

## I. Ha Jin and the Sense of Subalternity

This thesis represents the marginalized people as subalterns. Subaltern studies in Ha Jin's collection of stories *Under the red Flag* is the main concern of the research as the thinkers like Spivak, Gramsci propounded the perspective of subaltern. In their theoretical perspectives they clearly make the definitions and interpretation of what subalternity is. Therefore, subaltern is an ideological tool to prove the hitherto historical deprivations of their own history and identity of those oppressed, marginalized, discriminated and brutally manipulated by authoritative communist regime during the time of Cultural Revolution.

Subaltern identifies and describes the man, the woman, and the social group who is socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the world. In describing "history told from below", the term subaltern derived from the cultural hegemony work of Antonio Gramsci. It identified the social groups who are excluded from a society's established structures for political representation, the means by which people have a voice in their society. Among Chinese American writers, Ha Jin is one of the most prolific and has garnered a number of top literary prizes. He has received the Flannery O'Connor Award for *Under the Red Flag* in 1997, the 1999 National Book Award for Fiction and the 2000 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction with the novel *Waiting*. Ha Jin has so far written about Chinese life in China from the 1950s to the early 1980s.

According to Spivak, in order to be heard and known, the oppressed subaltern must adopt Western ways of knowing, of thought, reasoning, and language. The subaltern's abandonment of his and her culturally customary ways is necessary in many post-colonial situations. The subordinated man and woman can only be heard by his

oppressors if he or she speaks the language of the oppressor; thus, intellectual and cultural filters of conformity muddle the true voice of the subaltern. Advocating the marginality and inferiority of Chinese people caused by the authoritative communist regime relatively inferiorize the Chinese people pushing them into ghetto that paves the way for the implication of subaltern.

It is probable that Ha Jin draws on some literary efforts with claims for the free will of female sexuality by rehabilitating Pan Jinlian, a notoriously lustful woman figure who appears in both *Water Marsh*, a heroic epic which Frank Chin praises highly, and *Jin Pin Mei*, a classic Chinese erotica. Similarities between Mu Ying and Pan Jinlian are apparent. Pan Jinlian defies her landlord's coercion, choosing to marry a dwarf peddler rather than being his concubine. She then falls in love with and has an affair with a handsome local squire. In order to stay together, the lovers plot the murder of her dwarf husband. In *Water Marsh*, she is killed by Wu Song who takes revenge for his brother's death, while in *Jin Pin Mei*, she continues to live a lascivious life with her new husband. Although sharing the same idealistic longing for real love with a real man, Pan Jinlian in the rewriting is the Chinese counterpart of Anna Karenina and Hester Prynne, while Mu Yin, in my view, is not. The fact that Mu Ying has relationships with different men without knowing who they are and charges them twenty yuan for the pleasure proves that her affairs are motivated by mere libidinal and mercenary drive more than the assertion and fulfillment of her sexuality. Moreover, Mu Yin explicitly equates manhood with potency by contemptuously disclosing in public that her husband is no good in bed, which, if not directly, leads to Meng Su's death.

Ha Jin explains that transcending time to some degree in this sense is a literary technique that aims to see past it to what is essential to the characters, it evacuates the

historical context which largely occasions such a story. On the other hand, Ha Jin also transcends time in the sense that he transposes some time-specific signs of Chinese history, politics and culture. Jeffrey C Kinkley, among a number of book reviewers, believes that Ha Jin creates “authentic socialist rural and urban backdrops, then lets phantoms from the past intrude more sparingly and with greater shock effect” (11).

Gayatri Spivak has the most theoretical look at the subaltern, and her work is still the root text for a discussion of the subaltern, in her article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* The subaltern does not have a voice. Indeed, subaltern has a voice, they are no longer the subaltern. They become other, merely subaltern.

Another prolific post-colonial writer, Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that

within the notion of the modern Indian state, citizenship requires certain subject-positions that many rural, illiterate Indians do not have. What is often taken for granted in any idea of the citizen is a number of things, including the more positivists understanding of history. For the Indian peasant, however, their mytho-historical conception is so different, that they are not, in fact, citizens of India. Their worldviews are different enough that they are elided by the state apparatus. Other examples of the subaltern are indigenous groups or lower-caste, lower-class women who are marginalized in such a way as to not have a voice (23)

Giving focus on the construction of the subaltern and the category of the native, well known scholar, Rey Chow argues part of the problem of attempting to find the voice of the subaltern is that there may be some incommensurability between the subaltern and the rescuer. It may be the case that the very act of recovering the voice of

the subaltern can be the act of ‘translating’ an ‘image’ that imperialism can make sense of. She says:

As we challenge a dominant discourse by ‘resurrecting’ the victimized voice/self of the native within our readings... this process, in which *we* become visible, also neutralizes the untranslatability of the the native’s experience the hasty supply of original ‘contexts’ and ‘specificities’ easily become complicitous with the dominant discourse (332).

The subaltern always stands in an ambiguous relation to power- subordinate to it but never fully consenting to its rule, never adopting the dominant point of view or vocabulary as expressive of its own identity. ‘One must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogenous’” (Spivak 2194). Assimilation is required for survival, especially after colonization. It is not always voluntary, but it is necessary to get somewhere in life. Despite all efforts to colonize a place, and eradicate the culture, some things remain the same, such as dowry. In “A Site of Subaltern Articulation: The Ecstatic Female Body in the Contemporary Bangladeshi Novels of Taslima Nasrin,” Khatun explains a cultural practice that degrades women:

The system of dowry encompassing all classes very effectively sums up the different degrees of subalternity devaluing all women. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980 outlaws dowry. But the custom has survived with extraordinary might and resilience. Although nobody calls it dowry, a bride's status in the in-law family is directly related to what she brings from the natal family in terms of money and goods. The value of dowry may vary across classes ranging from a watch and a bicycle to a

television and refrigerator, to a car. Despite the dowry Prohibition Act, dowry has been the cause of gender violence (1).

Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak*, *Deconstructing Historiography* talks about how people oppressed by colonialism are not allowed a voice because they do not have importance to be heard. Women act out in acts of violence to make a point, and no one understands or does anything to change the way the subaltern is being treated today. Women are objectified by society and men, and because of their culture it is considered acceptable.

Women, the oppressed, the uneducated, the poor, and the subaltern group as a whole are treated unfairly, and need to be heard. They have stories that should not be considered trivial just because of their gender or socioeconomic status. These people need to be heard, but are they heard, can the subaltern speak? The answer is no, the subaltern cannot speak. “If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak 2203). According to Spivak, subaltern women are subjected to oppression more than subaltern men. They do not have proper representation, and therefore, are not able to voice their opinions or share their stories. No one is aware of the daily struggles they face; subaltern women are ghosts in society. “I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting, in order precisely to be more effective in the long run” (2207).

It is not only colonialism that silences the subaltern, but also those of us who are watching the oppression taking place around the world, and not doing anything about it. A poor woman is subject to extreme subalternization since her lack of education severely limits her access to power; male violence is also relatively more common

among the poor. A middle class woman, on the other hand, might enjoy above-subsistence life style and in some cases might be highly educated and decently employed. However, in a patriarchal society, she is vulnerable to subalternity in terms of property, marriage, and divorce laws of which an expanded account will be given later.

Despite the social class a woman is in, the treatment she is subjected to what dictates whether she is a subaltern or not. However, Ranajit Guha seems to refute the social groups and elements included in representing the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those who have been described as the elite. In Spivak's notes, it seems that Guha is saying that people who are elite are not subaltern.

Different critics have given numerous criticisms to the book. Given focus on moral deterioration with the keen sense of survivor, Amit Chaudhuri states:

Unfortunately, these sorts of political exigencies seem awfully familiar, especially when used in the service of well-worn themes. And Ha Jin's narrative style isn't much of a help. As plain and stiffly serviceable as a Mao uniform, it lacks expressive elegance and leaves the reader wishing for grater psychological richness for colors other than red (14).

Similarly, Wenxin Li focusing on the richness of plain style and giving importance to the traditional cultural society, argues that "while Ha Jin's narrative style appears "plain and unassuming", his work is "always captivating and rewarding". "Working in the tradition of the classic Chinese story." In same manner Li adds, "He strongly prefers a well-spun yarn to elaborate stylistic experimentation" (23).

Besides these personal criticisms of the critics Official Website of the Flannery O'Connor Award highlights diasporic condition of the writer giving him the highest honor for portraying the loss and moral deterioration of the Chinese people and society. In the introduction to *Under the Red Flag* on the official website of Flannery O'Connor Award, it says: "Ha Jin, who was raised in China and emigrated to United State after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, writes about loss and moral deterioration with keen sense of a survivor"(1). Out limiting the spatio-temporal framework politics Kirkus Reviews emphasizes on the humanity working in its full strength beyond particular society or specific times. It says "Ha Jin vividly evokes the renegade humanity that runs counter to officially 'correct' behavior...unusual and distinctive work"(2).

In the same way, Judges' Citation highlights presentation of the then Communist China in the text of Ha Jin. The very Citation pins the point that

The seemingly contradiction between roots in and removal from the third world native land, to the western audience, confers on Ha Jin an aura of credibility in giving a better guide of Communist China-'a world and a people we desperately need to know. Chinese poet Ha Jin, winner of the latest Flannery O'Connor Award, works out the conflicts between tradition and constraint that animate his second collection. (6)

The twelve stories in *Under the Red Flag* take place during China's Cultural Revolution. Ha Jin, who was raised in China and emigrated to the United States after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, writes about loss and moral deterioration with the keen sense of a survivor. His stories examine life in the bleak rural town of Dismount Fort, where the men and women are full of passion and certainty but blinded

by their limited visions as they grapple with honor and shame, manhood and death, infidelity and repression.

Short stories of Ha Jin set in a provincial town in north-eastern China during and right after the Cultural Revolution. With an unmistakable reference to Communist China by its characteristic red flag, the title suggests that the book is about the lives of Chinese under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Ha Jin assumes a double voice, speaking both in the voice of the subaltern and for them in his own voice in the space of third world intellectuals in the Chinese diaspora. With about thirty years' experience, from 1956 to 1985, in China, Ha Jin seems unimpeachable to any western reader in the authenticity of his representative role and voice. Interestingly, while Ha Jin's claim for his representativeness and the credibility of his authenticity largely relies on his roots in China, he expresses his detachment from the native land: "China is distant. I don't know what contemporary Chinese life is like now I'm not attached to it anymore" (16). The seemingly contradiction between roots in and removal from the third world native land, to the western audience, confers on Ha Jin an aura of credibility in giving a better guide of Communist China" (34).

However, Ha Jin as a Chinese native in America acting as a spokesman for the subaltern left behind in China reminds Gayatri Spivak's precaution about the validity of the vicarious voice. In *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*, Spivak identifies the problem of the investigating subject assuming the subaltern voice. She holds that the ascription of a voice to the subaltern cannot be trusted as authentically representing the true voice of the subaltern.



Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag* deals with the predicaments of inferiors, neglected, and backwards. With an unmistakable reference to Communist China by its characteristic red flag, the title suggests that the book is about the lives of Chinese under the leadership of the Communist Party. Apart from the Award for the whole collection, *In Broad Daylight* was also the winner of the Kenyon Review Prize for Fiction in 1993 as well as the Pushcart Prize in 1995.

In these stories the chaotic Cultural Revolution is raging even in the small Dismount Fort: Angry Red Guards parade an alleged prostitute through the streets before a brutal struggle session, and anyone's hard-won position in society could be lost at any time. A man must decide whether to honor his mother's last wish to be buried or cremate her and show a good example for the New China. The political consequences of his decision could be ruinous in a state where the Communist Party controls everything – from jobs to food rations. Not unlike in American cities, the kids of Dismount Fort select gang leaders – their “emperors” – and protect their play areas and neighborhoods with sticks and knives. Meanwhile a woman just coming of age must choose between two men who are both in line for a good job with the Party but she must make her decision before the Communists make theirs, and live with it. A very superstitious man moves step-by-step toward killing the teenaged son who he believes is soaking up his money and his strength. Every story in this collection has a character to sympathize with, to cry for, or to learn from.

The subaltern is a person or a group of people that have been excluded from society. They do not have a voice, and are lost in the world due to assimilation and colonialism. The subaltern is a broad category that attempts to characterize individuals whose voices and actions have been muted, drastically reinterpreted, lost, or

consciously swept away. Implicit in the term the questions of power, agency, and representation are related to the subaltern's ability to define or represent them in the public arena in any way. Ranjit Guha argues that

In different historical contexts, the subaltern has been understood as synonymous with women, children, colonial subjects, the poor, the illiterate, the proletariat, or the religious or ethnic minority. Today's subaltern scholars, however, do not intend for the term to be reduced to any single oppressed group or minority. Though the study of subalternity has been central for generations of Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial scholars, though they may not have used that terminology, it should not be assumed that Subaltern Studies is necessarily in conspiracy with any of these intellectual schools (56).

Spivak's question does not drive toward yet another totalizing theory of human history but rather seeks to dig into specific sections and ask questions of how such totalizing theories, even the most well-intentioned, succumb to representing the subaltern as objects rather than conscious subjects of their own history. One important project of this latest wave of Subaltern Studies, beginning with Spivak and continuing on through Ranajit Guha, Amitav Ghosh, Partha Chatterjee, and others, has been to resurrect specific stories of individuals whose lives mean so little to history that their stories have been all but lost. Another project worth noting has been to track resistance, even to the smallest degree, in attempt to represent the subaltern as an active agent in her/his own history.

As another similar example of reclaiming a document for history, Ranajit Guha examines the story of a young Bengali widow named Chandra who became pregnant

during an affair with her brother-in-law, who in turn demanded that Chandra's family perform an abortion. Chandra tragically died during the operation, and the sister who performed the abortion was subsequently arrested for murder. Their depositions were archived and anthologized at Viswabharati University. Studying these documents, Guha noted that the actual facts of Chandra's unfortunate death had been interpreted in a way that stripped the characters involved of their own agency in telling the story as it happened:

the narrative in the document violates the actual sequence of what happened in order to conform to the logic of a legal intervention which made death into a murder, a caring sister into a murderess, all the octants in this tragedy into defendants, and what they said in a state of grief into depositions. (Gupal 140)

There was no conscious attempt on the part of the police or individuals in the judicial system to deviously reinterpret Chandra's family members as co-conspirators in a crime. To the contrary, the power imbalance was implicit in the system. The oppressive re-writing of the subaltern was not violent and chaotic but orderly and methodical. Guha's methodology of reading the voice of the subaltern out of obscure, limited documents is similar to the project of novelist Amitav Ghosh. Ghosh's novel "In an Antique Land" was inspired by a few brief notes in the letters of a twelfth-century Middle Eastern Jewish trader about an Indian indentured servant named Ben Yiju. Because the voice-consciousness of Ben Yiju could only be read out of the fragmentary evidence from obscure texts, "In an Antique Land" was written as a fictional reconstructed history of the Indian servant, told from the perspective of a researcher in twentieth-century Egypt (Gupal 150). While Ghosh's novel doesn't solve

the problem of representation it does make a strong case that fiction is an appropriate medium, sometimes the only available medium, for doing the difficult work of telling the stories of the subaltern in a non-oppressive, self-critical manner.

## **II. Subaltern Consciousness in *Under the Red Flag***

The research preserves the representation of the submissive subalterns in Ha Jin's *Under the Red Flag* which contains twelve stories that show the concern of subalternity. Subalternity demonstrates the submission of the subaltern people. In these well acclaimed stories Ha Jin vividly depicts the harsh and bitter realities of marginalized, oppressed, tortured and dominated Chinese people. How those discriminated people tortured by so called powerful and dictator communist regime have been dramatized in the stories. As subaltern concerns for such people Ha Jin becomes the advocator of subalterns in his stories. Powerless have been deprived of history by powerful. These twelve stories contain the undercurrent of cynicism in the face of authority that is common to communist military societies. As Gramsci said those people who have medium social and political can be subaltern if they are denied what they need as equal as powerful.

Ha Jin, who was raised in China and emigrated to the United States after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, writes about loss and moral deterioration with the keen sense of a survivor. His stories examine life in the bleak rural town of Dismount Fort, where the men and women are full of passion and certainty but blinded by their limited vision as they grapple with honor and shame, manhood and death, infidelity and repression.

*Under the Red Flag* including twelve stories with an unmistakable reference to Communist China by its characteristic red flag, the title suggests that the book is about

the lives of Chinese under the leadership of the Communist Party. Ha Jin's award-winning first short story collection examines the constraints and oppressive measures the communist government in China inflicts on the people. The stories cover themes and issues that are touching, shocking, heartrending, and immediate in their depiction of simple people living under the constant surveillance of a government that seeks to dictate their every move and thought. Jin makes clear the ideology of communist China: if it's not good for the state, it must be eliminated or punished. Conscience is strictly a creation of the state, not of individual freedom. The souls of the characters are often reduced to pawns of the state. People are seen as malleable and changeable. They can be either reformed or sacrificed if need be. For example, in "Winds and Clouds Over a Funeral", a grandmother's wish not to be cremated is rebuffed by the commune leaders who make her death a political issue and force her son to submit to their demands to save his citizen's status. In every one of the stories, Ha Jin does not back away from problems of morality and identity, and the oftentimes violent and rebellious reactions they cause under a repressive government and a society that does not embrace the idea of selfhood.

Ha Jin's short story "In Broad Daylight" has received as much publicity as possible in contemporary American literary circle. Set in the 1960s China, the time when the Great Cultural Revolution was catching on like fire throughout the country, the story depicts, from a teenager's perspective, a public denunciation of a woman named Mu Ying and the unexpected rough death of her husband. With a focus on different voices exemplified on figures like the narrator, the Red Guards, the town people, the denounced and husband, Ha Jin attempts to bring the voices of subaltern into the limelight.

In “In Broad Daylight” the narrator as well as observer nicknamed White Cat, is a teenager who lives in the town with his crippled grandmother. The story begins at the moment when Bare Hips, his near living on the same street, hopped in informing him the news that Mu Ying, the Old Whore, had been caught, and urging him to join quickly the rare event in the town. The narrator put down his bowl, which was almost empty, and rushed to the inner room for his clothes. Under the urging of Bare Hips, White Cat finally gave up his searching for the shoes and, ignoring his grandmother’s shouting behind him, ran out barefooted. From these descriptions, it is easy to see that for the teenagers in the town like the narrator and his companion, the event serves only as a scene of bustle and excitement. They feel no worry nor doubt, but excitement and fun at hand.

When adults burst out laughing at Mu’s assertion of her husband’s impotence, the teenagers appeared to be puzzled. The dialogue between them shows this point clearly:

“What’s that? What’s so funny?” Big Shrimp asked Bare Hips.

“You didn’t get it?” Bare Hips said impatiently.

“You don’t know anything about what happens between a man and a woman. It means that whenever she doesn’t want him to come close to her he comes. Bad timing.”

“It doesn’t sound like that,” I said. (8)

Obviously, Bare Hips does not know any more than Big Shrimp though his impatient tone tries to conceal this ignorance. Ignorant as he is, Bare Hips makes so bold as to cry at Mu, “Shameless Old Whore!” (4) Such tags are given to suppressed people to make them submissive. According to sense of subaltern, such tags- bearers are the true

subalterns. Imperceptibly, the innocent children are acting the role of accomplice in the public denunciation against Mu. Their thoughts and behaviors manifest the influence they have taken from their parents. In this sense, the innocent teenagers have degenerated from lovely angels to dreadful demons.

In Ha Jin's story, the rough death of Meng Su, the husband, constitutes an unscheduled event, which brings the narrator and his companions to the violence of the adult world. The public denunciation of Mu was no longer a thrilling scene, but something that touched them to their souls, evoking their introspection or maybe disillusion about the world. Bare Hips's vomiting is a strong signal, indicating the shocking effect that the violence may have brought to him. After the shocking experience, they are no longer innocent adolescences, but adults struggling at the "threshold of maturity and understanding" (Marcus 223).

Chatman points out that the author has no voice, which only empowers others to speak; and that the author is a silent source of information, which "instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices" (149). By these arguments, Chatman not only states the differentiation between powerful and powerless, but also recognizes the characters' relation to subalterns.

In contrast to the innocent teenagers, the voice of the grandmother of White Cat represents a view popular among the old people in the town. When she was confirmed that Mu would be paraded that afternoon, her response was "Good, good! ... They should burn the bitch on Heaven Lamp like they did in the old days" (Jin 1). Though a female herself, Grandma supports the revolutionary action of the Red Guards without any reservation. She feels no sympathy for the suffering of Mu because in her eyes, Mu is a bad woman and she deserves more severe punishment.

This point of view is typical of Chinese old women, who are subjected with teachings like be Obedience and preserve Virtues. For them, women, as the dependency of men, are not allowed to have their own rights and thoughts. A woman's chastity is valued more than her life, and a husband's kindness is considered as a sort of favor that requires a wife to return with a whole life's gratitude, loyalty and slavery service. In the case of Mu Ying, a woman who lost her virginity in an accident, it is quite natural that, rather than being sympathized; she would be condemned and underrated. Now that her husband accepted her, she should have returned his good-heartedness with her loyalty, instead of bringing him shame with her illicit affairs. No wonder that the older generation like Grandmother would clap and cheer at Mu's suffering and not condemn those who brought trouble to her.

However, Ha Jin's self positioning as a Chinese native in America acting as a spokesman for the subaltern left behind in China reminds us of Gayatri Spivak's precaution about the validity of the vicarious voice. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Spivak identifies the problem of the investigating subject assuming the subaltern voice, and develops the argument further in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She holds that the ascription of a voice to the subaltern cannot be trusted as authentically representing the true voice of the subaltern.

As a unique existence of the times, the Red Guards-agent of the power holder, an organization that was initiated among young students all over the country to protect the red socialist power during the Cultural Revolution, play an important role in the story. It is the Red Guards who caught Mu at home and organized the session of public denunciation. The author writes, "God knew how they came to know there was a bad



woman in our town” (4). This actually constitutes a suspension in response to the acts of upper hands people.

In the atmosphere of hailing all revolution enthusiasm, from publicly denouncing teachers at school to intervening various trifling matters in the neighborhood, the Red Guards was entrusted an unlimited power to take whatever “revolutionary action” that was necessary in their eyes. Assuming to be holders of truth and justice, they shouldered spontaneously the great responsibility for removing any thoughts and practices that might harm the socialist cause. Naturally, they would not mind traveling seventy kilometers to come and denounce Mu, the demon and the snake in the town, whom they did not know at all.

As a group of juveniles that had been brainwashed by the extremely Left trend of thought, the Red Guards never realized that their dehumanizing means of punishment like planting paper hat on people’s head, cutting their hairs, or parading them against their will, were flagrant violation of their human rights, and that they were against the law of protecting people’s basic rights of living. They were just afraid that what they did was not revolutionary enough.

The most noticeable point in the story is the wording of the Red Guards towards Mu, “the criminal,” (23) and the three visitors of her house. They asked her first, “Why do you seduce men and paralyze their revolutionary will with your bourgeois poison?” (Jin 7). Obviously, the word seduce is connotative of vicious intention and spiteful behavior while bourgeois is a sensitive label to which nobody would like to have any relation during the Cultural Revolution. Contrarily, the frequenters of her house become people with revolutionary will. Ironically, the Red Guard asked the question solemnly, without any awareness of the ideological color in his wording. Mu is further depicted as

the parasite that sucked blood out of a revolutionary officer and the snake that swallowed the money of a peasant; whereas the peasant who visited her house became the object of sympathy a poor peasant who worked with his sow for a whole year and got a litter of piglets. That money is the salt and oil money for his family, but this snake swallowed the money in one gulp (Jin 12).

Nobody in the town takes the trouble to think why Mu is the sole culprit that is condemned. When Mu confessed that the third man that visited her house was a Red Guard, who led the propaganda team that passed there last month, the crowd broke into laughter. This might be the response to the sentence above, “God knew how they came to know there was a bad woman in our town” (Jin 4). As readers, we cannot say for sure, but it is not any wrong to guess that the Red Guard, who had been beaten black and blue, may have plotted behind the scenes such a revolutionary action against Mu. Deploying this incident, the implied author launched a satire on the Red Guards as a whole, who assumed to be removers of bourgeois practices, while some of them were doing something against which they are denouncing. More importantly, they were taking advantage of the revolution to revenge their personal enemies. The implied author seems to highlight that the Red Guards are human beings that may err, not saints or sagas that they assume to be. Naturally, their motives, values and practices are questionable.

Nevertheless, the leader of the Red Guards is skillful and experienced, who distracted the public attention with the following remarks:

We all have heard the crime Mu Ying committed. She lured one of our officers and one of our peasants into the evil waters, and she beat a Red Guard black and blue. Shall we let her go home

without punishment or shall we teach her an unforgettable lesson so that she won't do it again? (Jin 14)

With his words, the denunciation was directed again at Mu; and meanwhile, the introspection incurred by the episode of the Red Guard was interrupted successfully.

As a central focus of the public denunciation, Mu appeared to be rather calm when she was caught at home. She neither protested nor said a word, but followed the Red Guards quietly. In her eyes, these Red Guards were only a group of children. She did not expect that the joint forces of the Red Guards and the revolutionary masses in the town would be tremendous enough to put her in destruction; more importantly, she did not think that her behavior had violated any rule or law. When her husband appealed to the Red Guards, she stared at him without a word, and a faint smile passed the corners of her mouth. In her eyes, the behavior of her impotent husband is pedantic and ridiculous. When the Red Guard asked her why she "seduced men and paralyze their revolutionary will," (23) she responded rather calmly with a rhetorical question, "I've never invited any man to my home, have I?" (23) When several women hissed in the crowd, she even tried to persuade them by citing her own experience:

Sisters," she spoke aloud. "All right, it was wrong to sleep with them. But you all know what it feels like when you want a man, don't you? Don't you once in a while have that feeling in your bones?" Contemptuously, she looked at the few withered middle-aged women standing in the front row, then closed her eyes. "Oh, you want that real man to have you in his arms and let him touch every part of your body. For that man alone you want to blossom into a woman, a real woman. (8)

If we do not doubt whether a woman living in the town at the end of the 1960s can speak in such an undisguised way, we may take her speech as a declaration of women liberation movement. In this sense, Mu is already a feminist with a strong awareness of subject. She is not only courageous to ignore the social norms, but also brave in breaking the patriarchal tradition.

The speech also provides a footnote for Mu's calmness in front of the Red Guards and the gathering crowd. According to her own logic, she has done nothing wrong. Compared to the "withered middle-aged women" standing in front of her, she even feels proud of her face that is "white and healthy like fresh milk" (Jin 4).

Imaginably, as a victim of the gang rape, she must have experienced a hard time of being treated with disdain. Instead of being hit to death by the accident, she has walked out of the shadow of the concept of chastity, and began to enjoy the pleasure of the flesh as well as economic benefits brought about by men, the invader of her virginity. The bitter time she has experienced has actually hardened her heart and paved the way for her further self-liberation, both physically and spiritually.

While she was indulged in her speech, a heavy blow from a stout young fellow silenced her. This is a clear signal that her liberation declaration cannot be accepted. At the bottom of their hearts, they may agree with her, but, to defend their dignity and the so-called moral principles, they have to conceal their real thoughts and appear to be resisting it strongly. When Bare Hips's mother pointed out that she had her own man and that she should not have others' men and pocket their money, Mu glanced at her husband and smirked, "I have my own man?" She straightened up and said, "My man is nothing. He's no good, I mean in bed. He always comes before I feel anything" (Jin 8). Viewed from a modern perspective, Mu has good reason to divorce her husband, yet in

her times, to divorce was almost impossible, and more importantly, a divorced woman would be condemned too. If she could not bear the life without sexual love, she could only keep illicit sexual relations with other men.

When a large bottle of ink smashed on Mu's head, she broke into swearing and blubbing. In order to get rid of her "counter-revolutionary airs," the Red Guards decided to cut her hair. Despite her appealing, her premed hair became the sacrifice of the Red Guard's scissor. After these sufferings, she became another person, from appearance to air.

At the end of the denunciation, Mu was asked to parade the street, with a huge paper hat planted on her head and a big placard between the cloth shoes lying against her chest. On the placard, there are the following words: "I am a Broken Shoe. My Crime Deserves Death" (14).

They put a gong in her hands and ordered her to strike it when she announced the words written on the inner side of the gong. Up to this point, her pride and beauty has disappeared completely in front of the strong, collective will of the Red Guards and the revolutionary masses. She has lost her normal rights as a human being in the society. Anybody can call her name, hit her, or throw stone at her. She becomes again a victim of the collective action under the name of revolution.

The story ends with a plain sentence: "She was lying at the bus stop, alone" (16). With this terse sentence, the implied author casts again his sympathetic eyes on the unfortunate woman. The author seems to be murmuring that, after all, she is only a tool, a sexual tool for the group of Russian soldiers, the visitors of her home, and an outlet of the Red Guards' revolutionary enthusiasm and revolutionary action. As the target of public denunciation, she is the greatest victim of the event: she has lost her beauty as

well as her dignity as a normal person in the society; and most importantly, she has lost forever her husband, who once offered her a shelter from the wind and rain outside, a material home whose existence was often ignored by her.

Meng Su, the husband, is a dwarf peddler, who sells bean jelly in summer and sugarcoated haws in winter. He is such a kind and humble man that he calls the Red Guard, “Comrade Red Guards” and “sister” (54) though they are much younger than him. In order to persuade the Red Guards to set his wife free, he is ready to kneel down. Compared to the calmness of his wife and her shouting abuse when someone put ink on her head, Meng looks more like a woman than a man. This is very likely a manifestation of his position at home.

Though some people in the town consider him as a born cuckold, Grandma, for some reason, seemed to respect him, believing him to be a good-hearted man. Though in the eyes of his wife, Meng is not a qualified good husband, he himself assumes in public his role as a husband, a master. When he begged the Red Guards to set her free, he said, “It’s all my fault. I haven’t disciplined her well” (Jin 5). The word discipline is connotative of a sort of power and authority. It seems that he is appealing for his children who have made mistakes at school.

Yet when his wife revealed in front of the crowd his shortcomings, his pride and dignity as a man and as a husband were smashed into pieces. The gossip of the town people and the public denunciation of his wife had brought him embarrassment, but the key factor leading to his unexpected death was his wife’s public disclosure of his scar. As the story goes, Mu glanced at her husband and smirked before she announced the shocking secret; yet a few minutes later, when she turned her eyes to the spot where her husband had been standing, he was no longer there. Obviously, Meng followed the

crowd to the site of denunciation though he failed to get his wife free, and hearing his wife's condemnation, he left quietly.

Like the image of God in the Bible, who was born to deliver those from an abyss of misery, but was perished to death, Meng spared no effort to save his wife, providing her a comforting shelter, but was pushed to death at the end. Did he commit suicide out of the feeling of shame or the feeling of guilt towards his wife? Whatever the reason is, he must have been overcome by the overwhelming despair. Through his corpse with so many openings, the author seems to tell people the various injuries he had suffered. His opening mouth seems to be relating his feeling of helpless in front of the social upheaval and his vast sadness as a social outcast. Like his body, his heart had been crushed to pieces too. The figure that he looked like a large piece of fresh meat on the counter in the butcher's indicates his tragic life that was bullied and humiliated by people around him, including his wife.

The text mentions several times his tearful eyes. When he answered the Red Guards' question, his small eyes were tearful; when the town people teased him by urging the Red Guards to take him too, he looked scared, sobbing quietly; when his wife stared at him contemptuously, he winced under her stare; and finally he had spoken with tears in his eyes to a few persons he had run into on his way to the station. A symptom of weakness though, tears in his eyes also relate the various grievances and humiliations he had suffered and the feeling of helpless and despair that nobody understood. However, his rough death under the running train seems to be asserting his bravery, his resistance and his indictment.

The first time it appears as an echo to highlight the farcical nature of the public denunciation. The young driver, who just toots to attract attention of young women

beneath the track, is analogous to the Red Guards, who takes the public denunciation as a political game. The second time, however, with the word screamed being used, serves as a warning of the coming catastrophe. The text writes, “It was strange, because the drivers of the four o’clock train were a bunch of old men who seldom blew the horn” (53). As it turns out later, this is a signal of Meng’s violent death. Just as his defense for Mu and his pleading for leniency are weak and unheard, the signal of his death stirs no emotional disturbance among the masses. As the only person in the story who defends Mu and pleads for releasing her, Meng represents, for the implied author, compassion and humanity, and his death “dramatizes the loss of compassion and humanity” at least in the world of Mu Ying (Zhou 160).

The town people voluntarily joining the public denunciation can be considered as a collective voice, though an inconsistent one. When the Red Guards caught Mu and decided to parade her, the town people, including Grandmother, all felt a sensation of pleasure because some people have done what they wanted to do but failed to do due to various misgivings. They joined the session of denunciation not out of the revolutionary enthusiasm that is shared by the Red Guards, but out of the revengeful mentality of watching for fun.

In the eyes of the town people, Mu is different. She wore a sky-blue dress while the other women “were always in jackets and pants suitable for honest work” (45). Even the small boys like the narrator can perceive her beauty. She is perhaps the best looking woman of her age in town. Though in her fifties, she didn’t have a single gray hair; she was a little plump, but because of her long legs and arms she appeared rather queenly. While most of the women had sallow faces, hers looked white and healthy like fresh milk.



To some extent, it is her beauty that makes her stand out among the masses and leads to her suffering. When Meng appealed to the Red Guards, a man in the crowd said aloud, “If you share the bed with her, why can’t you share the street?” (25). Hearing the words, many of the grown-ups laughed, and someone even suggested the Red Guards, “Take him, take him too” (36). Nobody paid attention to the poor man’s sobbing drowned out by the wanton laughter. Maybe because of their belief that Meng was “a born cuckold, and that he had no pride of a man or a husband, nobody would like to support him. On the contrary, they took the advantage of his bad fortune to make fun of him. Through the behavior of these town people, the implied author seems to show readers the wicked side of human beings. Facing other people’s suffering, they would rather stand by and watch than stretch out their hand.

After the session of denunciation began, a middle-aged man cried after the Red Guard, with both hands in the air, “Down with Old Bitch Mu Ying!” (23). The text explains that: this man was “an active revolutionary in the commune” (27). Through the image of this man, the implied author seems to tell us that the public denunciation of Mu have provided a chance for those enthusiastic revolutionaries to show themselves off.

According to the general thrust of Spivak’s argument, her final assertion that the subaltern cannot speak denies the gendered subaltern the ability to represent herself and achieve voice and agency. Spivak’s contention that the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read also precludes the possibility of others re-presenting the subaltern woman save as a blank or empty space. Hence the limited task Spivak envisions for the female intellectual is to merely foreground the space or absence that according to Spivak, is the subaltern woman in discourse—Colonial, Western or Native Elite. This presentation of

the gendered subaltern as completely inaccessible, and more crucially, incapable of agency or resistance leads to a problematic conclusion that colonialism in collusion with patriarchy affected a complete erasure of the subaltern woman.

When Mu was indulged in her long speech about women's sexual desire, a stout young fellow struck her on the side with a fist like a sledgehammer. Yet questions like "How many men have you slept with these years?" (65) are raised. Through these completely opposite behaviors, the implied author seems to condemn the hypocrisy of the town people. On the one hand, they openly sneer at Mu's confession about her own sexual desires; yet on the other hand, they are eager to know the details of Mu's copulation with different men, and command her to confess the specifics. It is a display of typical voyeurism:

The conflict between what they openly despised and what they secretly yearn for conveys the town people's distorted and suppressed desires, which have to be channeled through their verbal and physical abuse of other people who materialized their own suppressed desires. (Zhou 158-59).

In addition, during the session, a farmer even shouted, "Sing us a tune, sis?" (11). who is on earth more obscene, the denounced or the revolutionary masses? It is very likely that they just lack the opportunity or perhaps the money to do the thing that they are publicly denouncing against. Besides, it is hard to say clearly whether there are some people among the "revolutionary masses" who once yearned for the body of Mu but was rejected by her. The public denunciation for them is a golden chance to revenge their rejected and unsatisfied desire.

“In Broad Daylight” is about Mu Ying, nicknamed Old Whore. She has affairs with different men and is publicly denounced and paraded before the community by the Red Guards who travel from another city and happen to know her bad name. Her dwarf peddler husband Meng Su tries to rescue her from the public humiliation, only to be humiliated himself by the Red Guards, the spectators and his wife as well. Finally, he is found crushed by a train, and Mu Ying lies alone at bus stop, deranged. Written from the point view of a naïve boy, nicknamed White Cat, Ha Jin intends to portray through untainted and authentic lens a Chinese woman with a self-awakening feminist consciousness who stands up for her sexuality. Turning point number one in the story is when the questioning of Mu Ying has started and has to confess her crimes of adultery with three other men. She then comes to the point where she explains the feeling of wanting a man holding her with his strong arms very detailed. After Mu Ying describes this feeling of sexual need, a woman who is the mother of Bare Hips speaks from the front of the crowd and says “You have your own man, who doesn’t lack an arm or a leg. It’s wrong to have others’ men and more wrong to pocket their money” (Jin 156). And on this moment Mu Ying is still recovering from a punch of the Red Guards and still replies with a smirk on her face looking down on her husband “I have my own man?” (Jin 156). “My man is nothing. He is no good, I mean in bed. He always comes before I feel anything” (156).

*Man-to-be*, another splendid story of Ha Jin’s *Under the Red Flag*, undoubtedly indicates the trace of subaltern consciousness. Subaltern people unconsciously want vigorous revolt against torture, dominations by their physical gestures. But their sense of revolt is subdued with the presence of power. They want to express their hatred and agitation towards oppressor, dictators but they cannot speak and fight against it as

Spivak points out that Subaltern cannot speak in her world famous essay *Can Subaltern Speak?* With their unbearable agitation, hatred they try to display their dissatisfaction through their physical, emotional gestures. But it is useless because power always dominates powerless. No one supports them in their difficulties. As brutal domination of power holders upon subalterns crosses the limitations, they try their best to revolt against it though they cannot be successful as:

He was surprised by the fierce eyes but couldn't help observing them. Somehow her eyes were changing – the hatred and the fear where fading, and beneath their blurred surfaces loomed a kind of beauty and sadness that was bottomless. Nan started to fantasize, thinking of Soo Yan and other pretty girls in the village.

Unconsciously he bent down and intended to kiss that pale face, which turned aside and spilled the tears. (28)

The soldier of “A Man-to-Be”, who holds back from taking part in a gang-rape, not only finds himself defensive about his own manliness but is eventually shunned by his fiancé's family, who doubt his ability to father children, whereas the hooligan boys who terrorize their fellow classmates in “Emperor” discover that The narrator, in the story, *Man-to-be*, named Hao Nan, engaged to be married with a pretty girl Soo Yan involves in a gang rape. On the auspicious occasion of engagement he organizes a grand party in which his uncle Sang attends. He had a beautiful wife but he was not loving to her because she was considered as a bad woman having illegal affairs many men. She was called as a fox spirit; always ready to seduce a man. The husband, narrator's uncle, invites five boys to have sex with his wife to teach her a lesson of life as punishment of having unfair relation with other men. All the boys being excited to have sex with a

woman without charge become ready and three out of them fulfill their hunger of sex adequately but the two cannot do that because they are inexperienced and are taken as an impotent. Hao, who is going to marry Soo, feels desperate and wretched himself so he breaks of his engagement with Soo due to the fear of lack of virility. Subalterns are inhumanely behaved. The extreme violence upon a helpless woman by her cruel and merciless husband has been demonstrated as:

Prostitution was banned in the New China, but there were always women selling their flesh on the sly... Even after she lost consciousness they went on mounting her. She died the next day. Then the police came and arrested the man. Later three of them were sentence to death... Shang said "I invite you boys to share my wife, free of charge, but none of you come. Chickens!" (45)

The woman who is raped by a gang of youths tortured a lot represents the pathetic conditions of helpless and desperate women in Chinese society. This kind of operation shares the norms of subaltern realities. Subaltern people are always under the claws of powerful people. They have to bear whatever other imposes upon them. They don't have freedom, their own life, the desires and the wishes that are always overlooked. They cannot fulfill their desires and wishes and compelled to live as per others desires and wishes. Ha Jin through such stories has demonstrated the ground bitter realities and the actual condition of poor, marginalized, dominated, oppressed people in terms of economy, politics, culture, social status and gender. As everybody has a desire in their life; only powerful people can get it but powerless and marginalized people are always deprived of such things. It is a dream for them but a reality for

powerful. This kind of discriminatory notion can be felt in this story so it is a real manifestation of the subalterns' pangs and pains as:

“Let me go. You’re hurting me,” she begged, and turned to the others, her round eyes flashing with fear. “You stinking skunk, always have an itch in your count!” Sang bellowed. “I want you to have it enough today, as a present for the Spring Festival. See, I’ve five men for you here.

Every one of them is strong as a bull.” His head tilted to the militia (25).

As Wayne Booth points out, “most of the characters are, in one or another way, in difficult situation, while seeming merely to act out their roles” (152). In this story, Uncle actually plays the role of a dominated man. As a common man living in the town, he certainly has experienced more things than the young, as makes his a suitable candidate to act as the suppressed person relating the past story of Sen, tortured man and his wife. It was Sen, the man who became husband later, who sneaked there, carried his back, and looked after her for a whole winter till she recovered. This story shows that the predicament of poor childless couple who are bound to live under the storm of suppressor- the communist government.

Booth points out that powerless people are seldom labeled so explicitly as God in Job, they often speak with an authority as sure as God’s (152). According to Booth’s perspective, the powerless often acts as the agent of the powerful and the voice of powerful represents the authorial voice. In this sense, the view of Uncle can be interpreted as part of the norm of the powerless. The voice of Uncle represents the real voice of subalterns. According to Post Colonial thinker, Gyatri Spivak the voice of the powerless is never heard and their presence and agency is greatly undervalued. (34) In

this story, the characters' voices are not responded though they are genuine and sensible by authority because subalterns are always submissive.

In the same story, *Man to Be*, Ha Jin continues the castration theme; the impotent husband invites five young men to gang rape his wife who has an affair. During the gang raping, one of the young man permanently loses his potency because of an emotional surge for the woman thwarted by a sudden burst of dogs' barking.

A peek behind the Bamboo Curtain, where Chinese poet Ha Jin, winner of the latest Flannery O'Connor Award, works out the conflicts between tradition and constraint that animate his second collection (*Ocean of Words*, 1996). Ha Jin, who writes in English, is a Chinese veteran of the People's Liberation Army and, although he doesn't address political dissidence directly in his work, the 12 stories here all contain that undercurrent of cynicism in the face of authority that's common to military societies. Thus, the soldier of "A Man-to-Be", who holds back from taking part in a gang-rape, not only finds himself defensive about his own manliness but is eventually shunned by his fiancé's family, who doubt his ability to father children, whereas the hooligan boys who terrorize their fellow classmates in *Emperor* discover that their popularity and status increase ever higher with each new atrocity they perpetrate. The abiding tensions of peasant life prove themselves again and again to be deeper than the Party's ideal of the New Communist Man, as in "New Arrival" where a childless couple refuses to adopt a beloved young boy entrusted to their care because of their fear of bad luck or "Fortune" in which an old man's faith in fortune-telling remains so absolute that he becomes willfully deluded rather than admit that his life has been ruined. Honor remains a powerful primordial force as well, best illustrated in the predicament of the dutiful Party member who disobeys his dying mother's wish for a traditional funeral and

is promptly denounced by his comrades for filial impiety; or in the public degradation of a prostitute, which, however harrowing, remains a less vivid spectacle than the degradation of her accusers. Splendidly fluid and clear: Ha Jin has managed to make an utterly alien world seem as familiar as an old friend.

In the introduction to *Under the Red Flag* on the official website of the Flannery O'Connor Award, it says: "Ha Jin, who was raised in China and emigrated to the United States after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, writes about loss and moral deterioration with the keen sense of a survivor." (19) The implication is that he is a politically dissident writer, though Ha Jin denied that assumption in an interview, saying he was more of an immigrant writer. Nevertheless, this association does betray the preconception of not a small number of readers, probably including prize judges in reading works by Chinese diaspora writers, which in turn influences their reading of representation in the works. He also admitted that he would not have an audience if he wrote in Chinese because other exiled writers had already established their names for a Chinese readership.

The practical reason for living in America and looking for an audience, though understandable, inevitably colors the nature of the work: the exclusive topic of an ambiguous contemporary China for mainstream white publishers and readers. Ostensible as Ha Jin's intended audience are, he claims in the preface to his poetry collection *Between Silences: A Voice from China* that:

As a fortunate one I speak for those fortunate people who suffered, endured or perished at the bottom of life and who created the history and at the same time were fooled or ruined by it. They make voice as loud as



fountain of Himalayas but are totally discarded and unheard. They should talk and should be talked about (43).

He assumes a double voice, speaking both in the voice of the subaltern and for them in his own voice in the space of third world intellectuals in the Chinese diaspora. With about thirty years' experience, from 1956 to 1985, in China, Ha Jin seems unimpeachable to any western reader in the authenticity of his representative role and voice. Interestingly, while Ha Jin's claim for his representativeness and the credibility of his authenticity largely relies on his roots in China, he expresses his detachment from the native land: "China is distant. I don't know what contemporary Chinese life is like now I'm not attached to it anymore" (34). The seemingly contradiction between roots in and removal from the third world native land, to the western audience, confers on Ha Jin an aura of credibility in giving a better guide of Communist China "a world and a people we desperately need to know"(39).

However, Ha Jin's self positioning as a Chinese native in America acting as a spokesman for the subaltern left behind in China reminds us of Gayatri Spivak's precaution about the validity of the vicarious voice. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Spivak identifies the problem of the "investigating subject" assuming the subaltern voice, and develops the argument further in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She holds that the ascription of a voice to the subaltern cannot be trusted as authentically representing the true voice of the subaltern.

The authenticity derives largely from Ha Jin's transcending time, the result of which conforms to Western presumptions of what an authentic picture of China should be. Phantoms from the past appear as sayings about girls, fantasy about polygamy, and yet are most conspicuously materialized in Shuyu's bound feet which are the basic

reason for Lin's separation from her. However, it is highly unlikely that Shuyu is bound footed. She is born in 1936, and according to her own words, her parents have her feet bound at the age of seven, that is, in 1943, because her face is ugly and "its second chance of marry good," and essentially, "men are crazy about lotus feet in those days" (206).

However, the historical facts are that the Empress Dowager first issued a decree to abandon the practice in 1902 and it was officially outlawed in 1911. Besides, at that time, north-eastern China was under the occupation of the Japanese with a puppet emperor of the collapsed Qing Dynasty, Pu Yi. Under such circumstances, it is implausible that foot binding was still observed or that men were still vastly infatuated with bound feet. In addition, foot binding is mainly intended to confine women to home in order to preserve their chastity and facial beauty. A country girl like Shuyu was often deprived of such a "privilege" for the practical purpose that she could be a necessary help in the household as well as in the fields. In fact, Ha Jin gives it away when he describes Shuyu as a capable field hand, who grows crops and vegetables in their half-acre family plot five hundred yards west of the village. It is impossible for Shuyu with a pair of distorted 4-inch feet to teeter that far with farm tools, and work long and hard enough to secure a harvest. Shuyu's bound feet stand out as a marked sign in Ha Jin's portrayal of a stereotyped traditional Chinese woman. Practiced for the confinement of women and also for the erotic effect--a swaying walk, big buttocks and tight vagina, foot-binding as-signification has been going hand in hand with two tenacious, collective Orientalist beliefs--first in the primitiveness and patriarchy of traditional Chinese culture, then in the sensuality and exoticism of this culture.

Chinese women's (bound) feet are still much exploited in the western cultural fetishism and neo-Orientalism. Jung Chang, the author of *Wild Swans*, explains the process of foot binding in a recent interview in *The Sunday Times* that mothers had to take a large stone and crush their daughters' feet, which is a ridiculous and irresponsible fabrication. The front cover of both Chatto and Windus' *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* and Scribner's *American Knees* features a pair of fine-looking women's feet in traditional silk shoes. While in the former book, the little seamstress shows a small pretty foot which the author describes at only one point, the latter has no mention of so oriental and sensual looking a pair of feet at all. Bound feet, in this case, is not an innocent ruse of a writer. Likewise, the artistic license should not be accorded when Ha Jin transposes another historical specificity. Held in 1984 in the conference room of the hospital, Lin and Manna's wedding is officiated by Ming Chen, the director of the Political Department. The ceremonial part of the wedding is mostly composed of the tribute paid to the Party and Chairman Mao symbolized by banners and a portrait hung on a sidewall. The couples are asked to bow to the portrait and banners three times accompanied by the director's chanting. The solemnity of the ritual is well acknowledged by the couple who meticulously "keeps the tips of their middle fingers on the seams of their trousers" (46) and bow even lower for the second time, almost eighty degrees. The wedding guests, no less sincere and pious about the ritual, remain quiet and seem muted. The marriage is thus sanctified through the homage to the Party and Chairman Mao before Ming Chen can announce Lin and Manna's union as husband and wife.

When Ha Jin stood in the limelight of the prestigious National Book Award, his gratitude was all attributed to America, American people and the English language. The

subaltern Chinese who have nurtured his works are left in what he describes as the inscrutable dimness of limbo.

Although Jin is more concerned with the patterns made by small lives under new pressures, there are times when the broader picture comes to the fore. “It’s foolish to think you’re done for,” (67) the downtrodden hero of the title story is told by a friend. “Lots of people here are illegal aliens. They live a hard life but still can manage. In a couple of years there might be an amnesty that allows them to become legal immigrants” (76). To characters like this, immigration to a land of opportunity proves an occasion of loss as well as gain. They are ordinary people with modest expectations, modest even in what they notice and remember and imagine. This lack of color is reflected in Jin’s quiet, careful, restrained prose — prose whose absence of flourish can, at times, make it all the more eloquent.

Jin writes with a peculiar intensity and insight about money. His stories are filled with people who are emotionally disfigured because of suppression, oppression, domination and subalternization because they don’t have enough self respect or because they are desperate to get their self esteem, from one another or from an employer. He writes about money as if it were the opposite of love, and he manages to be unsettlingly precise and convincing in conveying what poverty feels like, what it does to relationships, to the way people not only experience but perceive their lives. He is at his best when he writes about what the struggle against penury and financial ruin can do to the soul. It precisely relates to the subalternization economically.

In another story, “Winds and Clouds over a Funeral”, a Communist leader disobeys his mother's last wish for burial to keep his good standing in the party, but his enemies bring him down for being a bad son.

The story "Winds and Clouds over a Funeral" highlights the dimension of subalternity. The protagonist, Shang, the Head of Commune, disobeys his mother's wish for burial to maintain his position in the party. Shang's mother is dying, and she pleads with her son to promise her that she will be buried in the ground. Shang finally assents, but he knows that "nowadays the government encouraged people to cremate the dead in order to preserve arable land" (78). He is aware of how the Communist Party stands on this issue, yet he allows his filial obligations to cloud his political judgment. When his mother dies, he begins preparations for the burial of his mother, buying a casket from the nearby Carpentry House. In the midst of these preparations, Huang Zhi (the vice-chairman of the commune) tells Ding about a Party meeting that he should attend, during which the burial of Ding's mother will be discussed.

Shang is the head of the commune, and he has a political faction within the commune that is in opposition to the group led by Secretary Yang, the Party chief in the commune. He comes to the meeting believing that Yang's faction will reject him leaving the mother's death ceremony undone. As an honest leader in the party Shang, tries to keep the promise he has made to his mother but he can't pursue the commitment because of the policy of Communist government, the agent of power. The communist government becomes the barrier to his promises. His mother wants to be buried rather than to be burnt down. She is very much spiritual and conservative. According to her culture burial is the salvation of life. But due to the changed policy of New China burial has been banned to protect the arable land. Shang tries his best but finally he fails to fulfill the wish of his mother and laments upon his wretched fate and helplessness. He feels sad and tragic because the most important thing in his life that he has to complete for his loving mother is not materialized. Therefore, common and backward people

have wish and desire according to their ritual and culture but that is a dream and a far cry. They are made cultureless, ritualless, and historyless though they are rich in these things. Their social, cultural, political, economic values are undervalued in one or another pretensions. They are totally hagemonized to act according to elites, so called high people. This clearly shows the unbearable agony of subaltern people who are always bound to follow whatever is ordered.

Death is death. When I am dead, everything will be over for me. Don't miss me. Don't think of me. Just go on with your life. But I've a wish I want to be buried after I am dead. I don't want to be burned. Don't take me to the cemetery. I don't want to go there. You don't have to buy me a coffin. Just put me in a wooden box, nail it tightly, and bury it deep in the earth. Remember, deep in the earth, so that no tractor can plow me out when it turns the soil. (45)

Subaltern wishes are vehemently denied and are forced to live in kennel where human least aspirations, ambitions and feelings are deliberately ignored. Thus, Subalterns are always losers without any war and power holders are always victories without loss. As subaltern expert Dr. Taralal Shrestha opines, "History is priceless, but it is cruel to the Subaltern groups and it doesn't mean that they don't have history but they're made historyless for ages" (11).

In *Under the Red Flag*, privacy is nonexistent and paranoia rules as neighbor turns against neighbor, husband turns against wife, state turns against individual, history turns against humanity. These stories display the earnestness and grandeur of human folly, and in a larger sense, true history of historyless. The hidden heart rendering realities of subalterns' during China's Cultural Revolution is captured in this strong

collection. Fear of public humiliation and punishment haunts these 12 tales of small-town political rivalries, marital despair, family clashes and the balance between new and ancient China. Through a series of troubling vignettes, many of which involve sadism, Ha Jin, as mediator of subaltern presents unique picture of a people struggling in a world in which matchmakers, fortune tellers, adulterers, humiliated, cuckolds, impotent, and so on exist with party officials and Red Guards. At the same time, Jin uses these simple stories to explore larger themes about human relationships and the effect of government on individual lives.

### III. Marginalization of Female

*Under the Red Flag* comprising the twelve stories has vivid depiction of the harsh and bitter realities of marginalized, oppressed, tortured and dominated Chinese people. Ha Jin has perfectly dramatized pathetic and miserable condition of people due to so called powerful dictatorial communist regime. In other words, they are precisely subalterns who can't live as they want.. Here in his stories Ha Jin becomes a real advocator of subaltern.

Characters like Mu, Meng Su in “Broad Daylight”, Hao, Soo, Suiling in “*Man to Be*”, Seng, Mother in “*Winds and Clouds over a Funeral*” etc. are real representatives of submissiveness and suppression. They have been deprived of their basic human rights, human feelings and emotions, wishes, desires, ambitions, culture, ritual fondness and their own history. By presenting such degraded characters, Ha Jin, actually mirrors the Chinese society and its people's pathetic and sympathetic condition. Ha Jin in the stories, has dramatized meticulously how they have been made void of their minimum Human Rights, sentiments and their dignified presence in the society by the dictatorial Communist Regime pushing them into the Ghettos in the name of revolution- Cultural Revolution. Thus, Ha Jin, world acclaimed Novelist and short story writer, becomes the open book and guide to the subaltern.

Ha Jin's collection of stories contain that undercurrent of cynicism in the face of authority that's common to military as well as Communist societies. Thus, the soldier of *A “Man-to-Be”*, who holds back from taking part in a gang-rape, not only finds himself defensive about his own manliness but is eventually shunned by his fiancée's family, who doubt his ability to father children, whereas the hooligan boys who terrorize their fellow classmates in “*Taking a Husband*” discover that their popularity and status increase ever



higher with each new atrocity they perpetrate. The abiding tensions of peasant life prove themselves again and again to be deeper than the Party's ideal of the New Communist Man, as in "New Arrival" where a childless couple refuses to adopt a beloved young boy entrusted to their care because of their fear of bad luck or "Winds and Clouds over a Funeral" in which an old woman's wish to be buried becomes willfully deluded due to the authoritative Communist Policy. Honor remains a powerful primordial force as well, best illustrated in the predicament of the dutiful Party member who disobeys his dying mother's wish for a traditional funeral and is promptly denounced by his comrades for filial impiety; or in the public degradation of a prostitute which, however harrowing, remains a less vivid spectacle than the degradation of her accusers.

Jin's *Under the Red Flag* is a book of short stories set in China during the Cultural Revolution. A unifying theme appears to concern how individuals negotiate between two worlds, the old and the new, and how these worlds come into conflict. Set in the small town of Dismount Fort or in surrounding rural villages, the stories are full of compelling action and wonderfully drawn characters: peasants, members of street gangs, village bureaucrats, military officials, and the occasional professional.

Guided by powerful emotions like sexual desire, shame, anger, jealousy and greed the characters act in big ways, and often violently. Hao's Uncle fetches five boys to have sex with his own wife who is supposed to be in relation with other men. Mu is paraded in the public for humiliation as a punishment to the adultery. There is gang violence, the destruction of a wedding feast by the local military, and the violence of crowds egged on by Red Guards attempting to purge the country of bourgeois demons.

There is immense violence done to the inferiority-driven people. The decision about whether to bury or cremate a loved one becomes fraught with political peril. Private

sexual relationships are treated as perversions and find their way into becoming village gossip in the name of the public good. Children are used as informants and as a means of punishing adults for their crimes.

Characters like Mu, Meng Su, In “In broad Daylight”, Hao, Soo, Suiling, in *Man to Be*, Shang, Mother etc are real representatives of submissive and suppressed people of close Chinese society that Ha Jin has explicitly exposed. They have been deprived of their own emotions, feelings, wishes, desires, ambitions, culture, ritual fondness, history etc. By presenting such characters in the stories Ha jin actually mirrors the Chinese society and its peoples’ conditions. They are always made historyless, rightless, cultureless and tortured, interiorized pushing into the ghettos by so called peoples’ communist regime in the name of reformation and revolution like Cultural Revolution. Thus, the writer Ha Jin, becomes the spokesman of subaltern people.

Subalternity in *Under the Red Flag* unfolds in terms of the voicing of the voiceless, race, ideology and class. It unearths the prevalent notion that subalterns aren’t presented as they are rather they are exaggerated in a demonic way essentially. In this sense, Ha Jin becomes the spokesperson of the Chinese subaltern through this text.

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