Dialectical Abjection: Unearthing Waste in Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud A Solitude* and Shao-lin Zhu’s *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground*

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Abstract

While referring to “landscape,” it normally occurs to people its grandeur and splendor of mountains and rivers. What buried under our feet, especially the unwanted and deserted, catch our little attention. What are being categorized as waste can be no incidents; there’s a pair of powerful hands maneuvering behind the symbolic ordering. Thus, unearthing our solid ground and observing our underground from the vertical angle become essential. In this paper, I intend to unearth waste from Bohumil Hrabal’s *Too Loud A Solitude* and Shao-lin Zhu’s *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground* in order to examine the landscape we have seldom set our eyes on before.

I will apply both Walter Benjamin’s concepts of *chiffonnier* and dialectics and Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection as my theoretical frameworks. My intention is to examine in both Hrabal’s and Zhu’s literary works how waste dialectically provokes and endangers the systematic ordering. In Brabal’s *Too Loud a Solitude*, I will discuss how Benjamin’s perception of “dialectical image at a standstill” would lead us to comprehend struggles between two dialectically opposed camps—progress and regress. In Zhu’s *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground*, an individual’s abjection becomes the most powerful weapon to fight against the symbolic order. Moreover, it is the best way to observe “the real you” through personal waste which gets rid of redundant wrapper and decoration.

The purpose of using a term “dialectical abjection” is to emphasize not only the overthrowing power of abjection but also its historicity. History apparently plays an essential role in these two novels even though Hrabal and Zhu narrate from different
angles of renditions. They all question the temporal demarcation of progress and regress. Hrabal’s *Too Loud a Solitude* temporally challenges chronological relationships between *progressus* and *regressus* and their nature of annihilation in Hegelian dialectics. He spatially topples down the stereotypical consciousness regarding vertical dimension and classification of social status. In *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground*, the whole novel is composed of four chapters. Each chapter is centered on one main character’s life story. By using the narrative technique of “montage,” Zhu scatters information everywhere and the reader as a rag-picker needs to collect rag-like information in the barrel. The beginning of the novel already connotes its end; namely, the novel progresses to its beginning or regresses to its end.

Key words: Bohumil Hrabal, *Too Loud a Solitude*, Walter Benjamin, chiffonnier, dialectics, Julia Kristeva, abjection, 朱少麟，《地底三萬呎》
While referring to “landscape,” it normally occurs to people its grandeur and splendor of mountains and rivers. What buried under our feet, especially the unwanted and deserted, catch our little attention. What are being categorized as waste can be no incidents; there’s a pair of powerful hands maneuvering behind the symbolic ordering. Thus, unearthing our solid ground and observing our underground from the vertical angle become essential. Alain Badiou, a French Philosopher specialized in the study of evil, has proposed his great doubt on the “self-evidence” of evil and the “idealization” of our democratic system and liberal capitalism as worldwide trends. While in labeling evil or holy, good or bad, he urges the necessity of re-examining the categorizing system which has long been problematic and might be designed according to politicians’ egoism. Due to loosening from our stereotypical way of thinking, it is indispensable to scrutinize in Walter Benjamin’s terms “the abortive, retrograde, and obsolescent” (Arcades 459).

In this paper, I intend to unearth waste from Bohumil Hrabal’s Too Loud A Solitude and Shao-lin Zhu’s Thirty Thousand Feet Underground\(^1\) in order to examine the landscape we have seldom set our eyes on before. I will apply both Walter Benjamin’s concepts of chiffonnier and dialectics and Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection as my theoretical frameworks. My intention is to examine both Hrabal’s and Zhu’ literary works how waste dialectically provokes and endangers the orthodoxy of ordered system. In Brabal’s Too Loud a Solitude, I will discuss how Benjamin’s perception of “dialectical image at a standstill” would lead us to comprehend struggles between two dialectically opposed camps—progress and regress. In Zhu’s Thirty Thousand Feet Underground, an individual’s abjection becomes the most powerful weapon to fight against the symbolic order. Moreover, it is the best way to observe “the real you” through personal waste which gets rid of redundant wrapper and decoration.

Liberal capitalism has not only brought the consumers the multitude choices of commodities but also speeded up the elimination of commodity’s life span. It means

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\(^1\) This is my own translation since this novel has not had English translation yet. In this paper, all the paragraphs cited from Thirty Thousand Feet Underground are all my translations.
that people have created a huge repository of waste and garbage whose amount would
definitely be out of our imagination. Archaeologists William Rathje and Cullen
Murphy, founders of the University of Arizona’s Garbage Project, provide quite
appalling information in *Rubbish!: The Archaeology of Garbage*. At the outset of
their book, they mention “one of the largest man-made structures in North American”
is “the Fresh Kills landfill” in New York City (3). This huge mound, being
composed as a repository of garbage, “in the year 2005 will have reached a height of
505 feet above sea level, making it the highest geographic feature along a
fifteen-hundred-mile stretch of the Atlantic seaboard running north from Florida all
the way to Maine” (3-4). The reason why the Fresh Kills has to be shut down while
reaching the height of 505 feet is its height already endangers the aviation security of
aircraft to Newark Airport in New Jersey (4).

Such a mammoth artificial construction towering up into the sky ironically
would not be added into the Guinness world Records as one of the tallest skyscrapers,
the symbols of capitalist extremity. The Fresh Kills landfill, however, symbolizes
the neglected underside of capitalist splendor; it has so much archaeological value as
“a Pompeii, a Tikal, a Valley of the Kings” (3). Rathje and Murphy believe
landfills represent valuable lodes of information that may, when mined
and interpreted, produce valuable insights—insights not into the nature of
some past society, of course, but into the nature of our own. Garbage is
among humanity’s most prodigious physical legacies to those who have
yet to be born; if we can come to understand our discards, . . . then we
will better understand the world in which we live. (4)

In terms of their archaeological viewpoints on the waste disposal, Rathje and
Murphy have inspected the discarded material goods which are the side products
generated in the consumer society in the US. It becomes imperative for us to ponder
further over the doomed fate fallen on these waste disposals. Why do they become
unwanted? What kind of consciousness sentences their death penalty?

What remains as the valuable or invaluable bases on a set of categorizing
principles. “Dirt, then, is never a unique, isolated event” as Mary Douglas claims
According to her anthropological perspective she further delineates that “[w]here there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity” (155). Dirt, therefore, is not dirt by nature or in born; it has been labeled through symbolic systems of purity. By dint of classification, the impure elements can be sifted, filtered and jettisoned out of the systematic ordering. In doing so, purity can evade from the contamination of impurity and remain its blood pure.

In spite of the thesis-antithesis relationship between the pure and impure as mentioned above, Walter Benjamin alleges the effortlessness of establishing oppositions between the positive such as “the “productive, forward-looking, lively,” and the negative such as “the abortive, retrograde, and obsolescent” “according to determinate points of view, within the various “fields” of any epoch” (Arcades 459). The classification system is impossible to stay put; namely, the positive or the negative has its spatial and temporal limitation. Deeply influenced by Hegel’s conception of dialectics, Benjamin perceives non-stopped but unequally vis-à-vis wrestling between the positive and the negative in the systematic ordering.

What makes Benjamin’s theory so different from Hegelian dialectics is on historicity. Hegel expects that synthesis signifying as the historical progress comes after the political struggling between thesis and antithesis. Benjamin’s historicity constructs on his concept of the “dialectical image.” This image catches an observer’s attention in a flash. At this very second, “image is dialectics at a standstill” (Arcades 463 [N3, 1]). According to Highmore, “what this requires is the arrest of the flow of history (particularly its representation as the march of progress) so that it can be recognized as a specific experience of a moment” (62). As to the relations of history with the dialectical image, Benjamin expounds

For while the relation of the preset to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical—that is,
not archaic—images. The image that is read—which is to say, the image in the now of its recognizability—bears to the highest degree the imprint of the perilous critical moment on which all reading is founded.

[N3, 1] (Arcades 463)

That particular dialectical moment appears at “the now of recognizability of the image.” This shock experience arouses the sense of “awakening” which is “perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the ‘now of recognizability,’ in which things put on their true—surrealist—face” (Arcades 436-4 [N3a, 3]). This awakening process is equivalent to what I call “unearthing,” which implies the process of excavating objects which have not yet exposed under the sun.

Yet, what is the connection of Benjamin’s idea of “dialectical image” to waste? As Benjamin elucidates that “I needn’t say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse—these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them” (Arcades 460 [N1a, 8]). As a “materialist historian,” his intention is to “show” history which refers to large-scale constructions assembled out of the smallest and most precisely cut components (Arcades 461 [N2, 6]). These “smallest and precisely cut components” allude to “the refuse of history,” the historian is the rag-picker, the chiffonnier.

Too Loud a Solitude is a chiffonnier’s “love story” (1). The whole novel sets at the time of 1950s in Prague. Czech society had drawn German Fascist regime to a close and progressed into the next phase of socialist administration. The rest of the world at that time had striven to recover from wartime trauma and put an effort in developing industrial capitalism. Living under the uncanny atmosphere of political

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2 It is a lucid message that Benjamin observes history by means of “the rags and the refuse” which are the deserted materials outside the orthodox historical narrative. As he challenges the conception of “aura” in his most renowned essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” he converts his attention from “valuable” authentic artwork to the reproduced works of art which are deemed as the invaluable. Benjamin makes an effort to transform the image of the reproduced artwork from the negative to the positive; in other words, he endeavors to examine history via the historical refuse in order to “discover the crystal of the total event” (Arcades 461 [N2, 6]). But I suppose that Benjamin would have never imagined a scene in which the reproduced artwork becomes trash?
unrest, Haňť’a, “the lowest of the low, the bottom of the barrel. \(^3\)” is obsessed with the wastepaper he compacts.

Dialectics is a central recurrent conception in the whole novel. For instance, Haňť’a once is astounded by Arthur Schopenhauer who appears like a flash of lightning and remarks, “The highest law is love, the love that is compassion” (Hrabal 53). And Haňť’a “realized why Arthur hated strongman Hegel, and I was glad that Hegel and Schopenhauer weren’t leading opposing armies, because the two of them would wage the same war as those two rat armies in the sewers of Prague” (53-4). This humanlike war between white rats and brown ones, though it ended in the absolute victory of the whites, had led to their immediate break-down into two groups, two opposing clans, two tightly organized rodent factions engaged at this very moment in a life-and-death struggle for supremacy of the sewers, a great rodent war over the rights to all the refuse and fecal matter flowing through the sewers to Podbaba, and as soon as the present war was over, . . . the winning side would again break down . . . into two dialectically opposed camps, the struggle for supremacy bringing life back to life, the desire for conflict resolution promising imminent equilibrium, the world never stumbling for an instant. (22-3)

This dialectical equation in rat battles seemingly relies on the constant split-up of the winning side due to remaining “imminent equilibrium.” Echoing Benjamin’s perception on the positive and the negative which are impossible to remain unchanged, the synthesis is under constant mutation. Interestingly, Hrabal and Benjamin do not support Hegelian way of progress which has smeared with blood and violence. Haňť’a indicates that

I could grasp the true meaning of Christ’s cruel words, “I came not to send peace, but a sword”; and having received my education unwittingly, I was always amazed at Hegel and what he taught me, namely, that the

\(^3\) Irving Wolhlfarth explicates very clearly the notion of *chiffonnier* in Walter Benjamin’s *Passagenwerk*. Please refer to his essay “Et Cetera? The Historian as Chiffonnier.”
only thing on earth worthy of fear is a situation that is petrified, congealed, or dying, and the only thing worthy of joy is a situation where not only the individual but also society as a whole wages a constant battle for self-justification. (22-3)

Haň’a apparently is dissatisfied with the rigid relationships in dialectical opposition. He queries if ceaseless violence is a necessary means to achieve the progress in dialectics. In other words, is this the real progress if it must be based on violence? Violation must exist in dialectics, but it can be shown in docile way.

In addition to witnessing Schopenhauer’s appearance, Haň’a surrealistically beholds Jesus and Lao-tze standing side by side in his dimly and musty cellar. He realized for the first time how important their age was for an understanding of their teachings, . . . and watched Jesus, an ardent young man intent on changing the world, rise up and take over Lao-tze’s place at the summit, while the old man looked on submissively, using the return to the sources to line his eternity; I watched Jesus cast a spell of prayer on reality and lead it in the direction of miracle, while Lao-tze followed the laws of nature along the Tao, the only Way to learned ignorance. (33-4)

Jesus and Lao-tze are deemed as two dialectically opposed forces, even if Lao-tze does not really fight this battle vis-à-vis. Instead, he applies submissive attitude to confront Jesus’ aggressive supremacy. Furthermore, in Haň’a’s observation he perceives “Jesus as the flow, Lao-tze as the ebb, Jesus as spring, Lao-tze as autumn, Jesus as the embodiment of love for one’s neighbor, Lao-tze as the height of emptiness, Jesus as progressus ad futurum, Lao-tze as regressus ad originem” (40). Jesus resembles the positive force progressing toward future; Lao-tze in contrast regresses back as the negative force toward the origin. Haň’a yet does not consider Lao-tze’s regress in a disapproving way; the world in his behold moves backward and forward at the same time, like a blacksmith’s bellows . . . and that’s what makes the world go round. . . . in my profession spiral and circle come together and progressus ad futurum
meets regressus ad originem, and I experience it all firsthand: I, unhappily happy with my unwitting education, ruminate on progressus ad futurum meeting regressus ad originem for relaxation, the way some people read the *Prague Evening News*” (48).

Haňť’a wittingly takes reading Evening News as an example to indicate that we allow things happened in the past to participate every second of our lives progressing into future. That is to say, we regress back to the past in order to get progressed into the future.

Even though progress and regress are two dialectically opposed forces, they are no necessary to annihilate each other. Their symbiotic existence can bring benefits to the greatest extent. Yet, it is indispensable to define what futurum and originem refer to. In *Too Loud a Solitude*, future seemingly connotes the industrial modernization. Haňť’a has been compacting wastepaper with his “bare hands” in the dimly sultry cellar, lit only with a light bulb for thirty-five years. He “loved the feel of the paper in [his] fingers” (64). Yet, a more modern and efficient machine has been introduced to compact wastepaper. A younger generation of wastepaper compactors work with “orange and baby-blue gloves and yellow American baseball caps, and overalls that went up to their chests, and suspenders that went over their shoulders and crossed on their backs and showed off the T-shirts and turtlenecks they had on underneath” (64). They put on gloves and overalls to prevent the direct contact with wastepaper. Besides, their working place is full of sunlight which “streamed in through the glass walls and glass ceiling, and the ceiling had a ventilation system to boot” (64). As to Benjamin, glass ceiling in Paris Arcades signifies the consummation of industrial modernization; it inhibits humans’ direct contact from nature and shroud people with artificial protection. The whole society progresses into such an industrial modernization.

With regard to originem for Haňť’a, it refers to all of the traditional cultural and historical heritage that a new regime has attempted to annihilate, including the Greco-Roman heritage and such “Old Masters” as “Rembrandts, Halses, Monets, Manets, Klimts, Cézannes, and other big guns of European art” (5). These Old
Masters are what Lao-tze calls “the sources” where Haňť’a would like to regress into. No matter how a new regime has endeavored to eradicate the aging marks left by Old Masters, no matter it has already destroyed tons after tons of reproduced masterpiece, it could never achieve the outcome it has expected. Cultural heritage has already left its footprint everywhere in Prague including the façades of the buildings constructed in beautiful Hellenic model, the most ordinary buildings decorated with garlanded cornices, templelike vestibules and so on (24). It means that “Prague’s involvement with the Greek spirit goes deeper than the façades of its buildings, it goes straight into the heads of the populace” (24)

In spite of Haňť’a as a victim under industrial modernity, he believes that “spiral and circle come together and progressus ad futurum meets regressus ad originem” (48). There is no clear demarcation line to split progressus ad futurum from regressus ad originem; moreover, it can become progressus ad originem meeting regressus ad futurum. Haňť’a’s dramatic death can explicate how spiral and circle can come together. At the last moment of his life, he elucidates that

Why does Lao-tze say that to be born is to exit and to die is to enter? Two things fill my mind with ever new and increasing wonder . . . “Every beloved object is the center of a garden of paradise.” . . . here, in my press, in my cellar, choose my own fall, which is ascension, and even as the walls press my legs up to my chin and beyond, I refuse to be driven from my Paradise, I am in my cellar and no one can turn me out, no one can dismiss me. A corner of the book is lodged under a rib, I groan, fated to leave the ultimate truth on a rack of my own making . . . (96-7)

In the end, the collector becomes his own collection (Wohlfarth 145). Haňť’a merges with both wastepaper which symbolizes originem and a compacting machine which is a sign of futurum. Furthermore, a deceased Haňť’a appears to tell us his love story; it signifies the past emerges to join the future. Lao-tze’s epigram “to be born is to exit

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4 此句源於老子道德經第五十章<出生入死>。Please refer to 傅佩榮。《解讀老子》。This English translation seems inconsistent with our understanding from Chinese, but it dramatically provides another way to ponder over life-death relationships.
and to die is to enter” apparently echoes Hańt’a dramatic ending and further encapsulates the essence of \textit{progressus ad futurum—regressus ad originem} relationships. It becomes that to be born is to regress and to die is to progress. As Benjamin designates, “Overcoming the concept of ‘progress’ and overcoming the concept of ‘period of decline’ are two sides of one and the same thing” (\textit{Arcades} 460 [N2, 5]).

Hrabal’s \textit{Too Loud a Solitude} temporally challenges chronological relationships between \textit{progressus} and \textit{regressus} and their nature of annihilation in Hegelian dialectics. He spatially topples down the stereotypical consciousness regarding vertical dimension and classification of social status. That is to say, “the cellars are headquarters for Prague’s fallen angels, university-educated men who have lost a battle they never fought, yet continue to work toward a clearer image of the world” (24).

Spatiality simultaneously plays an important role in Shao-lin Zhu’s \textit{Thirty Thousand Feet Underground}. The whole novel centers on “River Town” which “is a transitional housing temporarily taking in the bankrupts” (8). Namely, River Town, located outside the borders of cities, is built to take in people who are “the dregs, the lowest of the low, the bottom of the barrel” deserted by the capitalism. Those people, unable to keep up with capitalist rules, lose the games and are isolated in this border city. Spatial isolation can be presented in various ways: not only in geography but also in language and body. Vulture, a homeless and nationless drifter roaming to River Town, formally is a prisoner:

\begin{quote}
[Vulture] is completely isolated by language. His strong accent is an impregnable fortress, within there arresting a garrulous mind. . . . Three-hundred-pound doctor is also a prisoner. His jail is his obesity. His body fat is his life sentence, . . . His watch is a pair of wrist cuffs, firmly stuck into his flesh. Taking the watch off shows a ring of strap mark. For him, the world is always too tight. (227-8)
\end{quote}

Spatial fluidity simultaneously provokes temporal mobility. Resembling to Benjamin’s narrative technique applied in \textit{The Arcades Project} presented in the way
of “literary montage,” Zhu’s *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground* pieces together four characters’ life stories. Each of their stories ostensibly is independent and irrelevant to the others; they bear a resemblance to floaters flowing on the river and let the fate carry them to River Town. In consequence, their lives indirectly and unintentionally are closely connected. Professor Shiu (許文蔚) relates Deleuze and Guattari’s well-known theoretical standpoint “rhizome” to analyze the narrative technique applied in this novel. Unlike trees or their roots, “the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states” (21). Each event outwardly bears a resemblance to a single plant above ground. Each plant or tree ostensibly is an independent existence. However, every event or character inwardly is closely connected with others, like the rhizomes underground are intertwined with one another.

As Benjamin specifies, “[t]he first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of montage into history. That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event.” (*Arcades* 461 [N2, 6]). Zhu has spread small individual moments as deserted notes being littered everywhere. We need to collect all those smallest components in order to “construct the crystal skeleton of the total event.” In the novel, Vulture philosophically lectures that

You more or less are like a river. You are the composites of multiple water drops, but no single drop is you. This world and all the other people are constantly making subtle changes on their composites. The sum constitutes a flowing you. You are no longer the same as you were. So there is no real you. But what we can see is an obscure you, the water lines you have left behind. (290-1)

One of the best ways to inspect “obscure you” is through individual waste. Waste, rag or trash tells us more than material history; it can unfold our personal stories hidden subconsciously or unconsciously. Julia Kristeva proposes her
renowned theory of “abjection” to elucidate how defilement functions in self becoming. “The abject,” as she specifies, “is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. . . . The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I.” (1) The abject as a matter of fact is the I who “expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which ‘I’ claim to establish myself” (Kristeva 3). Evidently, where meaning collapses is also the place where meaning creates.

Trash indeed “escapes that social rationality” and exposes the frailty of the symbolic order (Kristeva 65). A jettisoned note carried the unpolished truth of individual’s dark secrets. According to the sorters in Garbage Project, they have discovered that

*National Geographic* magazine and the kind of magazine known in the trade as “men’s sophisticates” (Magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse* and the rest) almost never show up in household garbage. . . . Subscribers to *National Geographic* tend to keep the magazines on the shelf for a long time—in many cases, literally, until death . . . . In contrast, copies of the men’s sophisticates often don’t get thrown away at home because people, out of embarrassment, throw them away in nondomestic garbage cans. (Rathje 58)

People would throw away pornographic magazines elsewhere instead of in their household garbage cans. This behavior explains that the readers of men’s sophisticates are afraid of being discovered their inner desire which transgresses the symbolic order. In other words, they do not think reading pornographic magazines matches their social status and identity.

In *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground*, Hat Man is second to none understanding garbage the best. Being a rag-picker in River Town, he takes pleasure in collecting every individual’s garbage and further dissecting each person’s inner secrets and daily habits. In terms of observing people through garbage, Hat Man apprehends
All of the garbage is men’s offshoots, merely because men are too
devious, indirect, incapable to face the truth. If you were like me living
in the garbage repository, you would know that more than eighty percent
of garbage is the redundant packaging. You are a big box of Christmas
present, packaged with incredibly beautiful wrapper. Unwrapping the
covering comes out a strong outer shell. Peeling off the shell comes out
a soft inner lining. Stripping off the inner lining comes out exaggerating
ornament. Lifting away ornament comes out trivial garnish. Erasing
garnish comes out a cowardly, unable-to-be-exposed, you. (82-3)

In addition to unfolding a man’s deepest psychological secrets, garbage essentially is a
recorder of history, recording the stories which have never been told by the grand
narrative. Hat Man realizes a truth: “Everything in this world, including you, is
either garbage or becoming garbage. Garbage is history” (17). He further indicates
that

Time is a sewer. You can only drift along with it downstream. In the
whole way, mixing with all kinds of flavors, you are submerged out of
shape. . . . You have suffered from knocks, bruised all over; still, you
are drifting forward nonstop. You thought you might reach somewhere
someday. You thought light comes at the end of tunnel. Tell you the
truth, there lies a bigger garbage repository. (56)

Zhu’s standpoints on history does not go against Hrabal’s notions of progressus and
regressus. If time is a sewer, it metaphorically alludes that every proceeding
moment is dealing with things happened in the past. Namely, today’s fashion would
soon become yesterday’s debris. The accumulation of debris is the best witness to
the process of modernization; hence, the accumulator of debris becomes the
storyteller of history.

History apparently plays an essential role in Too Loud a Solitude and Thirty
Thousand Feet Underground. They all question the linearly temporal demarcation
of progress and regress. Hrabal’s Too Loud a Solitude temporally challenges
chronological relationships between progressus and regressus and their nature of
annihilation in Hegelian dialectics. He spatially topples down the stereotypical consciousness regarding vertical dimension and classification of social status. In *Thirty Thousand Feet Underground*, the whole novel is composed of four chapters. Each chapter is centered on one main character’s life story. By using the narrative technique of “montage,” Zhu scatters information everywhere and the reader as a rag-picker needs to collect rag-like information into the barrel. The beginning of the novel already connotes its end; namely, the novel progresses to its beginning or regresses to its end.
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