

**Exhibiting an imaginary past:
a case study of the Gallery of the
Scene of the Republican Period in
the Nanjing Museum**

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Abstract

In 2013, the re-opened Nanjing Museum added the Gallery of the Scene of the Republican Period (abbreviated as the Republican Gallery) to its permanent exhibition. This research attempts to explore the curatorial aim by examining the conceptualization of this exhibition hall. It suggests that the Republican Gallery has simplified the nature of Republican China and presented a selected, idealized Republican street view which the public is familiar with through mass media. By examining the Republican Gallery, the research expects to achieve a better understanding of the connection between memory and museums.

I. Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed a rising interest in Republican China in mainland China. Republican China can either be perceived as the Republican era in recent Chinese history from 1912 to 1949, or the regime, the Republic of China, also currently known as Taiwan. The phenomenon of the obsession with the Republican era is named "Republican fever (民国热)". Zhang and Weatherley define the phenomenon as "an increasing groundswell of popular support for the Republican era in mainland China" (Zhang & Weatherley, 2013, p. 278). They suggest that the Chinese government's loosened restrictions on discussing the legacy of the Republican era have led to this phenomenon. Their definition of the phenomenon as "support for the Republican era" may have exaggerated the nature of the Republican China fever, which, from my observation, is an expression of interest rather than support.

It is undeniable that Republican China has had an impressive influence on Chinese public life. For instance, the Chinese public has been complimentary in their opinion of education during the time of the Republican era. One post in December 2008 on Tianya BBS, one of the most influential Chinese online discussion forums, was named "Education in Republican China was always on a world-leading level (民国时期的中国教育一直走在世界的前沿¹)". Peking University Press editors selected essays from textbooks used in Republican China and published *Republican China Chinese Textbooks (民国语文)* in 2011. The book is highly recommended because textbooks in Republican China "were written by masters" "who held a great enthusiasm towards the nation and devoted it to the editing work (大师……怀抱对国家……巨大的热忱投入到……编写工作中)". These textbooks "did not employ any commercialism, but only the masters' strong care for the children (绝无当代社会华而不实的商业气息, 却满含着大师浓浓的温情)" (Hu, 2011, p. 1). Huang Junwei suggests that contemporary Chinese colleges and universities should learn from those built during Republican China, for the latter were more open-minded and had higher academic integrity (2012).

Although the obsession with Republican China has been popular in the past few years, no previous research has examined the production and presentation of Republican China narratives from the approach of memory studies. The aim of this research is to fill in this blank and to investigate how the image of Republican China is constructed and perceived by the visitors of the Republican Gallery in the Nanjing Museum. This chapter provides details about the research field. The following chapter introduces the theoretical and methodological frameworks employed during this research. Chapter iii examines the curatorial aim of the Republican Gallery. It suggests that the Republican Gallery aims to construct Nanjing's central status in popular narrative of Republican China. Chapter iv looks at the interactions between the visitors and the displays of the Republican Gallery from the approach of

¹ All the Chinese translations were done by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

memory constructions. Chapter v discusses the reasons of the Nanjing Massacre's absence in the Republican Gallery. Finally, chapter vi concludes with a summary of the research and suggests areas that could be addressed through further research.

Without specific explanation, this paper defines Republican China as the era, and more specifically, from 1911/12, when the Xinhai Revolution ended the governance of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), to the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Chapter iii addresses the history of Republican China in greater detail. It should be noted that the starting and ending date of Republican China is flexible. Sometimes the late Qing Dynasty is also considered as part of this era.

II. Theories and methodologies

This chapter starts with an introduction on the history of museums in general and in China. Then it presents a literature review of memory studies as the theoretical framework of the research. The last section of this chapter summarizes the methodologies that have been used during the research and their limitations.

1. The history of museums

This section introduces the development of museums in general and in China. Then it will present the history of the Nanjing Museum, the subject of the paper. For the convenience of writing and reading, I describe the history of museums in chronological order. My writing refers to some ancient museums as the predecessors of present museums, or to certain ancient museums that have laid the groundwork for current museums. It does not suggest that museums in general from earlier times are the ancestors of current museums. Museums have not experienced such a straightforward linear development.

1.1 Museum definition

The word "museum" originates from the ancient Greek word "mouseion", a temple dedicated to the Muses, the nine goddesses regarded as the protectors of nine types of art and sciences. Much research defines a museum by its functions, mainly preservation, education, and entertainment. Arinze, for instance, concludes that "the traditional role of museums is to collect objects and materials of cultural, religious and historical importance, preserve them, research into them and present them to the public for the purpose of education and enjoyment...Today, museums must become agents of change and development" (1999, pp. 1-2). The International Council of Museums (ICOM) agrees with Arinze, defining a museum as "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM Statutes, 2007). The ICOM's definition stresses that a museum must be non-profit. Museologists have been wary of for-profit museums because, as Donley summarizes in his quantitative research on the Museum of Sex in New York, the essence of a for-profit museum lies in making maximum profit for the owners (2014, p. 3). Experts are concerned that a strong interest in profit can result in the failure of a museum to achieve all its functions. They are equally worried that for-profit museums may fail to survive due to the lack of a stable financial background. Donley's report, however, also indicates that the Museum of Sex in New York "creates a space to experience and discuss sex without censorship through the lens of a historical or scientific approach" (ibid.). Its for-profit status allows it more freedom in the choice of topics. The American Alliance of Museums points out that

"non-profit museums are not the only answer for preserving cultural heritage" and for-profit museums can do just as well (2014, p. 4). Discussions over non-profit and for-profit museums are ongoing while the visitors can hardly recognize the difference. Elizabeth Merritt acknowledges that "they (for-profit museums) look just like any other museum to their visitors, but their governance, accountability, and regulatory environment are so different that the National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums do not cover them" (2009).

In the digital age, museums face the challenge of the internet and digital media. Massimo Negri argues that the world is in the process of transforming into a globalized community, therefore, the role of museums has to change accordingly. He believes that "the crucial point is not what a museum is defined as, but rather how a museum thinks and acts" (2013, p. 38).

1.2 Museum history

The earliest museums on record date from the third century BCE, of which the one built in Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter is the most famous (Edwards, 1979, p. 6; Arinze, 1999, p. 1). Rulers funded the establishment of the Mouseion of Alexandria and filled it with their collections. They allowed scientists such as Archimedes and Eratosthenes to research objects preserved in the museum exhibition (Edwards, 1979, p. 6). The Romans continued the Greek tradition of collecting and exhibiting artifacts (Wang, 2001, p. 56). The purpose of exhibiting power and aesthetic taste replaced the purpose of research and science. The exhibition of taste also symbolized the power of the owner. Both Greek and Roman museums were only accessible to a limited group, the aristocracy, and the educated (membership of the two groups often overlapped).

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Medieval Period (from the fifth to the fifteenth century) started. Museums remained elitist during the Middle Ages. Monks replaced aristocrats and mastered the management of museums. Monasteries, churches, and basilicas, along with other religious institutions, replaced noble residences to store jewels, paintings, sculptures, and artifacts brought back from "the exotic East by the Crusades" (Edwards, 1979, p. 7). The spoils of war displayed in religious sites were devoted to worshipping the divinity of the Christian belief and the church. In this epoch, the purpose of collecting objects experienced a shift from scientific research to religious exhibition.

The Renaissance (from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century) promoted the popularity of museums among the newly developed class of merchants. The merchant class amassed fortunes from the rapid growth of banking, trade, and other commercial activities. The improvement of navigation technology and a renewed interest in Greek and Roman antiques enriched the collections of the rich. The newly rich perceived family collections as an opportunity to build a decent reputation and wash off the

stereotype of being parvenus. The Medici family collection, started during the 1440s under the supervision of Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), "creates a technology of space that would emphasize their (the Medici family) newly acquired dominant status in Florence" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 24). The present Medici Museum was later founded on this collection. The humanism promoted in the Renaissance enabled artists to focus more on human beings, rather than on religious themes and motifs. It turned the focus of collecting practices from religion to human beings. This laid the groundwork for many museums we see now (Edwards, 1979, p. 9).

Not only the Renaissance shifted the topic of collections, but it also prepared an enlarged audience for museums. In the late seventeenth century, museums went public. Edwards considers the museum built in Basel in 1671 as the first public museum (1979, p. 9), while Wang gives the credit of the first public museum to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 1682 (2001, p. 58). Different understanding of the public leads to different conclusions. The Basel museum was "public" because it was "publicly" owned, by both the city and the University of Basel (Edwards, 1979, p. 9). The Ashmolean was "publicly" accessible - "admission to the Ashmolean was not restricted by class or limited to personal invitations but open to any visitor who paid the entrance fee" (Delbourgo, 2017, p. 306). It is possible that the Ashmolean was the first for-profit public museum. The sixpence entrance fee "made it among the most accessible collections in Europe" (ibid.). It was not until the 1750s that the national museums appeared. In 1753, the British Parliament started the British Museum on the basis of Sir Hans Sloane's collection (Edwards, 1979, p. 8; Wang, 2001, p. 61)². France, after the Revolution, opened the Louvre to the public as the Museum of the Republic. Museums open to the public called for a bigger and better-organized collection (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 167). It marked the era when nations and states began to manipulate museums as sites to educate the people to their advantage. The later chapter on memory studies will unpack this theory.

After the seventeenth century, museums enlarged their collections to cover recently developed scientific, and technological discoveries and inventions (Wang, 2001, p. 64). The Greek tradition of conducting scientific research on objects was revived. The employment of science and technology in the museum design is set as a standard for modern museums. Siti Isa and Siti Salwa Isa suggest that modern museums are those based in developed countries which "have transformed to become more interactive and by adding creativity elements...and new products to sustain their existence in the market since the 1980s". In contrast, museums in developing countries with "the traditional methods"

² Again, Edwards' and Wang's opinions differ. Edwards writes that Parliament bought the collection (2007, p. 8), but Wang says that Sir Hans Sloane donated his collection to Parliament when he heard of the museum plan (2001, p. 59). An expert on Hans Sloane, Delbourgo, writes that Sloane's will includes his wish to offer his collection to the nation, on the condition that the nation pays one-fourth of the real value to purchase the collection. (2017, pp. 310-311).

are considered to lack modernity (2012). The Isas therefore define modern by techniques and the developed status of the country, despite the fact that scholars have stopped using the terms "developed" and "developing" countries owing to their hidden discrimination. Hooper-Greenhill links the definition of a modern museum to modern technology as well. He argues that modern technology changes the museum display logic and the audience experience, hence, reforming the traditional museums into modern ones (1992, pp. 152-155). Crook associates the concept of modernity with the spirit a museum embodies. Museums in the Renaissance were motivated by humanism, hence, modern (1972, p. 32)³. Rivera-Orraca combines the definitions above and defines a modern museum as "a nineteenth century European creation" developed in "transformation", and "discourses about history and nationalism" (2009, p. 32). In practice, when a museum is titled "modern", it is most likely to be part of the term "modern art", like the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

1.3 Chinese museum history

Although China has a long tradition of preserving, researching and exhibiting certain objects, the term museum was only imported from the Japanese term hakubutsukan (博物館, or はくぶつかん) in the late Qing Dynasty (Ho, 2018, p. 7). It was translated into bowuguan (博物館 museum-library⁴), bowuyuan (博物苑 museum-garden⁵) and bowuyuan (博物院 museum-yard⁶). These three types of museums are subtly different. Bowuguan (博物館) is the most frequently used term in the modern Chinese context. It refers to the building where the exhibition halls are located. Bowuyuan (博物苑) is the combination of museums and botanical gardens. Bowuyuan (博物院) refers to the institution of museums. All three translations will be referred to as "museum" in this paper. This section will introduce the Chinese museum history chronologically. For the convenience of reading, museums built during Republican China will be identified by their founders.

1.3.1 Museums in ancient China

Chinese museologists consider the preservation of artifacts as the origin of Chinese museums. For instance, Wang argues that artifacts found in a tomb belong to the tomb occupant's private collection. It reflects the fact that the sense of preservation existed in ancient China (2001, p. 68).

The tradition of exhibiting collected artifacts in certain orders in ceremonial places for sacrifice and worship remained significant in ancient China, especially among the ruling class. Similar to the Greek

³ "Enlightenment, democracy, and Renaissance humanism", together made modern museums (Crook, 1972, p. 32).

⁴ Translated by Ho.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

and Romans, artifacts during this time were only accessible to the owners and their social circles. Besides offering entertainment and education, the collections and exhibitions also had political and ideological implications. In the Qing Dynasty, the emperors ordered court painters to draw the "Southern Tour" series of paintings and preserved the series in the imperial collection. The series visualized Qing emperors Kangxi (1654-1722) and Qianlong's (1711-1799) visits to southern China, the center of resistance of the preceding Ming regime and its loyalists. The paintings represented the imperial power, with an emphasis on a great unification between Manchu rulers and the other groups of people, mainly Han in southern China, where the emperors visited, and the centralization of authority (Thorp & Vinograd, 2001). Collecting the series of paintings, and many other Han pieces of art, was also a strategy to show the Manchu rulers' capacity and willingness to appreciate the Han culture. Duara writes that the Manchu court being able to embrace the Han Chinese culture "softens the boundaries between the Manchus and the Han" and "blurs the distinctions between it and the communities it ruled" (1993, p. 21).

Recorded research on artifacts can be traced back to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). Xu Shen (58 CE-148 CE), a respectable scholar, wrote a book on Chinese characters and their history from the information on collected inscriptions. Studies of earlier artifacts -or epigraphy⁷- achieved their peak during the Song Dynasty (960-1276). Later dynasties carried on this scholarly tradition. Thus, Wang argues that Chinese museology originates from epigraphy (2001, p. 68).

1.3.2 Museums built by foreigners

1.3.2.1 Missionary museums

In the late nineteenth century, the interaction between the east and the west accelerated the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and transported new concepts to China. Western missionaries encountered hostility and violence in China, which they ascribed to the fact the Chinese were unfamiliar with the outside world. To open up the Chinese mind and better promote Christianity, missionaries set up the earliest museums in China (Smalley, 2012). Museums legitimated the missionaries' collecting activities so they could transport specimens from China back to their home countries (Wang, 2001, p. 100). A French missionary, Pierre Heude (1836-1902), collected specimens through his Asian expeditions and colleagues, more than half the collections of which were sent back to France. He set up a museum in Xujiahui⁸, Shanghai, with the rest of the collections. This Zikawei Museum⁹ was later named after him

⁷ Epigraphy is a discipline that shares similarities with archeology and museology. It focuses on metal and stone objects, especially the texts carved on them.

⁸ Xujiahui is also known as Zikawei and Siccawei, based on the Shanghainese pronunciation.

⁹ Scholars disagree on when the Zikawei Museum was built. Taiwanese researcher Tai Li-chuan states that it was

as Musée Heude. John Whitewright (1858-1926), a British missionary, opened a museum in Yidu¹⁰, Shandong, in 1887. Whitewright's museum specialized in exhibiting natural history and modern technologies. He reported that after the first year, "the museum went on to receive 60,000-80,000 visits per year" (Smalley, 2012, p. 105). Seven years later, this museum was moved to Jinan (Wang, 2016, p. 146). The Shandong Provincial Museum keeps some objects from his museum. Missionaries' preaching activities gradually developed from coastal cities into inland areas. In 1929, the Harvard-Yenching Institute funded Daniel Sheets Dye (1884-1977), an American Baptist missionary, to open a museum in Sichuan province. What makes Dye's museum unique is that compared to the other missionary museums presenting natural histories and western techniques, this is an ethnological museum focusing on Chinese folklore, handicrafts, and many other Chinese traditional relics (ibid., p. 107). Based on this collection, Dye completed the book *A Grammar of Chinese Lattice*.

1.3.2.2 Museums built by the Japanese

The Japanese opened several museums in northeastern China and Taiwan during their occupation of China. The "Manchu and Mongolia Source Reference Museum (满蒙物资参考馆)" was built in 1924 in Dalian, Liaoning. Two years later it was renamed "Manchu and Mongolia Source Museum (满蒙资源馆)". The museum collected natural resource samples and archeological artifacts to supply the Manchu and Mongolia Source Museum in Japan. Besides enriching collections in Japan, these museums were also bases for political propaganda. In 1939, Japan set up the National Central Museum (国立中央博物馆) in Changchun, Jilin Province, the center of Japanese power in China. The museum held its activities outside of the institution, promoting "the same language, the same ethnicity (同文同种)" and "co-existence and mutual glory (共存共荣)". Wang argues the purpose of the museum was to separate the northeastern provinces away from China (Wang, 2001). Museums started by the Japanese were nominally assigned to the Kuomintang (KMT) Government after Japan surrendered in 1945.

1.3.3 Museums built by Chinese before 1949

Inspired by the museums established by foreigners, and facing the fact that the nation was being invaded by the imperialist countries, Chinese elites believed that in order to save the country, the people had to be strengthened, both in physique and intelligence. Kang Youwei (1858-1927), a prominent scholar, political thinker and reformer who dreamt of a constitutional monarchy, once

established in 1868, the first year when Heude arrived in China (2013), but does not indicate the source of this information. The Catholic researcher Rompel records that the museum was established between 1881 and 1883 (1910). His source is a French missionary book.

¹⁰ Yidu is in present-day Qingdao.

delivered a speech in 1884, the content of which was recorded in *Da Tong Shu, the Book of Great Unity*. Both the speech and the book depicted Kang's ideal society, with "museums preserving ancient literature and languages for the enthusiasts (其各国旧文字, 存之博物院中, 备好古者考求可也)" (Kang, 1901). Kang's companion Liang Qichao (1873-1929) understood the functions of museums as for preservation as well as education. He argued that compared to war supplies, education cost less money and received better returns. "The cost of one Krupp gun can be used to build many small museums (克虏伯一尊之费, 可以设小博物院三数所)" (1896). In 1898, persuaded by the group represented by Kang and Liang, the Guang Xu Emperor (1871-1908) issued *Technological Innovations Rewarding Edict* (振兴工艺有奖章程). The seventh and the eighth sections of the edict regulated that the court should commend private museum initiators with both monetary rewards and official titles, either honorable or practical, depending on the financial investment amount (Wang, 2001, p. 79).

The Hundred Days of Reform, led by the Guang Xu Emperor, Kang, and Liang, resulted in Guang Xu losing control of the court. The reform, however, prepared Chinese society for its own museums. In 1905, Zhang Jian (1852-1926) founded a public museum in Nantong county, Jiangsu. Zhang was one of the earliest Chinese entrepreneurs. He planned to save the nation by developing industry and technology. After visiting Japan in 1903, Zhang proposed a museum plan in Beijing and failed. He turned to focus on his hometown Nantong, arguing that "an institution is necessary for the development of local people's knowledge (图地方人民知识之增进, 亦必先有实现之处所)" (Wang, 2001, p. 80). The Nantong Museum (南通博物苑) consisted of a museum, a zoo, and a botanical garden. The museum displayed more than 20,000 objects, covering nature, history, art, and science topics. It is considered the "first fully Chinese sponsored", "modern", and "private museum"¹¹ (Shao, 2004). Shao argues that the "exhibitory modernity" presented in the Nantong Museum expressed the Chinese local elites' effort to save the nation by enlightening the public. The museum served its function to educate and influence its visitors, and to assist the teaching activities of the Nantong Normal University (南通师范学院), also founded by Zhang Jian.

The Chinese society during Republican China was going through a transition, and so were the museums. They experienced great progress during this time. Nantong Museum was significant as the first museum started by Chinese. But the museums built by different levels of governments "were more influential in society" (Shi, 2012)¹². In 1912, the Administration of Education of the Beiyang

¹¹ Lu Huiyuan argues that the Kao Factory Museum in Tianjin (天津考工厂陈列馆), built in 1902, should be considered the first modern museum in China (1987). The Kao Factory Museum was an institution founded under government supervision. Lu suggests that since the Kao Factory Museum has served the functions of exhibition and education, it should be considered as the earliest museum.

¹² Shi suggests that funding and propaganda come with government backing, making the governmental museums more influential.

Government¹³ decided to start the National History Museum Preparatory Office (国立历史博物馆筹备处). The artifacts collected by this office contributed to the foundation of the National Museum in the People's Republic of China (国家博物馆).

In 1915, Japan issued the *Twenty-One Demands*¹⁴. It fueled Chinese elites' nationalism and patriotism, and led to the May Fourth Movement (五四运动, also known as the New Culture Movement 新文化运动). Scholars came together to "reject government service in order to step back and analyze old Confucian values and determine what had retarded Chinese development" (Olson, 1998, p. 121). One question that the May Fourth Movement was trying to solve was how to deal with the traditional Chinese culture. One of the leading scholars of the May Fourth Movement, Hu Shi (1891-1962), started the "Reexamining the National Heritage Movement (整理国故运动)". This movement, at first sight, seems to run counter to the original intention of the New Culture Movement. Some people opposed it for the same reason, "not only in its tendency to restore ancient ways, but also by luring young people to plow into the heaps of musty old books and papers amid national disaster, disregarding the dangers facing the nation and serving the interest of the rulers only" (Lei, 2008, p. 22). Lei Yi thinks that Hu Shi considered the ideological tide of the New Culture Movement as a critical attitude, which shared similarities with Chinese traditional learning. The movement aimed at preserving traditional Chinese culture so it could be reevaluated under a "new culture" system, although Hu had mutually controversial and contradictory views with the change of times¹⁵. It became essential to collect and conduct comprehensive research into cultural artifacts in professional institutions. Consequently, the movement contributed to the further progress of the museum field. As a response to the movement, Peking University opened an institution to collect and research objects that embodied Chinese traditional culture (Chen, 2011, p. 48). From 1919 to 1936, the number of Chinese museums grew from an estimated ten to seventy-seven (ibid., pp. 55-56). Besides natural history and science museums that enlightened their visitors and inspired them to set up industry (Huang, 2015), several art museums and galleries came into being as well.

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, it interfered with the development of museums in China. So, did the civil war, which kept China in chaos until 1949. Museums in or next to the war zones had to transfer their collections to relatively safer places. Artifacts not significant enough or not convenient for transportation were left behind. Some precious objects were damaged, stolen or lost.

¹³ In 1912, Beijing was under the control of the Provisional Government of Republican China, also known as the Beiyang Government. The section below will give more information.

¹⁴ *The Twenty-One Demands* were a set of demands made by Japan in 1915. It would extend Japanese control of China.

¹⁵ For instance, Hu Shi changed his attitude towards utilitarianism. He rejected it as being narrow and that it should be eradicated, regardless of the fact that the purpose of the Reexamining the National Heritage Movement was utilitarian since it advocated to keep what was useful and reject the rest (Lei, 2008).

Several museum buildings were destroyed during the war. The manager of the National Museum foresaw the coming truce-less war and started packing its collections in 1932. In the following years, almost 130,000 boxes of artifacts were separately sent to Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, and Chongqing. Some artifacts have remained in their temporary storage locations until now (Zheng, 2010).

Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) recorded and archived its activities and personnel changes for better education and propaganda. In 1932, the CCP made an announcement to add remains of martyrs, slogans, trophies, weapons, and photos to the collection (Wang, 2001). After the center of the CCP relocated to Yan'an, Shaanxi in 1935, it set up some temporary displays and permanent memorial halls to honor to martyrs and inspire the audience to join the CCP. The majority of the CCP museums during the Yan'an period (1935-1948) focused on telling revolutionary stories and promoting socialist and communist ideologies.

1.3.4 Museums in People's Republic of China

When the PRC was founded in 1949, the regime did not have control over the entire territory. Neither did it have control over all the museums. By the end of 1952, around 25 museums were taken over by the new government. Relevant policies and regulations were published simultaneously during 1949-1952. The PRC gradually took over the management of museums when its dominance enlarged. The purpose of museums in Mao's era aims to "call on the masses" to "take part in revolution" (Ho, 2018, p. 5). Based on the former museums, new museums were built in the following years until 1958, when the Great Leap Forward Movement (大跃进) hindered the development. Although the number of museums increased, most museums had neither collections nor offices. The number of museums was believed to be exaggerated (Wang, 2001, p. 124). The following Great Cultural Revolution (文化大革命) made the situation worse. The development of museums stagnated and existing museums faced the risk of being damaged or losing their collections. The former imperial palace, later the Palace Museum since 1925, also known as the Forbidden Palace, escaped the Red Guards¹⁶ many times, thanks to the garrison troops sent by premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) to protect it. Zhou's assistance was not enough to avoid it from being plundered by Kang Sheng and other leaders of the Cultural Revolution (China Heritage Project, 2005).

After 1978, the reform of the economic system and increasing interactions with the world have brought Chinese museums more opportunities. Every province, most cities, and many counties have built their own museums (Wang, 2001, p. 131). Museums in the PRC retained their preference for "narratives of martyrdom and revolutionary liberation", but have been "reshaped to downplay issues and to legitimize

¹⁶ Red Guards were student groups mobilized by Mao Zedong during the Great Cultural Revolution.

commercial interests" (Denton, 2005, p. 565). Denton's argument precisely summarizes the condition of official museums, but it is not accurate for the private ones. Private museum owners develop their collections by their own will, sometimes against the government's ideology. The Museum Cluster Jianchuan (建川博物馆聚落) in Sichuan is a private museum run by the entrepreneur Fan Jianchuan (1957-). The Museum Cluster Jianchuan has many exhibitions on nationalism and revolution, such as the Long March, the Red Army, and the Sino-Japanese War, in juxtaposition with sensitive topics represented by the KMT Army's contribution to the victory of China in the Sino-Japanese War (国军抗战) and the Great Cultural Revolution. Many attempts have been made at establishing a museum of the Great Cultural Revolution but have been unsuccessful. In 1986, Ba Jin (1904-2005), an influential writer in the PRC's culture system, proposed the construction of a Museum of the Great Cultural Revolution. His proposal was ignored. Ho argues that "there were in fact Cultural Revolution exhibitions" (2018, p. 208) during the Great Cultural Revolution. They did not "serve to recall and to warn", but to "attack and condemn" (ibid.). In 2005, the former mayor of Shantou, Guangdong, Peng Qi'an (1932-), finished the construction of the Shantou Museum of the Great Cultural Revolution. This museum was open to the public until 2016 when the local government stopped the museum operation (Di, 2016). In an interview, Fan contributed the success of his museum of the Great Cultural Revolution to its name. To avoid the censorship on the topic of the Great Cultural Revolution, Fan named the museum of the Great Cultural Revolution "The Red Time (红色年代)" (*The Time Weekly*, 2013). It got official approval. Private museums are allowed to participate in the museum market, while the censorship remains tight and strict. The owners, however, can negotiate with the political system.

1.4 Nanjing Museum

The Nanjing Museum, located south of the Purple Mountain, Nanjing, is "the first large national comprehensive museum in China" (Nanjing Museum, 1999). In 1933, Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940), the former Minister of Education, proposed the construction of a national central museum. The National Central Museum Preparatory Office (国立中央博物院筹备处) was subsequently established in Nanjing in the same year. In the next year, Cai led a team to seek an appropriate location for the National Central Museum (国立中央博物院). With the government's approval, the team decided to purchase 100 mu¹⁷ of land in Banshanyuan, the former residence of Banner¹⁸ People (半山园旧旗地). Then they invited the famous architect Liang Sicheng (1901-1972) to direct the building design. Cai was appointed as the chairman of the board of directors for the museum in 1936 (Chen, 2011). The

¹⁷ Mu is an ancient unit of land area. One mu equals 0.0667 hectares.

¹⁸ Banners functioned as military divisions in wartime, and the fundamental organizational framework in the Manchu society.

building was initially designed to imitate the official buildings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, a contemporary popular architectural style under the KMT's Nanjing urban construction proposal. Liang changed it into the style of architecture of the Liao Dynasty (907-1125) (Li, 2005, p. 25).

The Sino-Japanese War prevented the completion of the construction in the following years. The museum building was occupied by the Japanese Air Force and suffered air raids (Li, 2005, p. 26). Parts of the artifacts were sent to Chongqing, then Lizhuang, Sichuan, along with artifacts from the National Museum in Beijing during the war.

Japan surrendered in 1945. In 1946, the KMT government moved back to Nanjing and the museum construction continued. When the KMT abandoned Nanjing again, the CCP took control over the unfinished National Central Museum. It carried on with the construction, although significant artifacts were smuggled to Taiwan by the KMT. This group of artifacts formed the foundation of Taipei's National Palace Museum (台北故宫博物院). An assumption was that Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) fled with the artifacts because he believed the ownership of the ancient artifacts bolstered his status as the legitimate leader of China (Nojima, 2011).

After 1949, the National Central Museum was put under the direct leadership of the Central Ministry of Culture in the communist government. In 1950, the museum was renamed "National Nanjing Municipal Museum (国立南京博物院)". Since 1954, it has been affiliated with the Bureau of Culture of Jiangsu Province and is no longer under the direct leadership of the Central Ministry of Culture. In 1959, it consolidated with the Nanjing Municipal Museum, the Jiangsu Provincial Museum and the Relics Administration Committee of Jiangsu Province (Nanjing Museum, 1999). The combination led to the present Nanjing Municipal Museum (南京博物院), also abbreviated as Nanjing Museum. Retaining its prominent status as one of the three biggest museums in China, the post-1949 Nanjing Museum experienced a demotion at the administrative level, from "national" and "central" to "national" and "municipal", and eventually to only "municipal". The declining attention it received from the central government may have resulted in its relatively daring choices in exhibition topics. But the less funding distributed to the museum may have also led to its eagerness for profits.

The current Nanjing Museum has six galleries, namely the Gallery of History (历史馆), the Gallery of Temporary Exhibitions (特展馆), the Gallery of Art (艺术馆), the Digital Gallery (数字馆), the Gallery of the Scene of the Republican Period (民国馆), and the Gallery of Intangible Heritage (非遗馆). The latter four were newly built after four years of renovation (2009-2013), supported and funded by the Jiangsu Government (Nanjing Museum, 2013).

2. A literature review of memory studies

In this chapter, I will summarize the history, concerns, and issues of memory studies¹⁹. At the end of it, I will address the development of memory studies in China, including the contributions made by Chinese and non-Chinese scholars.

2.1 Definition of memory

In the past centuries, different disciplines have made attempts to explicate the definition of memory and its mechanism. Malcolm defines memory as follows: "A person, B, remembers that p from a time, t, if and only if B knows that p, and B knew that p at t, and if B had not known at t that he would not know that p" (1963, p. 236). Zemach praises Malcolm for his definition as "the most elaborate, the most careful, and probably the best definition of this concept" (1968, p. 526). In the meantime, he criticizes Malcolm for being "indeed inaccurate in that it is both too narrow and too wide (ibid.)". He defines that memory, in general, is simply "remembering that". This paper will embrace Zemach's elegant and powerful statement. I define "memory" in this paper as "remembrance". The subject of the remembering is flexible, ranging from the memory owner's experience, or what he/she believes to be his/her experience, to the knowledge of something that he/she associates with the past. It does not have to be the de-facto fact.

2.2 Collective memory: memory and group-making

Durkheim undertook early research on the function of memory, arguing that a persistent past of the group and a shared understanding of the persistent past within the group enables a group to come into shape and continue. He was "among the first to develop the idea that [a] collective imagined past is not only renewed, [avoiding] any conceptualization of remembering as achieved monologically and instrumentally (Misztal, 2003, p. 136)". Durkheim inspired his student, Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist and the founder of memory studies.

Halbwachs is better known for his great contribution to the use of "collective memory" but it was Aby Warburg, who came up with the term in the very beginning of the 1920s. Warburg focuses on the transmission of primitive and ancient motifs to later societies, especially their influence and meaning in Renaissance Florence (Confino, 1997). Halbwachs develops the "collective memory" concept in *Les*

¹⁹ Memory studies have been associated with many different disciplines, such as psychology, history, sociology, culture studies, media studies, literary studies, emotion studies, political studies, and so on. Psychological research on memory has been focused on the memory system from the perspective of the cognitive system. It is beyond the topic of this paper, and will not be discussed here. In this paper, the discussion is centered on the sociological, cultural sense of memory.

*Cadres sociaux de la memoir*²⁰ (1925). The memory that is constructed, shared, passed on from generation to the next generation, and reconstructed in a certain group is referred to as "collective memory". Anderson observes that the emergence of such a "memory" is essential for the formation of an "imagined community", although he does not use the term "collective memory" (1991, p. 6). Anderson's interest in memory stems from his research on nation-state building processes. He sees memory as a completed existence that can be and certainly is manipulated by nations and other authorities to establish coherence in the community. Halbwachs argues that the memory is not a product but a process, not solid but dynamic, hence the memory narratives are continually under reconstruction during the process of retelling and with the development of the society. He stresses that language plays an essential role in the process of collective memory making. Without a common language, people cannot achieve a common understanding, and thus the collective memory fails to come into shape (1992). As a constructivist and a functionalist, Halbwachs considers memory as a mechanism that unites groups and cements identity, and the memories that do not fit with the group will gradually fade and be forgotten (ibid.). Green criticizes Halbwachs because he ignores conflicting memories' influence on the shaping and reshaping of collective memory. Green proposes that scholars should distribute the attention given to the process of memory to that of amnesia. She admits that certain memory narratives will try to replace the other narratives, but the other narratives can survive by altering the way of storytelling or negotiating with the dominant memory. Examining what is forgotten helps to understand the memory making process.

Since Benedict Anderson's "imagined community", scholars like Smith, Campbell, and Kent have stressed the function of memory for the coherence of the nation-state. Much research has been devoted to the topic how memory has been the tool for different countries to solidify their governance, both long-established countries and newly independent ones. Examples include Confino's studies on imperial Germany (1997), Cressy's writing on Protestant Britain (1989), and Cheryl's research on South Africa in the post-apartheid era (2003).

The scholarly concern with the function of memory in nation-state building may have ignored the fact that national memory is not the only memory narrative. If the rituals and ceremonies put emphasis on the identification of a specific group and community, then the national memory will be pushed to the edge and replaced by group/community memory (Gillis, 1996). There are as many memories as there are groups, memory is by nature multiple but specific; collective and plural but individual (ibid., p. 3).

²⁰ Besides "collective memory", Halbwachs also identifies autobiographical memory and historical memory. Autobiographical memory is the memory of events that individuals have personally experienced. Historical memory is the memory that has been transferred to individuals through historical materials, history books, documentaries and archives for instance (1925).

2.3 Sites of memory: history and memory

Pierre Nora, a French philosopher, underlines the importance of sites in memory making. In Nora's understanding, a site is not limited to a physical existence with a fixed location and size. It could be a place, but could also be an object, or an event, as long as it is something that embodies "a particular historical moment". "*Lieux de mémoire*", sites of memory²¹, such as festivals, celebrations, monuments, memorial halls, anniversaries, cemeteries, and museums are there "because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory" (Nora, 1989, p. 7). After agriculture was replaced by industrialization and vanished from everyday practice, the French started researching agriculture as the repository of collective memory. Nora uses this as a case to show that the sites of memory are trying to recreate rituals in a society that has banished them, to appreciate the beauty of agriculture when people no longer see the farmers plowing in the fields. He expects to motivate historians to pay attention to the "self-selective" feature of history writing. The present history is a memory of the past, when the present history only keeps the significant part and abandons the rest. Rothberg points out that Nora's theory originates with "the sense that there is no spontaneous memory", "what we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history" (2010, pp. 12-13). The history is gone and can never be recreated.

The twentieth century experienced globalization, democratization, independence of many former colonial national states, the advent of mass culture, and the prosperity of the media industry. All these "accelerate the history" (Kritzman & Nora, 1997, p. 2). Nora notices the popularity of memory studies in the new age and attributes it to the changes of the world. He suggests that people's need for a trace of themselves calls for history. In an age where history no longer exists, memory replaces history. Individuals search for a memory to be connected to. The nation-state looks for a memory to solidify its governance and legitimacy (Nora, 1989). Many pieces of research have discussed the difference and connection between history and memory. Hegel, for example, distinguishes original history (chronological experience), reflective memory (scientific conclusions that are written after the event), and philosophical history (the meaning and aim of history understood by contemporary people). He defines original history as "history", and reflective memory and philosophical history as "memory" (1975).

Some scholars argue that memory does not only intertwine with history, also the present and the future. Nora suggests that the "memory boom" is connected to the feeling of being cut off from the past.

²¹ Pim den Boer lists different translations of *Lieux de mémoire* in English and many other languages. He also locates the translations to their local context. See Pim den Boer (2008). "*Loci memoriae—Lieux de mémoire*", in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning in collaboration with Sara B. Young. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter. 19-25. The translation "a site of memory" or "sites of memory" is commonly used in English.

Huyssen argues that the feeling of being cut off is anchored in the present. He thinks that memory is a mode of representation and as belonging ever more to the present. After all, the act of remembering is always "in and of the present, while its referent is of the past and thus absent" (2009, p. 3). Individuals in modern society have experienced rapid changes in both individual life and social environment. They seek a secure sense of stability from the past. Americans have been yearning for the glorious 1920s; Europeans have indulged in the Golden Age, despite different interpretations of when the golden age is. The British yearn for "the empire on which the sun never set". In China, mass media publish eulogies about Republican China, the so-called "golden age". Nostalgia, yearning for yesterday, and the obsession with the past, identical terms have inundated the mass media. The issue that triggers sentiments is not the loss of some golden age. It is "the attempt, as we face the very real processes of time-space compression, to secure some continuity within time, to provide some extension of lived space within which we can breathe and move" (Huysen, 2009, p. 24). An obsession with the past is de-facto escapism, a reflection of an uncertain and insecure present.

The inhumanity expressed in the World Wars, the Holocaust, and the genocides have inspired human beings' introspection. "Remembrance for the sake of future" motivates curators and scholars to dig more into memory. Psychologists have conducted research on whether the function of memory includes predicting the future. The conclusion is that with a better understanding of what has happened and what should not have happened, individuals and institutions tend to make choices that have been proven to be right, or have not been proven wrong in the past. Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell point out that "the utility and legitimacy of nostalgia" help to sustain "authentic emotional states" (2017, p. 624). Smith and Campbell, under the influence of Benedict Anderson, reach the conclusion that the function of memory is to cohere the community for the future. Similarly, Kent's research on the East Timorese can be summarized as the mourning for the past is interpreted as a promise for the future. The East Timorese government regularly organizes commemorative rituals for the dead and pray to them that they will spiritually bless the country's future. The rituals are proven to have fostered loyalty and nationalism (2015).

2.4 Memory boom

The flourishing interest in memory from both the academic field and society in the 1980s has been named a "memory boom" (Silke, 2013, p. 14). Nora is considered as one of the fathers of the "memory boom". Cultural memory (Jann Assmann and Aleida Assmann), false memory (Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud), recovered memory (False Memory Syndrom Foundation), postmemory (Marianne Hirsch), traumatic memory (Dana Mihailescu, Adrian Parr, etc), vehicle memory (Y.H. Yerushalmi)

and prosthetic memory (Alison Landsberg) are a few examples of memory and its distortions that emerged in the boom. The emergence of the memory boom is closely linked with twentieth century history, such as the World Wars, the Holocaust, the concentration camps, the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and many genocides²². Tony Judt states that one of the main questions that every post-war European has asked oneself is what his position in the Holocaust would have been. Post-war Europe seems to be diagnosed with a collective amnesia. Everyone prefers to tell a story of themselves suffering from and fighting against the Nazis' violent governance, despite it not being the truth in most cases. This shelter story helps individuals associate themselves with the winners and avoid negative feelings. Hence, a collective memory narrative of "defensive myth" is constructed. It draws an image where every European becomes a brave and fearless fighter against the Nazis (2011). This "myth" profoundly influences European memory studies, especially collective memory studies.

With the development of memory studies, different methodologies and disciplines have been introduced into this field of study. With the advanced transportation and communication technology, the method of memory transfer has multiplied. Scholars have noticed the importance of oral traditions and oral history for research on memory. Geary illustrates how orality and oral practices assist to preserve the family memory of the family land. He concludes that in medieval times, people frequently altered, added, deleted or duplicated the textualized archive based on the hints given by oral narratives from the earlier generations (1999). Oral history arms memory studies with abundant materials. It helps to extend the research subjects from the textualized history of the elite to the vocal history of the ordinary people. Admitting oral history as a new feature that should be included in memory studies, Jann Assmann argues that oral tradition as a way to preserve and transfer memory should be considered as a stage of the history of memory. From vocality to text is a remarkable evolution in the history of memory medias (2008).

Le Goff identifies the historical stages of memory medias, namely "ethnic memory" owned by the ancient group without writing traditions; "ancient memory", emerging after the development of scripts and literacy; Christianized and technicalized "medieval memory", where the sacred memory shared among the believers was separated from secular memory, duplicated and enhanced through religious ceremonies and rituals; "modern memory", also known as the foundation of "sites of memory", marking the Renaissance when the invention of the printing press and its innovations made both

²² It does not only refer to the Nazi genocide eradicating the Jews in the Second World War. We should not forget the Nanjing Massacre perpetrated by the Japanese against Chinese in 1937, the Bangladesh genocide in 1971, the Cambodia genocide led by the Communist group against dissidents in 1975, and the Bosnia genocide during the 1990s. Scholars have argued that too much attention given to the Holocaust has led to scant attention to the other human tragedies that should not be ignored. The book *Forgotten genocides: oblivion, denial and memory* edited by Rene Lemarchand gives more examples of the genocides that have been silenced and forgotten.

individual memory and history more available to the public; and "contemporary memory" in the present time, more freely and symbolically transmitted with the help of digital media and electronic information technology (1992). What is lacking in his memory media stage theories is that new memory media do not completely replace the earlier ones. Multiple memory transmission techniques co-exist and interact. After paper was invented, people did not abandon the tradition of oral storytelling but added writing into the method of remembrance.

2.5 Memory studies in and on China

The literature review shows that the one purpose of memory studies is seeking the meaning of the past in the current epoch. Memory is uncertain, elastic and plastic. It is consistently under construction and reconstruction. The discovery of memory narratives that have been forgotten has the potential to shake the legitimacy of the authorities. By its nature, research on memory is politically dangerous and has been at the mercy of politics. In China, the development of memory studies has been suppressed and it has not yet become an independent discipline. In this section, I will employ Qian Licheng and Zhang Hexuan's classifications of Chinese memory studies and introduce existing research on memory studies in China, including the contributions made by Chinese and non-Chinese scholars.

Qian and Zhang conclude that Chinese memory studies can be categorized into three perspectives: nation-state power, community, and historical evolution (2015). The nation-state perspective is the most often analyzed in both Chinese indigenous research and overseas. Sun Liping and Guo Yuhua discover that the "speaking bitterness (诉苦)²³" practice turned a single person's life memory into the bitterness of the whole peasant class. It constructed a group identity for peasants to ensure their approval of and loyalty to the CCP (2002). Zhou Haiyan uses the case of the "Nanniwan spirit (南泥湾精神)²⁴" to explain how the Chinese Communists manipulated memory symbols to mold identification and legitimacy (2013). Wang Zheng extends the discussion from domestic to global, pointing out that the Chinese government has deliberately enhanced education on the memory of national humiliation to fuel nationalism after the 1990s. The public motivated by nationalism has a certain influence on the Chinese government's decisions in global affairs (2014).

Non-Chinese scholars have analysed how the Chinese authorities apply memory narratives to serve their purpose as well. Charles Horner observes that the Chinese present and future is rooted in its past.

²³ Speaking bitterness is a mobilization strategy used in the land reform movement led by the CCP from 1947 to 1952. Communist members organized public meetings, where they encouraged local peasants to publically express their anger, sorrow, and suffering living in the former society.

²⁴ During the early 1940s, the CCP, located in Yan'an, Shaanxi, faced economic blockades by both the Japanese Army and the KMT. The 359 Brigade of the Eighty Route Army was sent to Nanniwan, a gorge to the southeast of Yan'an, to increase agricultural productivity. It achieved great success. The determination and ability to develop agriculture in a harsh environment is named "Nanniwan Spirit".

The current Chinese view of its modern historical experience has a great influence on the Chinese government and society (2009). Chinese scholars have developed the discussion further. They have noticed that nation-state power is not the only thing shaping the form of memory in China. Wu and Chen develop Sun and Guo's research on "speaking bitterness" and specify that farmers did not often agree with the official narrative and occasionally developed their own stories. Some farmers understood the reason behind the CCP's preference for a fixed mode of stories and tried to take advantage of it (2012). Contested memories sometimes replace the official memory narratives. Speakers occasionally alter the storytelling and rebel against the authority's order.

A second perspective is that of a community. The community can either be people from a specific social group, or people who have experienced a specific historical moment. The group of sent-down youth²⁵ has attracted much attention from memory studies experts. Liu Yaqiu analyses the popular "youth without regret (青春无悔)²⁶" slogan among the sent-down youth. For this group, admitting "regret" means that their youth was meaninglessly wasted. She believes that by saying "without regret", the sent-down youth ascribe meaning to their experience and achieve a reconciliation (2003). David Davies conducted research on the sent-down youth's visual materials. A group of former sent-down youth gathered and collected photographs reflecting sent-down life from the whole country. The photos were on display in a public shopping mall in Shanghai without interpretations and narratives. Davies believes that the audience read different meanings from the same picture, based on their own life experience. A shared memory narrative is therefore impossible in this community of the exhibition audience (2007).

Current memory studies have given women opportunities to speak. Guo Yuhua senses the uncertainty and incoherence of female memory. He argues that the female memory is identified as subtle, daily and insignificant in a male-dominated society. He indicates that collectivization gave rural women a vision that they had been freed from the family, and at the same time covered the truth they were still under the ruling of the nation-state machine (2003). Hershatter observes the same feature of female storytelling in her interviews with Chinese rural women. Rural women have evolved a unique system to share their memories. Their decision on what to remember and what to forget is intertwined with the past, their understanding of the present, and their wish for the future (2007).

Wang Mingke focuses on the collective memory of minority groups in China. He explains that the identification of Qiang people does not only aim to unify the Qiang, but also to strengthen their Han

²⁵ The sent-down youth, also referred to as the "educated youth", were the young people who were sent away from the cities to work and live in the countryside during the Great Cultural Revolution in the PRC. The majority of the sent-down youth received different levels of education, from elementary schools to universities.

²⁶ Translated by Liu Yaqiu.

identification. Ancestral memories are chosen to reflect and enhance the identification. On the residential boundary of the Qiang and Han, some Qiang people adopt Han collective memory and become recognized as Han (2006). Erik Mueggler's study is a combination of gender and ethnicity centering on a specific historical event. His research on how one Yi community remembered the Great Leap Forward famine concludes that a "familiar story" of "an unaccepted mourning" is forbidden in favor of "narratives of progress and redemption". The story telling all the pain and violence that Yi people have experienced is attributed to ghosts. The story of making progress is "the story", the story of suffering is "another story" and "the others' story". This strategy of memory deflects what the government orders to forget and keeps the memory of social relations alive (2007, p. 67).

Qian and Zhang's third perspective associates Chinese memory studies with history and the writing of history. Some scholars focus on how the memory of a specific event changes with time. A series of books named "*The Centennial Collection of the research on the Xinhai Revolution* (辛亥革命百年纪念文集)" edited by Luo Fuhui and Liu Wangling was published in 2011. This tetralogy explains how the government, parties, the public, and academics memorize, record and discuss the Xinhai Revolution in different ways to adapt to the need.

Chinese memory studies are established and developed under the great influence of the west, but there are apparent differences between memory studies in China and the rest of the world. China has not developed its own memory theory. Chinese scholars have been transplanting western theories to China. The problem is that sometimes the theory does not fit the Chinese reality, resulting in a rupture between the theory and the case. Memory studies in China highly depend on earlier European memory theories, with the risk of overusing collective memory theories. Neither American nor modern European theories have been reflected in Chinese memory studies. While trauma has been a crucial topic in memory studies elsewhere, containing war, apartheid, and genocides, not much research has been done on this topic in China, although China has experienced a series of traumatic events in the last century. These traumatic events have been politicized by the government. The government has produced a fixed mode of memory storytelling and put strict restrictions on the production of individual memory narratives of traumatic events. Besides, trauma is associated with the victim's weakness and humiliation. The government has focused on drawing an image of a New China being strong and fearless. The desire for such an image leads the government to reject a humiliating past. Moreover, for security concerns, Chinese scholars tend to avoid sensitive issues that may put them under the government censorship.

3. Methodologies and limitations

This research has employed literature review (as written above), participation observation, questionnaires and interviews. Each method is chosen for the convenience of the research but has its shortcomings. My identity remains the prominent help and drawback through the research. As a Chinese mainlander growing up under the Chinese standard education system, I have faced the research on the memory of Republican China with a systemized narrative which I learned from schools, the media and the society. My identity, education, and experience at least partially predetermined my reading of the Republican Gallery. Being aware of this dual positionality as a researcher and an object, I feel it mandatory to acknowledge the possibility of subconsciously biased arguments and try to make the best out of this situation.

I visited the Nanjing Museum five times in two weeks in the summer of 2017. The first time I went through the whole museum under professional guidance offered by the museum, when I examined the museum layout. I also collected the printed introduction of the Republican Gallery from the reception desk. The guide left us at the entrance of the Republican Gallery. According to her, it was not worth her professional attention. A few days later, I revisited the Nanjing Museum, but headed directly to the Republican Gallery. I stayed outside of the gallery entrance and tried to observe how visitors entered, whether they knew of the existence of the Republican Gallery before their visit, and whether it was easy for them to enter it. Then I visited the Republican Gallery again and tried all the recommended tourist activities, including taking selfies, bargaining with the shop owners and waiting in lines to buy some popular but hardly delicious snacks. My first two visits to the Republican Gallery were spent as an "innocent" tourist. Starting from the third time, I began selectively taking notes of interesting dialogues and behaviors, and trying to observe the audience in their natural interactions. My average Chinese look gave me an opportunity to watch the others without being noticed. Several times people caught me staring at them, probably thanks to my gender (female), they either understood it as an invitation or ignored me. Most times people were not aware of being watched and behaved naturally. It saved the worries of unnatural performance under observation in the laboratory but raised concerns about research ethics. Meanwhile, despite my identity as a native Chinese Mandarin speaker, it was difficult for me to comprehend some visitors, especially people with a strong southern accent. This restricted my objects to Mandarin and northern dialects speakers with a loud voice.

During the same summer, I conducted an anonymous questionnaire survey (See Appendix. 1) in Chinese amongst Chinese native speakers both offline (in Beijing) and online (on Sina Weibo, a microblogging website aimed at Chinese speakers). Offline participants were randomly selected from Peking University students through snowball sampling. The headline of the questionnaire explains that

the aim of the research is to understand what people think of Republican China. It redefines Republican China in this questionnaire as the epoch there once was in modern Chinese history. Participants are requested to provide factual information on their gender, age, education background, then write down their answers to three questions. Until the termination day, more than 100 questionnaires were collected, of which 83 were valid. The rest were unqualified for illegible handwriting, irrelevant replies, uncompleted questionnaires and plagiarism²⁷. Online participants could change their answers before the final submission time, which gave space for re-thinking and self-affirmation. The process of writing provided participants an opportunity to structure their minds and form a complete narrative. Without fixed answers to choose from, participants felt free to embrace the abundant Chinese vocabulary, which led to the difficulty of labeling. Unavoidably, my personal comprehension and preference influenced the credibility of the analysis.

During both the participation observations and questionnaire distribution, I found chances to interview some people in Chinese. No audio is recorded due to the environment and equipment restrictions. I took notes during and after the interviews. Questions were improvised in different situations but focused on explaining the sentences and further illustrating the meaning. No working staff from the Nanjing Museum agreed on an interview without official permission from the museum management team. When the discussion involves curators, the paper relies on making assumptions on the basis of published interviews with them.

²⁷ If a questionnaire repeated its answer to different questions and the answer was not relevant, the questionnaire was disqualified.

III. Republican China capital(s)

This chapter compares Nanjing and Shanghai's status in the current Chinese memory of Republican China. It explores why and how the Nanjing Museum aims to construct Nanjing's city status as a former capital, and scrutinizes how the popular narrative influences the shaping of the official narrative.

1. Capital in Chinese context

The word "capital" originates from the Latin word "capitalis", which means head. When "capital" is a noun, the *Oxford University Dictionary* explains the meaning as 1) the city or a town that functions as the seat of government and administrative center of a country or region; 2) a place associated more than any other with a specified activity or product.

Relevant Chinese words are shoudu (首都) and shoufu (首府). Shou (首) refers to the head, both physically and symbolically. In the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600 - 1046 BCE), du (都) was the city or town where the ancestral temple of the rulers was located. Its extended meanings include big cities, the land belonging to the local rulers, and the head. From the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 CE) to the Qing Dynasty, fu (府) referred to the location of the prefecture. In contemporary Chinese, shoufu means the prefecture where the provincial or regional capital is located. Shoudu refers to the administrative center of a country. Semantically, the meaning of "capital" in the western context is the combination of shoudu and shoufu. Without special references, "capital" in the following writing also refers to "shoudu", the administrative center and government of a country.

2. History of the capital in Republican China

Many regimes declared their governance in certain regions through Republican China, including some which hardly managed to control the whole territory. Videlicet, none of the political centers of these regimes are qualified as a shoudu. This section, therefore, will use shoudu as its extended definition, the administrative center of a regime, both regionally and nationally. In Shi Wei's calculation, there were at least twenty-five cities that were capital cities during Republican China's turmoil (2017). I will discuss a few important ones to prepare readers for further discussion on "Nanjing as the capital".

2.1 Beiyang Government and Beijing

After the Xinhai Revolution broke out in 1911, different revolutionary organizations agreed on Sun Yat-sen's (1866-1925) leadership. On New Year's Eve of 1912, Sun announced the establishment of a temporary government in Nanjing, while the last Qing emperor Pu Yi (1906-1967) retained his governance in Beijing. In the same year, to put a complete end to the ruling of the Qing Dynasty, Sun

arranged the abdication of Pu Yi with Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), an influential military commander, on the premise that Yuan was guaranteed the presidential position of the new regime. In April, Yuan became the president of the Republic of China. He moved the capital to Beijing, in the neighborhood of which his military power was based. Yuan's army was the former Newly Created Army (新军) established in the late Qing Dynasty on the Qing court's orders. It was renamed Beiyang²⁸ Army in 1902, when Yuan became the Minister of Beiyang (北洋通商大臣). The army was equipped with western weapons and some officers received professional military education abroad.

Yuan was the only one to maintain the fragile peace under the initial Republican government. Fairbank sees the result of this 'unscrupulous and reactionary militarist' regime as "a rapid slide into warlordism" (1983, p. 208). The term warlord is "applied to all militarists who commanded a force from a few as a mere handful of men and some outmoded weapons to as many as several hundred thousand well-trained regular soldiers with modern equipment" (Chi, 1969, p. 21). Yuan's death in 1916 left his army fractured into competing divisions. The leaders of these divisions, also known as Beiyang warlords, were in practical control of the government of the Republic. This government, therefore, is referred to as the Beiyang Warlord Government. It was internationally recognized as the legitimate Chinese government until the Northern Expedition²⁹ ended its governance in 1928. While the government in Beijing was nominally in control, each warlord was in charge of his own base.

2.2 Capital of the National Government

In 1912, the KMT was built on the basis of Tongmenghui, a former revolutionary society which was transformed into an open political party in the same year. The KMT is usually translated as the Nationalist Party (Fairbank, 1983, p. 219). Governments built under the leadership of the KMT were named the Nationalist Government or National Government.

Disappointed by Yuan Shikai's dictatorship, Sun Yat-sen set up the Guangzhou Law-Enforcement³⁰ Military Government³¹ in Guangzhou, Guangdong, to protect the democratic government. This government experienced several internal conflicts and announced its disbandment after admitting the Beiyang Government's legitimate status in 1920. In the same year, Sun Yat-sen again established a Guangzhou Law-Enforcement Military Government. It was later reorganized as the Guangzhou National Government. This government was defeated in 1922. In the next year, Sun built the Army and

²⁸ Beiyang means northern ocean.

²⁹ The North Expedition was a military campaign led by the KMT from 1926 to 1928. It aimed to reunify China.

³⁰ The law refers to the *Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China*. It was promulgated in 1912 as an outline of basic regulations for a formal constitution.

³¹ The first and second Guangzhou Law-Enforcement Military Governments both agreed to the legitimate power of the congress of the Republic of China. They only denied the governance of the Beiyang Government.

Navy Base of the Republic of China in Guangzhou. After his death in 1925, this military institution was reconstructed as the Guangzhou National Government. The Guangzhou National Government united with the recently established CCP and won the victory of the Northern Expedition.

With the gradual development of the Northern Expedition, the Guangzhou National Government moved its capital to Wuhan, Hubei, in 1927. The intense power struggles among the KMT senior members led to the government's split. Wang Jingwei (1883-1944) and his faction remained in Wuhan while Chiang Kai-shek led the rest of the KMT to Nanjing, where he declared the establishment of the Nanjing National Government after the Beiyang Government's demise. The Wuhan National Government and the Nanjing National Government were nominally unified in 1928 under the leadership of the Nanjing National Government. Nanjing's status as the capital of the Republic of China was legally affirmed by the unified Nanjing National Government.

The unification of the National Government did not last long when Yan Xishan (1883-1960), a warlord and a KMT member, founded the Beijing National Government, where Wang Jingwei became the actual leader. It was soon defeated by northeastern warlord Zhang Xueliang (1901-2001). Wang moved to Guangzhou to set up another National Government. When Chiang Kai-shek was forced to resign owing to his compromising attitude towards Japan in 1931, Wang shut down the Guangzhou National Government and returned to Nanjing.

Although many short regimes emerged, Nanjing remained the capital until 1932 when the Japanese army attacked Shanghai. The threatened National Government escaped Nanjing and shortly selected Luoyang, Henan, as its auxiliary capital in 1932, followed by its retreat to Hankou, Hubei, in 1937. Eventually the National Government settled down in Chongqing, Sichuan, in 1940. Chongqing was designated as the wartime capital of the Republic of China.

The KMT shortly returned to Nanjing after 1946 and abandoned it again as a result of its consistent failures in the ensuing civil war. The National Government fled to Guangzhou, Chongqing, then Chengdu, and Taipei. Since then, Taipei has been the capital of the Republic of China. To avoid confusion, this country/region is often referred to as Taiwan.

2.3 Capital of the regime supported by the Japanese

During Japan's invasion, the Japanese army supported a puppet regime in northeastern China, the center of which was located in Xinjing, present-day Changchun, Jilin. Former Qing emperor Pu Yi was installed as the puppet emperor in 1932. This regime is referred to as Manzhouguo. In 1940, Japan invited Wang Jingwei, the former KMT member and contemporary pro-Japanese politician, to be the head of a Japanese-supported collaborationist government in Nanjing. The regime is known as the

Wang Jingwei Regime. Both the Republic of China and the PRC denied the legal status of these regimes.

3. Capital of Republican China in contemporary memory

3.1 Shanghai, the capital in popular memory

If we understand "capital" as "a place associated more than any other with a specified activity or product", then Shanghai is no doubt the capital of Republican China. My 2017 survey revealed that the Chinese public, especially the younger generation, considers Shanghai to represent Republican China. When being asked to write down the city they have in mind when hearing the word "Republican China", 71.1% (60 out of 83) replied Shanghai, 8.43% wrote down Beijing, the rest answered Tianjin, Nanjing, Jinan and Kunming. Two of three people who answered Nanjing have lived there. One was born in Nanjing while another one was currently pursuing her degree at Nanjing University. The majority of the participants who answered Shanghai have not visited Shanghai.

Unlike other cities in ancient China, Shanghai grew organically without a strictly designed urban landscape. It was officially made a city in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) but did not receive much government attention until the late Qing Dynasty. The First Opium War (1839-1842) started China's history of being colonized as well as Shanghai's prosperity. The Qing court's failure in the war ended with *The Treaty of Nanjing*, where Shanghai was required to be one of the five cities to be opened to foreigners. Located in the Yangtze River's estuary, between Huangpu and Wusong Rivers, Shanghai is equipped with a harbor and hinterland. The convenient location attracted foreign capital and political powers to be established here. Its loose governance from the central government fostered extraordinary tolerance towards cultural and commercial diversity (Denison & Yu, 2014). First British, then French, and gradually many western powers established their concessions in Shanghai. The city did not experience many struggles between the contradictions of "being modern" and "being Chinese" (ibid.). It rapidly expanded in size and upgraded the urban infrastructure under foreign investment. Since then, the city has been closely associated with the international society.

After military power overthrew the Qing court, Shanghai became the focal stage of many activities that have shaped China. Once a forgotten small fishing village, Shanghai had become a world city (MacPherson, 2012, p. 38). Flourishing industries created a great need for workers. Young people flooded into Shanghai from its surrounding areas. The gap between rich and poor, foreigners and Chinese, prepared a disgruntled working population for the foundation of the CCP. In 1921, the CCP held its first conference in a residential building in the French Concession. Sun Yat-sen valued the financial potential of Shanghai and considered it crucial for nation saving. Before his death in 1925, he

cooperated with the Shanghai Municipality on the urban development of Shanghai. As a result of this cooperation, the Shanghai Municipality appointed a committee, which published a semiofficial urban development plan of the city in 1927, the *Greater Shanghai Plan*. It called for the construction of a new city center north of the Shanghai settlements and connected to port re-developments (ibid., p. 39). The implementation of the plan was interrupted by the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1932. The final wartime blow came in 1937 (Ho, 2018, p. 67). The war destroyed much of its civic center but increased its politic status owing to its strategic location.

After the foundation of the PRC, Shanghai went through a huge transformation from a former colonized capitalist city to a communist one. Its "imperialist" past which once brought it prosperity needed to be expunged by "diminishing its economic hegemony" (MacPherson, 2002, p. 39). Its economy was only revived as a result of the economic reforms in the 1980s. "Capitalism in its contemporary manifestations has returned to China's historically most capitalist place" (ibid., p. 38). Despite the Chinese government's attempt to rewrite Shanghai's past from being capitalist and imperial to revolutionary and liberation (Ho, 2018), its Republican past has never been forgotten. Historians of Shanghai agree that the 1930s were the "Golden Age" (Arkaraprasertkul, 2010, p. 239). "One of the most active areas of research……concerns the urban history of Shanghai in the Republican period (Yeh, 1997, p. 375)". Mass media and cultural industry have promoted this obsession with Republican Shanghai to a nationwide imagination. Republican Shanghai is beautified on big and small screens (e.g. *The Wasted Times* 罗曼蒂克消亡史³², *Love Story in Shanghai* 像雾像雨又像风³³, *Romance in the Rain* 情深深雨蒙蒙³⁴), in publications (Eileen Chang³⁵ for example. Her writing inspired by Republican Shanghai urban life has been highly admired by the public). These cultural products have shaped the public's understanding of Republican China, the result of which will be shown in the later discussion, where I will give an example of visitors reenacting famous scenes from the TV series. Residents, Chinese tourists and foreign visitors voluntarily join the memory craze for Shanghai's "Golden Age". Daily life in Shanghai turns in to a *lieu de mémoire*, a living performance of legendary Republican Shanghai (Lagerkvist, 2013, pp. 10-11). Everyday practice in Shanghai repeats, enhances and continuously reconstructs its Republican narrative.

³² A 2016 Chinese-Hong Kong film directed by Cheng Er. It tells a gangster and spy story set in 1930s Shanghai.

³³ Also known as *Symphony of Rain*. It is a 2001 Chinese television drama series directed by Zhao Baogang, set in 1930s Shanghai.

³⁴ A 2001 Chinese television drama directed by Li Ping. The story was adapted from Chiung Yao's romantic novel. The TV series set the story in 1930s Shanghai.

³⁵ Eileen Chang (1920-1995), also known as Zhang Ailing, is one of the most influential writers in Republican China.

3.2 Nanjing, the forgotten capital

Museum Facts & Data, posted by the American Alliance of Museums, indicates that museums are considered educational by 98% of Americans. It is believed to be "the most trustworthy source of information", "a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers or even personal accounts by relatives", and "rated higher than local papers, non-profit researchers, the U.S. government or academic researchers" (2018). A museum is an authoritative place for knowledge (ibid.).

Preceding sections have explained that Nanjing's status as the capital was not consistent from 1911 to 1949. The Nanjing Museum published a brochure about the Republican Gallery, entitled "The Former Capital, Nanjing in the Republican Time (老南京: 民国首都社会风貌)". As the text states, "the Republic, a modernizing age of China. Nanjing, a thirty-eight-year capital of the Republic. Through replicating the historical scenes, the Republican Gallery represents the history of the Republic where traditions encountered modernism and the East met the West. Let's enter the historical context to explore the memories while walking along the streets of the old Nanjing. (民国, 一段近代化³⁶的岁月。南京, 一座历史三十八年的民国首都。民国馆通过建筑场景的真实还原, 再现了那段传统与现代, 东方与西方交融的时代画面。在这片历史的天空下, 让我们寻着老南京的街巷, 走到记忆的深处)". It would appear that the Nanjing Museum curators are convinced that people will not be hypercritical about a miscalculation of years. The historic mistake triggers me to inquire about their intention. My assumption is that the memory of Nanjing as a Republican capital is not widely shared in the public memory, and it needs to be enhanced.

It is not the only inaccuracy in the Republican Gallery. When the Nanjing Museum reopened in 2012, a trolley car was displayed in front of the train station in the Republican Gallery, with a trolley trail going through the whole street. The trolley car aroused harsh criticism from the local visitors. "In our early Nanjing, we had all kinds of vehicles", one visitor posted online, "including the ones flying in the sky, running on the ground, and swimming in the water. The only thing we lacked is the trolley car (我们老南京什么都有, 各种交通工具, 天上飞的, 地上跑的, 水里游的, 我们唯一没有的, 就是这个有轨电车)". The same person contacted local media to call for the removal of the trolley car since it might give tourists the wrong impression that 1930s Nanjing had trolley cars³⁷ (Tian, 2014). His proposal won wide support from the media and the public. The curatorial team was forced to remove the trolley car and replaced the trolley railway with granite marbles. The public paid compliments to

³⁶ Both 近代化 and 现代化 are translated as modernization. In the Chinese context, 近代化 especially refers to the early stage of modernization before the foundation of PRC in 1949.

³⁷ From limited information available, it is hard to tell the age of this "someone". But it is very unlikely that he is old enough to have personally experienced 1930s Nanjing. He claimed that he gathered his information from historical archives but did not specify which ones.

this change of display because the granite marbles were often used in road construction in Republican Nanjing.

Visitors did not bother to complain against the expression of Nanjing having been the Republican capital for thirty-eight years, but they strongly opposed the display of a trolley car. It proved my assumption that the knowledge of Nanjing being the Republican capital is not of great significance in popular memory. It could have stemmed from the CCP's ideology on giving itself the most credit for the victory in the Sino-Japanese war and obscuring the history of the KMT's governance in mainland China, especially Nanjing's urban development under KMT leadership. This is because the KMT is supposed to be depicted as the rotten and evil regime. Republican characteristics that may remind people of Taiwan are delicately covered for political reasons. For instance, the Nanjing Presidential Office elsewhere in the city is officially named the Nanjing Modern History Museum. The main display of the museum is the daily life of Sun Yat-sen, although Chiang Kai-shek's leadership here exceeded Sun, in both influence and length of time. The memory of Nanjing being the Republican capital has disappeared.

Once a memory is lost, it is hard to reconstruct it, especially when it does not fit contemporary memory storytelling. The Republican Gallery curatorial team made attempts to reconstruct the memory of Nanjing as the Republican capital by including all that they considered to be the Republican characteristics in the display. Dai Qun, who was in charge of the Republican Gallery construction, admitted that the architectural team from the Ancient Architecture Department collected information for the buildings inside the Republican Gallery from all over China. They sought inspiration from Tianjin, Dalian, and other representative Republican cities. The trolley car mentioned above was a Republican characteristic they captured in Tianjin, to "show a bigger landscape of Republican China" (Tian, 2014).

The Republican Gallery employs both literature and artifacts to draw a portrayal of Nanjing as the center of Republican China and expects to plant the idea in the minds of the public. The attempt was rejected by the local visitors because the memory construction process goes from top to bottom, and ignores the public will. The public was excluded from the Republican Gallery curation. The Nanjing residents were not aware of the construction plan of the Republican Gallery until its completion. One interviewee's answer to my question about the knowledge of the Republican Gallery could represent the public's memory of the curation, "I know absolutely nothing (完全不了解)". "We knew that the museum was closed due to renovation. I heard rumors that the museum would be bigger and have an enlarged collection. But we did not know what and when. Then just before my graduation, suddenly, it was there (我们知道博物馆停业了, 要装修。我听说是要扩建, 要扩大收藏规模。但是具体是什

么，什么时间开门，这些我们都不清楚。然后我毕业的时候，突然就在那了)"³⁸. Compared to the public's ignorance of the Republican Gallery, the government was in full control of the curation. Zhujing Design (筑境设计), the executive team of the Republican Gallery, writes on their website that the construction proposal was approved by the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Culture. Zhujing Design belongs to a state-owned enterprise, Jiangsu Artall Cultural Industry Company (江苏爱涛文化企业有限公司). It won the bid through an open tendering under the government's supervision, to which only a limited number of companies were invited. The artifacts on display in the Republican Gallery were collected from the public, including second-hand markets, antique markets and individual collections (Tian, 2014). It is worth mentioning that the objects were collected on the basis of the professional team's selection, instead of the public donation. The Republican Gallery ignored the importance of building a solid mass base through its curatorial practice, and thus it failed to build a close connection with the visitors. It has made it harder for the Republican Gallery to influence the public memory, when it does not have a loyal and involved audience.

Memory theories have explored how governments manipulate memory to alter, rewrite and eliminate individual storytelling to solidify their governance. Paul Connerton argues that collective amnesia and organized forgetting are distinctive features of a non-democratic regime (1999). A group amnesia of the public's negative actions under Nazi rule emerged in East Germany. It led to the production of an official memory of early communist members' participation in the antifascist struggle against Hitler (Epstein, 1999). But as Denton mentions, state narratives and official memory are neither monolithic nor solid. They continuously evolve to adapt to changing economic and political demands (2014, p. 3). The tension between official and vernacular memories does not necessarily follow the stereotype that official memory eliminates the vernacular memory. Denton observes that individual testimonies and official narratives are intertwined in complex ways and should not be simplified as being in opposition (ibid., p. 14). Official memory and state discourse mediate individual memory through state-controlled media; individual memories seek opportunities to fill in the blanks left by official memory and attack official memory at its weak point. The Nanjing public has accepted the story of Nanjing being "Republican Nanjing" instead of "the Republican capital Nanjing", as the result of the CCP's strategy to wipe out the influence of the KMT's governance. When the Republican Gallery tries to replace "Republican Nanjing" with "the Republican capital Nanjing", it has encountered difficulties caused by memory persistence. Memory construction is a dynamic, lengthy procedure, therefore, I will not rule out the possibility that the Republican capital Nanjing narrative replaces the "Republican Nanjing" in the public memory in the future.

³⁸ From field notes.

The fact that the public can influence the official memory making on Republican China suggests that the restrictions on this topic have been eased. From 1949 to 1966, the term Republican China (minguo 民国) was rarely seen in the People's Daily (人民日报), the most influential and authoritative official newspaper of the CCP. When necessary, the newspaper used specific dates and events to avoid using Republican China. When it had to refer to an era instead of a specific time, it used terms with strong emotions, such as "old society (旧社会)", "before liberation (解放前)", to generally refer to Republican China and the late Qing dynasty. These terms construct a sharp contrast between Republican China and the PRC. Republican China was old and bad while the PRC is good and new. The liberation drew the line to separate them. Researchers conclude that the absence of the term blurs the concept of Republican China to the readers (Yang & Yin, 2015). The taboo on Republican China was broken after economic reforms in the early 1980s (Zhang & Weatherley, 2013). Zhang and Weatherly point out that the emergence of the increased interest in the Republican era on the mainland resulted from the economic reform and the CCP's desire for nationalist legitimacy. This also resulted in the CCP losing its absolute control over Republican China memory construction.

3.3 Nanjing: a city without a distinctive Republican narrative

"When I hear of Republican China, Shanghai immediately comes to mind. The Shanghai described by Eileen Chang or the *Shanghai Bund*³⁹ in the TV series. I used to immerse myself in the romantic Republican Shanghai atmosphere in my teens. The fabulous dancing halls with gorgeous ladies with fashionable bob haircuts, dressed in expensive Qipao⁴⁰ (听到民国的时候, 我马上想到了上海。张爱玲笔下的上海, 电视剧上海滩里的上海。青少年时期, 我一度任由自己沉浸在民国上海的浪漫氛围里。金碧辉煌的舞厅里交际花花团锦簇, 梳着流行的波波头, 穿着名贵的旗袍)", wrote one interviewee in my 2017 questionnaire research. The keywords of Republican Shanghai stories I gathered from this research, are "modern girls" (along with an exquisite description of their hairstyles and dresses), "romance" and "Shanghai Bund gangster (also spy stories)".

The imagination of Republican Beijing shares the obsession with "modern girls" but of a different type. Shanghai modern girls are labeled by their appearance while Beijing modern girls' characters lie in their behaviors. A commonly shared Republican Beijing image is that of "a short haired girl from a rich and traditional family with a progressive attitude. She attends school against the family's wish and

³⁹ *Shanghai Bund*, also known as *the Bund*, is a 1980 Hong Kong TV series set in 1920s Shanghai made by Television Broadcasts Limited. It tells a gangster's romance story, in the background of invasion and gangster power struggle. It was reshot in mainland in 2007, directed by Gao Xixi.

⁴⁰ Qipao was a popular piece of clothing in late Qing Dynasty and Republican China. It originates from Manchu female dress and was modernized to adapt to the contemporary need.

actively participates in school activities". "Modern", "progressive" and "revolution" are the themes of Republican Beijing.

Unlike the other cities where a distinct narrative has been identified regarding Republican China, no such narrative is explicitly recorded for Nanjing. Three Republican Nanjing stories I gathered do not share many similarities. One interviewee wrote a story of a renowned Republican litterateur Zhu Ziqing's (1898-1948) night visit to Qinhuai River. It turned out to be an essay in a Chinese textbook. Another one is the gossip of Chiang Kai-shek requiring the municipal department to plant phoenix trees in Nanjing to entertain his wife. Although the fact is that the trees were planted as part of the *Capital Plan* (首都计划) published in 1927 by the Nanjing National Government, the gossip is more popular because of its nature of being celebrity anecdotes. One interviewee wrote an abstract of *Eighteen Springs* (十八春), a love story set in Nanjing written by Eileen Chang. It was first serialized in a Shanghai newspaper in 1938, then republished many times in contemporary China. From my field trip, I noticed that the story of Nanjing being the former capital city of six dynasties (liuchaogudu 六朝古都), and the story of prostitutes on Qinhuai River (qinhuaibayan 秦淮八艳), are the dominant stories in Nanjing's city memory. When being asked their first impression of Nanjing, no answer bypasses these two features. The popular memory of Nanjing has been anchored within them, and thus there is no space left for a Republican located narrative.

IV. Exhibiting an imagined past

1. Traveling back in time through space

"Museum spaces are more than just containers for exhibition settings, and objects on display. Layout, design and atmosphere are some of the most significant factors in the overall experience of a museum visit" (Simonsson, 2014, p. 1). Visitors do not only learn what to see but how to see from museum visit experiences. The spatial experience of museum visiting teaches visitors how to appreciate objects in a certain order. My spatial experience of the Nanjing Museum gives me the feeling that the Nanjing Museum does not want its visitors to pay attention to the Republican Gallery, or at least to not consider the Republican Gallery as part of the Nanjing Museum.

The Nanjing Museum consists of two buildings and six exhibition halls. Each building has two floors above ground and one underground. The main building stands in the west of the museum yard, where the Service Center, the Gallery of Art, The Digital Gallery, the Gallery of Intangible Heritage, the Gallery of Temporary Exhibition and the Gallery of the Scene of the Republican Period are located. The northern building is the remnant from the Republican China era museum building and currently houses the Gallery of History. The two buildings are connected by a hallway internally decorated with traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphies.

The three galleries above ground, the Gallery of Art, the Gallery of Temporary Exhibitions, and the Gallery of History enjoy the greatest significance in the Nanjing Museum. Poster and banners inviting visitors to these galleries hang everywhere in the museum yard. Their locations are clearly marked on direction signs and maps. Underground galleries are built in an irregular circle, centering on a small hall connected to the ground floor with stairs and elevators. The small hall is an extension of the Gallery of Intangible Heritage, where the souvenirs sold in the hall are made on-site. Souvenir shopping is an integral part of the museum experience in the Nanjing Museum. I will come back to this issue in another section.

In the Nanjing Museum's overall design, the Republican Gallery is of little account. Not only is it excluded from the official guide route and the audio guide system, but its location is also well hidden. Besides, information on the Republican Gallery is limited on the Nanjing Museum's website. The Chinese website introduces the Republican Gallery as an achievement of the second renovation under the government's support and supervision. On the English page, the Republican Gallery is invisible.

With great observation and patience, visitors on the underground floor will find a hidden staircase going down, behind the staircase connecting the underground and the ground floor. While most stairs in the Nanjing Museum are made of patterned white marble, this one is made of gray cement. At the end of the staircase stands a gate, which is a distinctive feature that distinguishes the Republican Gallery from the other exhibition halls in the Nanjing Museum. The Nanjing Museum generally installs

built-in sliding glass sensor doors at exhibition hall entrances. These doors are open most of the times, except at opening and closing time. Visitors from one exhibition hall to another will not be stopped by the gate, and thus it creates a sense of continuity. The gate of the Republican Gallery employs no modern technology. It consists of two heavy iron barrier doors. One door is always opened to the inside of the Republican Gallery, through which people can take a glance at a street corner scene. The voyeuristic opportunity sends an open invitation to the visitors to explore its inside, the full image of the street. Another door remains closed, triggering people's curiosity. It creates a substantial screen to block visitors' views and leaves space for imagination. The gate and the staircase together construct the entrance of the Republican Gallery and exclude the Republican Gallery from the Nanjing Museum.

Located deep underground, the Republican Gallery is not equipped with any natural light. While the Nanjing Museum buildings are equipped with a modern illuminating system, no light is installed in this staircase⁴¹. The deeper the staircase goes, the darker the environment is. Similarly, convenient facilities for the disabled are absent. Modern technology meets its end (at least so it appears) at the beginning of this narrow, rough and slightly slippery staircase.

After stumbling down the stairs, visitors are presented with a Republican street view. The long entrance serves the function of a time machine. When groping down the stairs, visitors are trained to get accustomed to the shimmering light instead of strong incandescent light, the bumping stone road instead of smooth polished marble, and noisy street sounds instead of the silent, serious and even sacred museum atmosphere. Although the museum experience is a personal meaning-making process, I would argue that the entrance display of the Republican Gallery has successfully supplied its visitors with the feeling of walking into the past.

The Republican Gallery is designed as a straight shopping street from south to north, with several alleys and many stores. A street nameplate standing in front of the entrance suggests the street name is Central South Road (中央南路). This street starts from a crossroads, where the two-storey Xinjiekou Bank of Communications (新街口交通银行) stands. Although Nanjing has never had a Central South Road, visitors still find its archetype through their life experience. Zhongshan South Road (中山南路) is considered to be the inspiration for Central South Road. The 1927 *Capital Plan* issued by the Nanjing National Government decided to develop Xinjiekou to be the business center. In the following ten years, surrounding Xinjiekou, a business network including four streets came into shape. The four streets are Zhongshan East Road (中山东路), Zhongzheng Road (中正路), Hanzhong Road (汉中路), and Zhongshan Road (中山路). Two roads were named after Sun Yat-sen, whose Chinese name is Sun

⁴¹ The guide explained that the illumination system is controlled by a modern technology center and it covers the whole Nanjing Museum, but no sign of contemporary science and light can be found in this staircase leading to the Republican Gallery.

Zhongshan but internationally known by his courtesy name. One road was named after Chiang Kai-shek's given name Chiang Zhongzheng. After 1949, the PRC denied the legitimacy of the KMT governance history and tried to eliminate its influence, therefore street names that might remind people of Chiang Kai-shek were changed. The current Zhongshan South Road is developed on the foundation of Zhongzheng Road. Similarities shared between the imagined Central South Road and the real Zhongshan South Road are remarkable. Besides the similar names⁴², they are both south-north business streets starting from the Bank of Communication in Xinjiekou. The building of the Bank of Communication was once used as the Central Reserve Bank by the Wang Jingwei Regime and is now a trading center. Local people call it the former building of the Bank of Communication (工商银行老楼). TheWorldofAnywhereDoor (任意门的世界) compares the shops in the Republican Gallery and contemporary Nanjing on his web blog, where he refers to Central South Road as Zhongshan South Road (2015). The employment of a familiar Nanjing landscape makes it easier for the locals to immerse themselves in the exhibition and adds Nanjing features for the non-Nanjing visitors. High similarity blurs the boundary between imagination and reality, and enhances the convincing atmosphere and credibility. Adapted from reality, the Republican Gallery has made changes to the exhibition so the display looks like an idealized and beautified version of the Republican Nanjing landscape.

A panorama of a dark blue night sky with sparkling stars hangs on the ceiling. Under the stars, street lamps cover the street in a hazy, blurred and gentle yellow light. Minimal lighting creates a mysterious and uncanny atmosphere in some corners where the human figures are too dark to be seen. A little girl cried out because she was scared by a rickshaw in the shadow while her parents took this opportunity to educate her about the difficulty and poverty of Republican life, especially the hard labor and the shortage of necessary life materials, light for instance. Not all the visitors realize the educational value of the Republican Gallery, however. Visitors praise the lighting design for its "romantic atmosphere" and "Republican style".

The flames glowing and shaking inside the light bulbs are electric instead of gaslight. In the 1900s, gas lamps were introduced to Nanjing with the arrival of foreigners and their technology. In 1910, with the foundation of Jinling Power Station (金陵电厂), electric lamps were put into use on a small range. By then the lamps were hung on electric wires across the street. They were easily broken by the heavy rain and wind, typical Nanjing weather. These lamps caused some car accidents because the drivers were blinded by the strong light (Wang, 2016, p. 69). In 1929, the Nanjing National Government distributed

⁴² Central and Zhongshan do not look the same in English but the Chinese Zhongyang (Central) and Zhongshan are easily mistaken.

funding to install electric lamps on Zhongshan Road, as the current lamps were either stolen or broken, causing much violence in the darkness. The reedited *Capital Plan* of 1929 regulated that the lamps should be installed on pillars along the streets. It also required that in the business district, the lamps were supposed to be at least four meters away from the ground. The proposal was fully processed by the end of 1929 (ibid.). In the Republican Gallery, we see lamps both on wires and pillars, some outside of building walls as well. Some diorama exhibitions do not get enough light and photographers require the assistance of flashlights. The combination of lamps from different times blurs the precise time of the period the Republican Gallery exhibits, reaffirming the concept that the Republican Gallery is about Republican Nanjing as an entirety and contains all the features through the decades.

To conclude, the Republican Gallery is designed as a hidden space excluded from the rest of the Nanjing Museum. The design aims at stressing that the Republican Gallery is anchored in re-envisioning a romanticized "past" which "contemporary" visitors are familiar with.

2 Consuming Republican China: a take-away memory

Lianne McTavish argues that the position of the Carrousel du Louvre, the shopping mall in the Louvre Museum, Paris, expresses the Louvre curators' contradictory goals. "Even as they strive to present a modern and democratic museum, one that is open to a diverse public, they simultaneously attempt to maintain the status of the Louvre as an elite protector of the French cultural heritage" (1998, p. 168). The same argument applies to the status of the Republican Gallery in the Nanjing Museum. Located deep underground with no other galleries on the same floor, the Republican Gallery occupies a precarious area, inside the museum building and outside of the museum system. The different structural features exclude the Republican Gallery from the Nanjing Museum. It is an underground attachment, a black sheep, and a controversial entity.

Although souvenir shops have been widely introduced to museums worldwide, it is rare to see a museum set up a whole gallery as a consuming space. By the summer of 2017, about thirty stores had started their business in the hardly one and half kilometers' pedestrian street in the Republican Gallery. From grocery shops to fashion departments, from snack bars to cafeterias, the Republican Gallery has it all. Shops here can be categorized into three types: catering services, namely Taiping Western Restaurant (太平西餐厅), Tai Mountain Xiang Noodle (泰山祥面馆), Hongfu Restaurant (洪福饭店), Chun Xiang Cafe (醇享咖啡厅), Jinfeng Restaurant (锦丰饭店), Residence Hotel (民居客栈)⁴³ and Red Duke Bar (红公爵酒吧); grocery shops, including a silk thread shop (untitled), Tianbao Antique (天宝古玩店), Fengtai Flower Shop (丰泰花店), Lirong Knife and Scissors (利荣刀剪), a jewelry

⁴³ The hotel is in fact a restaurant, with a diorama of a Republican hotel room scene upstairs.

shop (untitled), Wang Shunxing Barbershop (王顺兴理发店), Ma Qingkang Clothing Store (马庆康服装店), China Soda (中华汽水), Tianhefu Grocery (天和福杂货铺), North and South Goods (南北货), and Lee's Tea (李记茶); and service industry, which are the Bank of Communication, a pawn shop (unnamed), a post office, the Earth Newspaper (大地报社), Hong Fanyu Clinic (洪范宇诊所), Xianghongtang Chinese Herb Medicine (祥弘堂中药铺) and Dehe Photography (德和照相铺). In addition to the Bank of Communication and the Earth Newspaper, which only serve the function as part of the display now, all the other sections are functional⁴⁴. Visitors can walk into the Wang Shunxing Barbershop to ask for a haircut, or send letters in the post office.

The Republican Gallery design rejects the traditional museum experience, and presents a shopping street to its visitors with limited introductions and explanations. The only introductory literature visitors receive is the brochure which I referred to previously. Furthermore, I noticed that not many visitors had the brochure because it was not distributed by the museum working staff. The visitors must find it on the service center desk on their own. The current 150 words' version brochure originates from a booklet of 15,000 words. Gong Liang, the head of the Nanjing Museum, decided to cut the words because "all the introductions are pale and powerless. It is better to let the audience immerse and ask themselves what they understand (任何解说都苍白乏力, 不如让观众融入其中, 问他们自己看懂了什么)" (Fang, 2016). He explains that the Nanjing Museum is expected to be "not only the palace for culture and art, but also a place for urban citizens' entertainment (不仅要文化艺术的殿堂, 还要做市民休闲的场所)" (ibid.). Here the motivation of the Republican Gallery design becomes clear. It aims to attract and hold a larger and diverse public, the group of people who have been fed up with the systemized museum tour and jumping at the opportunity to be their own guides. Gong's expectation subconsciously puts "citizen's entertainment" on the opposite side of "culture and art". Distinctions are made between the "high" "palace" and the "popular" "place". From what we can read from the Republican Gallery curation, Gong's understanding of urban citizens' entertainment equals creature comforts.

Pierre Bourdieu finds that although most European museums state that their goals are to attract a diverse public and enlighten the people, the museum audience continued to be made up of highly educated patrons (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991). Bourdieu argues that an individual's cultural capital accumulation decides his aesthetic preference. The distinction of social class leads to the distinction of taste. McTavish believes that when the Museum de Louvre constructed the Carrousel du Louvre, it blurred the boundary between the "high" and the "popular". "With the potential confusion of 'high' and

⁴⁴ The function of the pawn shop is partially disabled. Customers can purchase things from the pawn shop but cannot pawn their belongings.

'popular' culture in the Grand Louvre, however, the role of the museum in (re)producing social distinctions is less obvious" (McTavish, 1998, p. 175). My observation challenges such a conclusion. Visitors of the Nanjing Museum have split into different groups. My classification may not be accurate but it covers all the types I encountered. All-inclusive tourists are determined to finish the museum marathon in one go and hurry from one exhibition hall to another. Connoisseurs already have the artifact in mind before their visit and go to their beloved piece of artwork directly. Less professional than art critics, art lovers (or imposters) are fascinated by the opportunities to showcase their familiarity with temporary exhibitions and are busy taking selfies with objects. To my surprise, the third type are the Republican Gallery visitors. People make reservations for dining, have a cup of coffee or hang around in the Republican Gallery. The museum institution alienates visitors by their taste, videlicet, their social backgrounds. Opposed to what McTavish suggests, the social distinctions are reproduced and enhanced with a shopping purpose institution joining a civilized museum. Although the purpose of attracting a diverse public is achieved, it remains unknown if the public really benefits from the "high" culture enlightenment.

Behaviors strictly forbidden in upstairs galleries are allowed in the Republican Gallery. On condition that the food and drink are purchased inside the Republican Gallery, noting the Republican Gallery not the Nanjing Museum⁴⁵, visitors are encouraged to satisfy their appetites. Different from average museum cafeterias, where dining is clearly separated from the museum tour and strictly restricted to a certain space, the Republican Gallery allows visitors to feed themselves everywhere, unless it is against the shop's regulations. For instance, yogurt bottles are not welcomed in the antique shop. Without enough space for seats, visitors are forced to walk around while enjoying their snacks. Gong Liang believes that dining is essential to the Republican Gallery experience. He requires all the teahouse visitors to order one pot of tea because otherwise they fail to experience the complete teahouse atmosphere and culture (Fang, 2016).

Consumerism is highly worshipped and celebrated in the Republican Gallery. Although the entrance fee is included in the Nanjing Museum ticket, everything inside the Republican Gallery requires buying. Post Second World War America developed museum shops urgently as "a response to increased museum attendance", "mass consumption", "the rise of individualism and cultural pluralism, and the modern consumers' search for novelty, nostalgia and later high culture" (Kovach, 2014, p. 103).

⁴⁵ The Republican Gallery has a strict rule on what belongs to the Republican Gallery and what belongs to the Nanjing Museum. For example, I witnessed one customer asking the Republican Gallery post office worker to stamp her postcards. Her requirement was rejected because her postcards were bought in the Nanjing Museum souvenir shop, not in the Republican Gallery. The worker refused to give further explanation but I think it is because shops in the Republican Gallery are privately owned. They pay rent to the Nanjing Museum and do not share the museum profit. One grocery shop owner proved my suspicion and complained that although the Republican Gallery has a large number of visitors, once the cost and rent are deducted, profit is lower than shops outside (of the museum).

Kovach looks through the development of museum retails in America and observes that "the museum shop concept" in the 1970s "was successful enough to warrant museum shops without museums (ibid., p. 118)". The Republican Gallery pushes the obsession with museum retail to an extreme. The museum shop replaces the museum and becomes the museum itself. Kovach concludes the argument among curators on the duty of museum shops and wonders whether museum retail should aim at profitability or education, and whether the museum shop managers should expect their products to adapt to the public desire or improve the public taste. The Republican Gallery indirectly answers Kovach's concerns by changing the identity of museum shop managers. As mentioned above, retailers inside the Republican Gallery are selected by the Nanjing Museum and run the business on their own. The difference between the museum retail and average retail outside of the museum disappears. It is up to the shop owners instead of the museum curators to decide whether the museum shops should carry on the museum function of education or focus on making the maximum profit.

Visitors on the bustling street pushing through the crowd to make their own way eventually encounter similar souvenir shops under different titles. The free retail results in great homogeneity of the merchandise. Grocery stores are stocked with modern made calendar posters, mirrors, fans, simple toys (strangely the Qing royal court hair accessories and swords have also passed the "to-be-Republican" examination. I understand it as another proof that Republican China and the late Qing Dynasty are combined in the popular memory of Republican China), and crafts. Clothing stores are full of qipao and silk fabrics. The qipao was once the symbol of modern girls but this ceased after the foundation of the PRC. In recent years, qipao has been reestablished as a cultural representation of "Chineseness", therefore, a "national dress", especially after its presence in international events (Chew, 2007). It has regained popularity in the fashion industry and is embodied as a salient Republican dress, regarding its relatively recent emergence in Chinese history and its rebel origin as a symbol of female body revolution. In the Republican Gallery, the salesmen take full advantage of customers' desire of "being Republican" in a modern society to stimulate their shopping inclination. They spare no effort to exaggerate the customers' "Republican style of beauty", which reminds people of "models walking out of Republican calendar posters"⁴⁶. Female workers in the Republican Gallery are required to wear unified qipao and speak a soft southern dialect for "it represents the Republic". No similar dressing code is required for the male workers except for a few assistants in the teahouse, Xianghongtang Chinese Herb and Hong Fanyu Clinic, where they only hire male workers, then put them in long gowns and fake pigtailed. The pigtail was the Manchu male hairstyle that was imposed on the Han Chinese during the Qing Dynasty. It was abolished in 1912 when the Republic overthrew the Qing Dynasty.

⁴⁶ From field notes.

Similar to the Qing royal court hair accessories sold in the Republican Gallery, the pigtail reveals the fact that the late Qing Dynasty has become part of the popular memory of Republican China. The Hong Fanyu Clinic may have found its inspiration in Hong Fanyu Dentist Clinic, a well-known dentist in Republican Nanjing but there is no evidence that Hong's family authorized the Republican Gallery⁴⁷. This western clinic is connected with the Chinese Herb Pharmacy behind the counter. During its random and short opening time⁴⁸, clinic workers are passionate to recommend customers to purchase tonics from the Chinese Herb Pharmacy.

From my experience, things sold in the Republican Gallery are not much different from any other tourist shopping streets. What tourists can find in Wangfujing and Nanluoguxiang in Beijing, or Jinli in Chengdu, they find here. Customers are aware of the relatively high prices of the souvenirs in the Republican Gallery but insist on shopping. Li and Cai's research result is that although most tourists are "dissatisfied with the price, uniqueness and workmanship of the souvenirs (2008, p. 201)", the souvenir purchasing continues because "a souvenir can serve as a reminder to those who have visited an attraction and as an enticer to those who have not" (ibid., p. 202). A souvenir's value lies in its status as part of a collection, as a material anchor to remind the owner of this visit, rather than the object itself as a product. Stewart explains that "in this process of distancing the memory of the body is replaced by the memory of the object, a memory standing outside the self and thus presenting both a surplus and a lack of significance. The experience of the object lies outside the body's experience - it is saturated with meanings that will never be fully revealed to us" (1993, p. 133). The significance of the object is centered in the understandings and memories of the owner, no longer in the purpose of the designer. "Every souvenir object represents a miniature version of past events, which at every subsequent biographical remove is liable to further simplification" (Poulter, 2011, p. 268). I happened to see a little girl begging her mother to buy her a mirror with Hu Die's portrait. Hu Die, also known as Butterfly Wu, was one of the most popular actresses in Republican China. The mother paid for the mirror and advised that she would hand over the mirror if the girl would rehearse the story of her visit and promise to tell it to the families. The girl followed the instructions and added that the mirror would remind her of the lovely and educational time she spent in the Republican Gallery and the Nanjing Museum. We can predict that in the near future, this roughly made mirror will be the trigger of a memory storytelling, inviting the girl's families to revisit the past through her eyes. Although the mother and the daughter were still physically inside the Republican Gallery, their present already became the memory of the

⁴⁷ In general, the Republican Gallery does not value intellectual property. One shop owner indirectly said that merchandise sold in her shops was bought from Yiwu, Zhejiang, a place famous for its intellectual property infringing products.

⁴⁸ The Hong Fanyu Clinic is the medical service center of the Republican Gallery. A sign on the clinic door introduces the opening time of the clinic but it is not always correct.

past in the future. Surrounding a souvenir as "a point of memory (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2006, p. 353)", an individual forms a memorial narrative which he believes to be true. Pearce alleges that "no one is interested in (the) other people's souvenirs" (As cited in Poulter, 2011, p. 279). Poulter disagrees on that and points out that "although articulating a fragile connection to personal memory, when souvenir objects are scrutinized they begin to disclose some of their secrets and reveal more than a blinkered view into a private world" (ibid.). I agree with Poulter's argument and found support for it. One student wrote a pile of postcards in the Republican Gallery post office. He explained that he "want (ed) to share the precious memory with his remote friends" and "hope(d) they can come here together next time"⁴⁹. When he sent a postcard away, he shared his personal memory of the visit with the others and expectation to achieve a mutual understanding towards the future.

3. The Republican Gallery as a parody: implanted memory and performativity

To "recreate a real Republican China scene", the Republican Gallery collected 30,000 Republican artifacts from second-hand markets and public donors. These artifacts are exhibited in the newly-built Republican style shops and departments, together with contemporary commodities. Nothing seems to represent the past as concretely as the concrete object itself (Flath, 2011, p. 257). As time progresses, as the memory of people who have experienced Republican China gradually fades and disappears from public attention, the significance of these objects as "memory traces" becomes heightened (Poulter, 2011, p. 280). They provide a material record of the "situated lives of the individuals" (Ibid.). Gong Liang expects that "the audience will learn" from "the material record" and understand "how Republican China life was" (Fang, 2016). Therefore, no sign or label is given to explain the artifacts or distinguish the artifacts from contemporary crafts, except a few pieces that are labeled with a "do not touch" sign and displayed behind fences or red lines. Visitors are encouraged to touch, use and interact with the objects in general. Gong Liang holds the expectation that the free interaction with the exhibits will inspire the visitors to learn about life in Republican China. In response to Gong's expectations, visitors develop their own comprehension of the display, although it may not be historically correct. During my third visit, I overheard someone explaining the reason why the pawn shop was closed. He said that the closed door of a pawn shop was a normal scene in Republican China because "people do not want to be known that they have to sell things to survive. It is to save the customer's face and secure the pawn shop's safety (不好意思让人知道得卖东西还钱。顾客也要面子。而且关上门当铺也安全)". To make it persuasive, he added, "I saw it many times in the TV series (我看电视里都是这

⁴⁹ From field notes.

么演的)"⁵⁰. After a while, a staff member opened the door from inside and apologized. He owed the late opening to the fact that the cleaning went slower than expected. During the rest of the day, the pawn shop remained open and visitors could walk in to see the fenced counter with no obstructions. This entertaining interlude reflects the awkward fact that the Republican Gallery does not achieve the educational purpose its curator sets up. People come to the Republican Gallery with a memory implanted by the mass media (in this case, TV series). Instead of being inspired by the exhibition and deepening their understanding of Republican China, visitors see what they have previously known.

The Republican China generation has disappeared, with the result that the connections between media and memory have become critical. Mass media have invaded the arena of memory and dominated the narrative production. Huyssen points out that "we cannot discuss personal, generational, or public memory separately from the enormous influence of the new media as carriers of all forms of memory" (2009, p. 18). Such implanted memories "which do not come from a person's lived experience in any strict sense" are defined as "prosthetic memories" by Landsberg (1995, p. 175). "At an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum", "an experience occurs through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history" (Landsberg, 1996, p. 2). Because of the rapid development of mass media and technology, contemporary people believe that they "remember" things that have never happened in their life experience, like the guy who remembered that pawn shops were supposed to be closed. The prosthetic memory coming from outside of the living experience shapes people's "remembrance" and comprehension, therefore, influences their behavior. Next to the north end of the Republican Gallery lies a train station, which is said to be a duplicate of the Pukou Train Station (浦口火车站). Built in 1908 and opened in 1912, Pukou Train Station was one of the earliest train stations in China. It was once used as the Nanjing North Train Station, the main train station in Nanjing after the foundation of the PRC. It retired in the 21st century after serving as a freight station for almost a decade. There used to be a period when people were allowed to visit the train station in its original settings but now it is completely shut down for future development. It is said there will be another Republican China theme district under construction surrounding Pukou Train Station. Many influential TV series and movies shot their classical scenes in Pukou Train Station, including *Romance in the Rain*, for instance. *Romance in the Rain* is a romantic drama adapted from a love novel under the same name. It became a hit in southeast Asia after its first broadcast in 2001. I happened to see reenactments of the classical scene from *Romance in the Rain*, where the leading actor comes back home by train from the frontier with a broken leg, his girlfriend waits for him in the train station and throws herself into his arms. Most couples were trying to get a picture of hugging in freeze-frame, the guy holding the girl up

⁵⁰ From field notes.

until her legs are off the floor. One brave girl shouted out the well-known line "Shuhuan, you stay there, let me run to you (书桓, 你不要动, 让我飞奔过去)" and received kind laughter and onlooker's flashlights. The visitors' unwitting memory practice becomes part of the exhibition. "The performance of memory is both a mnemonic device and a way in which individual memories are relived, revived, and refashioned" (Winter, 2010, p. 11). Judith Butler sees the individual's identity not as an expression of what one is, rather what one does, "that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (1990, p. 33). The performance of memory as a set of acts, is embodied in the visitor's physical appearances and behaviors. In the Republican Gallery, the memory performance makes implanted memory "real". The performance is added to the performers' life experience and the history of the onlookers, accordingly, a new group's collective memory is formed. Through this process, the "selected" past on display in the Republican Gallery is transformed into a "real" past, with its costumes, rituals and ceremonies.

The train station in the Republican Gallery is a well-designed diorama, a duplication of Pukou Train Station. It is a two-storey building with red lanterns hanging in its semi-open corridor. The office inside the train station is for staff only. A steam locomotive is located next to the train station. A black vintage car with red lines parked in front of it. Two human figures are placed a bit further away from the train station entrance, one standing in the corner with a towel on his arm, another one pulling a rickshaw. Dioramas and panoramas are widely used in the Republican Gallery. Dioramas were originally developed by Louis Daguerre as a forerunner of the cinema. It was designed to be a mobile theoretical device, where people can see a sequence of photographs through a fixed platform. The definition of the diorama develops with the technology innovation and is no longer restricted to the 2D world. "The diorama — like most illusionism ... —is a demonstration of a technical power to transform the material of the world into representation" (Don, 1995, p. 219). It is supposed to invoke the "wonder at the experience of being transported to a fully realised unreal world" and "the wonder at the technology which makes it all possible" (ibid.). The employment of the diorama and contemporary crafts break the "concrete" sense of the past brought by the "real" artifacts in the Republican Gallery. One end of the Republican Gallery is designed as a panorama of an arch on the brick wall. Under the arch is a painting of a shopping street with high buildings, busy pedestrians and neon lights. When visitors' eyesight moves along with the scene, their imagination relatively travels to a fictive field. The Republican Gallery, therefore, can extend its limited space to the end of the imagination.

The popularization of smartphones with high-quality built-in cameras and the trend of photography-based social media have encouraged people to record and share their museum experiences. From the iron entrance to the dark and narrow alley, the Republican Gallery is crowded with posing

visitors and flashlights. The museum visit that Gong Liang wants to create as an immersive Republican experience is frequently interrupted by modern technology products, phones and selfie sticks, in particular. It makes the scene uncanny. The Republican Gallery is not a realistic reconstruction of Republican China, but an illustration of how the curators wish Republican China to be perceived in the popular memory, a selected past shaped by the mass media, and a performance co-acted by the working staff and the visitors. It exhibits a scene of Republican China that has been broadly accepted and worshipped in the public arena and enhances the impression. But it fails to achieve its curatorial aim, which is to establish Nanjing as the center of the Republican narrative in popular memory.

**V. The missing piece in the
Republican Gallery:
the Nanjing Massacre**

What is missing in both the interviewees' Republican Nanjing imagination and the Republican Gallery, is the Nanjing Massacre, a representative event of Republican Nanjing. The Japanese army occupied Nanjing on December 13th, 1937 and committed numerous acts of violence during the first two months of their occupation. There is no record on why the Nanjing Massacre, the most significant event in Republican Nanjing is absent in a Republican exhibition. It could be explained by the motivation of the exhibition as a re-envision of "what was petty bourgeoisie life in Republican China like" (*Nanjing Daily*, 2013) and what detracts from this topic should be removed. The trauma of the Nanjing Massacre will no doubt violate the "bourgeois" atmosphere. Besides, the Republican Gallery aims to depict a picture of Republican China, instead of a specific time and event. A display of the Nanjing Massacre may have violated the exhibition proposal and resulted in a shift in exhibition emphasis. Another reasonable explanation is that there already is a worldwide renowned museum mediating the trauma of the Nanjing Massacre. It may cause unnecessary competition among curators in the tourist market. This chapter also suggests that although historically, the Nanjing Massacre belongs to the period of Republican China, the Nanjing Massacre is extracted and integrated into a different discourse system, therefore, absent from the Republican Nanjing narrative.

The memory seeking of the Nanjing Massacre started in Japan and has gone through oblivion and been revived (Li & Huang, 2017, p. 36). It was initially presented as evidence to denounce the Japanese Army's criminal act of aggression. In China, the discovery of the Nanjing Massacre memory is in combination with condemning the Japanese violence and invasion. In 1982, the Japanese government published a proposal on newly edited high school history textbooks, where the references to the Japanese army's violence in Nanjing were removed or altered. It provoked intense reactions and controversy in China. Before that, the Nanjing Massacre had disappeared in the public context because "as a suffering and humiliation history, it does not agree with the victory rhythm (Liu, 2009)". Fueled by the Japanese government's intention to cover up this history, the Chinese government and the public rediscovered the massacre and called on Japan to acknowledge and apologize for its wartime deeds (Brook, 2009). The Chinese leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), directed that "we should build monuments everywhere to memorize the Japanese invasion (到处搞日本侵略之碑)" to "educate the people, the youth and the later generations (教育人民, 教育青少年和子孙后代)" (Ministry of Culture, 1982). As a response, Jiangsu Province and Nanjing organized a series of activities to "build museums, set up monuments and compile historiographies" (建馆立碑编史). A "building museums and setting up monuments" team led by the by-then Nanjing mayor Zhang Yaohua (1931-) was formed. This team decided to build a memorial museum on the Nanjing Massacre in the southwestern corner of Nanjing, in the neighborhood of a site where thousands of corpses were buried (万人坑). The location

of a museum shapes its influence. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum is located in the city center, close to bus and subway stations. Not only does the historical geography evoke the audience's strong feelings facing numerous skeletons, its central location also marks its prominence in the Nanjing urban construction system and the attention it receives as an official memory education institution. "Armed with a little information and imagination, any visitor to a historic monument can perceive the venerable physical construction not merely as the arrangement of brick, stone or concrete that it technically is but also as a profound statement on the past that was made in or was made to represent" (Flath, 2011, p. 257). Together with the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum, a series of Japanese invasion memorial sites were discovered in construction sites, for instance, Monument of the Victims in Yanzi Sandbank (燕子矶江滩遇难同胞纪念碑), Monument of the Victims in Zhongshan Dock (中山码头遇难同胞纪念碑) and Monument in the Eastern Suburban Burial Ground (东郊丛葬地纪念碑). After an expansion in 1995 and a reconstruction in 2002, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum became the current Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders. Since its foundation, it has been a top patriotic tourist attraction. In 1997, it was selected as one of the first national patriotism education demonstration bases. In 2014, the seventh meeting of the Twelfth National People's Congress Standing Committee decided to set December 13th as the National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre Victims. The decision stated that the national and local governments should hold public memorial ceremonies for the Nanjing Massacre victims, and the other victims of Japanese invaders during the Japanese invasion. In 2015, the Archive of the Nanjing Massacre was added to the United Nation World Memory Heritage List. The Nanjing Massacre mediated in contemporary context has become the synonym of Japanese invasion and violence.

In the summer of 2016, ten Nanjing University students were invited by a research group funded by the Chinese government to participate in three online Nanjing Massacre memorial ceremonies. In the "brick donation movement (捐砖行动), the participants clicked at "adding a brick from the city wall", filled in their personal information, and left a comment. Among the comments, China (中华) and national humiliation (国耻) were selected the most frequently. Five participants selected one comment offered by the system, "do not forget the national humiliation, hold memorial ceremonies for the heroes (勿忘国耻, 祭奠英魂)". The research shows that owing to personal experience (family education and media) and patriotic education starting from the 1990s (Yoshida, 2009), the Chinese people in general understand the Nanjing Massacre as a national humiliation even though it is a distant event (Li & Huang, 2017, pp. 282-283). The trauma memory is transmitted from generation to generation through mass media and education, and evokes a strong emotional reaction.

As a national trauma memory, the Nanjing Massacre embodies China's and Chinese people's suffering. The object of the enemy changes with the need of the time. For example, shortly after the foundation of the PRC, when China was in alliance with the Soviet Union, American imperialism was condemned for the Nanjing Massacre, especially after America signed *the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan*. The Nanjing Massacre was described as a performance directed by American imperialism and executed by the Japanese invaders (Li & Huang, 2017, p. 29, p. 146). In the 1970s, when the mainland and Taiwan were in an intense relationship, mainland history textbook blamed the Nanjing Massacre on the Kuomintang's weakness. It claimed that it was the KMT's surrender which led to the Nanjing Massacre because it incited the Japanese to conduct their inhuman behaviors. The shaping of the Nanjing Massacre memory has been influenced by China's external relations.

The process of seeking and rediscovering the Nanjing Massacre is a process of memory led and controlled by the nation and the Chinese government. As many researchers have observed, the Nanjing Massacre is an essential element in Chinese modern history's "suffering-revival (受难-复兴)" narrative (Liu, 2009; Li & Huang, 2017). Due to the essence of the Nanjing Massacre and the distance of time, not many survivors have had the chance to tell their stories. In 2014, testimonies of 100 survivors were collected and edited by the National Memorial Network (国家公祭网), a website founded by the Chinese government (*Legal Evening News 法制晚报*, 2014). At the end of 2016, there were merely 108 survivors of the Nanjing Massacre on record alive (*Sina News*, 2016). The memory narrative stage has developed to "postmemory" from "common memory". Hirsch's postmemory describes how the second generation empowers the memory testimony with their understanding and experience growing up in a social and familial structure constituted by the trauma. Personal pain articulated as public testimony is translated in the national propaganda into "social suffering", or in Nanjing, "national suffering", to create a "we", a sense of common identity to which the second generation finds they themselves belong. It makes it convenient for the government to control the narrative⁵¹. The government narrative of "national humiliation" has been produced and consistently enhanced through public media. The victims as individuals are shadowed by the grand national narrative and rarely heard. Li and Huang argue that everyone has been given a fixed character in this narrative: former Japanese armies as "former inflictor and current confessor"; the other foreigners as witnesses; Chinese as victims (2017, p. 363).

⁵¹ The government's control over the Nanjing Massacre memory is limited. The condemnation of America in the 1950s did not last long because it did not fit the truth regardless of the government's intention. Memory is capable of self-defense when the mediated memory is distinct from what is remembered by the public.

As a "*lieu de mémoire*", a site of memory, the Nanjing Massacre is at the top of this "national humiliation" system. In the domestic context, the Nanjing Massacre as a discourse obtains more opportunities and privileges to be known, overshadowing the other traumas brought by the Sino-Japanese War. The historical sites created to commemorate and celebrate the battles for equality, while suitable and reasonable as places of remembrance, also have the effect of limiting the ability of adopting a new narrative (Bindas, 2010, p. 121). The Nanjing Massacre, centering on its "site of memory", the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese invaders, is anchored to the stage of the Chinese official "national" memory narrative, and is excluded from the memory of Republican China.

VI. Conclusion

In this paper, I look at the rising interest in Republican China in contemporary Chinese society and focus on how this is reflected in the Republican Gallery in the Nanjing Museum. Regardless of the complicated history and the controversial political concerns, curators of the Republican Gallery aim to construct Nanjing's status as the capital of Republican China but have failed because the local visitors expected a "Republican Nanjing" narrative and rejected the "Republican capital Nanjing" narrative. Despite the existence of an official memory, public memory has the power to alter the memory narrative.

I argue that several reasons have contributed to the amnesia of Nanjing being the "Republican capital". The popular memory of Nanjing has been built surrounding its ancient history of being the capital city of six dynasties, and the prostitution business on Qinhuai River. There is no space left for a Republican Nanjing storytelling. Besides, Shanghai has been at the center of the Republican narrative. The memory of Republican Shanghai is still under consistent reconstruction in Shanghai daily practice. Here I propose that another reason why Nanjing's history of being the Republican capital is forgotten is that compared to Shanghai, the history of Nanjing during Republican China caters less to the public taste. The collision and integration of diverse cultures, gangster power struggles, espionage and conspiracy in Shanghai have inspired many cultural products, which, in return, have enhanced the public memory that Republican China equals Republican Shanghai. Although the Nanjing visitors can find remarkable similarities between the Republican Gallery and Nanjing street views in real life, the non-Nanjing visitors are only impressed by the resemblances between the Republican Gallery and idealized Republican Shanghai.

Not only has Shanghai overshadowed Nanjing and other cities in the Republican narrative, it has also shaped the popular memory of Republican China through mass media. Mass media have played an important role in Republican China performance, acted out by the working staff and the visitors. Visitors of the Republican Gallery in the Nanjing Museum are equipped with the expectation for a Republican sightseeing, therefore, they change their appearances and adjust behaviors to fit the Republican atmosphere they have in mind, and even reenact representative scenes of Republican China they have watched in the TV series. By being part of the performance, the implanted memory of the visitors has become life experience, the "real" memory. Meanwhile, by being the witness of the performance, this memory narrative is added to the onlookers' memory of Republican China. The concept of museum display is extended in the Republican Gallery. Behaviors of the visitors have become part of the exhibition performance.

By examining the display and layout of the Republican Gallery, the paper comes to the conclusion that the Republican Gallery is excluded from the Nanjing Museum narrative. Located on the underground

floor of the Nanjing Museum, the architectures and decorations of the Republican Gallery are obviously different from the other exhibition halls. It creates a space-time continuum where visitors can travel back in time by walking through a rough and dark staircase. The staircase and a gate made out of two iron doors consist the entrance of the Republican Gallery. It cuts the connection between the Republican Gallery and the Nanjing Museum, and marks the beginning of a new adventure. As an (semi-) independent space, the time inside the Republican Gallery is confusing. It aims to bring back the time of Republican China, but objects that remind people of the late Qing Dynasty frequently interrupt the time-space coherence. It reveals that the late Qing Dynasty is contained as part of Republican China era in the popular memory. I believe it also indicates that the curatorial purpose of the Republican Gallery is not to provide its visitors knowledge of Republican China, but to cater to their imagination of the era.

Visitors of the Republican Gallery are more concerned about themselves, not the artifacts. McTavish argues that the purpose of setting up a section with a different function in the museum is for the museum to attract a diverse public and enlighten more people. My observation supports McTavish's argument that a different section attracts a diverse public, but instead of mass enlightenment, it stresses the social distinction and changes the focus of the museum function from education to entertainment.

Museum regulations and rules do not apply to the Republican Gallery, making the experience different. Visitors of the Republican Gallery are treated as customers, and encouraged to believe that "buying is owning". Souvenirs become memory anchors to remind people of their visit to the Republican Gallery in the future. A souvenir as a gift also serves the function of an invitation. It invites the receivers to share and spread the memory storytelling. The display of the Republican Gallery as a shopping street is groundbreaking because for the first time, the museum shop becomes the display itself. Furthermore, the Republican Gallery has introduced self-financing private enterprises to a government-operated cultural institution. Due to time and source limitations, this research has not collected enough information on the profit of the Republican Gallery. For the future, I suggest investigating the profit distribution in the Republican Gallery and how it contributes to the discussion on whether for-profit or non-profit museums are better for the achievement of museum functions.

One chapter of the thesis attempts to explore the reason why the Nanjing Massacre, an influential historical event that took place in Nanjing during Republican China is invisible in the Republican Gallery. The reasons I provide are the curators' struggle of interests, the exhibition emphasis, and the significance of the Nanjing Massacre in the national propaganda system. Researchers have explored how the storytelling of the Nanjing Massacre has been intertwined with China's external relationships. Which is to say, research on the Nanjing Massacre has treated it as a single event. I call on researchers

to examine the process of the Nanjing Massacre being excluded from Republican China narrative and becoming a single event.

This thesis serves as an introduction to the Republican Gallery in the Nanjing Museum. Different kinds of memory interact in this site of memory and co-construct the visitors' memory of the Republican Gallery and Republican China. The thesis tries to extend the research on the connection between memory and museums. It seeks the mechanism of how the museum visitors' experience participates in the memory-making process. As part of a government operated museum, the influence of popular memory and mass media on the Republican Gallery have exceeded that of government ideology. It supports Zhang and Weatherley's conclusion that the PRC has loosened its control over the topic of Republican China. It also indicates that the PRC has realized that the popular memory of Republican China is an idealized, romanticized, gentle desire on escaping from reality and catching up with fashion, which will not violate the PRC's legitimacy. The demand for strict restrictions on the memory of Republican China no longer exists.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to collect data for a master thesis research in Leiden University, the Netherlands. The purpose of the study is to examine the popular memory of Republican China. It defines Republican China as the period in Chinese history from 1911/12-1949. This questionnaire asks about your personal understanding of Republican China. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. Your answers will be anonymous and will be used only for academic purpose. Please answer the questions in legible simplified Chinese. Filling in the questionnaire will take you about 15 minutes. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Gender: a) Male b) Female

Age: a) Under 18 b) 18-40 c) 40-69 d) Over 69

Education: a) High school b) Bachelor (in progress included)

c) Master (in progress included) d) Doctor (in progress included)

Question 1: Which word would you use to describe Republican China? Please write them down. No less than three but no more than ten.

Question 2: Which city do you have in mind when you hear the term Republican China? Please write down the city name and the reason why you think it is associated with Republican China. No longer than 150 words.

Question 3: Please write down a story/scene that you think represents Republican China. No longer than 150 words.

Thank you for your participation.