An Impossible Encounter between Lacan, Lu Xun, and Chen Shui-bian: A Psychoanalysis of Taiwan and Its Discontents

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Abstract
After Lee Teng-hui succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo and was sworn in as the first native Taiwanese president in 1988, Taiwan seemed to move toward a surer democratic future. And through the 2000 presidential election, Chen Shui-bian piloted the nativist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), terminated the reign of the Nationalist Party, Kuomintang (KMT), and seemed to have realized a democratic revolution. “Again,” in the 2008 presidential election, Ma Ying-jeou led KMT, vanquished DPP, and seemed to secure for Taiwan a democratic vista. In the process of these “democratic” turns, the inter-ethnic relationship was aggravated and increasingly bound up with the concurrent political strife between these two dominant parties. On the theoretical level, this paper aims to explore the act of writing the impossible by way of a Lacanian analysis of these socio-political turns of Taiwan. On the real level, the aim for employing the Lacanian analytical mechanism is to induce some “real” effects on the present symptomatic Taiwan which is suffering from a complicity between enjoyment and knowledge. This paper is divided into three parts. The first part discusses Lu Xun and Mao Zedong in order to clarify the structure of desire in terms of its intimate relationship with impossibility. The second part draws on Lacan’s theories of jouissance and the Borromean knot, and his four discourses in order to analyze Taiwan’s socio-political turmoil mentioned above. The last part first elucidates the structure of suffering and enjoyment as revealed in the 2006 Red Shirt Army protest and the 2008 presidential election. Then, as part of an envisaging of a

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way out of the said complicity, Lu Xun and his writing are taken up again to illustrate the act of writing the impossible. Last, resorting to the *modus operandi* of the “true hole” in Lacan’s *Seminar XXIII*, this paper presents and expounds the two concepts of “linking cut” and “doing with-out,” in order to arrive at the possibility of severing the complicity between knowledge and *jouissance*. Above all, this paper aspires to imagine a way, emphatically though not exclusively for Taiwan, to dissolve the repetitive compulsion of the “again” so as to embark upon the future.

**Keywords**

Lacan, Lu Xun, Chen Shui-bian, four discourses, impossibility, true hole
The root of wild grass is not deep; its leaves are not beautiful. But it sucks on dew, sucks on water, sucks on the flesh and blood of dead people, striving for its own life. When it lives, it still has to suffer from treading and mowing till death and decay.

But I am composed, contented. I shall laugh, I shall sing.

I myself love my wild grass, but I hate the ground that decorates itself with the wild grass.

—Lu Xun, epigraph of *The Wild Grass* 154

Dear Cheng, you have known many ruptures in your life. You’ll know how to transform these ruptures into an active Void-median linking for you your present with your past, you will, at last, be in your time.

—Jacques Lacan to François Cheng (程抱一) (qtd. in Laurent 50)

**The Impossibility of Lu Xun**

If any man has ever embodied the Lacanian subject *qua* letter-litter in modern China, that person is none other than Lu Xun (1881~1936), the idol and rival of Mao Zedong, who at the last hour of his life was said to be reading Lu’s oeuvre. In 1940, Mao dedicated his highest encomium:

Lu Xun is the captain of Chinese cultural revolution; he was not only a great man of letters but also a great thinker and great revolutionary. Lu Xun’s bone is the toughest; he did not harbor a slightest modicum of servitude and flattery, exemplifying the most precious character of the colonial, semi-colonial people. At the cultural front, Lu Xun represented the majority of the nation, thrusting himself against the enemy in the most correct, courageous, determined, and passionate manner, this unprecedented hero of the nation. Lu Xun’s way is the way for the new culture of the Chinese nation. (Mao 658)

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1 And if we are to find a female counterpart, she must be Eileen Chang (張愛玲).
2 In this essay, all the translations from Chinese sources are mine.
However, the master’s self-empowerment through deification of this acclaimed unyielding revolutionary is marked by an inherent impossibility. In 2001, Lu’s son, Zhou Haiing, published a memoir which uncovered an incident in 1957—a time when the anti-rightist movement was still in the ascendency. One day, in Shanghai, Mao made the following remark as his answer to the question, “What if Lu Xun were still alive?”: “As I see the question, either he would still insist on writing in prison, or he would keep his mouth shut for the sake of propriety” (Zhou 370-71; see also Chen 4). Here, in this master’s self-defeating knowledge, the impossibility of writing the Chinese modern event is clear in view: the event as the impossible “does not stop not being written” (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Female Sexuality* 94) and thus still remains as the mere structural “underside” (envers) of the master. The event is imprisoned or unactualized because it is not written: “for the discourse . . . there is no other fact than the fact of saying (dire). The enunciated fact is in sum the fact of discourse. This is what I designate by the term artifact” (*Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII* 12).3

What deserves special attention is that Zhou’s anecdote would ever arouse so many intense discussions in the twenty-first-century China, as registered in the dossier *If Lu Xun Were Alive* (Chen, *Jiaru luxun huozhe*), given that Mao’s answer expressed empirically the only possible outcome for Lu, were he still alive in the 1950s, and that the present China, in becoming a global power, seems to have cast off its bitter past. In other words, the power of the question bears upon the power of the said impossibility of the event; that is, the impossible power is strongly felt and structurally articulated at this turning moment for China, the moment for the (im)possibility of modernity. In the first place, this question is posed repetitively because it is an impossible question: Lu just could not live. If he were alive in the 1950s, as all the questioners know implicitly or explicitly, he would have been subject to the operation of the vel (either/or) of alienation: either he would have had to choose a life without the revolutionary substance, or he and the substance would have had to die a premature death. In either scenario, he would be vanquished by Mao’s authoritarian regime, and, accordingly, the question would not be pursued insistently since it would be merely a nonexistent question rather than one in the mode of the impossible, as taken in the Lacanian sense of the ex-sistent real, one that makes both the regime and Lu impossible. In consequence, Lu could not (but) live: he could not live in order for so many people to crave for his living; his death, contrarily, has brought him an indefinite, if not infinite, afterlife which, however, testifies to the impossibility of the event. That is, if he were alive, he would have

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3 In this essay, all the translations from French sources are mine.
suffered death, and conversely he has been living because he died a biologically premature death which some critics claim to be a fortunate event for him and for China as a whole. And it is precisely this enunciated claim that reveals, on the level of enunciation, the impossibility of the question and the symptomatic splitting of China gripped by the desire for encountering the impossible event. Lacan’s account of the neurotic splitting and the Hamletian procrastination in striking at the Other best explains why this symptomatic gripping submits the subject to the Other:

[O]nly insofar as the object of Hamlet’s desire has become an impossible object can it become once more the object of his desire. In the desires of obsessional neurotics we have already encountered the impossible as object of desire. But let’s not be too easily satisfied with these overly obvious appearances. The very structure of the basis of desire always lends a note of impossibility to the object of human desire. What characterizes the obsessional neurotic in particular is that he emphasizes the confrontation with this impossibility. In other words, he sets everything up so that the object of his desire becomes the signifier of this impossibility. (“Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet” 36)

That is, a prior submission to the Other forces the subject to reject the object of desire and turns it into a prohibited impossible object which here characterizes the status of Lu Xun qua phallus in the impossible question. What we see in this place is the inextricable coupling between the question and the Other. “What if Lu Xun were still alive” cannot be asked because he needs to be dead, and has to be asked because Lu represents the unactualized revolutionary event. In other words, the impossibility of the question resides in the structural condition that Lu, defined as an event instead of as an individual, is the impossible underside of the master: it is because the event is not a true event that it cannot vanish out of memory and that the master is thus possible owing to this impossibility of Lu which at one and the same time makes the master impossible. That is, the impossibility of Lu is nothing else but the impossible foundation of Mao’s reality. Hence, we can say that Mao and Lu constitute a siamese couple: in contrast to the common view that the saintly status of Lu derives from Mao’s exaltation, it is rather the ghostly Lu who becomes inseparably bound up with Mao. And what is this ghost if not the phallic image which invokes the existence of the phallus and veils its truth as lack? Furthermore, the contemporary resurgence of the
spectral, indestructible memory of Lu as the modern Chinese giant of the impossible refers us to what Freud metaphorized as the “immortal” Titans, i.e., the unconscious wishes:

They share this character of indestructibility with all other mental acts which are truly unconscious, i.e. which belong to the system Ucs. only. . . . If I may use a simile, they are only capable of annihilation in the same sense as the ghosts in the underworld of the Odyssey—ghosts which awoke to new life as soon as they tasted blood. Processes which are dependent on the preconscious system are destructible in quite another sense. The psychopathology of the neuroses is based on this distinction. (Freud, The Interpretations of Dreams 553, n.1)

Here the reference to neurosis is pivotal precisely because the neurotic “sets everything up so that the object of his desire becomes the signifier of this impossibility”: the indestructible impossible desire is exactly the ghostly partner or byproduct of the destructible which, due to the permeability of the preconscious system, is inherently related to the law of writing or remembering. And what causes neurosis is nothing other than this conflictual collaboration or complicity which the neurotic subject does not want to know anything about.

To arrive at a more thorough reading, it is necessary to look to the ending of The Interpretation of Dreams from which Freud’s passage above is taken:

By picturing our wishes as fulfilled, dreams are after all leading us into the future. But this future, which the dreamer pictures as the present, has been moulded by his indestructible wish into a perfect likeness of the past. (621)

In addition to Freud’s theory at this stage, which posits the aetiology of the neuroses in infantile erotic wishes, what has already appeared here with regard to the coincidence between the future and the past pertains to what Lacan designates as the second stage of Freud’s discovery: that of repetition in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, as distinct from the articulation of the unconscious in the first stage (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XVII 45). That is, the ultimate fulfillment of the unconscious wishes or drives would lead to an absolute return to the inorganic primordial state of psychic inertia: this is exactly the unexpected turn
or inversion of the “new life” that can be attained through annihilation or satisfaction of the ghosts with blood. If in the first idealist stage, remembering or bringing the repressed unconscious wishes into consciousness, which is the main therapeutic *modus operandi* at this stage, will restitute psychic balance and the harmony between desire and law, the second stage encounters the inherent psychic war between life and death instincts, which accounts for the ambivalence of love and hate (see Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* 124-32). In his dissatisfaction, Lacan recoils from this “bastardized” term, “ambivalence,” which, in his view, evades the decisive nature of hate; the coinage “*hainamoration*” is his choice (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality* 90-91). More precisely, what this “loving-hate” brings home is the siamese structure of drives, which Freud sidesteps and substitutes with his model of two independent kinds of drives, thus encountering a theoretical impasse: “The pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts” which, however, work beyond and “independently of the pleasure principle,” that is, disrupting it from within (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 62-63). As demonstrated by the traumatic neurosis, the compulsion to repeat reveals that the pleasure principle and its beyond are not just bound up with each other; more significantly, the power of the impossible is strengthened by the power of the law. Lacan has formulated this complicity in another way:

Is the Law the Thing? Certainly Not. Yet I can only know of the Thing by means of the Law. In effect, I would not have the idea to covet it if the Law hadn’t said: “Thou shalt not covet it.” But the Thing finds a way by producing in me all kinds of covetousness thanks to the commandment, for without the Law the Thing is dead. But even without the Law, I was once alive. But when the commandment appeared, the Thing flared up, returned once again, I met my death. And for me, the commandment that was supposed to lead to life turned out to lead to death, for the Thing found a way and thanks to the commandment seduced me; through it I came to desire death. (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII* 83)

It follows that the ultimate question we need to ask is: “*How can I break out of this vicious cycle of Law and desire, of the Prohibition and its transgression, within*

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4 “Loving-hate” is taken to be a better rendition than “hate-loving” chosen by the translator, Bruce Fink. In terms of the word formation itself, *hainamoration* already points to a kind of hate that is made lovable. Further theoretical import will be accounted in the last part of this essay.
which I can assert my passion for life only as its opposite, a morbid death drive? How would it be possible for me to experience my ‘life drive’ not as a foreign automatism, a blind ‘compulsion to repeat’ which compels me to transgress the Law (with the unacknowledged complicity of the Law itself), but as a fully subjectivized, positive yes’ (Žižek, “Psychoanalysis in Post-Marxism” 249).

In brief, what we see here is precisely the duplicity of the no/name-of-the-father: at the moment the law is instituted, its limit and opposite are called into existence by the same act. In this vein, we might be able to grasp in part what Lacan means when he states that “the father is a symptom” in terms of its ability to tie the three rings together into a Borromean knot (Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan* 19). In other places, he also says that the Oedipus complex and the name-of-the-father are also symptoms (22; see also Hoens and Pluth 13). In the direction taken here, the structure induced by the father or the name-of-the-father is symptomatic in that the subject is thrown into and split by the neurotic complicity described above.

In that sense, to return to the case of Mao, his regimentation structurally engenders Lu as the impossible question which is compelled to return incessantly. However, since its return has presupposed the existence of the Other, the question consequently becomes more and more impossible. In other words, the formula “what if” has already presupposed the existence of the dominant condition, i.e., of reality; as a matter of fact, “what if” which also invokes the possibility of the opposite condition can be defined as the statement of the impossible situated on the level of enunciation. It seems to be the case that each time the impossible question is posed, it is meant to strike at the Other, to disrupt him at the right moment. However, since this “hour of the Other” (Lacan, “Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet” 25) is just a “mirage” to the Hamletian subject, because “there is only one hour, the hour of his destruction” (25), the subject who repetitively poses the impossible question turns out to be “constantly suspended in the time of the Other” (17). However, two questions ensue. First, along this line, it would mean that the resurgence in the twenty-first century of the impossible question of Lu is merely an instance of the compulsion to repeat, implying that the siamese structure of the Other and its underside remains the same in different times. In that case, the historical condition or actuality would be left out of theoretical accounts; correlatively, the shift of discourses would also become obscure, especially with regard to the moment to strike at the Other. Second, in view of Lacan’s insistence on the impossibility to say the whole truth, which is thus defined as “half-saying,” the perfect circle or absolute return implied by the complete coincidence between
the past and future does not exist. What is more complex is that the above quotations from Freud contrarily adumbrate the possibility of a “new life” attainable through bringing to pass a “perfect likeness” between the past and future. That is, to go back to the two meanings of the impossible and to their links with memory and forgetting, the possibility of future is predicated upon the writing of the impossible and the annihilation of memory. Lu Xun had been striving toward this goal, with the intention to cast himself and his writings out of memory and into the unknown. The result is that Lu came to an impossible writing—the “writing after the grave”—which is able to turn the impossibility of writing into a writing of the impossible. On the theoretical or symbolic level, the aim for what follows is to clarify these questions by way of a Lacanian analysis of Taiwan’s recent socio-political turmoil. On the real level, the aim is to write the impossible of Taiwan by means of employing the Lacanian “letter,” i.e., of undertaking a Lacanian analysis in this essay, in order to induce some “real” effects on the present symptomatic Taiwan which is suffering from a complicity between enjoyment and knowledge.

**Fathers of the Nation and Their Vicissitudes**

The turmoil concerned is usually summed up as the strife between the blue camp represented by the Nationalist Party, Kuomintang (KMT), which, under the lead of Chiang Kai-shek (1887~1975), withdrew to Taiwan in 1949 after being vanquished by the Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War, and the green camp represented by the nativist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Originating from opposition movements, DPP was established in 1986, one year before Martial Law and the ban on establishing political parties were suspended; the party’s chief aim is to terminate KMT’s authoritarian rule and to establish Taiwan as an independent sovereign state. Against this historical backdrop, some people see the strife between the two camps as one between the so-called “ex-province people”—the Mainlanders who fled to Taiwan after the Civil War—and “native” Taiwanese, most of whom are indeed descendents of Chinese settlers who came to Taiwan in earlier times during the past four hundred years. In fact, this ethnic definition becomes

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5 Kafka also strives toward this self-annihilation. While Lu comes to a “writing after the grave,” Kafka achieves an animal writing which is nothing but an inhuman writing, a writing coming after the humanly impossible writing: on the one hand, the K-characters of his various fictions are trapped in an impossible condition, while, on the other, impossible “creatures” are singing or speaking after the Law has been suspended. What is especially noteworthy is that Lu also writes as snake and owl (see the last part of this essay), that is, as a-nimal in Lacanese.

6 For the sake of convenience and in accord with local usage, the word “native” is used in this
more and more uncertain since a lot of natives have joined or supported KMT. However, this demarcation which increases the tension between different ethnic groups still holds for a considerable number of both DPP and KMT supporters. Even though continuous efforts have been invested in redressing this ethnic orientation by redirecting the focus toward the two parties’ commitment to democratization and human rights, somehow the “organic” view holds firm. When things get stuck and do not work, education aiming at changing people’s ideas becomes, as Freud says, impossible because the impossible, i.e., what resists inculcation or symbolization, concerns the real (see Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 166, 172-73). In short, the organic does not exist in reality, since the above-mentioned two dominant ethnic groups in Taiwan cannot be unquestionably distinguished on biological grounds; instead, it ex-sists in the real. That is, this distinction is not groundless; to locate the “real” core of the problem, we have to direct our critical attention to what Žižek (1989) designates as the “sublime object” of enjoyment which renders changes impossible.7

First of all, from a Lacanian perspective, this strife can be grasped vis-à-vis the status of the father.

![Symmetrical representation of a quaternary Borromean knot](image)

This figure is a symmetrical rendering of the division of the symbolic into symptom and symbol (the two middle interlocking rings) which respectively connect to the real and the imaginary (Lacan, Le séminaire de Jacque Lacan, Livre XXIII 21).

7 In a sense, the “sublime object” can be taken as the Althusserian “determination in the last instance”; what Althusser failed to see ultimately is that economy in the last instance comes down to the governing of jouissance. This also enables us to modify Althusser’s understanding of Pascal’s formula: “Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe” (see Althusser 168-69). If the practice of rituals determines the efficacy of ideology, it is because they, especially religious ones, are “means of jouissance”—Lacan’s definition for knowledge (S2) (The Seminar of Jacque Lacan, Book XVII 89)—taken up to regulate and give form to enjoyment. That is why the “reign of terror” might ensue after regular rituals are annulled in times of revolution, and why totalitarianism has to engage itself in frantically manufacturing new ones, such as the Nazi salute, lest the carnivalsque outbreak of jouissance would come about.
Lacan’s oblique gloss for this knot goes as follows: “The Oedipus complex is as such a symptom. It is because the Name-of-the-Father is also the Father of the Name that all holds up, which does not make the symptom less necessary” (22). Basically, Lacan can be taken as modifying or supplementing his earlier theory of representation, i.e., his definition of the signifier as that which represents the subject for another signifier: the establishment of the name (S₁) introduces the whole network of signifiers (S₂). Specifically, in addition to representation, symptom is necessary if the knot or psychic structure is to hold up. For the present purpose, a slightly varied reading is substituted: the name and the father meet or intersect so that the symbolic linking between the real and the imaginary is established. In the case of Taiwan, however, the two do not meet; representation has failed: the two major ethnic groups in Taiwan do not have the same father. That is to say, the connection between symbol and symptom or, in an extended but not symmetrical manner, between the name and the father breaks up. When the KMT government took over Taiwan in 1945 from Japan after World War II, the Taiwanese in general expected the Chinese father to be the true father, but they gradually found him not worthy of being loved because he was a murderous father tyrannizing over and suppressing the islanders. However, to date, a certain number of them have chosen to identify with the Chinese father as the name for the telltale reason that they have been received into the KMT regime to share its money and power, i.e., enjoyment. From a Lacanian point of view, the organic difference is obviously not the right place to search for the answer; instead, it is the no less organic, sublime object of enjoyment which is involved. The master’s discourse can best clarify the point here.

8 Owing to blood links to the Chinese and the harsh Japanese colonial rule, a lot of Taiwanese people welcomed the return of the island to China. But right after the takeover in 1945, incessant instances of corruption, bullying, plunder, and oppression took place and finally gave rise to the island-wide revolt in February 1947, the so-called “228 Incident,” in which thousands of Taiwanese were slaughtered by KMT’s troops. After KMT’s retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the grievous situation did not change; Martial Law was imposed in the same year and inaugurated the White Terror lasting for nearly four decades, during which probably up to hundreds of thousands of people were directly victimized. This history of oppression accounts for the tense ethnic relationship between the Taiwanese and the ex-province people. However, it needs to be mentioned that, of KMT’s victims, though most are Taiwanese, a certain number are ex-province people; that is, the political class conflict is displaced unto the realm of ethnic relationship via manipulation and identification. While manipulation may be easily detected and criticized, identification is inevitably bound up with specific modes of psychic or libidinal investment which ultimately determine the compulsive repetition of the political deadlock. While not being able to fully address Taiwan’s ethnic problem, this essay can be taken as aiming at the “real” core of identification, i.e., at a mapping of the psychic vicissitudes in Taiwan’s recent socio-political turmoil, for psychoanalysis enjoins itself to come to “where it was,” that is, where the “real” binding power of the status quo is.
Lacan defines discourse as a “social link” (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII 17); namely, the four terms ($S_1$, $S_2$, $\$, $a$) constitute the “intersignifierness” (intersignifiance) which determines “intersubjectivity” (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVIII 10). And the basic structure of the four discourses is read as: the agent in the place of command puts its receiver to work, and the work produces truth (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 79) in the sense that the unconscious truth of the agent or the discourse is also engendered. This explains why Lacan says that truth is “inseparable from the effects of language” (62) and that the other side (envers) of a discourse is “assonant with vérité, ‘truth’” (54). In other words, the two sides of a discourse are produced by the same act, so truth cannot be taken as the mere “unsayable” (51) but as the unsayable qua effects of the saying. And since truth refers to the unconscious (62) or the other side of what can be said, Lacan defines it by the concept of “half-saying”: “it cannot be said completely, for the reason that beyond this half there is nothing to say. That is all that can be said” (51). In terms of the master’s discourse, its schema has to be read, in the first place, as, again, representation: the signifier ($S_1$) is that which represents the subject ($\$) for another signifier ($S_2$) which, qua signifying work or knowledge, produces loss ($a$) taken by Lacan as equivalent to the thermodynamic phenomenon of “entropy”—the loss of energy or reduction of jouissance (47-48). Situated in the
place of truth of the master, the final term, $, is defined, in relation to castration, as “lack in being” (52). Lacan alludes to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* to explicate the operation: the slave ($S_2$) is put to work under the command of the master ($S_1$) and produces surplus *jouissance*, a, for the master (20-24, 79-80). Here, the a should be taken to mean both a “modality of *jouissance*” and its loss (see Yacoi 100); the master is the master precisely because of self-castration: he exposes himself to death by renouncing *jouissance* and thus acquires compensations from the slave (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII* 107). Since Lacan defines the master’s discourse as “discourse of the unconscious” (Geller 109), Freud’s classical language can further advance our grasp of the operation: the mental censorship does not allow the entry of repressed unconscious thoughts into manifest representation, so the dream work activates the mechanism of displacement and condensation to select a representable dream content divested of explicit links or resemblances with the thoughts which, for being fully charged with psychic energies, are the elements really capable of inducing satisfaction. In that case, the selected content lacking in enjoyment but invested with identification is representing the subject for another signifier which, qua battery of signifiers, provides links and associations to constitute the dream representation aimed to bring about “displaced,” i.e. surplus, wish fulfillment. Though merely serving as an approximate rendition of Lacan’s account, this gloss by way of dream formation can further clarify his several formulations. First of all, there are no master signifiers at the outset, and every signifier “is able to come to the position of master signifier, precisely because its potential function is to represent the subject for another signifier” (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII* 89). Second, knowledge is “a means of *jouissance*” (51) because the unconscious processes are equipped with the “how-how” (153) of producing substitute enjoyments. In addition, truth is “the sister of *jouissance*” in the sense that the real is mediated by the repressed unconscious truth qua “the residue of the effect of language” (67); therefore, the impossibility is that of “grasping, of seizing . . . the naked real, without truth” (174).

What is pertinent here with regard to Taiwan is that the condition or truth of the master is related to the subject’s willing *aphanisis* into the field of representative representation on account of the (surplus) *jouissance* brought about by the signifying work: the existence of a specific mode of enjoyment is determinant for the subject to accept the master as his representative and to accept to be represented by the name of the master/father. From this perspective, identification should be divided at least in two stages: the primal identification with the mode of enjoyment
and the symbolic identification, the identification proper, with a specific master. By the same token, Althusser’s ideological interpellation can be divided into two moments: first, the subject recognizes the “unary trait”—the “simplest form of mark” or “the origin of the signifier” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 46)—in the call of enjoyment, and second, he turns around for a symbolic confirmation or inscription.° In this vein, we should be able to see why a certain number of DPP supporters are underdogs who do not participate or recognize the mark of enjoyment in KMT’s structure of jouissance. On the other hand, this approach also enables us to grasp the pertinence of the green camp’s continuous effort to find a father whose candidates are the Japanese colonial heritage and, Relatedly, Lee Teng-hui (1923–), the first native Taiwanese president who, though pertaining to KMT from 1971 to 2001 and assuming its chair from 1988 to 2000, has an ingrained colonial Japanese formation and is named by many Taiwanese as “the Father of Taiwan’s Democracy.” During his presidency (1988–2000), Taiwan’s political network infiltrated into and was conflated with the monetary network so much so that the socio-political system was considerably “capitalized” and became a venal web of pecuniary interdependence. In effect, the power-money complicity gave rise to a totalized society that was different from the previous socio-political system, which operated by means of privilege and segregation. In this aspect, Lee actually laid the ground for the turn toward the university discourse whereby S₂ becomes a “universal” system of total formalization and calculation, which, by means of valorizing surplus jouissance into surplus value, recuperates the loss produced by work in the master’s discourse (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 80-81). In Lacan’s own words, “[s]omething changed in the master’s discourse at a certain point in history. . . . [O]n a certain day surplus jouissance became calculable, could be counted, totalized. This is where what is called the

° The point not to be missed is that the “unary trait” is an empty mark, which is indeed a void counted as one (see Cottes 434; Verhaeghe 44). In recognizing the trait as existing in some other party, the subject has already accepted a displaced form of enjoyment which presupposes loss, brings about surplus enjoyment, and introduces the subject into the symbolic: “in the event of the loss of the object the investment is transferred to the unary trait that marks this loss; the identification with a unary trait thus occupies the (structural) place of the lost object. Yet, at the same time, this identification . . . becomes itself the source of a supplementary satisfaction” (Zupančič 157). The central void of the trait also explains why Lacan describes it as “a mark toward death” (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 177). Hoens observes that Lacan neither identifies it as nor distinguishes it from S₁; the reason is quite clear: it is the unary trait recognized in a signifier that makes it an S₁, so Hoens is justified to infer that the unary trait is the “element by which a subject gets represented” in the Other (“Towards a New Perversion: Psychoanalysis” 100, n. 17).
accumulation of capital begins. . . . Surplus value combines with capital—not a problem, they are homogeneous, we are in the field of values” (177). Here we can also see the other side of democracy, i.e., homogenization. Thus, Lacan takes USSR as an example to illustrate a society reigned by “the university” (206); that is, taken in its aspect of totalization, totalitarianism proves to be a truly modern product, the truth of democratic capitalization.

What is ultimately totalized or democratized, i.e., leveled up, is the distinction between $S_1$ and $S_2$, which collapses as a result, for “the impotence of conjoining surplus value with the master’s truth . . . is being won” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 177). This move toward the university discourse was indeed virtually accomplished during the presidency of Chen Shui-bian (2000~2008) who, as the first president coming from the nativist party DPP, terminated KMT’s reign which had lasted for more than half a century. Evidence could be found in various “globalizing” areas. In the realm of work, leisure or pleasure has been extensively incorporated so as to create the most humanized working “milieu” (Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78 20); in other words, jouissance that, in its form of loss, used to resist calculation and that “serves no purpose” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality 3) is now governed or capitalized upon by $S_2$ qua a holistic enjoyment-governing system, taken, in Foucault’s sense, as providing the optimal condition for “the use of pleasure” or the circulation, above all, of “desire” (see Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78 72). In the field of popular culture, especially the mass media, we see those little objects of enjoyment, which Lacan calls the “lathouse” or “ventouse” (sucker) (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 162), geared into the knowledge apparatus which knows how to tease drives. For example, recent sentimental films are promoted by their high “tear-driving index number,” i.e., their remarkable ability to make the spectators weepy, and news cameras do not wait for a close-up when a tear of the sufferer is about to drop. In addition, there abound various talking programs dedicated to “explode the substance” or to decipher mysterious, i.e. obscene, knowledges about celebrities, politicians, and the supernatural world; what this “epistemological drive” explodes amounts to nothing but the real as the said substance. That is, “the categorical imperative, ‘Keep on knowing’” (106), drives knowledge into the real so that $S_2$ becomes the machine to put the real to work, as the schema for the university discourse shows. Concerning the “lathouse,” Lacan’s premonition is:
Nowadays, it is equally possible that this is the whole thing, that it would be terrible if it were to emerge. If you spend your time waiting, then you are done for. In sum, one mustn’t tease the lathouse too much. What does undertaking this always assure? What I am forever explaining to you—it assures the impossible by virtue of the fact that this relationship is effectively real. The more your quest is located on the side of truth, the more you uphold the power of the impossibles which are . . . governing, educating, analyzing on occasion. For analysis, in any case, this is obvious. (187)

The truth of the university discourse is an S_1 which is no longer the master signifier in the master’s discourse but a perverse master embodying the categorical imperative, that is, a “murderous” S_1 which “appears even more unassailable, precisely in its impossibility” (178). What governing, educating, analyzing, and desiring prove impossible is, in short, language that is able to activate the master signifier or to introduce a cut into the realm of murderous truth, i.e., the “alethosphere” (161) which can be defined as the realm of modern scientific truth revolutionizing classical aletheia/truth.

**Doing with-out and Writing the Impossible**

What Lee Teng-hui—the father who was excommunicated from KMT, instigated the founding of another party,^{10} and thus did not know he should die—does not understand is that to be the father of the nation, he has to castrate himself because his potency poses too great a threat to the sons and enemies. Correlatively, what frantic members of the Patriotic Union (愛國同心會), mostly ex-province veterans propagating Chinese nationalism, do not understand is that rather than claiming to execute Lee Teng-hui, they should be his lifelong guards, for if Lee is murdered, he would become the father proper. And what Chen Shui-bian and DPP do not understand is much more complex. On the one hand, as Foucault has indicated, the system of complete formalization, quantification, or circulation

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^{10} In the 2000 presidential election, Lee Teng-hui, the chairman of KMT at that time, failed to send its candidate into the Presidential Hall. Since Lee had always been friendly to nativist campaigns, KMT’s supporters took him as responsible for the splitting of the party during the election run and suspected him of surreptitiously aiding DPP’s candidate, Chen Shui-bian. Lee was thus forced to resign from chair in 2000 and expelled from the party in 2001; in the same year, by rallying the nativist faction in KMT and other affinitive groups, he occasioned the establishment of the party, Taiwan Solidarity Union, which took him as its “spiritual leader” since.
would depose the traditional master of sovereignty who has to maintain his “state of exception,” to appropriate Agamben’s phrase (State of Exception 15), so as to constitute a more or less bounded or territorialized structure (see Foucault, Essential Works of Foucault 204; Security, Territory, Population, Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78 64); as a result, what the DPP government has done is exactly to make the project of sovereign independence impossible. Second, the dominance of \( S_2 \) endangers \( S_1 \), not due to the commonly alleged “symbolic inefficacy” but, rather, over-efficacy, in the way that the subject is brought to face the danger of being directly represented by \( S_2 \) or of directly confronting the apparatus of jouissance—Lacan indeed describes \( S_2 \) as inherently “related to the ear and the eye” and other body orifices (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome 23, 17-18). Consequently, the subject would find this overproximity too unbearable and suffocating owing to lack of an \( S_1 \) to execute the function of separation.

The precariousness of \( S_1 \) and the ensuing symptomatic reactions cannot be more conspicuously revealed than in the event of the failed assassination of Chen Shui-bian during the 2004 presidential election. When the image of the wound, which showed a straight cut on the surface of his belly and exposed the red flesh underneath, was publicized in the media, later commotions were destined to ensue. What was cut is nothing but the master signifier, and what was exposed and thus became unbearable is the dimension of jouissance. In other words, the two bullets indeed reached their goal, which is another instance of why failure is the only success: the veil of the master signifier was torn apart so that the subject and jouissance were deprived of protection and exposed to extreme danger. The anxiety caused by this event best evidenced that what the image showed is the Thing in its raw color. What Lacan kept on insisting about anxiety is that “anxiety is an affect of the subject” and that “anxiety—it is not without object,” i.e., the object \( a \) as “what falls out of the subject in anxiety” (Des Noms-du-Père: 69, 71). The function of this “cause of desire” as revealed in fantasy is precisely “to be the support of desire” (71); that is, the object \( a \) underpins fantasy which “teaches us how to desire” (Žižek, The Parallax View 40). From the schema of the master’s discourse, we see that the master signifier produces loss; thus, what is fallen is exactly this loss that makes desire or the desiring subject viable (see Copjec 128). Lacan has clearly formulated what is involved here:

It is because the master’s discourse reigns that \( S_2 \) is divided. The division concerned here is that between symbol and symptom. This division is, if one may say so, reflected in the division of the subject. It
is because the subject is what a signifier represents for another signifier that we are necessitated by its insistence to show that it is in the symptom that one of these two signifiers takes from the Symbolic its support. (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome 23)

On the one hand, the “insistence” of S$_1$ to represent the subject for S$_2$ endows the master signifier the character of repetition which connects it to the symptom in the real (Morel 104). On the other, this representational mediation makes the real impossible and simultaneously renders the signifying network as lacking in itself because loss is implicit in it thanks to the necessity of mediation. Unlike the case in the university discourse, S$_2$ here is separated from the real and thus cannot directly command it (a). In this manner, symptom and symbol can be dialecticized. In short, the incompleteness of S$_2$ makes it possible for the subject or the analyst to employ “equivocation” against symptom (Lacan, Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome 17-18).

When Chen Shui-bian’s wound was shown—that is, when jouissance erupted—there also emerged numerous wild speculations about a plot behind the shooting; for example, a sizable number of KMT supporters conjectured that the assassination had been arranged by Chen’s team in order to win people’s sympathy and the election. From a psychoanalytic point of view, it cannot be put any clearer than the fact that signifying chains were let loose owing to the decline of quilting points. To put it otherwise, the society was so seriously affected by this “loss of loss” and by the impossibility of desiring that desperate symptomatic attempts were undertaken to create as many fictions as possible in order to veil the cut in the king’s symbolic body, S$_1$, that is to say, in order to be distanced from the real, the king’s real body. And it should come as no surprise that most of these wild speculations qua defenses were produced by intellectuals whose function in the society has always been to engender ideas, i.e., signifiers. As a matter of fact, they were executing symptomatically the function of the analyst by separating the master signifier from knowledge, as indicated by the division between the two terms in the lower line of the analyst’s discourse (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 130), with the purpose to secure a place for the subject defined as “fault” in the link between S$_1$ and S$_2$ (88).

From this perspective, we can now come to what really happened in the 2006 protest of the Red Shirt Army in front of the Presidential Hall. The real cause

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11 The following analysis of the protest should not be thought to apply to all the protesters, for they actually belonged to complex groups and classes and harbored different causes. The well-off
should have been very clear: the irruption of jouissance in the guise of a series of corruption allegations, such as the First Lady’s reception of coupons and jewels from capitalists, suspicious donations made by them to the First Family, the President’s son-in-law’s illicit deals in the stock market, and the First Family’s fraudulence in collecting receipts to draw out the presidential confidential bursary.12

On the one hand, as stated above, the demonstration was against not so much the enjoyment of the master as his exposing of the protesters’ or the society’s enjoyment. On the other, the inherent link between this red outcry and the crisis of the master signifier was expressly revealed in the color and topology of the event. Many people have wrongly associated the color with the Chinese communist red; rather, it was the color of the real or the flesh revealed in the president’s wound. The topology of the protest exactly replicated the wound: the place being cut was the place of the master signifier, the Presidential Hall, while the Red Shirt Army symbolized, more than signified, the flesh opened by the cracking of S1. Thus, the protest has to be defined as “real”; it revealed Taiwan’s enjoyment in suffering and invoked the call for a “real father.” Here, we see the coexistence of obsessional neurotic and hysterical symptoms. On the one hand, Taiwan was being thrown into the quantifying, globalizing knowledge of enjoyment, the so-called knowledge in the real, and superegoic commands were making jouissance compulsory and desire impossible: the obsessive neurotic’s enjoying in suffering. It was obvious that the protesters were suffering in front of the Presidential Hall, but it was also evident that they were enjoying, e.g., in singing and hard-partying. What was even more telling is that many of them went there to live their lives: they arrived in the morning with breakfast, then left for work, and returned to have lunch at noon together; after work, they went back to have dinner, converse with other protesters, take a walk around, and shop the food stalls. This was life; the protest became such a daily routine that spectators in front of TV did not forget to update what happened every day: the quintessential Arendtian banality of evil. In Lacan’s own words, “you fulfill the role of helots of this regime. You don’t know what that means either? The regime is putting you on play. It says, ‘Look at them enjoying!’” (The Seminar of

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middle class is taken as the sample in order to highlight a new structure of jouissance which most analyses do not adequately account for and which is specific to the global age and distinct from easily recognizable types of motivation, such as indignation, vested interests, or hatred either due to jealousy or agitprop.

12 Up to March 2009, the former First Family has been indicted for several crimes such as money laundering, corruption, and forgery. Nonetheless, whatever the result of the trial will be does not affect the present analysis, nor do new findings; the structure of the event had been determined on account of the generation of its unconscious truth in the guise of symptomatic acts.
Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 208). The point is that the regime should refer to, instead of Chen Shui-bian’s government, the globalizing $S_2$ of governmentality.

On the other hand, the protesters were appealing to the failed master signifier to tell them how to desire, to restitute their mode of enjoyment which was seriously perturbed by the global flow of drives. What they were discontented with was not the setback or stasis of economy, for a lot of them belonged to the well-off bourgeoisie: the protest has been correctly defined as one of the middle class. In a word, they were complaining about the over-efficiency of the global, capitalist machine or about the disorder of libidinal economy. It is here that we see why Lacan says, “the master’s discourse finds its reason from the hysteric’s discourse” (Autres écrits 445). That is, what the protesters wanted, as shown by the hysteric’s desire, was “a master” (see Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 129, 207): the hysteric is saying, “I want a man who knows how to make love” (204) but does not know so much about my enjoyment as to meddle with it, as the division between the two terms at the lower line of the hysteric’s discourse indicates (129). In other words, the protesters were calling for a master who was able to cover the wound and institute appearance and did not want to know anything about jouissance so that their unconscious apparatus of enjoyment could keep on functioning. And this is exactly why the handsome appearance of the 2008 elected president, Ma Ying-jeou, could meet the exigency of the subject’s desire to desire, to evade the impossible question.

During the presidential run, severe interrogations on Ma’s national loyalty and other ethical or personal matters were unable to touch him, for enjoyment was not (but) the point in his case. It did not matter whether he had a green card (the US Permanent Residence card) or that he, too, was involved in fraudulent defrayment. The point is that his silence or feigned ignorance about the enjoyment of KMT when he was its chairman (2005~2007) and about that of Taipei City Government when he was the mayor (1998~2006) functioned to veil the truth of enjoyment and the impossibility. In this sense, Xing Yun, a Buddhist leader in Taiwan, was absolutely right when he responded to the questioning of Ma’s potency with the

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13 Here, as elsewhere in this essay, “potency” denotes competence and resoluteness; however, since the father’s potency bears on how he relates to jouissance, it necessarily or structurally carries sexual connotations. Furthermore, the father’s potency runs counter to his symbolic competence, for, as Freud indicates in Totem and Taboo, the over-potency of the primal father threatens the sons’ relation to jouissance (see Freud, Totem and Taboo 141-43). His efficacy or competence is asserted only after he becomes impotent, i.e., murdered or castrated in the sense that the absence of direct, absolute immersion in jouissance secures a distance toward the real and thus makes viable both the subject’s enjoyment and the socio-symbolic network.
remark: what was vital was not “potency” but virtue, i.e., distance from the source of evil to which a monk must be definitely extremely sensitive. What was desired of Ma was exactly his impotence to meddle with enjoyment.\textsuperscript{14} That is to say, on account of its connection with the exposure of enjoyment, “shame” could be taken as the most befitting and revealing sentiment in the event. At the end of \textit{Seminar XVII}, after delineating the obscene power of the university discourse, Lacan takes up the concept of shame and defines it as “the hole from which the master signifier arises” (\textit{The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII} 189). Miller has pointed out the connection between shame and “dignity” of the master signifier (26-27): “Making ashamed is an effort to reinstate the agency of the master signifier” (23). Thus, it is understandable why the red protest took shame as its slogan because the movement was addressing $S_1$, which was eclipsed. What remained to be explained is why a lot of DPP supporters were ashamed to express their espousal of the party. Following Lacan, we can say that their shame had very little to do with the truth of political corruption; thus, they felt justified to ask why KMT’s corruption and embezzlement of people’s or the government’s properties could be endured, but the DPP government was not forgiven for the exigent measures it took to use the bursary in order to carry out secret diplomatic missions. The above discussion indicates that the cause of their unconscious shame was predicated upon their support of a government which disturbed people’s mode of secret enjoyment and endangered the master signifier: “this shame is justified by the fact that you do not die of shame, that is, by your maintaining with all your force a discourse of the perverted psychoanalytic account might explain why, during the presidential campaign, the attack on Ma’s effeminacy was destined to fail, for the subjects desired precisely an impotent father or master signifier. For an elaborate Lacanian analysis of the impotent Other’s appeal to the subject, see Copjec’s “The Unvermögender Other: Hysteria and Democracy in America” (141-61) in which she takes Ronald Reagan as an example.\textsuperscript{14} Not long after Ma’s inauguration, there appeared warnings about the return of Martial Law, another name for the “state of exception” (Agamben, \textit{State of Exception} 4); psychoanalysis should be able to trace the mechanism of enjoyment involved. It is telling that since being sworn in, Ma has consistently avoided making comments on various events involving enjoyment, most notably, Chen Shui-bian’s case. Obviously, he endeavors to keep himself ($S_1$) detached from knowledge of enjoyment ($S_2$). Maintaining the master’s state of exception requires that the source of enjoyment be circumscribed, a state of affairs exemplified by Chen Shui-bian’s being taken into custody in a detention center for several months up to July 2009. Even more telling are some “cleansing” measures taken by the Ma government: to name just two, first, the polemical police actions in dispersing protesters from the streets when Chen Yunlin (陳雲林), the Chinese envoy in charge of affairs across the Taiwan Strait, visited Taiwan, and, second, the enforcement of the smoke-control act intended to create a clean, healthy “Victorian” public space free from enjoyment.
What is waiting to be exacted from those bourgeois subjects who have pushed the master signifier up to the stage is the sense of guilt, for they have been forced to love the primal father. To put it bluntly, what the protesters wanted is castration. In Seminar XVII, Lacan tries to explain why, in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, Freud would present the father rather than the Oedipal mother as the object of the very first “emotional tie” (Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego 105), i.e., of primary identification, that is, why the father “is the one who deserves to be loved” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 88). He first criticizes Freud’s theory of Oedipus complex as “unusable” (99) and as “being Freud’s dream” (117; see also Grigg 2006). Then, he explicates why, for Freud, the primal father has to exist or why he has to be a real father: he or, more exactly, his death “guards jouissance” or “keeps it in reserve” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 123). Based on this observation, Lacan states that “there beyond the Oedipus myth we recognize an operator, a structural operator, which is called the real father—with . . . this property that in the name of a paradigm, it is also the promotion, at the heart of the Freudian system, of what the father of the real is” (123). In a word, “the real father is the agent of castration”; he “carries out the work of the master agency” (124, 126). What Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian have not known ultimately comes down to this: people would love the father if he castrates them. And it is because Ma seemed to fulfill this structural function that Chiang Kai-shek, the tyrannical primal father or “father of the real,” now undergoes a “promotion” and is turned lovable, as the newly designed cute dolls of him show. And this also explains why, in terms of their dolls, Chiang Kai-shek is more lovable than his son Chiang Ching-kuo (1910-1988) who is in fact a much more democratic father figure, one who was significantly more sympathetic toward the Taiwanese people. In other words, to submit to the master’s discourse, the subject has to love

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15 While being named as “fathers” or masters in this essay, all these leaders belong to different types, as there are different fathers in Lacan (see Evans 61-63). Though it is sometimes not advisable to sketch a simplified theoretical picture, to do so with regard to the “fathers” may add to the clarity of this essay. The first thing to note is that the master is not necessarily a master able to sustain the benevolent master signifier or paternal function; he might well be a dictator, the primal father, as in the case of Chiang Kai-shek. Though not without disputes, Chiang Ching-kuo, in contrast, has been remembered as a benevolent father-leader by a lot of people belonging to different ethnic groups; he had undeniably contributed to Taiwan’s economic development and social stability. In his late years, he managed to enlist into the power center native Taiwanese, including Lee Teng-hui who became his vice president in 1984 and succeeded to presidency after Chiang’s death in 1988. As Chiang Kai-shek’s son, Chiang Ching-kuo must have experienced the
the object of hate, and according to Freud, this would engender the sense of guilt (see Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* 124-25), which appears to be the most befitting sentiment if love is symptomatically attached to the violence and brutalities Chiang Kai-shek had committed against Taiwan. In this vein, Taiwan might turn out to be divided between shame and guilt, and the impossibility would remain impossible and unwritten, unless, perhaps, there is a different cut.

In *Seminar XVII*, Lacan announces that “the other side of psychoanalysis is the very thing that I am putting forward this year under the title of master’s discourse” (87). But at the beginning of *Seminar XVIII*, he stresses that “the master’s discourse is not the other side of psychoanalysis, it is where the proper torsion of, I will say, the discourse of psychoanalysis is demonstrated”; the two in fact have to be envisaged as the two sides of a “double inscription” or of a Möbius band (*Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVIII* 9). In another place, Lacan further specifies this structure:

[A] double inscription . . . does not etch into the same side of the parchment when it comes from the printing plate of truth and when it comes from that of knowledge.

threat from his father, and thus decided to castrate himself, i.e., to distance himself from enjoyment, and initiated democratization by a more satisfying distribution of power. In this sense, he is the son proper, dedicated to carry out the paternal function. Identified as a usurper, Lee Teng-hui somehow intended to appropriate the master’s (KMT’s) enjoyment and thus threatened its sons’ inherited right to enjoy. In Taiwan, while all the three leaders are generally identified as fathers, Ma Ying-jeou and Chen Shui-bian are taken as sons to these fathers. For his attempt to imitate Chiang Ching-kuo and to inherit his legacy, Ma is usually taken as his most filial son-leader. But if Chiang was at a right time, Ma is not. At his best, Ma is an anachronism; when “globalization” has disrupted the stability of representation, the attempt to restitute the traditional master signifier is self-defeating and self-deceptive. It is here that the late Lacan proves insightful: at the time when symbolic representation cannot hold, symptom has to be reevaluated in terms of its capability not just to cut but to hold up life. And in contrast to Ma, Chen Shui-bian, hailed as “the Son of Taiwan,” is timely in this globalizing age in that he brings to the surface enjoyment and combines it with knowledge, the Taiwanese know-how of production. But this time, the slaves’ product, the surplus *jouissance*, no longer serves the masters but is consigned to the subject thanks to the knowledge of global calculation and accumulation: the subject’s lack is conquered because “[s]urplus value combines with capital—not a problem, they are homogeneous, we are in the field of values” (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII* 177). In light of this “globalization,” Chen proves to be unfilial, for he endeavors to direct his quest on the father’s, Lee Teng-hui’s, “truth” and thus threatens to derail him, i.e., to make his father status, the traditional S₁, impossible. In short, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the relation of the father or master to *jouissance* determines his type and the discourse or social link he initiates, and it is in reference to this relation that this essay expounds the “vicissitudes” of the fathers of Taiwan.
The fact that these inscriptions commingle could have been simply accounted for by topology, there being at hand’s reach a surface in which front and back are situated so as to join up at all points. (Écrits 734)

In other words, the band should be taken as running from the upper left of the schema of master’s discourse to the lower right; consequently, the mode of enjoyment, the product of S₁, is precisely the place where the analyst should act upon. Indeed, Lacan defines the analyst’s discourse as “nothing other than the logic of action” (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVIII 61). Agamben has already highlighted the sovereign and the abject, that is, in our case, the master and the analyst qua refuse, as residing in a “zone of indistinction” (Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life 9). Therefore, the whole question centers around what the analyst has to do in order to cut the complicity between the Other and jouissance (see also Voruz 114) which this essay has invoked at the beginning via the coupling between Mao Zedong and Lu Xun. In order to locate the cut, we have to go back to them.

Mao’s alleged answer to the question “What if Lu Xun were still alive?” in a sense also reveals the revolutionary fate or division of the modern subject, which Lu must have been exceptionally aware of: either he has nothing to say apropos of the new situation, that is, consigning himself to disappearing into it, or he has to be a historical refuse. Instead of the vel of alienation, the division here, which is, more exactly, coincidence in negativity, should be taken as what happens to the subject qua, in Lu’s own self-definition in his “Writing after The Grave,” historical “intermediary” “in the process of change” or “in the chain of evolution” (Lu, Luxun quanji v 1, 286; see also Wang 133-94). What is singularly distinct about Lu is that he insistently sees himself as an anti-Hegelian “owl” or “evil bird at the dusk” (Lu Luxun quanji v 1, 284; see also Wang 113). In himself, he sees the existence of the ineradicable evil of the Chinese national character and inverts the sadistic drive toward himself so that its vicissitudes are completed in him who is at one and the same time its subject and object (Yang 26-27). That is, on the one hand, Lu sees himself as having nothing to say about, or nothing to do with, “the coming of light,” while, on the other, he defines his resistance as “nothing but meddling with darkness” (Lu, Luxun quanji v 11, 79).16 Jameson’s reading of Lu Xun has already

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16 For an analysis of how, in engaging in “self-dissection” or “reflexive examination,” Lu Xun’s narrator-observer unsettles an external, realist position and assumes an insider one, see Anderson (76-92).
highlighted that “psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms” (72). In this vein, what Lu arrives at in this place is precisely the import of the Lacanian-Žižekian politics of jouissance, i.e., the psychoanalytic “real” politics: “The intrusion into the political can only be made by recognizing that the only discourse there is, and not just analytic discourse, is the discourse of jouissance” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 78). This is what the Fathers of Taiwan do not know, especially in terms of their attempts to make changes. In other words, if change is to be envisioned, jouissance, the obscene dark underside of discourse, should be the place for a truly “revolutionary” act (176), that is, through returning to the same old place rather than moving forward. And this can be taken as the significance of Freud’s act of making a “perfect likeness” between the past and future in order to attain a “new life.” In Lu’s case, true revolution has to deal with what Lacan shouted at the students when he was giving a speech at Vincennes in 1969, a time when the May Revolution was exerting its repercussions: “always, the revolutionary aspiration has only a single possible outcome—of ending up as the master’s discourse. . . . What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one” (207). That is, if true revolution defined here as an impossible event is to be possible and if the subject is to be disengaged from the master, he has to induce in himself a cut on the link between jouissance and knowledge so that his little piece of being, the a, would begin a new life thanks to the writing of the impossible. To go back to Freud’s account on the paradox of the ghosts in whom “annihilation” and “new life” coincide, it is the “blood,” the red flesh qua the underside of the symbolic texture, which has to be divested so that future rather than compulsory repetition of the past is possible and that “there can emerge another style of master signifier” (Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 176) in the sense that the analyst’s discourse is severed from the position of the analyst’s discourse is severed from S1 in the lower left of the schema.

The point hinges on Lacan’s insistence on the position of the analyst which has to be the place of “impossibility . . . insofar as the analyst puts himself in the position of representing the cause of desire” (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII 176). If analysis must not be turned into a university discourse and if the analyst needs to let himself be cut from the underlying knowledge of jouissance, he has to disengage himself and be disengaged by the analysand from the position of

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17 Jameson claims that “in the third-world situation the intellectual is always in one way or another a political intellectual” (74). Basically, in terms of China, this essay concurs with him. But his analysis of Lu Xun remains incomplete in that he does not adequately demonstrate how Lu’s variation of his “subjective” libidinal investment disrupts the intellectual’s, or the writer’s, relation to the “political” determination specific to China or the third world.
“the subject supposed to know.” That is, if the analysand is to separate his jouissance, now embodied in the analyst by dint of transference, from the unconscious knowledge presumed to exist also in the analyst, the analyst has to write his non-knowledge into his discourse: “The famous non-knowledge for which people mock us is only dear to his heart because, for him, he knows nothing” (186). Lacan at the end of Seminar XVII puts forward the concept of “the strike of culture” (179) to illustrate how this cut or writing of the impossible works. This strike as cut is what he tried to accomplish in the journal Scilicet: instead of sanctioning the signing of the author’s name as master signifier, “it should be a place in which unsigned things should be written” (191). In Seminar XVIII, Lacan again explicates this act of unsigning and puts it as a “cut” (coupure) disengaging the subject from the position of a exploited and governed by the university discourse: what the unsigning is meant to achieve is “the subtraction of that presence, of that space where you are squeezed” (11, 13). In terms of writing, it would mean that “no discourse would be from an author” (12). What is involved here consists in two structural, if not temporal, moments: a cut and the writing of the cut. To illustrate the cut, Lu Xun resorts to the scene of Christ’s crucifixion:

Suddenly, a bone-cracking, excruciating pain penetrated into the marrow; he then was absorbed in great ecstasy and great mercy.  
There was a tremor inside his belly, the painful tremor of mercy and curse.  
Then it was darkness everywhere.  
“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”  
God forsook him; he was at last a “son of man.”  
(Luxun sanwenxuan 110)

It is here that we see the topological chiasmus between Chen Shui-bian’s cut and Lu’s: in the former, the external cut severs the surface of writing and fortifies the power of the impossible real under the grip of knowledge, whereas, in the latter, the “tremor” qua internal cut uncouples the subject from the obscene knowledge of jouissance and maintains the existence of the surface—the cut happens within, i.e., inside the belly. Yang Tze is keenly perceptive to describe Lu as a “human-hater” (Yang 16-23) but more or less misses the point when he opposes Lu’s “Gospel of Hate” to Christ’s teaching (29-30). In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus claims: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (14.26;
also qtd. in Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute* 120). The uncoupling brought about by this “hate-loving” instead of superegoic “loving-hate” is well formulated by Žižek:

Does not Christianity, however, go even a step further and enjoin us not only to hate our parents on behalf of the beloved one, but, in a dialectical inversion of love for one’s enemy, “‘to hate the beloved out of love and in love’? The proper way to understand this is to ask a precise question: what dimension in the beloved other am I enjoined to hate? Let us take the hatred towards one’s father in Oedipal family tension: as we see again and again, this hatred disappears, and a new understanding for the father emerges, the moment the son, in effect, gets rid of the shadow of paternal authority—in short, it disappears the moment the son perceives his father no longer as the embodiment of his socio-symbolic function, but as a vulnerable subject ‘unplugged’ from it. It is in this sense that, in true love, I ‘hate the beloved out of love’: I ‘hate’ the dimension of his inscription into the socio-symbolic structure. . . . (*The Fragile Absolute* 126)

What Lu Xun hates ultimately amounts to nothing but this complicity between the Other and *jouissance*, and his writing might well be the very kind of love that “enjoins us to ‘unplug’ from the organic community into which we were born” (121; italic emphasis added). To put it otherwise, in terms of the nature of love as bound up with hate, Lu’s hating love is tantamount to hating hate.
As stated earlier, the institution of representation implies a symmetrical connection between symbol and symptom, so there is a “false hole” between them (Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII* 23). This false hole can be conceptualized through its equivalent in the master’s discourse: “the gap of the subject’s division between $S_1$ and $S_2$” (Morel 108). It is when the master’s discourse still works, i.e., when the subject still receives representation by the symbolic, that the structure is maintained in a symmetrical but very “unstable” balance: it may go awry or even disintegrate at any moment. “The praxis of analysis . . . concerns ‘realizing’ this false hole by transforming it into a true hole,” which can be done by “passing a straight line into it [i.e., the false hole]” (108). In other words, analysis consists in intervening in this structure by creating something, a cut, in order to modify the structure or to hold different registers together when they are about to fall apart: “the tao of the psychoanalyst, if we follow Lacan’s indications, is to manage to be able to hold oneself in one’s place, there where there was a rupture, there where there was a fracture, . . . transforming this into . . . a possibility of making what does not hold together hold together, the real and sense, doing and speaking” (Laurent 50-51).

It is on account of this act of linking in cutting that Lu’s cut should be understood. From the figure of the true hole obtained by a penetrating straight line, we can see that the cutting line actually binds the two connected rings by running into the central hole from under one end and out of it from above the other. For this function of the linking cut to be effective, Lacan adds, the line has to be “infinite” so that the rings would not slip out of either end (*Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII* 24). But if we imagine the two ends of the line as joining with each other, we will have a circle that, while still effecting a “true hole,” is also infinite. In this sense, a straight line is “the parent of a circle” (25). This linking cut is what the second structural moment, the writing of the cut, achieves, for the circle writes the impossible infinite line into the central realm. By turning the circle, we can see that no part of the cutting circle is not within the realm, but the circle is “not wholly” in it. That is to say, the absolute straight line embodying the masculine principle would only make the
writing of the impossible impossible. That is why the impossible question of Lu Xun
is impossible precisely because he is regarded as a giant, a man, instead of a
“vanishing mediator” (see Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative* 33-35), a refuse or a
woman. Only by means of feminine writing taken in Lacan’s sense as divested of
heads and as writing/lettering the litter can we imagine the writing of the impossible
as an acephalous writing, for “contingency” is strictly defined as “stops not being
written” (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality* 94); that is,
the impossible suddenly stops its impossibility of being written. In this vein, if “what
if” is the formula of the unwritten impossible, uncoupling and the linking cut which
can effectuate the writing of the impossible should be formulated as “I can do
with-out.” When Lu sees the existence of evil in himself, he might also have harbored
the same understanding: “Life’s but [this] walking shadow [in me], a poor player /
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more: it is a tale /
Told by an idiot[-ic jouissance], full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing [which is
nothing but me]” (*Macbeth* 5.5). However, in actively “doing with-out,” the subject
cuts into the core of this life-knot, separates knowledge from jouissance, and writes
“out” the obscene supplement of the Other that determines him; in this act, the subject
actually writes himself out and simultaneously writes out the Other (see also Žižek,
*The Parallax View* 382-85). In one word, if history or future (“the coming of light”)
can do without the Lu-subject, it is because he can do without history by dint of
ousting this evil complicitous law in him. Most importantly, the subject holds himself
in his place which is also the place for the impossible writing, the event, and new life.
That is to say, this “doing with-out” qua acephalous writing cannot be equated with
merely “doing without” but also with “not doing without” which maintains the
possibility of doing with while without the Other: the parallaxic nature of the linking
cut.18 And Lu Xun’s term for this writing is exactly the “writing after the grave.”

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18 Here, Lu’s “doing with-out” seems to differ from Bartleby’s “I would prefer not to” as
formulated by Žižek. Lu’s refusal corresponds to Bartleby’s in that the latter is “not’ not to do it’;
his refusal is not so much the refusal of a determinate content as, rather, the formal gesture of
refusal as such. . . . [It is an act of Versagung, not a symbolic act]: “it is a signifier-turned-object,
a signifier reduced to an inert stain that stands for the collapse of the symbolic order” (*The
Parallax View* 384-85). However, Lu’s linking cut does not stop at collapsing or “realizing” the
symbolic; it also holds in itself the possibility of creating signifiers from the real (see Barnard
179-181). But, actually, Lu’s parallax writing also ties in with Žižek’s concern with the emergence
of the New, and might better explain the subject-parallax he advances: by decoupling himself
from the obscene law of enjoyment, the subject institutes in every One the fundamental negativity
which, however, sustains and “forever reverberates” in any newly constructed order (see Žižek,
*The Parallax View* 382).
The paradox of the Lu question is at last to be revealed by Shakespeare, the quintessential writer of the modern event. By cutting himself from the sinful cycle, Hamlet outs himself and the whole enjoyment-entangled generation out of the scene of history at the end of the play. What disappears via the subject’s disappearance is exactly the old society or its evil structure. In this sense, Hamlet has fulfilled his function as a vanishing mediator, the instrument of the event. Therefore, we would not ask what if Hamlet were alive because the question is completely forgotten rather than repressed. Thus, what we should ask apropos of the Lu question is why Lu could not die or why he dies so hard. That is, why do we not let him die, or what forces us not to let him die, to the extent that we keep asking “what if Lu Xun were still alive”? In my personal correspondence with Nagahori Yuzo, whose review of the Lu question (Nagahori) partly inspired this essay, I learned from him that the Lu question has to do with the Japanese dream of modernity. Similarly, the controversy incited by the question reemerging in the twenty-first-century China implies that it also has to do with the Chinese dream of modernity. This instance of the compulsion to repeat testifies to the fact that we refuse to let Lu Xun die or vanish out of the scene of history and that the impossible has not been written. This haunting memory of the question reveals that we are still looking for the “Father of Democracy,” and what Lee Teng-hui would not know is that there is only the refuse of democracy. Did Chen Shui-bian ever have a chance? Probably, when, during the Red Shirt Army protest, some people suggested that he exchange his deposition for depriving KMT of its illicit properties procured through plundering and fraudulence. But the chance was predicated on the condition that he delivered up the “pound of flesh,” his or DPP’s complicity with the structure of jouissance, in exchange for cutting the real support of the Other. Or the chance was there only when he still occupied the place of people’s object of desire. Only in that situation could he, like the analyst, “touch the ‘mechanic’ of the drive or modify its trajectory”—in a word, symptom—by inserting a cut, in the way that the analyst does with his weapon of language, so as to “make the signifier resonate in the body” (Morel 107), like the tremor resonating inside Lu’s belly. Probably, through this self-cut, the red color of the pulsating flesh in front of the cracked master signifier represented by the Presidential Hall would disperse on its own. Probably.  

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19 This is the most this essay can say about Chen Shui-bian’s chance. Partly as an analysis of Taiwan’s socio-political dilemma, this essay, on the level of statement, may be taken as an attempt to sway the fathers of Taiwan to act on jouissance as one possible way out. But, first of all, as in clinical analysis, the leader/analyst on his side may contribute to the success of the act only on condition that the subject initiates the cut on his own part. Secondly and crucially, on the level of enunciation, stipulating what the fathers should do would fall into the pitfall of the hysterics
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desire for a master to solve the subject’s dilemma of desire. In the case of Chen Shui-bian, that would amount to demanding from him that he sacrifice himself for the sons in order to save the nation. That is, this essay cannot (but) appeal to the fathers to act like an analyst—the “not but” (see Lacan, *Écrits* 677) maybe marks the impossible unconscious desire of this essay and perhaps also of the nation.


Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology.

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