

**A Parallel Study: Europe Dada Poetry, Guo's The Goddesses, and Japanese Poetry  
1910-1930**

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**Abstract:**

This paper attempts to justify Chinese poet Guo Moruo (郭沫若)<sup>1</sup> as the first Chinese Dadaist using his most famous collections of poetry *The Goddesses* under the influence of European Dadaist movement. The paper consists of three sections. Section 1 emphasizes Dadaism as an important modernist literary trend around the globe, identifies six most important features of Dada poetry and outlines the spread of Dadaism from Europe to Asia, namely Japan and China. Section 2 elucidates how and to what extent can Guo's poetry be read as Dadaist poetry by comparing Guo's work with Europe Dada poems written by Dadaists such as Tristan Tzara and Hugo Ball, and also with some Japanese poetry written by Shinkichi Takahashi(高橋新吉) who incorporates the idea of Dada with local culture into the poem, such as the idea of Zen<sup>2</sup> with Dada. The last section discusses why there is such a discrepancy in Dadaist elements found between Guo's poetry and Japanese poetry, and suggests the possible reasons by contrasting the differences among Europe, China and Japan with historical and cultural analyses. By reading Guo's poetry from a different perspective, we will be able to understand the Chinese literary development, as well as the constraints that might limit it.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper, except direct quotations from others, sticks to mainland pinyin spelling system of Chinese characters.

<sup>2</sup> According to Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto in Zen Poetry, Zen is indeed “a product of the merging of Buddhism and Taoism,” and it rapidly grows in early T'ang China.

## I. Introduction

### A. Dadaism as an important literary trend

Dada or Dadaism is an art movement commencing in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916. Originated from negative reactions to the terrifying First World War (1914-1918) by Tristan Tzara the Romanian artist, the movement rejected present reasons and logic, and despised all the artwork created by bourgeois people, as was told in “1918 Dada Manifesto” (Dachy, 2006, p. 98-99) The origin of Dada has been controversial, as Hugo Ball insisted the internationality of the word which signifies hobbyhorse in French, “yes, yes” in Romania and “an allusion in German to the early sounds a baby makes.” (Kuenzli, 2006, p. 19) However, irrespective of its origin, challenging the present art and spreading to the rest of Europe and to the world, Dada laid groundwork to abstract art and sound poetries. In 1916, Hugo Ball created sound poems (*Klanggedichte*) using “heavy series of vowels and a rhythm that was dragging elephants.” (Dachy, 2006: 27) For instance, below shows the first five lines of the first verse of “gadji beri bimba” written in 1916 by Ball:

gadji beri bimba  
glandridi lauli lonni cadori  
gadjama bim beri glassala  
glandridi glassala tuffm i zimbrabim  
blassa galassasa tuffm i zimbrabim

When readers skimmed these four lines at the first sight, they might find them meaningless looking simply at the words. Only through reading the lines aloud will they understand the heavy rhythm equivalent to different lengths of musical notes in the score. Ball was probably experimenting the sound poem to blur the genre between poetry and music. He once wrote in his diary, “The heavy vowel sequences and the plodding rhythm of the elephants had given me one last crescendo.” (Ball, 1996, p. 71) His attempt was to widen the definition of poetry by not confining to expressing ideas with mere “witticisms and images,” (Ball, 1996, p. 71) but also with sounds and beats through the emphasis of vowels. I shall say the above example the purest sound poem in which solely sound but not the meaning of the words are stressed. However, even in another poem of Ball “Dance of Death”<sup>3</sup> (*Totentanz*), we could find traits of sound poems from the first verse:

So sterben wir, so sterben wir.  
Wir sterben alle Tage,  
Weil es so gemütlich sich sterben lässt.  
Morgens noch in Schlaf und Traum  
Mittags schon dahin.  
Abends schon zu unterst im Grabe drin.

This is how we die, this is how we die  
Every day we die  
Death comes so cosily.  
In the morning, still sleepy and dreaming  
Gone by lunchtime  
Deep in the grave by evening

We can see the word “die” (*sterben*) was repeated four times, and “we” three times in the mere first verse to lay the emphasis of the action “we die”, and the poem contains more alliteration such as “morning” (*Morgens* in German) and “lunchtime” (*Mittags*), “sleepy” (*Schlaf*) and “already gone” (*schon*). This poem has no particular meter or rhyme though the word *dahin* (literally meaning: there) rhymes with *drin* (literally

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<sup>3</sup> The poem was translated by David Britt and Debbi Lewer from German.

meaning: within) at the end of the forth and the last line. In terms of contextual meaning, we see no particular images as we see daffodils in William Wordsworth. Instead, we could only feel the dark and gloomy mood of the poem by reading aloud and hearing the sound effect brought by the combinations of those words.

Starting from the 1920s, Dada poetries spread to Tokyo through Japanese poets such as Murayama Tomoyoshi (村山知義) who had spent nine months in Berlin and Takahashi Shinkichi who had his Dada poems first published in April 1922. They, together with a few dada poets, established the Mavo group and journal aiming to “change society and win greater freedom.” (Kuenzli, 2006, p. 166) Since then Dada poems flourished and became metamorphosed in Japan. For instance, Shinkichi Takahashi connected the idea of Zen Buddhism with Dadaism and wrote Yamatoshimane in a new style unique to Europe. (Lucien & Takashi, 1977) Impressed by Takahashi’s works, Cyûya Nakahara produced his own version of Dada poems beginning from 1918. (Watanabe, 2007) On the other hand, China was indeed obsessed with reformation. Accompanied by the Cultural Movement, Chen Du-xiu (陳獨秀) published the journal New Youth introducing Western ideas in the hope to change the society as well. Hu Shih, one of the intellectuals who published articles in the journal, championed the use of vernacular Chinese and during that period Guo Mo-ruo created during his studies in Japan in 1921 the most representative new-style poem *The Goddesses* into which he incorporated lots of modernist ideas.

## B. Defining Dada poetry

Before discussing further how the idea of Dadaism, and to what extent is Dada represented respectively in the works of Guo Moruo and Takahashi Shinkichi, we must first understand the definition of Dadaist poetry works. I will characterize six main features of Dada poetry: nihilism, erase of life and art dichotomy, multilingualism, capricious style, blurring of genre, radicalism and strange eroticism. One of the characteristics is the nihilism which signifies the nothingness, denying the meaning in every aspect of life. As Francis Picabia remarked in the Cannibal Dada Manifesto in 1920, dada is nothing like “hopes,” “heaven,” “politicians,” “heroes,” “artists,” and “religions”.<sup>4</sup> In the poem “I am Javanese”<sup>5</sup> (*Je suis des Javanais*) written by Picabia, he also represented the senseless of dada, which echoes his manifesto saying “DADA, as for it, is smells of nothing, nothing, nothing.”<sup>6</sup>

Le fond de ma pensée et une imprimerie correcte	My underlying thoughts and their proper publication
Un livre superbe condense mes facultés	A great book distils my faculties
Niaiseries n'est-ce pas ?	Nonsense, isn't it
Tout est niaiseries – en Amérique tout est DADA	Everything is nonsense – in America everything is DADA

<sup>4</sup> For more details, one may refer to the documents in P. 266 from Kuenzli Rudolf's *Dada: Themes and Movements*

<sup>5</sup> The poem was an extract from line 9 -12, translated by Terry Hale from French. In this paper, both the foreign original text and its English translation are shown in-parallel for readers' reference.

<sup>6</sup> Same as (5)

Picabia underscored in the poem the word “nonsense” (*nialiseries*) questioning the existence of everything including the deeply-rooted and traditional matters such as knowledge, forms and content of literary works.

The second characteristic is the attempt to “erase distinctions between the claims of art and those of life.” (Hopkins, 2004, p. 17) In other words, Dadaists consider everything related to life can be art ranging from newspaper cutting to random writing. Looking back to poetry, we can see the randomness with no intentional rhymes and metaphors employed as classical or romantic poets did. Third is the multilingual feature shown in the poems. The poems tend to reflect poets’ capability in different languages because in the case of Europe, certain Dadaist figures “such as Tzara, Picabia and Arp were bi- and multi-lingual.” (Hopkins, 2004, p. 26) For instance, Tristan Tzara invented simultaneous poem from which different people read the poems in different languages and with different rhythms at the same time. The fourth feature is the capricious style of the poetry which changes tremendously since the poets experimented different forms and structures of their works. Take Hugo Ball as an example, his two poems *Karawana* and Dance of Death (*Totentanz*), both of which were written in 1916 but differed stylistically.<sup>7</sup> The fifth characteristic is Dadaists’ intention to blur the genre between poetry and other art forms. *Karawana* that Ball wrote was indeed a phonetic poem which blurred the distinction between “musical composition” and “poem”. The sixth is the radical and strange erotic ideas represented in the poem. Take Picabia’s “I am Javanese” as an instance, he overturned the meaning of everything by decreeing the meaninglessness of everything. In other words, he is radical about the present existence of matters. In terms of eroticism, we can see from Tzara’s “The Sailor”<sup>8</sup> (*Le Marin*):

Il fait l’amour avec une femme qui n’a qu’une jambe l’étroitesse d’un anneau Pondichery On a ouvert son ventre qui grince GRIgri d’où sortent les bas et les animaux oblongs	He is making love to a woman who has only one leg the tightness of a Pondichery ring they have opened his stomach which shrieks chi-chi from which come the stockings and the oblong animals
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The first line, “He is making love to a woman who has only one leg” as well as the four line “from which the stockings and the oblong animals” is suggestive of sexual desire. The erotic way to express sexual desire might have been represented in the courtly-love poems over the past centuries, but such strange way of describing having sex with someone who is physically handicapped, and the weird juxtaposition of “stockings” and “oblong animals” is indeed unprecedented.

## II. Analyses of The Goddesses

Of all the Chinese scholars and writers during the late 1910s and the early 1920s, Guo Moruo was the most daring in applying western ideas in his poetries. Guo’s exposure to these western ideas probably started in 1914 when he went to study in Japan where lots of other western theories had already been introduced. (Hsu, 1963) As Bonnie S. McDougall put, Guo was particularly influenced by expressionism in which

<sup>7</sup> More detailed analyses of the two poems can be found in page 5 and 6 of this paper.

<sup>8</sup> The poem was an extract from line 1-4, translated and edited by William Bohn from French

expressionists “showed the greatest spirits of revolt,” (McDougall, 1977, p. 197) leading to the “nihilism of dada” (McDougall, 1977, p. 197). She supplemented that Guo “read some examples of expressionist poetry and drama by Ernst Toller, Georg Kaiser and others,” (McDougall, 1977, p. 196) and watched “the expressionist film, *Das Kabinet des Doktor Caligaries.*” (McDougall, 1977, p. 196) She pointed out the similarities of the expressionist ideas Guo published in his article “Nature and Art” in *Creation Weekly*. (McDougall, 1977, p. 196) From these, we can infer that Guo might also employ those ideas in his poetries.

Guo Moruo, born from a fairly wealthy family, was well trained in both Chinese classics and Chinese literary. (Hsu, 1963, p. 29) In 1914, he went to Japan and studied medicine at the Kyushu Imperial University where students were required to learn three more foreign languages. The acquisition of Latin, English and German enabled Guo to access different national literatures, leading to his versatile styles of poetry works. As Roy remarked, Guo’s vision of founding a magazine “devoted entirely to literature” (Roy, 1971, p. 3) could be traced back “as early as the summer of 1918,” (Roy, 1971, p. 3) and he realized his dream in 1921 with his friends in Tokyo such as Yu Dadu and Tian Han by establishing the Creation Society (創造社) in which literary works heavily influenced by Western ideas were introduced. The society, as suggested by its name, was aimed at creating something completely new from the old or classic literary works found before in China. The aim of the society was to promote “creative writing rather than on translation, information and theory.” (McDougall, 1971, p. 37) As Michel Hockx remarked, it was “different life-style” (Hockx, 1999, p. 73) and the “different tastes that the Creationists had acquired” (Hockx, 1999, p. 73) that the whole group “had obtained it first avant-garde.” (Hockx, 1999, p. 73) Such a favorable environment enables the flow of new ideas among literary writers, and thus also enables Guo to create his avant-garde works.

His post as an editor in the Taidong Press further allows Guo to publish his first collection of poems on August 5 1921, *The Goddesses* which was made as “the first volume in the *Creation Society Collectanea* (創造社叢書)” (Roy, 1971, p. 116) to draw Chinese readers’ attention to his poetry works which were completely different from the past Chinese classical poetry. Since then, he was widely recognized as a versatile poet. The whole collection of *The Goddesses* consists of fifty seven poems, most of which were created during his studies in Japan from 1918 to 1921. Different from old classical Chinese poems which emphasized rhymes, number of words in each line, and imagery, *The Goddesses* depicts the spontaneity and randomness of his poetry, which matches the second characteristic of Dada poetry aforementioned.

For instance, when we read closely the poem “The Good Morning” (晨安)<sup>9</sup>, it is not difficult to find relevant traits:

晨安！大西洋呀！	I greet you with a Good Morning,
晨安！大西洋畔的新大陸呀！	Atlantic, flanked by the New World,
晨安！華盛頓的墓呀！林肯的墓呀！	grave of Washington, of Lincoln, of
Whitman	Whitman,
的墓呀！	Whitman! Whitman! The Pacific that was Whitman!

<sup>9</sup> The poem is translated from Chinese to English by John Lester and A.C. Barnes in *Selected poems from the Goddesses*. The poem shown in this paper is only part of the extract.

啊啊！惠特曼呀！惠特曼呀！ 太平洋—Pacific!  
 樣的 Pacific Ocean! Isles of the Pacific,  
 惠特曼呀！ ancient Fu-  
 啊啊！太平洋呀！ sang lying in the Pacific,  
 晨安！太平洋呀！太平洋上的諸島呀！ O Fusang! Fusang still wrapped in  
 太平 dream.  
 洋上的扶桑呀！ Awake! *Mésamé* !  
 扶桑呀！扶桑呀！ 還在夢里裹著的扶桑 Hasten to share in this millennial dawn!  
 呀！  
 醒呀！*Mésamé* 呀！  
 快來享受這千載一時的晨光呀！

We can see from the above poem that Guo did not intentionally amend his works, or in other words, he wrote almost immediately what he thought. Just as the scholar Li Zhi-min remarked, Guo did not precisely control “either diction or emotion” (Li, 2005: 47) to achieve deliberately any aesthetic effects of his works. He possibly wrote to praise the prettiness of the morning subconsciously during his stay in Japan. In the poem, Guo also mentioned figures such as Washington, Lincoln and Whitman which might spring up in his mind when he put down the lines. Roy quoted the letter of Guo to Tsung Po-hua of February 16, 1920, in which he considered the language of poetry “not a human effort to express emotion, but emotion’s expression of itself,” (Roy, 1971, p. 90) and in which he further elucidated the languages of “primitive men and of young children are expressions of poetry” (Roy, 1971, p. 90) because they “derive fresh sensation” (Roy, 1971, p. 90) which “give rise to irresponsible emotions from everything in their environments.” (Roy, 1971, p. 90) I believe Guo treated poetry at that time as solely expression of feelings, and he considered unnecessary to craft literary works with beautiful words, the idea of which draws affinity of Dadaism, as suggested by Tristan Tzara in 1918 dada Manifesto, that “the work of creators, coming from a real need of the author’s, and written for himself” can also be literature. In other words, from both Dadaists and Guo’s perspective, art needs not to abide by its old form but the natural feelings and creation.

From the frequent use of interjections *Ah* (呀) at the end of most of the sentences, together with numerous exclamation marks, we as readers can feel the jubilance the moment when he wrote this poem. All these infer that Guo underscored the importance of instantaneous emotions when it comes to writing poetry. Such a use of interjection was unprecedented when compared to classic Chinese poetry which follows metrical rules and structures. The exclamation resembles more like colloquial Chinese speaking naturally to someone else how he feels directly.

When we read another poem “Rebirth of the Goddesses” (女神之再生) in *The Goddesses*, we can see that it begins with the quotation of Goethe’s *Faust* followed by the setting of the poetic story with the seeming dialogues engaged by the three Goddesses, Chuan-Hsu, Kung-Kung and other characters. Readers might probably consider it as a drama genre, but I shall argue such as Guo’s attempts in blurring the genre between drama and poetry based on the content and form of the work. First, when we read the extract of the poem concerning the conversation between the three Goddesses:

女神之一

我要去创造些新的光明，  
不能再在这壁龛之中做神。

女神之二

我要去创造些新的温热，  
好同你新造的光明相结。

女神之三

姊妹们，新造的葡萄酒浆  
不能盛在那旧了的皮囊。  
为容受你们的新热、新光，  
我要去创造个新鲜的太阳！

FIRST GODDESS:

I will go forth and create new  
light,

No longer will I remain a mere  
goddess in a niche.

SECOND GODDESS:

I will go forth and create new  
warmth

to compound with your newly  
created light.

THIRD GODDESS

Sister goddesses, new wine may  
not be contained in old skins.

I will go forth and create a new  
sun

To contain your new light and  
new heat.

The reason why Rebirth of the Goddesses cannot be categorized into the genre of drama like Shakespearean play is first the use of vernacular language in Guo's works. Guo did not employ any metrical or rhythmic rule, but he follows his old thoughts and imagination when he wrote this piece. Guo once described his experience of writing poetry, as quoted by Roy:

From 1918 to 1919 I was frequently attacked by such compulsions [of sudden inspirations]. Whenever they came I would begin to write poetry like one possessed, and sometimes I could not write fast enough to keep up with my inspiration. (Roy, 1971, p. 84)

This elucidates why Guo did not apply those literary devices into his work. But Rebirth of the Goddesses cannot be sorted as western modern drama either, for the dialogues the characters engaged are not everyday conversations but something abstract such as the goddesses' intention to create respectively new light, warmth and a new sun. In terms of the length and the order of each line for the Chinese original version, it resembles more the genre of poetry. It is thus justified to say that Guo indeed created a new genre by combining the elements of drama and poetry together just as Dadaist Hugo Ball's attempt to blur the genre between music score sheets and poetry.<sup>10</sup>

However, when we read the poem “Ennui”<sup>11</sup> written by Japanese poet Takahashi Shinkichi, we can identify Dada features:

dish  
ennui

passion of an earthworm creeping on the brow

Do not wipe dishes  
with the rice-colored apron.

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<sup>10</sup> For more detail, see “gadji beri bimba” on P. 5 of this paper

<sup>11</sup> The poem was translated by Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada*. This paper only shows part of the poem.

皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿 皿

### 倦怠

額に蚯蚓が這ふ情熱  
白米色のエプロンで  
皿を拭くな

“Ennui” emphasized the repetitive dish washing caused the feeling of “ennui” by repeating sixteen times of the word “dish”. The visual image of the overlapping of the dishes can thus be achieved by such a repetition, and such feature can also be categorized as the blurring of genre between painting and poetry, as discussed in the fifth features of a Dada poem in the previous section. Likewise, when we read the order of the poem in the source language, it is not written immediately at the very beginning of each line but instead in the second line and the third line, some spaces are left to achieve some aesthetic effect, which implies the random and capricious style of the poem. Surprisingly, when we read Guo’s *Song of the Huang* (凰歌) in *The Nirvana of the Feng and Huang*<sup>12</sup> (鳳凰涅槃), we can also see the combination between visual image and poetry:

足足！足足！足足！	Jug-jug, jug-jug, jug-jug,
足足！足足！足足！	Jug-jug, jug-jug, jug-jug
五百年來的眼淚傾瀉如瀑。	Five hundred years of tears have streamed like a cataract,
五百年來的眼淚沐漓如燭。	five hundred years of tears have dripped like wax from candle.

The word “jug” (足) is repeated a dozen times, and when we decipher the Chinese character jug, it consists of a radical “human” (人) which resembles the two legs of a human being, and hence creating the moving image of the creature. On the other hand, when we concentrate on the sound produced by the character “jug” (足), we can regard the repetition of words as a technique onomatopoeia, i.e. to imitate the sound of the footsteps of a person. Similarly, at the very beginning two lines of *Song of the Feng* (鳳歌), it starts as follows:

即即！即即！即即	Jig-jig, Jig-jig, jig-jig,
即即！即即！即即	Jig-jig, jig-jig, jig-jig

We can see thus from Guo’s *The Goddesses* the increasing emphasis of sounds and rhythms, albeit not so extreme as Hugo Ball’s sound poems as mentioned in the previous section. Yet, this has already been a tremendous change when comparing poetry in or before the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century in China.

### III. Conclusion

Parallel studies among Dada poetry in Europe, Japanese modern poetry<sup>13</sup> as well as Chinese modern poetry have so far been limited. If we look at the case of Japan, most scholars focussed upon some particular poets such as Masataka Matsuda on

<sup>12</sup> Feng and Huang refer to Phoenixes and according to Chinese myth, they exist in pair. “Feng” refers to female phoenix while “Huang” refers to a male one.

<sup>13</sup> Due to limited space in this paper, I will skip the detailed comparison of Japanese poetry with Guo’s works here.

Takahashi Shinkichi and analyzed his works psychologically without further comparing the European dada poems with his works. Others concentrated on individual works such as Tomoyoshi Murayama (村山知義) and Katsue Kitasono. Almost no articles or books mentioned the effect of Dada on China from the late 1910s to the late 1920s, and few articles and journals compare and contrast works from various countries. Thus, first I employed the idea of Dada as the case to demonstrate how variously Western avant-garde ideas have close affinity with that of the two Asian countries to fill this research gap. Second, most scholars saw Guo as either a romanticist or a Marxist without taking into account the cultural tradition, overall historical condition and national status of China together. For instance, literary critic Li argued at the very first beginning of his introduction of Guo that *The Goddesses* was read generally as “Chinese Modern Romanticism” (Li, 2005, p. 45) on the ground of pantheism depicted within the poetry without further considering its form and sound. Another scholar Mi Jiayan focuses on the creation of the individual self and the reconstruction of national identity of Guo’s works through merely mentioning the diction but without delving into greater details of the motivation of Guo’s writing, as well as his variety of writing styles. McDougall attempted to categorize Guo as an expressionist in her book *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories* into Modern China, but no scholars looked at any Chinese writers from a Dadaist perspective possibly because many see Dadaism as mere nihilism but never outline some distinguishing features in Dada poetry. Even when McDougall wrote the sub-topic Dadaism in the chapter Avant-garde Literary Theories, she confessed the difficulties of collecting information and had to rely on “Japanese account of a recent German publication by one of the original Dadaists.” (McDougall, 1971, p. 209-210) According to McDougall, Japan first summarized Richard Hülsenbeck’s Geschichte des Dadaismus (1920) and the summary was then published in Japan in February 1922. Two months later Chinese translation version appeared, but “ends with the rather scornful comment that dada as a movement is no more than dada the word – a mere childish expression.” (McDougall, 1971, p. 210) However, I would like to argue that it is not fair to compare China with Japan and European countries at a particular time but we should also look back to their respective history. While different novel ideas and new forms of work had been introduced since Renaissance in the 15th century ranging from romanticism at the turn of 19th century to symbolism, Europe had undergone the process of modernization for a long time. If we follow Marshall Berman’s three stages of modernity, the revolutionary wave of literary works had been lasting for more than a hundred and twenty years until the end of the First World War. (Berman, 1982: p.16-17) Similarly, Japan had commenced to apprehend Western ideas since the Meiji Reform in 1868 during which lots of translation of foreign works were introduced to the country and till the end of the First World War such had been remaining for about fifty years. However, the idea of transformation of local literary works only began in China in 1919 followed by the New Cultural Movement. We can see a tremendous time lag in the process of modernization between China and Europe, and even between China and Japan. Therefore, while from the eye of a Western scholar or a Chinese scholar heavily influenced by European ideas, they might regard Chinese work as those incorporated with Gothic, or romanticism, from a Chinese perspective in the late 1910s, they see it as avant-garde artwork because, take poetry as an example, the form, rhythm and sound is completely different from before. The attempt to write poetry in vernacular Chinese was indeed a great breakthrough in Chinese literary field in the world war period.

Another possible reason that explains the discrepancy in Dada movement across the two nations might attribute to the traditional ideological difference as well. Chinese poets are more inclined to associate nature with their career prospect and nation in chaos while their Japanese counterparts seemed to see art as imitation of nature, or at least it did in the case of Takahashi Shinkichi, as argued by Ueda. (Ueda, 1983, p. 381) He further implied that pre-modern Japanese Haiku or Tanka poets wrote poetry for expressionistic purpose, and thus Western ideas might more easily exert influence upon Japanese literature. However, traced back to before 20<sup>th</sup> century or even to the era of the previous dynasties, we see officialdom writing could almost be inseparable from literary works, and even nowadays letters between emperor and officials or writings about army deployment and war strategies are highly regarded as literary works in China. To name a few, works include Zhuge Liang (諸葛亮)'s Petition on Taking the Field (前出師表) and The Art of War (孫子兵法). Hence the idea of patriotism might still deeply embed in most of Chinese literati's works, which further resulted in the selective appropriation of Western ideas by them to save the nation from falling into a colony of other world powers.

Based on the above arguments, I would suggest also taking into account “the rate of modernization” to analyze whether the work is an avant-garde artwork. If we employ Berman’s three stages of modernity to the situation in China, the first stage when Chinese people began to experience the modernity should be after the Opium War (1840-1842) as gradually “Chinese scholars and officials recognized a need to master West scientific and industrial techniques,” (McDougall, 1971, p. 1) thus lots of translation of Western texts and works followed. (Wong, 1999, p. 22) Followed by the defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese literati began to look for deeper literary reform. (Wong, 1999, p. 23) As Karen L. Thornber pointed out, “hundreds of thousands of educated Chinese streamed to Japan’s cities” (Thornber, 2012, p. 99) to learn “engineering, medicine, science, and technology, for political reasons or to study the arts” (Thornber, 2012, p. 99). The literary movement in 1919 formally began the second stage of Chinese modernization in the form of revolution.

After all, due to time limitation, I can merely verify some affinity of Dada poetic features exhibited in Guo’s *The Goddesses*. Thus, more investigation about the profound differences in the spread of avant-garde movement across Japan and China needs to be carried out before the arguments discussed just above could be solid and supportive. I will further delve into parallel studies among Chinese literary artists in the Creation Society, Japanese Dadaists and European Dadaist from the pre-first world war period to the post second world war in the late 1950s by taking a mixed mode of cultural and historical approach in the hope to provide some insights to appreciate Chinese avant-garde artists from a more open perspective, but not in a more constrained Westerners perspective.

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