already deep misery resulting from a century of internal decay. (23)

T. S. Chien also mentions:

The [Second] Sino-Japanese War of 1937 was the most important single event of China’s coming of age. It can be expected to exert an altogether disproportionate influence on the Chinese attitude toward peace and the new world order. (691)

In the novel, the Old Man, too, narrates, “In June 1937, I left Peiping, my home, and went to visit friends in Shanghai. July 7, 1937, the war broke out, and by the 28th, Peiping had fallen. . . .I’ve been fleeing east and west with my friends” (Nieh 33). He continues:

No place like home. . . .After I left Peiping my wife died. Right now I don’t even know if my own daughter is dead or alive. Everyone has roots. The past is part of your roots, and your family, and your parents. But in this war, all our roots have been yanked out of the ground. (Nieh 34)

The Refugee Student, too, suffers the war and describes that the Japanese are bombing Nanking for Chinese soldiers. In one day, they take away one thousand three hundred people. The dogs in Nanking are getting fat because there are so many corpses to feed on. The anti-aircraft guns and machine guns are everywhere. Bullets pock the water spitting spray in all directions. So many boats capsize. People are drown and killed by the Japanese machine gun fire.

Next, the Chinese Civil War (Communist-Nationalist Civil War, 1938-1949) is one of the decisive encounters of the twentieth century in China. Dennis Showalter indicates:

By mid-March of 1948, however, the KMT held only fragments of Manchuria. Elsewhere, the tide turned slowly at first, and then the KMT forces collapsed. Mao’s troops drove south across the Yangtze, capturing Shanghai and forcing the remaining KMT forces into the west. (167)

Its outcome determines the course of China’s history and, subsequently, international affairs in East Asia. Its memories continue to influence those who experienced it and “who experienced the memories as myth and politics” (Showalter 165). What the official story line does not reveal is that, at least, “160,000 civilians died during the siege of the northeastern city, which lasted from June to October of 1948” (Jacobs).

During December 1948 to March 1949, Mulberry left her home at Nanking because she was afraid of being arrested by the Nationalist government. She kept in Peiping in 1949 when the city was
under siege by the Communists. In besieged Peiping, She stayed with the Shens, an old traditional family. Since September 1948, the Communists had occupied the whole area of the northeast part, and the war had erupted in Hsuchou and Tientsin. There were rumors that the Eighth Army had occupied Peiping. Grain and vegetables couldn’t get into the city, and food supply was almost gone.

For most Chinese, “[l]ife in the late 1940s became a question of survival—of getting through hunger, social degradation, political oppression, and warfare” (Westad 69). During the Chinese Civil War (1938-1949), Odd Arne Westad observes:

> The landless peasants themselves redistribute the land after holding mass meetings to criticize the landlords, and deprive them [the landlords ] of their political power. To the party leaders, the social and political disempowerment of the landholding class was as critical as the egalitarian principle of land redistribution: It was an act of creating allies (and enemies) in the social landscape of the Chinese countryside. (39)

Workers increasingly linked their demands to the political demands, such as strikes, hoarded rice, suspended classes, marches, demonstrations, and bloody riots. China, then, was divided into three kingdoms: The National government in Chungking; the Communist government in Yenan, and the Japanese puppet government in Nanking. The radio was the only connection with the outside world, “Those of you living in the areas controlled by Chiang Kai-shek, please listen carefully: The Chinese People’s Liberation Army was about to liberate the whole country” (Nieh 75). However, the other side of the radio continued:

> The Communist rebels, unconcerned about the lives and property of the people in Peiping, have been savagely bombing Peiping since December thirteenth Commander-in-Chief of the extermination Campaign Against the Communist Rebels in North China. Fu Tso-I has announced that he has utmost confidence in wiping out the rebels. (Nieh 76)

Chiang Kai-shek announced that he was seeking peace negotiation. Mao Tse-tung also asked the eight conditions under which peace negotiations could be held.

Later, in Taiwan, so-called White Terror in the 1950s (exactly from 1949 to1987), “most people agree that the era of White Terror exerted a pervasive pressure for people to censor themselves to avoid arrest and imprisonment” (Lin 413). From summer 1957 to summer 1959, Mulberry, her husband, and her child (Sang-wa, born in Taiwan) had lived in Taiwan. They were hiding out from the police in an attic of Mr. Tsai’s house because Chia-kang was wanted by KMT government for embezzling. In Taiwan, Sang-wa expressed her hatred toward her mother and father in her diary. In the rhythms of arrhythmia, Sang-wa thought that she was an orphan, and people on the outside who had identity cards even ate people. She wrote:

> . . .When Mama finishes eating all the people on the outside, she’ll eat Papa and me. I
want to run away and elope someone. . . . I ask if people in paradise wear identity cards. . . . Papa says Mama tells lies. (Nieh 138-39; italics original)

Sang-wa also narrated:

Mama goes out everyday to eat people. . . . The attic is on fire. . . . I turn into a bird. I fly away from the window. . . . The people who eat people all burn up and die. . . . Papa and Mama are also dead. I am left alone. . . . I don’t want to have a baby. (Nieh 144-45; italics original)

Sang-wa, actually, suffered her lifestyle and couldn’t escape the status quo. On 17 July 1969, Mulberry left her husband and Sang-wa, and had applied for permanent residency in USA. But, until then, everything in Mulberry’s life had been destroyed. She became schizophrenic, and she had the nightmare:

I am running on top of the stone wall in Nanking. . . . The city wall is crumbling about to fall, . . . Corpses lie in heaps under the stone. My father, my brother, Chia-kang, my mother. . . . The prostitute is going to give birth to a bastard! . . . I’m already dead. (Nieh 161; italics original)

Both Mulberry and Sang-wa struggled to survive in their rhythms of arrhythmia.

Besides, in summer, 1958, Taiwan, Nieh also writes that people were talking about a ghoul that ate people alive. In the novel, Lin Huo-tu found his three friends dead. It said that a girl, Pan Chin-chiao, was buried in the tomb and became a ghoul to eat people. In rapid succession, three young men died in the village. It had become a village of death. Further, Sylvia bi-Liun Lin, too, states that, after White Terror in the 1950s in Taiwan, “For many members of the victims’ families, the 2/28 Incident was a contagious disease; they were shunned by society and harassed by military police or the secret service” (424). Here, we, readers, sense the rhythms of arrhythmia in Taiwan.

Lastly, when Mulberry first arrived in America, she heard that people were talking about the Vietnam War. Soldiers were dispatched to Vietnam and returned to their homes as individuals with no opportunities for their survivals. “Returning soldiers often felt traumatized a second time when they encountered public criticism and rejection of the war they had fought and lost” (Herman 71). Experiencing the atmosphere of the war in America, in the end of 1969, Mulberry had the weird thoughts in her mind, “There is no god! . . . I just want to kill myself I can’t go on living there’s nothing worth living for! . . . Teng, you’re still young you can’t marry a woman who’s already dead” (Nieh 196; italics original). On January 1970, USA, Mulberry was considered dead, and Peach showed her abnormal sexual behavior in her apartment to have the conversations with the agent of the USA Immigration Service, Department of Justice. She claimed that Mulberry was dead, her name was Peach, and she was born from Nuwa. Later, she encountered the rhythms of arrhythmia.

From July 1969 to January 1970, Mulberry had applied for permanent residency in the USA. She
met some incidents of the Vietnam War (1955-1975) in America. On 9 September 1969, New York, there was a long procession of anti-war protestors on Fifth Avenue. White people, black people, and yellow people streamed from Greenwich Village, Washington Square, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Metropolitan Museum of Art to Central Park. It was a demonstration against the Vietnam War. According to Kim Servart Theriault:

The era of the Vietnam War (1955-1975) was one of the most tumultuous in American history. It was a time that dismembered individuals, families, much of the government, and society--physically, psychologically, and intellectually. (421)

Theriault further indicates:

Those who fought in the Vietnam War, and returned to the United States often had psychological problems brought on by the anxiety of jungle warfare. Others contracted diseases related to the jungle or chemicals used to aid fighting. Many veterans were treated with hostility, and often submitted to a kind of internal forgetting, or denial, in which they disassociated themselves from Vietnam. (422)

In the Vietnam War, we are told that:

Soldiers became profoundly demoralized when victory in battle was an impossible objective and the standard of success became the killing itself, as exemplified by the body count. Under these circumstances, it was not merely the exposure to death but rather the participation in meaningless acts of malicious destruction that rendered men most vulnerable to lasting psychological damage. (Herman 54)

On 13 January 1970, in USA, Peach hitchhiked and wondered in St. Louis. She was going to Washington to join the “March against Death,” a demonstration against the Vietnam War. In that demonstration, 45,000 people in Washington carried candles, wore name tags with the names of soldiers killed in Vietnam, and walked from Arlington National Cemetery to the foot of Capitol Hill where there were twelve coffins with the dead soldiers’ names. Peach also saw the instructions on a poster. The title was “What to do in case of Nuclear Attack When the First Warming is Sounded.” It shows:

1. Stay away from all windows.
2. Keep hands free of glasses, bottles, cigarettes, etc.
3. Stand away from bars, tables, musical instruments, equipment, and other furniture.
4. Loosen necktie, unbutton coat and any other restrictive clothing.

…………………………
7. Then kiss yourself goodbye. (Nieh 12)

In USA, Peach experienced the atmosphere of irregularities and the rhythms of arrhythmia
Peach was forced to live peculiar ways of survivals.

On 22 February 1970, Peach met a Polish Jew in USA. He said that when he was thirteen he was in Auschwitz. The Nazis used his father, mother and older sister for bacteriological experiments, and they died in the camp. After he got out, he became a drifter. He made a living by cutting down termite-infested trees. His rhythms of arrhythmia led him to wander everywhere without a stable home.

Meanwhile, the media and the radios in USA still advocated the advertisements of fantasy. For example, the commander of the space capsule for the moon landing requested that:

Everyone, no matter who you are or where in the world you are, remain silent for one moment, to meditate on the events of the last few hours and in your own way express the gratitude in your heart. . . .those words were just spoken by astronaut Aldrin on the surface of the moon. (Nieh 162)

Later, the astronauts spoke:

Getting closer, you can see that the moon’s surface is made up of very fine dust, like powder, very, very fine. . . .That’s one small step for man, one giant leap forward for mankind. . . .Armstrong, moving slowly one step at a time, explores the surface of the moon. (Nieh 164)

This was the particular moment in human’s victory to conquer the space. However, it was not natural and universal, but man-made creation. In the rhythms of arrhythmia, Peach had to figure out her difficulties. In the end of 1969, USA, Teng and Peach heard the news in the radio:

Some people say we’re people without roots in a world without faith, worth or purpose. . . .I propose organizing a “Committee to defend Human Rights” to protest against incidents which threaten human rights! . . .I suggest that we first take action, to understand through our actions. (Nieh 169; italics original)

When the rhythms of arrhythmia come to Peach’s life, she figured out the solutions. Peach meditated Jerry’s comments on children:

Pretty soon they’ll be creating electric children. Electric children would have one merit: they’d never grow up; they’d forever be in the state of infancy, then the world wouldn’t have any more wars. Now we can use test tubes to make babies; the baby’s sex and personality can all be decided beforehand, scientifically. . . .People create the chaos. Machines create order. It’s best to interact with machines. (Nieh 184)

Peach realized that within these above-mentioned terrible wars, people were apt to lose their identities and, later, caused traumas. Laura S. Brown indicates that:
Identities... are delineated by values and inform values in a recursive process. Threats to identity are experienced as challenges to those values. People’s values predict their choices, the nature of their relationships, and the meanings that they make of life circumstances. Identities reflect... a worldview, an overarching strategy for understanding and lending meaning to all aspects of one’s life. (50)

Identities emerge from the interactions of social locations. However, trauma occurs when identities have been challenged. Patricia A. Resick points out that:

The person who assumes a new identity is likely to exhibit a more outgoing personality than before, and may adopt a whole new life with a new name, residence, and social life. Although it is a rare disorder, the incidence increases during times of major stressful events, such as natural disasters or wars. (21)

Resick calls this symptom as “dissociative identity disorder (DID)” (21). It is, indeed, multiple personality disorder. Rather than viewing the person as having more than one personality, the disorder shows a single personality that has split off memories, experiences, or mood states into separate identities or personality states. Resick further interprets:

The criteria for DID are: (A) the person has two or more separate identities or personality state with their own distinctive patterns of perceiving their experiences and themselves, relating to and interacting with others; (B) two of these identities or personality states must take control of the person’s behavior recurrently; (C) The person has amnesia for personal information that is too pervasive to be ascribed to ordinary forgetfulness, and (D) The symptoms are not due to substance abuse or a general medical condition such as complex seizures. (22)

The person with DID exhibits personality disorder, such as self-mutilation, impulsivity, and sudden and intense changes in relationships. “It may be impossible to estimate the prevalence of the traumatic effects of war. War produces widespread trauma on a national and global level” (Resick 37). Therefore, prisoners of wars, victims of torture, the imprisonment of soldiers and civilians are additional sources of war trauma. Wars cause massive social upheavals resulting in loss of homes, jobs, entire communities, and even countries. Millions of people have fled their native war-torn countries, and have experienced the stress or trauma of being refugees in foreign lands. In China, particularly, Rana Mitter even estimates that “the number of refugees within China has been calculated at 80 million” (17). In the novel, Nieh hints that many Chinese people, especially those who grew up during the tumultuous decades of war, famine and political persecution, carry psychic wounds that are seldom expressed, let alone healed. Babies are too weak to cry, and thousands of people perish in full view of troops. It’s an unspeakable trauma that has not once been opened up after so many years.
V. Polyrhythmia after the Wars

Even though we might meet arrhythmia, which is different from our usual habits, we still hope that we can return to the regularity of eurhythmia. However, after the process of arrhythmia, the values we own in our normal life are always about to be revalued. Though we cannot find the same eurhythmia as before, however, we reach polyrhythmia.

In the rhythms of polyrhythmia, we experience synchronicity in representational spaces, and learn the aesthetics of existence in the harmony of the anima (yin) and the animus (yang). In other words, through the normal routines of eurhythmia to the irregularities of arrhythmia, we yearn for polyrhythmia. In polyrhythmia of temporality, followed by the concepts of eternal recurrence and synchronicity, we convey an attitude by which we consistently re-evaluate our past in order to make meaningful actions in the present and possible hopes in the future. In polyrhythmia of spatiality, Lefebvre associates images and symbols of spaces. Through memories and dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days. Through recollections, we touch Bachelard’s poetics of space. In polyrhythmia of life rhythms, we hope to recognize and confirm the positions in our society with multiple perspectives and visions. Thus, life has always been openly constructed, reconstructed, transformed, and reassembled in terms of the aesthetics of existence.

In the novel, during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), Nieh mentions that, “Peach-flower Woman represents the natural life force, vital, exuberant, sensuous and enduring. It is this spontaneous life force that has enabled the Chinese to survive after thousands of years of wars, revolutions, and natural disasters” (13-14). Later, “Peach-flower Woman sits on the deck, nursing her child. The baby sucks on one breast, patting the other with its hand in rhythm with its sucking, as if keeping time for itself, pressing the milk out” (Nieh 24). We can sense that Peach-flower Woman tries her best to reach the rhythms of polyrhythmia. Like Peach-flower Woman to show her energy of life, the Old Man, too, really believes that heaven cares about people and answers prayers. Nieh describes that people no longer talk about the wars. They can, finally, enjoy the scenery. “Look, see how beautiful the moon is, feel how soft the spring breeze is. The trees on the hill outside the temple are sprouting green leaves” (Nieh 104).

In 1970, USA, while the Vietnam War was at its height, a new organization called “Vietnam Veterans against the War” in society was found for veterans to claim against the war. The soldiers were encouraged bravely to offer testimony of war crimes in public, and they also eagerly demonstrated antiwar movements. Meanwhile, Vietnam veterans retold and relived the traumatic experiences of the war to people. They were invited by sympathetic psychiatrists to offer them professional assistance. “A lot of them were ‘hurting,’ as they put it. But they didn’t want to go to the Veterans’ Administration for help..They needed something that would take place on their own turf, where they were in charge” (Herman 26). Those Vietnam veterans searched for solace, and asked for the authorities to raise awareness about the effects of war. Therefore, in the years following the
Vietnam War, both USA and the Vietnamese government, subsequently, traced the impact of wartime experiences on the lives of returning veterans, and started to care for the syndrome of post-traumatic stress disorder. “Since its dedication on November 13, 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become a prototype for mourning and healing that has spawned many more created in the same spirit of healing” (Theriault 422; italics original).

Besides, studies do show that those Vietnam veterans who do not develop post-traumatic stress disorder, in spite of heavy combat exposure, present the characteristics of active, task-oriented strategies, strong sociability, and internal control. They focus on preserving their calm, their judgment, their connection with others, their moral values, and their sense of meaning, even in the most chaotic battlefield conditions. In the rhythms of polyrhythmia, they approach the war as “a dangerous challenge to be met effectively while trying to stay alive,” rather than as an opportunity to prove their manhood or a situation of helpless victimization (Herman 59). Furthermore, they also show a high degree of responsibility for the protection of others as well as themselves, avoiding unnecessary risks. Under the rhythms of polyrhythmia, they accept fear in themselves and others, but strive to overcome it by preparing themselves for dangers. They tend to form a life with high sociability, a thoughtful and active coping style, and a strong perception of their ability to control their destiny.

Last but not least, in polyrhythmia of life rhythms, the most important changes would be “the restoration of a sense of personal worth, respect for autonomy, and the development of self-esteem among people” (Herman 63). Before, in China, bound by the “three obedience”—to her father as a young girl, to her husband as a wife, and to her sons as a widow, women had few opportunities to get an education, to form societies, or to take part in politics. Now, under the rhythms of polyrhythmia, women around the world have access to some advantages, such as education through evening classes, companionship through welfare associations or unions, freedom of having their own wages, and access to birth control.

In the fourth part of the novel, Nieh analyzes the name of Mulberry that:

Mulberry is a holy tree. Chinese people consider it the chief of the tree family. It can feed silkworms. Silkworms can produce silk. Silk can be woven into silk and satin material. The mulberry tree is green, the color of spring. (Nieh 172)

Nieh has already implied the positive way of life for Mulberry. Later, in USA, though Mulberry is claimed dead, Peach learns the life lesson from Teng: “Sacrificing a dog’s life to save a human life is very humane. He thinks that constant change keeps us alive. A person changes by his own choice. He also has a decision to make” (Nieh 192). Peach grasps her rhythms of polyrhythmia, and finally practices her way of life from Betty, Chiang I-po’s wife:

I was floating in the clouds. The wind was blowing; the clouds [were] floating; the flowers were swaying. . . .I suddenly understood why the wind blows in such a way, . . .that’s the dance style of the wind, clouds, and flowers. I have my own dance
style, too. We’re each an independent life, and when we’re together, we dance differently to the same rhythms. (Nieh 180)

In the beginning, Mulberry follows her eurhythmia and suffers arrhythmia in wars, but, in the end, Peach survives in her polyrhythmia of life rhythms. She chooses to stay in USA for her future baby and creates her own unique lifestyle.

**VI. Conclusion**

Rhythmology includes euthythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia in recurrent time and representational spaces. Euthythmia enables us to verify the normal relations among rituals, customs, daily routines, walks, entertainment, activities, and occupations. Arrhythmia destroys them through wars and interventions. However, polyrhythmia creates inspirations and new styles, and brings compensation for the miseries of everydayness. Polyrhythmia performs the aesthetic and ethical rhythms of life to search for the harmony of the anima and the animus in human bodies. Of course, it would not exist without the experiences of the normality and differences of eurhythmia and arrhythmia.

In the beginning of the novel, Nieh has already described the positive side of her characters, such as Peach-flower Woman, the Old Man and the Refugee Student. We can, vividly, see that the Refugee Student raises the drumsticks to pound on the drum with all his strength. Metaphorically, he isn’t beating the drum. He is beating the mountains, the heavens, and the waters. Similarly, The Old Man, too, cries, “Go on singing. Sing. Don’t stop now. . . .Let’s sing an old song, ‘Flower Drum Song’” (Nieh 24-26). The Old Man’s doctrine is, “If you’re in a great disaster and you don’t die, you’re sure to have a good fortune later. . . .Here we are fighting for our lives” (Nieh 25). Further, the Old Man even tries to propose to the divine by the ancient method of sandwriting. He describes that if the spirit comes, the frame will write words all by itself, tell people’s fortunes, write prescriptions, resolve grudges, reward favors, and even write poems. Instead of sandwriting, the Old Man also uses ashes from the cooking fire and put them in a basin. He, then, ties the two fire sticks together and make a T shape. The Old Man closes his eyes and works his mouth up and down. Finally, he gets the answer. He completely realizes that mountains are on both sides; water is below; sky is above, and the suffering is passing eventually.

In polyrhythmia of life rhythms, Peach, in USA, becomes a new woman. She thinks:

> [A]ll my pains vanish. All feelings of suspicion, fear, and guilt disappear. The water warms my whole body. I am translucent as the water. It is wonderful to be alive. The elm, the rays of the sun and the squirrels outside the window are also alive. The water laps against my breasts. . . .The whole world comes to me. (Nieh 161-62)

She tells herself that, “I must change and become a new person. I want to start a new life. The bird flies out the window” (Nieh 165; italics original). Peach comprehends that no matter where Teng
goes, he will take freedom as it comes. In his heart, he’d found freedom because he has decided his own course of action. Similarly, after the accident, Peach, actually, does not suffer any serious injury. She is recovering in Mercy Hospital. Later, she escapes from Mercy Hospital, and wanders so many places in America in order to search for a perfect space for her to live calmly and raise her baby. She, definitely, carries the rhythms of polyrhythmia to cope with her own life patterns in the end.

Note


A. The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945):

The Second Sino-Japanese War (July 7, 1937-September 9, 1945) was a military conflict fought primarily between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan. From 1937 to 1941, China fought Japan with some economic help from Germany, the Soviet Union (1937-1940) and the United States. The Second Sino-Japanese War started in 1937—the incident of Marco Polo Bridge (七七盧溝橋事變), and ended with the surrender of Japan in 1945.

B. Chinese Civil War (Communist-Nationalist Civil War, 1938-1949), i.e., The War between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) by the Communist regime, and the Republic of China (ROC) by the Nationalist government (Kuomintang or KMT): As a hard-won result of revolutionary efforts led by Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙, 1866-1925), ROC was formed in 1912 to replace imperial Qing’s rule (1644-1911) in China. However, ROC entered a state of instability due to struggles among ambitious local warlords. This turbulent era of warlords found a solution in 1928 when the forces became unified under KMT government led by Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石, 1887-1975). Following Japan’s surrender after the eight-year war, at the end of World War II, KMT government relocated to Taiwan in 1949.

C. White Terror in the 1950s in Taiwan (1949-1987):

In Taiwan, the White Terror describes the suppression of political dissidents, as well as the 228 Incident in Taiwan, under the martial law from May 19, 1949 to July 15, 1987. It lasted for 38 years and 57 days. During the White Terror, around 140,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned or executed for their real or perceived opposition to KMT government. The White Terror and the 228 Incident gradually decreased with the lifting of martial law in 1987.

D. The Vietnam War (1955-1975):
The Vietnam War was a Cold War era (1946-1991) military conflict that occurred in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from 1 November 1955 to the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975. This war followed the First Indochina War and was fought between North Vietnam supported by its communist allies, and the government of South Vietnam supported by the United States and other anti-communist nations. The Vietnam People’s Army (North Vietnamese Army) engaged in a more conventional war, while the United States and South Vietnamese forces relied on air superiority and firepower to conduct search and destroy operations, involving ground forces, artillery and airstrikes. The capture of Saigon by the North Vietnamese army in April 1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War. North and South Vietnam were reunified the following year (1976).

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