Literary Bilingualism: Chinese Authors Writing in the Language of the Other in Sino-Anglophone Contexts, 1930s-1970s

A Dissertation

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A Note on Romanization and Translation

1. For Chinese names, I use *pinyin* and follow the order of spelling in Chinese language, namely, that surnames come before given names. For instance, Lin Yutang. But for names which have a fixed form or have been more universally used in the English-language academy, I keep them as they are. These include but are not limited to: Eileen Chang, Chiang Kai-shek, C. T. Hsia, Leo Ou-fan Lee, Lydia H. Liu, Hualing Nieh, Hu Shih, David Der-wei Wang, Sau-ling C. Wong, and Pai Hsien-yung.

2. For all works originally written in Chinese, I give their Chinese titles in *pinyin* followed by my English translation in brackets.

3. For all works that are translations into Chinese, I give their Chinese titles in *pinyin* followed by the titles in their original languages.

4. For all terms that originate from the Chinese language, I use *pinyin* followed by my English translation in brackets and, when necessary, the corresponding Chinese characters.

Introduction

In his 1989 State of the Union Address, George H. W. Bush, with the hope of establishing new allies in the Asia-Pacific region, alluded to a Chinese writer:

> I was struck by something I came across from a Chinese writer. He was speaking of his country, decades ago, but his words speak to each of us in America tonight: "Today," he said, "we're afraid of the simple words like 'goodness' and 'mercy' and 'kindness.'" ...... My friends, if we are to succeed as a nation, we must rediscover those words.[1]

The writer President Bush referred to is Lin Yutang, a renowned Sino-Anglophone bilingual writer in both China as well as the United States between the 1930s and late 1960s. The text Bush quoted in his speech comes from Lin's first book-length publication in English, *My Country and My People*, finished in Shanghai and published in New York, 1935. A few questions can be immediately raised, however, about Bush's statement. What is there in the book by a Chinese author that "struck" the U.S. president? Is it the timeless truth of which this Chinese of the 1930s spoke, Bush seems to imply, that had been lost at some point in history and must be resurrected and appreciated in the late 1980s?

Though anachronistic, it might be interesting to see how Lin's own remark about *My Country and My People* subtly diverges from that of Bush. In the preface to the book, Lin writes, "I have not tried to enter into arguments or prove my different theses [about my countrymen], but I will stand justified or condemned by this book." He continues, "Nor do I write for the patriots of the West. For I fear

[1] Bush, George H. W. "State of the Union Address." February 9, 1989. Accessed on April 4, 2017. http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/george-herbert-walker-bush/state-of-the-union-1989.php.

more their *appreciative quotations* from me than the misunderstandings of my countrymen" (my italics).[2] Whereas Bush seems to have identified some universal merits in the text half a century after Lin's initial discussion of his Chinese countrymen, the author himself expresses prophetically his concern about the possibly oversimplified and reductionist essentialization of his fellow people by Westerners or—as Edward Said would have it—Orientalist readers. Lin seems to fear that his personal view would be taken as the only authoritative representation of China and the Chinese. Moreover, despite his mentioning that Lin's text is a work by a Chinese writer, Bush's generalized statement is inherently devoid of the Chineseness that he attempts to highlight about the book, any more than such a theme can be found in (I hope I am not exaggerating here) any other humanistic book that draws on the concepts of goodness, mercy, and kindness. In short, his specific note of the book's Chineseness goes nowhere in his speech. However, to point out its thematic and ideological Chineseness and the potential controversy that it might involve in the English-speaking world seems precisely that about which the author, Lin Yutang, is concerned.

Several questions arise in the contrast between Lin's vision of the book in the mid-1930s and Bush's more contemporary view of it in the late 1980s. In what type of arguments about Chinese people did Lin predict himself to be involved? Arguments with whom? Were his readers mainly the English-speakers who had misunderstandings of the Chinese people and culture as he presumed, or the bilingual Chinese-speakers who might have disagreed with the content of the book and the way in which he represented them in a non-Chinese language? What made

[2] Lin, Yutang. *My Country and My People*. The John Day Company, 1935, pp. xiii-xiv.

Lin believe that his work could engender such “unintended” effects as being appreciatively but mistakenly quoted by “patriots of the West?” Lastly, who did Lin expect to address and communicate with when he wrote the book (note that he initiated the project in China before it caught the American publisher’s attention)? An argument that may be commonly forwarded is that Lin was cautious about using the words of a native informant to testify to the Orientalist imagination about Chinese people. Lin’s statement, however, can be interpreted from another perspective. As a bilingual writer who wrote both in Chinese and in English, Lin was aware that he was telling the story of his countrymen and culture in the language of the Other. Such awareness led to the consciousness of self-censoring, of not designating oneself an exclusive role, of being limited by language in cross-cultural representations, and of belonging to *both* cultures but also to *neither* culture.

The project offered here explores the issue of literary bilingualism, through examining the literary practice of ethnically Chinese bilingual authors as well as the hetero-lingual exchanges their works kindled in Sino-Anglophone contexts at varying historical stages between the 1930s and 1970s. Despite the focus on literary bilinguality of a particular cohort of Sino-Anglophone intellectuals, I embark on broader questions pertaining to two realms of scholarship. First, I want to find out how the works of the bilingual authors that I analyze here have, as products of semi-colonialism and (post)semi-colonialism, engaged the Chinese experience of modernity in the twentieth century. Second, these cases in the Sino-Anglophone context help me re-consider, in a more general sense, the link between monolingualism and bi-/multilingualism, between identity and language, between authorship and readership, and between nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

My study of the literary practices of bilingual Chinese authors is theoretically informed by Naoki Sakai's discussion of heterolingual address. In his book *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*, Sakai criticizes a dominant presumption in translation studies, that is, that literatures are autonomously enclosed in separate spheres defined by nation-state, territory, ethnicity, and above all, language. Instead, he argues that translation is "an essentially hybridizing instance."[3] Rather than circumscribing texts and their translations in separate monolingual settings, Sakai proposes a pair of concepts, homolingual address and heterolingual address, to identify two opposing models of writing based on their target audiences. Homolingual address, he writes, "is a regime of someone relating herself or himself to others in enunciation whereby the addresser adopts the position representative of a putatively homogeneous language society and relates to the general addressees, who are also representative of an equally homogeneous language community."[4] For instance, a native Chinese speaker writes in the Chinese language for a Chinese speaking audience. But things become complex when a native Chinese writes in non-native languages like English. This can lead to an illusion among the native English-speaking readers, who believe they belong to the same and exclusively a homolingual community. The fact that the author also writes in Chinese tends to be forgotten in this kind of reading, which might further result in amnesia about the distinctiveness of the author's ethnicity, cultural roots, and geopolitical background. According to Sakai's logic, one needs to be warned against reading such texts as homolingual address, because the verbal

[3] Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 3.

[4] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

designation "to address," which implies an uncertainty of whether one's message arrives at its destination, is confused with "communication."[5] In other words, for any English-speaking audience, native or non-native, English-language texts by a native Chinese speaker should be read as heterolingual address, a discursive practice in which the author is aware of the non-communication or the difficulty to communicate with the addressee even if they share the language on the textual level. Sakai as a bilingual scholar, for example, has been consciously attempting to establish an alliance with his readers "without taking national, ethnic, or linguistic affiliations for granted."[6] His own texts, according to him, are "translated as they were written, and written as they were translated."[7]

Whereas Sakai's study focuses mainly on the heterolingual consciousness from the authorial perspective, I intend to include the readerships of heterolingual address, as well as their interactive and negotiating participation in the whole process. The heterolingual addresser, Sakai claims, should be capable to "call into question other discursive positivities similar to the unity of a particular ethnic or national language, such as the unities of ethnic and national cultures."[8] The heterolingual addresser must be able to unsettle the auto-constitution of the national or ethnic subject by acknowledging or even foregrounding "the figure of another" through his or her work. A heterolingual addresser "would, of course, wish the addressee to comprehend what [he/she] say[s]—for without this wish, the act of

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[5] Ibid., p. 5.

[6] Ibid., p. 8.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 10.

addressing would not constitute itself—but [he/she] would not take it for granted."[9] In other words, the heterolingual addresser faces the challenge that what he or she represents in writing could involve misunderstanding, interrogation, and even incommensurability among the various communities of addressees whose cultural and ideological roots are diversified. However, frustrated as a heterolingual addresser might feel when his or her message fails to arrive at his intended audience or communicates with the latter in an unexpected way, it is precisely the conflicts they experience through the responses of their heterolingual readerships that help them reflect upon, continue to develop, and eventually complete in cooperation with various readership the meaning of their works. More importantly, the cultural and ideological tensions entailed in the heterolingual encounters between, in this case, bilingual Chinese authors and their multiple reader communities are an embodiment of the convoluted social-historical realities they have lived in at both the local and global levels.

Literary Bi-/Multilingualism in (Post)Semi-Colonial Context

The point of departure that drives this project is the relative underestimation of literary bilingualism in the study of modern Chinese literature and its association with China's pursuit of modernity in the twentieth century. The predominant attention paid to the discursive practice conducted in Chinese, including creative writing and literary translation, fails to capture an alternative side of modernity that is marked by the multilingual and heterolingual experiences of Chinese intellectuals. Although numerous critical works have been published on cross-lingual activities

[9] Ibid., p. 9.

such as translation, they are after all Chinese-language centered, thus covering only the homolingual community of native Chinese speakers. My study, nevertheless, aims to draw attention to the ways in which Chinese authors involved heterolingual communities not through translation, as the role of translation is rather indirect, passive, and shadowy in such kind of engagement, but through writing directly in the languages of the Other and bringing diverse voices into their project of negotiating, contesting, and identifying the Chinese approach to modernity.

Another issue resulting from the underestimation of non-Chinese language texts by bi-/multlingual Chinese authors is that their works are often split into two bodies of literature, which also leads to a split in scholarship. Eileen Chang's literary career, for instance, has been divided into several stages: Her most famous and well-discussed works are her Chinese-language stories in the 1940s. Her English-language novels written in the mid-1950s and early 1960s are designated by many, in a reductionist fashion, as anti-communist propagandist literature of little significance. Weighed on separate scales, the two bodies are often viewed more as inconsistent or even oppositional in theme and style, rather than as a coherent whole, and have gained unbalanced currency in different discourses. Whereas Chang's English writings have been endorsed by quite a few scholars in North American academia, research on this body of writing remained blank in mainland China until the 1980s, and is still limited due to various reasons. More problematic is the fact that in the Chinese scholarship, studies of bilingual writers' non-Chinese texts are more often based on their translations, treated as if they were originally written in Chinese. In other words, the "invisibility" of the translator has also led to the "invisibility" of a writer's bilinguality. In short, bilingual writers are "monolingualized," in some cases, by translation, and in others, by the centrality of

nationalist discourse in literary studies.

The underestimation of non-Chinese language literature by Chinese authors in these studies has much to do with the historical reality of modern China. Unlike other Asian countries such as India or the Philippines, which were colonized by Western imperialist powers in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, modern China actually underwent a stage called semi-colonialism rather than official colonialism.[10] Whereas colonialism in other Asian countries is typically marked by the dominance of a ruling imperialist power over the colonized,[11] semi-colonialism refers to the historical condition that features "multiple imperialist presences in China and their fragmentary colonial geography (largely confined to coastal cities) and control, as well as the resulting social and cultural formations."[12] In other words, semi-colonialism does not mean the incompleteness of colonialism, but rather that China was a miniature of the globally colonized world where multiple powers contested (or conspired) to achieve domination. One cultural consequence of semi-colonialism is, as Shih suggests, that China managed to maintain its "linguistic integrity—China was never forced to supplant its native language with a colonial one and its official language remains

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[10] "Semi-colonialism" in its classic Marxian sense has been used along with "semi-feudalism" in the Communist discourse since the 1920s to describe the combined oppression by foreign imperialism and native feudalism that China and Chinese people experienced during the periods of the late Qing Dynasty and of Republican China, namely, the century after China was defeated in the first Opium War in 1842. Whereas the Communist rhetoric confines the term to the social-political realm, Shih's employment of "semi-colonialism" is more concerned with the cultural political effects that such a historical condition generates. See Shih, Shu-mei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937.* University of California Press, 2001,

[11] Of course, the identity of the ruling power is fluid in the long history of colonialism. As Shu-mei Shih notes, global colonization continuously involves what Fredric Jameson terms as the "inter-imperialist" rivalry, which indicates the transfer of power over a colony from time to time. See *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937.* p. 32.

[12] *The Lure of the Modern*, p. 31.

Chinese,"[13] because no central colonial government was ever formed on Chinese territory to establish a totalizing set of colonizing rules and policies.

It is then not difficult to imagine that the linguistic map in such a semi-colonial context, particularly in the coastal metropolitan regions like Shanghai and Tianjin, was literally multilingual. Beneath the retention of Chinese as the official language was the undercurrent of various imperialist languages co-existing yet also competing with one another, although none of these foreign languages ever managed to gain linguistic dominance on Chinese territory. Works in non-native languages by Chinese authors were, therefore, enmeshed in a convoluted linguistic web of varying communities writing and speaking for varying purposes. To understand their relevance in the vast multilingual picture of (post)semi-colonialism, it then seems necessary to consider the practices of writing in non-Chinese languages (in this case, English), in comparison to other linguistic and literary exercises.

At the local level, for instance, how did the Anglophone works of Chinese authors function differently from the Chinese-language texts (many were actually by the same group of bilingual writers) in the history of China's literary modernity? Moreover, how do we posit these Anglophone works within the network of texts composed by Chinese authors in other foreign imperialist languages such as Japanese, German, and French? Indeed, literature created in English was a minor literature at the linguistic level in the (post)semi-colonial context, despite the institutional presence of the English-speaking imperialists. Generally, the movements promoting national literatures and national languages have essentialized

[13] Ibid., p. 34.

the link between authors' linguistic identity and their national identity. Thus, in critical studies on China's literary modernity, which take for granted the equation between literature of a modern Chinese nation-state and literature of a modern Chinese language, the absence of texts in English is not surprising. The overwhelming emphasis on the role of translation from other languages into Chinese has consolidated the impression that literature produced in non-Chinese languages is exclusively foreign to China. Even scholarly discussions that highlight the cross-cultural and translingual nature of Chinese literary modernity, such as Lydia Liu's[14] and Chen Xiaomei's[15] works, still confine their subjects of investigation to the constellation of Chinese-language productions. In short, the study of Chinese literary modernity is preoccupied with a kind of linguistic centrism, Chinese in this case.[16] Thus, it is difficult to find a place for non-Chinese language literatures by Chinese authors because they were quantitatively less visible compared to publications in Chinese. It is even more difficult to identify them thanks to the premise that the national, linguistic, and ethnic identities of a literature should be seamlessly connected or interchangeable. In other words, literary modernity in China is recognized to be built exclusively upon a literature created in modern Chinese vernacular by native Chinese-speaking authors.

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[14] Liu, Lydia H. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937.* Stanford University Press, 1995.

[15] Chen, Xiaomei. *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China.* Oxford University Press, 1995.

[16] Chinese scholars Chen Pingyuan, Huang Ping, and Qian Liqun raised the question in 2004 as to whether writings in non-Chinese languages by modern Chinese authors should be included in the realm of what they refer to as "literature of twentieth-century China." However, they do not provide a detailed account but only briefly mention the issue in their conversation. See Chen Pingyuan, et al., *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Wenxue Sanrentan / Manshuo Wenhua* (*A Trilogue on Literature of Twentieth-Century China*). Peking University Press, 2004, pp. 41-42.

Acknowledging a writer's bi-/multilinguality is one thing; consciously taking into account the bi-/multilingual characteristics of his or her works in critical readings thereof is another. Notwithstanding the fact that they represent a significantly smaller body of literature, works in non-Chinese languages by Chinese authors are not negligible. Instead, their presence precisely proves and foregrounds the distinctiveness and complexity of the literary landscape at the linguistic level in a (post)semi-colonial environment. Writing bi-/multilingually was not an uncommon phenomenon among Chinese writers: Lu Xun published more than a dozen essays in Japanese; Lao She was an active contributor to several English-language periodicals; Hu Shih published numerous critical essays in English; Lin Yutang wrote bilingually throughout his life and founded a famous English-language journal with several other bi-/multilingual intellectuals in Shanghai. If foreign imperialist languages functioned as the sources for what Lydia Liu terms as the "translated modernity" through translingual practice such as literary translation, terminological borrowing, and Westernization of the Chinese vernacular itself; writing directly in these imperialist languages placed this modernity into immediate contact with its sources. Whereas Chinese-language writings served to cultivate a homolingual community that embraced the birth of a language of the modern Chinese nation-state by modifying the foreign for the sake of the native; non-Chinese writings by Chinese authors engaged addressees in multiple hetero-cultural communities, which were smaller in terms of demographic statistics but much less homogeneous or unified in their senses of communal belonging. Rather than borrowing languages *from* the foreign, a process that was underlined by a debtor-creditor relationship and thus the urge to internalize what did not belong to the Chinese language, authors in the latter scenario ventured directly

into languages of the Other and invited diverse voices to participate in the formation of Chinese modernity. As a result, their writings helped extend the process of what Liu calls the "co-authoring" in translingual practice.[17]

At the global level, the connotations of writing in English by Chinese authors in the (post)semi-colonial context must also differ from their counterparts in (post)colonial Asian countries such as India. Does semi-colonialism also lead to a kind of semi-decolonization or anti-colonization in Chinese authors' experiments with languages of the Other? To what extent are Chinese authors writing in English driven to revolutionize from within the language itself as a form of resistance? In other words, the practice of writing in English in (post)semi-colonial context is accompanied by a sense of in-between-ness. It is really a matter of degree. On the one hand, in the semi-colonial context, the pressure of linguistic domination is not nearly as strong as it is in colonized regions; in the semi-colonial context, the potential threat of foreign languages to the native language is mildly felt or even absent. In fact, under these conditions the co-existence of multiple foreign languages, as I have noted earlier, has become a crucial resource for the development of a national language, namely, the modern Chinese vernacular. This is most significantly manifested in the promotion of total Westernization by the major participants in the New Culture and May Fourth movements during the first two decades of the twentieth century: a case in point is Hu Shih. On the other hand, the inherent threat of English as a language of foreign imperialist power is undeniable. It is worth querying how bilingual Chinese authors could keep a balance between subjection to and the subjectification of English when they chose to write in it. Was

[17] *Translingual Practice*, pp. 1-42.

there an issue of betrayal, betrayal to the Chinese language but also betrayal to English when it was adapted for Chinese nationalist purposes? More importantly, how did this shared experience of writing in the language of the Other play a part in the history of global Englishes and global anti-colonization?

In India, for instance, the language of the colonizer that was once forced upon the subcontinent during the colonial era has become "a splintered, hybrid English, being appropriated, nativized and adapted by local environments"[18] as a form of negotiation, resistance, decolonization, and self-empowering in the post-colonial communities. Yet, as we shall see in the cases I analyze in the following chapters, such processes as hybridization, appropriation, nativization, and adaptation of English have been performed in the literary practice of bilingual Chinese authors since semi-colonial times and have continued in the (post)semi-colonial era. Less concerned with the systematic and institutional resistance against colonization, these approaches served rather different purposes, such as distinguishing the Chinese language itself (and Chineseness, in broader terms) and solidifying the Chinese ideal of cosmopolitanism. To put it in another way: The relationship between the colonizers' languages and those of the indigenous in the constitution of post-colonial literatures is, following Vinay Dharwadkar's logic in his study of Indian English, one in which the interspersion of the latter into the former has been a *shadowy* practice throughout the history of colonialism. "[T]he highly crafted 'English' of Indian-English literature is full of the *long shadows* of Indian languages" (my italics).[19] The adoption of English in the semi-colonial context suggests more a

[18] Ramanathan, Vaidehi. *The English–Vernacular Divide: Postcolonial Language Politics and Practice*. Multilingual Matters LTD, 2005, p. vii.

[19] Quoted in Ramanathan, p. vii. Dharwadkar, Vinay. "The Historical Formation of Indian English Literature" in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia.* Sheldon Pollock ed.,

constructive intention than a destructive rivalry between the foreign and the indigenous. Whereas the indigenous languages of the officially colonized had to sneak their way into English in order to decolonize it from within, the acquisition of English for the semi-colonized was not an institutionally compelled experience, but one by which they took the initiative and retained the flexibility in doing so. For example, the authors discussed in this project were either granted governmental funding to study overseas or chose with their families' support to attend bi-/multilingual schools. In that sense, they were fully integrated into the semi-colonial power structures.

It is true that the introduction of English into modern China, however innocent or mildly colonizing as it seemed through exercises such as religious preaching and education at missionary schools, was marked by "the unfailing presence of embedded biases within Western discourse"[20]—that is to say, its entry into China was after all the consequence of Western imperialist invasion. It is also true that access to English—similar to the travel of Western modernism into China that Shih discusses—"points to a peculiar collusion between metropolitan hegemony and local Chinese elites' cultural hegemony."[21] Indeed, English was not widely popularized and was socially divisive as a way to upward social mobility and as a means to address limited intellectual communities. My focus, nevertheless, is on the constructive side of writing in English and its contribution to the experience of modernity at both local and global levels. It is safe to suggest that, rather than being

University of California Press, 2003, p. 262.

[20] *The Lure of the Modern*, p. 15.

[21] Ibid., p. 12.

linguistically interpellated in the Althusserian sense by the Western imperialists, Chinese authors writing in English found their historical roots in the famous claim of the late Qing reformers during the Westernization Movement (*yangwu yundong*), 1861-1895: *shi yi changji yi zhi yi* (to emulate the advanced technologies of the foreigners in order to overcome them). While the late Qing reformers promoted technological emulation, writing in English in (post)semi-colonial China was a performative echo of a similar ideal of Westernization at the linguistic and literary level. Just as the technological emulation was grounded in the Confucian ethics of respecting one's enemy,[22] Chinese authors did not simply subject themselves to the English language. In fact, instead of having their national linguistic territory occupied by non-Chinese languages—although modern Chinese vernacular was not yet completely formed—the experience of writing in English for these writers was more like breaching a linguistic border, stepping into the Others' land, and interpellating standardized English into a literary alchemy all their own.

Bilingual Writing as a Distinctive Literary Form

One question that concerns me when reading the works by bilingual Chinese authors is the issue of naming. The identification of bilingual authors in the Sino-Anglophone contexts, particularly their works in English, is never stable. Their works have been divided by different measurements in critical studies: sometimes the language in which they are written, sometimes the location where they are created, and other times the ethnic or geopolitical identity of the author. Bilingual writers have been claimed in varying discursive fields including but not

[22] Liu, Lydia H. *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*. Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 112.

limited to studies of modern Chinese literature, Sinophone literature, literature of the exile, diasporic literature, immigrant literature, and Asian-American literature. It is even harder to determine a term that is inclusive enough to define the works of a bilingual Chinese author in their entirety. Various attempts have been made to highlight the hyphenated nature of their literary productions by using terminologies in the "trans-" family, such as translingual, transnational, or cross-cultural literature. These seemingly unsettling distinctions in naming, however, suggests that we should not confuse the geopolitical and linguistic identities of the author with the literary identities of bilingual writing *per se*. In the chapters below, I pursue answers to the following questions: Can bilingual writing itself be treated as a literary genre, regardless of issues like identity and geopolitics? If so, what literary qualities does bilingual writing have to distinguish it from monolingual writing and translation? In Hokenson and Munson's terms, is there a "common core of the bilingual text" that cannot be found in other literary productions?[23]

First, I find it necessary to raise a more fundamental question, that is, what is bilingual writing or who is the bilingual writer in this particular project? According to the distinction that linguistics makes between the two terms bilinugality and biligualism, bilinguality refers to the individual ability of code-switching between languages. The term bilingualism, on the other hand, is used to describe the phenomenon of writing bilingually by a group of writers, whose works could draw together people of hetero-cultural and hetero-lingual circles to form an imagined community based on the language in which they write. In *The Bilingual Text*, Hokenson and Munson develop a six-part terminology to categorize bilingualism

[23] Hokenson, Jan Walsh, and Marcella Munson. *The Bilingual Text: History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation*. St. Jerome Publishing, 2007, p. 4.

depending on the degree of individual competency in two languages.[24] I focus my study on authors they refer to as the "idiomatic bilingual," who write "in both languages with near-native handling of grammar, idioms, discursive registers, and stylistic and literary traditions."[25]

Then there is the issue of linguistic dominance. In Hokenson and Munson's observation, linguistic dominance is an extraordinarily complicated issue in determining a writer's bilinguality. They limit their study to a group of self-translators because these writers' bilingual productions seem more balanced as they move back and forth between the same texts in different languages. Balance in productivity, however, is not a major concern in my project to identify a bilingual writer. For instance, the number of Chinese-language texts written by Lu Xun and Lao She far exceed their works in non-Chinese languages. But the currency of the latter cannot afford to be understated if one considers how bilinguality has been inscribed in their thoughts about translation, cross-cultural communications, as well as in their participation in building the modern Chinese language. In fact, when it comes to the idiomatic bilingual Chinese writers whom I discuss here, I argue that the quantitative imbalance of their works in respective languages (perhaps also in theme and genre) or the changing linguistic dominance in their works over time is precisely evidence of the complicated geopolitical and historical dynamism in which they were engaged. For instance, Lin Yutang's Chinese-language texts were predominantly *xiaopinwen* (small essays), a common genre of critical writing in the Chinese literary tradition, but his several highly popular cultural primers and

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[24] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[25] Ibid., p. 14.

fictional stories published during and shortly after the Sino-Japanese War were written in English. Another case is Eileen Chang. She was most well-known and received much more critical attention for her Chinese-language short fiction, but it was the few English-language novels she wrote during the Cold War that kindled the most provocative and contesting reviews among scholars in mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States.

Linguistic dominance is also often a temporal matter. The writers discussed in this project chose to write solely or more frequently in one language at a certain historical stages, while in the other language at other times. Chang, for instance, wrote exclusively in Chinese before the mid-1940s, but started to write novels in English, which many refer to as anti-communist, after she moved to the United States in the early 1950s. Even if it was for circumstantial reasons, such as writing to survive in a foreign language book market, the switch of the dominant language in Chang's literary career is suggestive of the social-historical impact of regional and global geopolitics on the fate of a modern Chinese writer. Linguistic dominance, in short, is also an unstable concept. Therefore, instead of querying which language played a dominant role in the works of bilingual writers, I am more concerned about why they made the specific choice of language for their writing at particular moments.

In my study of literary bilingualism, I also intend to make distinctions between bilingual writing and other cross-lingual exercises. Hokenson and Munson's discussion of self-translation sheds light on the importance of distinguishing the study of bilingual writing from other paradigms. They write,

> [In the practice of self-translation,] the standard binary model of author and translator collapses. Theoretical models of source

> and target languages also break down in the dual text by one hand, as do linguistic models of lexical equivalence, and foreign versus domestic culture. Literary critical models of a writer's (monolingual) style, and of translation as diminution and loss, a falling away from the original, similarly cannot serve.[26]

The main issue I consider is the "intendedness" of different kinds of cross-lingual and cross-cultural literary practice. Bilingual writing differs, for instance, from translation, which is usually the passing on of a text from a guest culture to the "unintended" audience of a host culture.[27] In bilingual writing, similar to what Hokenson and Munson remark about self-translation, the binary models of source and target languages or of guest and host cultures are broken. Of course, it might be true that an author's English-language work is not intended for monolingual readers in Chinese, neither is their Chinese work for monolingual English speakers. However, what Lydia Liu terms as the process of "invention" in translating concepts to another culture actually also happens within the bilingual writing of Chinese writers because their writings in each language are inscribed by linguistic features of the Other, as well as its cultural legacies and ideologies. Their Chinese writing is embedded in the history of translation and Westernization of the modern vernacular. Their English writing features, as noted above, adaptation and nativization of the language itself. In short, they write in an already translated or re-invented language. The key difference is that in translation such invention occurs due to the unintendedness of the original, whereas for bilingual authors, this process

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[26] Ibid., p. 3.

[27] *Translingual Practice*, pp. 26-27.

is exactly intended for the readers of respective languages in order to bring them into conversation with the other language or culture. The nativization, adaptation, and hybridization Chinese authors have brought to English, for instance, are not what they *have to do*. On the contrary, they *are compelled* to show through these approaches the multiple possibilities of alternative Englishes. We could say a bilingual writer seeks and finds intended readerships in both languages.

A closer look at the cases in this study reveals some interesting patterns. First of all, several of the major works by the writers discussed here were not completed voluntarily, but more as a response, in some cases reaction, to a non-native solicitor: Lin Yutang was first invited by Pearl Buck and Richard Walsh in the mid-1930s to write about China and Chinese culture for the American audience, and Lin continued his cooperation with them for more than two decades of his later literary career. Eileen Chang was commissioned by the United States Information Agency (USIA) as part-time translator of American literature into Chinese in the early 1950s, and later finished two novels under the USIA-funded program of Asian literatures. Hualing Nieh published her best known Chinese-language novels when she served as the co-director of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa between the 1960s and 1980s; in this case, I take her experience of working in a U.S. literary organization as a form of institutionalized call upon the writer. The subject matter of their writing is almost predominantly China-based: family melodrama of traditional middle class, land reform in rural China, life of exile during war times, etc. However, these writings at times created unexpected effects among their intended readers. Despite their linguistic commonality with their readerships on the textual level, what these authors represent in their writing may at times fail to be fully understood by their readers and even cause misunderstanding,

culturally and politically. There always seems to be the binary between the "linguistic us" and the "ideological other" in the literary practice of bilingual Chinese authors. Such tension, in Sakai's terms, is a result of heterolingual address.

Besides difference in authorial intention, another thing that distinguishes bilingual writing from monolingual writing and translation is, of course, the composition of their respective readerships. Despite readers and writers sharing language at the textual level, they may differ in various other aspects, including their identities, cultural roots, and social-political experiences. Readers of the English-language texts by a Chinese author, for instance, might be monolingual English speakers, bilingual Chinese like the author, bilingual readers whose first language is English, or other multilingual speakers. Therefore, it should be safe to assume that a reading community in this sense is much more fluid and less stabilized than those consisting of monolingual and homo-cultural members. In other words, literary works of a bi-/multilingual author, particularly those in his or her non-native languages, would inevitably find themselves in a situation of being negotiated, contested, and disputed because they are read by people of diverse communities with different senses of belonging, cultural heritages, social responsibilities, and political ideologies. In short, the communal feeling among these writers and readers based on the language they share—which might be native to some and non-native to others—is always partial, incomplete, and interspersed by at least some incommensurable sense that one does not belong to the particular community "intended" by the author to varying degrees.

In this project, I focus on the fictional and prose writings of bilingual Chinese authors during the period between 1930s and 1970s. Each of these writers and their works are representative of cross-lingual and cross-cultural practice at different

historical stages within the Sino-Anglophone context. I want, by associating their careers with some of the critical historical moments in which they lived, to highlight the feelings of tension and conflict, rather than unifying sentiments or sympathy, their works have kindled between heterolingual communities, and to reveal how they are embodiments of historical realities at the discursive level.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One examines a community of bi-/multilingual Chinese intellectuals through their works published in a Chinese-sponsored English-language journal, *The China Critic*, in Shanghai from the 1920s to 1930s. By analyzing a corpus of articles that revolved around the question of women in modern China written by these authors, and the critical reviews that they received from non-native readerships, I demonstrate how the seemingly idiomatic English language these authors used in fact had been culturally and ideologically creolized. The liberal cosmopolitan club that the contributors to the journal claimed to have established was inscribed by culturally and politically divergent opinions on the shared issues they discussed. The concept of cosmopolitanism, which originated from Western thought and whose meaning was supposed to be universally agreed upon, was contested and became unstable.

Chapter Two investigates one of the most-renowned bilingual writers in Anglo-Chinese history, Lin Yutang. My discussion focuses on Lin's English-language novel *Moment in Peking*, a text that has received much less critical attention than his other English-language works, especially the cultural primers he wrote for the American audience between the mid-1930s and 1940s. I analyze how Lin experimented with the concept of the novel, a Western-rooted

literary genre, by interspersing elements of Chinese literary language, Chinese literary aesthetics, and the novel's Chinese counterpart, *xiaoshuo*—as a way to express his ideal about cosmopolitanism and world literature. However, archival research of Lin's correspondence with his editor and publisher in New York reveals the long and difficult process of negotiation and debate that Lin's ideal had to undergo in the language of the Other.

Chapter Three engages a particular form of bilingual literary practice, Eileen Chang's English-language rewriting in the U.S. in the early 1950s of her Chinese-language fictions published in China in the 1940s. The major question that I address in this chapter is what drove Chang to rewrite her earlier Chinese publications into English rather than simply translating them, considering that translation might have been more efficient and beneficial for a writer when transiting from one literary culture to another at such a critical moment in history. I compare the figure of the maidservant in Chang's Chinese fiction "Guihuazheng: A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer: A Xiao's Autumnal Lament") and in her English-language novel *The Rice Sprout Song*. I argue that Chang's cross-lingual rewriting displays a kind of incommensurability between the two bodies of her writing even if she managed to translate herself physically and linguistically into another culture.

Chapter Four is an interrogation of the meaning of literary bilinguality through Hualing Nieh's Chinese-language novel, *Sangqing yu Taohong* (*Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*). I propose the possibility that we view the Chinese language in Nieh's novel as having been internally foreignized as a language of the Other. In this particular case, the author, the text, and the language are so fluid because they have been endlessly travelling across regions, cultures, as well as

discursive fields. The novel puts into question, for instance, exactly in which Chinese language the author writes because that language has been discursively inscribed by different political ideologies and by linguistic elements of multiple languages. Nieh's play with bi-/multilingual writing is also embodied in the narrative structure of the story, in which the voice of a translator keeps making itself visible on the page to remind readers of the bi-/multilingual nature of the novel, rather than it being a monolingual and homogeneous Chinese text.

Chapter One

Creolizing the Ideal of Cosmopolitanism: *The China Critic* and the Hetero-Cultural Debates on the Question of Women, 1920s-1930s

In his discussion of the history of the nation-state, Benedict Anderson lays much emphasis on the role print languages played during the transitional moment from the classical times to the modern. Analyzing how print-capitalism created unified fields of communication through a newly established language-of-power based on spoken vernaculars in Europe instead of Latin, Anderson concludes,

> The convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.[28]

A few points are worth noting in Anderson's statement. First, it would not be possible to imagine such a community as the modern nation without *three* necessary conditions: capitalism, print technology, and a uniform language resulting from the former two. Second, for a language in print to be national, it must be one of *exclusivity* to the extent that no extra space seems to be allowed for other languages. Third, as Anderson claims clearly, the three conditions altogether create but one form of imagined community, that is, *the modern nation*. If we agree with Anderson's discussion in other parts of his study that capitalism and print culture lead to the emergence of the imagined community, as people acquire a new sense of temporality through the simultaneous consumption of, for instance, newspapers,

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[28] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2006, p. 46.

then the exclusivity of the print language seems essential in making this imagined community national.[29] In other words, any change made to Anderson's tripartite formula may cause a butterfly effect, creating a different form of imagined community. More specifically, if the status of language in this formula becomes a variable, an imagined community that is not necessarily the nation-state could also take place.

The possibility of alternative imagined communities other than the nation-state is worth pondering if we expand Anderson's temporal focus from the eighteenth century to later eras, when international trade and trans-continental cultural exchanges boomed along with the expansion of modern colonialism. During that period, the readily established Euro-American national languages also travelled. One may then pose the following question: What kind of imagined community might be created if capitalism and print technology marry a language that is not national for members in the community, namely, for those who already have another language enshrined as their national language? This question applies to semi-colonial contexts such as that of China in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, when anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and above all, nationalism were priorities on the sociopolitical agenda. For example, as early as the 1930s, Chinese readers queried how they should identify their contemporaries writing in languages other than Chinese. Were English-language stories written in China part of Chinese literature? Some of them asked. The specific case I have in mind is that of the English-language periodicals published by Chinese intellectuals in urban Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s, such as *The China Critic*. My

[29] Ibid., pp. 33-35.

questions are: After more than a decade of advocacy for the establishment of a modern Chinese nation, especially through the vernacularization of a national language both on the discursive level and in practice, what did it mean for Chinese intellectuals to publish a non-Chinese-language journal? What kind of community did they attempt to build? Who were their target community members? How did they manage the tension between the discourse of nationalism and the reality of colonialism? What role did English play in their imagined community, which, for local Chinese, was not only the lingua franca in the international settlement of Shanghai but also the language of the colonists? How did these Chinese intellectuals' bilingual and cross-cultural consciousness intervene in their representations through the language of the Other?

In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the nature of the community which the bilingual Chinese editors of *The China Critic* referred to as the Liberal Cosmopolitan Club. There have been outstanding discussions on this topic such as Shuang Shen's study of the magazine's dialectics between cosmopolitanism and nationalism and Eugene Lubot's study of its dilemma between patriotism and liberalism. While taking account of this scholarship, my investigation focuses on the role of print language in unsettling the meaning of a community. I then examine how the ambivalence of cosmopolitanism finds its specific manifestation in the magazine's representation of questions associated with women. I propose that English, despite how linguistically standard and idiomatic it appeared in print, was culturally and ideologically creolized by different contributors. Different political and cultural stances on the same issue were translated into one language, making the meaning of cosmopolitanism envisioned by the Chinese editors and critics contested and unstable. The magazine's accessibility to readerships of divergent

national or imperialist allegiances through the lingua franca in a semi-colonial international context, on the one hand, allowed its authors to communicate their messages to a broader audience than the homolingual native Chinese speakers; but, on the other hand, exposed them to ideological and cultural conflicts or even clashes that they might not have experienced in their contact with their fellow Chinese. In other words, the language that was expected to be the key to shaping the cosmopolitan community was more like a field (in the sociopolitical sense) where various discourses competed with one another for the position of power. Beneath this common language were stories of multilayered significations that challenged the possibility of a homogenous goal that the self-proclaimed Chinese liberal cosmopolitans attempted to attain. The complexity the editors and their contributors added to the nature of their community was reflected in the various topics the magazine covered, among those the women's question, which was of great concern in China at that time.

The China Critic and Its Cosmopolitan Ideal

In 1928, a group of Chinese intellectuals initiated an English-language weekly in Shanghai, *The China Critic*. It was among the first English-language periodicals funded and edited completely by Chinese in China. The magazine was based in the international settlement of Shanghai where Europeans, Americans, and Chinese migrants from other parts of the country mingled, but was circulated beyond Shanghai and sold overseas. The Shanghai Municipal Council commented in its yearbook that it was the only Chinese-owned weekly that had great influence overseas.[30] The magazine lasted for more than a decade until 1945. Scholars tend to

[30] It seems *The China Critic* also circulated in the United States since a foreign address was printed

divide its publication into three stages: The first stage was from its pilot issue (May 31, 1928) to the years before the second Sino-Japanese War erupted. The second was the war period. In the third stage, the magazine was first suspended in 1940 and resumed for a few months in 1945 (August 23, 1945-December 27, 1945). A large selection of culturally and socially related themes was covered during its first stage, while the magazine turned its focus to war and international relations in later years.[31]

Most of the magazine's editors received degrees at American universities after graduating from Qinghua University or Peking University between the 1910s and early 1920s. Chang Hsin-Hai (张欣海), a PhD in English Literature at Harvard University, was the first editor-in-chief of *The China Critic* and later left the position to work for the National Government as a diplomat. Other editors included Kwei Chung-Shu (桂中枢), an editor of several English-language periodicals in Shanghai at the time; Quentin Pan (潘光旦), a famous sociologist and eugenicist who studied at Dartmouth College and Columbia University; and various others of similar education background. Its contributors were also well-known intellectuals such as T. K. Liu (刘大钧), a prestigious economist who graduated from the University of Michigan; Lin Yutang, an essayist of equal popularity as Lu Xun in

on its front cover for overseas subscription. A few Western journals such as *International Affairs* and *Pacific Affairs* published reviews about the magazine or excerpts from it. In an advertisement for subscription discounts in January 1929, the magazine's business manager mentioned that the Sociology Department at the University of Minnesota had reproduced some of its articles on population and similar subjects in a book of reading materials for the students. After 1935, however, *The China Critic* was not the only Chinese-owned magazine that gained overseas popularity. Periodicals such as the *T'ien Hsia Monthly* initiated by Lin Yutang, one of the key contributors to *The China Critic*, also came to the attention of overseas readership.

[31] Deng, Lilan. "Lüelun *Zhongguo Pinglun Zhoubao* de wenhua jiazhi quxiang—Yi Hu Shih, Sai Zhenzhu, Lin Yutang yinfa de zhongxi wenhua lunzheng weizhongxin" ("An Investigation of *The China Critic*'s Cultural Orientation: Debate over Eastern and Western Cultures among Hu Shih, Pearl Buck, and Lin Yutang") in *Fujian Luntan—Renwen shehuikexue ban* (*Fujian Forum-Volume of Humanities and Social Science*), Issue 1, 2005, p. 43.

the late 1920s and early 1930s who studied in both America and Germany; and Lin Yu, Lin Yutang's younger brother, who oversaw the column about Chinese life experiences in foreign countries.[32]

On November 13, 1930, an editorial article was published as the magazine's declaration on the kind of community it expected to build, "Proposal for a Liberal Cosmopolitan Club in Shanghai." In the article, the editors proposed that they "have always felt the desirability of having such a club established, a club of men who can think, or are willing to make an effort to think, over and above the merely nationalistic lines."[33] Shuang Shen, however, points out how there was "a contradiction between cosmopolitanism as an intellectual agenda advocated by the magazine editors and cosmopolitanism as urban experience."[34] Based on her observation of the Anglophone periodicals published by Chinese in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s, Shen challenges a long-held premise at the center of theories about cosmopolitanism, that is, cosmopolitanism and nationalism are mutually exclusive. These Anglophone periodicals, including *The China Critic*, showed that "some forms of cosmopolitanism in early twentieth-century China were not in

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[32] This Euro-American educated community of Chinese editors and contributors formed a very different circle than the New Culture activists. Many of the latter group were strong advocates of Westernization and anti-Confucianism during the May Fourth Movement, and later became members of the Left-Wing League of Writers promoting national revolution during the early 1930s, whereas it is interesting that the editors of *The China Critic* kept reiterating the urgency to revitalize the Chinese civilization instead of dwelling completely upon learning from the West. Various studies have been done on the tension between the Chinese leftists and the liberalists. See Lubot, Eugene, *Liberalism in an Illiberal Age: New Cultural Liberals in Republican China, 1919-1937*, Greenwood Press, 1982; and Zhao, Libin, "Pipan yu bianhu: Hu Shih yu *Zhongguo Pinglun Zhoubao* de yiduan chongtu" ("Criticism and Defense: A series of conflicts between Hu Shih and *The China Critic*") in *Xueshu Yanjiu* (*Academic Research*), Vol. 10, 2013, pp. 101-108.

[33] "Proposal for a Liberal Cosmopolitan Club in Shanghai" in *The China Critic*. Vol. III, November 13, 1930, p. 1085.

[34] Shen, Shuang. *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semi-Colonial Shanghai*. Rutgers University Press, 2009, p. 43.

opposition to nationalism, especially in the case of publications during the Sino-Japanese War, when the threat of colonization was real and immediate."[35] However, Shen also regards such co-existence of cosmopolitanism and nationalism as the main tension in the magazine. "Whereas politically," she argues, "*The China Critic* had a clearly articulated anti-imperialist agenda, this political position was complicated by the cultural and linguistic borders manifested in this publication."[36] English was not only a global language for its editors and contributors, but also a source of local cultural capital. "It played an important role in shaping the cultural community in Shanghai, while registering the distance between Shanghai and the world as well as the differing social status of English and Chinese."[37]

Shen insightfully unfolds the dilemma of bilingual Chinese intellectuals as they attempted to strike a balance between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in semi-colonial Shanghai. It is worth noting, however, that Shen's analysis is essentially grounded on the view that sees cosmopolitanism and nationalism as a set of binaries. Stating that the two co-existed in *The China Critic* rather than being mutually exclusive, Shen still finds them to be struggling for the position of power. She concludes her analysis as follows:

> Overall, *The China Critic* is a bundle of contradiction that combined ownership of universal terms with commitment to local politics and wavered between accepting and censoring the increasingly heterogeneous urban culture. Its context was also

[35] Ibid., p. 23.

[36] Ibid., p. 42.

[37] Ibid., p. 43.

> full of contradiction and conflict—an internally divided city with the borders of the nation inscribed on its surface. This publication had multiple tasks of representing national interest, representing the self of the cosmopolitan intellectual, and representing the city.[38]

Throughout her study, Shen concentrates on the Editorial section of the magazine and a few critical articles on cultural issues by some of the major Chinese contributors. Surely, there are good reasons to focus on the editorial articles, which accounted for the largest proportion of contributions in the magazine. They not only represented the group ideology of the key members but also covered dominant political and cultural themes of the time. I argue, however, that such a perspective limits our investigation to the specific circle of bilingual but homo-cultural Chinese intellectuals, who shared the same native language. The community Shen presents to us in her study is a community of Chinese bilinguals who struggled between their cosmopolitan ideal and their nationalist sentiment. In other words, the gap between their ideological agenda and their discursive practices was basically the consequence of self-contradiction, or, as Shen would have it, their internal division. If, however, we reconsider the way in which an imagined community is created, as Anderson proposes in his study, readership is an indispensable element in its construction. An imagined community is not simply the product of the creator of a print medium, but rather the result of a conversation between writer and reader, in which conceptions about one's identity and his or her relation to others are reformulated. Therefore, to view more fully the complicated nature of *The China*

[38] Ibid., p. 57.

Critic, articles submitted by people other than the editors or major Chinese contributors should also be taken into consideration. A fundamental question is: Was there an imagined community?

Translated Cosmopolitanism

Rather than viewing cosmopolitanism and nationalism as a pair in contradictory co-existence, I propose we think of nationalism as part of the cosmopolitan agenda in *The China Critic*. Within the context of this magazine, the term "cosmopolitanism" in the rhetoric of Chinese intellectuals acquired a new meaning that differed from the long held conceptualization in the European tradition. Two modern theories may help us understand better the way in which this Chinese form of cosmopolitanism emerged in the early twentieth century. One is Lydia Liu's idea about the re-invention of Western terms in the Chinese context through translingual practices such as translation. To use Liu's terms, the formation of cosmopolitanism in *The China Critic* was a process of "legitimation of the 'modern' and the 'West'" in the Chinese discourse. What was manifested in such a process is "the ambivalence of Chinese agency."[39] Although editors of *The China Critic* used the original English term "cosmopolitanism," the fact that the magazine was edited by Chinese intellectuals with bilingual consciousness in semi-colonial Shanghai by itself constructed what Liu refers to as the condition of translation and the ensuing discursive practices that must be interlingual.[40] In short, "cosmopolitanism" in *The China Critic* was a translated concept even though it appeared directly in English.

[39] *Translingual Practice*, p. xviii.

[40] Ibid., p. 27.

The other scholastic study that sheds lights on my investigation is Kwame Anthony Appiah's theory of partial cosmopolitanism. In the history of the development of the notion of cosmopolitanism, there have been two strands that intertwine but also at times clash with each other. One is the universal concern that "we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship." The other is the belief that "there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, we neither expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life."[41] Appiah, however, questions whether we can really carry the idea of "citizens of the world" far enough to abjure all of the local allegiances and partialities. He proposes a third approach other than the two dominant strands, a position that neither sides with "the nationalist who abandons all foreigners" nor sympathizes with "the hard-core cosmopolitan who regards her friends and fellow citizens with icy impartiality."[42] He calls this position a partial cosmopolitanism.

Appiah's re-invention of cosmopolitanism is the result of his contact with a post-colonial African world that featured figures like his father, a Ghanaian patriot who was also a proclaimed citizen of the world. In a similar vein, for editors of *The China Critic*, war and colonialism gave them the legitimation to design a cosmopolitanism in their own context. The title of the editorial declaration on cosmopolitanism mentioned above already betrays how the original meaning of the term had been re-invented. The title of the article was "Proposal for a Liberal

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[41] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p. xv.

[42] Ibid.

Cosmopolitan Club in Shanghai." It is curious that the term "club" was employed, which placed various restrictions on the border of this entity. Instead of terms such as "society," "league," "association," or "union," which were more commonly used by other Chinese intellectual groups to identify their communities, editors of *The China Critic* borrowed a concept of Western origin. Moreover, the word easily reminded one of associated concepts such as exclusive membership, socialization, and particularly in the context of semi-colonial Shanghai, entertainment and luxury. It also had greater local appeal in places like Shanghai than that it did nationwide impact because residents of Shanghai, especially those in the international settlement, must have been better acquainted with its meaning. The accessibility to the liberal cosmopolitan club was limited only to a certain kind and number of people. According to Appiah, in the European tradition, which took the world or cosmos as equivalent to the universe and its citizens as all human beings, "talk of cosmopolitanism originally signaled, then, a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities."[43] However, what the editors of *The China Critic* projected was precisely the opposite. Not only did they entertain the idea of community, they also set criteria on the identity of legitimate members in this community, whom they referred to as liberal cosmopolitans. In Shen's words, although the magazine established a dialogue with the city, its editorials "show that the public was a contested space with selective inclusiveness."[44]

What was the liberal cosmopolitan club like? An article published later by Lin

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[43] Ibid., p. xvii.

[44] *Cosmopolitan Publics*, p. 57.

Yutang explained the relationship between liberalism and cosmopolitanism. "To my mind, Liberalism is only an attitude of mind, a way of thinking. … Opposed to this liberal attitude is of course the conservative, and often called the die-hard, mental attitude." He continued, "Cosmopolitanism has arrived whether we will it or not. The radio, the aeroplane, the automobile and television are all bringing the world closer together. You will have to see more of your 'foreign devils,' whether you will it or not."[45] In short, the liberal attitude, openness or adaptability to changes and differences, is the ground for becoming a cosmopolitan or citizen of the world.

The editorial declaration in 1930 elaborated the nature of this club. "In such a gathering, there will be warmth for the soul, and each one's old shibboleth may get a chance of being fumbled out and re-furnished by contact with people of different opinion." The article went on to argue that citizens of the world are those who "come together for the purpose of better understanding one another's point of view and culture" and who "come together to thrash out some of the problems confronting mankind as a whole."[46] Insofar as they were bound by this common attitude, the editorial stated, it did not matter whether they were men of scholastic careers or wives of millionaires, Japanese, French, or Chinese. However, the article did not deny that there might be "a hierarchy of fellowship according to the number of heresies one is prepared to hold."[47] Overall, the cosmos or the world conceptualized in *The China Critic* was a place where its citizens shared one attitude, yet this attitude must tolerate divergence in thoughts and cultures. It did not

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[45] Lin, Yutang. "What Liberalism Means" in *The China Critic*, Vol. IV, March 12, 1931, p. 251.

[46] "Proposal for a Liberal Cosmopolitan Club in Shanghai," p. 1086.

[47] Ibid.

demand that its members reconcile with one another to reach a consensus. Nor did it simply show icy respect towards differences by leaving them untouched. Mutual understanding and abjurations of anti-foreignism by both Chinese and non-Chinese were its goal.

I must hasten to add a few points. First, by viewing what the editors advocated as *one* possible form of cosmopolitanism instead of *the* cosmopolitanism, we can now move beyond their internal contradictions to the constellation of multiple ideologies in which their vision was situated. After all, despite its explicit elitism thanks to its choice of print language and the location of its publication, *The China Critic* did reach a readership of diverse national sentiments and thus probably engaged diverse interpretations of cosmopolitanism. We should entertain the possibility, in particular, of the cosmopolitan colonist or imperialist, who as a cosmopolitan respected the entitlement of everyone to home attachments and cultural particularities but to whom the cosmos inherently meant the suzerain or the colonial state.[48]

Second, the term cosmopolitanism was printed in its original language, English. It did not appear as a neologism for the readers of *The China Critic*, as other loan words did in the Chinese-language periodicals. Therefore, by re-inventing meaning of the term but presenting it in its original Anglo-European form, the Chinese editors inevitably faced the difficulty of how it would function to establish a

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[48] The idea of cosmopolitan colonist or imperialist is inspired by Appiah's proposal of cosmopolitan patriot, a form of partial cosmopolitanism, who "can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people." (Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Cosmopolitan Patriots" in *Critical Inquiry*, Spring 1997, Vol. 23, No. 3. 618.) Of course, the cosmopolitan colonist or imperialist sounds more like a fake cosmopolitan because the connotation of the world is restricted by their colonial or imperial imaginations, for example, the classical Chinese interpretation of China as the world and the center of all peoples.

community. English, the lingua franca supposed to facilitate better understanding, became a field of contests because the editors had creolized it by translating a different set of ideologies into it. Digging a little deeper, we may find that the way in which the editorial declaration defined cosmopolitanism sounds less like the conventional European conceptualization and more like the traditional Chinese ideal of *Tianxia* (天下, all under heaven) in classical Chinese thought. Although the editors did not inherit the perception from their traditional predecessors that China was the center of the world, they shared what were generally believed to be the key ideas of the *Tianxia* ideal: harmony without uniformity, openness to the other, inclusiveness of differences, assimilation and naturalization of the foreign.[49] As Shuang Shen and other scholars have noted, "these editors promoted the fusion between the traditional and the modern and exhibited an attitude of acceptance toward Chinese traditional culture. Facing a rapid turnover of new ideas and ideologies, the editors promoted slow change and peaceful transformation."[50] This stance not only differentiated them from May Fourth intellectuals such as Hu Shih who enthusiastically advocated complete Westernization, but also confronted their foreign readership with indigenous ideals, despite the common language they deployed. In my view, the tension in the magazine was not between the editors' national sentiment and their cosmopolitan ideal, if we agree the two can together make a partial cosmopolitanism as Appiah suggests. The tension rather lay between their ideology and that of the club members whom they wished to recruit. Could

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[49] Liu, Qing. "Chongjian quanqiu xiangxiang: Cong 'Tianxia' lixiang zouxiang xin shijiezhuyi" ("Reconstruction of the Global Imagination: From the Ideal of *Tianxia* to a New Cosmopolitanism"). Online source. Accessed on October 10, 2017. http://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1379172.

[50] *Cosmopolitan Publics*, p. 34.

English still be impartial when thoughts rooted in different cultures meet in one linguistic field? Is it still the lingua franca when alternative or even conflicting interpretations of the same word or same matter encounter one another? If not, how could Chinese intellectuals make others understand their thoughts and reality while also better understanding the others?

The last question is associated with the third point I would like to make. On the one hand, the editors promoted an attitudinal commonality among the club members, namely, denial of anti-foreignism and embrace of cultural and intellectual differences. On the other, they repeatedly emphasized in the same article that the goal of better understanding was "to thrash out some of the problems confronting mankind as a whole."[51] But what were the problems confronting mankind as a whole? How were they demonstrated in the discourse of *The China Critic*? Were they abstract universal problems with no traces of local particularities?

An overview of the magazine's components may be revealing. *The China Critic* covered a variety of topics and themes that were also at the center of many Chinese-language periodicals published at the same time. The main section of each issue was the Editorials, a group of articles concentrating on the latest national events such as new governmental policies, problems in Manchuria, urban developments of Shanghai or other major cities, local deals in the international settlement, or China's changing relationship with other Powers in the political turmoil. Each issue also consisted of critical essays written by individual editors or outside contributors, discussing more generic cultural matters such as Chinese traditions and religion, the history of colonization, the modern life style, and

[51] "Proposal for a Liberal Cosmopolitan Club in Shanghai," p. 1086.

Chinese cultural reform. The magazine also set up several columns for celebrated writers, for instance, Lin Yutang's "The Little Critic," which preferred to sketch the more humanly mundane matters, such as the Chinese culture of naming. In the column, he tended to eschew what he referred to as the "big papers,"[52] that is, the more immediate political affairs with which the editorial board was most concerned. The weekly book review overseen by Quentin Pan introduced and commented on one or two books published by foreign writers. Another source for readers to learn about the outside world were the weekly reports from foreign presses which ran for only a few years. Nearly all issues ended with correspondence from everyday readers, both Chinese and non-Chinese, in the section of Public Forum. As the editors stated in a "Foreword" of the pilot issue, they had sensed a long-felt need for a representative publication free from censorship and prejudice that would offer "a fair presentation of all issues arising between China and the other Powers" and be "just to all."[53] Ideological impartiality and linguistic commonality beyond the national border seemed to have become the markers of the magazine, which were constantly highlighted in its promotional advertisements for many years. However, except for book reviews on recent overseas publications by foreign authors and excerpts of foreign reports published in the magazine, which served as the only immediate sources for Chinese readers to better learn about foreign thoughts and cultures, the topical focus of the editors seemed to imply that the problems of China were problems of humankind as a whole. This observation elicits more questions: How could their articulations of China-based problems be embedded in a more

[52] Lin, Yutang. Inaugural column of "The Little Critic" in *The China Critic*, Vol. III, July 3, 1930, p. 636.

[53] "Foreword" in *The China Critic*, Vol. I, May 31, 1928, p. 1.

international context and convince non-Chinese readerships that these were universal problems of humankind? Since the magazine emphasized an attitudinal commonality yet conceptual diversity, how could its editors determine that the problems of China and those of other nations were commensurable? Was the translatability of problems of divergent nations into one common language the key to making them universalized? Overall, how could editorial impartiality be maintained if the magazine's interpretation of problems of humankind was in effect marked by its embedded Chinese nationalist sentiment?

Since the publication of the editorial declaration on cosmopolitanism in 1930, there had not been much discussion or argument on the said theme. The article which appealed to the embrace of cultural and conceptual diversities served basically as a guideline for editors on selecting and editing the textual contributions in the following years. The question of whether and how divided translations of thoughts and problems could accommodate, assimilate, or abjure one another to form a community kept emerging in the magazine's presentations of various topics. English became the locale which made it possible for these different and maybe conflicting translations to cross borders and converge. In the following, I concentrate on the presentation of questions associated with women in the magazine as one case to illustrate the complexity of the community it strove to establish.

Positioning the Question of Women

The question of women seemed to have carried less immediate currency compared to the political turmoil China had undergone. The editorial board of *The China Critic*, for instance, tended to designate it more as a cultural matter than a socio-political issue. Most articles pertaining to the question appeared in special

columns which focused on cultural themes such as Chinese marriage and domestic life. Nevertheless, the question of women had always held a remarkable historical and political weight in the discourses of Chinese modernity. There was an explicit difference between *The China Critic* and the Chinese-language periodicals. In most of the debates over women's question, which took place between Chinese-language periodicals, each of them usually held a relatively coherent standing; by contrast, the overall presentation of the question within *The China Critic* was filled with contestations and evasiveness, even if at some point the Chinese editorial board displayed its own positioning. In short, probably because of the nature of the magazine as a collection of critical essays or because of its liberal cosmopolitan guidelines, it put together a group of articles with contradictory opinions causing internal arguments from time to time.

Throughout its decade-long publication, three major debates associated with the question of women appeared in *The China Critic*. All of them took place in or shortly after 1931, because the magazine concentrated solely on the political turmoil during the last quarter of 1931 when the second Sino-Japanese War broke out after the Mukden Incident. The first debate was ignited by an article written by a male Chinese contributor, Sun Chih Hsiang, on January 22, 1931, "The Chinese Madonna in the Making." With its title implying that an ideal woman had not yet been successfully made in modern China, the article was largely a dismissive criticism of the women's movements and the feminist trend of the previous decades. It charged that the "feminist misconceptions and educational blunders [in Chinese middle schools and colleges]" were responsible factors for "the countless and ever-increasing number of domestic tragedies and matrimonial failures that occur

every day in this country."[54] The school curriculum of the prior two decades had set only one goal for young Chinese women, that is, to be worthy of the efforts of men. The author opined that it had eliminated sexual differences, causing the loss of confidence and pride in women's sex as such, because adopting a mannish way of life was nothing other than obscuring women's own nature and worshiping men by likening them to the latter. Instead of rushing to suggest that women were inferior to men in social affairs, however, Sun emphasized that he believed in women's equal capability in the professional world but was more concerned with the disappearance of "a single Madonna capable of brightening a Chinese home." Such concern, he wrote, was "among circles that are interested in the welfare and happiness of the Chinese home and that profess whole-hearted and infinite faith in the home as the source of a tremendous driving force which must function to its fullest extent in the psychic and material construction of the Chinese nation."[55] In the end, he concluded that the schools should primarily train women for Chinese motherhood. "Only then can the young women of China fully utilize their invaluable capacities in the service of society, and be the real equals of men in the reconstruction of the Chinese nation."[56] Anyone with a feminist sense at the time would find the article fraught with a male-centered perspective. A few weeks later, V. T. Bang-Chou, a female contributor, fought back with the article, "What Is the Chinese Madonna[?]" She criticized Sun for blaming family deterioration on women and their desire to be educated and self-supporting. Moreover, she argued that the primary aim of girls

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[54] Sun, Chih Hsiang. "The Chinese Madonna in the Making" in *The China Critic*, Vol. IV, January 22, 1931, p. 77.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 79.

going to school was not simply to be the equals of men. “The aim of education, be it for women or men, is the training of citizenship.” She continued, “That includes, of course, the fatherhood of man and the motherhood of woman.”[57]

It would be easy to conclude that the debate between Sun and Bang-Chou was fundamentally the tension between the patriarchal attempt to keep women trapped in domesticity and the feminist quest for equal rights and emancipation. This I think is no more than a belated clichéd opinion. I am more interested in how both of their arguments were legitimized in the community formed in *The China Critic*. Part of Sun’s argument—namely, that there were natural differences between men and women—was the same as the position held by the editorial board. “Everywhere we hear the noisy slogan of emancipation and equality for our women,” Sun exclaimed, “as if equality meant *identity*!”[58] An editorial published later expressed a similar view, “We do not believe in sex equality, but we know for sure that the sexes have complementary parts to play, each therefore important and indispensable in its own way. At best we can only agree with Mr. Havelock Ellis in his revised edition of *Men and Women* that the sexes are equivalent.”[59]

The primacy of home-making and family in defining women’s life tasks also matched the dominant discourse of the Republican government, which had been recently taken over by Chiang Kai-shek after the North Expedition. In the early 1930s, the Republican government promoted the renaissance of Confucian social

[57] Bang-Chou, V. T. “What Is the Chinese Madonna[?]” in *The China Critic*, Vol. IV, February 19, 1931, p. 178.

[58] “The Chinese Madonna in the Making,” p. 78.

[59] “China’s Womankind at the Crossroad” in *The China Critic*, Vol. V, December 15, 1932, p. 1322.

morality, at the center of which was the value of the traditional Chinese family. The promotion was later followed by the government-led New Life Movement in 1934, calling on women to "come back home." The Association of Promoting Women's New Life was organized at the time, devoting all its activities to training women in domestic management and child rearing. Therefore, Sun's article was in some sense like a forerunner of China's propagandist ideology on the women's question.

Moreover, Sun's article engaged in a debate of greater interest to Chinese-language intellectual circles. In the early 1930s, the New Culture stage of focusing on the salvation of Chinese women was almost over and there was a relative regression in the feminist movement due to governmental promotion of reviving the old traditions. However, a variety of periodicals concerned with the women's question were incessantly created by Chinese intellectuals. The most popular dispute among these Chinese-language periodicals was precisely between those insisting on the continuing revolution for women's emancipation from the home and those echoing the government's rhetoric on women's domestic role.[60] In this sense, although Sun's article was written in English and thus reached a readership more diverse than one consisting of monolingual Chinese speakers, it seemed to have engaged non-Chinese readers more on an intellectual level while emotionally his arguments moved closer to the community of Chinese readers. By drawing a link between the future of women, the value of family, and the fate of the Chinese nation, Sun explicitly filled the question of women with a localized flavor. He stated that only a home glorified by wifely/motherly women was the driving

[60] For more detailed discussions on debates between Chinese-language periodicals revolving around the women's question, one may refer to Maeyama, Kanako, "Lun *Funü Yuandi* dui chuantong funüguan de pipan—Zhongguo sanshi niandai de nüxingzhuyi lun" ("Criticism on the Traditional View of Women in *Women's Fields*—Feminist Discourses in China, 1930s") in *Overseas Social Science*, Vol. 3, 1995, pp. 40-44.

force for national construction. This kind of statement was underlined by deeply-rooted Confucian ethics, that is, the notion that a well-regulated family was the fundamental component in the structure of an orderly state and ultimately a peaceful *Tianxia* (天下, all under heaven). The state according to classical thought was essentially an expanded system of families tied by kin relations. In short, the question of women was presented in Sun's article as the question of reviving a Chinese nation that is built upon successful domestic life. The Madonna of China, like the term Cosmopolitanism, turned out to be a translated concept charged with local politics, community sensibility, and traditional Chinese values.

Cohen Tien described Bang-Chou's response to Sun, in an article he published in a later issue of the magazine, as "indignant."[61] We may, of course, argue that Bang-Chou's critique of Sun's male-centered view was representative of the Chinese feminist camp in the debate over whether women should dedicate their life to the domestic world. Or we may give credit to both texts and take a neutral stand as Tien did in his article. Suggesting that Sun based his opinion on the assumption that "woman is *woman*," while Bang-Chou on the assumption that "woman is *homo*," Tien wrote, "Now of course woman is both, and for her and for society to live at peace she simply had to live and let live as both. That is the problem in a nutshell."[62] The debate over women's social role thus ended in a nutshell with an impartial conclusion in *The China Critic*.

What intrigues me in Bang-Chou's article, compared to Sun's, is the way in which her discussion provided a framework that enabled her to posit the women's

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[61] Tien, Cohen. "Whither China's Womanhood?" in *The China Critic*, Vol. IV, February 26, 1931, p. 196.

[62] Ibid.

question in another imagined community. Bang-Chou criticized Sun's article point by point, from logical mistakes to questionable presumptions. For instance, she ridiculed Sun for quoting from Western studies to support his view on the role of women: "But if a woman should find herself talented in a subject that a man ordinarily indulges in, she need not give it up just because she is a woman. It's ability that counts—and that Mr. Sun takes pains to defend by giving extensive quotations from statistics from the United States and England."[63] Bang-Chou did not believe that mere quotations from the West would enable Sun's argument to be acceptable by a broader audience. Her own theory showed that a conceptual transformation was needed in rethinking and universalizing the question of women.

Nevertheless, instead of identifying gender equality as the final goal of school education or the women's movement, Bang-Chou urged, "the aim of education, be it for women or men, is the training of citizenship. It is to teach men and women to be intelligent citizens, to be able to form an opinion on important questions of the day, to be intellectual and refined. That includes, of course, the fatherhood of man and the motherhood of woman."[64] She did not deny the weight of family as the foundational element of Chinese civilization. At the end of the article, in fact, she asked why a mother with a college degree could not be regarded as the Chinese Madonna. It is interesting that Bang-Chou also associated women's development with the formation of a modern nation-state. The underlying legitimacy for this association, however, was not the traditional Chinese assumption that the nation was based on the well-being of family and kinship, to which women were subjected.

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[63] "What Is the Chinese Madonna[?]" p. 178.

[64] Ibid.

Bang-Chou instead introduced the concept of citizen, a concept which "has not existed outside the Occident"[65] according to Max Weber and which did not come to the attention of modern Chinese intellectuals until the 1900s. By deploying a concept entirely of Western origin, Bang-Chou placed her argument in a political system that conceptualized the relationship between womanhood and nation-building differently. In this system, women were not bridged by traditional family to the modern nation, but were, like men, the basic components in national construction as independent-thinking individuals. Bang-Chou's identification of the women's question in a Westernized political and intellectual framework might have enabled her to gain resonances and sympathy from different communities than Sun's article: for instance, the Western-minded individuals among both the Chinese and non-Chinese readership. Her article showed an intention to draw the intellectual involvement of more diverse audience by translating Western political rhetoric into discussions of Chinese womanhood. I would be cautious but propose the following question: did it legitimize the question of women to be considered as a question of humankind?

It seems the debate on the Chinese Madonna raised the editorial board's awareness of how acute the issue was. A few weeks later, Bang-Chou was appointed by the magazine as the editor of a new column called "The Women's World." In the inaugural essay, Bang-Chou opened with a scene in which she asked the editor-in-chief what was the women's world. It is worthwhile to ruminate over the male editor's response:

> To this my friend and editor smiled. And then, turning his head,

[65] Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Routledge, 2001, p. xxxvi.

> he hummed the tune whose words run something like this: "I want my bacon fried nice and brown and my egg turned upside-down. … Is my breakfast ready? …" And, his sonorous voice still ringing, he turned toward me and smiled again. His smile made me feel stupid, ill at ease.[66]

There are several layers of tension in this scenario. What made the author feel uncomfortable with the editor's smile? Was it his casual gesture of turning his head when asked what the author saw as a big question? Was it his evasiveness and potential dismissiveness in answering the question by humming a meaningless tune? Was it the implication in the tune that the women's world was nothing more than the monotonous daily chore of preparing breakfast? The sexual prejudice from the male perspective was obvious. What I find interesting is the tune itself. It is highly possible that the conversation took place originally in Chinese. But there is no way to find out whether the song hummed by the man was in Chinese or in English. If it were in English, did the man indicate that the women's world was limited not only to routine daily life but a Western-style daily life? It would be even more interesting if it were originally hummed in Chinese-language lyrics with localized diction, for example, "I want my tea boiled hot and my dumpling steamed soft." If such were the case, Bang-Chou both translated the tune and domesticated it for the Western-minded community. In other words, she was so aware of the language in which she wrote that she consciously moved the women's world under discussion closer to those who were better acquainted with the English language as well as the English culture.

[66] Bang-Chou, V. T. "What Is the Women's World?" in *The China Critic*, Vol. IV, May 28, 1931, p. 516.

Annoyed by the male editor's narrow-mindedness, Bang-Chou went on to paint another picture:

> Hence, from the world of bacon and egg, I wandered to other worlds of women. There is the social world—that which is made up of: Miss Emma Chang invites Miss Josephine Liang to a tea party; Mrs. Norman White requests the pleasure of Mrs. George Allan's company to a bridge party; and Mrs. Thomas A. Johnson entertained the charming Miss Catherine Mitchell at a garden party. … As someone has said, women live in a world of their own. Let them do so. Theirs is the aspiration and inspiration, the ideas and ideals which, when frustrated, take wings and ascend to worlds unknown.[67]

The names of the women in this society, whether the original names of foreign women or the adopted English names of Chinese women, revealed that Bang-Chou was mostly speaking about and to the women in a limited circle. More specifically, "the social world" presented here is curiously restricted to, for instance, the bourgeois community in the international settlement of Shanghai or in other metropolitan cities like New York. The language the author used, namely English, had put an ambivalent restraint on the border of the women's world that the readers could have imagined. To put it in another way, the standardized and idiomatic English writing made it impossible for the social world of women depicted by the author to represent the women's world in a universal sense.

It begs to be asked: To whom had the question of women become *our* question

[67] Ibid.

in this situation? Certainly not all of us. Bang-Chou realized how problematic it was to translate merely the bourgeois lifestyle of semi-colonial Shanghai to make the women's question a question of humankind. Therefore, she moved on to depict "another world where women cry in the wilderness and light the prophet's torch."[68] In this world, there were women scholars, women leaders of social organizations, women fighters for equal rights, and toiling women laborers in city slums. Following Bang-Chou's roaming steps from one world to another, we find how the women's question gradually gains universal weight in the text. The article embedded the women's question in the clash of gendered visions between a male and a female editor. It queried whether the question could be fully represented in a particular language and culture such as domesticated English. And it associated the question with the problems of colonialism, class, as well as geopolitics. "The Women's World" lasted for a few months and was suspended in September as the magazine became more dedicated to the political developments in Sino-Japanese relations after the Mukden Incident took place.[69]

The Bilingual Meeting the Monolingual

The other two major debates on the questions associated with women occurred between the famous Chinese writer Lin Yutang and two foreign contributors. On

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[68] Ibid.

[69] From September 24, 1931, the design of the magazine's cover suddenly changed. It featured in red block letters: "Japan the Untouchable," with Chinese characters also printed in red running at the bottom: 暴日入寇专号 (*A Special Issue on the Violent Invasion of Japanese*). Besides "The Women's World," columns like Lin Yutang's "The Little Critic" and Quentin Pan's "Book Review" (a column introducing and commenting on recent publications overseas) were also suspended during this period, which indicated the editorial's intention to separate these columns as culturally-related from the more immediate social-political events. All columns resumed in December 1931. However, "The Women's World" did not last long after that.

December 1, 1932, Lin published in his column "The Little Critic" an article titled "I Like to Talk with Women." Making the disclaimer at the beginning of the article that "it must not be inferred that I am a misogynist," Lin wrote,

> I like women as they are, without any romanticizing and without any bitter disillusionment. With all their contradictions, light-mindedness, and superficialities, I have an immense faith in their commonsense and their instinct for life—their so-called sixth sense. Beneath their superficiality, they live a deeper life and are closer to this business of living than men, and I respect them for it.[70]

Lin went on to elaborate how women, as mothers and wives, were key to the sustainability of human society: "Through them and through them alone, do we preserve our racial continuity, our national homogeneity and our social solidarity."[71] Following his pleasant, seemingly flattering, but in effect condescending remarks about women, Lin took on a satirical tone to discuss how women lacked logic but manifested instincts in their way of thinking and talking. "In fact, their conversation is part of their business of living. Instead of a colourless discussion of abstract terms, we have what is called gossip, in which persons are very real and everything either creeps or crawls or marries."[72] He cited his recent experience as an example to show the frustration of a man in making conversation with a "lady." Throughout their discussion on the latest development of war and the recent Disarmament

[70] Lin, Yutang. "I Like to Talk with Women" in *The China Critic*, Vol. V, December 1, 1932, p. 1276.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

Conference, the lady seemed constantly confused with the man's arguments and stuck in her own logic of reasoning. The whole dialogue made the author amused but also frustrated as if he were playing the guitar to an ox, although he did not explicitly say so. The article ended with an exclamation: "She was irresistible."[73]

Lin's essay immediately provoked some harsh response. A female columnist from the United States, pen-named Cassandra, refuted Lin's text fiercely with an article sarcastically titled "Men Are So Wonderful!" She wrote:

> I shall try to mitigate the sting of his gratified laughter by admitting everything in advance, that some things he said were just, (some, mind you—) that some were absurd, that some were too facetious to notice (the lady getting on a high horse) and that some provoked me and got under my skin in precisely the way the gentleman with the big cigar hoped they would irritate every woman who read them.[74]

Cassandra was particularly uncomfortable with Lin's dictum, for instance, that women were "superficial." Neither was she content with Lin's emphasis on women's dependence on instinct and sensitivity. "I firmly believe that every woman's instinct and logic could be directed by some man into sensible, ethical admirable ways of living. Au fond I believe there is little difference between men and women."[75]

From today's perspective, one would easily find some of Lin's points

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[73] Ibid., p. 1277.

[74] Cassandra. "Men Are So Wonderful!" in *The China Critic*, Vol. V, December 8, 1932, p. 1304.

[75] Ibid.

problematic. For instance, he partly shared Sun's view on the idealized figure of the Chinese Madonna, thinking that women fundamentally belonged to the domestic world despite how much they could thrive outside the home. He also held the gendered prejudice of stereotyping women as more instinctive than logical. But I tend not to dwell in my examination on whether Lin was a misogynist or whether Cassandra was fair in her critique. I am more interested in how their consciousness of language(s) and the associated culture(s) were reflected in their discursive representations of women.

As one of the most prominent essayists in China at the time, Lin was well educated in both Chinese and English cultures.[76] Deeply influenced by the West but also experiencing the transition from the traditional China to the modern, Lin's position towards women was complicated (a point which I continue to elaborate in my next chapter). In his article, Lin kept negotiating his understanding about women. On the one hand, he viewed women as individuals who deserved respect from men as they were. Women's capacity to seize the essence of human life, a virtue of humankind Lin always cherished in various other texts, won his greatest admiration. On the other hand, it was not easy for intellectuals like Lin to completely isolate themselves from the traditional patriarchal discourse. Therefore, he unconsciously aligned himself with the male-centered practice of fixing

[76] Born in a Chinese Christian family in 1895, Lin received education at St. John's University in Shanghai, one of the most prestigious mission schools in China, which trained its students completely in English. After receiving a Master of English Literature at Harvard University and a PhD of Linguistics at Leipzig University, he came back to China in the early 1920s to serve at Chinese universities as a professor of English. Lin also read widely in Chinese throughout his life and was particularly familiar with the philosophy of Taoism and classics such as *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*). During his stay in Shanghai, he was an active contributor to and editor of several Chinese-language periodicals including *Lunyu* (*The Analects*), *Yuzhoufeng* (*Wind of the Universe*), and *Renjiangshi* (*The Human World*). He was also the initiator of the English-language magazine, *T'ien Hsia Monthly*. He created a unique style of Chinese essay by bringing the Western sense of humor into his writings. His Chinese-language essays once enjoyed equal popularity as those of celebrated writers such as Lu Xun.

women's nature to domesticity and stereotyping them as wife and mother.

Lin's wavering attitude was also embodied in his employment of language. One typical example was the word "superficial" that he applied to women's nature and which was most detested in Cassandra's argument. After its initial publication in English in *The China Critic*, Lin revised and translated the essay into Chinese. The Chinese version was first published in a magazine he had founded, *Lunyu* (*The Analects*).[77] It was later re-edited and collected in an anthology of essays, *Xingsuji* (*Xingsu Collection*). The meaning of "superficial" was unequivocally derogatory for a native English speaker from America like Cassandra. According to the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, superficiality of a person means "lacking depth of character or understanding; concerned only with outward appearances; shallow, frivolous." But when it was translated by Lin into Chinese, its connotation became less easy to grasp. In the original English-language article, Lin first juxtaposed "superficiality" with "contradiction" and "light-mindedness" to describe the nature of women. In the Chinese translation, however, he wrote, "women's theories are usually rebuked by men to be of light-mindedness, superficiality, privileging sensibility over sense" (my translation).[78] He continued in the original English-language article, "Beneath their superficiality, they live a deeper life and are closer to this business of living than men." This line was translated into Chinese as "Beneath the surface of their privileging sensibility over sense, they are able to

[77] Although the title of *Lunyu* magazine is translated as *The Analects* in English, its connotation in this context is reinvented, compared to its original meaning in classical Chinese. While *The Analects* of Confucius refers to records of oral instructions and exemplary behavior by a saint and his advisees, *Lunyu* magazine in modern times is understood by Lin and his peer editors, as well as contributors, as a public forum that welcomes discussions and commentaries of any kind by any people.

[78] Lin, Yutang. "Nü Lunyu" ("Women's Analects") in *Lin Yutang mingzhu quanji: Xingsuji / Pijingji* (*A Collection of Lin Yutang's Major Works*), Vol. 14, Northeastern Normal University Press, 1994, p. 84.

grasp the truth of reality, and not willing to let go" (my translation).[79] Rather than being only a pejorative word, "superficiality" in Lin's Chinese translation was complemented by "privileging sensibility over sense" and used interchangeably with the latter. With his mastery of English, it seemed hardly possible that Lin misunderstood the connotation of the word in its origin. There is no way to find out whether Lin had already reinvented its meaning in his head when he first wrote the word in English. But his bilingual mind must have reminded him of an audience more diverse than the monolingual Chinese or English speakers. This kind of awareness added multiple layers of significance to the language(s) of the writer. In other words, in contexts like that of *The China Critic*, it was less easy for Lin to maintain linguistic transparency and fixity in his writing.

A brief comparison between the English and Chinese titles of Lin's article further explains the complexity in his thinking about the questions associated with women. Whereas the English-language title was a colloquial statement, "I Like to Talk with Women," the Chinese version rewrote it more formally as "Nü Lunyu" ("Women's Analects"), which easily reminds readers of the ancient book, *The Analects* of Confucius. "Nü Lunyu" ("Women's Analects") is also the title of a classical book composed in the Tang Dynasty, which lists a set of behavioral disciplines for women in traditional China. Traditionally Chinese women were instructed that they should be reticent to talk. In contrast, Lin's modern version of the "Nü Lunyu" ("Women's Analects") encouraged and appreciated women's talking. "Banning women's talk was no less than banning their thinking," he wrote, "so at a time when men and women have become equal, it is really rebellious to

[79] Ibid.

demand that women be silent" (my translation).[80] It is interesting how Lin's thoughts constantly moved between the two cultures in both the English and Chinese texts. For Lin, the question of women meant neither a simple persistence in the traditional ideology nor a complete gender revolution. It was rather about how a balance could be reached, culturally, intellectually, and linguistically.

A week after Cassandra published her "Men Are So Wonderful!," Lin replied with the article "The Chinese Mother" in "The Little Critic." He criticized Cassandra's understanding of women as oversimplified and argued that she had belittled her own kind. "She is instinctively right and logically wrong, as usual."[81] He first quoted from Cassandra: "So long as a man is fool enough to believe that a woman dependent on his pleasure for everything she eats, wears and enjoys can be utterly truthful and sincere and guileless in her relationship toward him, just so long will this inanity between the sexes continue." Then he commented with disappointment, "I did not think that Cassandra could be so devastatingly cynical about women."[82] He was particularly critical of Cassandra's generalization of the women's problem because the local particularity and historicity of the women's question in China were absent from her discourse. He pointed out that the role of mother and wife in a traditional Chinese family might not indicate dependency in the sexual relationship but rather functioned as the backbone for domestic sustainability. "Close observation of Chinese life," he argued, "seems also to

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Lin, Yutang. "The Chinese Mother" in *The China Critic*, Vol. V, December 15, 1932, p. 1332.

[82] Ibid.

disprove the prevalent notion of her dependency."[83] Lin raised examples of women leaders in the imperial court or the middle-class family to support his argument, which was itself problematic. But he was clear that, while the women's question deserved universal concern, the Western wife and the Chinese mother should be neither homogenized nor represented as mutually exclusive.

On the contrary, Cassandra was more straightforward in presenting her opinion as a feminist from the English-language world. In response to Lin's article of defense, she followed up with another article a week later. She lamented how women were degraded in the unequal relationship with men. She not only blamed men's suppression of women but also criticized women's economic dependency on men, which made them superficial and immoral. Like many other feminists of the time, she encouraged women to liberate themselves from the kitchen. Cassandra legitimized her discussion of the Chinese "women's problem" by placing it in an entirely Westernized framework of thinking. In this second article, "What Women Want," she asked what emancipation meant to a Chinese woman. She depicted at length what she remembered about women's movements in the United States and Great Britain in the early twentieth century. What emancipation meant for women, according to her, was for instance the right to vote, the freedom to parade, and the courage to fight for better working conditions. "The essence of emancipation, I felt, was that no decent woman would ever ask or contrive to get anything either from a husband, her father, or, if she were working, from her employer, that she was not entitled to in pure, simple, unadulterated fairness."[84] Cassandra did not associate

[83] Ibid.

[84] Cassandra. "What Women Want" in *The China Critic*, Vol. V, December 22, 1932, p. 1362.

the nature of women with realpolitik or social obligations but viewed it as essentially related to individualism. However, she wrote, “Probably Chinese women will never have special individualistic rebellions, as Anglo-Saxon women have had and still are having—for the simple reason that they will always have ample gratification from being mothers ….”[85]

Cassandra, particularly in “Men Are So Wonderful!,” seemed to have reduced the question of women to a dispute between the male-centered view and the feminist opinion. The goal of her argument was to dismiss the former while legitimizing the latter. For Lin, however, it was never a question about which side would be the winning party in the contestation. What he had to continuously deal with was how conceptualizations about women from two different cultures could be negotiated and translated into his English-language writing impartially. Moreover, whereas Cassandra’s understanding of Chinese women’s problems was infiltrated by the Westernized ideology centered on individualism, Lin’s bicultural consciousness inevitably related the women’s question to more social and political obligations, namely, that women alone are key to preserving “our racial continuity, our national homogeneity and our social solidarity.”[86] One contradiction between Cassandra and Lin was inherently the tension between a bilingually-minded Chinese and a monolingually-minded American, or two people of different national sensibilities. The debate between Lin and Cassandra brings us back to my main point in this chapter. In an English-language magazine like *The China Critic*, with diverse or even conflicting linguistic awareness, cultural rootedness, political

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[85] Ibid.

[86] “I Like to Talk with Women,” p. 1276.

ideologies, and with historical memories constantly being translated into one common language, the connotation of the "question of mankind as a whole" or "cosmopolitanism" had already extended beyond what they meant in the languages in which they originated.

Interestingly, a year after the exchanges between Lin and Cassandra, his role transformed from the accused to that of the accuser when he wrote an open letter to another foreigner, a well-known French novelist, Maurice Dekobra. In "An Open Letter to M. Dekobra: A Defense of the Chinese Girl," Lin attacked Dekobra for being sarcastic when the latter claimed that Chinese women were beautiful and that he wanted to marry a Chinese woman. Lin's criticism of Dekobra was not an isolated event. It was grounded in a nation-wide dispute among Chinese intellectuals against some of Dekobra's statements when he was interviewed by the Chinese media. In 1933, Dekobra was on a field trip in China to do research for his new books. On November 29, he was invited to a meeting for Chinese and French literary circles and media. After the meeting, a Chinese journalist asked him to comment on Japan's recent invasion and his impression of China. Saying that the Sino-Japanese issue was too big a matter for a novelist, Dekobra turned to discuss how delicious Chinese food was and how adorable modern Chinese women were. He was so intrigued by the beauty of Chinese women, especially the way their dresses clung to their bodies, that he was willing to give up his oath to bachelordom and marry one of them. The Chinese public was infuriated after reading the report. Comments and correspondence were published in various Chinese-language periodicals denouncing Dekobra for humiliating Chinese women. In an interview by *Shenbao*, the most widely circulated newspaper in Shanghai, the female writer Pan Junying commented, "Chinese women who valued propriety and morality would

not tolerate such eroticization of their body." She continued, "It was ridiculous that Dekobra's view about Oriental beauty was solely based on his observation of the singsong girls."[87] The interviewer of *Shenbao* concluded: "Mr. Dekobra, a man of letters notwithstanding, was inherently a literary hooligan!" (my translation).[88] Even Lu Xun joined the attack on Dekobra in an essay a few months later, juxtaposing him with other so-called writers who did nothing but hunt for the grotesque and the erotic. He suggested that there were numerous others like Dekobra, who regarded Chinese and populations from other colonies as "primitive" people. Lu Xun concluded with his usual icy sarcasm, "We Chinese should be aware of those depictions about us. Moreover, we should be aware that such honors of being written about in this way will become more and more. One day, some people will even take pleasure in reading those writings" (my translation).[89] In short, Lu Xun's critique of Dekobra essentially aimed at the national awakening of the Chinese people.

On face value, Lin's open letter in *The China Critic* was part of the greater criticism on Dekobra. He seemed to have acquired the legitimacy of criticism from the Chinese-language community which pitted itself against Western male-centered rhetoric. A closer look at his text, however, again reveals how bilingual consciousness made him relatively dissociated from but also associated with both parties. Whereas all the other Chinese-language critical essays addressed Dekobra in the third person, that is, they made the conflict into one between *us* and *them*, Lin

[87] "Beiping kuaixun" ("News-flash from Peking") in *Shenbao*, December 11, 1933, p. 3.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Lu, Xun. "Weilai de guangrong" ("Honor of the Future") in *Lu Xun quanji* (*The Complete Works of Lu Xun*), Vol. 5, People's Literature Press, 1980, p. 444.

adopted the epistolary genre of an open letter to Dekobra, a common form of debate among Chinese intellectuals, especially on occasions when disagreements were expressed in less aggressive manner and open to discussion. Addressing Dekobra as "you" throughout the text, Lin clearly demonstrated his awareness of the fact that he was writing in English, which enabled him to target as well as directly engage a specific audience of not only Dekobra, an English-speaking French writer, but many other English-speaking monolinguals or bilinguals. In other words, the letter was written to Dekobra, but it was also written to the Western readership represented by him. The letter started with Lin's brief recollection of a meal he had with Dekobra in Shanghai, an experience shared by *us*. Over the meal, the figure of the Chinese Madonna became *our* common topic. But Lin thought Dekobra was carried away so far by this enthusiasm for the Chinese Madonna that the Frenchman's statements in the interview in Shanghai appeared ridiculous. "Of course you are joking, and—this is what makes it unbearable—you are mocking at them (the Chinese women)," Lin wrote, "No, M. Dekobra, *we* have been so bullied and bamboozled and disheartened that *we* can't believe anybody who says a good thing of China" (my italics).[90] Lin began to vacillate between the two "we"s. On the one hand, the controversy over the question of Chinese women was to be resolved by *you* and *I*, by you the Westerners and me the Chinese, that is, by *us*. On the other hand, *we*, Chinese, had suffered in this colonial world where matters relevant to Chinese women were relevant to the Chinese nation as well.

Lin's patriotism was unequivocal. But he dissociated himself from the nationalistic sentiments of some Chinese critics, whose opinion, according to him,

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[90] Lin, Yutang. "An Open Letter to M. Dekobra: A Defense of the Chinese Girl" in *The China Critic*, Vol. VI, December 21, 1933, p. 1237.

was irrelevant to the center of the problematic Dekobra provoked. For instance, Miss Pan's demand that Dekobra should talk about literature rather than girls was dismissed by Lin as "a typically sophomoric question."[91] Other seemingly harsh queries were no less misogynist or biased than Dekobra's. "A girl writer in the *Tawanpao* asks," for instance, "Why do you mock at Chinese, and not at Parisian women?" "Another retorts that," Lin continued to quote, "if Chinese women's dress clings to the body and shows its graceful outline, doesn't European women's dress do the same?" Moreover, "[a] male contributor to the *China Times* gives a heart-searching question: Why don't you insult the ladies of other countries?" Lastly, Lin quoted from another female writer, "the echo of a woman writer in *Tawanpao* is pathetic in its sincerity: although we do not choose to be insulted by anybody, still ourselves are to blame."[92] Despite the diverse implications of these critical responses, some of which were inherently problematic in themselves, Lin attributed them to an overall Chinese "inferiority complex."[93]

However, he immediately aimed the problem at Dekobra: "All this because you say (according to *Sun Pao*) that the ideal woman for you is a gay, Oriental beauty."[94] "As a novelist," Lin went on, "you know of course that an inferiority complex can very well exist without actual inferiority."[95] The Chinese people's

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Here, Lin quotes from both English and Chinese-language newspapers and magazines, but more detailed information about the sources is not given in his article. It is interesting, though, to see how Lin emphasizes the gender of the commentators and expresses mixed impressions on these remarks when he quotes from them.

[94] "An Open Letter to M. Dekobra," p. 1237.

[95] Ibid.

"inferiority complex," Lin suggested, was caused by the "Shanghai Club white superiority." "Your white brothers in the Far East, Monsieur Dekobra, are the Sunday school gospellers who by their clean-shaven superiority and by their hatred of dirt and the yellow skin and the flat face make us think we are children of the devil, and don't mind telling us so until we half believe it ourselves."[96] This half belief of the Chinese, he argued dialectically, fostered white superiority. It was essentially a "vice versa" situation. Overall, for Lin, the question of women engaged by Westerners like Dekobra was a question of the Chinese nation. But it also demanded a negotiation between the West and the East. It was a question for *us* the Chinese as well as *us* in a much broader sense.

Interestingly, Lin would go to translate his letter to Dekobra into Chinese for *Lunyu* magazine (*The Analects*). Whereas he translated his other essay "I Like to Talk with Women" into *baihua*, the national language promoted since the New Culture Movement, Lin translated this letter to Dekobra into a language much closer to *wenyanwen*, classical Chinese. To whom among the Chinese-language readership did he attempt to address? For instance, by translating "you" and "I" into "rǔ/汝" and "yú/余"—first and second persons in classical forms—rather than "nǐ/你" and "wǒ/我" (and "zán/咱" as Hu Shih preferred to use to refer to *us*) in *baihua*, did he attempt to temporally disconnect Dekobra and his like-minded Westerners from modern Chinese-language readers? Was the figure of Dekobra reinvented through such translation into the classical Chinese language, which moved him closer to the "primitive" people he despised? In short, could we view such recourse to classical Chinese as a linguistic or translational strategy Lin took to mock Dekobra's

[96] Ibid.

Orientalism?

Conclusion

The intellectual community created in *The China Critic* ultimately was much more complicated than the liberal cosmopolitan club its editorial board initially envisioned. The magazine promoted an attitudinal cosmopolitanism or rather a vaguely defined openness towards diversity among its contributors. When different political, social, and cultural thoughts and standings were translated into various topics, however, the magazine's common print-language English became a contested field, making the significance of cosmopolitanism unstable and constantly reinvented. This instability was reflected, for instance, in the presentation of the questions associated with women. Instead of a relatively coherent discourse, *The China Critic* exposed clashes of minds, leaving the question forever to be answered: How is the question of women the question of humankind as a whole?

Chapter Two

A Chinaman's World Literature:

Cross-Cultural Adventures of Lin Yutang's Anglophone Writings, 1930s-1940s

Among the key advocates of liberal cosmopolitanism in modern China, Lin Yutang was probably the most internationally established between the 1920s and the 1940s. In China, he was once referred to as one of the greatest modern Chinese essay writers, enjoying a fame equal to that of Lu Xun. He was the founder of several cultural magazines both in Chinese and in English. On the global stage, Lin was befriended by Pearl Buck's family in the mid-1930s and published several best sellers in English with the latter's support during his thirty years abroad. He was elected as the Director of Art and Literature for UNESCO and nominated twice for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In contrast to his resounding fame in cross-cultural literary circles and diplomacy, scholarly research on Lin and his works appears to be relatively thin both in China and in the West. Unlike his contemporaries such as Lu Xun, who has been hailed as the founding father of modern Chinese literature, Lin as a literary figure has curiously faded into oblivion since the 1950s.[97] It is not until the last three decades, particularly in mainland China, that there has been a growing interest in Lin and his life, which is manifested in the flourishing reprints of his Chinese-language writings and his English-language works translated into Chinese. But critical studies on him, according to Qian Suoqiao, still lag far behind. Qian ties the newfound importance of Lin to the reconstruction of Chinese modernity. He

[97] Lin's works were banned for publication in the People's Republic of China until the 1980s. His name was barely brought up in research, or at best, mentioned in passing in the footnotes to studies of other writers. In book illustrations, his image was airbrushed out during the Mao era from the photographs in which he appeared with celebrities like the Zhou brothers and Bernard Shaw.

argues, "a deep understanding and appreciation of Lin's life and works would require revision of the knowledge structure of modern Chinese intellectuality."[98] Qian's biography of Lin, *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth* (2017), for instance, is one of the latest endeavors to examine Lin's role in Chinese modernity through his cross-cultural and transnational experience rather than exclusively focusing on his literary career in China.

The treatment of Lin's literary and cultural works is complicated, if not worse, in the contemporary Western world. For instance, in the United States, where he was once honored as the greatest modern Chinese writer, Lin seems to have received much less pedagogical and scholarly attention in the studies of modern Chinese literature than his contemporaries. This relative lack of attention is largely attributable to the tension between Lin's national identity, his native language, and the second language, namely, English, in which he wrote most of his works after the mid-1930s, since it has been taken for granted by many that language is the single most important determinant of a national literature. Indeed, one factor that explicitly differentiates Lin from his contemporaries in modern China is that he was one of the few prolific bilingual writers in Chinese and English during the 1930s and the 1940s. Since Lin has always been a cross-cultural figure in the sense that he was intellectually and physically "the most 'traveled' writer in modern Chinese history,"[99] it seems vital to expand the mere focus on his role in cross-cultural engagement in modernity from the perspective of China to that of the global stage.

In this chapter, I explore Lin's critical thinking about literature, the way in

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[98] Qian, Suoqiao. *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth*. Palgrave, 2017, p. 4.

[99] Ibid., p. 2.

which his understanding of literature takes form in his Anglophone writings, and the tension resulting from the hetero-cultural receptions of these writings. I focus in particular on, among others, his English-language novels, which are less investigated compared to his non-fictional writings. It might be true that Lin's fictional writings, in terms of aesthetic taste and literary techniques, were not as sophisticated as the non-fictional ones. Most were "slapdash, designed more for commercial success than artistic longevity."[100] Yet I suggest that it is precisely his novels, a genre he claimed to be unable to produce until he was biologically and intellectually prepared (according to him, at forty years of age,)[101] that manifest best an attempt, even if unintended, at a cosmopolitan literary ideal and bring to the surface the conflicting literary ideologies between Lin and his cross-cultural audiences. I argue that Lin created a literature that was both at the center as well as the margin of varying cultures.

Lin's work was neither to serve simply the goal of establishing a modern Chinese literature nor to satisfy the concept of Chinese literature projected in the West. Terms such as "national literature" or "Oriental literature," which were dominant in the respective imaginations of modernity in the Chinese and Western contexts, are insufficient to define his writings. Instead, I examine the ways in which Lin's cross-cultural experiments with literary languages, forms, and ideas might have unintendedly paved a path for us to conceptualize a new kind of world literature. Such a literature was an embodiment of Lin's long-held ideal of liberal

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[100] So, Richard Jean. *Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Cultural Network*. Columbia University Press, 2016, p. 124.

[101] Lin, Taiyi. *Lin Yutang zhuan* (*A Biography of Lin Yutang*). Lianjing Publishing House, Taiwan, 1989, p. 181.

cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, it ill befitted the ideology of both the Chinese nationalists and the Western Orientalists, and thus it was excluded from the literary kingdoms they had conceived. The restoration of Lin's life and work in contemporary times is significant not only, as Qian suggests in his studies, for the reconstruction of a Chinese modernity, but also for a reflection upon the possible form of world literature that has gained momentum in this globalized world since the late twentieth century.

Literature as a World View

Since Goethe coined the term *Weltliteratur* two centuries ago, multiple attempts have been made to explain its meaning. In the post-colonial era when globalization drastically accelerates the circulation of texts, the idea of a world literature, as David Damrosch claims, has been greatly complicated. In its most expansive sense, the concept has become so unlimited that any work reaching beyond its home base could be included.[102] Instead of an infinitely growing canon of works, Damrosch suggests that world literature is "a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike."[103] A work becomes world literature not necessarily because of its canonical greatness but because of its "circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin."[104] One crucial way for it to be circulated into the sphere of world literature, as Lawrence

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[102] Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 4.

[103] Ibid., p. 5.

[104] Ibid., p. 6.

Venuti suggests, is translation. “World literature cannot be conceptualized apart from translation,” he writes, since “considered from the reader’s point of view, world literature consists not so much of original compositions as of translations.”[105]

Pascale Casanova and Franco Moretti also approach the question through the lens of how literary works should be read. Rather than sticking to internal criticism such as the conventional close-reading of individual works or external criticism of literature from the perspective of politics and history as post-colonial theorists do, Casanova proposes the exploration of “a world literary space” in which it has “its own laws, its own history, its specific revolts and revolutions.”[106] “At stake are not the modalities of analysing literature on a world scale,” she states, “but the conceptual means for thinking literature as a world.”[107] In other words, Casanova aims not at locating certain works that can be regarded as world literature, but rather a possible way in which one observes literary texts, authors, and their relations based on the idea of a world, namely, that of the “World Republic of Letters.” In short, the conceptual identification of a literary world precedes the evaluation of individual works. In a similar vein, Franco Moretti proposes the method of distant reading, which enables us to move beyond the text itself and to focus on, for example, literary genres and systems. According to him, the identity of a literature is not self-sufficient. Rather, it is how we read a given literature that determines the category to which we assign it, for instance, “national literature, for people who see

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[105] Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice*. Routledge, 2013, p. 193.

[106] Ibid., p. 72.

[107] Ibid., p. 73.

trees; world literature, for people who see waves."[108] Alexander Beecroft epitomizes the commonality among these theories: "In reading [Sheldon] Pollock, as well as Damrosch, Casanova, and Moretti, and in continuing to think about my own work, l began to think that each of us was in fact talking about different instantiations of the same question, which might, most simply, be put as 'the interaction of literature with its environment.'"[109]

Instead of discussing fixed features a specific work of world literature should possess, each of these theories in fact talks about the *conditions* for the making of world literature. What is at stake is not about identifying the objective qualities in the individual works to be evaluated on a world scale, but rather the way in which the reader as a subject relates to the literatures he or she encounters. World literature does not refer to a set of pre-existing works that await recognition based on certain rules and criteria, but about how, to use Moretti's term, the "condition of knowledge"[110] makes the birth of a world literature possible. Only by viewing literatures, for example, in circulation, in a world literary space, or in a trend from diversity to uniformity could one imagine the emergence of a world literature. In this sense, the conceptualization of world literature is less about defining what the literature should be like than about the kind of world view one develops when facing literature.

An expansion of the condition of knowledge provides us with a way to

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[108] Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures on World Literature" in *New Left Review 1*, Vol. Jan-Feb, 2000, pp. 66-67.

[109] Beecroft, Alexander. *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day*. Verso, 2015, p. 3.

[110] "Conjectures on World Literature," p. 57.

discover the potentials of texts that may have been neglected because one has limited oneself to the mere appreciation of individual literatures within, for instance, national or regional borders. But this does not mean that we identify such texts, whose great potential remains to be discovered, as *the* works of world literature. Rather, our real task after acknowledging the undiscovered potential of texts is that we need to reform the world view we already have long established in reading and interpreting literature. It is in this regard that I propose that we rethink Lin Yutang's fictional works in English through the lens of world literature: Lin's novels demanded that his readers form a new world view, a mode of reading that was not bounded by the mainstream ideologies in the Chinese or Western contexts of his time. It is precisely the demands of such a world view that resulted in divergent treatment of the author and his works among different readers at different times. Because for those who see and want to see the trees, the chance of seeing the waves seems small.

Lin Yutang and the Goethean Ideal of World Literature

To understand the world view Lin Yutang's work demands of us, it seems not too archaic to go back to Goethe and his ideal of cosmopolitanism. Historically, Lin lived in a China whose social-political conditions were comparable to those of the Weimar of Goethe's final years, although, as John Pizer notes, there are indeed "dangers in exaggerating the parallels between the political/cultural milieu of the *Goethezeit* and that of our own age."[111] The chilling of nationalist fervor and absence of political unity in 1820s Germany "occurred in concert with a renewed

[111] Pizer, John. *The Idea of World Literature: History and Pedagogical Practice.* Louisiana State University Press, 2006, p. 20.

spirit of cosmopolitanism in Europe and advances in communicative media and transportation infrastructures, as well as increased translation activity."[112] Although China in the next century witnessed an upsurge of the nationalist spirit, the practical political state of the country was no more unified than that of 1820s Germany. Meanwhile, just as Weimar of the 1820s underwent dramatic cultural and political transformations, the New Culture Movement, as a monumental turn of China towards modernity during the 1910s and 1920s, was also motivated and marked by the increasing activities in transnational communication, transportation, and translation. Yet, over-emphasis on nationalism and revolutionary radicalism in the mainstream narratives in the studies of the New Culture Movement has overshadowed another important stream of intellectuality that links early-twentieth-century China to early-nineteenth-century Germany and Europe at large, that is, the ideal of cosmopolitanism.

The China Critic to which Lin contributed for several years exemplified the spirit of cosmopolitanism among young Chinese. In fact, the cosmopolitan attitude was not limited to the Western-educated Chinese like Lin, but garnered universal attention among other major New Culture activists such as Cai Yuanpei and Chen Duxiu. It also played a crucial role, as Juan Ruan points out, in the formation of the "humanist literature," a literary ideal emphasizing democracy and individualism advocated by Lu Xun's brother Zhou Zuoren, with whom Lin Yutang established a long-term friendship.[113] Of course, as I discussed in the last chapter, the idea of cosmopolitanism in modern China already underwent a series of translations and

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[112] Ibid., p. 18.

[113] Ruan, Juan. "Shijie zhuyi yu wusi xinwenxue de xuanze" ("Cosmopolitanism and the Choice of the New Cultural Literature") in *Dangdai Wentan* (*Literature of Today*), Issue 6, June 2013, p. 124.

gained diverse meanings in its new context. Ruan concludes that, regardless of the source in which Chinese cosmopolitanism was rooted—the ideal of *datong* (大同, great harmony) from traditional Chinese thought or the Western imagination of a unified world—cosmopolitanism did exert some impact on the thoughts shortly before and after the May Fourth revolution.[114] In short, Lin Yutang lived in a China where intellectuals had multiple options in conceiving a road towards modernity and he clearly picked the path of cosmopolitanism.

There is no concrete evidence that Lin obtained immediate inspiration from Goethe in his conceptualization of cosmopolitanism. But the potential impact of the Goethean aesthetics and philosophical thought on Lin is undeniable. Goethe was translated into Chinese as early as the second half of the nineteenth century. By the time Lin started his literary career in the 1920s, the Chinese readership was already familiar with Goethe's works such as *Fushide* (*Faust: Eine Tragödie*) and *Shaonian Weite zhi fannao* (*Die Leiden des jungen Werther*). The famous *Sanyeji* (*Book of Trefoil*), a collection of comprehensive readings of Goethe in the form of correspondence between Zong Baihua, Tian Han, and Guo Moruo, was published in 1920. Two grand events were organized respectively in 1922 and 1932 to memorialize Goethe on his ninetieth and one-hundredth death anniversaries, which resulted in "Werther Fever" and "Goethe Fever" in China. Lin himself received his doctoral degree in linguistics at Leipzig University, Goethe's alma mater, where he took a class on late German romanticism and became very fond of the poetry of Goethe and Heinrich Heine. He traveled to Jena, where Goethe once taught, and was impressed by Goethe's collection of books in his private library. He wrote on

[114] Ibid., p. 125.

more than one occasion of how he enjoyed most, among Goethe's works, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*) and Goethe's autobiography, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life*).[115]

It is not difficult to find isomorphic connections between Goethe's theory of world literature and Lin's literary practices, a point I will demonstrate in more detail later. As Martin Albrow suggests, despite Goethe's Euro-centrism, particularly his emphasis on German supremacy, it is arguably more productive to reflect upon his optimism towards the age of *Weltliteratur*.[116] Pizer points out even more sharply that it might be problematic for us to stick to a criticism of Goethe's Euro-centrism, since Goethe paid much attention to Asian poems and found analogies in particular between some Chinese legends and his own works. He writes:

> Goethe's equation of "European" with "World-Literature" was based on the profound intra-European intercourse he saw developing in his time; if the non-European world did not yet participate in a world literary dialogue, this was simply due to the fact that improved communication networks, transnational media exchange, and prolific translation activities were still restricted to his own continent.[117]

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[115] Lin mentioned that he read Goethe and other German romanticists' works while he studied at Leipzig University. It is safe to assume that he read these works in their original language, although his proficiency in English is more well-known than that in German.

[116] Quoted in Pizer, p. 20. Martin Albrow, "Auf dem Weg zu einer globalen Gesellschaft?" Ilse Utz trans., in *Perspe/aiven der Weltgesellschaft.* Ulrich Beck ed., Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998, pp. 428-432.

[117] *The Idea of World Literature*, p. 27.

Indeed, in his scattered remarks about world literature in the late 1820s and early 1830s, never did Goethe attribute its meaning to a specific corpus of texts or cohort of authors. In a letter to Sulpiz Boisserée, for example, he wrote, "In this connection it might be added that what I call world literature develops in the first place when the differences that prevail within one nation are resolved through the understanding and judgment of the rest."[118] On a later occasion, he stated, "Not merely what such men [who have developed a sense of relationship as neighbors of us, the Germans] write to us must be of first importance to us; we have also to consider their other relationships, how they stand for the reference to the French and the Italians. For that after all is the only way towards a general world literature."[119] Quoting from Albrow, Pizer summarizes the two central ideas in Goethean *Weltliteratur*: "One is that the diverse forms of human existence evident in national literatures could be made reciprocally beneficial through a world literary dialogue. This dialogue would bring to life the second central *Weltliteratur* ideal, a universal striving toward mutual goals."[120]

We can see that Goethe's focus, like that of the contemporary theorists of world literature I discussed earlier, was also on the conditions that made possible the emergence of world literature. For him, the key to the birth of world literature was that readers should not only see different literatures and cultures in relationship to one another but also, and more importantly, recognize that they were related dialogically. Moreover, the material condition that facilitates such dialogues is the

[118] Quoted in Strich, Fritz. *Goethe and World Literature*. C. A. M. Sym. trans., Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949, p. 349.

[119] Ibid., p. 351.

[120] *The Idea of World Literature*, p. 20.

existence of a world media, a world market that, in Pizer's words, "will weave a writer's products into a transindividual, indeed transnational grid." Further, Pizer suggests, "Goethe's discovery of an emerging *Weltliteratur* is not intended to be read as announcing the demise of discrete national literatures."[121] Instead, it is intended to evoke an alternative view of the world and to use such a world view as a new tool in reading literatures. In short, only by consciously positioning oneself in a transnational context and uncovering the dialogues in and among literatures can one project the texts in front of oneself as world literature.

Moretti might regard this intellectual preparation for viewing literatures in dialogical relation as the condition of knowledge. I cannot help but ask: What does an inter-literary dialogue look like? To be more specific, when it comes to assessing concrete literary practices such as the works of Lin Yutang, what kind of dialogue do we see, and how is such dialogue conducted between literatures in his time? Is it just the juxtaposition of aesthetic properties from different literary traditions? Do these properties co-exist harmoniously like the alternating sounds in a symphony? Or do they end up a cacophony of voices? Is there the "danger of giving way to hegemonic influence by one partner in the dialogue" in what is alleged to be the transcultural exchanges of contemporary times?[122] In the case of Goethe, for example, the dialogue between literatures may be manifested in the universal human nature that different literatures share while reserving their own cultural uniqueness in the form of their presentation. In a conversation with Eckermann, he remarked, "With them [Chinamen] all is orderly, citizen-like, without great passion

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[121] Ibid., p. 23.

[122] Ibid., p. 26.

or poetic flight; and there is a strong resemblance to my 'Hermann and Dorothea,' as well as to the English novels of Richardson. They likewise differ from us, inasmuch as with them external nature is always associated with the human figures."[123] The potential of "Chinamen's" texts as *Weltliteratur*, as Goethe suggests here (who, of course, read them in German translations), lies in the universal merits they share with literary texts of other nations, but also in the styles and emotions that belong exclusively to Chinese poetics.

This Goethean understanding of Chinamen's texts as *Weltliteratur* finds its manifestation in Lin Yutang's critical thoughts on literature as well as his fictional works that I examine below. But the process of conveying such an ideal of world literature through one's own literary practice, resonant with Goethe's conceptualization notwithstanding, was not without difficulty when the author had to face communities of hetero-cultural and hetero-lingual readerships. I will demonstrate this in three major points. First, Lin has always held a cosmopolitan view towards literature, even when he was deeply involved in the patriotic wave of literary revolution. His literary cosmopolitanism did not germinate when he started writing in English but from the inception of his literary career in Chinese. Second, just as "Goethe's discovery of an emerging *Weltliteratur* is not intended to be read as announcing the demise of discrete national literatures,"[124] Lin's cosmopolitan literary ideal did not mean to devalue Chinese literature, including its traditional legacies. Instead, he was always concerned about the balance between literary traditions. Third, in his English-language novels, Lin created an inter-literary

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[123] Damrosch, David, et al., eds. *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*. Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 20.

[124] *The Idea of World Literature*, p. 23.

dialogue that revolves around the question of translatability between languages, literary genres, and cultures. Such a dialogue, however, received convoluted responses from its audience in different social and cultural contexts.

Past and Present Make the Language of Great Literature

By the time Lin Yutang returned to China after graduation from Leipzig, he was quickly drawn to the tide of nationalist revolution and emerged as one of the top linguists and philologists in 1920s China. Although Lin was active in the modern reform of the Chinese language as a philologist during the first few years of his professional life, his interest in literature and culture kept growing, since Chinese language reform and literary revolution were always interrelated during the New Culture Movement. Moreover, in the circle of linguistic learning, Lin was one of the few scholars to have proposed the system of simplified characters and the development of the *pinyin* system based on a modified Wade-Giles system. Among those who seemed to be more inclined towards complete Romanization of the Chinese writing system, Lin was "a lonely minority surrounded by a group of specialists who were more radical and 'scientific.'"[125] In contrast, he found more like-minded people in literary circles and joined the *Yusi* group headed by the Zhou brothers in 1924, who were vocal supporters of anti-imperialism and national salvation.

However, Lin gradually retreated from his association with these progressive nationalist writers and became the key member of the Analects School in the 1930s, which held the idea that "literature does not need to save the nation, nor is it

[125] *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth*, p. 74.

required not to save the nation,"[126] an attitude that distanced Lin from his early peers in *Yusi*. In later years, he even openly expressed his discontent with the communists' ideology and conduct. This is the political reason that scholars usually cite to explain the paucity of Lin Yutang studies and the fact that he was silenced in the narrative of Chinese modernity for decades in mainland China. Yet the political dissidence of Lin, it seems to me, was only one factor that divorced him from the left-wing Chinese genealogy. The deeper difference was more intellectual and cultural, which existed even earlier between Lin and other New Culture intellectuals including liberalists like Hu Shih, even though the latter supported Lin, both intellectually and financially, as a mentor and life-long friend. Such difference was manifested in their respective thinking about, among others, the following issues: the goal of language reform; the social and ideological function of literature; and above all, the essential meaning of literature.

As part of the New Culture Movement, a direct outcome of the language reform in early-twentieth-century China was expected to see the complete replacement of classical Chinese by the vernacular, the spoken language of the Chinese populace. Lin had always been an enthusiastic advocate for Chinese language reform. Prior to his departure for Harvard University in 1919, he had already published several articles promoting a new Chinese character index system in the leading journal of the May Fourth Movement, *Xin Qingnian* (*The New Youth*). He paid close attention to the vernacularization of Chinese and discussed it several times in correspondence with Hu Shih when he was studying abroad at Harvard and at Leipzig University. But one significant difference divided Lin from other New

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[126] Laughlin, Charles A. *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2008, p. 118.

Culture intellectuals on the issue of vernacularization. For most of the language reformers, vernacularization was like a process of weaning. It was underwritten by the idea of evolution in early-twentieth-century China, that is, the notion that cutting oneself off from the classical language by more universally adopting the vernacular was a step forward towards modernity. For Lin, however, vernacularization of the Chinese was more a process of rediscovering the past, a position which required him to seek a balance between the West and China, the old and the new, rather than radically getting rid of a tradition he once inhabited.

The Chinese language reform in which Lin played an unusually complex role was initiated by a group of scholars who received foreign education in their adulthood, even though many of them had been trained in traditional Chinese schools and had studied the Chinese classics at an earlier age.[127] It was the exposure to the Western cultures that kindled their reexamination and resolute denial of traditional Chinese learning. Traditional culture, according to Lu Xun, exerted a sense of nostalgia that intellectuals of early twentieth-century China must constantly fight.[128] For these New Culture intellectuals, one major task of the language reform was to convince their readers of the necessity of vernacularization, that is, to legitimize to the readers their resolution of abandoning the traditional for what they understood to be a more advanced modernity.

Lin Yutang, however, never experienced the pain of divorcing the mother

[127] Hu Shih was educated in a private school in his hometown before he received a stipend to study at Cornell University and at Columbia University. Chen Duxiu, the Zhou brothers, and Qian Xuantong received traditional education before going to Japan. All of them were well acquainted with Confucian texts and trained to write in the classical language.

[128] Quoted in Wang, Hui. *Fankang juewang: Lu Xun jiqi wenxue shijie* (*Fighting Against Desperation: Lu Xun and His Literary World*). Sanlian Publishing House, 2008, p. 181.

culture. Born to a Chinese Christian family in 1895, his childhood was imbued with traces of Western civilization brought by the missionaries. After graduating from a mission school in Amoy (nowadays Xiamen in Fujian Province), he went to St. John's College in Shanghai, where he received English-language Western-style training. Therefore, when he became involved in the swirl of the New Culture Movement, his Western-educated mindset had already prepared him to usher in a modern cultural transformation. In other words, Lin took for granted the Chinese language reform: a reform that embraced the language on the lips of the Chinese masses as well as features from foreign languages, thanks to the large number of translations from those languages into Chinese in the early twentieth century. For him, the legitimacy of the reform was self-evident. What old Chinese learning was to his contemporaries new Christian training was to Lin. Rather than a painful struggle against the traditional intellectuality, Lin's encounter with the New Culture Movement kindled his reappraisal of his early Westernized education, Christianity in particular. One important step he took was to turn to the Chinese classics for illumination. Contrary to his New Culture contemporaries, when Lin started to teach English at Qinghua University, he felt so embarrassed about his lack of knowledge in traditional Chinese philosophy and literature that he spent a large amount of time digging into classical readings, a lifetime interest that inspired most of Lin's works.[129] It was also these readings that generated in Lin a different understanding of language reform as well as the function of literature. As early as 1920, Lin's second year at Harvard, he wrote two crucial letters to Hu Shih, discussing the Chinese language reform. The issue was also brought up in "The

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[129] *Lin Yutang zhuan* (*A Biography of Lin Yutang*), p. 32.

Literary Revolution and What Is Literature," an award-winning article he published for the monthly essay contest of *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, an English-language journal edited by overseas students in America. In the first letter to Hu Shih, Lin wrote:

> The movement of vernacularization should not simply end with the popularization of the vernacular Chinese. You must be aware that, in the history of foreign literatures, the popularization of a language always led to a great age of renaissance. We need a genius, following exemplars like [Nikolay] Karamzin of Russia, [Blaise] Pascal of France, and [Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe of Germany, who will persist in adapting and polishing the national language until it can be used in literature. (my translation)[130]

The materials one needed to forge this literary language of a new era, Lin added, came from the ancient texts as well as from popular speech. Lin emphasized his point a few months later in his second letter to Hu Shih:

> The vernacular Chinese is undeniably rich and expressive. However, I cannot say that its power has been fully fulfilled in its current employment. … The justification of vernacularization, I reckon, is that it would result in the creation of a topnotch literature. Otherwise, both the vernacular and the literary revolution are meaningless. To popularize the vernacular in education and take it as the goal, it seems to me, is

[130] Geng, Yunzhi. ed. *Hu Shih yigao ji micang shuxin* (*Posthumous Manuscripts and Private Letters of Hu Shih*), Vol. 29, Huangshan Press, 1994, p. 307.

> a blemish on the language reform. (my translation)[131]

While Lin's contemporaries strove to convince themselves and their audience of the significance of language reform—for the sake of nationalism and general education, for instance—swallowing the bitterness of the radical breakup with their traditional learning and constantly entering wars of words against others' defense of the classical Chinese, Lin was more concerned with the extent to which this language reform, despite its historical inevitability, should (dis)engage with the past. In addition, the goal of the Chinese language reform was beyond the scope of a nationalist ideal. Whereas most New Culture intellectuals viewed language reform and its associated literary revolution as prerequisites for the emergence of a modern nation, Lin's idea was rather the reverse. For him, it was the establishment of a national language that preceded the construction of a modern literature. He also believed that here should be a distinction between the language of a nation and the language of literature in the general sense. In the English-language article he contributed to *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, Lin wrote:

> The danger of seeking literary perfection in the imitation of the language of the pork-butcher and bean-curd seller is perhaps as great as that of bigoted conservatism. A cheapening of [the] literary standard, the making of language easy and simple to learn and write, seems to be the main argument of vernacular literature, and causes to be shrouded up many far greater and more significant issues of the movement. … However, we must not let it obscure our other issues; on the contrary, if mere ease

[131] Ibid., p. 313.

> and simplicity is what we want because it is so pleasant to our indolent, poker playing generation, we may as well forsake the literary reformers, and preach a theme on hard, strenuous scholarly labor.[132]

Lin imagined the language of a new literature to possess more profound aesthetic and philosophical qualities than the speech in the marketplaces, although the latter was the cornerstone for nationalist language reformers. The literariness of language could not be replaced by its socio-political function, namely, it should not be treated merely as an approach to nationalism. Still, a well-forged literary language was not the end of the language reform. A mere appreciation of literature on the linguistic level was problematic. "It is clear," Lin writes, "that what we have been praising so much and enjoying so much is not literature in the highest sense of the word, but rhetorical perfection."[133] He continues, "this misconception of mere rhetorical excellence for truly great literature inevitably leads to a limiting of our vision of what great literature is."[134] The traditional view that literature was the incarnation of language prevented readers from appreciating the vernacular for its "profusion of variegated vocabulary, and mysterious suggestive phrases and allusions,"[135] not to mention the modern literary language that derived from it.

From the popularization of the vernacular to the institution of a new literary

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[132] Lin, Yutang. "The Literary Revolution and What Is Literature" in *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, Vol. XV, February 1920, p. 25.

[133] Ibid., p. 27.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., p. 28.

language, what Lin truly expected was the birth of a new style of literature: "The aim of the literary reform, so far from a cheapening of the literary standard, ought to be an effort to advocate a higher conception of what is literature."[136] So, what is great literature, according to Lin? And what is the language of this literature like? Thanks to his belief in literature as an autonomous realm, Lin did not use such modifiers as "national" or "Chinese" to circumscribe his understanding of what it is. "This idea that a nation should keep and maintain a literary standard distinctly different from all others in this great world republic of letters and thought," he maintains, "is one of the belated prejudices we ought staunchly to fight against."[137] He goes on:

> The aim of all great literature is to see life steadily and see life whole, that literature is to play for us the part of the interpreter of life, that insight into human nature, a penetrating sense of the tragedy of human life, and a clear, close vision of the enigmatic face of the great being called the universe, are the first qualifications of a great writer.[138]

Clearly, the chief end of the Chinese language reform in Lin's conceptualization was more universal than national. In other words, Lin posited literature on a world stage. One could find reference in the languages of not only Nikolay Karamzin, Blaise Pascal, and Goethe, but also of Cao Xueqin and Shi Nai'an, two of the greatest novelists writing in the vernacular Chinese of the Song

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[136] Ibid., p. 25.

[137] Ibid., p. 26.

[138] Ibid., p. 28.

and Qing dynasties.[139] With such a universalist view towards literature, Lin had no difficulty in going back to the past as a source of literary inspiration, although he was cautious against the traditional tendency to cling to the perfection of literary rhetoric. In the letter to Hu Shih, he wrote, “My own vernacular is not liberal enough. I dare not and do not want to write in the vernacular now. Let me go for a walk in the ancient texts and wander into the small alleys of Beijing to listen to the casual talks. Only then I can expect to create a style of vernacular literature” (my translation).[140] In fact, his thoughts on the balance between the classical Chinese and the vernacular transformed even more radically a few years later after he took “a walk in the ancient texts.” When he was criticized for moving backward by mixing the classical *yuluti* (语录体) genre (conversational classical Chinese)—a genre of essay rooted in *Lunyu* (*The Analects*) that records dialogues and exemplary behavior of intellectuals—into his vernacular essays, he argued, “It is not that I favor classical Chinese over the vernacular, but sometimes there is no better alternative. For some topics, vernacular Chinese is the most expressive; whereas for some others, classical Chinese might fit better. … I disdain the flamboyant vernacular, but prefer the plainness of classical Chinese such as the *yuluti*” (my translation).[141] Just as Lin did not oppose the merits of the old Chinese texts, so too did he not disagree with the New Culturalists’ agenda of Westernization and

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[139] Ibid., p. 29.

[140] *Hu Shih yigao ji micang shuxin* (*Posthumous Manuscripts and Private Letters of Hu Shih*), p. 308.

[141] Lin, Yutang. “Lun *yuluti* zhi yong” (“On the Advantages of *yuluti* Genre”) in *Lin Yutang mingzhu quanji: Xingsuji / Pijingji* (*A Collection of Lin Yutang’s Major Works*), Vol. 14, Northeastern Normal University Press, 1994, p. 188.

popularization. Overall, he was more inclined towards a negotiable or dialogical relationship of different languages—in this case, the languages of the past and the present negotiating for the place that each may fit—to make a great literature that is universal. Such critical thinking about language and literature persisted throughout his career and would manifest even more clearly in Lin's own literary practices, both in his Chinese-language familiar essays and English-language writings.

The Discontented Chinaman in America

In the late 1920s, Lin's English-language essays in *The China Critic* caught the attention of Pearl S. Buck, who then recommended Lin to Richard Walsh, the editor-in-chief of The John Day Company and later her husband. Lin quickly made a name for himself in the United States after the publication of his first book in English in 1936, *My Country and My People*, introducing Chinese culture to American readers. As a work of literature, Richard Jean So remarks, the book was "relatively predictable and mundane."[142] So refers to unvexing cultural portraits of this kind as autoethnography, an ideal genre for Asian American authors to make their voices heard.[143] Yet the work, I would argue, also plays a more complex role, as it is from that point forward that we see Lin became more aware of the question of Chineseness. Since his early English-language essays circulated mostly in China, the language was more a carrier for him to address his critical thinking to his English-speaking Chinese fellows, with no concern for how "Chinese-like" his writing was. However, writing about China in English in America from the 1930s

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[142] *Transpacific Community*, p. 136.

[143] Ibid., p. 135.

onward demanded that Lin reconsider how issues of China could be conveyed to a different readership, cultural community, and circle of socialization. If English had once been an unexamined medium for Lin's thoughts on China-oriented issues, it gradually became a material space on which he could work to negotiate the relationship between languages and cultures, and to form a new literary identity. In other words, English used to be more transparent for Lin to discuss China-oriented issues between him and his fellow Chinese—his English-speaking Chinese audience were more familiar with the subjects of his work regardless of how foreignized his English might appear; it now required Lin to consider the otherness of language into which he translated Chinese culture—his American readers were foreign to the content of his writing regardless how close they were to the language.

The emergence of Lin's concern about his and his work's Chineseness was less a spontaneous reaction than the result of his communications with his readers, in this case, his American publishers and editors. As So observes, even before Lin published *My Country and My People*, Walsh and Buck had already seen his writings "performing the work of autoethnography for a Western or American audience."[144] Walsh, for example, reiterated in correspondence to Lin that he envisioned the book showing the American readers a real China. Buck concluded in her introduction to the book: "It is, I think, the truest, the most profound, the most complete, the most important book yet written about China. And, best of all, it is written by a Chinese, a modern, whose roots are firmly in the past, but whose rich flowering is in the present."[145] Walsh and Buck were very satisfied with Lin's book,

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[144] Ibid., p. 136.

[145] Buck, Pearl S. "Introduction" in *My Country and My People*, 1935, p. xii.

because it both brought The John Day Company a big fortune, and also fulfilled what they projected to be a book by a "Chinese" writer and for Americans. Lin was happy, too, with the book's commercial success, which greatly spared him from his financial difficulties.

But was Lin content with the way in which John Day helped plan his writing? According to So, Lin showed disagreement with Walsh on several issues such as language style, design of characters and plots, and form of expression when he was drafting his second novel *A Leaf in the Storm* (1941), which John Day also published.[146] Such disagreement reached its summit and assumed material presence in his *Chinatown Family* (1948), also published by John Day. I would suggest, however, that the conflict that came to a head in Lin's dealings with his publisher had always existed in his writing of even earlier English-language texts including *My Country and My People*, though probably in a less explicit way. There was clearly an uneven execution of power between the Chinese writer and his Western publisher, with the former acquiescing to an image of Chinese designed by the latter. Moreover, whereas Walsh was more concerned with the book market, Lin was more preoccupied with the question of literature proper. The key difference between Lin and his publisher was their expectation of readership, which also drew a line between their visions of the purpose of *My Country and My People*. For Walsh and Buck, "Lin's writing held the potential to improve or extend the 'effects' of [Buck's novel] *The Good Earth*."[147] They wanted the book to "operate within the parameters of 'explaining' China" to fulfill American readers' growing interest in

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[146] *Transpacific Community*, pp. 137-138.

[147] Ibid., p. 135.

Asia due to the escalating tension between the United States and Japan.[148] Lin, of course, knew the book was a primer intended solely for the American readership. Though he followed much of what Walsh and Buck advised him to do in the process of writing, traces of details in his correspondence and writing betray the other side of the story of the text's composition.

Before Buck met Lin, he had already been preparing an English-language manuscript about China and planned to have it published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai. This indicates that Lin's initial target audience was the English-speaking population in China. In fact, he had always kept this cohort of readers in mind even after The John Day Company commissioned *My Country and My People* to aim at the American market. In a letter to a Chinese reader after the book's publication, Lin discussed at length his feeling about the reaction from China: "Such a reaction of my countrymen toward my book was exactly what I had feared and anticipated. I am therefore not surprised, for he who would be sincere cannot try to please everybody. I expect this sensitivity particularly from the English-speaking, fashionable, modern, self-conscious Chinese" (my translation).[149] In contrast to his publisher, Lin was aware of the readership outside the United States, especially his fellow English-speaking Chinese. But why did Lin want to write a book in English for his countrymen? In the same letter, he continued, "It is not the peasant boy who is ashamed of his peasant mother, but rather the fellow who has been sent to a Treaty-port middle school, seen how his fellow-students' mothers look in their limousines, and becomes ashamed of his mother when he

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[148] Ibid., p. 136.

[149] Lin Yutang to Liu Yuwan, February 23, 1937, Folder 9 Box 1, RG6B1, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

comes home to the countryside" (my translation).[150]

For Walsh and Buck, a book like *My Country and My People* might not require much artistic ornament or the author's subjective criticism but only a dispassionate *presentation* of the concrete facts about a culture, even if objectivity might mean different things for different persons. In this case, such objectivity was built upon their presumption of China. For Lin, however, the book was more than a primer for people of another culture. It was also, from its cradle, part of the debate in which he had engaged with the modern Chinese who advocated complete Westernization and abandonment of traditional legacies. In other words, one function of the book was to address a problem Lin had long been concerned about, that is, how modern Chinese intellectuals should associate with the old China—symbolized in the letter as the relationship between the young men sent to schools in the treaty ports and their mothers in the countryside. Lin's choice of addressing his Chinese audience in English was precisely an embodiment of his thinking that one need not necessarily divorce oneself from his own culture by adopting Western devices such as the language of the Other.

Therefore, the book contract with The John Day Company was less a demand on Lin to leave behind one group of addressees for another than an opportunity for him to bring on board diverse readerships. Rather than simply "explaining" China to a U.S. audience in a textbook-like manner, he took the chance to confront the audiences of two cultures, demonstrating again his stance in the pursuit of a Chinese modernity with the hope that such a stance would establish a common ground between the two readerships. While Walsh and Buck wished for an impartial

[150] Ibid.

Chinese eye free from the author's subjective predilection, Lin precisely demonstrated a self-reflexive subjectivity as the route for more careful reasoning. "In this book I have tried only to communicate my opinions, which I have arrived at after some long and painful thought and reading and introspection," he wrote in the Preface. "I have not tried to enter into arguments or prove my different theses, but I will stand justified or condemned by this book."[151] He wrote neither for the great patriots of China, he stated, nor for the patriots of the West, because he feared more the possibility that "the patriots of the West" would respond to his book with a blind appreciation for "his countrymen" than the possibility that they would come away from his book with "misunderstandings of his countrymen."[152]

What Lin expected was not an American reader who merely wanted to know about the fundamentals of China, nor a Chinese reader who overprotected or denounced China. Instead, he expected a universal understanding could be reached by relating his work to both readerships: "But truth is truth and will overcome clever human opinions." He continued, "For truth can never be proved; it can only be hinted at."[153] At the end of his Preface, the national distinction between Chinese and American seemed to have completely evaporated, as he turned to people in the most general sense as his target readership:

> I write only for the men of simple common sense, that simple common sense for which ancient China was so distinguished, but which is so rare today. My book can only be understood

[151] *My Country and My People*, 1935, p. xiii.

[152] Ibid., p. xiv.

[153] Ibid., p. xiii.

> from this simple point of view. To these people who have not lost their sense of ultimate human values, to them alone I speak. For they alone will understand me.[154]

Of course, the difference between the positions of Lin and The John Day Company was still subtle at this stage. As So points out, during the whole process of writing, Lin "suppresses many of the ideas about 'self-expression' that he had begun articulating in his Shanghai writings."[155] For Lin, since *My Country and My People* was his first book-length work written in English and he was facing an audience of an entirely different culture, he appeared most of the time humble in response to Walsh and Buck, taking their suggestions without much self-defense. For example, when it came to deciding the title of the book, Lin proposed *China: A Confession* with *Thinking of China* as his second preference.[156] By using the third-person reference, he clearly wanted to keep a cool distance from the subject itself and, to use his own words, "to hint at truth" rather than overemphasizing his Chineseness. After some back and forth correspondence, he ended up with what Walsh proposed, *My Country and My People*, a title suggestive of his Chineseness and dissociating him as the Other from his American audience. It is interesting, though, that by suggesting the first-person singular pronoun instead of the first-person plural, namely, *Our Country and Our People*, Walsh and Buck had curiously deviated from their initial faith. The title they proposed seemed to have decreased the authority as well as the impartiality of Lin to speak for the Chinese

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[154] Ibid., p. xiv.

[155] *Transpacific Community*, p. 136.

[156] *Lin Yutang and China's Search for Modern Rebirth*, p. 179.

population in general, but gave voice to the author's subjectivity, creating a gap rather than a commonality between Lin and his Chinese peers.

I should add that it was not only the expectations of Walsh and Buck, in a broader sense, of the American readership that put restrictions on Lin's individualism and self-expressionism. The genre of the commissioned text itself, an autoethnographic cultural portrait, did not leave much liberty for him to demonstrate more profoundly his critical thinking or to experiment with artistic devices. Lin expressed a certain disappointment with his American audience, who he thought did not really grasp the major points of the book. A quick look at some of the subsections of *My Country and My People* tells us which aspects of the Chinese culture Lin entertained: "The Chinese Character," "Women's Life," "Social and Political Life," and "A Personal Story of the Sino-Japanese War." These, again, were some of the heated themes Lin and his fellow Chinese had been discussing that were immediately relevant to the questions of Chinese modernity and national salvation.

However, what appeared most appealing to Lin's American readers was unexpectedly the chapter "The Art of Living," a chapter focusing on the leisure pursuits and daily entertainments of the traditional Chinese. "Admittedly, the Westerners may be most fascinated with the Chinese arts of living—the arts of tea drinking, of wine appreciation, of traveling …" (my translation).[157] He notes, sarcastically, "The focus of *My Country and My People*, nevertheless, is not at all on these things. But most Americans paid attention only to the chapter of 'The Art of Living' on gardening and food tasting. Some American women even took this

[157] Lin, Yutang. "Guanyu *Wuguo yu Wumin*" ("A Few Words about *My Country and My People*") in *Lin Yutang mingzhu quanji: Shiyiji II* (*A Collection of Lin Yutang's Major Works*), Vol. 18, Northeastern Normal University Press, 1994, pp. 299-300.

part as their new principles of life" (my translation).[158] Lin was aware that the book's success had much to do with its autoethnographic positioning in the U.S. book market, but seemed to be unwilling to continue his literary career on this track. Thus, when Walsh urged him to seize the day by publishing another book, an expansion of "The Art of Living" that would present more basics of Chinese culture, he was reluctant but had no alternative. "I had no intention to write the book at first, but planned to translate a few Chinese classics," which he believed were more profound representations of Chinese art and cultural spirit than the surface introductions to tea drinking and bird raising. "But the publisher preferred a book on the Chinese philosophy of life to the translation project, … a book that can be prescriptive for the contemporary Americans preoccupied with their busy schedules" (my translation).[159] As Walsh expected, this second English-language book by Lin, *The Importance of Living*, made the list of best-sellers again in the United States. It might have fulfilled the American's presumption of the other culture, but not necessarily Lin's own literary ideal. Therefore, he started to plan for a new project, a project he would not launch until he was over forty years of age: a novel.

Lin Yutang's Experiment with the Novel as Genre

In 1938, Lin wrote to Walsh, stating that his next book was "definitely going to be a novel," a story about the life of a Chinese family in Peking from 1918 to the present year of 1938.[160] Walsh and Buck welcomed the idea, but their instant response set

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., p. 299.

[160] Lin Yutang to Richard Walsh, March 24, 1938, Folder1, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

an early tone for the fundamental ideological conflict between them and Lin, which would manifest itself in the long run. In the letter back to Lin, Walsh wrote:

> The plan for the novel sounds splendid. … Perhaps there is one more suggestion that might be added: that you should not strive to emulate the Western forms of novel writing, and should not hesitate to employ the technique of the true Chinese novel itself. Indeed, I am inclined to think that the book might have a greater critical and commercial success if we promote it as a novel in the authentic Chinese manner, even though written directly in English.[161]

The same idea was reiterated a few times in later correspondence. "I hope you take to heart our caution not to be influenced at all by Western novel technique, but make it entirely Chinese in manner of telling."[162] However, Walsh himself was in fact ambiguous in terms of what the Western form of the novel looked like and how "the true Chinese novel" differed from that form. But he was obviously persistent in the message that he had always conveyed to Lin in their previous correspondence, namely, that Lin should hold onto his Chineseness, whatever it meant for each of them. Moreover, by suggesting "a novel in the authentic Chinese manner, even though written directly in English," Walsh did not seem to entertain the idea that language was the most important determinant of national identity as many would argue, despite the fact that he wanted to circumscribe Lin's novel within national

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[161] Richard Walsh to Lin Yutang, April 5, 1938, Folder 2, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

[162] Richard Walsh to Lin Yutang, April 25, 1938, Folder 2, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

borders.

What sort of Chineseness did Walsh have in mind that would not be interrupted by the language in which it was represented, in this case, English? An earlier letter from Walsh to Lin might give us some more clues. In that letter, Walsh explained how he and Buck felt about a manuscript by another Chinese writer recommended by Lin, Yi Ying: “I am inclined to believe that a Chinese novelist, writing in English for the Western reader, would do well to bring her [Yi’s] book into the Western mood, rather than leave it at an inconclusive point, as might be done in a strictly Chinese novel.”[163] At face value, Walsh and Buck seemed to have held double standards for Lin and the other Chinese novelist. A closer look at these statements, however, shows that they only wanted Lin to adopt the technique of writing—again a vaguely defined term in Walsh’s correspondence—from the Chinese novel, but still expected Lin, as they did any other Chinese author writing for the West, to fit his work to the “mood” to which Western readers were accustomed. In other words, they were not bothered by the thought of a Chinese novel written in a non-Chinese language, because what they expected was still a novel adapted to the Western imagination of China and Chinese. It was not their concern whether Lin’s Chineseness would be contaminated by English; rather, they were certain that the Chineseness they imposed on Lin’s work would not disturb the authenticity of English.

One could easily critique Walsh and Buck for their orientalist perspective, but this is not the major point I examine here. I am more interested in how their opinions became the catalysts for Lin’s critical experiment in the novel he would go

[163] Richard Walsh to Lin Yutang, March 30, 1937, Folder 9, Box 1, RG6B1, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

on to write, to bring into dialogue what Walsh and Buck strove to divide in their imagination, namely, Western literature and Chinese literature. Whereas Walsh, as I noted above, did not make a clear distinction between the two literatures, he demonstrated at some point what kind of work fit his perception of "the true Chinese novel." The work Walsh wished Lin to imitate or revive was one of the greatest vernacular novels in the history of Chinese literature, *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*) by Cao Xueqin, written during the Qing dynasty.[164] Lin himself was also a fan of Cao's text, defining it as an "essentially domestic novel, concerned with domestic activities, and relationships, jealousies of sisters-in-law, birthday parties, weddings and funerals, etc."[165]

In the drafting stage, both Lin and Walsh took the *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an exemplar for Lin's writing. Nevertheless, the final product, *Moment in Peking*, turned out to be a modern *Dream of the Red Chamber* that was not entirely what Walsh and Buck expected, even if it became another great commercial success in Lin's and Walsh's careers. Instead of writing a Chinese novel in an adapted version that was completely manageable and imaginable to Walsh or to the American readership in general, Lin demonstrated his understanding of the novel's Chineseness by negotiating here and there its translatability into the English-speaking culture. In other words, Lin did not draw his story closer to his audience, but tested its distance from them in multiple ways even if it was written in the readers' language.

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[164] Richard Walsh to Lin Yutang, July 12, 1938, Folder 2, Box 1, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

[165] Lin Yutang to Richard Walsh, March 24, 1938, Folder 1, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

Moment in Peking, a three-volume novel totaling more than eight hundred pages, covers the life of three families during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Unlike Lin's initial plan for a solely domestic novel, however, the core story is essentially about how the main character, Yao Mulan, survived the historical vicissitudes in China. One challenge Lin undertook to translate Chineseness into the English-language literary world was his understanding of the novel as a genre. In fact, the distinction between Western novel and Chinese novel, which Walsh and Buck wished to highlight, was not as easy to make for a Chinese writer like Lin who was raised in the modern Chinese context, in particular with his Westernized education. The literary revolution in the world of the modern Chinese novel, which took place in China as early as the late nineteenth century, was inspired by the vernacular fiction of the Ming and Qing dynasties as well as by Western novels introduced into China through translations. In other words, for Chinese writers of the early twentieth century, modern fiction was already a partially translated genre from the Western world because of the impact of the literary revolution. Whereas Walsh claimed a truly Chinese novel should follow the example of *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), which he simplified as featuring traditional domestic events like birthday parties or banquets, Lin complicated the concept of the novel by introducing a mixed definition of the genre—drawing selective elements from classical Chinese texts and the modern Chinese literary revolution, as well as from Western traditions.

When Lin started the project, he did not seem to entertain the idea that *Moment in Peking* was written exclusively for a monolingual English-speaking readership, who expected, as Walsh did, a genre specifically derived from an Eastern culture or even another cultural primer through the form of storytelling. Instead, the audience

he projected had always comprised both Chinese and English speakers. For example, even while Lin was still working on the draft, he had already begun searching for a Chinese translator for the book. As soon as he finished the manuscript on August 8, 1938, he wrote a letter on September 4 to Yu Dafu, the Chinese translator he personally designated, to confirm the commission. Moreover, as he wrote *Moment in Peking*, Lin drafted much of the story—in particular the dialogues between its characters—in Chinese in his mind and translated it into English in print.[166] Thus translation of the novel into Chinese was more a demand on the translator to *restore* the Chinese texts that the author originally composed in his mind than to *translate* Lin's English into Chinese. Thus, for both English- and Chinese-speaking audiences, the novel had always been a translated work from the very beginning. The most ideal reader of the story, as Lin wished, was a bilingual writer like Yu Dafu, who was acquainted with both languages and literatures and thus able to appreciate the beauty of the English version of the novel as well as to re-present, if not restore, the stylistic and formal features of the original Chinese in the author's head. Moreover, many poems and idioms in *Moment in Peking* are actually Lin's English translations from Chinese, which requires that the translator had better have been well-trained in literature in order to relocate them back into Chinese. Again, there seems no better choice than Yu Dafu, a famous writer himself in China.

For Lin's Chinese audience, the modern novel as a genre was a relatively new concept, which was still in the process of becoming, based on negotiations between

[166] Lin, Yutang. "Gei Yu Dafu de xin: Guanyu *Shunxi Jinghua*" ("A Letter to Yu Dafu: Some Words about *Moment in Peking*") in *Lin Yutang mingzhu quanji: Shiyiji II* (*A Collection of Lin Yutang's Major Works*), Vol. 18, Northeastern Normal University Press, 1994, p. 295.

the old and the new, influences Chinese and non-Chinese. With such a readership in mind, Lin was not only concerned about evoking his readers' emotional sympathy with the fictional figures he represented in his novel, a function Walsh urged him to realize in the writing. He also laid as much emphasis on the social-political role of the novel form itself, which was at the core of the literary revolution in modern China. On the dedication page of *Moment in Peking*, for instance, Lin wrote: "To the brave soldiers of China who are laying down their lives that our children and grandchildren shall be free men and women this volume written between August 1938 and August 1939 is humbly dedicated."[167] In a letter to Yu Dafu, he explained in more detail:

> This book is to memorialize the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives on the frontline. It is not a work for entertainment. … Though I have been staying overseas, I have no intention to write romances between young men and women. I only wish that the readers' interest in individual romance could lead them to pay more attention to what lies behind. All these incidents [from the Boxer Rebellion to the New Culture Movement, and the Sino-Japanese War] are linked by the domestic lives of the Yaos, the Zengs, and the News. (my translation)[168]

While Walsh suggested in a letter that Lin should focus on the development of the characters more than that of the incidents,[169] Lin threaded the individual

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[167] Lin, Yutang. *Moment in Peking*. The John Day Company, 1939.

[168] "Gei Yu Dafu de xin: Guanyu *Shunxi Jinghua*" ("A Letter to Yu Dafu: Some Words about *Moment in Peking*"), p. 295.

[169] Richard Walsh to Lin Yutang, April 5, 1938. Folder 2, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang

experiences of his characters through the larger fate of Chinese society, since he believed the historical turmoil Chinese people underwent during the period in which the novel is set should be the most important. Such content, as he claimed, could only and best be displayed to the English-speaking readers in the form of a novel.[170]

Lin's thought clearly resonated with the key idea promoted by his revolutionary contemporaries, who advocated that the primary role of the modern novel was the critical representation of social realities. But what makes Lin's definition of the novel more complicated is the way in which he mixed the modern Chinese understanding of the genre with one of its traditional meanings. At the beginning of the Preface to *Moment in Peking*, he writes: "What is a novel but 'a little talk,' as the name *hsiaoshuo* [*xiaoshuo*] implied? So, reader, listen to this little talk awhile when you have nothing better to do."[171] By introducing the concept of *little talk*, a word-for-word translation of *xiaoshuo* (小说), the Chinese term for *novel*, Lin required his readers to return to one of the earliest origins of the novel in the history of Chinese literature—the idea predominant in the pre-Qin era (twenty-first century BC) which registered *xiaoshuo* as nothing more than the shallow and trivial conversations among the ordinary people on the streets.[172] Lin himself was indeed elusive in providing the precise definition of *xiaoshuo* in its traditional sense. Instead of resting on the classical concept to downplay the

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Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

[170] "Gei Yu Dafu de xin: guanyu *Shunxi Jinghua*" ("A Letter to Yu Dafu: Some Words about *Moment in Peking*"), p. 295.

[171] *Moment in Peking*, Preface.

[172] Chen, Hong. *Zhongguo xiaoshuo lilunshi* (*A History of Chinese Theories of the Novel*). Tianjin Education Press, 2005, pp. 7-10.

significance of the novel as a modern literary genre, he believed that trivial talks carried universal value for readers who wished to reflect upon human life in general. As he continues in the Preface:

> This novel is neither an apology for contemporary Chinese life nor an exposé of it, as so many recent Chinese "dark curtain" novels purport to be. It is neither a glorification of the old way of life nor a defense of the new. It is merely a story of how men and women in the contemporary era grow up and learn to live with one another, how they love and hate and quarrel and forgive and suffer and enjoy, how certain habits of living and ways of thinking are formed, and how, above all, they adjust themselves to the circumstances in this earthly life where men strive but the gods rule.[173]

Not only did Lin expect the novel to speak to the life of readers irrespective of whichever language they spoke, he also reformulated the genre for a Chinese readership who was familiar with its classical meaning as the "little talk." In other words, the concept of *xiaoshuo* was translated from the Chinese tradition to a non-culturally specific context as well as from the past to the present—and reinvented.

Lin's focus on the novel's representation of historical upheavals does not mean that he was unconcerned about the development of individual characters. However, the shaping of characters in his novel seemed to be less influenced by traditional novels like *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), in which the characters had

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[173] *Moment in Peking*, Preface.

a fixed personality, than by the Western-style Bildungsroman, in which the characters developed through social experiences. Although *Moment in Peking* was structured chronologically around events in the first three decades of twentieth-century Chinese history, the author indeed unfolded the narrative around the growth of the main character Mulan, the eldest daughter of the Yao family.[174] However, neither did Lin follow strictly the classical European mode of the Bildungsroman, which synthesized "the subjective unfolding of an individuality" and "the objective process from the standpoint of the educator,"[175] that is, the process of an individual reaching his or her maturity through social engagements.

Unlike the Western Bildungsroman which features interiority and mobility of the protagonist,[176] *Moment in Peking* displays each stage of Mulan's development in a different framework: Mulan neither matures via self-reflection or internal transformation, nor evolves due to historical incidents. What drives Mulan to move forward from one life stage to another and finally graduate to the point of sublimation are the continuous life and death experiences she and the people related to her undergo. The temporality of the *Moment in Peking* as a Bildungsroman follows neither the chronological order of the objective social events, nor the timelessness of subjective activities such as introspection. It is, rather, through the

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174 It is worth noting that the novel was originally named *Mulan* (*Magnolia*) when Lin first drafted the outline. Mulan as a symbolic name in classical Chinese originates from the famous "Mulan shi" ("The Ballad of Mulan") written in the Northern Wei Dynasty by an anonymous poet, of which there were many later versions in various genres. In the ballad, the legendary female warrior, Mulan, disguised herself as a man and took the place of her aged father to join the army. She fought on the battlefield for years, but refused any military decorations from the royal court and retired to accompany her parents. Thus the name Mulan is usually associated with courage and filial piety, particularly in women.

175 Moretti, Franco. *The Way of the World: The* Bildungsroman *in European Culture*. Verso, 1987, p. 17.

176 Ibid., p. 4.

repeating cycles of death and rebirth that the protagonist grows from innocence to sophistication. In addition, lacking the mobility in the outside society that Moretti claims as fundamental to the conventional European Bildungsroman, Mulan's mobility essentially unfolds between domestic structures like that of her own Taoist family, which adjusts itself more conveniently to social changes, and those of her husband Sunya's Confucian family, which sticks more rigidly to the traditional dogma. For example, after Mulan gives birth to her first son,

> Sunya noticed that Mulan now became different. It was as though her son were her first child. She became more serious, and less careful in her dress, and for a year or two she lost all interest in her excursions and dinners at little restaurants. Motherhood had leveled her to the eternal type of the average woman.[177]

A later life-changing incident, however, moves Mulan towards another direction: her daughter Aman is shot dead during the patriotic students' protest against the corrupted warlord government and foreign imperialists. After the initial shock, Mulan becomes extremely calm and seems to have lost interest in mundane daily affairs:

> She seemed to have a new sense of values. … No one saw her weep any more. Her sadness was something deeper than tears, and she bore her sorrow like a queen.
>
> Her new interest in her jade collection and in the bone inscriptions was more than momentary. She kept them all

[177] *Moment in Peking*, p. 389.

> spread out on her bedroom table again. They were fraught with a spiritual meaning for her, reminders of certain moments of joy and of her childhood, but also reminders of Time and Eternity. It seemed to her that Moment and Eternity were one. These inanimate objects symbolized immortal life.[178]

Relocating the pain of bereavement onto the curios she had collected, Mulan develops a new level of conceptualization about life and death. Not only does death mean a transformation towards resurrection, but moment and eternity, life and death become essentially one thing. This idea that the distinction between life and death could be transcended reflects the Taoist heritage of Mulan's family.

The story ends with Mulan and her family joining the flood of refugees fleeing war-ridden Hangzhou city during the Sino-Japanese War. On her way, Mulan adopts a newborn baby from a couple who could no longer sustain their family. When she feeds the baby, "Mulan had an exquisite pleasure in this, feeling that even in suckling this one child, she was doing something not for an individual, but something eternal for China, to carry on the life of the Chinese race."[179] Meanwhile, the thought of her best friend Mannia's murder by the Japanese soldiers and the death threats her son is facing on the battlefield stir even stronger patriotic feeling in her. Sympathy towards the common people and the nation in war brings Mulan to a transcendence of her class as a woman of the gentry as well as of her intellectuality as an heir of Taoism. She attains a completely new world view:

> The conquest of the ego which her father had achieved by sheer

[178] Ibid., p. 624.

[179] Ibid., p. 812.

> contemplation, she now achieved through human contact with this great company of men, women, and children. The aesthetic retreat that she had made for herself in Hangchow on the top of the City God's Hill now seemed to her meaningless, unsatisfactory, unreal. In this moving mass of the refugees, there was now neither rich nor poor. The war and its depredations had leveled them all.[180]

At this point, Mulan's development is not so much philosophical as historical and social. Her mobility into the greater social sphere compelled by the war leads to the disavowal of her Taoist reclusive interiority and to the embrace of what has been sought after by the revolutionary Chinese. In a sense, the last moment of Mulan's awakening resembles more the experience of protagonists in the classical Western Bildungsroman.

Overall, *Moment in Peking* as a Bildungsroman is organized around the repeating spiritual nirvana of its female protagonist. Nevertheless, the protagonist's enlightenment is less underscored by the historical vicissitudes of progressive time than by the continuous cycle of life and death of the people around her and by a deepening comprehension of classical Chinese intellectuality. The product of such a Bildungsroman is not the maturing of a historical being but a philosophical one. In short, Lin reinvented the genre of Bildungsroman by translating classical Chinese elements into the framework borrowed from the Western tradition. What complicates the narrative is the fact that, by the end of the novel, the classical mode of the Western Bildungsroman is resumed as the protagonist finally merges into the

[180] Ibid., p. 815.

larger society and achieves a new interiority. This sudden shift in the evolution of the protagonist seems odd at first glance. The sublimation of Mulan is not so natural and even opposes her previous self, since she long had been passively rejecting, or at best reticent about, the nationalist agenda and revolutionary zeal in the novel. It is worth noting, however, that Lin wrote the novel for readers of two language cultures. On the one hand, he did indeed translate the Chineseness that his publisher demanded by inserting classical Chinese elements into a Western genre. On the other, the pressing need to propagandize China and to evoke the patriotic sentiments of a people under national crisis demanded that Lin echo the ideal of his modern fellow reformers, who believed in the social-political power and function of literature. In this regard, a self-reflexive protagonist who would finally adapt herself to contemporary values and morality seems inevitable.

Conclusion

In September 1939, one month after Lin's *Moment in Peking* was finished, publisher Walsh wrote a letter to book sellers in the United States to promote the novel:

> [It is] a novel that will be read by generations to come, and take its place among the classics of world literature. Reading it, one inevitably thinks of three well-loved novels in three different languages— "War and Peace" and "Les Miserables" and "Vanity Fair". It has something of each of these and adds a vast deal of its own, for it is of course characteristically Chinese and the first modern novel by a Chinese in our language. The comparison is with the great European novels, rather than with

> the esoteric oriental classics such as "Tale of Genji"—lovely as those are—because it is a story of modern times and modern people and one that we of the West will read with quick understanding and sustained pleasure.[181]

Walsh's praise for the book as a world classic might be exaggerated. A marketing strategy for commercial success is not difficult to discern in his words. What interests me more in Walsh's statement is the contradictory nature of the way in which he perceived the novel. Whereas Walsh and Buck wrote repeatedly to Lin in their earlier correspondence to suggest that he avoid Western forms of novel writing and stick to the characteristics of the traditional Chinese novel, they now displayed a rather opposing stance. Claiming that the novel was comparable to Western novels by invoking its similarities to three great Western novels, Walsh seemed to take the Chinese elements in the novel more as ornament than as the essence he had rigidly required Lin's writing to represent. But we could also say that Walsh was persistent in his perception of Chineseness in Lin's work. If he had previously attempted to draw a line between the Chinese novel and the Western novel, he now seemed to divorce the Chinese novel—in a broader sense, the oriental classics—from world literature, or at best, to take the former as a supplement to the latter.

Whether *Moment in Peking* deserves the name of world classic is still debatable, as there have been different critical stances on its literary value. Despite how strongly Lin wanted to follow the example of *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*), lengthy depictions of cultural phenomena and political situations kept

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[181] Richard Walsh to the booksellers of America, Unknown date of September 1939. Folder 7, Box 2, RG6B2, Lin Yutang Correspondence, Archives of the Pearl S. Buck House, Pearl S. Buck International.

interrupting the development of his narrative. From time to time, readers of Lin's novel had to stop in the middle of a wedding ceremony, for instance, to read explanations of what the Chinese word *tsungshi* (冲喜, chongxi in *pinyin*) referred to or what a specific dressing code meant. Traces of a cultural primer, which Lin attempted to avoid in the first place, inevitably made their way into the novel. On the one hand, such traces left an impression of cultural translation for English-speaking readers; on the other, they posed a challenge to the Chinese translator who needed to decide which elements to eliminate from the translation in order to bring it closer to its Chinese audience. Moreover, while Lin merged his characters' domestic life with the drastic social changes they experienced, his prolonged remarks on political cliques and their conduct constantly distracted readers from the narrative drama by redirecting their attention to the nationalist propaganda. One thing is certain, though: Lin had never truly complied with the blueprint that Walsh and Buck created for him. Reflecting his own ideal of literary cosmopolitanism, his works demonstrate the endeavor of a Chinese author to bring together the old and the new, the East and the West, each in the language of the Other.

Chapter Three

Displacing the Shanghai Amah:

Eileen Chang's Translingual Rewriting in the Early 1950s

That Lin Yutang's enormous success in the West stirred admiration among his contemporaries is hardly surprising. Eileen Chang (a.k.a. Zhang Ailing; 1920-1995),[182] one of the most popular writers in Shanghai during the 1940s, expressed her outright envy towards her predecessor in cross-cultural adventures: "I wanted to make an even bigger splash than Lin Yutang," she claimed, "I wanted to wear only the most exquisite and elegant clothing, to roam the world, to have my own house in Shanghai, to live a crisp and unfettered existence."[183] Ambitious as she was, Chang's own journey from Asia to North America was not, however, so blessed as Lin's. Her forty years' stay in the United States (1955-1995), which accounted for almost two-thirds of her life, was not at all crisp or unfettered as she had anticipated. Although her debut in Shanghai in 1942 did make a huge splash in the history of modern Chinese literature, Chang's attempt to develop a literary career in the United States was commonly considered among critics to be a sheer failure. Except for her first two English novels published in the 1950s, her other English works barely made it to the book market in North America; these were only accepted by little-known British or Hong Kong publishers with disappointing records of sales.

[182] Depending on the romanization system used, the author's name is spelled as Eileen Chang, which she employed after immigrating to the United States; or Zhang Ailing, which is used in Chinese-speaking circles and for her Chinese-language texts. The author also had several pen-names, for instance, Liang Jing, which she used for her translations of American literary works into Chinese in the early 1950s including Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. In this chapter, I use Eileen Chang, unless otherwise noted.

[183] Chang, Eileen. "Whispers" in *Written on Water*. Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 156.

Whereas Chang's frustration in the American literary market was compensated by her return to fame in the Chinese world in the 1960s, this regained success, in hindsight, paradoxically reaffirmed her previous failure in the United States. The "Eileen Chang fever" in Taiwan, for instance, was essentially kindled by C. T. Hsia's celebration of Chang as the greatest fiction writer in modern China, and his canonization of her Chinese fiction mostly completed in the 1940s, such as "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue").[184] In other words, the resurgence of Eileen Chang since the 1960s is due, in large part, to the rediscovery of her pre-1950 works finished in Shanghai. The renewed interest in Chang also resulted in the re-publication of her English-language works translated, self-translated, or rewritten into Chinese, which had been less favorably received in North America. However, curiosity about the semi-autobiographical elements in many of these stories seems to have exceeded critical interest in them as literary and aesthetic works by Chang in a new stage of life. Moreover, the fact Chang self-translated or rewrote her English-language works seems to have been conveniently interpreted by the general audience as another sign of her diminished creative power. Rather than passively viewing rewriting and self-translation as the author's mere subjection to the demand of the market to keep her publication record alive while nearly no new stories were created, I am more concerned with the meaning of Chang's authorial choice to engage in these distinctive forms of literary practice, cross-lingual rewriting in particular, at a specific stage of her career as well as in the history of modern China. The subtle changes Chang makes to her original works, in particular, are manifestations of the cultural and historical intricacies the author faces when she

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[184] Hsia, C. T. *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, *1917-1957.* Yale University Press, 1961, pp. 389-431.

writes on the same or similar themes and figures in a cross-lingual context.

My study of Eileen Chang is informed by Julia Kristeva's dialectical conceptualization of intertextuality and originality. According to Kristeva, intertextuality is a "passage from one sign system to another" that involves "the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one (through displacement and condensation of the original)."[185] In this light, I understand Chang's acts of rewriting more as a creation of new works that draw resources from the old rather than as a reliance on or redemption of the latter. Besides undertaking a comparative analysis of what has been added, eliminated, or adapted in Chang's rewritings, I also look at how these changes are associated with Chang's cross-lingual experiences in the early years of the Cold War. I argue that rewriting is a form of literary practice resulting from the historical transformations Chang underwent during this period, which demanded that she renegotiate fictional themes, languages, and narrative modes. To put it simply, this chapter is not about *what* Chang's rewriting represents—for instance, whether it echoes or waves goodbye to the past—but about *how* rewriting functions in her literary productions. Although during her lifetime Chang firmly reiterated her disinterest in any kind of politics, I propose that her cross-lingual rewriting, as a critical form of literary expression, is her response to the tensions she confronted at the intersection of war, revolution, and personal predicaments during her first few diasporic years of the 1950s. These writings thus bear witness to the historical and political transformations that China and Chinese people underwent in the middle of the twentieth century.

[185] Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 59.

Theorizing and Contextualizing Rewriting

The idea of rewriting, as Bright Molande suggests, is so broad that concepts such as intertextuality, adaptation, translation, and revision may all fall under the category. "All that we call writing is a form of rewriting," Molande claims.[186] Such an idea finds its source in Roland Barthes, who views the text as "a tissue of quotations"[187] and as essentially a form of endless rewriting until the text arrives at its destination, namely, the readers. It also echoes Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist idea that the meaning of a text is indefinitely deferred and thus disseminated everywhere.[188] Although I agree with this overarching conceptualization of rewriting, I intend to, for the purpose of this chapter, narrow it by differentiating rewriting from other associated concepts such as translation.

Gérard Genette's classification of five different types of rewriting, in his term "transtextual relationship," helps us understand the body of works by Chang that I examine here. These five types, not without reciprocal contact or overlapping, are recognized in the order of increasing abstraction and complexity: *intertextuality*—the actual presence of one text within another, such as quotations; *paratextuality*—secondary signals that bind the text to other texts in a less explicit way, such as prefaces, blurbs, and illustrations; *metatextuality*—commentaries that associate one text with another without necessarily naming both of them; *hypertextuality*—any non-commentary relationship that unites a text B (which Genette calls hypertext) to an earlier text A (which he calls hypotext); and

[186] Molande, Bright. "Politics of Rewriting: What Did Achebe Really Do?" in *Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 18, 2004, p. 38.

[187] Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author" in *Image Music Text.* Fontana Press, 1977, p. 146.

[188] Derrida, Jacques. "Différance" in *Margins of Philosophy.* The Harvester Press, 1982, pp. 1-27.

architextuality—the entire set of general categories, such as modes of enunciation and literary genres, from which singular texts emerge.[189] Admitting that the whole of universal literature can be subsumed under the field of hypertextuality, Genette notes that some works are somehow more visibly, massively, and explicitly interconnected in their hypertextual relationship to other works. The less explicit ones, on the other hand, depend more heavily in their analysis on "constitutive judgment: that is, the reader's interpretive decision."[190] In other words, it is an over-generalizing statement to claim, as Molande and other scholars have done, that all five categories are interchangeable or that they are in the broadest sense one thing. Such an approach, Genette points out, would make the study of certain types of transtextuality unmanageable.[191]

The rewritings by Chang that I investigate here fall under the fourth type, the relationship of hypertextuality, in which text B originates from the preexisting text A through a process of transformation and consequently evokes the latter, to greater or lesser degrees, without necessarily citing it. It is then reasonable to include Chang's rewriting of her English-language works into Chinese-language ones and vice versa in this category, as long as they share similar themes, design of fictional characters, or narrative events, even if the two bodies of texts are written in different languages. Moreover, it is worth pointing out, to identify the hypertextual relationship between text A and text B, it is really *not* a question about the extent to which the latter transforms the former. Insofar as text A and text B are "united" in a

[189] Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsest: Literature in the Second Degree*. University of Nebraska Press, 1997, pp. 1-7.

[190] Ibid., p. 9.

[191] Ibid.

"non-commentary" fashion, namely, that traces of text A could be more or less found in text B, hypertextuality then exists between the two. In this sense, even if Chang only employs and adjusts fragments of sources from her Chinese-language work—such as a figure, a plot, or a dialogue—into her English-language text, I suggest that the latter can be identified as a cross-lingual rewriting of the former.

To study Eileen Chang's cross-lingual writings, therefore, it seems necessary to make a distinction between her rewriting and self-translation by narrowing the definition of both, although the line between the two has not been clear or even has been deliberately erased in translation studies since André Lefevere.[192] When I speak of translation in Chang's works, I invoke "translation" in the most conventional sense of the term, that is, the transference of a text from its original language to the target language. Although Chang's self-translations provide the author with the liberty and the flexibility to manipulate her own original texts, her rewritings constitute a separate constellation of texts, which are, as Genette suggests, hypertextually related to the hypotexts. In other words, transformation and transposition of the source texts are performed more visibly and extensively in rewriting, which makes them less recognizable than they are in the final products of translation—regardless of whether the method of translation is sense-for-sense or word-for-word. For instance, in rewriting her Chinese fictional works into English, Chang makes significant changes to narrative techniques, plots, personalities of characters, linguistic styles, and even literary genre to the extent that certain boundaries she has established in her Chinese works are transgressed. These

[192] In his *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (Routledge, 1992), for instance, Lefevere refers to the term *rewriting* overarchingly to the extent that rewriting, according to him, takes various forms and is at work in translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism, editing, and cross-media adaptation.

approaches make it harder to claim that the Chinese original is basically the same story as the English-language one, which, at best, only *reminds* her readers of a certain Chinese work she has written. However, when she self-translates, we can see that the question of fidelity to her original Chinese texts is still at the core of her concern, as she only makes adjustments to small details in her translation such as changing the name of a character, adding or deleting a few words, and, at most, using a semantically different story title.

In Chinese-language criticism, much scholarly work has been done, for instance, comparing Chang's most famous novella "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue," 1943) and her novel *Yuannü* (*The Embittered Woman*, 1966). The latter is, however, the Chinese self-translation of her English-language novel *The Rouge of the North* (*Beidi yanzhi*, 1967), itself a rewritten version of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue").[193] Commonly, the comparison between the Chinese texts is done as if *The Embittered Woman* were derived directly from "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue"). On the other hand, in English-language studies of Chang's writing, such as Jing Tsu's examination of *The Rouge of the North*, all of the different versions of the story are referred to as translations.[194] However, if we differentiate Chang's rewritings from her self-translations, questions such as translatability, authorial

[193] Chang first finished rewriting "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") into the English-language novel *Pink Tears* in 1956. The manuscript was turned down by the U.S. publisher Charles Scribner's Sons. She then rewrote *Pink Tears*, in 1962, into *The Rouge of the North*, which again failed to get published in the United States. No sooner had Chang finished *The Rouge of the North* than she translated it into *Yuannü* (*The Embittered Woman*). *The Rouge of the North* was eventually accepted by a British publisher, Cassell, in 1967, one year after its Chinese translation *Yuannü* (*The Embittered Woman*) was serialized in *Xingdao Ribao* (*Star Island Daily*) in Hong Kong in 1966. This Chinese translation was later published in book form by Huangguan Press in Taiwan in 1968. The Chinese title *Beidi yanzhi* is the literal translation of *The Rouge of the North*, which is used by many Chinese-speaking scholars to differentiate that title from Chang's self-translated title, *Yuannü* (*The Embittered Women*). For more details, see Zhang, Huiyuan, *Zhang Ailing nianpu* (*A Chronicle of Eileen Chang*). Tianjin People's Publishing House, 2014, p. 166.

[194] Tsu, Jing. *Sound and Script in Chinese Diaspora*. Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 93-102.

license, fidelity of the translator to the original, and the politics underlying Chang's choices of literary style and techniques will need to be considered on a more profound level, rather than simply being subsumed under the general discipline of translation studies.

Whereas Chang's self-translations of the original were marked by, as Lydia Liu would have it, a sense of "unintendedness" towards their receiving cultures,[195] Chang more explicitly intends a new audience when she rewrites her earlier works with significant revisions. Rewriting, as Ionut Miloi argues, "expresses the fact that each literary text stands for a certain socio-political and cultural code, and when rewriting occurs, it signals that a mutation took place in the way that particular code is now perceived."[196] The process of rewriting is not simply the transformation of the hypotext on the textual level, but "a critical remark on the socio-cultural context in which this new text is produced."[197] "Rewriting is more than just repolishing old texts, it becomes a strategy to subvert, undermine and jam a discourse," Miloi continues. "To initiate a process of rewriting cannot be considered a random act, but rather a manifesto, charged with a strong motivation which aims, undoubtedly, to produce an effect among the readers, the literary hierarchies, etc."[198] To put it briefly, rewriting or hypertextuality was a strategic initiative Chang took during a specific period of her literary career—"a deliberate investment of social energy."[199]

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[195] *Translingual Practice*, p. 60.

[196] Miloi, Ionut. "The Ideologies of Rewriting" in *Studia UBB Philologia*, LVII, 2, 2012, p. 168.

[197] Ibid., p. 169.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

Such a practice has its own characteristics that conventional studies of translation—centering on the dichotomy of source and target, fidelity and betrayal, submission and resistance—may not suffice to explain.

Viewed from the perspective that rewriting differs from translation since the former is charged with a different mode of authorial intention and motivation—even if it is also understood as a second-degree writing in comparison to the source text—rewriting becomes an "initial point from which any attempt to reconstruct the Zeitgeist that produced [the] mutations [that call for distinctive forms of literary representation such as rewriting] should start."[200] It is thus important to distinguish between rewriting and translation in Chang's works not only because Chang herself treated rewriting and self-translation as two very different literary practices, but also because such a distinction should drive us to query why she *chose to* rewrite some works while translating others. In her examination of the question of disloyalty in Chang's late works, Shuang Shen suggests that "we should not aim at integrating Zhang into a particular political or cultural center, which she allegedly betrays, but instead take into full account the ambiguity of the *ends* of her betrayal in order to consider the new possibilities of political and cultural affiliation opened up by the diaspora."[201] In short, it is not a matter of what Chang has betrayed in her late writings, but why and how she has done so. If self-translation is a *re-presentation* of Chang's past works in a different language culture, her post-1950 rewritings from Chinese to English represent a more drastic process of *reinvention* which gains its value precisely from its

[200] Ibid.

[201] Shen, Shuang. "Ends of Betrayal: Diaspora and Historical Representation in the Late Works of Zhang Ailing" in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 2012, p. 115.

innovative betrayals of the past.

Current studies of Chang's rewritings, however, share a problem Rachel Douglas notes in her study of early twentieth-century Caribbean rewriters: "[M]any studies of rewriting, hypertextuality, and intertextuality generated by French narratology have a tendency to view their subject with often almost no reference to anything outside the text."[202] Similarily, scholars have been preoccupied with analytical comparisons of different versions of Chang's literary works in terms of motifs, thematic contents, characterization of main figures, and formal properties such as narrative structure, use of imagery and metaphors. In brief, studies have been conducted about how Chang's texts differ, but little explanation has been given as to why such rewriting took place. Nevertheless, it is impossible to study Chang's rewritings in a decontextualized way, because most of these works were completed at the intersection of Chinese revolution and the global Cold War, in the face of which diasporic Chinese writers like her were compelled to make life-changing choices on the borderlines, both culturally and physically.

More noteworthy is the fact that many of Chang's rewritings are conducted between languages. As I have noted earlier, studies in Chinese evade such relevant questions as literary circulation, self-translation, shifting readerships, the author's aesthetic identity, and above all, the mediating role of the English language in the cross-lingual context. In his foreword to Chang's *The Rouge of the North*, published posthumously in the United States in 1998, David Der-wei Wang asks why Chang rewrote the story several times.[203] A more penetrating question, I suggest, is why

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[202] Douglas, Rachel. *Frankétienne and Rewriting—A Work in Progress*. Lexington Books, 2009, p.1.

[203] Chang, Eileen. *The Rouge of the North*. University of California Press, 1998, p. ix.

Chang rewrote her Chinese novella "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue"), and in particular why in English? The circumstantial reason for her to do so, Wang speculates, is that she expected to be admitted to the American book market with her most renowned work in Chinese.[204] This then begs the question as to why Chang took the trouble to rewrite the story into *The Rouge of the North*, especially when "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") had been canonized through C. T. Hsia's effort. In other words, she might as well just translate the story. More curiously, when Chang gained momentum again in the Chinese literary world in the late 1960s, she chose to translate *The Rouge of the North* into its Chinese version, *Yuannü* (*The Embittered Woman*), but at the same time published a reprint of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue"). This indicates at least two things: First, for Chang, "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") and its rewritten versions are essentially different texts. Second, as Douglas suggests, "the act of rewriting provides the opportunity to update a writer's work at different moments in their personal, aesthetic, and very often political trajectory."[205] Chang chose to rewrite "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") in English as *The Rouge of the North* because, besides the circumstantial desire to enter a new market, the aesthetic and political conditions had changed to the extent that she was compelled to create something different. It was the English-language context that gave Chang the impetus or even necessitated her to turn her early work into a new text.

Another issue in current studies of Chang's rewriting is that the preoccupation with different versions of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") has limited the scope

[204] Ibid.

[205] *Frankétienne and Rewriting*, p. 1.

of investigating rewriting as a literary practice in general in Chang's career. Thanks to the story's partially autobiographical features, the rewritings of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") have been interpreted as a form of memory that haunts Chang's personal life as well as her literary ideal—a perspective Wang rightly problematizes in his foreword, proposing that "literature need not serve merely as reference to authorial turmoil."[206] If we look beyond "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") and its multiple afterlives, we may find that rewriting represents a much bigger project in Chang's literary career. Not only was "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") rewritten or translated several times, Chang's other works also acquired new lives in different forms or languages years after they were first published. For instance, a partial rewriting of her 1944 Chinese short story "Guihua zheng: A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer: A Xiao's Autumnal Lament")[207] is included in a chapter of her most famous English novel, *The Rice-Sprout Song*. A Chinese-language rewritten version of her 1963 English essay "A Return to the Frontier" has been unearthed among her posthumous manuscripts, among which her Chinese novel *Xiao tuanyuan* (*Little Reunion*) is also found to be a rewriting of her semi-autobiographies in English, *The Book of Change* (*Yijing*) and *The Fall of the Pagoda* (*Leifengta*).[208] Such

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[206] *The Rouge of the North*, p. xi.

[207] C. T. Hsia uses a word-for-word translation of the title, "Indian Summer: A-hsiao's [A Xiao in *pinyin*] Autumnal Lament," in his *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 1917-1957*. Chang self-translates it as "Shame, Amah!" in *Eight Stories by Chinese Women*, Nieh, Hua-ling ed., Heritage Press, 1962. I will use "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") for short in the following unless noted otherwise.

[208] Both *The Fall of the Pagoda* and *The Book of Change* were published posthumously by Hong Kong University Press in 2010. *The Fall of the Pagoda* is the prequel of *The Book of Change*, revolving around the author's childhood. The latter focuses on Chang's life between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. Both were completed between the early and mid-1960s. *Xiao tuanyuan* (*Little Reunion*) is a 1976 Chinese rewriting based on these two texts, published simultaneously in 2009 in Hong Kong and in mainland China. The publication of *Xiao tuanyuan* (*Little Reunion*) stirred a heated debate in Chinese-language circles because Chang demanded that her close friends, Song Kuang Wenmei and Song Qi, destroy the manuscript after her death in the 1990s. However, the

assumptions as diminishing creativity or nostalgic sentiment, therefore, do not suffice to explain the significance of Chang's rewritings. If the rewritings of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") were indeed a result of her Freudian drive to make the repressed past return, her various other works require us to view rewriting in a broader sense as a unique form of literary practice that has acquired its own politics and aesthetics. In other words, one needs not only to be liberated from the obsessions with Chang's biography but also made open to the re-conceptualization of rewriting itself.

Chang's Self-Displacement in Writing in English

Although Chang is best known for her series of rewritings from Chinese into English based on the prototype of "Jinsuo ji" ("The Golden Cangue") in the 1960s, her dedication to the cause of rewriting can be traced to her English-language novel of 1954, *The Rice-Sprout Song.* The novel depicts life in rural China during the communist Land Reform Movement of the early 1950s with the experience of a peasant couple, Gold Root and Moon Scent, at the center of the story. It is safe to suggest that writing *The Rice-Sprout Song* was a completely new experience for Chang since it was her first attempt to write a novel as well as her first time to write fictional works in English.[209] Although the story is also thematically new for Chang, as her earlier Chinese stories are predominantly based in urban Shanghai with little or, at best, implicit reference to immediate social movements, the first few chapters

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Song couple decided to have it published eventually, regardless of the criticism they received.

[209] Chang only published Chinese-language short stories, novellas, screenplays, and essays in Shanghai during the mid-1940s. At the same time, she wrote a few English-language essays commenting on Chinese culture or film for the British newspaper *The Times* and the Russian-sponsored magazine *The XXth Century* based in Shanghai.

of *The Rice-Sprout Song* about Moon Scent's life in Shanghai before her return to the countryside strongly remind readers of Chang's Chinese novella "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") published a decade earlier; the resemblance is seen in terms of narrative structure, plot, characteristics of the protagonist, use of symbols, and the perspective of the narrator. However, the hypertextual connection of *The Rice-Sprout Song* to Chang's earlier Chinese-language work has remained unexplored in critical evaluation of the novel, which has long been polarized between scholars concentrating either on its political relevance or on its aesthetic merits. But before I go on to analyze its hypertextual association to "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"), I first will discuss Chang's authorial intention of writing the story in a cross-cultural and translingual context, which may help us see the historical and aesthetic necessity that underlines her inclusion of a partial rewriting of her old Chinese story in a new English novel.

As a work commissioned by the United States Information Service (USIS)[210] under its "Chinese Book Translation Program" to promote U.S. Cold War cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia, *The Rice-Sprout Song* has been identified, particularly by scholars in mainland China, as merely anti-communist propaganda unworthy of much critical attention.[211] Although reexamination of Chang's works began in the

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[210] The United States Information Service (1953-1999) served as an overseas agency of "public diplomacy," particularly as part of the Cold War propaganda of the United States. Its mission was "to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad." In Asia, for instance, it established several cultural programs in the 1950s such as translating American literature for Asian readers and inviting Asian authors to write about their cultures and histories for American readers.

[211] The book has long been identified as one of Chang's commissioned works by the USIS to promote its Cold War cultural diplomacy in Asia in the 1950s. It is not until recent years that scholars have made a clearer distinction between Chang's self-initiated works and those commissioned by the USIS. For more detailed research on the relationship between Chang and the USIS, see Wang, Mei-Hsiang, "Buweirenzhi de Zhang Ailing: Meiguo xinwenchu yishu jihuaxia de *Yangge* yu *Chidi zhi lian*" ("Eileen Chang—The Unknown Story: *The Rice-Sprout Song* and the

1980s and preconceived assumptions about her period in the USIS are loosening, still Ke Ling—one scholar who otherwise speaks highly of Chang's works finished in Shanghai—remarks on *The Rice-Sprout Song* with regret, calling it a "bad work." "(Its) main problem," Ke writes, "is untruthfulness because of its ambiguous representation of people, things, and environment. The author also fails to stand up to her usual charm in terms of aesthetics."[212] Ke continues, "That Chang has written these two counterfeit novels (*The Rice-Sprout Song* and *Naked Earth*)[213] indicates that she has completely broken up with the motherland."[214] On the other hand, high credit has been given to *The Rice-Sprout Song* in terms of its aesthetic characteristics. C. T. Hsia praises the fact that the story has "retained in admirable balance the dual concern of the traditional novel with both society and the self" without overstating that concern in propagandist terms or sacrificing the principle of realism.[215] Hu Shih also writes encouragingly in a letter to Chang, "The book

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Naked Earth under the USIS Book Translation Program") in *EurAmerica*, Vol. 45, 2015, pp. 73-137; and So, Richard Jean, "Literary Information Warfare: Eileen Chang, the US State Department, and Cold War Media Aesthetics" in *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography*, Vol. 85, December 2013, pp. 719-744.

[212] When Ke Ling made these comments on *The Rice-Sprout Song* and *Naked Earth* in the 1980s, Chang's other English-language novels had not been published yet. There is no concrete evidence that Ke is critical of Chang's English-language writing per se as a kind of betrayal of China, namely, betrayal of her mother tongue (Chang, as I noted above, actually wrote bilingually in Shanghai during the 1940s). Therefore, Ke does not seem to be targeting language itself, but makes his comments from the stance of a mainland Chinese literary scholar, who is politically pro-communist and aesthetically realist, but not necessarily linguistically Sino-centric in this particular case.

[213] *Naked Earth* was first serialized in the USIS-sponsored *Jinri Shijie* (*Today's World*) in 1953, but did not get published in book form until 1976.

[214] Quoted in Wang, Mei-Hsiang, p. 76. Chen, Zishan, " 'Yaoji Zhang Ailing' de butong banben" ("The Different Versions of *Mailing to Eileen Chang*") in *Chenxiangtanxie: Zhang Ailing shengping he chuangzuo kaoshi* (*The Research on Life and Writing of Eileen Chang*), Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 177-180.

[215] *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 417.

centers entirely on the theme of 'hunger.' I assume you have also thought of the title *Hunger*. It is well written, delicate, and unadorned as nature." He continues, "It is usually not easy for a book to be appreciated by readers if its overall style is plain and unadorned like nature. *The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai* is a good case in point that deserves better attention" (my translation).[216] When *The Rice-Sprout Song* was first published in English, book reviews in the United States also revolved mainly around either its anti-communist nature or its stylistic sophistication and classical Chinese aesthetics.[217] The polemics in reading *The Rice-Sprout Song* are underlined by the question of how one should approach the text—that is, whether one labels it thematically as a politicized work or views it stylistically as another aesthetic achievement in Chang's overall literary career—a division that is based primarily on scholars' stance regarding the extent to which Chang's work is a realistic representation of communist China.

The question, it seems to me, is irresolvable. Even Wang Mei-Hsiang's eclectic opinion that views the book as "a fettered free writing (不自由的自由书写)"[218] or "a politicized writing not without Chang's autonomous style"[219] is not particularly instructive. Instead of oscillating between the two perspectives and arguing whether the story's diegetic content is truthful to history or not, I am more interested in what it is within the narrative itself that allows us to approach the story alternatively and

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[216] Hu, Shih. "Gei Zhang Ailing de xin, 1955-1-25" ("To Eileen Chang, January 25, 1955") in *Hu Shih quanji* (*The Complete Works of Hu Shih*), Vol. 25, Anhui Education Press, 2003, pp. 622-623.

[217] *Zhang Ailing nianpu* (*A Chronicle of Eileen Chang*), pp. 86-87.

[218] "Buweirenzhi de Zhang Ailing" ("Eileen Chang—The Unknown Story"), p. 81.

[219] Ibid., p. 101.

find in it the kind of reality that is represented in Chang's mode of narrative, namely, reality as a condition that allows or requests her to write in the literary language, style, and form of her particular choice.

A few points are worth noting before I continue my examination. First, Chang had already started writing *The Rice-Sprout Song* before the novel was included in the literary program of the USIS.[220] In other words, the initiative for Chang to write the story in English was more complicated than simply a response to the call from the USIS. Second, whereas thematically the novel was a timely fit for the USIS to promote its Cold War agenda, Chang demonstrated alternative intentions, especially in terms of the novel's target readership. In a letter to Hu Shih, she wrote, using her typical stylistic trope of color and taste, "*The Rice-Sprout Song* is too plain (太淡了)[221] for the taste of Chinese readers—especially for those in Southeast Asia—so in the end I was determined to finish it in English" (my translation).[222] In contrast to the USIS, which assumed that the story was ideologically agreeable to a supposedly homo-cultural Chinese community overseas, Chang's hesitation was purely aesthetic, resulting in an evaluation that pits the novel's stylistic

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220 According to Lin Yiliang (a.k.a. Song Qi, manager of the USIS office in Hong Kong), Chang had already finished a few chapters of the novel in English before she joined the USIS literary program in 1953. The director of the Hong Kong office, Richard M. McCarthy, was intrigued by the story and recommended it to the Pulitzer Prize winner John P. Marquand, who brought the manuscript to American publishers. Thanks to McCarthy's encouragement, the novel was included in the "Chinese Book Translation Program" and a self-translated Chinese version was first serialized in the core journal of the USIS, *Jinri Shijie* (*The World Today*). The complete Chinese edition of the novel was brought out in print in Hong Kong in 1954, followed by the publication of its English version by Charles Scribner's Sons in New York in 1955. For more details on the history of the book's publication, see Lin, Yiliang ed., *Zhang Ailing siyu lu* (*Records of Eileen Chang's Correspondence*), Huangguan Publishing House, 2010; and Zhang, Huiyuan, *Zhang Ailing nianpu* (*A Chronicle of Eileen Chang*), Tianjin People's Publishing House, 2014.

221 The Chinese character 淡(dàn) can describe either colors being light or tastes being plain.

222 Chang, Eileen. "Yi Hu Shizhi" ("In Memory of Hu Shih") in *Zhang kan* (*Chang's Views*). Huangguan Publishing House, 1978, p. 168.

untranslatability against its political translatability for readers in Southeast Asia. However, by stating that *The Rice-Sprout Song* as a "plain" novel was better suited to English-speaking readers, Chang by no means implied that she was adapting herself to their literary taste. Although plainness as a literary style finds its U.S. roots in, for instance, Ernest Hemingway's straightforward and unadorned narratives, of which *The Old Man and the Sea* was Chang's favorite among the works by American writers she translated for the USIS,[223] this plainness is also well represented in Chang's favorite Chinese novel written in *wufangyan* (a dialect of Southeastern China) by Han Bangqing, his 1892 *Haishanghua liezhuan* (*The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*),which revolves around the mundane life in a Shanghai brothel.[224] Therefore, literary plainness was not a culturally exclusive style, but one which Chang found most appropriate for telling the story of *The Rice-Sprout Song*.

Neither do I understand Chang's claim as an Occidentalization of her English-language readers by projecting into the plot of *The Rice-Sprout Song* what she thinks they desire, namely, a depiction of the brutality of the Chinese communist Land Reform. In the Afterword to the novel's Chinese version, she writes, "These episodes [of people suffering from hunger in the rural areas] are unforgettable. They have stayed with me as I wandered about for years. Now I have finally put them into words, expecting more people might share this heavy-hearted

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[223] Chang commented on the American writers she translated on various occasions. She claimed in a letter that she had to compel herself to finish the translation of Ralph Waldo Emerson and that translating Washington Irving was like being forced to speak to someone you dislike. But Hemingway, she added, was different from any of them. See *Zhang Ailing siyu lu*, pp. 25-26.

[224] In a letter to Hu Shih, Chang remarks that the classical Chinese novel *Xingshi yinyuan* (*Marriage Destinies to Awaken the World*) is an embodiment of embellishment, while *Haishanghua liezhuan* (*The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*) is representative of stylistic plainness. See "Yi Hu Shizhi" ("In Memory of Hu Shih"), p. 169.

feeling" (my translation).[225] What interests me here, combining Chang's own remarks about the novel on different occasions, is how she has actually created a complicated network between the text, its target readership, and herself as the narrator. For Chang, it is not a matter of writing the right story for an English-language audience. On the contrary, it is a matter of seeking the right language and style to better express what she witnesses in history, as well as the right audience for her story to be more widely received. In this process, the author has positioned herself in a doubly displaced situation, thanks to the tension between her linguistic choice and the subject matter. On the one hand, she has distanced herself, through her choice of English language and plain style of writing, from the diasporic Chinese community with whom she shares a mother tongue, a culturally-rooted poetics, and historical memories of war and revolution; on the other, she also draws a line between herself and the English-language readers for whom the story evokes more sympathy on the intellectual level other than that which arises from ethnic identification with the people in rural China. Translation takes place in two directions for readers in Southeast Asia as well as for those in the English-language world, with a certain degree of untranslatability in each case, whether experienced in terms of language and style or in terms of ethnic and cultural commonality.

Rewriting Shanghai Amah

Chang's sense of self-displacement finds its isomorphic manifestation in the narrative of *The Rice-Sprout Song*, part of which is a rewriting of her Chinese

[225] Chang, Eileen. *Yangge* (Chinese translation of *The Rice-Sprout Song*). Huangguan Publishing House, 1987, p. 191.

novella “A Xiao beiqiu”(“Indian Summer”) published in 1944. It is necessary to note again that rewriting here is understood as what Genette would have as a kind of hypertextuality relationship, in which text B (hypertext) relates in a non-commentary way to text A (hypotext) and the former encourages readers to connect to the latter without citing directly from it. In this sense, even though *The Rice-Sprout Song* is not entirely based on the story of “A Xiao beiqiu,” their overlapping plots and similarities in the depiction of a Shanghai amah suffice for us to claim that part of *The Rice-Sprout Song* is a rewriting of “A Xiao beiqiu.” Or, to put it differently, it is the figure of the Shanghai maidservant that Chang rewrites.

The novel revolves around the life of a peasant family near Shanghai during the first few years of the People’s Republic of China. Upon returning home from Shanghai where she has worked as a maidservant for three years, Moon Scent, wife of Gold Root, a model farmer decorated by the Communist Party, witnesses a series of unforeseen incidents in the countryside—relatives persistently coming to borrow money from her family, neighbors speaking excitedly about the latest harvest but with empty stomachs, and a literary cadre living in guilt due to his having stealthily purchased extra food against the principle of “eating as the peasants eat.” The story ends with Moon Scent setting on fire the communal barn, following the death of Gold Root and their daughter in a riot of the desperate farmers who have been refused a loan of food by the Party officials. *The Rice-Sprout Song* is one of the few works by Chang in which the protagonists are proletarian Chinese; the writer has been more celebrated for her portrayal of the petite bourgeoisie in urban China. C. T. Hsia notes briefly the hypertextual consistency between the novel and Chang’s other work centering on the figure of the proletariat, her 1944 Chinese novella “A Xiao beiqiu” (“Indian Summer”). The Chinese novella delineates, over the span of

one day, the mundane chores and other trivialities in the life of a maidservant who works in a foreigner's household in the international concession of Shanghai: cooking meals, doing laundry, answering phone calls, meeting other amahs, and chatting with her husband who occasionally visits. "Miss Chang, who has drawn in A-hsiao [A Xiao] a peasant character of compelling interest," Hsia writes, "extends her sure touch to half a dozen portraits of memorable villagers [in *The Rice-Sprout Song*]." He continues, "[S]he restores to them a sense of humanity missing in works designed to ennoble or sentimentalize them, as in nearly all Communist peasant fiction."[226] In short, Hsia's focus is on Chang's intellectual and aesthetic consistency across texts in depicting the peasant characters. What I find intriguing, however, are precisely the transformations the image of the peasant has undergone from the Shanghai amah of the mid-1940s to Moon Scent of the early 1950s and the reality that is represented through such transformations in Chang's narrative.

Although Chang herself has nowhere mentioned the connection between *The Rice-Sprout Song* and "A Xiao beiqui" ("Indian Summer"), Moon Scent is indeed a reproduction or reincarnation of A Xiao: a maidservant in Shanghai.[227] Although only the first few chapters of *The Rice-Sprout Song* are in explicit hypertextual relationship to "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"), I suggest, in broader terms, that the entire novel can be understood as a hypertextual rewriting of the latter, because of their commonality, for instance, in the protagonists' class identity, career path,

[226] *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 419.

[227] The English word "rewriting" can be translated into Chinese either as *gaixie* (to write with changes and adaptations, which emphasizes "re-" as in revision) or *chongxie* (to write anew, which emphasizes "re-" as in reincarnation). In this case, I think *gaixie* better captures what Genette terms the hypertexual relationship, because it allows cutting, re-structuring, expanding, as well as selectively or partially adapting partially the source text.

and historical background. In other words, except for its change in the female protagonist's name, *The Rice-Sprout Song* could be read as a sequel to "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") insofar as it expands on the amah's life after she leaves Shanghai. However, upon her return at home, Moon Scent quickly senses the distance existing between her and the villagers who have been forever staying in the countryside.

The feeling of estrangement emerges, for instance, on her first night at home, when Gold Root asks her only about his sister Gold Flower, whose family Moon Scent has stopped by to visit on her detour home. Although "she did not think it strange that he asked after his sister whom he saw so often instead of inquiring after her, when they had not seen each other for so long," Chang writes, "she knew how it was."[228] Without disclosing in detail what Moon Scent has on her mind but instead finishing the sentence with an inexplicable vagueness, Chang registers in the very succinctness of her language the absence of verbal exchange between the couple after years of separation. Moon Scent's frustration is aggravated when she attempts to conceal her embarrassment by diverting their conversation to focus on her daughter, Beckon, whom she has not seen for a long time.

> She lowered the lantern to take a better look. Beckon twisted around to avoid the light but Moon Scent only held the lantern closer to her face. The child finally writhed out of her father's grasp and ran madly towards the safety of home. She crossed the courtyard blue-white with moonlight. The long bamboo poles the family used to weave baskets had been left out in front

[228] Chang, Eileen. *The Rice-Sprout Song*. University of California Press, 1998, p. 28.

> of the house. They made a great hollow clatter when she kicked against them as she passed. At this the dogs barked more fiercely than ever.
>
> "Be careful not to trip in the dark," Moon Scent shouted, hurrying after her. Again the bamboo poles clattered under her blundering feet.[229]

Such fear is not uncommon in a child who has not seen her mother for so long, as if the latter were a complete stranger. But Chang extends the fear spatially and temporally, using her highly stylized cinema-like language to vividly depict a series of movements the child makes in front of the readers' eyes: Starting with a close-up of the child twisting and writhing away, Chang guides the readers' eyes to track her frantic footsteps through the moonlit courtyard and ends with a frame devoid of human traces but only the non-human noises that remind us of the transient presence of Beckon. The child's struggle has permeated the scene, all the way from her body to her father's hands and to the entire domestic space. More importantly, it is from Moon Scent's point of view, as she hurries after the child, that she witnesses (and we too witness) how this fear spreads over what she has perceived as home and leaves only a feeling of loss in her: the empty-handed husband, the pale color of the moon, the hollow sound of the bamboo poles, and the unusually fierce barks of the dogs. The warmth and familiarity of home are shattered with the disappearance of her daughter into the dark, whom Moon Scent has expected to cushion the awkwardness between her and Gold Root. The bamboo poles clattering again under her own feet are not a reminder of the family business but an obstacle that has

[229] Ibid.

hindered her from approaching her child.

Establishing a contrast between the brief moment of family reunion and Moon Scent's elongated experience of psychological and physical distance from home, Chang generates a sensibility of displacement in her female protagonist, which extends in other parts of the novel from the domestic space to the entire rural world. In a get-together where her neighbors, the Tans, are invited over to chat, Moon Scent expresses her anxiety about harvest in the coming year. The neighbors, however, assure her there has been plenty of rainfall.

> "Far too much," thought Moon Scent, but she held her tongue. She could not understand the way they rushed to the defense of the weather as if it was their own son. She had been brought up in the tradition of pessimism. Whether it was out of fear of jealous gods or self-defense against the endless exploitation of landlords and governments and their agents, the country people never opened their mouths but to complain about the weather and crops, even among themselves. It had become second nature.
>
> And now they were loudly praising this year's crops. To her unaccustomed ears it sounded foolish and immodest, in shocking bad taste.[230]

Moon Scent fails to identify with the country people with whom she has assumed she should be able to sympathize easily. Three years away from her rural home, Moon Scent discovers that the discrepancy between her and the neighbors is not

[230] Ibid., p. 32.

only ideological, but also psychological and temporal. It is not just a matter of difference in evaluating the weather and farm productivity, or of the questionable integrity of her self-deceiving neighbors, but of the difficulty that Moon Scent faces in adapting herself to a mindset, a mode of feeling, and a power relationship that the rural world has newly acquired. As a country woman rooted "in the tradition of pessimism," Moon Scent finds herself accustomed to the past, which was filled with exploitation and complaints of the oppressed; thus she lacks a sense of belonging to the current optimistic atmosphere, which brings her more shock than relief. She also finds herself a stranger to this world in which the fear of jealous gods seems to have disappeared or to have been replaced by a different kind of "religion," that is, faith in the Communist Party.

This feeling of displacement also constantly emerges in the novel through Chang's symbolic register of the rural landscape from Moon Scent's point of view. As she surveys the land around her house one morning, for instance, Moon Scent looks at "a great dark chunk of hill hung above the roof of the house." Writes Chang, "Every tree on the hillside stood out in the sunshine, with the trunk reduced to a thin white line, all but invisible, and only the light green foliage showing, so that each tree was like a flat green spot of duckweed floating over the shadowy depth of the hill."[231] Here, in Brontean fashion, Chang paints a Gothic image of the wild, dark, and oppressive hilly background against a peasant house. Added to it is the unrealistic impression left by the strangely lit trees assuming the shape of rootless duckweed. Ethereal as the images of trees and leaves may seem, their appearances as thin white lines reduced to invisibility and flat green spots floating in a rootless

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[231] Ibid., p. 42.

manner, rather than being sturdy and luxuriant, produce an ambiance that lacks vigor and liveliness, which is further reinforced by the shadowy hill in the background. Placing Moon Scent in such a still and almost lifeless moment on the first day of her return, instead of a bustling morning filled with family greetings and household chores as one would have imagined, the author alienates the protagonist from the homey rural world. In the eyes of Moon Scent, the rural has become unfamiliar, unreal and untruthful. It is not surprising, then, that Moon Scent misses the city. "If she had known what she'd found out during the previous day," Chang writes, "she would have stayed on in Shanghai and tried to get Gold Root to join her out there."[232] However, it would be mistaken to assume that Moon Scent had a stronger sense of belonging or felt more comfortable in the city. Immediately following her regret over having returned to the countryside, she remembers an incident she witnessed on the street in Shanghai, where two policemen captured a skinny man and sent him off to work in the great labor camp on the Huai River. In other words, the city is no more hospitable than the country for Moon Scent. She is displaced from both.

Although Moon Scent is a rewritten version of A Xiao, one change Chang has made is precisely to the ways in which readers are required to reexamine differently the two maids' identification with the city. This change is most explicitly represented in the second chapter of *The Rice-Sprout Song*, a partial rewriting directly based on the plot of "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"). The chapter also depicts the mundane daily routine of Moon Scent as a maidservant, focusing particularly on her husband's visit to her in the master's house. Both the stories of A

[232] Ibid., p. 43.

Xiao and of Moon Scent in Shanghai are underlined by the tension between the country and the city. Urban maidservants like A Xiao, as Ruan Lanfang remarks, "have never managed to get rid of the influence of the rural society and assimilated [themselves] to the metropolis." Ruan notes, "With regard to interpersonal exchanges, they appreciate the friendship among their peers from the country. Like A Xiao, they create a 'relational effect' by forming socializing circles similar to those in the rural world" (my translation).[233] For instance, amahs of neighboring households would visit one another to gossip during their spare time, thereby replicating patterns of rural social life. At the same time, they are unable to fully adapt themselves to urban life: A Xiao can never get herself accustomed to the poster of a whisky advertisement in the master's bedroom featuring a scantily dressed woman, and Moon Scent merely thinks of the city as a place for a temporary stay.

The focus here, however, is not on Chang's metaphorical representation, in either text, of the insurmountable rural-urban gap through the figure of a maidservant in Shanghai. According to Chang's correspondence, her original draft of *The Rice-Sprout Song* began from the third chapter of the current version of the novel, that is, from the scene of the reunion of Moon Scent and her family in the village.[234] She added two chapters when she was told by the publisher that the novel was too short to make a book. The first chapter introduces the arrival of a Communist Party official to the countryside. The second depicts the wedding of

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[233] Ruan, Lanfang. "Xiang dushi qianxi de nüxing buluo: youguan Shanghai nüyong de sange wenben kaocha" ("The Women Tribes Migrating to the City: An Investigation of Shanghai Maidservants in Three Literary Texts") in *Wenyi Lilun yu Piping* (*Literary Theory and Criticism*), Vol. 2, 2012, p. 66.

[234] "Yi Hu Shizhi" ("In Memory of Hu Shih"), p. 168.

Gold Root's sister, and Gold Root's recollection of his first and last visit to the city, where he witnesses the daily routines of Moon Scent as the maidservant in a big Shanghai household. For one thing, the addition of chapter two structurally allows the readers to take into account Moon Scent's two lives, thereby better understanding their contrast. More importantly, despite the thematic overlaps, the chapter differs from the story of A Xiao in "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") in several aspects, including but not limited to the perspective of its narration, its use of symbols, and its tone of language. Therefore, even if unintentionally, the author has woven *The Rice-Sprout Song* organically into the constellation of her fictional works, raising with more complexity the question of what kind of reality inheres in her fiction through the narrative transformations—for instance, the transformation in her representations of the maidservant's experience of displacement—that have taken place from her Chinese short story of 1944 to her English novel of 1954.

One explicit difference in Chang's depiction of the two women's city life is in the narrative point of view. Whereas "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") is written from the perspective of A Xiao herself, Moon Scent's urban experience is unfolded through the eyes of her husband Gold Root. Thanks to this difference in narrative perspective, the two maidservants' way of relating to the city is distinct from each other. "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") begins with a third-person narrative about A Xiao and her son climbing stairs in an apartment building. As they reach the foreign master's place, the narrative immediately turns to a bird's-eye view from A Xiao's viewpoint:

> From the back of the tall apartment building the city spread like
> a wilderness, a rubble of gray and rust-red roofs, all backyards,
> rear windows, back alleys. Even Heaven had turned its face

> away, the sky blank and sunless. Nobody knows what it was thinking of. The Moon Festival had passed and still so hot. Many sounds floated up from below: cars and buses, carpet being beaten, school bells ringing, carpenters sawing and hammering, motors humming, but all very vague.[235]

The panoramic view seems to put A Xiao in an omniscient position. She knows the smallest details of this city that are hidden under the gloomy sky, beneath the densely aligned roofs, or in the secretive corners of the neighborhood. The sounds on the street she hears from high above are vague but real and accessible enough for her to relate to her own experiences. In other words, a certain degree of subjectivity is given to A Xiao as an organic being in the city. Later in the story, we see how her countless daily chores, trivial and mundane but also demanding, are precisely the labor power that drives her master's life and, in a broader sense, enables the entire city to keep operating. In contrast to the master who barely stays in the apartment, A Xiao fills the space with a life no less busy than anyone else's in the city, from brewing coffee, to meeting neighbors, to catering to guests. The author creates an impression, although illusory and momentary, that A Xiao's professional identity as the maidservant is at times disrupted by her omnipresence in the apartment, as if she were its real owner. A Xiao indeed regards her master as a guest. Like all ordinary maidservants, she talks behind the back of her master. "[My master says] 'In Shanghai even the servants take advantage of foreigners.' If he's not in Shanghai,

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[235] Chang, Eileen. "Shame, Amah!" in *Eight Stories by Chinese Women*, Hua-ling Nieh, ed., Heritage Press, 1962, p. 91. (Chang made a number of revisions to the original "A Xiao beiqiu" when she translated it into English and renamed it as "Shame, Amah!" However, unless noted otherwise, most quotations from "A Xiao beiqiu" are based on Chang's own translation.)

the Germans in Germany have to go to war, he'd be dead long ago."[236] In A Xiao's view, the master should appreciate the fact that he is able to stay in Shanghai and in general in China. She takes pride in the city for providing shelter to the foreign Other, to the extent that she talks about him as if she herself were a native Shanghainese.

However, the kind of agency A Xiao enjoys and the affection she has for the city seem to be absent in Moon Scent. The episode in *The Rice-Sprout Song* about Moon Scent's city life also begins with an overview of the landscape, though from Gold Root's perspective during his first and only visit to his wife during her Shanghai years:

> He had never been out of the country before. It made him feel clumsy and gawky, the big city with its mountain-high buildings and roaring traffic, and everybody either snarling or sniggering at him. For the first time in his life he was conscious of his shaved head, his ill-fitting, too-tight clothes.[237]

Gold Root's unpleasant impression of the city as a hostile place is extended to his observation of his wife. Unlike A Xiao who has relative freedom and autonomy in her master's household, Moon Scent lives a much more cautious life, since she shares responsibilities as well as working space with other servants. "[When the two

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[236] Ibid. 100. A Xiao's original words in the Chinese text are: "If he is not in Shanghai, he should have gone to the battlefield as other foreigners do and died already." By saying this, A Xiao implies that her master should feel lucky to be able to stay in the international concession in Shanghai where he could enjoy peace and privileges as a foreigner rather than going to war like his fellowmen in his home country. It is not clear, though, why Chang decided to translate the generic word *waiguoren* (foreigners) specifically into the Germans. My assumption is that she either attempted to highlight Germany/Germans as the center of World War II or to avoid *waiguoren* which generally refers to any non-Chinese population in order to show her sensitivity towards a reader-friendly translation for the American readers.

[237] *The Rice-Sprout Song*, p. 22.

were having conversations],” Chang writes, “people kept coming into the kitchen and she would pause their talk to smile at them sweetly and, as it would seem, apologetically. Often she would spring up to remove the umbrella [Gold Root brought] from its perch, to allow them to pass.”[238] Therefore, she never has the master’s house to herself, even if that simply means taking care of all the chores. Moreover, whereas A Xiao shows a subtle motherly affection towards her master no matter how much she despises his stinginess, for instance, by voluntarily adding flour rationed under her name to his pancakes, Gold Root sees in his wife a woman disgusted with her master. When he visits Moon Scent at the master’s house, he learns that the mistress of the house suspects there is theft in the kitchen because oil and rice are consumed fast. To prove that she has nothing to hide and to be ashamed of, Moon Scent displays an almost vengeful attitude: “she would fry some cold rice for him, pouring oil into the pan with a defiant air.”[239] In addition, A Xiao, with her examining eye of the city landscape as well as of her master’s life, plays the role of an observer and is allowed to make critical comments and exert moral evaluation on people and things surrounding her. On the contrary, Gold Root’s consciousness of being under surveillance upon his arrival in the city is also manifested in Moon Scent, which results in her remaining reticent on the various occasions: she pauses her conversation with Gold Root when people come into the kitchen; she never tells Gold Root how the mistress dislikes visiting families; and she barely says a word on the day Gold Root leaves Shanghai.

Besides the ways in which they represent the two maidservants’ connections to

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[238] Ibid., p. 23.

[239] Ibid.

the city, Chang's narratives also differ in the ways in which they stage the women's self-identifications in the urban context. Several studies note the positive characteristics of A Xiao in "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"). "Eileen Chang ably contrasts A-hsiao's [A Xiao] moral fastidiousness and strong attachment to her family with the coarse sensibility and heartless philandering of her stingy master," C. T. Hsia remarks, "and achieves a haunting portrait of an unspoiled country woman with all her pride and helpless servitude."[240] Ruan Lanfang argues that "A Xiao has the distinctive wisdom of a Shanghai amah who has long been exposed to the metropolitan culture."[241] Wang Youxin and Liu Tongdan analyze A Xiao from the perspectives of post-colonialism and feminism, suggesting that the figure of A Xiao is a critique of colonialism and male dominance.[242] On the one hand, the image of a self-respecting and self-disciplined A Xiao is achieved through her strong initiative to assimilate herself to the urban culture. She relentlessly learns skills in order to survive in the city, even if her efforts at times produce opposite or satirical effects, against her expectations. On the other hand, she has her own measurements of ethics and morality that help her identify or judge other city dwellers. When she answers phone calls from her master's Chinese girlfriend, for instance, she code-switches naturally between English and Chinese. Nevertheless, she only pronounces the word 'Hello' most correctly, and gets messed up quickly as

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[240] *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 415.

[241] "Xiang dushi qianxi de nüxing buluo" ("The Women Tribes Migrating to the City"), p. 67.

[242] Wang, Youxin, and Liu Tongdan. "Xiaojie zhimin huayu, zongfa quanwei de Shanghai yiniang xushi: Zhang Ailing xiaoshuo 'Guihuazheng: A Xiao beiqiu' xidu" ("Deconstruction of Colonial Discourse and Patriarchal Authority by the Narratives of Shanghai Amah: A Close Reading of 'Indian Summer: A Xiao's Autumnal Lament' by Eileen Chang") in *Huxiang Forum*, Vol. 6, 2014, pp. 91-96.

she continues to talk. At the same time, though, the coarseness and pretentiousness of her English enable us to recognize the superficiality and insincerity in her conversation, as well as in the core of the city itself:

> "Mr. Schacht [the master], she [A Xiao's misuse of pronoun, which should be "he"] go office! Yes Missy, I Amah… I very well, thank you missy." She acted up to the yellow-haired woman, shyly laughing, emitting in the foreign language the series of piercing chirps as happy and unreal as the world in advertisement. "What time you send Amah? Now I go market, ha' past nine come back maybe… Thank you Missy… Don't mention, bye, Missy."[243]

Writing in Chinese and targeting the Chinese-speaking audience, Chang seems to demonstrate more liberty in her depiction of a Shanghai maidservant who boldly (and unwarily in a sarcastic way) imitates her foreign master with her pretentious English.[244]

Such an implicit criticism of the foreign imperialist through fictional characters, however, is missing when Chang writes in English describing a figure of the same gender, profession, and class. Moon Scent dreads being judged by others, her master in particular. For Chang's English-speaking readers, the heroine in *The Rice-Sprout Song* is subject to the forbidding social hierarchy. "Employers never liked it when amahs had relations who showed up in the kitchen." Chang writes, "Moon Scent still remembered when one of the amahs spent the night in a small

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[243] "Shame, Amah!" p. 98.

[244] Chang deliberately uses ungrammatical English and spelling errors in her self-translation to show A Xiao's pretentiousness in imitating the master's language.

hotel with her husband, causing no end of talk and shocked laughter in the household."[245] Moreover, she has never seen herself as an insider of the city. As noted earlier, although she leaves Shanghai only to find it extremely difficult to survive in the rural context, when she tries to envision possible means of livelihood in the city besides working as a maidservant, she could only imagine herself mending nylon stockings and ironing clothes in an open-air stand at street corners, or looking into garbage cans for marketable rubbish, or even begging. For her, "it was a bearable existence so long as it was regarded as a temporary state. Any moment their luck might change."[246] In short, Moon Scent is always on the margin of the city, both physically and psychologically.

The Allegory of Diaspora

In one of the most symbolic moments in both narratives, Chang deploys one of her favorite motifs, the mirror. In "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"), when A Xiao dresses every morning, she tends not to look into the water in a big brown jar, although the image reflected on the water reminds one of the portrait of classical Chinese beauty. Chang writes, "But A Xiao is a metropolitan woman. She would rather glance at herself in the chipped little purse mirror pasted near the front door on the corner of the light-green wall."[247] The role of the mirror in "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") can, of course, be conveniently interpreted in the Lacanian

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[245] *The Rice-Sprout Song*, p. 23.

[246] Ibid., p. 44.

[247] Chang, Eileen. "Guihuazheng: A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer: A Xiao's Autumnal Lament") in *Red Rose and White Rose: A Collection of Eileen Chang's Short Stories, 1944-1945.* Huangguan Publishing House, 2010, p. 201 (This line is partially revised in Chang's English self-translation. For example, "A Xiao is a metropolitan woman" is left out of the English by the author/translator.)

sense as the medium in which A Xiao gains an illusory self-identification through her fragmented and alienated ego. Her subjectivity as an urban dweller is undermined by the reality of class distinction, the gap between the city and the country, and colonialist confrontations.

As noted earlier, however, these are not my major concerns here. My focus is not on how A Xiao's reflection is essentially imaginary in the mirror which functions as the symbolic medium, but on the mirror *itself* as a "material signifier" that extends beyond the private realm to the urban space.[248] In Chang's narrative, this symbolic object—in contrast to the water jar, which represents the rural and the traditional—is nothing better than a chipped little purse mirror hanging on the wall, an embodiment of the city which is already misshaped, damaged, and precariously located. Through this object, Chang, writing in Chinese displaces A Xiao from the city, in the sense that the city with which she attempts so vigorously to identify is more dilapidated, in reality, than anything she has perceived or even fantasized. Therefore, on the one hand, Chang reveals critically that the city, though perceived to be on the upper end of the urban-rural hierarchy, is no less crude and unappealing than the crude countryside: everything is rationed from water to flour and sugar; apartments have little room for extra belongings; trams are over-crowded and noisy. On the other hand, there is something about the city that still curiously allows people like A Xiao to feel connected to and identify with it through their labor, their observation, their pride, and above all, their illusion, which are the sources of its aura.

In *The Rice-Sprout Song*, the episode that involves a mirror is equally

[248] Lee, Leo Ou-fan. *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945.* Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 271.

symbolic. Upon her return to the village, Moon Scent first feels excited at the news that Gold Root has been allocated a large mirror when the landlords' properties are redistributed to the peasants. But she is immediately disappointed to learn that the mirror had already been given away as a dowry to her sister-in-law while Moon Scent was away in Shanghai. The event is narrated in a typically cacophonous rural scenario, where Moon Scent learns about the mirror in a chat with her neighbors:

> "Where is the mirror?" Moon Scent looked around the room.
> "It went with Sister's dowry," replied Gold Root.
> "You had a fine mirror, a mirror of the highest quality, Sister-in-Law Gold Root—" began Big Aunt. But at the mention of that mirror, the usually timid Sister-in-Law Gold Have Got [Big Aunt's daughter-in-law] was so beyond herself with enthusiasm that she would not even let her mother-in-law finish a sentence.
> "Ah, it was really elegant, Sister-in-Law Gold Root," she exclaimed. "Blackwood borders an inch wide, carved with a [Buddhist] swastika design. It was easily two feet high—"
> "More than that, much more," said Big Aunt.
> "And with red and green streamers tied on to its corners on the day the dowry was sent over—beautiful!"
> Poking his fire with chopsticks, the old man pointed them at Moon Scent. "You people drew the best of the lot."
> [……]
> She had not even set eyes on it and Gold Root had already given it to his sister. Of course, if she had been consulted, she

> would never have said no, but she should have been consulted. She went on smiling but she was very displeased and felt less and less inclined to talk.[249]

If the mirror confiscated from the landlord is one of the few things that could console Moon Scent and relate her nostalgically to the city, she is deprived of such a possibility prior to her return to the village. Moreover, the fact that the mirror is given away without her consent upsets her, as if she were betrayed in her own domestic world. Her feeling of loss is further accompanied by a sense of isolation, as her knowledge of the mirror is solely acquired from other villagers' conversation. Everyone else but her has some form of access to the mirror and gains a certain degree of agency, even through mere visual experience, such as having had a glance at the mirror. The usually timid Sister-in-Law Gold Have Not, for example, who surprisingly remembers the smallest details of the mirror, suddenly finds her discursive power—such that she would not even let her mother-in-law finish a sentence. Indeed, the villagers' growing enthusiasm and envy are proportionate to Moon Scent's disappointment, who withdraws her own voice gradually from the conversation.

The rewriting of the maidservant from Chinese to English in the decade between 1944 and 1954 in Chang's fictional works is an allegory for what the author witnessed and experienced during that period. Completed in Chinese, "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer") was still within the genealogy of her urban tales of the 1940s, although the fact that its protagonist was a proletarian made the short story an anomaly among her fiction of the same period, which was dominated by

[249] *The Rice-Sprout Song*, pp. 33-34.

portraits of the petit bourgeois. The 1940s represented the pinnacle of Chang's literary career as well as the most intense moment of the Pacific War: The international concession in Shanghai and the entire city of Hong Kong, where Chang studied at the time, were occupied by the Japanese. Trapped in war-ridden China, Chang's narratives bear the inexorable movement of history, as Leo Ou-fan Lee suggests.[250] But her details of the quotidian world, defined by Rey Chow as "the sensuous, trivial, and superfluous textual presences that exist in an ambiguous relation with some larger vision such as reform and revolution," keep returning to displace the grand narrative that "seeks to subordinate them."[251] While Chow uses the term "return" more rhetorically to indicate the intensive recurrence of details in Chang's work, I want to note the *literal* significance of the word. That is, by constantly resorting to descriptions of mundane material objects and human activities in texts such as "A Xiao beiqiu" ("Indian Summer"), Chang is able to create a concrete place to which one can always return and achieve a sense of belonging.

Even in her 1943 "Qingcheng zhi lian" ("Love in a Fallen City"), for instance, a novella that evokes an "aesthetic sentiment, that is cut off from its original source by the passage of time and changed space"[252] through the displacement of the female protagonist Liusu from Shanghai to Hong Kong, Chang's narrative ends with Liusu settling down in an undesirable marriage and returning to Shanghai with her partner after Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese. In short, the Shanghai

[250] *Shanghai Modern*, p. 298.

[251] Chow, Rey. *Women and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading between West and East.* University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 85.

[252] *Shanghai Modern*, p. 298.

in Chang's Chinese-language novella of 1943, despite all its illusory aspects, is a place of possible return in Chang's consciousness (and language). This conceptualization of the city, Shanghai in particular, as approachable and homey finds its explicit manifestation in her 1943 essay "Shanghainese, After All," published a year after Chang left Hong Kong for Shanghai when the former fell in war. The article starts with Chang's seemingly ironic observation of the Shanghainese upon her return: "Having grown accustomed to seeing them," she teases, "each and every Shanghainese seemed as fat and white as a gourd, like the children in powdered milk advertisements."[253] However, her tone grows increasingly appreciative and her relief in being able to go back to Shanghai can be easily sensed. "The knowingness of the Shanghainese is not limited to their facility with language and proficiency in the ways of the world." She remarks, "Everyone says Shanghainese people are mean, but their meanness is measured."[254] The essay ends with Chang's salute to Shanghai, accrediting it as the place where her literary inspirations and sensations are harbored:

> I have written a book of Hong Kong romances for Shanghainese readers, including the seven stories "Aloeswood Ashes: The First Incense Brazier," "Aloeswood Ashes: The Second Incense Brazier," "Jasmine Tea," "Heart Sutra," "Glazed Roof Tiles," "Blockade," and "Love in a Fallen City."[255] The entire time I was writing these stories, I was

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[253] Chang, Eileen. "Shanghainese, After All" in *Written on Water,* p. 53.

[254] Ibid., p. 54.

[255] The original Chinese-language titles of the seven stories are: "Chenxiangxie: Diyilu xiang (沉香屑：第一炉香)," "Chenxiangxie: Di'erlu xiang (沉香屑：第二炉香)," "Moli xiangpian (茉莉香片),"

> thinking of Shanghainese people, because I wanted to try to observe Hong Kong through Shanghainese eyes. Only people from Shanghai will be able truly to understand the parts where I wasn't able to make my meaning clear.[256]

There is little record of Chang discussing her experience during the first few years after she left mainland China in 1952. According to biographical evidence and personal correspondence, she first went to Hong Kong to resume her college study, left again for Japan in the hope of finding jobs, but soon returned to Hong Kong in 1953 and continued to work for the USIS. Her sojourn in Hong Kong ended in 1955 when she boarded the *President Cleveland*, heading to Hawaii. Chang had never expected Hong Kong to be her post-1949 final destination, since she applied for the U.S. visa and permanent residency immediately after the Refugee Relief Act was issued in 1953, which resulted in the admission into the United States of 45,000 immigrants from communist countries. In short, *The Rice-Sprout Song* was completed at a time when Chang was on a route of no return like her numerous contemporaries.

In 1952, communist China was left behind as she went across the formidable iron fence on the border. Chang depicted this experience vividly in an English-language essay a decade later. "I remembered coming out ten years ago, walking the last stretch across the Lohu Bridge with its rough wood floor closed in on both sides by guardhouses and fences." She continued, "That fateful bridge has

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"Xinjing (心经)," "Liuli wa (琉璃瓦)," "Fengsuo (封锁)," and "Qingcheng zhi lian (倾城之恋)." All were first published in 1943 in different magazines, and later included in Chang's famous collection, *Chuangqi* (*Legend*, 传奇), 1944.

[256] Ibid., p. 55.

often been compared to the Naiho Bridge between the realms of the living and the dead."[257] What lay in front of Chang was the uncertainty about her future in the United States or in other continents. It may sound clichéd to claim that Chang, like various other refugees in diaspora, acquired a sense of in-between-ness during this transitional moment, but it is not. For this in-between-ness is more complicated than what David Der-wei Wang claims to be the condition of living "in the cracks of history,"[258] namely, between pro-communism and anti-communism. Instead, it is a sentiment shared more universally by those dislocated in multiple terms, including but not limited to politics, ethnicity, gender, culture, and language. Viewed in this way, the in-between-ness that underlines Chang's English-language work offers us a possible perspective to review the critical binaries that have circumscribed the study of texts like *The Rice-Sprout Song*.

From A Xiao to Moon Scent, Chang has created through rewriting two palimpsests of respective historical and linguistic realities. While A Xiao demonstrates a modern Chinese longing for and confidence in migration and resettlement; Moon Scent's double displacement mirrors the anxiety of the Chinese population traveling across borders in the revolutionary age. Moreover, Chang's rewriting is not merely on the narrative level, but also in her choice of language. The misalignment between what she claims to be thematically closer to the Chinese-speaking readership and what she proposes to be aesthetically better represented in English has set *The Rice-Sprout Song* in an odd position in the first

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[257] Chang, Eileen. "A Return to the Frontier" (English version) in *Chongfang biancheng* (*A Return to the Frontier*). Huangguan Publishing House, 2008, p. 74.

[258] Wang, David Der-wei. "Chongdu Zhang Ailing de *Yangge* yu *Chidi zhi lian*" ("Re-reading Eileen Chang's *The Rice-Sprout Song* and the *Naked Earth*") in *Yijiusijiu: Shanghen shuxie yu guojia wenxue* (*1949: Scar Writing and National Literature*). Sanlian Publishing House, 2008, p. 78.

place. Finally, in the case of A Xiao and Moon Scent, rewriting as a literary genre itself is an embodiment of Chang's gesture that there is no return to that which is familiar to her.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that *The Rice-Sprout Song* sets the foundation for another genealogy of Chang's English-language productions after the 1950s, not all of which are under the category of anti-communist propaganda. If many of her works during the 1940s bear inevitably the weight of history, as Leo Ou-fan Lee reveals in his examination, the sensibility of double dislocation seems to have added another layer of pressure to her post-1950 English-language works. One explicit manifestation of that pressure is Chang's foreignization of her English throughout almost all these works, which increases the difficulty of reading, and more importantly, alienates her texts from English speakers to varying degrees. The flow of narrative is inordinately disrupted, for example, by the word-for-word translations of Chinese pronouns, idioms, proverbs, or political neologisms with or without an explanation or sense-for-sense translation. On the other hand, the haunting impression that places like Hong Kong are nothing but a mid-point offering no prospect of settlement is again evidenced in her English essay, "A Return to the Frontier," published in 1963. In reality, even as the political atmosphere in mainland China eased in the 1980s, Chang never returned to the only place she would refer to as home: Shanghai.

Chapter Four

I Shalt Not Speak Thy Language:

Rethinking Literary Bi-/Multilingualism through Hualing Nieh's *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*

While Eileen Chang's re-blossoming in Chinese-language literary circles in the 1960s, particularly in Taiwan, was sharply contrasted by her prolonged solitude and reclusion in California, another diasporic Chinese woman writer of the same generation, Hualing Nieh, had just started to build a name for herself on U.S. soil, both for her literary creations and for her activities as a cultural agent. Born in mainland China to the family of a Nationalist official in 1925, Nieh left for Taiwan in 1949 with a bachelor's degree in English from Nanjing Central University. Unlike Chang, who took Hong Kong as a transitional place for sojourn after the Chinese Civil War, Nieh stayed in Taiwan for fifteen years and achieved great success in her literary career. She was recruited to the editorial board of the famous fortnightly *Ziyou Zhongguo* (*Free China*) magazine and was in charge of its literary supplement, *wenyilan*, between 1949 and 1960. After *Ziyou Zhongguo* was terminated by the Nationalist government for its radical liberal stance, she taught creative writing at the National Taiwan University and Tunghai University for a few years. Besides being an editor and instructor of literature, Nieh was herself a prolific bilingual writer in Taiwan. During her stay there, she published one of her most successful novels, *Shiqu de jinlingzi* (*The Lost Golden Bell*); several collections of short stories in Chinese; and a collection of English-language short stories, *The Purse*. In 1964, she moved to the United States, where three years later she co-founded with Paul Engle the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa (IWP) and served as its co-director until 1988. It was during this period that

Nieh completed her best-known novel in Chinese: *Sangqing yu Taohong*, translated into English as *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*.[259]

The novel describes the experience of a Chinese woman called Sangqing (translated as Mulberry) during the Sino-Japanese War and Chinese Civil War, who flees from home as a refugee to Beijing and later to Taiwan. However, in Taiwan Sangqing's family has to live in a dark attic to hide from the police because her husband embezzled public funds when he worked in the government. When she eventually travels to the United States as an undocumented immigrant, Sangqing suffers from schizophrenia and identifies herself as Taohong (translated as Peach), who moves from place to place in order to avoid investigation by a U.S. immigration officer. Told from Taohong's perspective in the form of letters to the immigration officer, the epistolary narrative is intersected by multiple literary genres including diaries, poems, newspaper clippings, and maps. The novel is divided into six parts. The Prologue begins in Taohong's apartment with her conversation with an immigration officer. The four main sections comprise letters from Taohong to the same officer, each followed by diaries written by Sangqing at different stages of her life, from Chongqing, to Beijing, Taiwan, and New York. The last section ends with the protagonist escaping from a hospital after a car accident. It does not occur to the readers until this point that the Prologue really takes place after the last diary entry, leaving the narrative in a loop of time. The Epilogue is a rewriting in modern Chinese vernacular of an ancient Chinese myth in which a princess is reincarnated as a bird who persistently uses its beak to move pebbles to fill the sea where she was drowned.

[259] Below I use *Sangqing yu Taohong* to refer to the novel's Chinese versions, *Mulberry and Peach* solely for its English translations, and *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach* when both the original and the translation are involved.

The publication of the novel was a long and complicated process. It was first serialized in *Lianhebao* (*United Daily News*) in Taiwan in 1970, but was terminated halfway through its serialization allegedly due to its pornographic plots and latent criticism of the Nationalist government. As an alternative, it was published in book form in Hong Kong in 1976. Since then, the novel has been published in multiple editions and translated into dozens of languages, including a

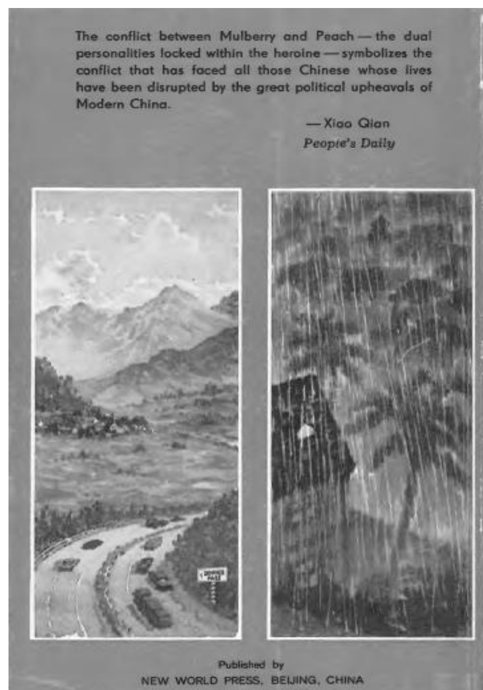

Figure 1: Back cover of *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*, New World Press, Beijing, 1981.

significantly expurgated version in mainland China in 1980. Its first English translation, based on an altered typescript of the 1976 text, was published simultaneously in Beijing and New York in 1981.[261] The ban on the book in Taiwan

[261] The China-based publisher of *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China* in 1981 is New World Press, Beijing, a government-sponsored company founded in 1951. Targeting readerships overseas, the company has long devoted itself to publications of Chinese-language books in translation, which seems very similar to the USIS project of translating American literature for Asian readers. This English version of *Mulberry and Peach* is translated by Jane Parish Yang and Linda Lappin, but with several changes to the 1976 Hong Kong edition. It is noteworthy that the cover of this Beijing version consists of four *guohua* (traditional Chinese brush paintings). Moreover, on the back cover (fig. 1) is an English-language blurb by Xiao Qian (Chinese translator), which reads: "The conflict between Mulberry and Peach—the dual personalities locked within the heroine—symbolizes the

was lifted in 1988. In 1989, mainland China also published its full Chinese-language version. New editions and translations of the novel continue to be published in varying parts of the world. It has also been used, in partial or in complete form, in college courses with diverse pedagogical approaches in the United States, including but not limited to Chinese Literature, Asian-American Literature, and Diasporic Literature.[262]

I begin with a discussion of the critical literature that has engaged the novel. Instead of attempting to articulate a concrete meaning of the text, as do many of the studies that I review, I will show how the complicated condition of its writing, as well as the story in itself, evades, distorts, and rejects homogeneous discursive identifications. Nieh and the narrative world she unfolds in her novel call on us to rethink how bi-/multilingual writing could be defined and what it means for a bi-/multilingual author like Nieh to write in Chinese.

Nieh's Chinese Work as Writing in the Language of the Other

This chapter of my dissertation is driven by the many questions that kept emerging as I read Nieh's *Sangqing yu Taohong,* as well as the critical literature it has engendered. My previous chapters are preoccupied with Chinese authors' writings in English. Throughout those chapters, language is considered in terms of the author's ethnicity or national identity. As a result, placing English on one end of the

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conflict that has faced all those Chinese whose lives have been disrupted by the great political upheavals of Modern China."

[262] For a more detailed description of the pedagogical employment of the text and the changing disciplinary interest it has kindled, see Leo Ou-fan Lee's article "Repainting the Maps of *Sangqing yu Taohong*" in *Sangqing yu Taohong*. China Times Publishing Company, Taiwan, 1997, pp. 280-284.

binary between the authors' first/native language and second/acquired language, I have conveniently claimed this body of literature as writings in the language of the Other. Nieh's Chinese-language *Sangqing yu Taohong*, however, requires me to review such concepts as the language of the Other, bilinguality, and above all, Chinese. One major question, among others, haunts my reading: What legitimizes my identification of Nieh's novel as a story completed in a language of the Other, since it is so visible and taken for granted by its readers that the novel is written originally in the author's mother tongue, Chinese? The inherent complexity of the text opens itself up to this seemingly implausible question. The novel is created in and has created a convoluted web where issues of Cold War geopolitics, cross-cultural identifications, collective memories, tensions between monolingualism and bilingualism, and translation are intertwined. This web then leads to a series of inquiries. For instance, what is the Other that we are talking about here? In what terms other than ethnicity and nationality can we discuss the language of the Other? And from whose perspective are we referring to the novel as a story in the language of the Other?

A few factors in the novel's production demonstrate the complicated nature of these questions. The novel was completed in the United States and notably in the middle of Nieh's tenure as co-director of the IWP, a program that fundamentally supports writers from non-English-speaking countries (as opposed to the other literary program overseen by Paul Engle at the same time, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, which was established solely for Anglophone literary productions). Although Nieh's work is not directly funded by IWP, thus not officially a product of the program, the novel in a broad sense belongs to its literary constellation of works produced in various languages, if one considers how involved Nieh was in this

international community of writers. So in the geopolitical sense and for the mainstream English-speaking readership in America, *Sangqing yu Taohong* is by all means a story in the language of the Other, because it is written in a language perceived as minor and marginal (and probably that of an enemy) in the United States within the Cold War context. Viewed in this way, Nieh's novel raises questions at many different levels. For instance, does the authorial choice of language for the novel imply her self-marginalization from U.S. mainstream literature, since Nieh actually writes well in both Chinese and English?[263] If so, how is this awareness of oneself writing as a linguistic Other embodied on the textual level of her work? Moreover, besides her personal preference for the Chinese language when it comes to her fictional writings, as Nieh indicates on several occasions,[264] how does this linguistic choice relate to the Cold War dynamics in which she and her IWP members inevitably participated?

One may, of course, conveniently interpret Nieh's writing, from the perspective of linguistic nationalism or ethnocentrism, as a form of resistance against the hegemony of the English language and the dominance of Anglophone literature on the U.S. book market. But taking into account the complex role of the IWP in the supporting the creation of multilingual world literatures in which she has significantly engaged, for instance, I suspect such a claim is too easy to make. In

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[263] Nieh received her college degree in English literature in Nanjing. When she was in Taiwan, she published a collection of English short stories, edited several anthologies of Chinese stories in English translation, and translated several English-language masterpieces into Chinese. Her Master's thesis at the University of Iowa was a critical review of the life and work of the famous Chinese writer Shen Congwen. It was published in book form in 1972. During her service for the IWP, she co-penned with Paul Engle almost all essays related to the workshop, such as prefaces to the IWP-produced anthologies.

[264] Nazareth, Peter, and Hualing Nieh. "An Interview with Chinese Author Hualing Nieh" in *World Literature Today*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 1981, p. 17.

other words, it is problematic to view writing in the language of the Other on U.S. soil, an experience shared among Nieh and her guest writers of the IWP, as an appeal to literary diversity with the sole aim of challenging the dominance of Anglophone productions in the realm of world literature. Such a stance merely pitches a collection of literatures in different national languages against English-language literature or, more specifically, American literature.

A focus on the nationalistic binary fails to capture the dialogical intricacies that Nieh's work and other non-English literatures at the IWP might entail. It also fails to account for the universal literary ideal of the program, which is manifested in some of its accomplishments—the Iowa Workshop of Translation that translates non-English literatures into the U.S. book market, publications of the IWP participants' works such as *Writing from the World* (1976) and *The World Comes to Iowa: Iowa International Anthology* (1987), and above all, the still expanding list of international writers coming to join the IWP. In this sense, I would rather posit Nieh's Chinese-language writings and her achievements at the IWP as an embodiment of David Damrosch's theory about the nature of world literature as "a mode of circulation and of reading."[265] In this particular case, world literature forms not only through the circulation of the texts but also that of the writers' tongues and bodies. Therefore, even if authors like Nieh were aware of their literary identity as the Other while writing in the U.S. context, I intend not to restrict my investigation to the discourse on the dichotomy between the center and the periphery, the major and the minor, and particularly not to cast these authors' literary practice in the dominance-resistance dynamism between languages. Rather,

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[265] *What Is World Literature?*, p. 5.

I query how writers like Nieh and her works like *Sangqing yu Taohong* represent a literary reality in which writing in the language of the Other has become a productive process, whereby the fixed association of a language with a single national, racial, ethnic, or cultural identity is challenged by writings that seem to be monolingual but are inscribed with the authors' cross-cultural and transnational experiences, as well as with their bi-/multilingual mentality. In other words, such writings are inherently translational. In short, I am less concerned with the confrontational than with the symbiotic and reciprocal relationship between languages that underlines Nieh's literary practice in and beyond the borders of the United States. But before I go on to discuss this point in more detail and to engage other critical studies, I want to cite another perspective from which *Sangqing yu Taohong* could be viewed as writing in the language of the Other.

Although Nieh's novel can be conceptualized as a linguistic Other in the U.S. setting, its publication in the Chinese-language arena does not seem to guarantee its freedom from critical inquiries into its identity. Although Nieh states that she has written a Chinese story in the Chinese language as a Chinese author for the Chinese audience,[266] is it possible that a Chinese-speaking readership could also view *Sangqing yu Taohong* as a work in the language of the Other? In other words, can the integrity of an "imagined community," as Benedict Anderson would have it, be maintained once works like *Sangqing yu Taohong* are taken into account, even if written in a shared language of that community? This problem has much to do with the complexity of Nieh's own identity and experience: She was born in pre-1949 Republican China, exiled with the Nationalist government to Taiwan, and

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[266] Nieh has reiterated this idea in biographical statements, interviews, documentaries, public lectures, and prefaces to different editions of the novel.

immigrated thereafter to the United States. However, she has remained active, particularly since the 1980s, in literary circles of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China, as well as in other Sinophone regions such as Singapore. In the meantime, she has been equally involved in the growing constellation of Chinese-language writers at the IWP coming from various parts of the world, including the United States. Just as Sau-ling C. Wong provocatively notes, the concept of "being Chinese" is inherently precarious when we discuss cross-cultural agents like Nieh and her works.[267] Quoting from Kirk Denton's review of *Mulberry and Peach*, Wong emphasizes that the attempt to classify Nieh and her works in national or ethnic terms "is never innocent."[268] Denton writes, "For those of us who study modern Chinese literature, the question begs: is Nieh Hualing a Chinese writer, a Taiwanese writer, or an overseas Chinese writer?" He asks, "Drawing from such diverse literary traditions as she does, based on which tradition are we to view her novel?"[269] Despite her critique of China-centrism in Denton's review as well as in the works of other scholars in modern Chinese literary studies, Wong agrees with Denton that Nieh's identity is indeterminable.

> We might say that, artistically, "Chineseness" is a richly productive, if painful, concept for Nieh. Perhaps the productiveness comes precisely from the pain—from the impossibly snarled relationship between the Chinese

[267] Wong, Sau-ling C. "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing: Hualing Nieh's *Mulberry and Peach* in Sinocentric, Asian American, and Feminist Critical Practices" in *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 133-134.

[268] Ibid., p. 133.

[269] Denton, Kirk. "Review of *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China* by Hualing Nieh" in *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 24, 1989, p. 137.

> nation-state (of course, the immediate question is “which?”), the “Chinese people” or *zhonghua minzu* (how far and how long can this already ineffable entity be stretched under diasporic conditions?), and the *zhongguoren*, the individual onto whom “Chineseness” has been indelibly inscribed, to her endless grief.[270]

Although Denton and Wong claim Nieh’s novel for different discursive fields, studies of modern Chinese literature and of Chinese-American literature respectively, they both suggest the possibility of Nieh’s work being viewed as the Other even if placed in Chinese-speaking contexts.

Nieh’s Chineseness seems to be inherently intertwined with some sort of Otherness, as it cannot be recognized fully and homogeneously recieved by any single Chinese community, be it in mainland China, Taiwan, or the United States. In fact, the history of the novel having been censored and expurgated already connotes the bewilderment of Nieh’s audience in different Chinese-speaking regions. Their bewilderment is marked by the question as to whether the story is written in *our* language. According to Wong, this kind of question is attributed to a dual-directional problematization of the concept of “Chineseness.” On the one hand, the historical circumstances in which Nieh has lived “have irreversibly problematized the notion of the Chinese subject.”[271] In other words, the conceptualization of Chineseness fails to maintain its uniformity, thanks to the modern history of China and the Chinese people, which witnessed more than half a

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[270] “The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing,” p. 137.

[271] Ibid., p. 133.

century of foreign imperialism, warlord-ism, and the floods of exiles within and outside China, resulting from endless wars and revolutions. Nieh's endorsement or tolerance of the changes made to her original work, according to Wong, is her response to these historical circumstances.[272] Wong suggests a certain degree of authorial accommodation or even compromise to respective state ideologies made in order to present the novel less like the Other and more like a work belonging to some kind of *us*—a strategic adaptation to the market logic of the publishing industry. On the other hand, she notes, "Nieh's novel itself problematizes the notion of Chinese subject. Hence its distinctly unwelcoming reception by Chinese authorities on both sides of the Taiwan Straits which relaxed only very recently."[273] Wong thus conclusively proposes to depart from what she deems Sinocentrism and to focus on the novel's relevance in fields like studies of immigrant Chinese literature and Asian-American literature. Although I agree with Wong's insightful query into the instability of Chineseness caused by the history that is represented in Nieh's work, it is also worth questioning the effectiveness of diverting the focus to its "Asian-Americanness" as an alternative approach.

I shall note again the fact that Nieh has persistently stressed her literary identity of being a Chinese writer, however loosely the concept of "Chineseness" is employed in her rhetoric. Meanwhile, her national and regional allegiances as a Chinese-American have been deliberately downplayed in her self-identification, an authorial intention I find necessary to highlight for my current discussion. After all, why should we take great pains to label a work like *Sangqing yu Taohong*, if the

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[272] Ibid.

[273] Ibid.

novel itself refuses to be categorized? As Denton rightly points out, Nieh draws from "diverse literary traditions,"[274] and so does her Chinese language. Below I discuss how Nieh and her novel not only problematize the established conceptualizations of the Chinese subject, but also bring to light a literary Chinese language that lends itself to the state of being the Other.

Critical Engagements with *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach*

My examination of the existing scholarship on this particular novel by Nieh is first of all informed by Sau-ling C. Wong's seminal article published in 2001, "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing: Hualing Nieh's *Mulberry and Peach* in Sinocentric, Asian American, and Feminist Critical Practices," one of the early attempts I believe to have contributed to the "turn of decentering China" in the study of Chinese literature in North American academia. Delineating her own history of critical engagement with Nieh's *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach*, Wong demonstrates the diverse discursive locations the novel has occupied since its publication in 1971, including but not limited to studies of modern Chinese literature, Asian American literature, diasporic literature, and Anglo-American feminist literature. In mainland China, while gender studies and diasporic studies have begun to gain momentum in the examination of Nieh's novel, the more dominant and nearly unanimous approach to the text—bolstered by evidence from studies of her other fictional works like *Qianshanwai shuichangliu* (*Lotus or Far Away: A River*, 1984)—has been to view it "as solely or primarily a nationalist

[274] "Review of *Mulberry and Peach*," p. 137.

narrative."[275] This Chinese nationalist or even patriotic genealogy in the study of Chinese-language literature, regardless of the geographical location of a text's production and the complexity of an author's identity, is the main target of criticism in Wong's article. She also points out that scholars in non-mainland regions, like diasporic Chinese intellectuals in the United States, who seem to be less fettered by Chinese nationalist ideology and geopolitical partisanship, actually share with their mainland counterparts "a fundamental similarity: Sinocentrism."[276]

One of the earliest critical articles on this subject in U.S. academia is Pai Hsien-yung's "The Wandering Chinese: The Theme of Exile in Taiwan Fiction," published in 1976. Aligning Nieh's work with the novel of another diasporic writer, Yu Lihua, on the life of overseas Chinese students, *Youjian zonglü* (*Again the Palm Trees*), Pai praises *Sangqing yu Taohong* for having "elaborated the theme of exile to its fullest extent" with its employment of "personal dissolution as a paradigm for political disintegration."[277] On a more specific note, he writes:

> In creating the fragmented world of the schizophrenic, Nieh Hua-ling has allegorized the fate of modern China in all its tragic complexity. The strength of this novel lies in its manipulation of symbol. Nieh Hua-ling has made the psychic and the social correlatives mutually informing. A microcosmic, diseased personality has, by a series of projections and displacements, become representative of the macrocosmic

[275] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 138.

[276] Ibid., p. 140.

[277] Pai, Hsien-yung. "The Wandering Chinese: The Theme of Exile in Taiwan Fiction" in *Writing from the World*. The University of Iowa Press, 1976, p. 210.

disorder of an entire nation.[278]

Pai's reading sets an influential example for numerous studies of Nieh's novel, including those in Taiwan and in mainland China. Some focus on the woman's body as a symbol of national trauma under imperialism and colonialism. Others discuss the protagonist's schizophrenia and odyssey as a metaphor for the tragic division of the Chinese nation. Most of these studies still posit the work in—as Fredric Jameson would have it—the tradition of modern Chinese literature as national allegory,[279] despite the divergent identifications of the Chinese nation-state on each side of the Taiwan Straits. "The 'literature of exile' under which Pai classifies *Sangqing yu Taohong*, far from transcending nation (as it may first appear to do)," Wong remarks, "is very much a literature *about nation*."[280] While Pai's definition of "literature of exile" refers to the novel's content, Nieh's own transpacific itinerary, similar to that of her main character, leads scholars of modern Chinese literature like Denton to suggest the same term—exile—in classifying not only the type of literature her novel represents but also the author herself. Used either way, however, Wong criticizes the fact that the seemingly border-transcending concept of the exile "actually recuperates the notion of a legitimating political and cultural center."[281] "For the concept of exile is constituted by the concept of nation."[282] In

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[278] Ibid., pp. 211-212.

[279] Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" in *Social Text,* No. 5, 1986, pp. 65-88.

[280] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 140.

[281] Ibid., p. 134.

[282] Ibid., p. 140.

short, U.S.-based critics like Pai and Denton are also circumscribed by the paradigm of Sinocentric thinking.

Wong's deconstruction of Sinocentrism in the studies of *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach* and its author is kindled by her own pedagogical experience in U.S. colleges, where she has used parts of or the entire novel as well as its different language versions in her teaching. For instance, she has used Part IV of *Sangqing yu Taohong*, which revolves around the protagonist's life in America, for a class on Chinese immigrant literature: literature defined as "writings in Chinese by first-generation writers about their life in the United States."[283] She has also used the English translation of the novel, *Mulberry and Peach*, in courses on Asian American literature, in which the students received the story very differently as they "expressed little interest in the 'Chinese' aspects of the text."[284] Thus Wong argues that the relevance of the novel to Asian American communities calls for a decentralization of its Chineseness and a turn of focus to the more immediate concerns of second-generation immigrants: for instance, their anxiety about and resistance to assimilation, the tension between their identity as a culturally inscribed diaspora and their identity deriving from a so-called ancestral origin, and their yearning for a departure from both the Asian and the American cultures.[285] Another intervention Wong makes into Sinocentric discourse is the introduction of the feminist perspective. She raises pointed questions such as whether Nieh's female protagonist could be truly saved from her trauma as a schizophrenic, even if the

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[283] Ibid., p. 135.

[284] Ibid., p. 136.

[285] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

nation-state were recuperated. Building upon Lydia Liu's analysis of the correlation between women's sexuality and nationalist narrative in modern Chinese literature, Wong suggests that, "in Nieh's novel, the interests of nation and the interests of women are, more often than not, at odds with each other, and that the crises of nation are typically a contest between patriarchal structures in which women have no say."[286]

Like Pai's article, which has inspired a series of examinations of the allegorical and symbolic representation of a nation's history in Nieh's novel, Wong's article is also followed by increasing scholarly interest in its treatment of Asian American culture and feminism. There are also readings, however, that endeavor to put modern Chinese literary studies and Asian American studies in conversation. For instance, Tina Chen views the female body as a site of fluidity and change where the Chinese national allegory is performed but then becomes obscured as that body wanders about in the Asian American context. "An Asian American reading of Nieh's novel that is wary of the allegorical impulse to *decorporealize* the figures of *Mulberry and Peach*," she writes, "must then consider the body as a particularly important and generative site."[287]

Added to the list of discursive claims on *Sangqing yu Taohong* are those from fields like Sinophone studies and *shijie huawen wenxue* (world literature in Chinese).[288] Coined by Shu-mei Shih, Sinophone studies attempts to replace the

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[286] Ibid., p. 145.

[287] Chen, Tina. *Double Agency: Acts of Impersonation in Asian American Literature and Culture*. Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 99.

[288] Chiu, Kuei-fen. "Empire of the Chinese Sign: The Question of Chinese Diasporic Imagination in Transnational Literary Production" in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 67, No. 2, May 2008, pp. 593-620.

concept of *Chinese literature* with *literatures in Chinese* to de-centralize the hegemonic status of literature from China in Chinese literary studies.[289] Its scope is limited to Chinese-language works from outside China, including those created in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, as well as the United States. Though it is not the main focus of criticism in this chapter, the Sinophone approach has its own limitations when it comes to cases like Nieh's novel. By implying that "literatures in Chinese" uniformly and unanimously resist Sinocentrism, the gigantic body of writing drawn into Sinophone studies runs the risk of dehistoricization and decontextualization of that literature. In other words, the concept of Sinophone literature mainly functions to direct critical attention to literatures in Chinese outside China, but the term itself does not have the explanatory power to address these literatures' diversity and the dynamism of their relations with respective national/local literatures. In Nieh's case, the mere alignment of her novel with other literatures in Chinese would fail, as I have noted earlier, to reflect its connections to, for instance, other non-Anglophone productions at the IWP as well as the literary ecology of the United States in the late 1970s. Moreover, despite its endeavor to move beyond the geopolitical border of Chinese literature, Sinophone studies seems to have drawn another invisible border around the sum total of its community members. To borrow Wong's term in her depiction of Asian American literature, Sinophone studies sets the border of a linguistic nation-state "without an army or a navy."[290] This construct would again ignore the fact that Nieh's novel is created in a context where multiple boundaries are traversed.

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[289] Shih, Shu-mei. "Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition" in *PMLA*, Vol. 119, No. 1, 2004, p. 29.

[290] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 144.

The various discursive engagements with *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach* that Wong reviews in her article, as well as her own multidisciplinary interventions, are typical examples of heterolingual reception that are enabled by the transnational circulation and translation of Nieh's work. The text has drawn a mixed audience of readers who represent communities from which the author could never have had "an assurance of immediate apprehension or an expectation of uniform response."[291] As Wong rightly notes, "reading practices will differ according to where one places the text,"[292] and each discursive location that has claimed the novel has "its own institutional history, ideological axioms, analytic vocabulary, aesthetic framework, intertexts, and thematic concerns."[293] These, I believe, are precisely the stakes of writing across borders that Wong refers to in the title of her article.

One thing I could not help but notice when I read about Wong's teaching experiences, though, is that she selectively uses parts of the text as well as its different language versions for different classes, notably Part IV in its English translation, which evokes distinct feedback from students in her Asian-American literature classes. Methodologically, then, Wong's selective reading is actually similar to Pai's, which she criticizes for being Sinocentric, since Pai's discussion revolves around the history of Chinese exiles represented in the figures of war refugees, runaway criminals, and wanderers to a foreign land in the first three parts of Nieh's novel, but deliberately downplays Part IV about the localized life of the

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[291] *Translation and Subjectivity*, p. 4.

[292] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 134.

[293] Ibid., p. 137.

protagonist as a settled immigrant—however temporarily—with her relatively stable shelter and social connections. The critical emphasis of Pai and Wong on different parts of the novel has dissected its narrative problematically into two distinct stories, as well as the author into two personalities. While Wong examines the novel as a story *about* Asian Americans by a contemporary Asian American writer, thus including it in "a cultural nation without an army or a navy,"[294] Pai views it as a story *about* Chinese people by a former Chinese writer, thus referring to it as "one of the most ambitious works to have come out of Taiwan."[295]

Such heterolingual receptions of the novel that divide it into fragments are in alignment with the critical attention the novel has received that is overwhelmingly focused on the schizophrenic characteristics of the protagonist, namely, the subject's state of being split between the past and the present, here and there. Driven by the impetus to compete for a claim on the text and its author in their self-contained discursive systems, these approaches raise the question of how the story could be understood in its entirety rather than in fragments, that is, as a story inscribed by the translingual, transnational, and transcultural journeys of the protagonist. Under the names of Sangqing and Taohong (and Helen Sangqing Shen, which also appears in the novel at one point), the protagonist's body and language are triangulated across the Pacific Ocean. The English translation of the title, *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China,* could not be more misleading. The story is after all about *one* subject who appears in the shape of a schizophrenic, whose wholeness is constituted by at least two sets of opposing yet symbiotic

[294] Ibid., p. 144.

[295] "The Wandering Chinese," p. 210.

personalities, mentalities, sentiments, and experiences. The text, as well as its protagonist, are not the products of one history or rooted in one culture, but are the results of mediation and negotiation among multiple histories, cultures, and languages. In other words, instead of concentrating on the pathology of schizophrenia as the state of being mentally divided, incoherent, and self-contradictory, can we account for the condition of the protagonist as a state of *doublement* in which the subject always has to carry with her another self that she attempts to deny or to combat? Moreover, if we turn our attention from the theme of separation to that of co-existence or co-evolution, can we also better understand Nieh's writing as a distinct form of literary practice other than what Leo Ou-fan Lee defines as "writing on the periphery?"[296] After all, Lee's definition seems to suggest that such writing is inherently caught in between languages and cultures, thus vulnerable to separation by different discursive fields subordinating to respective "centers."

Sangqing yu Taohong as Super-Sign

So, how do we comprehend the novel in its entirety and as a work that undergoes several layers of border-crossing? If we move beyond the question of in which language, history and culture the story is rooted and accept that its meaning has been constructed into what Lydia Liu terms as a *super-sign*, it would be easier to see *Sangqing yu Taohong* more as a heterolingual text that appears to be homolingual on the page for its Chinese-speaking audience. As a heterolingual text, it opens itself to multiple and diverse homolingual communities which project their

[296] Lee, Leo Ou-fan. "On the Margins of the Chinese Discourse: Some Personal Thoughts on the Cultural Meaning of the Periphery" in *Daedalus*, Vol. 120, No. 2, 1991, pp. 207-226.

respective (non-)identifications with the author and her language into their interpretations of what the story is about.

In her examination of the ways in which language changes in post-colonial contexts, Liu suggests that verbal signs—for instance, *yi*/barbarian (夷) which was employed in the official documentations of the Chinese Qing court to identify foreigners in the late nineteenth century—actually are unstable not only because of time and usage but also because they have already circulated among two or more mutually implicated languages that semantically, semiotically, and ideologically impact their seemingly transparent meaning. Foreignness, Liu remarks, "has penetrated the opacity of the indigenous."[297] Liu calls such signs *super-signs*.

> What is a super-sign? Properly speaking, a super-sign is not a word but a hetero-cultural signifying chain that crisscrosses the semantic fields of two or more languages simultaneously and makes an impact on the meaning of recognizable verbal units, whether they be indigenous words, loanwords, or any other discrete verbal phenomena that linguists can identify within particular languages or among them. The super-sign emerges out of the interstices of existing languages across the abyss of phonetic and ideographic differences. As a hetero-cultural signifying chain, it always requires more than one linguistic system to complete the process of signification for any given verbal phenomenon.[298]

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[297] *The Clash of Empires*, p. 13.

[298] Ibid.

Liu's analysis of the *super-sign* is made on the linguistic level; that is, she centers on how that which we normally understand as a linguistic *unit* such as a word actually becomes a *chain* of significations through time and space. However, I intend to expand the scope of the *super-sign* and make it a meta-concept, which not only refers to the formation of a signifying chain based on a linguistic unit, but to the way in which any signifying unit—such as a text, an image, a symbol, or even a performance—enters this infinite chain of signification. In this sense, the publication of various Chinese editions of *Sangqing yu Taohong* and its English translation *Mulberry and Peach*, not to mention the novel's translations into various other languages, have undoubtedly placed the novel in a still-growing "hetero-cultural signifying chain." Below is a comparison of a few versions of the novel released by different publishers, which shows how it has moved through multiple implicated languages, languages understood not simply in linguistic terms but also as discursive sites. These languages have helped form the hetero-cultural signifying chain in which the novel is embedded and through which it is read, and they continue to do so.

After the serialization of *Sangqing yu Taohong* was terminated midstream by the Nationalist government in Taiwan in 1971, the novel did not manage to appear in full until 1976 in Hong Kong. Its complete version was first serialized in *Mingbao Yuekan* (*Ming Pao Monthly*; *Mingbao* hereafter) and later published in book form by Youlian Publishing Co. Ltd (Youlian hereafter). If the initial serialization of *Sangqing yu Taohong* in Taiwan signified the endeavor of Nieh to return from the English-speaking world to a Chinese-speaking community, as well as the endeavor of Taiwan to re-admit an author (also an editor and translator) once forced into exile due to her radical stance of liberalism in the 1950s and early 1960s,

the termination of the serialization indicated the failure of Taiwan's mainstream literary establishment to incorporate the author's voice as one of their own. Although Nieh managed to get the book published in Hong Kong, the readership it mainly reached was not that originally intended by the author: before the 1980s the majority of Chinese-speaking readers Youlian aimed at were those in the North American and Southeast Asian markets.

The design of the Youlian edition indeed demonstrates a kind of "relative neutrality"[299] with not a single word of introduction about the author in the blurb, or any commentary essay on the novel by a well-known critic in an appendix, as can be found in the novel's other Chinese-language versions. The cover of this first edition in Hong Kong also seems free from any ideological inscriptions as it is constituted of four simply pigmented rectangular blocks—red, pink, light blue, and blue (fig. 2)—corresponding to the two names of Sangqing (literally translated as Mulberry Blue, denoting a color between purple and blue) and Taohong (literally translated as Peach Red, denoting a color of pinkish red). Moreover, compared to its serialized version in *Mingbao*, the Youlian edition made a few adjustments to make the story appear, as the publisher believed it to be, less politicized. For instance, the following parts of the protagonist's scribbles on the wall in her U.S. apartment are left out:

谁怕蒋介石？(Who is afraid of Chiang Kai-shek?)

谁怕毛泽东？(Who is afraid of Mao Tse-tung?)

Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf? (originally in English)[300]

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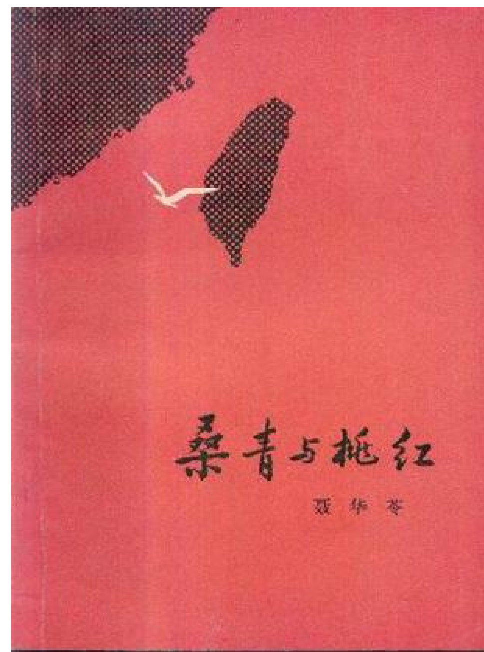
[299] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 132.

[300] Nieh, Hualing. *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Huahan Cultural Corporation, Hong Kong, 1986, p. 1.

The erasure of these lines is, of course, itself a politicized move by the publisher. However, Sau-ling C. Wong comments on the publication of this Hong Kong edition: “It was left to Hong Kong [due to the termination of the novel’s serialization in Taiwan], then a British colony caught in but not committed to either side of the Nationalist-Communist conflict, to provide *the relative neutrality* needed for *Sangqing yu Taohong* to first see the light of day in its entirety” (my italics).[301]

But is this Hong Kong edition as innocent as Wong claims it to be? It is worth noting that its publisher is a subsidiary of the Youlian Group, a cultural organization that has been funded by the Asia Foundation since the 1950s as part of the



Figures 2-3 (from left to right): Cover of *Sangqing yu Taohong*, Youlian Publishing Co. Ltd, Hong Kong, 1976; Cover of *Sangqing yu Taohong*, China Youth Press, Beijing, 1980.

American-aided Asian Literary Program, which is anti-Communist and anti-Nationalist. Therefore, the publication of *Sangqing yu Taohong* in Hong Kong

[301] “The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing,” p. 132.

may not be committed to the Nationalist-Communist conflict, but it has indeed placed the novel in another dimension of political and cultural tensions, namely, the postcolonial conflict between the East and the West within the Cold War context. Although the novel was published in 1976, four years after Nixon's visit to mainland China and close to the end of the heyday of the U.S.-aided literary program in Asia, the Hong Kong publisher's acceptance of Nieh's manuscript was a political move to show its critical stance against Taiwan's ban on the novel and the potential unwelcoming attitude in mainland China towards its full version. In this sense, even the cover of this edition does not seem entirely neutral, as the clearly bordered color blocks of red (which symbolizes Communist China) and blue (which identifies with the Republic of China, whose national flag was first the blue Navy flag) backgrounding the two Chinese names help highlight the split between Sangqing and Taohong, and implicitly between Taiwan and mainland China (fig. 2). In short, as a signifying unit, *Sangqing yu Taohong* is rendered visually as a narrative about conflicts and separation.

While the two names Sangqing and Taohong are translated inter-semiotically into different colors on the cover of the first Hong Kong edition, they are more explicitly political on the cover of the 1980 redacted edition published in mainland China. Against the red background is the black silhouette of a map constituting the Southeast corner of mainland China and the Taiwan island on each side of the Taiwan Strait. Over the Strait closer to the Taiwan side is the image of a white bird flying towards the mainland (fig. 3). Although the contrast between red and black again echoes semantically the two Chinese names (qing/青, as in Sangqing, in classical Chinese also refers to black), these are no longer "neutral" Chinese words but foreground the question of in whose Chinese language is the book written.

Wong reads the image of the bird (clearly a seagull) as signifying the intention of mainland Chinese censors to evoke the dove of peace or the Princess Bird of the novel's epilogue, whose labor to fill the sea with pebbles indicates the relentless effort of bringing the two sides to reunification, thus rendering *Sangqing yu Taohong* into the language of Sinocentric nationalist propaganda.[302] However, it is worth querying whether Nieh's language really serves these Sinocentric functions, even if the author made compromises in the significant expurgation of the novel, including cutting the entirety of Part IV.

The year 1980 is crucial in this case, as it was also the year when the first group of mainland Chinese writers participated in the IWP program co-chaired by Nieh. Before 1980, the Chinese-speaking members of the IWP had been mostly those located in the United States. The success of having writers from mainland China (as well as Taiwan at almost the same time) was not only a breakthrough for the IWP but also for China, which had just started to open up to the outside world after ten years of self-isolation during the Cultural Revolution. Also notable is that the mainland writers whom the IWP managed to invite for the first couple of years were particularly those identified as counter-revolutionists or rightists during the Cultural Revolution such as Ai Qing (poet), Ding Ling (novelist), and Xiao Qian (translator). In this sense, Nieh's novel played a role in an exchange program of the "unruly" Chinese writers. While Ai Qing, Ding Ling, and Xiao Qian were exported to the United States, Nieh's work was exported to China representing a third-party voice speaking from a position other than those on either side of the Taiwan Strait. In other words, as a token of exchange, *Sangqing yu Taohong*, like its author, was

[302] Ibid., p. 139.

endowed with the responsibility of an agent to mediate the conversations between Chinese-language writers from multiple regions, Taiwan and mainland China in particular.

The self-awareness of being an agent outside Taiwan and mainland China, thus writing without a specifically intended audience or an ideologically designated language, is manifested in Nieh's words uttered in jest in interviews as she calls the novel "unadorned by either the mother or the father."[303] This position is also demonstrated in her self-reflective comments in the Preface that first appears in the mainland edition of 1980:

> I keep thinking how many readers a novel like *Sangqing yu Taohong* could have engaged in *guonei* [literally translated as "inside the country," a term that commonly refers to mainland China]. That which art demands from a writer differs from what *renmin* [the people] demand. (It is not a question about whose intention is more sublime but that each demand is different.) I admire very much the extent to which writers of *guonei* are concerned about the people and write for the people. But where can I find my people as a writer in exile? All my writing depends on the demand of art itself. Now that *Sangqing yu Taohong* is introduced to the *guonei* readers, I start to question myself: From now on, for whom shall I write and what shall I write? (my translation and my italics)[304]

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[303] Nieh, Hualing. *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, Liaoning, 1990, p. 262.

[304] Nieh, Hualing. *Sangqing yu Taohong*. China Youth Press, Beijing, 1980, pp. 6-7.

Whereas Wong interprets this part of the Preface as Nieh's centripetal self-analysis due to a "pathology-inducing condition that must be redeemed by a return to the center,"[305] I would rather understand it as Nieh's realization of the necessity and possibility of addressing divergent Chinese-speaking readerships with her Chinese-language writing, as she writes for art's sake and because her novel has already circulated among Chinese-speaking communities of diverse political ideologies and historical heritages.

It is also interesting to see how scholars from both Taiwan and China in the late 1970s and the early 1980s spontaneously view Nieh's novel as a product of Taiwan, and mainly about Chinese exiles. For instance, U.S.-based Taiwan writer Pai Hsian-yung refers to it in his "Wandering Chinese" as "one of the most ambitious works to have come out of Taiwan."[306] Chen Ziling's essay in *Dushu* (*The Reader*), the most prestigious book review monthly in China, starts with the following line: "There is a common theme in the literary productions of Taiwan Province. To use a term by *haiwai* (overseas) critics, it is the theme of exile" (my translation).[307] Both, despite the subtlety in their Sinocentric positions, deliberately avoid in their extended remarks the fact that Nieh's novel is a Chinese-language work originating in the United States, which in its first three parts thematically seems to echo one of the predominant subjects in literary works of Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s: the Chinese exile.

Nieh herself recapitulates in the Preface what the Beijing edition of 1980 is

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[305] "The Stakes of Textual Border-Crossing," p. 139.

[306] "The Wandering Chinese," p. 210.

[307] Chen, Ziling. "Book Review of *Sangqing yu Taohong*" in *Dushu* (*The Reader*), Vol. 10, 1981, p. 75.

about. She writes, “my goal is to write about the real” (my translation).[308] But for her the real is not equivalent to historical events, which she believes to only function within the diegetic world to drive the characters’ growth and the narrative flow. “The real of the greatest importance,” she suggests, “is the human” (my translation).[309] Therefore, the first three parts retained for this edition are a representation of the human condition in general, that is, the condition of being forever trapped in predicaments. Such a condition is symbolically manifested in the fictional characters who are cornered by the narrow canyon near Chongqing overshadowed by a storm, the city of Beijing besieged in war, and the dimly-lit attic in Taiwan under the surveillance of police—all of which leave a claustrophobic impression on the protagonist, fearing that she may never be free from them.[310] This authorial effort to direct readers’ attention more toward a theme of universal significance rather than toward the social politics of particular regions and communities is restated several times in the book’s later editions. Although these editions retain Part IV, in which the protagonist escapes physically from the claustrophobic spaces of the first three parts to the “open land” of America, she continues to sink, as Pai suggests, “deeper into a Kafkaesque nightmare”[311] of being permanently chased after by the immigration bureaucrat without knowing any place to settle down.

However, Nieh’s claim to have thematically depoliticized the story becomes

[308] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Beijing, 1980, p. 1.

[309] Ibid.

[310] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[311] “The Wandering Chinese,” p. 211.

questionably complex if one takes a closer look at the book's second Hong Kong edition of 1986, which both Nieh and her publisher claim to be the most complete—indeed the only complete—version to that date. In addition to the restoration of Part IV, the most significant changes occur in two places: First is the addition of the bilingual lines on the wall of the protagonist's apartment in America at the beginning of the story, which I mentioned earlier: "Who is afraid of Chiang Kai-shek? (Chinese) Who is afraid of Mao Tse-tung? (Chinese) Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf? (English)"[312] The other is at the end of Taohong's second letter to the immigration officer, where a two-line postscript is added: "Attached to this letter is Sangqing's diary composed in Peking—an item smuggled out under the surveillance of the Communists, along with Sangqing's identity card—a unique product of the Nationalists" (my translation).[313] Taohong's defiant interrogations on the wall about Chiang, Mao, and Woolf echo Nieh's resounding statement at the beginning of her Preface: "Some say it is a work of realism; some impressionism; some symbolism; some surrealism; and some stream of consciousness. I do not know any -isms. All that I obey is the principle of art itself" (my translation).[314] Not only does Nieh refuse claims of political ideology on her work, she also resists reductionist identification of her aesthetics. This reductionism finds its common form with the simple comparison of her work to that of the British modernist female writer Virginia Woolf in many contemporary studies.

Nieh's self-justification in the Preface certainly plays interactively into critical

[312] *Sangqing yu Taohong.* Hong Kong, 1986, p. 9.

[313] Ibid., p. 90.

[314] Ibid., p. 1.

receptions of the text, thus further enriching its chain of signification. Pai Hsien-yung's re-reading of the novel in the 1990s, for example, no longer focuses on the theme of exile from Taiwan and mainland China but on the universal experience of people wandering away from any culture as a symptomatic phenomenon in the twentieth century:

> *Sangqing yu Taohong* is not a political novel, because a political novel should endorse some kind of political belief or intention. For example, [George] Orwell's *1984* was a novel of anti-authoritarianism, [Fyodor] Dostoevsky's *Demons* anti-nihilism, and Mao Dun's *Midnight* anti-capitalism. However, *Sangqing yu Taohong* does not have any political goal and it is against any *zhuyi* (-isms). Indeed, Sangqing has been running away from the Communists and Nationalists, but she also has done so from Japanese and Americans. (my translation)[315]

Pai's earlier Sinocentric interpretation of Sangqing as a centrifugal diaspora from China is now replaced by his view that Sangqing represents all people escaping ceaselessly from all kinds of oppression, a historical phenomenon shared by many other nations and cultures in the twentieth century.[316] On the other hand, Leo Ou-fan Lee's re-reading of the novel questions the possibility of rendering it exclusively in conventional diaspora studies terms, because both the story itself and

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[315] Pai, Hsien-yung. "Shijixing de piaobozhe: chongdu *Sangqing yu Taohong* ("Wanderer of the Century: Re-reading *Sangqing yu Taohong*") in *Sangqing yu Taohong.* China Times Publishing Company, Taiwan, 1997, p. 277.

[316] Ibid., p. 279.

its protagonist are “bilingual and bicultural practitioners who are still closely connected to their ‘original’ country” (my translation).[317] Since immigration and diaspora have become normal states of being near the end of the twentieth century,[318] it is impossible to stabilize the meaning of *Sangqing yu Taohong.* The book does not simply travel on a one-way flight but crisscrosses languages, cultures, as well as historical times. When its full edition was released in mainland China in 1990, ten years after the debut of its expurgated version, the editor-in-chief of Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House drew an analogy between its protagonist and Io in Greek mythology, who is chased by gadflies from Greece to Egypt after Zeus turns her into a white heifer. “*Sangqing yu Taohong* is neither a political novel nor a realistic one,”[319] he comments. “Its focus is on human beings, their internal spirits, and their emotional feelings.” He continues:

> Indeed, the story is built on the three crucial moments of modern China—the Sino-Japanese War, the Civil War, and the first few years of the Nationalist settlement in Taiwan. Such extensive coverage of historical events helps expand the artistic scope and social significance of the novel. It enables the readers to sympathize with the history of a particular nation-state, but it also demonstrates in a broader and deeper sense that social upheaval in this world is the major cause of human exile. (my

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[317] “Chonghua *Sangqing yu Taohong* de ditu (“Repainting the Maps of *Sangqing yu Taohong”*), p. 283.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Wang, Yancai. “Dangyishidu: Xiezai *Sangqing yu Taohong* dalu quanben zhiqian” (“To Be Read as a Poem: Foreword to *Sangqing yu Taohong*”) in *Sangqing yu Taohong*, Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, Liaoning, 1990, p. 1.

translation)[320]

In short, the centripetal appeal to China in the story, thus the critical drive to read it as a national allegory, has transformed into a humanistic concern about the universal human fate of permanent exile from place to place, both physically and mentally.

The Bi-/Multilingual World of Sangqing/Taohong

Despite interpretations of *Sangqing yu Taohong/Mulberry and Peach* coming from varying fields, readings of the novel are predominantly based on its narrative content—the symbolic existence of the schizophrenic protagonist, of the diverse people she experiences on her journey, and the historical events and socio-political tensions in which these fictional figures are involved. The themes of these studies, though this might sound oversimplifying, can be epitomized in such keywords as trauma, mental illness, patriarchal oppression, national allegory, cultural or ethnic marginalization, exile, etc. As Swan Kim suggests, even if conducted beyond Sinocentric discourses, many of the readings are still confined by "an allegorical master narrative."[321] Most studies are devoted to what the story is *about*; there are only a few exceptions that focus on *how* it is told, such as Kim's analysis of how the affect of paranoia helps construct the subject in the narrative and Linda Margarita Greenberg's discussion of the novel's epistolary form, which problematizes the demand of authenticity on ethnic literature.[322]

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[320] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[321] Kim, Swan. "Beyond Allegory: Absurdity, Paranoia, and the Diasporic Identity in Hualing Nieh's *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*" in *Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, Spring 2017, p. 74.

[322] Greenberg, Linda Margarita. "Epistolary Women: Navigating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Ana

An important feature I find missing in the critical narratives about Nieh and her novel is the question of language. The fact that the novel is originally written in Chinese in the U.S. context and has travelled to various Chinese-speaking regions accounts in large part for its ambiguity and complexity. It is worth asking what enables this monolingually written novel to entail heterolingual and heterocultural effects even within the different Chinese-speaking communities. A more specific question follows: In what Chinese language is the novel composed? Wong is right that Nieh's work is marked by external forces like the historical circumstances of China and Chinese/Chinese Americans and thus must be placed in a network of different geopolitical and cultural dynamics. Chineseness in historical terms has already become precarious. Wong briefly mentions that Nieh herself plays with the concept of Chinese, helping problematize its seemingly established nature. However, she does not dig into detail to explain how Nieh responds to the problematic of Chineseness and, more importantly, whether the author manages to produce a distinct literary Chineseness through her use of language and narrative style in her work.

As a super-sign, *Sangqing yu Taohong* resists translation both intralingually and interlingually. The movement of the text from one Chinese-speaking culture—be it a physical place, a discursive space, a social community, or a historical time period—to another is no longer the kind of intralingual translation that is defined by Roman Jakobson. "Intralingual translation or *rewording*," according to Jakobson, "is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs

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Castillo's *Mixquiahuala Letters* and Hualing Nieh's *Mulberry and Peach*" in *Genre*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2016, pp. 273-302.

of the same language."[323] It is then safe to assume that intralingual practices like rewording are performed with the premise that such practices keep the sense of reading community intact, particularly in terms of nation-state. However, the Chinese-speaking cultures that Nieh's novel crosses are at times incommensurable with one another on varying levels. Instead of interpreting or simply rewording *Sangqing yu Taohong* from the vantage point of another Chinese-speaking culture, each edition betrays its predecessors by leaving an exclusive mark on the novel, which makes the text ultimately untranslatable between Chinese-s. The omission or addition of the aforementioned scribbled lines on the wall of the protagonist's apartment and of her sarcastic comment on partisan politics, for instance, continue to give the novel different afterlives. In other words, each Chinese version is a foreignization of the novel's original edition, whose claim to that status is fundamentally challenged thanks to its failure to be published in full in Taiwan.

Thus, as a super-sign whose meaning accumulates and transforms because different Chinese languages crisscross within it, *Sangqing yu Taohong* has become a multilingual or heterolingual text. In it, one Chinese language and another are always in co-existence as well as in conflict. The novel is also multilingual because Nieh draws from a rich source of interlingual materials. The style and form of her Chinese writing translate, interweave, and compete through, for instance, the diverse syntaxes and semantics of languages other than the modern Chinese vernacular. In short, Nieh continuously tests the limitations of individual languages by folding them into a linguistic pastiche. Although the authorial choice of language appears monolingual on the page, the text itself is embedded in a complex network

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[323] Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader* (Third Edition). Routledge, 2012, p. 127.

of multilingualism. This multilingualism, of course, also brings challenges to the interlingual translation of the novel into English as well as other non-Chinese languages.

In the Preface to the novel, Nieh summarizes the literary tactics she uses to attain the goal of representing "the real." Her explanation helps us see how her Chinese language/s may not be simply identified or domesticated as that of a particular "us," whether it is understood in national, ideological, or cultural terms. "I have always been a *normal* author,"[324] she states, "but *Sangqing yu Taohong* is a *disturbed* attempt of a normal author" (my translation and italics).[325] By calling the novel "disturbed," the author first means that it does not follow a single style of literary innovation such as symbolism or stream of consciousness. Neither does the novel obey the laws of a particular literary school or, in general, the literary norms ordinary readers are used to. But even as the author announces "I do not know any -isms," this does not mean that we can ignore the intersection of her work with various styles of modernist literature such as impressionism and surrealism. Instead, by saying that "I only employ particular techniques of writing when art requires me to,"[326] the author on the one hand guides us to resist the temptation of reducing her work to or circumscribing it in just one literary mode; while on the other, she brings our attention to a diglossic relationship between different styles in the narrative. Nieh subjects the novel to art itself, which demands her to take the liberty of

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[324] The original Chinese here is 安分的, a word that can hardly find an equivalent in English. It can refer to a person who follows the laws, who is obedient, or who is well-behaved and does not make much trouble. I translate it as "normal" and its opposite 不安分的 as "disturbed" to resonate with the two personalities Nieh creates in her novel.

[325] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. 1980, 1986, 1990, 1997, p. 1.

[326] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. 1980, 1986, 1990, 1997, p.1.

adapting, transforming, and subverting established rules and styles of writing when necessary.

This diglossia of literary modes is embodied in the formal features of the novel's multi-layered language. For instance, it is undeniable that there are tactical uses of stream of consciousness in the text. In Part IV where Sangqing's other self, Taohong, becomes increasingly visible, the two selves start to talk alternately and sometimes converse with each other in Sangqing's diary. Sangqing frequently expresses her uncertainty and anxiety about who she actually is because she keeps losing memory of her activities during the day, and the voice of Taohong keeps emerging on the page to replace hers. For instances like these, Sangqing's intense flow of thoughts and feelings is written out in large blocks of unpunctuated or partially punctuated monologues, a typical linguistic device used in stream-of-consciousness fictions such as those of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, who frequently leave out periods and paragraph breaks. Moreover, to help readers distinguish between the two voices within the same diary entry, Nieh has their respective lines printed in contrasting typefaces, thus visually foregrounding the dialogic nature of Sangqing's monologues.

Whereas the absence or lack of punctuation is indeed a formal feature in the language of stream of consciousness, however, other important linguistic determinants of the style—such as the violation of grammar, syntax, and logic—seem to be missing in the interior monologues of Sangqing.[327] The following monologue takes place after Sangqing and some of her U.S. friends learn about the suicide of a mutual acquaintance. Rather than creating an effect of

[327] Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 244.

disconnectedness and disorganization as the language in a stream-of-consciousness narrative typically would do, the seemingly erratic currents of words on the page representing Sangqing's wavering thoughts are syntactically and semantically integral to the entire scenario. Despite being insufficiently punctuated, the lines are coherent and straightforward, their meaning comprehensible and predictable to the readers:

> 他们在客厅谈着张耀华的死我想着肚子里的孩子。丹红还是不能决定是否收养孩子她一面谈话一面喂阿京牛奶。想到孩子出生以后的命运——没有根的私生子我就没有勇气来保住他了。丹红收养孩子我就安心了。[328]
>
> Translation:
>
> *They're in the living room talking about Yao-hua's death I'm thinking about the child in my womb. Tan-hung still can't decide if she wants to raise the child as she talks she feeds A-king milk. When I think of the child's fate after birth—an illegitimate child with no roots I don't have the courage to keep it. If Tan-hung raises the child I won't ever worry about it.* (italics by translators)[329]

From the appearance of the continuous run-on sentences, readers may easily form the impression that these lines are formal representations of Sangqing's flow of thoughts. However, it is not difficult for Chinese readers to dissect every line between the periods into two or three independent and comprehensible signifying

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[328] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Hong Kong, 1986, p. 253.

[329] Nieh, Hualing. *Mulberry and Peach: Two Women of China*. Yang, Jane Parish, and Linda Lappin trans. The Women's Press, London, 1986, p. 187.

units, each of which is semantically self-sufficient. These grammatical and logical statements, as one may find, are also plain enough to be translated correspondingly into simple sentences and adverbial clauses in English with their meaning and syntax intact. Moreover, although the paragraph is presented on the page in a way that reminds readers of the formal characteristics of stream of consciousness, its content is expressed through a mixture of narrative modes: The first two lines are first-person omniscient narrations, as the narrator I/Sangqing not only describes her own behavior of "thinking about the child in my womb," but also maintains an observant eye on other people's activities and is wary of their thoughts and feelings. Beginning with the adverbial clause "When I think of the child's fate after birth" as the condition for the main clause "I don't have the courage to keep it," the third line is actually Sangqing's self-expressive soliloquy but also implies potential addressees or even interlocutors such as the readers of her diary. Only the last line in this paragraph can be read as an interior monologue, through which we enter Sangqing's mind to find her making a self-comforting wish to herself. In short, whereas the physical appearance of this monologue—run-on sentences missing punctuation marks—could be identified with a literary technique rooted in the European tradition, its grammar, content, and modes of narration are beyond the limits of stream of consciousness, consisting of a more complicated mixture of language properties. Since the author retains the fundamental grammaticality of the Chinese language(s) of her text, she in effect only deploys the optical illusion of stream-of-consciousness by mirroring foreign narrative strategies on a purely visual plane.

Nieh's own overview of the literary techniques she uses in the novel may give us some insight into other formal elements that are involved in her writing. She

notes (what she believes to be) traditional Chinese narrative forms and styles are employed to depict the reality of the external world within the story, for instance, through exceptional focus on the details of things as well as representation of real historical incidents via her protagonist's life. Nieh has also performed "disturbing experiments" with the language of the novel including incorporating elements of classical Chinese language. In the above monologue of Sangqing, the author almost exclusively uses the premodern "o" nodal mark to separate groups of signifying units, in contrast to other types of narration in the novel where a modern punctuation system is used. Not only are the lines here insufficiently punctuated by modern Chinese standards, the lack of diversity in the punctuation marks that typically help distinguish the functions of smaller linguistic segments like clauses also reminds modern Chinese speakers of the formal features in classical Chinese language, which only used this one punctuation mark. In fact, rather than acting as the Chinese vernacular counterpart of the period ".", the "o" could also be understood as a punctuation mark in the tradition of the *judou* (句读) system, which exists uniquely in the classical Chinese language.

The *judou* system consists of basically two types of punctuation marks: "o" and "、". Since classical Chinese canons like the *Analects* by Confucius were written without any punctuation marks, it became highly desirable for later generations of classical Chinese scholars to teach and learn the methods of *judou* in order to understand and appreciate ancient thought. The functions of these marks thus differ from those of the period and the comma in that they not only denote the syntactical stops and pauses in a language but also delineate and emphasize the semantic unity of words. The linguistic component before each *judou* mark may not be merely simple sentences, clauses, or phrases but an extensive chain of signifying units

without intervals, which taken together generate complete and independent meaning. Whereas Western Germanic languages and those significantly impacted by them such as the modern Chinese vernacular employ diverse forms of punctuation marks to divide signifying units based on grammatical and syntactical principles, the *judou* system is more focused on distinguishing sense groups of unified meaning in a language. In short, rather than following technical rules, the *judou* system serves to highlight the semantic integrity of a signifying unit.[330]

Sangqing's monologue in question indeed invites the readers of Nieh's novel to view it as the author's experiment with the *judou* system, namely, with classical Chinese textual conventions. Each phrase before the "o" consists of simple sentences and clauses that revolve around similar or related themes. The first phrase juxtaposes the different actions of Sangqing and her friends in a conversation. The second is organized around the mentality and behavior of one particular character, Tan-hung. The topic of the third phrase is Sangqing's self-reflection on her unborn child. The last phrase focuses on a wish Sangqing made to herself. If we interpret the language form of this monologue according to the tradition of the *judou* system, it not only offers us a glimpse into the mind of Sangqing but also contributes structurally to the narrative in a performative way. In contrast to Sangqing's formally playful language, Taohong's lines on the same page appear to be less dazzling and "normal." For instance, following Sangqing's monologue quoted above, Taohong's voice appears to express her thought on the illegitimate child that Sangqing intends to give up. Taohong writes:

> 我和小邓趁丹红不在家的时候， 把狗放在野餐篮子里提出去了。小

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[330] In some cases, the *judou* simply marks the "breathing marks" of a text when it is read aloud, in the sense the reader pauses at semantically significant places in the text.

邓说丹红对于她的生活是无可无不可，她没有狗就会收养孩子了，

干脆把狗干掉吧。我倒不要她收养我的孩子，我只觉得杀狗是个新

鲜玩意儿。[331]

Translation:

When Tan-hung goes out, Teng and I put the dog [A-king, whom Tan-hung fed milk in Sangqing's monologue] in a picnic basket and take him away. Teng says Tan-hung doesn't know what to do with her life, if she doesn't have the dog then she will want to raise a child, so we'll simply get rid of the dog. But I don't want her to raise my child, I only think killing the dog is something new to do.[332]

On the one hand, Taohong is speaking in a language that is strictly punctuated following the principles of standardized modern Chinese vernacular;[333] on the other, it is Sangqing's language that could be simultaneously translated as that of the stream of consciousness and that of Chinese marked by the *judou* system. The juxtaposition of Sangqing and Taohong's monologues printed on the page with distinct linguistic and formal features visually draws our attention to the double personalities of the protagonist.

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331 *Sangqing yu Taohong.* Liaoning, 1990, p. 243.

332 *Mulberry and Peach*. London, 1986, p. 187.

333 It seems the English-language translation does not strictly follow the standard punctuation rules. However, in the original Chinese, Taohong's lines are grammatically and syntactically well formed. Moreover, in the original Chinese texts, although the nodal marks in Sangqing and Taohong's monologues appear visually the same in print, their functions are subtly different. For a Chinese-language reader, the nodal marks in Sangqing's language function more like those in the *judou* system, which indicate the end of semantic clusters; whereas the nodal marks in Taohong's language function more like the end stops in modern Chinese vernacular, a counterpart of periods in English, which indicate the grammatical end of a sentence.

Moreover, the ability to put *judou* marks in the *appropriate* places in classical Chinese rather than only in the *right* places as the standard Western Germanic languages require also indicates the integrity and coherence of the subject. To master the *judou* system, one should be able to group linguistic elements that are semantically similar or close and logically related to one another based on his or her understanding of the meaning, the aesthetic essence, and the musicality of a statement. As I have noted earlier, although Sangqing's monologue looks like a stream-of-consciousness narration, it is by no means disorganized or illogical. In addition, it is indeed semantically intelligible to its readers and syntactically coherent, if the monotonous "o" is posited as a consistent *judou* mark. Considered from this perspective, the formal features of Sangqing's language demonstrate her ability to speak and write meaningfully and logically, which precisely reinforces her integrity as a subject, therefore, her sanity.

Of course, one can still argue that, even if the continuous flow of Sangqing's thoughts expressed in these nearly punctuation-free statements is not pure stream of consciousness, it shows the intensity in the pace of her speech in contrast to Taohong's neatly punctuated sentences, thus a sign of her schizophrenic anxiety and bewilderment when confronted by the other self. At this point, however, it is worth asking: Is there a way to understand the identity of Sangqing and Taohong other than two mutually exclusive personalities resulting from the internal split of a schizophrenic, whose thought and language are usually marked by disorientation, disjunction, and unintelligibility? The juxtaposition of the two women speaking and writing in their respective signifying systems could also symbolize the reality of two languages co-existing in one body, that is, a bilingual subject. In this sense, *Sangqing yu Taohong* is not only multilingual on the textual level, since it has

become a super-sign, a text circulating among diverse languages and discourses that continue to play a role in its completion; it is also multilingual on the narrative level, since its protagonist is a host of symbiotic languages or language forms. As the text *per se* challenges and resists any attempt to claim it for a homogeneous discursive or linguistic territory, so too the narrative world of *Sangqing yu Taohong* shows, in parallel, the struggle of a bi-/multilingual subject against her reduction to just one identity.

Further, beyond the textual level, the authorial choice of Chinese language for the novel stealthily conceals the fact that Nieh has indeed created a diegetic world that is bi-/multilingual. The entire story is framed by the U.S. context. As the story unfolds with a conversation between Taohong and a U.S. immigration officer, the narrator must assume the role of an invisible translator, since the conversations are "occurring" in English but presented in Chinese (the prologue notes that the officer does not speak or read Chinese). The Prologue begins:

> "我不叫桑青！桑青已经死了！"
>
> "那么，请问，你叫什么名字？"美国移民局的人问。
>
> "叫什么都可以。 阿珠，阿绸，美娟，春香，秋霞，冬梅，秀英，翠芳，妞妞，宝宝，贝贝，莲英，桂芬，菊花。干脆就叫我桃红吧！" [334]
>
> Translation:
>
> "I am not Mulberry. Mulberry is dead!"
>
> "Well, what is your name then?" Asks the man from the Immigration Service.

[334] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Hong Kong, 1986, p. 7.

> "Call me anything you like. Ah-chu, Ah-ch'ou, Mei-chuan, Ch'un-hsiang, Ch'iu-hsia, Tung-mei, Hsiu-ying, Ts'ui-fang, Niu-niu, Pao-pao, Pei-pei, Lien-ying, Kuei-fen, Chu-hua. Just call me Peach, OK?"[335]

Everything that is narrated after this exchange is within the framework of Taohong's communication with the immigration officer, namely, in an English-speaking world: Taohong's disavowal of her being Sangqing is followed by an extended argument to convince the officer that she and Sangqing are two different people, from their habits to their personalities. Each of the next four parts of the novel begins with a letter from Taohong to the same officer while she runs away from his further investigation. In these letters, she describes the routes of her escape, with fragmentary images of the U.S. map, and tells about the people and things she encounters when she travels across the United States. Attached at the end of each letter, obviously diegetically written in English though rendered in Chinese in the original, is a set of diaries written in Chinese by Sangqing during her stay in mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. In short, the entire narrative is embedded in the U.S. context, with Taohong as the protagonist presenting her life experience to an immigration officer through varying forms of storytelling.

It is safe to assume that very few Chinese speakers who read the text in its original language would be particularly attentive to or even bothered by the diegetic reality that Taohong addresses the immigration officer in English—as if the language they read is truly that which the fictional characters speak. The narrator in Nieh's novel, however, at times unveils her role as the invisible translator to remind

[335] *Mulberry and Peach*. London, 1986, p. 3.

the readers of the multilingual existence of Taohong, thus bringing to light the fact that the text Chinese speakers read has been partially translated, in a domesticating fashion, from English. (This is also the case for Anglophone readers of the translation when it comes to, for instance, Sangqing's diaries written—within the diegetic world of the novel—in Chinese. Therefore, for English speakers, the novel is doubly translated at the textual level as well as at the level of the narrative world. In the following scenario, after several failed attempts to get Taohong to acknowledge her identity, the immigration officer turns to ask her for any information she knows about Sangqing even if they were not the same person:

> "OK, Peach, you win. I need your cooperation. Please tell me everything you know about Mulberry."
> "OK, listen." Peach sprawls on the floor and pillows her head with her arms. She crosses her legs and swings her calf up and down as she talks. She is speaking in Chinese.
> The agent can't understand. He paces back and forth. The papers rustle under his feet. He motions for her to stop, but she goes on speaking in Chinese. Gusts of wind are blowing in.
> He finally interrupts her. "Excuse me, may I use your bathroom?"[336]

By noting Taohong's switch to speaking in Chinese, the narrator calls our attention to the language Taohong has used in her conversation with the immigration officer prior to this moment, that is, English.

Taohong's renunciation of her identity as Sangqing at the beginning of their

[336] Ibid., p. 6.

conversation—“I am not Sangqing! Sangqing is dead!”—is still a verbal non-submission to, as Louis Althusser would have it, the interpellation of the Subject by the state apparatus, a power that is embodied here in the immigration officer.[337] From this moment on, however, the non-submission becomes more disturbing because it is performative and physically effective to the extent that it kindles the bodily discomfort of the officer. Not only does Taohong make a claim that “I am not Sangqing,” she also turns the scene of subjection into a Tower of Babel to alienate the immigration officer from her. This performative non-submission to subjection is responded to performatively by the immigration officer: He retreats to the bathroom, which is now a metaphor for shelter, because Taohong has become unintelligible and untranslatable to him. The mysterious unknown language is so powerful and scary that he does not even bother to demand that Taohong switch back to his monolingual comfort zone of English, but only moves about anxiously and, at best, motions for her to stop without success. In the end, that which interrupts Taohong’s Chinese speech is the departure of the immigration officer. Adding to his frustration is an earlier statement by Taohong in the same scene: “If you want to know about me, I won’t tell you anything. If you want to know about Mulberry, I’ll tell you everything I know.”[338] This promise immediately becomes nothing other than “lip service” as soon as she starts to speak Chinese. In short, the immigration officer fails to gather information about either Taohong or Sangqing. It is particularly intriguing that, after the moment of their first encounter, the monolingual immigration officer withdraws into the tiny

[337] Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation” in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. Monthly Review Press, 2001, pp. 85–126.

[338] *Mulberry and Peach*. London, 1986, p. 5.

enclosed space of a bathroom, whereas the bi-/multilingual Taohong escapes on a route that extensively covers the map of America.

The revelation in the Prologue of the bi-/multilingual diegetic world of the novel prefigures the linguistic distribution within the entire narrative of *Sangqing yu Taohong*: All of Taohong's letters to the immigration officer about her journey across the United States are written in English. However, as much as Taohong knows about Sangqing and is willing to tell stories about her, she spares not a single word in English for Sangqing's story; rather, she makes Sangqing speak for herself through diaries and other Chinese texts. In addition, each time she introduces Sangqing's diaries, she presents them with signposts at the end of her letters that function, structurally, to remind the immigration officer as well as us—her readers—of the bi-/multilingual nature of their respective texts:

> You requested me to tell you about Mulberry. Today I'm sending you her diary written in Qutang Gorge on the Yangtze River. More material about her will follow, piece by piece. Let me tell you, I know everything including the smallest details of her life.[339]
>
> [......]
>
> I am enclosing Mulberry's diary written in Peking, which was smuggled out under the Communist surveillance.[340]
>
> [......]
>
> Attached are Mulberry's diary in the U.S., several letters from

[339] *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Hong Kong, 1986, p. 21.

[340] Ibid., p. 90.

Jiang Yibo [a Chinese professor, her lover], several letters

Mulberry wrote in New York [to her Chinese-speaking friends]

but failed to mail, and letters from Sangwa [her daughter] in

Taiwan.[341]

(my translations from the 1986 Hong Kong version)[342]

Taohong's persistence in presenting Sangqing's side of the story in Chinese, either through her verbal narration or Sangqing's written texts, seems to resonate metaphorically with their split personalities: Sangqing is Chinese-speaking and Taohong is English-speaking. But it can also be understood as the reality of a bi-/multilingual subject in an Anglophone-dominated context as Sangqing/Taohong is in effect bilingual and chooses to speak respective languages when she senses it is appropriate and necessary. After all, if not read allegorically or symbolically, Sangqing and Taohong are truly one person in the reality of the diegetic world. Rather than being two separate personalities of a schizophrenic, Taohong and Sangqing are mutually generative and dependent. Their co-existence is spatial as well as temporal. Sangqing is born in the past, evolves from the past, and carries with her the monolingual past into an afterlife as the bi-/multilingual Taohong.

All the way from war-ridden mainland China to Taiwan and then to the United States, however, there is no mention in the story about the way in which or the time when the protagonist acquires her second language. Sangqing's diary in Taiwan

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[341] Ibid., p. 204.

[342] I have decided to translate these parts from the 1986 Hong Kong edition, the then most complete version of the story. Several lines and words are missing in the English translation (Women's Press, London, 1986) that I mostly refer to here. This 1986 English-language edition is a republication of the 1981 English translation simultaneously published by New World Press in Beijing and Sino Publishing Company in New York, an altered version of Nieh's original Chinese-language typescript.

ends with the conversation with a police officer in the attic in which she and her family have been hiding. With no explanation of how she travels overseas, Sangqing begins her last diary entry with an interview taking place in the U.S. immigration office in New York—rendered again in Chinese in the Chinese-language versions. It can be taken for granted, though, that the interview is conducted in English. This is the first instance of Sangqing speaking in English in the novel.[343] Moreover, it is in the middle of this part of the novel that Taohong's voice emerges, which goes hand in hand with Sangqing's growth into a bi-/multilingual speaker. Such diegetic facts call into question the Sinocentric readings I reviewed earlier in this chapter. Rather than a schizophrenic who symbolizes the separation between mainland China and Taiwan, the Sangqing/Taohong problematic is more immediately related to the tension within the protagonist's linguistic identity. In addition, it is as early as the interview at the immigration office in New York, recounted in Sangqing's diary in Part IV, that the bi-/multilingual play with the bureaucratic force of the Immigration Service starts to take shape. In the interview, an investigator goes over the documents of Sangqing, whose name is printed on the file at the time as Helen Sangqing Shen, and asks:

> "Helen, are there any mistakes in the form?"
>
> "My name is Sāngqīng (桑青/Mulberry)[344]. I haven't used the

[343] I should note again that, in terms of the temporal order of events, the scenario in the prologue takes place a few days before January 13, 1970, the date of Taohong's first letter to the immigration officer. But Sangqing's diary in Part IV ends in early January. The last line of the diary is a piece of news about a woman (Sangqing) who gets hurt in a car accident. The same news appears in the scribble on the wall of Sangqing/Taohong's apartment at the beginning of the prologue. Therefore, the prologue is a flashback, whose opening is connected to the end of the last diary entry in Part IV. The interview at the immigration office in New York that Sangqing narrates in her diary early in Part IV should be read as the beginning of all events in the United States in the diegetic world.

[344] In the English translation of the novel published by The Women's Press (1986), the translators fail to reflect the different pronunciations of Sangqing in the conversation—for instance, by

name Helen for a long time."

"Sàngqīng (丧青/Sinking)—foreign names sure sound funny.

Now, let's get back to business."

[......]

"Now, I want to ask you some questions. What is your name?"

"Shěn Sāngqīng (沈桑青/Mulberry Shen)."

"I'm sorry. Please use the name Helen Sàngqīng Shen (Helen

Sinking Shen). What is your nationality?"

"Chinese."[345]

Nowhere else in the novel does the name Helen appear. All her acquaintances in the United States, including English-speaking Americans, call her Sangqing. Twice in the story we see the protagonist disavow an identity that the U.S. immigration service attempts to project on her by playing heterolingual games. The name Helen on her application file is clearly registered with an attempt to assimilate into the dominant monolingual Anglophone culture of the United States. Sangqing's insistence on her Chinese name in an English conversation is not a Sinocentric nationalist sentiment that merely uses one monolingualism to oppose another. Instead, she highlights her bi-/multilingual existence by sticking to the name Sangqing in her immigration interview, which is being held in English.

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transliterating "Sangqing" and using a different spelling of the pinyin in the officer's words to denote his mistake—but simply translate all of them into "Mulberry." In Nieh's original Chinese text, however, Sangqing does not call herself "Mulberry" but insists on pronouncing her name in Chinese, "Sangqing." The author uses 桑青(Sāngqīng, with "sang" pronounced as in "Sanskrit") and 丧青 (Sàngqīng, with "sang" pronounced as in "son") to show that the immigration officer is confused about the tones in Chinese language and mispronounces Sangqing's name. Therefore, I adjust the English translation here and add the original words from the Chinese version with their domesticated translations in the brackets.

[345] *Mulberry and Peach*. London, 1986, p. 157.

At this point, the word *Sangqing* has already become a super-sign through travelling and translation: For one, it has gone through different Chinese cultures and geopolitics. In addition, while the U.S. immigration interviewer finds its equivalent in the name Helen, the protagonist rejects the latter and insists on that which is foreign to the immigration officer. Her response intimates that there is something untranslatable in the word *Sangqing*, something that she does not wish to share in the language of the immigration interviewer. The translation of Sangqing into the homogenizing English-language name Helen misses the complex historicity and politics Sangqing's Chinese name carries. The interviewer's failure to reproduce accurately its pronunciation in English, which is rendered in Chinese as using the wrong characters—not to mention his ignorance of its semantic root—indicates that the bi-/multilingual person cannot be claimed by or reduced into a monolingual culture.[346]

In a similar vein, Taohong's denial that she is Sangqing in the Prologue is a declaration that it is implausible for a bi-/multilingual subject like her to return to the monolingual past, rather than a denial of the past itself. As a bi-/multilingual subject, the protagonist is translated from a monolingual one. This monolingual being haunts her, lives in her, but cannot define her. Sangqing is not a fragment that Taohong can separate or suppress into the silent unconscious, but a linguistic self

[346] The Chinese words in the square brackets are from Nieh's original text. Mandarin Chinese is a tonal language and the same syllable can be pronounced in four tones to differentiate meaning, which is reflected in the written forms. Here, sāng/桑 in Sangqing should be pronounced in the first tone. However, the investigator mispronounces it in the fourth tone. Sangqing (or the author) records his pronunciation as sàng/丧 to indicate that the immigration investigator has failed to capture both the pronunciation and the culturally-rooted meaning of the character. Whereas sāng/桑 refers to the sacred mulberry tree that, in Chinese culture, symbolizes fertility and love, sàng/丧 is an ominous character in Chinese which means death or loss. Therefore, for Chinese-speaking readers, it is really not the Chinese name that is funny, as the investigator comments. Rather, he himself is actually the one being made fun of in Sangqing's diary.

that is indispensable and has to be given voice. This imperative sets the tone for the entire structure of the narrative. When the immigration officer visiting Taohong notes that there is no furniture in her apartment, she replies, “The furniture belonged to Mulberry. I don’t want anything that belonged to a dead person, so I called the Salvation Army to haul it away.”[347] Nevertheless, Taohong contradicts herself by keeping all of Sangqing’s diaries as well as other Chinese-language texts related to her such as newspaper clippings, religious scriptures, and correspondence. In other words, whereas the extra-lingual material past of the protagonist may be ditched, her alternative linguistic selves cannot be “haul[ed] away.” Moreover, instead of addressing the immigration officer homolingually, Taohong persists in presenting him with bi-/multilingual texts, as well as following formal principles of the various language systems concerned, which suggests that there is always something in one of her linguistic selves that cannot be translated or interpellated by another. In other words, the co-existence of Sangqing and Taohong suggests that being bi-/multilingual requires one to express meanings in the languages to which they respectively belong. Perhaps the most telling example in the novel is the bilingual scribble on the wall of Sangqing/Taohong’s apartment:

花非花

我即花

雾非雾

我即雾

我即万物

谁怕蒋介石

谁怕毛泽东

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[347] *Mulberry and Peach*. London, 1986, p. 4.

Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf

柯宁斯无线电工厂

电动镜子电动梳子电动牙刷电动脑[348]

(selected examples from the original)

Translation:

Flower is not flower

I am the flower

Fog is not fog

I am the fog

I am everything

Who is afraid of Chiang Kai-shek

Who is afraid of Mao Tse-tung

Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf

Corning's Radio Plant

Electric mirror electric comb electric toothbrush electric brain

(my translation)[349]

In this text, one finds a mixture of Chinese and English, quotations from classical Chinese poems,[350] lists of unpunctuated words translated randomly from American advertisements, billboards, and road signs. Curiously enough, the immigration officer asks for permission to copy them down in his notebook, which again puts

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348 *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Hong Kong, 1986, pp. 8-10.

349 Again, some lines are missing in the English translation (Women's Press, 1986). Thus I use my translation based on the 1986 Hong Kong version.

350 "Flower is not flower" and "Fog is not fog" are two stanzas from Bai Juyi's Tang Dynasty poem "Flower Is Not Flower."

him under the readers' interrogation as to whether he has the capability to transcribe everything, since he (presumably) does not read Chinese.

Conclusion

Nieh's *Sangqing yu Taohong* has created a site for us to rethink the question of literary bi-/multilingualism and the practice of writing in the language of the Other. How do we define bi-/multilingualism? How do we define a language as that of the Other? The conventional view that being bi-/multilingual means mastering two or more languages in nation-state terms seems insufficient to explain a work like *Sangqing yu Taohong*. Although it appears to be monolingual, it has become, as Lydia Liu would have it, a hetero-lingual and hetero-cultural super-sign that travels across various linguistic and discursive territories, rather than just nation-states. Each of these territories leaves exclusive marks on the text, which may be incommensurable with that which seem to be homolingual communities or cultures. Underneath the monolingual appearance of *Sangqing yu Taohong*, we see how hetero-linguistic elements intersect and intermingle in the text. Resonating with the bi-/multilingualism on the textual level, Nieh also creates on the narrative level a bi-/multilingual diegetic world, in which the narrator as translator emerges on the page to remind us of the condition of the protagonist living as a bi-/multilingual in a dominantly monolingual context.

I would like to end this chapter with Dipesh Chakrabarty's discussion of bilinguality, which kindles deeper thinking about Nieh and her novel:

> Bilinguality, or even multilinguality, is thus a critical weapon in the struggle for many-centered worlds, provided we realize that there is no inherent contradiction between being able to imagine

> the world in many different languages and engaging with the "deep tradition" that each of these languages may claim to embody. ... By "bilinguality" I mean the capacity to experience, and equally important, the capacity to *express* the world in the two languages concerned (that is, to be able to participate in the life forms to which the languages belong). (italics in the original)[351]

For writers like Nieh, even the Chinese-speaking world is already "many-centered." The Chinese-s she uses or is driven to use in her writing—that of Communist China, of Taiwan, of Chinese Americans, of modern times, of classical times, and that translated from English—surely put her in the position to imagine a fictional world of multilingualism, and to engage with each tradition, culture, and history that are embedded in these Chinese-s. For while there seems an *inherent* co-existence of worlds in different languages embodied in Nieh's protagonist as well as in her literary career, as I have been arguing throughout this chapter, it is still worth questioning whether the *historical* and *political* contradictions represented in the bilingual and cross-cultural body of Sangqing/Mulberry could really be neglected.

[351] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Notes toward a Conversation between Area Studies and Diasporic Studies" in *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2001, pp. 117-118.

Epilogue

For writers caught in the world-wide debate on the choice of language in the post-colonial era, literary bilingualism, particularly in the realm of creative writing, becomes a question more of ethical than of aesthetic importance. For instance, Chinua Achebe's resolute advocacy for the relevance of English-language writing by African writers notwithstanding, his words are notably underlined by a sense of resignation and melancholy, and even discontent, that are commonly found in post-colonial subjects. "The real question is not whether Africans *could* write in English, but whether they *ought to*." He writes, "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal, and produces a guilty feeling." Achebe continues, "But for me there is no other choice. I have been *given* this language and I intend to use it" (my italics).[352] The importance of continuing to write in English in post-colonial Africa is still problematized by the fact that "history forced [the language] down our [Africans'] throats."[353]

Such an emotional burden in the face of multiple languages, however, can be barely sensed in the works and life experiences of the bi-/multilingual Chinese authors that I examine in this project. Writing in both their native language, Chinese, and in a non-native language, English in this case, the bilingual Chinese authors do not seem to have been so bothered by the difficult either-or situation that appears to preoccupy the Achebe(s) and their opponents—the Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o(s)—of Africa, even at times when foreign imperialist powers carved up the Chinese map

352 Achebe, Chinua. "English and the African Writer" in *Transition*, No. 75/76, 1997, p. 348.

353 Ibid., p. 346.

geopolitically as well as linguistically. Although the practice of writing in English undeniably results from the presence of imperialist and colonialist forces and is marked by the Orientalist ideology embedded in the language itself, writers in a (post)semi-colonial context such as China indeed enjoy more liberty and flexibility in their employment of the language, because their access to their native language has never been denied.

However, as history places a burden on the post-colonial subject to make the hard decision between one language and the other, the liberty bi-/multilingual Chinese authors are given in their English-language writing is also fettered by the particular historical responsibilities they need to assume at different stages. The contributors to *The China Critic*, for example, intended to redefine the idea of liberal cosmopolitanism by engaging with issues that uniquely concerned China and Chinese people but were also of universal merits. Their debates with a public beyond the Chinese-speaking world in the 1920s and 1930s were part of China's endeavor to find its path of modernity as a nation-state. Nevertheless, writing in non-native languages in the early decades during the first half of the twentieth century, these bi-/multilingual Chinese authors had to confront a cosmopolitan readership—a readership of diverse national and imperialist allegiances—that further complicated the negotiation and identification of a Chinese modernity that was playing out within the homolingual Chinese community (Chapter One).

The experience of writing in the language of the Other is never an easy process, not because one needs to strive to show his mastery of the language like a native speaker. On the contrary, the difficulty lies in how one convinces native speakers that what has been taken for granted in the latter's language (both linguistically and ideologically) could or even should be altered, adjusted, and, in some cases,

abandoned, while still ensuring a cosmopolitan communicability, though not necessarily commensurability. Achebe famously recapitulates this task for bi-/multilingual writers:

> So my answer to the question, "Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing?" is certainly, "Yes." If on the other hand you ask, "Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker?" I should say, "I hope not." It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language so much that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost.[354]

Thus, it is key to speak and write *not* like a native speaker. A case in point in this study is Lin Yutang, a master in both Chinese and English. As one of the most well-known cultural ambassadors between China and the United States from the 1930s to the 1950s, his experiments with the English language and the aesthetic traditions rooted in it when he wrote about his fellow countrymen were his peculiar answer to the invitations, interpretations, and interpellations of his English-speaking interlocutors. Instead of simply reducing such practice to a kind of *resistance against* the imperialist characteristics embedded in the English language, we might understand it as a necessary *reinvention* of English in order to better articulate his China-based stories (Chapter Two).

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[354] Ibid., p. 347.

But do the flexibility and liberty that China's (post)semi-colonial history allows these bi-/multilingual Chinese authors—namely, the accessibility of one's native language and the creolization of the languages of the Other—truly promise a home that is intact and stable? Eileen Chang's 1950s English-language rewriting of her earlier Chinese-language works in terms of theme, narrative style, and design of fictional characters suggests there is something "at home" in the past that one cannot conveniently return to and translate into the present (Chapter Three). That the return to one's native language is an arduous Odyssey is more true for bi-/multilingual writers like Nieh Hualing, who has witnessed the split of her mother tongue in partisan fights and the wandering of this language into a stranger's land through diasporic experiences. The choice of Chinese as the major language for creative writing while physically inhabiting the U.S. within the Cold War context means constantly testing the linguistic and cultural boundaries of the so-called mother tongue; because, from afar, the author in this particular case does not have a firm expectation where and to whom her text will be able to travel (Chapter Four).

In fact, the concept of "returning to Chinese language" is problematic in itself. In 1945, due to the Chinese Civil War, *The China Critic* was permanently terminated after having been briefly resumed after its suspension between 1940 and 1944. At the time, many of its contributors were no longer active in the literary world and disappeared from recorded history. Lin Yutang was one of the few exceptions, mostly because he had left China in the mid-1930s and lived in New York for a majority of time between 1936 and 1966. As his prime time in the English-language literary world came to a close in the late 1940s, Lin turned his focus to the invention of the famous (yet failed) *Mingkwai* Chinese typewriter and

later to the compilation of the gigantic *Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage* (1972). Receiving no luck in the U.S. book market, Eileen Chang devoted herself to archival research of the Chinese classical novel *Hongloumeng* (*Dream of the Red Chamber*) and translation of *Haishanghua liezhuan* (*The Sing-Song Girls of Shanghai*). Besides republishing her works of the 1940s, she completed only a few essays and short stories in Chinese from the 1970s until her death in 1995. Hualing Nieh continues to compose her fictional works in Chinese and manages to have them published for a wider variety of readerships. At the same time, she remains active in the works of The International Writing Workshop up to this day. "The medium of language," as Rey Chow suggests, "is hardly history free."[355] The (post)semi-colonial history of China leaves a unique mark on the work and life of bi-/multilingual Chinese authors. While it affords them liberty in their choice of languages, it also places on them a double mission: the reinvention of the language of the Other and the rediscovery of, if not return to, the Chinese language.

[355] Chow, Rey. *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Languaging as a Postcolonial Experience*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 38.

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