

## The Missing ICH in Shanghai CCI

Abstract: Chinese opera, an art form predominantly associated with rural and urban migrant communities has currently over 300 regional forms actively practicing. This paper examines the exclusion of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) opera in Shanghai cultural and place making, exemplified through All-female Yueju and Shanghai arts cluster M50. The paper challenges the Shanghai Municipal Government's exclusion of migrant workers and their ICH opera in the official 'collective memory' construction, and suggests that whilst a 'forgetting strategy', may be a necessary mechanism of Shanghai post-industrial transition trauma, it reinforces and legitimizes the official exclusion of local community memories, which further questioning the authenticity of Shanghai identity construction and the sustainability of Shanghai cultural and creative industries (CCI) expansion. This paper highlights Zhejiang government's support of All-female Yueju in the latest rise of the digital industry to demonstrate the urgency and importance of government policy support in allowing diverse cultural expression to address the world's most pressing developmental challenges such as sustainability and social inclusion (UNESCO 2013).

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Chinese opera, creative cluster, gaming, Shanghai, UNESCO

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### Introduction

The UNESCO 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Convention emphasised 'the process' of oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events as key in passing on collective memory, creating places of memory for communities of origin and a wider audience for economic as well as social impact' (UNESCO 2003). The UNESCO 2013 Hangzhou Declaration further promotes culture as a key strategy in addressing the world's most pressing developmental challenges, such as sustainability, poverty and social inclusion (UNESCO 2013). UNESCO's vision in reviving local narratives and integration of the community ICH in municipal planning and place making has been adopted globally (Waelde 2018, Jeannotte 2016, Kurin 2014, Foster 2015, Scott 2011, Moghadam 2007).

Scholars support ICH led creative industries development for two main reasons: first, ‘as place making, historical roots and cultural identities are crucial in guiding not only the community but also the city image and second, the so-called city of the third wave, which is content powered designs in digital technologies. ICH has become a strategic tool for the safeguarding of the identity of the local communities and authenticity of place making, when facing the rising hegemony of global commercialism and entertainment.

Chinese opera, an art form predominantly associated with rural and urban migrant communities has currently over 300 regional forms actively practicing. China officially endorsed the UNESCO 2003 ICH Convention in 2004, and in 2006 Shanghai Yueju<sup>1</sup> was listed amongst the first to be recognised as national ICH, along with three other Shanghai opera forms: Shanghai Jingju, Shanghai Huju and Shanghai Kunqu. By 2020, Shanghai has 220 registered ICH, ten are ICH opera, each representing local community identity and cultural expression. This paper focuses on Shanghai All-female Yueju to exemplify their missing voices and expressions in Shanghai culture and place making.

The original form of Shanghai Yueju, Shaoxinxi, came to Shanghai in the early 1920s from neighbouring Zhejiang province, along with Zhejiang rural female labourers who staffed the rising Shanghai textile industry. The name Shanghai All-female Yueju first appeared in a 1925 advertisement and by the end of the 1940s it had developed into Shanghai’s most popular entertainment amongst China’s first female working class – the female textile workers. During Mao Zedong’s era (1949-1976) the textile industry and Shanghai All-female Yueju peaked, with 113 registered Yueju troupes in Shanghai and a national expansion (Ying 2002: 177-179). Loudspeakers in Shanghai mills religiously played All-female Yueju’s *Love of the Butterfly* daily, and everyone in Shanghai sang ‘Lin sister has fallen from the sky (tianshang diaoxiange linmeimei)’, an aria from All-female Yueju *Dream of the Red Mansion* (Shanghai Story 2014). Shanghai post-industrial transition of the late 1990s saw the merger of Yueju troupes and full marketization, together with the closure of nearly all Shanghai textile factories and the redundancy of 550,000 female textile workers. Mr. Jiang, Curator of the Shanghai Textile Museum states that: ‘for Shanghai’s post-industrial transition, China’s Mother Industry, the textile industry, and its female workers sacrificed themselves’ (Jiang 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> Until early 20<sup>th</sup> century modern Chinese culture building, traditional sing-song music theatre of over 360 forms were called Xi, drama, or Qu, music, with a regional name appearing before to specify the origin for example: Yue is the ancient name for Zhejiang. The phrase Ju applies to modern drama. Xiju has been officially adopted in contemporary China as the umbrella term for Chinese opera. However, the appendix of Ju, Qu, Xi are often inter-used. For example, Shanghai Yueju is sometimes referred to as Shaoxinxi as a specific origin, as well as Zhejiang Yueju and all names refer to the same art form. Despite the communist party’s insistence of male-female mixed yueju troupes since 1950, they struggle to gain audience recognition and popularity till this day. This paper uses All-female Yueju for consistency unless specified.

In the early 2000s, the opening of the Shanghai arts cluster now known as M50, named after its address of No. 50 Moganshan Road on the site of the former Xinhe Cotton Factory, symbolised Shanghai industrial to post-industrial transition. A year later, the term cultural and creative industries (CCI), as China preferred, was officially adopted as the national economic-political strategy (Jiang 2002: 38). Shanghai's rich industrial heritage sites offered abundant resource for new place making: dilapidated industrial sites were transformed into arts and creative clusters, attracting artists, businesses of industrial design, gaming software and digital media companies, targeting middle class visitors and financial investors for Shanghai regeneration and gentrification. Shanghai's long-term ambition was to become the most influential CCI centre in Asia in 10 to 15 years, and the leading CCI hub globally in 25 years, with focus placed on digital technology (Zhu 2007: 139). A growing body of literature has since developed on Shanghai CCI and its global leadership ambition (Arkaraprasertkul 2019, Gong 2017, Ma 2015, O'Connor 2014, Zheng 2013, Wang 2011, Keane 2009, Wu 2003). However, in the making and the critique of Shanghai place making and CCI development, there is very little mention of Shanghai ICH opera, such as All-female Yueju or the Shanghai textile workers it represents.

In June 2020, two-weeks of field research took place in Shanghai M50, under the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Newton fund project *Popular performance for new urban audience, reconnecting M50 creative cluster with Shanghai All-female Yueju* (2018-2021), examining ICH opera in the making of Shanghai culture and place. Over 100 visitors were given digital questionnaires – scanned through a WeChat app, the most commonly used social device – ascertaining knowledge of ICH at the M50 site. More than 70% of visitors were unaware that the site was formerly a textile factory, over 90% stated that they had never heard of Shanghai female textile workers; virtually all of those questioned had never associated All-female Yueju or female textile workers with M50 and Shanghai CCI. All participants stated that although there are occasional signs in M50 mentioning Xinhe Cotton Factory, there is little or no information, either onsite or online, to inform visitors about its history and Yueju as the cultural identity of the textile workers. Visitors came to M50 because of the online marketing of the site as a cool collection of art galleries, design shops, coffee bars and restaurants. All participants agreed that the story of the missing ICH of Shanghai All-female Yueju and the textile female workers would enhance the M50 attraction and Shanghai cultural identity. The research results have been fed into one of the research outputs: a site-specific performance named *Ghost in M50 Host*.

This paper examines the lack of ICH opera in Shanghai cultural and place making, exemplified through All-female Yueju and its associated community in its ‘live process of oral tradition and expression in passing on collective memory’ and ‘creating places of memory for communities of origin and a wider audience for economic as well as social impact’ (UNESCO 2003). The paper challenges the Shanghai Municipal Government’s exclusion of migrant workers and their ICH opera in the official ‘collective memory’ construction, and suggests that whilst a ‘forgetting strategy’, in relation to the tried and failed State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) with inbuilt institutionalised panopticon surveillance, may be a necessary mechanism to deal with the post-industrial transition trauma, it reinforces and legitimizes the official exclusion of local community memories, questioning the authenticity of Shanghai identity construction and the sustainability of Shanghai place making. This paper ends with identifying Zhejiang government’s support of All-female Yueju collaboration with the digital gaming industry, highlighting an alternative evaluation of ICH opera and the importance of government policy support in allowing diverse cultural expression to address the world’s most pressing developmental challenges such as sustainability and social inclusion.

This paper is structured in four parts: Part 1 provides a theoretical structure through ‘collective memory’ and ‘selective forgetting’ in culture and place making; Part 2 examines the missing ICH All-female Yueju in Shanghai’s official ‘collective memory’ construction; Part 3 analyses ‘selective forgetting’, which may be a survival strategy of post-industrial transition trauma, but further excludes ICH Yueju and its community in the official memory creation; the paper ends with Part 4 exemplifying the recent digital rise of Zhejiang All-female Yueju highlighting the urgency of government support in tackling global challenges of sustainability, poverty and social inclusion.

### Part 1: Theoretical Structure: Collective Memory vs Strategic Forgetting

UNESCO has been a driving force in promoting diverse local community culture in place making and cultural and creative industries development as a strategy for dealing with the world’s most pressing developmental challenges such as sustainability, poverty and social inclusion (UNESCO 2013, UNESCO 2003). Integrating community stories as a way of urban design and municipal planning is not new. Scottish town planner Patrick Geddes back in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century advocated to ‘excavate the layers of our cities downwards ... and thence ... read them upwards, visualising them as we go’ (quote in Mercer 1997: 223). To Geddes, the local cultural aspects of city development, considering people’s history and culture, is the main element that determines a city’s organic growth. Unfortunately, this holistic perspective fell

out of fashion in the 1940s, to be replaced by a zone system of urban regulation and planning (Rubin 2009: 354-357). A renewed strategy of integrating local culture in space making and creative industries is increasingly seen as an important step in ensuring local distinctiveness and a city's organic growth.

Culture generated place making, however, is never straightforward. The relationship between memory and identity has been a mainstay of philosophy and psychology for centuries (Schechtman 1994; Parfit 1971). Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1925/1992), in the third decade of the twentieth century, founded the concept of 'collective memory' and argues that memory and identity making is often a contradictory process of communicative memory and cultural memory. Communicative memory is related to oral history – through an experience between partners, the group conceives its unity. As oral history expands no more than eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years, community identity could only be sustained through cultural memory – texts, images, epics, rituals, buildings, etc. Halbwachs points out that collective memory works by reconstruction, and that always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation, remaining that 'which society in each era reconstructs within its contemporary frame of reference' and it is often done through the institutional buttressing of communication, depending on a specialised practice, a kind of 'cultivation'. Through reconstruction of communicative memory and cultural memory, a community identity is formed and is defined in a positive 'this is who we are' or in a negative 'this is our opposite' sense (Halbwachs 1925/1992, Assmann 1995).

Meanwhile, from the 2010s, small but rising research further articulates memory and identity through theories of 'strategic forgetting' and 'selective remembrance', critiquing the 'shell' effect of recycling heritage sites for post-industrial urban regeneration and property commodification (González 2020, Pendlebury 2018, Kearns 2015, Joseph 2013, Luna 2013, Kearns 2010). Luna's work (2013), for example, examines old sites recycled as luxury hotels. The author sees the autonomous reuse implying a total disconnection from previous use; memory is sustained only through its exterior fabric with all traces of interior prior function removed; the building itself becomes a 'shell' for luxury sale. Pendlebury (2018) studies the Shanghai arts cluster '1933', a former slaughterhouse turned creative site, framed in the theories of 'strategic forgetting' and 'selective remembrance'. The author argues that parasitic reuse of the recycled building, through a process where the new use feeds off the memory of the building in a more one-sided, less symbiotic way, results in a recycled 'shell' of architectural distinction and a gentrified site.

Theories on ‘strategic forgetting’ and ‘selective remembrance’ have been built on the pivotal figure of Jeremy Bentham, English philosopher and social reformer of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Foucault famously continued the discussion of Bentham’s concepts of the panopticon and surveillance under specific ways of ordering and organizing the lives and social action of humans as well as animals (1977). The concept of the panopticon being where, under surveillance by guards, the inmates themselves developed a standard behaviour control. In response to the panopticon power and surveillance, Freud (1980) postulated a deeper model of psychology in which suppression, repression and the ability to forget are vital aspects of our psychological makeup. The unspeakable suffering of the proletarian victims was represented symbolically and emotionally as suffering shared by a broad group of people, united regardless of national boundaries, in a new universal class collective. This terrain is most often explored in fiction by examining the ways in which loss of memory alters, compromises or threatens personal and social identity. An individual as well as a community’s ability to cope with trauma and stress depends upon the function of forgetting (Elliott 1992; Eriksen & Pierce 1968; Freud 1920/1966; Van der Kolk 1994).

Applying the theories of ‘collective memory’ and ‘strategic forgetting’, this article argues that Shanghai culture and place making is a struggle between community and official collective memory construction. As the latter determines to make the nostalgic semi-colonial past and cosmopolitan extravagance the official Shanghai culture, through the institutional buttressing of cultivation and purposeful omission of migrant labour and their ICH opera, whilst the closing down of State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) and danwei, as a tested and failed socialist institutional organization, resulting in the redundancy of 550,000 female textile workers, may be the suppression stage of ‘cultural amnesia’, it conveniently continues to silence ICH opera and migrant community in Shanghai cultural making. The process has resulted in a separation of cultural identification between the official government and local community, a negative ‘this is our opposite’ verses the positive ‘this is who we are’. In other words, the local community refuses to associate Shanghai culture as their own, which evokes questions of ‘whose culture, whose city?’ and a critique of spectacle and alienation. The official exclusion of ICH opera and its community raises questions of authenticity and sustainability in Shanghai culture and place making brings forward the urgency of addressing global challenges of sustainability, poverty and social inclusion through culture, and the continued struggle of tackling these challenges.

## Part 2: The Missing ICH in Shanghai Culture Making

Shanghai official cultural branding focuses on pre-1949 semi-colonial modernity, proudly referred to as ‘Haipai’ or ‘Shanghai style’. Indeed, Shanghai’s transformation from a fishing village to a modern industrial city was hastened from the conclusion of the first Sino-UK opium war in 1842 when foreign trade became permitted. The extraterritorial presence of foreigners, such as the former British concession area starting in The Bund, extending to the French and Japanese concession areas with a proliferation of international styles of architecture, turned the city into a legend – elegant and kitschy. However, the cosmopolitan Shanghai could not be understood as the cultural domination of the foreigners alone, but the appropriation of the local with ‘elements of foreign culture to enrich a new national culture’; and the real pre-1949 Shanghai culture was the interplay of the traditions and customs with the modern brought into the city by thousands of rural migrants (Abbas 2000, Lee 1999).

‘Haipai’ was in fact a term first coined in the late 1930s to describe Jingju performed in Shanghai, which differed from the conventional Beijing Jingju style. As Pan states: ‘Haipai Jingju was spiced up, flashier, with an eye to the box office ... To put it another way, to say that a Jingju is done in Shanghai style is to suggest that it is commercialized, vulgarized and westernized. And these three tendencies – towards the marketplace, popular culture and hybridity – came to be regarded as aspects of Shanghai local identity’ (2009: 219). Jingju was just one of over 300 different theatre forms in China, and some were brought to Shanghai by the migrants, in the making of modern Shanghai, and developed to become their Haipai. The focus of our paper, Shanghai All-female Yueju, rose as a commercialised popular culture of hybridity, to cater for the new taste of the modern female consumer.

China established its first mechanised textile mill in Shanghai in 1888 and by 1894, the development of silk filatures and cotton mills, and other industrial sites, made Shanghai the largest industrial centre in China. Before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, there were 4,550 textile factories in Shanghai, occupying 47.23% of China’s total textile industry and the majority of the labourers were Zhejiang females (Honig 1986: 16). There are two reasons for this trend: First, Zhejiang females were traditionally the main labour force of the regional cottage silk industry and handicraft economy, which declined under the rise of the modern textile industry. Shanghai’s expanding textile industry became an obvious attraction and the Zhejiang females’ experience in the silk industry and handicraft economy made them the most desirable labour (Honig 1986, Fei 1953). Second, the New Cultural Movement of the 1910s and 1920s focused on female emancipation. Inspired by Mary Wollstonecraft’s Rights of Women as the foundation of building a strong nation, female emancipation was seen as the key to breaking the shackles of Confucianism for China’s

modernity (Wang 2009: 3). For the first time in Chinese history, women were legally permitted to enter public spaces and take professional positions, including in theatres, which until then exclusively had male actors performing for a male audience. This new cultural phenomenon brought new professional opportunities for Zhejiang females.

In 1923, inspired by the increasingly frequent all-female opera troupes of various opera forms performing in Shanghai, Zhejiang businessman Wang Jinshui formed the first All-female Shaoxinxi troupe in Zhejiang and brought it to perform in Shanghai a year later. Shaoxinxi, a popular regional opera across Zhejiang province, derives from Buddhist chanting and folk songs and was widely sung by people for relaxation and entertainment. Performances were mostly carried out by community members during off-farming seasons and festivals. Some professional troupes toured amongst traditional teahouses and modern theatres between Zhejiang and Shanghai. The first All-female troupe attracted little attention, amidst a sea of Shanghai entertainment, and returned to Zhejiang in the same year. However, it marked the beginning of All-female Yueju in Shanghai and developed opportunities within the continued Shanghai-Zhejiang female migration. A local saying was that there were only three professional paths for local females at the time: to work as a textile labourer in Shanghai, to sing Yueju or to marry a baby boy<sup>2</sup> (Ma 2016: 24, Gao 1981: 64). In 1925, one of an increasing number of all-female Shaoxinxi troupes were marketed as Shanghai All-female Yueju (Ying 2002: 2) and the transformation of rural girls to Shanghai professional artists and modern female consumers took off.

Until the 1920s, Yueju was sung by male performers with lyrics often explicitly focused on women's sexuality to entertain the male audience. Yueju reform represented the females as the protagonists, pursuing love and equality. One example is *Love of the Butterfly*, which tells the story of Zhu Yingtai disguising herself as a male in order to pursue study, only to fall in love with her fellow classmate Liang Shanbo. Yuan Xuefen, star Yueju performer who led Yueju reform in the 1930s and 1940s, recalls her reform of *Love of the Butterfly*: ‘the lyrics were so shameful to sing let alone listen to. Words such as Liang sings to Zhu: “I will prick my way into your skirt” ... I had to delete so many of them and re-create the lyrics’ (2002: 50). Yueju reform transformed women from objective to subjective beings and became the symbol of urban consumer and female worker solidarity. This was exemplified in 1947 when ten star Yueju performers, famously known as the Ten Sisters, jointly held a charity performance, *Love*

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<sup>2</sup> ‘To marry a baby boy’ or Tongyangxi was a common practice in Zhejiang and Shanghai. A widowed woman with a newly born male heir would purchase a young bride as in-house labour. Once the boy reached marital age, the two would marry. This practice was abolished in 1951 under the Marriage Law.

*of Mountains and Rivers (Shanhe Lian)*, opposing exploitation by male theatre managers and collecting funds to build their own Yueju theatre. Further female solidarity movements took place during the 1948 Shanghai strike, led primarily by women demanding rights to maternity leave, through organized petition signing, performances, textile workers shutting down their machines and the wearing of armbands to commemorate the women killed during the strike (Honig 1986: 289). This is not to say that all females worked in unison. In fact, Honig points out in her study that native segregation was strong and internal discrimination within the labour force, as well as through cultural forms, persisted. However, by the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Yueju had the widest urban female audience, consisting of Shanghai's first female working class as well as students, representing a new urban female cultural identity (Ma 2016, Jiang 2009, Gao 1981).

In 2004, China endorsed the UNESCO 2003 ICH Convention; in 2006, Shanghai Yueju was included on China's first national ICH list, along with Shanghai Huju, Shanghai Jingju and Shanghai Kunqu. By 2020, Shanghai has 220 registered ICH and ten are ICH opera (Shanghai ICH), each exclusively brought to Shanghai by local migrants and developed and established as Haipai. Despite the rich ICH, and abundant community memories, Shanghai Municipal Government insists on 'kicking them (regional opera) out of Shanghai' (private interview 2015) and presenting official Shanghai identity with a focus exclusively placed on the semi-colonial nostalgic past and the rising commercial signatures of tall buildings and grand theatres. In our research conducted in M50, as articulated at the beginning of the paper, whilst visitors at M50 have mostly never heard of female textile workers and never associated All-female Yueju and female textile workers with M50 and Shanghai CCI, most of the local residents never visit M50. When asking the local community for their views on M50 and Shanghai cultural making in general, the consistent response was 'it has nothing to do with us' (private interview 2020). The community rejection of Shanghai official culture stresses Maurice Halbwachs' (1925) views of 'collective memory' as a struggle between communicative memory and cultural memory, which defines a positive 'this is who we are' or a negative 'this is our opposite'.

Despite the exclusion of All-female Yueju and the redundant female textile workers in Shanghai's official cultural making, All-female Yueju continues to survive in Shanghai. In April 2020, Shanghai Yue Opera House pioneered digital streaming via TikTok and received 1.7 million hits, the highest audience online viewings amongst Shanghai live streamed entertainment (Wenhui Net). Many of the audience are the remaining 400,000 redundant textile workers. The sharp contrast between the silencing of Yueju in the official making of cultural

place, such as M50, and its extreme popularity amongst the current community audience evokes questions raised by researchers such as Zukin's 'whose culture, whose city?' and Debord's critique of spectacle and alienation. The official making of Haipai culture questions Shanghai Municipal Government policy in response to UNESCO ICH domain on 'creating places of memory for communities of origin and a wider audience for economic as well as social impact' (UNESCO 2003), and UNESCO Hangzhou Declaration in 'promoting culture as a key strategy in addressing the world's most pressing developmental challenges, such as sustainability, poverty and social inclusion' (UNESCO 2013).

### Part 3: 'Strategic Forgetting' as Post-Industrial Trauma

In 1999, the Xinhe Cotton factory closed its gates permanently with all workers made redundant apart from a few retained as cleaners. Units on the site were subsequently rented to local artists and in 2002 it became known as the Chunming Metropolitan Industrial Park. Facing demolition for a housing development project it was saved through government lobbying and declared a heritage site before officially opening as the Chunming Art Industrial Park in 2004 (Su 2008). It was renamed as Shanghai M50 in 2005, the first contemporary arts creative cluster, attracting tourists and visitors globally and landmarking Shanghai's post-industry transition. At this time, across the street from M50 at the entrance of Shanghai Textile Museum was a statue of a female figure with one of her arms broken whilst reaching to the sky with the other. The inscription below reads: Zhuangzhi Duanbi or 'the martyr breaking one arm to survive'. Director Jiang Guorong, curator of Shanghai Textile Museum, described the painful process as follows:

'State Owned Enterprise (SOE) was no longer working and it became the main burden of China's economic development – first space, second staff. Where the Pearl Tower stands today, the tripod used to be three textile factories. If they were not demolished, Shanghai could not be redesigned. In the early 1990s, there were 550,000 female textile workers, we had to shed them. Today, M50 creative park has only 20 full time employees, but we (Textile Bureau) are still paying around 400,000 pensioners. For Shanghai's post-industrial transition, China's Mother Industry, the Textile Industry and its female workers sacrificed themselves' (Jiang 2020).

None of this information has been acknowledged in the making of Shanghai CCI, such as the contemporary creative cluster M50. Neither the textile workers, nor yueju are mentioned at M50, either online or onsite. The continued missing ICH opera in Shanghai CCI making seems to be linked with Foucault's concepts of the panopticon and surveillance (1977) and

Freud's (1980) postulation of a deeper model of psychology in which suppression, repression and the ability to forget are vital aspects of our psychological makeup. To understand the link, we will need to explain SOE and danwei, the ultimate socialist experimentation of a centrally planned economy.

Researchers trace the roots of the danwei or unit system to the period of revolutionary struggle against the Nationalist government, when the CCP established its own government agencies, social service organizations, factories, and educational institutions in their base areas (Bian 2005, Lu 1989). It shaped the making of post-1949 China and allowed the national expansion of SOE, from heavy industry and national defence to arts institutions. Under SOE and danwei, all urban workers and artists had a 'rice bowl' - a permanent job for life - along with a full welfare system involving housing, pensions, medical care, kindergartens and entertainments, which were often built within the factory compounds. Inside the compound danwei, the individual became a member of the system where the Communist Party ideology was indoctrinated and individual behaviour was closely monitored. The extreme panopticon surveillance system arrived when the 1958 Hukou System of individual registration was introduced, where individuals were subjects of a rural-urban caste from birth, with food rationing, travel permissions, marriage and divorce permissions attached. Frequent self-criticism and self-denunciation, for the purification of CCP ideology was practiced through top-down as well as peer observations, peer criticism and peer denunciation within the danwei system. The panopticon surveillance through ideological and managerial censorship was reinforced via peer observations, peer criticism and self-denunciation, becoming drilled into the standard behaviour of self-censorship. It was within the SOE and danwei experimentation that we saw the controversial expansion of the textile industry and Yueju nationally.

During Mao Zedong's era (1949-1976), the textile industry and Yueju were handpicked to advance gender equality and exemplify socialist progression. 'Textile female worker' (fangzhi nvong) became a new phrase in Shanghai, with proud gender and class representation. Over 550,000 female textile workers were employed and every household in Shanghai had a family member and/or friends as fangzhi nvong. According to a survey in the late 1950s, 113 Yueju troupes were officially registered (Ying 2002: 162). There were frequent organized Yueju competitions within textile mills, interacting with professional Yueju troupes and all performance productions and tickets were fully subsidized. In the first five-year plan (1950-1955), Shanghai industries were relocated across the nation for knowledge transfer, along with Shanghai Yueju troupes 'to ensure the workers will settle'. Between 1956 and 1959, Shanghai Yueju expanded to nearly all of the 23 provinces and 5 autonomous regions across China,

including Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. By the end of 1965 there were 175 state owned Yueju troupes across China (Ying 2002: 180-181, 213) becoming China's second largest opera. Until the end of 1990s factory closure, Shanghai textile mill loudspeakers religiously played All-female Yueju *Love of the Butterfly* throughout the day, and everyone in Shanghai sang 'Lin sister has fallen from the sky (tianshang diaoxiage linmeimei)', an aria from All-female Yueju *Dream of the Red Mansion* (Shanghai Story 2014). Despite the SOE expansion, the panopticon surveillance of individuals through danwei, created a fundamental disruption to the once intimate worker-performer relationship, through top-down centralised production and compulsory consumer consumption. The panopticon surveillance process gradually reduced workers and artists' enthusiasm towards SOE; the unspeakable suffering which artists experienced during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) through thorough peer denunciation and ultimate self-censorship drove away individual faith and belief in the Communist Party.

Only the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 allowed the beginning of a re-examination of socialism theories and practices, including SOE and danwei. Deng Xiaoping's open door policy in 1978 had the motto 'it does not matter if the cat is white or black so long as it catches mice', inferring that Capitalist practice could be adopted for socialist ideological achievement. After the crack-down of the 1989 Tiananmen Square event and three years' contemplation, Deng emerged in 1992 and articulated the continued Capitalist practice of marketization and SOE reform as the only way to retain CCP legitimacy and survival (Ma 2016). In 1994, under the central call of 'smashing ten million (old) machines nationally (quanguo yading yibaiwan)' Shanghai, the newly appointed 'Head of the Dragon', was to lead SOE reform, resulting in the sacrifices of the textile industry and its 550,000 female workers, as illustrated at the beginning of this section. The government organized various retraining programmes to assist the transition and to prevent social unrest (Jiang 2020). The most famous event related to Aunt Stewardesses (Kong Sao), when Shanghai Eastern Airlines recruited exclusively from redundant textile workers who were married with children, hence the Aunt Stewardesses (Shanghai Story 2014). 18 Aunt Stewardesses were recruited from the 550,000 redundant workers. Further retraining and recruitment programmes were held to attempt to absorb the textile workers into a fast-rising service industry: hotels, shopping malls, metros and banking. In reality, these women had little chance to compete with a new Shanghai migrant labour force – the younger and better educated middle class female and, to compound their misery, the free housing the textile workers once occupied was sold to real estate developers and occupants were forced to move to the outlying suburbs, where they made do with what little they had (Chen 2009). Meanwhile, small theatres and SOE compound entertainment halls were pulled

down with symbolic grand theatres erected, one in Pudong and one in Puxi, and Shanghai Yueju troupes were reduced to just one, the Shanghai Yue Opera House, which was put under full marketization<sup>3</sup> with performance tickets sold with a fat price tag, barring the redundant workers from entering the official cultural sites. The continued exclusion of the textile worker community and their ICH opera in new Shanghai CCI making leaves the city an alienated spectacle and M50 creative cluster a ‘gentrified shell’.

As a model of psychology, Freud conceptualized repression as a defensive process and amnesia, suppression, repression and the ability to forget are vital aspects of our psychological makeup and ability to cope with trauma. Whilst the amnesia assists community and individuals to cope with the trauma of panopticon surveillance and the very recent CCI transition, further necessity seems to lie in the Chinese Communist Party firmly grasping legitimacy through suppression and repression of a struggled definition of Socialism in name and practice (Ma 2016). The ‘strategic forgetting’ and ‘selective memory’ seems to have further assisted Shanghai’s strategy in excluding ICH opera and its community from Shanghai CCI making, only this time it is more thorough and legitimate. Across the street from M50, the Zhuangzhi Duanbi statue that once stood at the entrance of Shanghai Textile Museum is now tucked away in an obscure corner. That memory of SOE and its painful transition in the making of Shanghai CCI are now the forgotten past to the M50 visitors and Shanghai’s new middle-class migrants and settlers.

#### Part 4: Reviving of ICH in Digital Culture

Whilst ICH opera has been missing in Shanghai official culture and place making, in Zhejiang where the textile workers and All-female Yueju originated, it has remained popular and has been receiving consistent support from the municipal government. At the 2013 Hangzhou UNESCO Congress ‘Culture: Key to Sustainable Development’, All-female Yueju was presented as ‘Zhejiang’s name card’. The Hangzhou Declaration promotes culture as the most powerful force for creativity and renewal, and in addressing the world’s most pressing developmental challenges, such as sustainability, poverty and social inclusion (UNESCO 2013). Zhejiang government has been keen to test the Declaration through All-female Yueju. The building of a Yueju museum at Shenxian in 2015 led to the development of the whole town as a Yueju heritage site and tourist destination commencing in 2020. Zhejiang purpose-built

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<sup>3</sup> All five Shanghai state owned opera houses became fully subsidized once again from 2014. Ticket prices, however, still remain high with only occasional subsidized Public Performances (gongyi biaoyan).

Grand Theatre opened in 2019 dedicating to Zhejiang All-female Yueju. The government were also integral in brokering a joint collaboration between ZHFYT and Tencent in design and development of China digital economy.

China's fast CCI development and ambition in global digital insertion has meant a hunger for digital content. Meanwhile, Chinese ICH opera, a synthetic art and oral practice consisting of literature, music, dance and drama, with currently over 300 regional forms, offers a rich pool of resource. In Xi Jinping's 2014 inaugural speech he stated that 'the future CCI is anchored in traditional Chinese culture', in particularly the rising digital economy. The collaboration between Chinese ICH opera and digital economy could potentially address this. Yet there seems to be a struggle in generating a collective memory through the official and the popular making.

Online gaming emerged between 1995 and 2000. Early video games were mostly pirated from the West or imported from Japan and Korea. Localization kicked in through the early 2010s with a series of traditionally themed story lines such as *Journey to the West* and *The Three Kingdoms*. However, how to create and present Chinese content has become the hottest national debate, exemplified through China's most popular online game, *Honour of Kings*. *Honour of Kings* was first released in November 2015 as a standard multiplayer online battle game, loosely based on the historical literature of *The Three Kingdoms*, when Warlords rose at the end of the long and prosperous rule of the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD) and fought for the reunification of China. It has proven to be hugely popular, enjoying resounding commercial success. The game takes great liberties with the depiction of these characters, its roster includes a robotic version of the philosopher Mozi and a female version of the male assassin Jing Ke. This controversy has attracted heated debate on how Chinese intangible heritage should be produced for commercial purposes. People's Daily and Guangming Daily have consistently highlighted Tencent's irresponsible adaptation of history, which are misleading for the game's younger players and disrespectful of China's culture. The final straw came in 2017, when People's Daily described the game as 'poison' and the very next day, there was a limitation imposed on players over the amount of time they were allowed to play *Honour of Kings*, resulting in a sliding stock value of US\$15.1 billion (Liboriussen 2020).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the regulation of gaming, but highlighting All-female Yueju contribution in digital content development in collaboration with Tencent, under the support of the Zhejiang government. According to 2018 data, of the 600 million gamers in China, most are under 30 years of age and 44.2% are women. Despite high female player numbers, limited design and content creation are provided for them (quoted in Liu and

Lai 2020). The support has ensured the creation of sites as well as digital places of memory for ‘communities of origin and a wider audience for economic as well as social impact’.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 Tencent and ZHFYT announced the joint launch of a new character or ‘skin’ for *Honour of Kings* – Shangguan Waner is based on the classic yueju *Love of the Butterfly*. Shangguan, modelled on the protagonist Zhu Yingtai, who disguised herself as a male in pursuit of study, became the only female game character that cross-dresses, which is a key characteristic of All-female Yueju. In addition to the skin or character creation, opera training sessions were offered to potential consumers free of charge, via the character Shangguan. Within five days of this announcement, ZHFYT website received over 1.5 billion hits and over 64 million orders of the Shangguan skin were placed online. A holographic performance of *Love of the Butterfly*, jointly developed between Tencent and ZHFYT, is to be debuted in the near future in the ZHFYT grand theatre at Hangzhou, within a purpose-built digital space.

Culture making is not just about the memories of the past, but more so the living practice of everyday life. It is remembered and constructed constantly and perceived and carried forward by people. ICH opera, is rooted in space as well as time, and is consequently place-based, site-specific, locality-sensitive and community-contextualised. It is this everyday aspect and ‘use’ of the heritage – buildings, places, townscapes, landscapes through ICH practice that construct a ‘collective memory’ and story of the community. Arts and culture have the power to connect people and become a strategic tool for the safeguarding of identity and authenticity, of creating places of memory for communities of origin and a wider audience for economic as well as social impact for innovation and sustainability’. Zhejiang government policy support for ICH opera digital development, has provided a voice to the old and new female consumers for economic as well as social impact’, as opposed to Shanghai’s continued rejection of certain communities and reluctance to acknowledge ICH Opera, through the convenience of strategic forgetting. The collaboration with Tencent, in designing new gaming content, challenges Shanghai’s long silenced ICH voice and makes a huge step forward in remaking memories of a female audience in the digital era.

### Conclusion

By evidencing the trajectory development of a Zhejiang migrant labour force, as Shanghai’s first female textile working class, and how their hometown all-female yueju developed in the new millennium, this paper has argued that Shanghai’s exclusion of ICH opera and associated local communities has resulted in Shanghai Cultural space developing as ‘alienated shells’ and

questions the sustainability of Shanghai cultural and creative industries (CCI). Whilst suggesting that a ‘strategic forgetting’ may be Shanghai’s way of dealing with post-CCI transitional trauma, it emphasises the exclusion of Shanghai ICH. The paper highlights Zhejiang government support of All-female Yueju development within the latest digital economy, with continued ICH practice and evolution, engaging with existing as well as a wider audience for the safeguarding of the identity of the local communities and authenticity of place making, in contrast to Shanghai’s continued ICH exclusion and strategic forgetting.

From paddy field to theatrical space, creative cluster to digital space, the All-female Yueju has evolved with an expansion of audience, despite a continued struggle between community and official cultural construction. The contrast between recent All-female Yueju development in Shanghai and Zhejiang highlights the urgency of the Hangzhou Declaration, which promotes culture as the most powerful force for creativity and renewal, and in addressing the world’s most pressing developmental challenges, such as sustainability, poverty and social inclusion (UNESCO 2013). It identifies the positive changes that can be made through government policy support, and the collaboration and commitment of government led civil society and private sectors. As the then Director General of UNESCO Irina Bokova declared to the 2013 Hangzhou Convention ‘Culture is precisely what enables sustainability – as a source of strength, of values and social cohesion, self-esteem and participation’.

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