THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Love, Power and Resistance: Representations of Chinese-Caucasian Romance in Twentieth-Century Anglophone Literature

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by

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Abstract

This thesis has examined a body of Anglophone literature centred on Chinese-Caucasian romance across the twentieth century, a time when such interracial literature started to emerge in a wide range of genres. Aiming to map out the evolution of the representations of interracial alliances in the works of British and American writers, the thesis has incorporated literary texts published chronologically across the century. In analysing the primary texts within a socio-historical context and under the theoretical framework of Orientalism, the discursive writerly strategies deployed to represent the Chinese – the racial Other – have been investigated. Concurrently the discussions have gone beyond Orientalism through accentuating the pitfalls in the indiscriminate application of this approach. This thesis has also undertaken a comparative study of how Western writers and Western writers of Chinese ancestry represent the motif of Chinese-Caucasian romance differently, and how the cultural hybridity of the latter group has influenced their perceptions of the Chinese and complicated the boundary between the Self and the Other.

This thesis has discovered that literary representations of successful interracial union were rare in the twentieth century. In order to sidestep the miscegenation laws or compromise the textual ambivalences regarding interracial relationships, most of the texts end with the death of the protagonists, the transformation of an interracial alliance into an intra-racial one, or the displacement of interracial love from the metropolitan West to the peripheral East. In addition, the Chinese characters are largely silenced and associated with darkness in literary works before the 1940s, while the works of the mid-twentieth century start to give centre stage to a Chinese presence. This study also gives prominence to the heterogeneity of literary texts, which suggests the possibility of intertextual dialogues through challenging the 'Madame Butterfly' or 'white knight' narratives. These counter-energies further contest the monolithic voice of the Orientalist discourse. By categorizing the primary texts, this thesis proposes two terms – manifest stereotyping (an uncontroversial negative representation of the Other) and latent stereotyping (a hidden or unconscious abstraction of the Other), which help draw attention to the problematics of intercultural representations.

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Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my parents, Zhaotao Zeng and Guitao Deng, and my brother, Shuai Zeng, whose selfless love and trust keeps me marching forward in the darkest moments of my pursuit. My father expressed the wish to read the Chinese version of my work, so I hope that one day I can rewrite this thesis in Chinese for him – my most inspirational reader.

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BF Rohmer, S. (2009) *Bride of Fu Manchu*. Cornwall: House of Stratus.

CC Burke, T. (2003) 'The Chink and the Child'. In *Limehouse Nights*. Rockville: Wildside Press, 15-37.

EW Shipman, S. & Hymer, J. B. (1918) *East Is West: A Comedy in Three Acts and A Prologue by Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer*. New York & London: Samuel French.

FWR Rockhill, W. W. (ed.) (1900) *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253-55.* Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Limited.

JB Steinbeck, J. (1995) 'Johnny Bear'. In *The Long Valley: With an Introduction and Notes by John H, Timmerman*. London: Penguin Group, 101-120.

MB Hwang, D. H. (1989) *M. Butterfly*. New York: New American Library.

MM O'Neill, E. (1927) *Marco Millions*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

MP Rhys, E. (ed.) (1908) *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Venetian.* London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

MST Han, S. Y. (1952) *A Many-Splendoured Thing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

MT Letts, M. (ed.) (1953) *Mandeville's Travels.* London: University Press Oxford.

PW Buck, P. S. (2012) *Pavilion of Women*. New York: Moyer Bell.

SG Beach, R. (1929) *Son of Gods*. New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

WSW Mason, R. (2011) *The World of Suzie Wong*. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Introduction

Recalling the experience of going to watch Ellen Kent's production of Giacomo Puccini's (1858-1924) *Madame Butterfly* (1904) at Hull New Theatre on a cold rainy night earlier this year, I still remember how deeply it struck me to witness the audience, old and young, weep sporadically throughout the performance over the tragic love story between Cio-Cio San (Madame Butterfly) and B. F. Pinkerton, Lieutenant in the United States Navy.[1] It was also quite a scene to see when the cast came onto the stage to answer a curtain fall, the whole audience booed the performer who played the role of Pinkerton not because of his unsatisfactory performance but because of the fact that he played the unconscientious Pinkerton, who abandons the loyal Madame Butterfly. As one of the rare Asian faces among the audience, I underwent a completely divergent psychological trajectory from the others due to the multiple roles that I allowed myself to assume in relation to the opera: a researcher, a woman and an Asian. I was then and am still (at the time of writing this introduction) conducting the research project of representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance in English literature. I went beyond the pure enjoyment of the performance and was occupied with the following thoughts: what has sustained the popularity of *Madame Butterfly* as one of the classics in the repertoire of Western opera? [2] What are the similarities and differences between this particular opera and the literary texts I was looking at? Why does Madame Butterfly have to die? Moreover, as an Asian woman, I was somehow vehemently resisting Cio-Cio San's subservience and hoping that she could live on independently after the desertion rather than kill herself for the unworthy Pinkerton. The mixed feelings that overwhelmed me during the performance to some extent answered the question asked by Helga, Rene Gallimard's wife, in the Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988): '[w]hy can't they just hear it as a piece of beautiful music?' (*MB*, 19). Helga's words smack of obvious sarcasm, indicating that 'they' – the Chinese in her case –

[1] I have used the term 'Madame Butterfly' in several formats throughout the thesis: the italicised *Madame Butterfly* refers to Puccini's opera; Madame Butterfly without the single quotation marks refers to Cio-Cio San or Cio-Cio San-like characters; and 'Madame Butterfly' stands for the narrative, discourse, paradigm or canon that perpetuates unequal relations between the submissive Oriental woman and the authoritative white man. The 'Madame Butterfly' discourse will be detailed in subsequent sections.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, 'Western' and 'West' in this thesis mainly refer to Europe and America. In the discussion of primary texts, 'Western writers' refer to American and British writers. In addition, it should be noted that the author's use of the word 'Oriental' in her argument does not suggest any derogatory meanings.

could and should enjoy *Madame Butterfly* as a piece of beautiful music. However, as a Chinese myself, I have to admit that *Madame Butterfly* suggests more cultural meanings than its sheer aesthetic significance.

This anecdote directs our attention to the fact that while the Western audience at large have been consuming Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* for more than a century since its premiere at La Scala in 1904, they are unaware that the 'Madame Butterfly' story and its variants (reworking and retellings) have constructed a narrative, discourse or canon dictating how interracial romances between the Asian woman and the white man should be represented in literary texts, on screen or through other channels in the West, although the original story is about a relationship between a Japanese woman and an American man.[3] In explaining the compelling zeal for the 'Madame Butterfly' narrative in the West and particularly the United States, W. Anthony Sheppard asserts that '[b]utterfly has been made to perform a good deal of cultural work over the past hundred years, and has always been entangled in the web of race and gender perception in American popular culture' (Sheppard, 2005, 59-60). This narrative, with its diverse variants across a broad range of genres, designates unequal relations between the submissive Oriental female and the authoritative white male, and also points to Orientalist ideologies in intercultural representations through its gendered readings of the East.

Taking the 'Madame Butterfly' narrative and the multi-layered cultural meanings it enacts as the point of departure, I would like to shift the focus to the body of interracial literature that is produced by and circulates in the West. In *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations*, Werner Sollors defines interracial literature as 'works in all genres that represent love and family relations involving interracial couples, biracial individuals, their descendants, and their larger kin' (Sollors, 2011). Sollors's investigation focuses on black-white romance in texts and the thematic recurrences pertaining to the characterization of interracial alliances. According to Sollors, the interracial theme has always been the target of public criticism no matter whether it appears in the classics of the past or the works of the most respectable modern writers (Sollors, 2011). Interestingly, Sollors points out that

[3] W. Anthony Sheppard provides a list of selected works related to the 'Madame Butterfly' narrative, which includes its reworking and retellings in various genres, such as Pierre Loti's novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887, the precursor), the sound film *Sayonara* (1957, dir. Joshua Logan, mus. Franz Waxman), and the musical *Miss Saigon* (1989, mus. Claude-Michel Schönberg). For more information, refer to W. Anthony Sheppard, 'Cinematic Realism, Reflexivity and the American "Madame Butterfly" Narratives', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 17(1), March 2005, 59-93.

> [i]t seems evident that—despite legal prohibition, religious denunciation, moral indignation, or social opposition from political conservatives, liberals, or radicals—more literary works about 'forbidden' couples and their descendants have been written, published, read, and debated than is usually assumed, and some attempts have also been undertaken to survey, catalog, and describe the vast materials that are in existence. [4] (Sollors, 2011)

In contrast to the fact that a great number of interracial literature has been written and circulating under unfavourable legal, religious, moral and social conditions, an equally intriguing phenomenon is that the authors of such works often resort to various means to transform what looks like an interracial romance at the beginning into an intra-racial one at the end (Sollors, 2011). The formula of removing interracial alliance completely from literary texts can take various forms, such as the frequently adopted 'Mulatto-Proved-White' strategy, i.e., the protagonist turns out to be white rather than mulatto. Jolie A. Sheffer makes similar observations in *The Romance of Race: Incest, Miscegenation, and Multiculturalism in the United States, 1880-1930* (2003).

> Turn-of-the-twentieth-century racial romances are frequently anything but 'romantic' in the conventional sense, featuring, as they do, coercion and exploitation, rape and death, misrecognition and thwarted unions. These domestic allegories question the possibility of mutuality and consent, even as they affirm the deep-seated desire structuring interracial sexuality. In this way, racial romance connotes a literary and psychological form in which eroticism functions at a deep, unconscious level, providing a window into a nation's fantasies and fears. (Sheffer, 2013, 20)

The moment when the 'interracial to intra-racial' formula is initiated in the text, or the moment when conventional 'unromantic' features of interracial romances (coercion, exploitation, death, etc.) are inserted into the text, forms the 'point of ritual death', which 'marks the moment in the narrative when the union between heroine and hero, the hoped-for resolution, seems absolutely impossible, when it seems that the barrier will remain, more substantial than ever' (Regis, 2003, 35). 'Ritual death' does not necessarily mean physical death but any plot setting or twist that jeopardizes or removes an interracial alliance. The

[4] For more information on the chronology of interracial literature that represents black-white romance and also legislation prohibiting interracial marriage and cohabitation, refer to the appendices in Werner Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations.*
Available at: http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195052824.001.0001/acprof-9780195052824 [Accessed 10 September 2015].

'Mulatto-Proved-White' strategy, for example, implies a point of ritual death, namely, the moment when the mulatto is turned into white.

I Research Aims and Questions

As Sollors has examined an ensemble of literary texts thematized on black-white romance, Western literary representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance remain an understudied territory. There are a few studies carried out to expound the representations of interracial romances between Asians and Caucasians in general. For example, Gina Marchetti, in *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (1993), has investigated a wide range of Hollywood cinematic depictions of Asian-Caucasian sexual liaisons and summarized the fixed patterns that govern the representations of interracial relationships. She has also uncovered the fundamental economic, social and cultural reasons for Hollywood's interest in miscegenation narratives. In Marchetti's analysis, the commercial appeal of such narratives, as well as the utilization of these narratives to address issues related to race, gender, class and the construction of national identity in the United States, form the primary reasons for Hollywood's romance with Asia, which 'tends to be a flirtation with the exotic rather than an attempt at any genuine intercultural understanding' (Marchetti, 1993, 1). Sheridan Prasso's *The Asian Mystique: Dragon Ladies, Geisha Girls & Our Fantasies of the Exotic Orient* (2005), draws on her living and working experience in Asia to challenge the 'Asian Mystique' – the cultural and political stereotypes of Asia that have dominated Western thinking for centuries. Both studies focus on the broader theme of Asian-Caucasian liaisons and have undeniably, to various extents, touched upon the representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance in particular films or texts, but neither has looked at the emergence and evolution of the presence of Chinese-Caucasian relationships in literary texts. In other words, no work has been done to chart the body of interracial literature that deals with Chinese-Caucasian romance in the same way as Sollors researches into black-white liaison in literary texts. Therefore, the present thesis attempts to fill this gap by addressing the following questions: how does Chinese-Caucasian romance emerge and evolve in literary texts of the twentieth century? What are the socio-historical contexts that have fostered the changes? What are the recurrent themes in the texts? What representational strategies are deployed by Western writers to engage with the racial Other? How does this

ensemble of texts with a shared thematic orientation work with and against Orientalist readings of the East?[5]

While the preceding epochs saw the scantiness of representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance in either literary or non-literary forms, the twentieth century witnessed the proliferation of such representations across various genres, such as short stories, fictions, plays and films. The novelistic, comic and filmic representations of the demonic Fu Manchu image are cases in point. In *Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933) by Sax Rohmer (1883-1959), Fu Manchu embodies a perilous threat to white womanhood with his evil plans to keep captive white females and destroy the white race. Prior to the twentieth century, the most well-known depiction of interracial relationships is Horace Walpole's (1717-1797) short story, 'Mi Li: A Chinese Fairy Tale' (1785). In the story, a Chinese prince is bound by the curse that he will become the unhappiest man unless he marries a bride who has the same name as that of his father's dominion. In order to break this curse, he travels around the world, overcomes numerous difficulties and ultimately finds the right princess in England, who is named Caroline Campbell and becomes the princess of China.[6] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Frank Norris (1870-1902), who writes about the Chinese community on the West Coast, narrates a love story between a French sailor (Rouveroy) and a Chinese flower vendor girl (Lalo Da) in the short story 'After Strange Gods' (1894). The protagonists meet and fall in love with each other at the World's Fair in France. One day, Rouveroy tells Lalo Da that he receives the order to join his ship at New Orleans. While Rouveroy is away, the saddened Lalo Da prays for reuniting with him. Fate somehow efficaciously answers Lalo's prayer and arranges an accidental encounter between them in San Francisco. Before long, Lalo is infected with small-pox when it breaks out in the crowded alleys of Chinatown, with her

[5] For the purpose of consistency, the following terms will be capitalized throughout the thesis: the Other, the Self, Othering, Otherization, Orientalized, Orientalization. However, if these terms appear in the citations taken from other scholars, their original formats will be kept.

[6] Another contemporaneous account that draws resources from ancient Chinese kingdoms and royal families is the Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi's (1720-1806) play, *Turandot* (1762). It tells the story of the ruthless Turandot, Princess of China, who declares that all her suitors have to solve three riddles before they have the chance to marry her and will be beheaded if they fail. Calàf, the Prince of Tartary, falls in love with Turandot and courageously puts himself to the test. He passes the test, but the cold-hearted Turandot still intends to sentence him to death. Calàf suggests that he will accept the death sentence if Turandot manages to guess his name before dawn the next day. Turandot imprisons Calàf's father and minister, but gets nothing out of them. At this point, Adelma, one of Turandot's slaves, tries to persuade Calàf to escape with her (she has been in love with Calàf ever since he was at her court, when she was still a princess). Calàf resists, but slips his name, which Adelma reveals to Turandot. Turandot, having gained her victory, marries Calàf, with whom she has, by now, fallen in love. Gozzi's play inspired several operatic adaptations, the most renowned of which is Giacomo Puccini's homonymous three-act opera, *Turandot* (1926).

features severely deformed and puckered by the epidemic. As Lalo is afraid of losing Rouveroy's love after he sees her twisted complexion, she succeeds in blinding him surreptitiously. Ultimately, the two manage to live on in China, with one distorted by disease and the other being blind. Interestingly enough, the first-person narrator in the text calls for lenience with Lalo's wrongdoing in view of the fact that she is after all only half-civilized and also a woman (Norris, 1894, 378). Moreover, Rouveroy is overwhelmed by the excitement of being in love with an exotic girl and in the meantime expresses concerns about the appropriateness of his romantic involvement with a Chinese flower girl. These textual details, along with the meticulously designed ending, in which the hero and heroine have to sacrifice physical integrity for interracial union (this is also where the previously-discussed 'point of ritual death' applies), to some extent, anticipate the overall thematic orientation of Chinese-Caucasian romance in literary representations in the forthcoming twentieth century. Differing from Walpole and Gozzi's fairy-tale style, which is less entangled with race, gender and the general sensitivity towards interracial alliance, Norris's text at the turn of the twentieth century ushers in a new era that has produced an ensemble of interracial literature on the much legally and morally censored topic of Chinese-Caucasian romance.

In the twentieth century, the portrayal of Chinese-Caucasian romance emerged in a variety of literary genres, including short stories, fictions, autobiographical novels and plays. Most of the stories are no longer written in the fairy-tale style that has been seen in Walpole's tale and Gozzi's play in the eighteenth century. For example, Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child' is believed to draw its information from the author's talks with his Chinese friend in London's Limehouse district; Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* is inspired by the author's travel to Hong Kong in the 1950s; and Han Suyin's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* is based on her own romantic relationship with an English journalist. Another important feature of the representation of Chinese-Caucasian romance in the twentieth century is that Western writers of Chinese ancestry also became engaged with this topos. The works by the Eurasian writer Han Suyin and the Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang, who both write in the English language in the Western literary circle, will be studied in comparison with their Western counterparts in Chapter 5. The purpose of drawing comparisons between these two categories of writers is to investigate how Han and Hwang's cultural hybridity has influenced their representations of the motif in question and how the Self/Other dichotomy is complicated and blurred by their cultural duality.

The proliferation of literatures on Chinese-Caucasian romance was driven by the incoming of a large number of Chinese immigrants into the United States and Britain since the latter half of the nineteenth century as well as the concomitant social problems caused by the immigrants.[7] The turbulent social conditions in China back then also played an important part in narrowing the geographical and cultural distance between the two races. For example, the two Opium Wars that lasted from the 1840s to the 1860s led to the occupation of Chinese territories by Western imperial powers and also forced the Chinese to immigrate to other parts of the world. In the United States, the influx of Chinese immigrants was attributable to the Gold Rush in the 1850s. In Britain, the employment of Chinese merchant seamen in World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) and their subsequent settlements in port cities like Liverpool gave rise to local Chinese communities. Such historical realities resulted in more frequent physical and cultural encounters between the Chinese and Caucasians, which further inspired writers of the time to explore a wide range of issues brought about by the incoming immigrants, such as America's wage depression caused by the Chinese immigrants, who often gained an upper hand over their American competitors in the job market as they were more industrious and willing to work at lower wages. Notably, interracial intimacy and sex between the Chinese and Caucasians loomed large as a legally and socially intractable issue in both America and Britain. Thus, the American scene during the first half of the twentieth century saw the prevalence of anti-miscegenation laws and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that banned free immigration of the Chinese into America. Britain was also faced with multitudinous social problems resulting from interracial relationships, such as the Race Riots of 1919, in which white men and non-white men attacked each other due to the former's resentment over the latter taking white women as wives (Mixed Britannia, 2011). The realities of interracial relationships in both countries found their way into literary production regardless of the sensitivity of mentioning such a topic. Just as Sollors claims, despite the adverse legal, social and moral environment, a substantial amount of interracial literature got written after all.

As one of the aims of this thesis is to explore the evolution of Western representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance in the twentieth century, I endeavour to incorporate materials

[7] The historical background for the Chinese immigration wave into Western society (mainly the United Stated) will be further detailed in 1.3.1 Chinese Coolies: Mark Twain and Bret Harte, 58.

published respectively at the early, mid and late stages of the century.[8] Some of the literary texts on interracial romance may be inevitably left out in this study, but it should be noted that depth, rather than coverage, is what frames this research project. Nine primary texts are incorporated into the overall analytical framework, which include John Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear' (1938), Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child' (1916),[9] Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* (1927), Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer's *East Is West* (1918), Rex Beach's *Son of the Gods* (1929), Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957), Pearl Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946), Han Suyin's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952) and David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988).[10] Chapters will be organized mainly according to the chronological publication time of the primary texts so that an evolution of the representations of interracial relationships can be displayed in a clear manner.

I choose the above works as my primary texts given that the majority of them enjoyed a certain degree of popularity at the time of their publication, although some of them have been largely forgotten and are obscure nowadays. Notably, seven of the primary texts, namely, 'The Chink and the Child', *East Is West, Son of the Gods, World of Suzie Wong, Pavilion of Women, A Many-Splendoured Thing* and *M. Butterfly,* have been adapted into films, most of which take the same name as the original literary text. 'The Chink and the Child', for example, inspired the silent film *Broken Blossoms*, which was directed by D. W. Griffith (1875-1948) in 1919 and became the pioneering film presenting interracial romance.[11] This means that these literary texts or film adaptations have reached a certain audience base, so the discussion of these materials is conducive to uncovering the influences that historical moments and literary production have upon each other. For example, the 'Yellow Peril' complex largely

[8] The list of primary texts to be discussed may not be made in an exhaustive manner. For instance, it does not include such accounts as Grace Zaring Stone's novel *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1930) and James Clavell's novel *Tai-Pan* (1966), which both touch upon romantic relationships between the Chinese and Caucasians. The decision to exclude these texts is made in view of the fact that, in the case of *Tai-Pan*, interracial romance takes up a minor position, and in the case of *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, there is a limited space devoted to the depiction of interracial romance between the American missionary Megan and General Yen, which may largely arise from the author's limited writing skills and failure to balance the portrayal of the romantic relationship as the major theme and other secondary events.

[9] The story first appeared in 1915 in the serial *Colour*.

[10] Here the primary texts are listed according to the order in which they are analysed in subsequent chapters.

[11] Burke's original literary text, however, was somehow reduced to obscurity compared to the popularity of the film. This might result from multiple factors. To illustrate, the notability of directors, such as D. W. Griffith, has a positive influence on the popularity of the film. Moreover, films usually have gone through a promotion stage before they are screened for the audiences. All these factors are germane to the publicity of films. This point will be further discussed in 2.3 Feminization and Fetishization: Orientalist Strategy in 'The Chink and the Child', 87.

reflected in the early-twentieth-century texts can be linked to the Boxer Rebellion in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Therefore, a simultaneous look at literary representations and historical contexts help interpret both literary works and historical moments in a more illuminating way. However, these adaptations will not be considered at length in this thesis, particularly as the filmic versions more or less differ from the original literary texts in terms of character presentation and detailed treatment. Significant changes result from the necessity to make compromises due to shooting practicalities as well as new interpretations of the script inserted by directors and actors. *Broken Blossoms,* for example, omits all the conversations found in the original literary text and merely cites particular sentences to indicate the development of the story line. Hence, the interpretation of the film largely relies on the body language of the actors, which could lead to drastic differences between the message conveyed by the film and the literary text. Nevertheless, it is important to raise readers' awareness of the filmic versions insofar as an appropriate degree of reference to the filmic adaptations will undoubtedly assist the illustration of particular points made in this study. For instance, Chapter 2 presents a stage photo taken from *Broken Blossoms* to help readers acquire a sense of the protagonists' image and the intimate relationship between them.[12]

In addition, the body of primary texts in this thesis consists of minor works of mainstream writers (such as 'Johnny Bear' by Steinbeck and *Marco Millions* by O'Neill), popular texts with an ostensible Chinese theme (such as *The World of Suzie Wong*), obscure texts by non-mainstream writers (such as *East Is West* and *Son of Gods*), and texts by Western writers of Chinese origin (such as *A Many-Splendoured Thing*). The selection of such a wide range of texts is to attest to the fact that miscegenation stands as a favoured topos utilized by writers of different popularities to explore issues related to race, gender and class. Moreover, the different genres of texts published in both Britain and America are gathered together to demonstrate the multifaceted voices of imperialism or the imaginations of imperialism.

Therefore, this thesis aims at exploring various issues emanating from the representation of interracial relationships in the literary writings of the twentieth century. The overarching questions that will be addressed are what thematic recurrences emerge from these narratives as well as what representational strategies are utilised by Western writers to portray interracial relationships and the Chinese in general. In addition, a comparative study of how Western writers and Western writers of Chinese origin deal with the subject matter differently

[12] See 2.3 Feminization and Fetishization: Orientalist Strategy in 'The Chink and the Child', 87.

will be carried out.[13] Articulated categories of race, gender, sexuality and others that arise from the cultural representations of interracial relationships will be explicated as interconnected and interacting issues under the rubric of Western representations of China.[14]

II Theorising Cultural Representations: Orientalism and Beyond

Representation is defined as 'the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning' (Hall, 1997, 61). The semiotic approach to representation, as expounded by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Roland Barthes (1915-1980), is concerned with how language and signification work to create meanings; whereas the discursive approach represented by Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is focused on the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse, in which knowledge connects with power to define the way certain things are perceived and practised (Hall, 1997, 6, 62). The Foucauldian discourse analysis, pinpointing the fundamental links between knowledge production and power, offers a theoretical framework to understand attempts to fix meaning through the representational practice. As meaning produced in the representation process is subject to changes, the practice of perpetuating meaning not only highlights the power that enables such an act, but also reveals the hidden intentions that trigger this act. Stereotyping, for example, is one of the representational strategies that work to fix meaning, and notably, what stereotyping attempts to fix are invented differences between groups. [15] According to Stuart Hall, stereotyping

> divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. It then excludes or expels everything which does not fit, which is different…It facilitates the 'binding' or bonding together of all of us who are 'normal' into one

[13] Here Western writers of Chinese origin refer to those who are ethnically Chinese (or half Chinese) writing in the English language in the West. In this thesis, the Chinese British writer Han Suyin and the Chinese American playwright David Henry Hwang will be discussed in the last chapter for comparative purposes.

[14] As McClintock argues, gender, race and class can be called articulated categories, since they come into existence in and through relation to each other rather than in isolation from each other as distinct realms of experience. See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, New York: Routledge, 1995, 5.

[15] Apart from stereotyping, there are other representational strategies like infantilization and fetishism. These representational practices will be touched upon or discussed at great length in subsequent chapters. For more information on representational strategies, see Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

> ‘imagined community’; and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them – ‘the Others’ – who are in some way different – ‘beyond the pale’. (Hall, 1997, 258)

The term ‘imagined community’ coined by Benedict Anderson is relevant here. Anderson argues that the nation is imagined ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (Anderson, 1991, 6). Unlike actual communities that involve face-to-face contacts between members, imagined communities are maintained by common symbols and beliefs (such as anthems, flags, mottos, etc.) shared by the members, who may never meet or know others in their lifetime. According to Anderson, ‘[c]ommunities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined’ (Anderson, 1991, 6). Anderson’s observation further sheds light on Hall’s argument regarding how stereotyping helps construct cultural boundaries that are merely symbolic and imagined. Stereotyping is conducive to the shoring up of cultures through stigmatization and dismissal of whatever is marked as different and thus abnormal. In cultural representation, representing difference and Otherness emerges as an important strategy, for difference and otherness contributes to the understanding and construction of the Self in complicated ways. In the Saussure school, difference matters because meaning relies on the difference between binary oppositions; in Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1895-1975) explanation, difference is needed in the sense that meaning can only be constructed through a dialogue with the Other; anthropologically, the marking of difference is the basis of the symbolic order that characterizes culture as a classificatory system (Hall, 1997, 234-238).

The cultural critic Fredric Jameson contends that stereotype is inevitable in intercultural representations since the practice of cultural representation always involves collective abstractions of another culture. Jameson astutely explains culture in relation to group libido, arguing that one culture only exists alongside another culture, for ‘culture is the nimbus perceived by one group when it comes into contact with and observes another one’ (Jameson, 1993, 33), or to utilise his citation of Erving Goffman’s definition, culture is ‘the ensemble of stigmata one group bears in the eyes of the other group (and vice versa)’ (Jameson, 1993, 33). Hence, according to Jameson, one culture reflects what it appears to be in the eyes of another culture rather than the inherent and intrinsic traits possessed by the culture per se. When two or more cultures come into contact, Jameson maintains that their engagement is contained at a superficial level.

> For the relationship between groups is, so to speak, unnatural: it is the chance external contact between entities which have only an interior (like a monad) and no exterior or external surface, save in this special circumstance in which it is precisely the outer edge of the group that – all the while remaining unrepresentable – brushes against that of the other. Speaking crudely then, we would have to say that the relationship between groups must always be one of struggle or violence: for the only positive or tolerant way for them to coexist is to part from one another and rediscover their isolation and their solitude. Each group is thus the entire world, the collective is the fundamental form of the monad, windowless and unbounded (at least from within). (Jameson, 1993, 34)

Based on what Jameson states in the quotation above, cultural interaction is the superficial contact of the outer edges of two or more cultural groups, or using a more vivid description it is a mere brushing of one culture's surface against the outer edge of another.[16] Moreover, cultures are beyond representation and even the outer edge of cultures remains unpresentable, hence the ineluctability of stereotypes in cultural representations of the Other. Specifically, '[t]he relations between groups are always stereotypical insofar as they must always involve collective abstractions of the other group, no matter how sanitized, no matter how liberally censored and imbued with respect' (Jameson, 1993, 35).

Stereotyping in cultural representations is studied with intellectual breadth and versatility by Edward Said in what he calls Orientalism, which is influenced by the Gramscian (Antonio Gramsci) thought on hegemonic formations and the Foucauldian concept of the episteme. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said explains the multiple meanings of the term 'Orientalism', which can be an established academic discipline, an approach to the Orient, a Western style, a cultural discourse, an ideological framework or an exercise of cultural strength. According to Said, the word 'Orientalism' is used to 'designate that collection of dreams, images, and vocabularies available to anyone who has tried to talk about what lies east of the dividing line' (Said, 2003, 73). Orientalism assumes a dividing line between the Occident and the Orient, referred to as 'imaginative geography' by Said. It is this dividing line that reconfirms the already conspicuous differences between the

[16] Jameson's characterization of cultural contacts as superficial is thrown into doubt in cases where border-crossing occurs at such a profound level that it exerts fundamental influences on the person encountering another culture. This results an internalization of cultural differences, which further impacts the person's perception of the Self and the Other. On such occasions, cultural contacts are no longer constrained to a superficial brushing against one another in Jameson's terms. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the introduction to 5.1 Introduction, 168.

Occidentals and Orientals – differences in language, physical appearance, habit, temperament and faith. In order to generalize these distinctions, Orientalists turn to the linguistic term 'binary opposition', which facilitates Orientalists' derivation of such a conclusion: the West is rational, humane and progressive, whereas the East is irrational, malicious and backward. Accordingly, this dividing line suggests a fundamental disparity that is established on discernible Eastern-Western differences, and most importantly, on a tendency among Orientalists to classify, typify and finally generalize other cultures. Said identifies such an inclination functioning at the centre of Orientalist theory and practice in the West:

> Orientalism as a form of thought for dealing with the foreign has typically shown the altogether regrettable tendency of any knowledge based on such hard-and-fast distinctions as 'East' and 'West': to channel thought into a West or an East compartment. Because this tendency is right at the center of Orientalist theory, practice, and values found in the West, the sense of western power over the Orient is taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth. (Said, 2003, 46)

Superiority assigned to the West brings forth a willed power over the East. Additionally, having knowledge of subject races or Orientals forms the indispensable premise for the West to proclaim power over them. This knowledge is acquired either through meticulous study of stock texts and materials contributed by previous scholars, travellers and writers, or through intentional observations of Orientals that are being studied, but the latter approach is rarely carried though the whole process and mostly given up halfway due to the pressure mounted from questioning preceding authoritative classical texts. Said devotes most of the space in *Orientalism* to the elucidation of such attempts from Orientalists:

> [i]n short, as a form of growing knowledge Orientalism resorted mainly to citations of predecessor scholars in the field for its nutriment. Even when new materials came his way, the Orientalist judged them by borrowing from predecessors (as scholars so often do) their perspectives, ideologies, and guiding theses. In a fairly strict way, the Orientalists after Sacy and Lane rewrote Sacy and Lane; after Chateaubriand, pilgrims rewrote him. From these complex rewritings the actualities of the modern Orient were systematically excluded, especially when gifted pilgrims like Nerval and Flaubert preferred Lane's descriptions to what their eyes and minds showed them immediately. (Said, 2003, 177)

The common practice of repeating existing scholarship among Orientalists could arise from the following factors: referring to authoritative texts facilitates the research process and creating something new often incites challenges and criticism. Thus, the authenticity of the so-called 'knowledge' created by Orientalists is thrown into doubt under the circumstances where authoritative texts are considered more important than actualities. In this knowledge system about the Orient, actualities, which consist of things with a real presence or existence within that particular culture, are reduced to a set of references and a congeries of characteristics. In Said's words, '[t]he Orient is less a place than a *topos*' (Said, 2003, 177).

In terms of writing about the Other, Said identifies an estrangement commonly experienced by Orientalists in their initiative to understand an alien and exotic culture (Said, 2003, 260). This sense of estrangement is characterized by an appropriate and adjustable distance and thus a certain degree of detachment from the culture under scrutiny, which is conducive to an objective judgement of the other culture. As Said claims,

> [t]he more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance. (Said, 2003, 259)

However, this estrangement felt by Orientalists, rather than increasing the propensity for true vision, emphasizes fundamental cultural differences and further enhances the superiority of the home culture. Identifying correspondence between the writings and the realities lies out of the scope of Said's discussion. He contends that 'Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world' (Said, 2003, 12). The West regards the Orient as the surrogate or underground Self; thus the process of representing the Other in written language is virtually a process of constructing one's own identity. As Said argues,

> we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do, as Dante tried to do in the *Inferno*, is at one and the same time to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are *for* Europe, and only for Europe. (Said, 2003, 71-72)

When the Orient is represented or staged, it is deprived of the legitimate right to speak, refute and resist. On this stage there is nothing to do with truth but a pretentious inclination to truth. Said finds Foucault's elucidation of knowledge and power a suitable framework to explain the interrelationship between the representational practice and colonization. As in the Foucauldian discourse knowledge and power are always intertwined and promote each other in an effective manner, the production of knowledge about subject races paves the way for the exertion of power over them. The produced knowledge propagates the inability of subject races, or the Orient, to exercise self-government, and thus justifies the intervention of a stronger administration from the West. The British colonization of Egypt and India is a case in point, and there is no difficulty in finding similar examples in history. According to Said, '[o]nce again, knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control' (Said, 2003, 36).

Containing ground-breaking and controversial ideas, *Orientalism* invites critiques on various fronts. One of the strongest critiquing voices is targeted at Said's neglect of colonized people's response to colonization. As the First World War transformed political and cultural realities, the West faced a myriad of decolonization movements and hence a shrinking suzerainty over its colonies. John McLeod argues that Said puts his work 'in danger of being just as "Orientalist" as the field he is describing by not considering alternative representations made by those subject to colonialism' (McLeod, 2000, 48). This critique is recognized by Said himself as one that needs to be addressed seriously; thus in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) a whole chapter is devoted to the discussion of resistance and opposition arising from both the natives and the West to imperialism and Western representations of non-Western cultures. The central idea of *Culture and Imperialism* is that culture plays a crucial role in the West's expansion of territories and sustenance of empire and that imperial concerns are constitutively significant to the culture of the modern West.

In *Orientalism*, Said excludes the possibility of counter-hegemonic writings from the Western tradition, namely, the very heterogeneity of the corpus of texts within the Western literary canon. As Dennis Porter argues, Said fails to take account of potential counter-hegemonic voices and how such an alternative discourse is able to emerge within the dominant hegemonic discourse (Porter, 1994, 152). In a similar vein, Aijaz Ahmad accuses Said of his extreme denunciations of the whole Western civilization. He argues,

> Said's denunciations of the whole of Western civilization are as extreme and uncompromising as Foucault's denunciations of the Western episteme or Derrida's denunciations of the transhistorical logos; nothing, nothing at all, exists outside epistemic power, logocentric Thought, Orientalist Discourse – no classes, no gender, not even history; no site of resistance, no accumulated projects of human liberation, since all is Repetition with Difference, all is corruption – specifically Western corruption – and Orientalism always remains the same, only more so with the linear accumulations of time. (Ahmad, 1994, 165)

According to Ahmad, Said takes his argument to the extreme by constructing Orientalism as an ahistorical, continuous and unchangeable discourse. In addition, Said's Orientalism points to the impossibility of making true statements about other cultures. In Said's enunciations on Orientalism, cultural misrepresentation seems to be a structural necessity rendered by the confines of geopolitical positions. This is a point that both Ahmad and Porter find problematic.[17] Built on Ahmad and Porter's critiques, the present thesis raises a general question within the field of cultural studies – is there a true representation of difference and Otherness? Or the more important question is – how can we best represent difference and Otherness? Given that Orientalism has its own limitations and problems, are there any alternatives to Orientalism when studies of Western representations of the East are carried out? As Hall defines the positions from which we speak or write as 'the positions of enunciation' (Hall, 1994, 392), which are always implicated in the practices of representation, it is important to ask who is doing the speaking and who is being spoken of in the course of representation. All these questions will be addressed in great detail in this thesis.

III Theoretical Framework

The analysis of Western literary representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance cannot be carried out without considering the influence of Orientalism on representational practices. As Said succinctly puts it,

> so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the

[17] McLeod provides a brief summary of the critiques raised against Said's *Orientalism*. Other critiques include its ignorance of gender differences, its weakness of being ahistorical and so on. For more information, refer to John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000, 47-49.

> limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity 'the Orient' is in question. (Said, 2003, 3)

Said further claims that *Orientalism* probes into a limited set of questions on 'the Ango-French-American experience of the Arabs and Islam' (Said, 2003, 17), and that in doing so, 'a large part of the Orient seemed to have been eliminated – India, Japan, China, and other sections of the Far East' (Said, 2003, 17). Said's words imply that the discourse of Orientalism can be applied to Western representations of China, which undoubtedly falls into the geographical scope of the Far East. The Australian Sinologist, Colin Mackerras, also states in his book *Western Images of China* that although Said's *Orientalism* is 'specifically designed as a critique of the Western study of West Asian civilizations, its main points are equally applicable to the study of China' (Mackerras, 1989 in Chow, 2010, 32).

However, the applicability of Orientalism to Western writings on China is questioned by some scholars. For instance, Gu Mingdong argues that China has never been colonized in a real sense, while the objects of Said's analysis of Orientalism are the Middle East and Near East, which have been historically occupied and colonized by the West. Thus, 'to approach the problems in China knowledge production using a theory generalised out of studies of cultures colonized totally by the West would be inadequate to say the least' (Gu, 2012, 3). Another weakness in the use of Orientalist and postcolonialist models on China-West studies is that the 'politically oriented and ideologically motivated approaches easily give rise to culture wars which are incapable of resolving scholarly issues and often ignore the fundamental objectives of knowledge and scholarship' (Gu, 2012, 3). In *The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: From the Jesuits to Zhang Yimou* (2013), Zheng Yangwen asserts that 'the Middle Kingdom neither was nor was seen as "weaker" than Europe until the Opium Wars in the mid nineteenth century' (Zheng, 2013, 19-20), whereas 'Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West' (Said, 2003, 204). In addition, the fact that Western representations of China from the sixteenth century to the present day keep evolving and do not conform to a single archetype challenges Said's 'preconceived archetypes' (Zheng, 2013, 21). Zheng's concerns about the 'preconceived archetypes' here, in my viewpoint, are actually directed at what Said

has identified as 'unchanging perceptions of the Other'. In other words, Zheng's argument accentuates the evolving trait of the China image rather than whether the image is preconceived archetype or not.

Both Gu and Zheng have warned us of the pitfalls pertaining to the indiscriminate use of Orientalism in Chinese studies, but these warnings do not relegate Said's paradigm to an irrelevant position. First of all, the 'political doctrine willed over the Orient' in Zheng's argument can be applied to the nineteenth century and later times when the scramble for China began and developed to its peak. In addition, the ideological role that Orientalism exerts on the West's approach to the East can take place even without territorial occupation. Rey Chow's explication of the significance of the West's ideological domination of the East in Orientalism is therefore pertinent here. She cogently argues,

> [t]he most crucial issue, meanwhile, remains Orientalism's general and continuing *ideological* role. Critics of Said in the East Asian field sometimes justify their criticism by saying that Said's theory does not apply to East Asia because many East Asian countries were not, territorially, colonial possessions. This kind of positivistic thinking, derived from a literal understanding of the significance of geographical captivity, is not only an instance of the ongoing anthropological tendency to deemphasize the 'colonial situation' I mention above; it also leaves intact the most important aspect of Orientalism – its legacy as everyday culture and value. The question ought, I think, to be posed in exactly the opposite way: *not* how East Asian cannot be understood within the paradigm of Orientalism because it was not everywhere militarily occupied, but how, *in spite of* and perhaps because of the fact that it remained in many cases 'territorially independent,' it offers even better illustrations of how imperialism works – i.e., how imperialism as ideological domination succeeds best without physical coercion, without actually capturing the body and the land. (Chow, 2010, 36)

Chow's argument, in my view, forms a persuasive counterpoint to the dismissal of Orientalism as irrelevant to East Asian countries. Chow revealingly pinpoints the nature of Orientalism as a discourse in which the West produces knowledge and constructs meanings about the Oriental Other through its representational practice. Orientalism, compared to imperialism, is less reminiscent of land occupation and military conflicts. Imperialism usually takes place by resorting to Orientalism as a knowledge production process, which designates the Oriental Other as inferior and thereby helps justify imperial conquests with the pretext of civilizing the barbaric Orient. The colonizing experience, according to Frantz Fanon, is marked by the dual objectives of positioning the subject race as the Other of a dominant discourse and subjecting them to this self-consciousness of being the Other (Fanon,

1986 in Hall, 1994, 395), the latter of which operates on a more profound level to sustain the colonial apparatus. In this light, ideological domination in the Orientalist discourse or the imperialist paradigm more decisively determines how these regimes function and sustain themselves as the predominant controlling apparatuses that aim to keep possible resistances at bay.

Moreover, Said's *Orientalism* helps illuminate the relationship between the Self and the Other. According to Said, the West regards the Orient as the surrogate or underground Self, thus representations of the Other mirror the circumstances and identity of whoever is performing the representing act. This argument echoes the contention articulated by Zheng: the contexts of Westerners shape the ways in which they perceive and portray China (Zheng, 2013, 22). The study of the relationship between the West and the East, as Said expresses in *Culture and Imperialism*, 'is not just a way of understanding an unequal relationship between unequal interlocutors, but also a point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves' (Said, 1994, 230).

Said also provides other methodological devices for undertaking a literature research project. Two phrases adopted by Said are particularly important to how the primary texts are approached and analysed in this thesis – *strategic location* and *strategic formation*.[18] In Said's definition, *strategic location* is the way of describing the author's approach and position with regard to his texts about the Orient (China, in my case); and *strategic formation* is the way of analysing the relationship between the primary texts and other texts of the same author, period or topos, and also identifying how the ensemble of these texts forms a larger group significant enough to acquire and project cultural meanings (Said, 2003, 20). *Strategic location* identifies the narrative voice through telling the role of the author as an omniscient narrator or as a particular protagonist in the text. The identification of the narrative voice helps determine what attitudes are those held by the author and which are those symbolized by characters portrayed in the text. *Strategic formation*, in contrast, is deeper expounding at a macro level. It requires the classification, grouping and contrast of a wide range of texts, which may refer to each other, in order to uncover potential referential cultural power. *Strategic location* provides the methodology for the analysis of a particular primary text, whereas *strategic formation* allows the contrast and comparison of all the primary texts of

[18] The phrases *strategic location* and *strategic formation* are italicised in Said's text, thus this thesis keeps its original italicised format.

the same topicality from a diachronic perspective. The combination of these two strategies constitutes the overarching guideline for analysing the primary texts, for it fits one of the purposes of this thesis: to examine the evolution of Western representations of Chinese-Caucasian romance across the twentieth century and reflect upon what cultural significance emanates from the ensemble of texts.

Another piece of methodological advice constantly emphasized by Said in *Culture and Imperialism* is also worthy of meticulous attention – the contrapuntal reading of literature. Said examines mainly novels as cultural forms, which have supported European imperialist ideas, and he takes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* as examples. For instance, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is commonly defined as an imperialist text; however, a contrapuntal reading also reveals the centrality of imperialist and colonialist ideas entrenched in Austen's *Mansfield Park,* which seems irrelevant to the theme of imperialism. Said argues that the stability and prosperity of Mansfield Park heavily relies on the operation of the sugar plantation in Antigua. Here re-reading cultural texts contrapuntally means 'a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts' (Said, 1994, 59). The contrapuntal reading of literature is important to my research not in the sense that there is a necessary link between literature and imperialism or that every piece of writing on China by the West is essentially Orientalist, but that it places premium on the histories and realities of both the metropolitan West and the peripheral East. The metropolitan-peripheral characterization is another aspect that will be looked at in subsequent analysis.

Therefore, the subsequent analysis in each chapter will be established on the methodological insights given by Said, but not wholly confined to the Orientalist discourse as the only approach to the West's cultural representations of the East. It is mandatory to take into account the realities of both the observer and the observed, which together lead to the creation of a particular image. The process of how a conception, perception and knowledge of the Other is produced is far more important than the accuracy of the created meaning itself. Given that Orientalism, as examined above, neglects the heterogeneity of literary texts as well as possible textual dialogues between the West and non-Western regions, this thesis will seek alternatives to the Orientalist discourse in the course of discussion. Dennis Porter offers three alternatives to Orientalism that prove pertinent to this research:

> (1) the very heterogeneity of the corpus of texts among which Said discovers hegemonic unity or the specificity of the literary instance within the superstructure;
> (2) the possibility that more directly counter-hegemonic writings or an alternative canon may exist within the literary canon or the Western tradition;
> (3) the feasibility of a textual dialogue between Western and non-Western cultures, a dialogue that would cause subject/object relations to alternate, so that the West may read themselves as the others of their others and replace the notion of a place of truth with that of a knowledge which is always relative and provisional. (Porter, 1994, 153)

Porter's insightful observation not only accentuates the heterogeneity of literary texts and the potentiality of counter-hegemonic energies, but also highlights the relativity of truth and knowledge produced in the practice of representation. It draws attention to the limitations of Orientalism as the monolithic discourse in analysing relevant texts and in the meantime sheds light on feasible alternatives to the study of cultural representations.

IV Chapter Organization

The research aims, research questions and theoretical framework introduced above work together to animate the following chapters, which are organized according to the chronological publication time of the primary texts.

The first chapter 'The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: Western Representations of China 1250-1988', as the point of departure in my research, provides a historical review of the image of China in Western writings from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century. This review provides the contextual background for the analysis of the primary texts and offers readers a panoramic view of the evolved image of the Chinese in Western perceptions.

Chapter 2, titled 'Western Discursive Strategies in Staging Chinese Presence in the Early Twentieth Century', uncovers the discursive strategies in representing the Chinese as a cultural Other in two primary texts, John Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear' (1939) and Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child' (1916). Steinbeck's portrayal of the Other is achieved by silencing the secret Chinese lover and characterizing him as a menace to both white womanhood and the white community as a whole. Burke employs feminization and fetishization to cover his fundamentally anxious view of Cheng Huan as a potential peril to Lucy's whiteness. Both texts feature authorial anxieties towards interracial alliance and also habitual association of the Chinese with darkness and inarticulateness.

Chapter 3, 'Orientalism and Counter-hegemonic Energies', incorporates three texts – *Marco Millions* (1927), *East Is West* (1918), *Son of Gods* (1929) – into the discussion of problems found in the application of Orientalism. Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* criticizes American culture by endorsing ancient Chinese wisdom and philosophy. The commercialized America and the philosophical China are respectively incarnated by the materialistic merchant Marco and the innocent Chinese princess Kukachin (and her unrequited love for Marco). O'Neill's representation of China, complicated by the self-Othering process that he has gone through, problematizes the neat classification of a text as Orientalist or non-Orientalist. *East Is West* and *Son of Gods* both feature an identity alteration of the Chinese protagonist from Chinese to American and contain a myriad of details that seemingly point to an ostensibly Orientalist ideology in representing the cultural Other. However, a careful examination of these two texts employing the method of *strategic formation* reveals heterogeneous voices against the dominant Orientalist discourse, as the texts offer a simultaneous exhibition of ideas held by the Chinese and their Western counterparts rather than silence the Chinese in the same way as Steinbeck and Burke's texts do.

The fourth chapter, with the title of 'Unveiling the *Harem*: Writing in the Contact Zone and the Third Space', explores how Chinese women are represented in Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957) and Pearl S. Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946). In both texts, the practice of representation takes place at the site where two cultures encounter and grapple with each other – the contact zone in Mary Louise Pratt's terms. Mason's text, as the first and only interracial romance account with a happy ending in this study, challenges the dominant 'Madame Butterfly' discourse, which designates the Asian female as submissive to the Caucasian male. Buck's portrayal of both Chinese women and China, enabled by her intercultural translation in what Homi Bhabha calls 'the Third Space', further contests the dichotomies of Self/Other and East/West.

The last chapter, 'The Politics of Intercultural Representation and The Potentiality of Hybridity', discusses the representation of interracial relationships in Han Suyin's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952) and David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988). Both authors' cultural duality enables them to make a virtue of their marginality and speak more directly to the dominant Orientalist discourse than the ones analysed in previous chapters. Complicated by her cultural hybridity, Han represents China as a fluid category that belongs to neither the

Self nor the Other. In contrast, Hwang's text directs a harsher critique against Western hegemony by inverting the binary opposition of the dominant white male and the submissive Oriental female, yet in doing so Hwang falls into the pitfall of constructing another dichotomy of the same nature. Hence, this chapter reaches the conclusion that the Self/Other dichotomy can be blurred by cultural hybridity and the inversion of the dichotomy proves to be unsatisfactory in collapsing binary thinking in cultural representations.

Chapter 1 The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: Western Representations of China 1250-1988

> China has at one time or another been thought to be rich and poor, advanced and backward, wise and stupid, beautiful and ugly, strong and weak, honest and deceitful – there is no end to the list of contradictory qualities which have been attributed to her.
> - Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization*

The British Sinologist Raymond Dawson wrote the above words in his interestingly titled book, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization* (1967). The metaphor of the Chinese chameleon fully explicates the implied meaning in the lines – the constantly evolving image of China in European conceptions. Prior to Dawson, Harold R. Isaacs makes similar observations apropos of America's imaginings of China in his book *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India*.[19] In the preface to the 1972 edition, Isaacs summarizes a repertoire of polarized perceptions of China by the West as follows:

> [d]own through time, from Marco Polo to Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese have appeared to us as superior and inferior people, outrageous heathen and attractive humanists, wisely benevolent sages and deviously cunning villains, thrifty and honorable men and sly and corrupt cheats, heroically enduring stoics and cruel and sadistic murderers, masses of hardworking persevering people and masses of antlike creatures indifferent to human life, comic opera soldiers and formidable warriors. (Isaacs, 1972, xi)

Dawson undertakes a historical investigation of European writings on China, whereas Isaacs bases his discussion on interviews of those who have had experiences of China.[20] Though employing different methodological devices, both scholars reach similar conclusions: Western perceptions of China from ancient times to the twentieth century are interwoven in a diversified, ambivalent and conflicting fashion. In this regard, Dawson's metaphor of the

[19] This book was originally published under the title of *Scratches on Our Minds* in 1958.
[20] The travelogue of Marco Polo, the writings of the Enlightenment philosopher Leibniz and many other accounts are included in Dawson's work.

Chinese chameleon stands as an appropriate, telling and expressive characterization to register the historical evolution of China's image in Western perceptions across the centuries.

As shown above, with a long history spanning the early thirteenth century to the present day, China's imagery in Western conceptions is marked by diversity, polarity and changeability. This chapter revisits the Chinese chameleon to enable readers to gain a general picture of its evolution, historical and intellectual contexts as well as actual textual representations. This review accentuates the evolving nature of Western perceptions of China and highlights the interactions between historical contexts and knowledge production on China, namely, what historical contexts have influenced the invention of a particular image of China at a particular time. This historical review is also salutary to the comparison of the China image in different literary texts from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective, and to the understanding of literary representations of China and interracial romance in the twentieth century, which is the focus of the current thesis. This chapter mainly discusses texts on Western perceptions of Chinese culture, literature and philosophy, and thus does not include primary texts specifically centred on interracial romance, which will be analysed in subsequent chapters instead. In the following section, I would like to briefly introduce the most relevant literatures that have informed my historical review of Western representations of China.

Both Western and Chinese scholars have contributed to the scholarship on Western conceptions of China through providing a diverse repository of China images, historical contexts and theoretical frameworks. The most relevant work that the current historical review is built upon is *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (1998) by the Sinologist Jonathan Spence, which contains a comprehensive review of Western perceptions of China from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century. Spence combines historical contextualization with textual analysis to study the evolution of China's image across time. His book consists of several topical headings, each recapitulating a specific image of China prevailing during a particular time period, such as 'The Worlds of Marco Polo' and 'Matters of Enlightenment'. The temporal breadth of Spence's work is also seen in the Australian Sinologist Colin Mackerras's book, *Western Images of China* (1989), which provides an evaluation of Western ideas about China from the thirteenth century to the late 1980s. Different from Spence, Mackerras draws on a wider range of sources (literature, film, television, arts, etc.) to show how changing power relations have influenced Western ideas

about China, its people and its history. Mackerras's approach to the power/knowledge connection is heavily influenced by Edward Said and Michel Foucault (Evans, 1994, 175), and bears resemblance to the Chinese scholar Zhou Ning's method adopted in his voluminous monograph *Western Views of China* (2006). Zhou brings new perspectives to the research on China's image through his utilisation of Edward Said's Orientalism to expound how the West sees China as the cultural Other and his exploration of Sino-Western relationship under Antonio Gramsci's framework of cultural hegemony.[21]

In addition, there are quite a few studies focusing on Western conceptions of China within a specific historical period, which also offer useful resources for the current study to engage with a more wide-ranging historical review. For instance, Nigel Leask's *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (1992) and Ros Ballaster's *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England* 1662-1785 (2005) incorporate similar territories of the East into the scope of their study, such as Turkey, India and China. The major difference in their studies is that Leask confines his discussion to Romantic writers, Thomas De Quincey and S. T. Coleridge, whereas Ballaster probes into more literary genres, such as the musical opera *Tourandocte*, the drama *The Orphan of Zhao* and the novel *Citizen of the World*. Apart from the Western scholars aforementioned, a number of Chinese scholars have conducted researches along similar lines. To start with, Qian Zhongshu's essay collection *China in the English Literature of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* is a thorough survey of China's image in the imaginative texts, translations and compilations by the English intelligentsia and men of letters, such as Horace Walpole.[22] The inclusiveness of Qian's enquiry lies in the scope of things Chinese incorporated in his discussion, such as the English enthusiasm for Chinese gardening, language and custom, and also in his expatiation on writers who rely heavily on Chinese subjects for their production and those who merely make slight references. Building on Qian's work, Ge Guilu extends the research on China's image in British writings

[21] As mentioned in the section III Theoretical Framework, the application of Orientalism to Chinese studies is popular among scholars in both China and the West, but the indiscriminate use of Orientalism could be problematic, for representations of China and knowledge production on China by the West are not necessarily Orientalist. The pitfalls of this practice will be further expounded in subsequent chapters.

[22] Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998) is a Chinese literary scholar and writer, famous for his satirical novel *Fortress Besieged*. He studied English literature at the University of Oxford, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in arts and submitted his dissertation titled 'China in the English Literature of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries'. His dissertation was published as 'China in the English literature of the Seventeenth Century' in *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography* (new series I, 1940, 351-384) and then 'China in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century' in *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography II* (new series II, 1941, 7-48, 113-152).

into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in *Distant Voices beyond London – English Writers and Chinese Culture* (2002), whereas Zhang Hong's *A Rainbow over the Pacific – American Writers and Chinese Culture* (2002) focuses on American writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, in *China and the West* (1979), Jerome Ch'en investigates cultural contacts between China and the West from the beginning of the nineteenth century down to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. He explores various agents that have contributed to the promotion of these cultural exchanges, including missionaries, diplomats, students, scholars, businessmen and others.[23]

The above-mentioned studies deal with China's evolving image either from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century or during a particular historical period. Although built upon previous studies, my review differs from them in the following aspects. First of all, as my review focuses on literary texts rather than historical contexts, it includes a substantial amount of textual analysis to exemplify the evolving and diversified nature of the Chinese chameleon in Western conceptions. The literary texts analysed in my review include those that have received scant attention in previous studies, which could possibly add new materials and fresh perspectives to the studies of Western conceptualizations of China. For instance, the historically important writing of Friar William of Rubruck, which precedes Marco Polo's travelogue but is often overshadowed by Polo's account, is given due consideration and put in contrast to Polo's travelogue. Secondly, special attention is paid to writers whom subsequent discussions of the primary texts will refer to, such as Marco Polo,

[23] Here I have only briefly discussed the most relevant works that have informed my historical review and will not carry out an encyclopaedic review of the scholarship. In saying so, I am not attempting to demean other works that have contributed to this area of scholarship. On the contrary, they provide circumstantial information and reference to those who intend to investigate Western views of China and other related areas. Here I provide a list of works that are not included in my discussion. They include Mary G. Mason, *Western Concepts of China and the Chinese, 1840-1876*, New York: Russell & Russell, 1939; J. A. G. Roberts, *China through Western Eyes: The Nineteenth Century: (a Reader in History)*, Wolfeboro Falls [NH]: A. Sutton, 1991, and *China through Western Eyes: The Twentieth Century (a Reader in History)*, Stroud [England] & Wolfeboro Falls [NH]: A. Sutton, 1992; *American Views of China*, edited by Jonathan Goldstein, Jerry Israel and Hilary Conroy, Bethlehem: Leihigh University Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1991. There are also a few doctoral dissertations discussing China's images, especially in the recent fifty years in the United States. To illustrate, in 1952, John Burt Foster in the University of Illinois named his PhD dissertation *China and the Chinese in American Literature, 1850-1950*, which is based on poems, dramas and novels with Chinese characters. In 1966, Stuart Creighton Miller in the University of California completed his dissertation, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882*. In this thesis, the author contends that the United States in the nineteenth century was keen on modernization and thus disdained China as a static and backward nation. Apart from these works by Western scholars, there are Chinese scholars who have conducted research on this topic as well. For instance, Chen Shouyi published 'Daniel Defoe, China's Severe Critic' in 1935 and 'Oliver Goldsmith and His Chinese Letters' in 1939. In these two articles, Chen undertakes a detailed analysis of Defoe's and Goldsmith's descriptions of Chinese people.

Mark Twain and Bret Harte. Finally, given that previous reviews are slightly fragmented in view of the extensive time span and do not sufficiently highlight the transitional historical moments that have re-orientated Western opinions of China, my historical review attempts to resolve these issues by roughly dividing the evolution into three stages: (1) The Mighty Mongol Empire in Travel Writings 1250-1450; (2) Chinese Philosophy in Jesuits Reports and Enlightenment Writings 1450-1800; (3) Chinamen, 'Yellow Peril' and 'Red Peril' – Diversified Views of China in the West 1800-1988.[24] In this way, readers can have a clearer picture of the seven-centuries-long evolution by identifying and linking to crucial historical moments.

This historical review will exemplify how the following foundational texts, especially Marco Polo's travelogue, the philosophical writing of Enlightenment luminaries, works on 'Yellow Peril' racialization and Chinatown coolies, continue to articulate meanings in the twentieth-century interracial literatures to be examined in subsequent chapters. For instance, one of the primary texts, *Marco Millions* by Eugene O'Neill, is an imaginative rewriting of Polo's travelogue. Interestingly, O'Neill goes beyond the original travelogue, which focuses on an account of the transport, custom and religion of the Mongol empire, and incorporates detailed discussions of Eastern philosophies, which is an emphasis of Enlightenment writing. O'Neill creates philosophical figures in the play, the Khan and the advisor Chu-Yin, and details their tranquil Eastern philosophies in contrast to American mercantile pursuit. Another philosophical character is Sam Lee's father, Lee Ying, in *Son of the Gods*. Unlike O'Neill, Rex Beach also characterizes Lee Ying as the wealthiest businessman in Chinatown. In this sense, Beach combines the philosopher image with the Chinatown-dweller image of the Chinese. Again, as commonly seen in the primary texts, the Chinese characters are usually connected to Chinatown or the Chinese coolie image in one form or another, such as John Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear', Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child', and quite a few others. The recurrent images of the Chinese in the texts examined in this chapter and in the primary texts analysed in subsequent chapters not only demonstrate the limited possibilities in portraying the Chinese in Western writing, but also reveal potential repetition of stereotypical perceptions of the Chinese in the writerly choices. The repetition of stereotypes

[24] The time range of these three stages is a merely a rough division based on specific turning points in history. The following sections will present these critical historical moments that have fostered changes in Western conceptions of the Chinese.

predetermines the limited possibilities in portraying the Chinese. It is also what Edward Said attempts to criticize in *Orientalism*.

Moreover, the variegated yet fixed perceptions of China and the Chinese discussed in this chapter help better understand the various tensions surrounding miscegenation per se and miscegenation narratives. First and foremost, it is the tension between miscegenation as a natural result of mutual affection between two human being and the anxiety caused by miscegenation to the interracial couple as well as the people around them. The fact that miscegenation causes anxiety partially arises from a stereotypical conception of the other race. Even the interracial couple, torn by the feelings of affection and fear, can entertain anxiety about interracial relationships. For instance, Ming Toy and Billy, the interracial couple in *East Is West*, are afraid of giving birth to children with pigtails. This anxiety stems from a stereotypical and essentialist intercultural perception of the Chinese as pigtail-wearing people. This indicates how intercultural misunderstandings can bring about interracial concerns. Another tension comes from the fact that various miscegenation narratives got written under adverse legal, social, religious and moral conditions, as discussed in the Introduction.[25] These two layers of tensions are interconnected and dependent upon each other. Therefore, the following historical review will not only provide the contextual background for understanding the vast materials on China, but also showcase how the foundational texts influence forthcoming accounts of the Chinese and how stereotypical intercultural perceptions relate to the commonly spotted anxieties about interracial relationships in miscegenation narratives.

1.1 The Mighty Mongol Empire in Travel Writings 1250-1450

As suggested in the studies by such sinologists as Jonathan Spence and Colin Mackerras, the initial flowering of contacts between the East and the West dates back to the reign of the Mongol empire in the thirteenth century, when China still assumed the old name of Cathay or Manji. Kublai Khan, known for his establishment of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) in Chinese history, immensely broadened his territory by incessantly conquering neighbouring tribes and kingdoms. He ultimately created a vast Mongol empire stretching from the Pacific to the Black Sea and from Siberia to modern day Afghanistan, which was allegedly about

[25] See page 3.

one fifth of the inhabited land area at that time. [26] The immediate influence of this territorial expansion on the world as a whole is that it brought most parts of Asia and some parts of Europe under common reign, which further contributed to increasing commercial and religious contacts between the East and the West. Commerce and religion constituted two primary ends for Western travellers of the period to step onto the land of the Far East. Encounters between the two regions enabled merchants and friars to see with their own eyes the distant and mysterious Far East, which had merely existed in their fantasies before.

The wanderings in foreign lands have yielded written accounts of exotic fascination and curious strangeness, among which travel writings dominate the historical stage from 1300 to 1450. According to Spence, the first traceable account that delineates Chinese people with some specificity should be the work of Friar William of Rubruck (Spence, 1998, 1), who was dispatched by King Louis IX of France to Karakorum (the Mongol capital) in 1253. The purpose of this mission was to convert Tartars to Christianity and win them as confederates against the Saracens. Upon his return to France, Friar William of Rubruck presented a report of the journey to the king, and its first full English version was later known as *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253-55*. Another important account of China is *The Travels of Marco Polo* or *The Description of the World*, one of the most popular travel books back then and even nowadays. Following Polo's account, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* was also widely read in Europe (especially France). Although these travelogues became the chief sources for Europeans to fantasize about China and the rest of Asia from around the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century, the academy has different conjectures about the authenticity of the accounts. Spence comments on Polo's travelogue as

> a combination of verifiable fact, random information posing as statistics, exaggeration, make-believe, gullible acceptance of unsubstantiated stories, and a certain amount of outright fabrication. The same is true of other works written before and afterwards, but what matters to us about Polo's text is that it was the first such work by a Westerner to claim to look at China from the inside, and the force of the narrative description was strong enough to imprint itself in Western minds down to our own time. (Spence, 1998, 1)

[26] Kublai Khan (Kubilai Kaan) is the grandson of Chingiz (Chinghis, Chingis or Genghis) Khan, the first great chief of the Mongols. He is one of the five Great Khans, who are chronologically known as Chingiz, Ogotay, Kuyuk, Mangu and Kublai.

These speculations may not carry as much weight as the fact that these books have indeed weaved a tapestry of China stories for the Europeans to gaze upon or ponder over. As Zheng Yangwen points out, '[t]ravelogues are extremely valuable, raw observations that often catch details that many take for granted' (Zheng, 2013, 4). Therefore, the question that matters here is what these books have depicted and why they were written in the first place. The significance of travel writings brings forth the following section, which provides a detailed discussion of various aspects of China in these travelogues. The discussion is arranged in a chronological order, i.e., Friar William of Rubruck, Marco Polo and finally Sir John Mandeville.

1.1.1 Friar William of Rubruck

There are scarce hard facts about the author Friar William of Rubruck. In William Woodville Rockhill's evaluations, Friar William is 'an honest, pious, stouthearted, acute and most intelligent observer, keen in the acquisition of knowledge' (Rockhill, 1900, xxxvi), and his work is one of the best narratives of travel in existence that contributes to various fields of human knowledge (Rockhill, 1900, xxxvi), such as geography, natural history, ethnology, linguistics, anthropology and history of religions. However, Friar William's work, originally titled *Itinerarium* in Latin, was not known or appreciated until the publication of part of his report by Hakluyt in 1600 and a republication by Purchas in 1625. Rockhill expresses the hope in the 1900 edition that his edition could foster the traveller's claim to the highest recognition and also his unquestionable right to eminence. Even prior to Rockhill's edition, similar compliments are expressed by Sir Henry Yule, who, in the introduction to his translation of Marco Polo's work, describes Friar William's work as 'a Book of Travels of much higher claims than *any one series* of Polo's chapters' (Yule, 1871 in Jackson, 1990, 51). Given the existence of different translated versions of Friar William's account originally written in Latin, I would like to explain the rationale for my choice of a particular translated version for analysis. There are currently two primary English versions of Friar William's account, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253-55* (translated and edited by W. W. Rockhill) and a more recent one, *The mission of Friar William of Rubruck: his journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255* (translated by Peter Jackson; introduction, notes and appendices by Peter Jackson and David Morgan). Jackson acknowledges that Rockhill's work takes pride of place in that

his personal experience as an explorer and hunter in Central Asia, China and Tibet makes his extensive commentaries a major advantage over other translations (Jackson, 1990, 54). However, Jackson also expresses the hope that his version would represent a significant advance on Rockhill's work due to considerable scholarship on the Mongols added in his volume. Additionally, Saad argues that Jackson's version is a preferred version for whoever wants full scholarly annotation as it provides extensive notes by two renowned Mongol specialists (Saad, 2005, 5). Therefore, my following analysis employs Jackson's version.

Friar William's work is marked by his keen observation and scrupulous documentation. He depicts geographic features along the journey, the roads and rivers traversed, different races encountered as well as his conversations with followers of various religions and audiences with the Chan. Among this wide range of delineations, I will mainly demonstrate the power of the Chan and the Mongol empire, the custom practised by the Tartars or Mongols[27] as well as the faith among its subjects, the last of which will be discussed in more detail in view of the very nature and objective of the mission per se. To start with, the following depictions indicate the might and honour of the Mongol ruler – Mangu Chan.

> At Caracorum Mangu has a large encampment, near the city walls and enclosed by a brick wall just as are the priories of our own monks. Here there is a great palace where he holds his drinking sessions twice a year, once at Easter when he passes by there and once in the summer when he is on his way back. The latter occasion is the more important, inasmuch as then there gather at his court all the nobles from place up to two months' journey away; and he then confers on them garments and presents, and parades his great grandeur. (*FWR*, 209)

Mangu Chan's grand palace and the regularly held drinking sessions not only point to the wealth and abundance of the Mongol empire but also reflect the peaceful lives of its subjects. The tribute that Mangu has received from distant aristocracies attests to the authority of the Chan and also the breadth of the Mongol realm. Additionally, the great power of the empire and the Chan can be inferred from the conversation between Friar William and the Chan in their first meeting, where Friar William acknowledges the Chan's colossal dominion

[27] Friar William makes a distinction between Tartars and Mongols, which are often regarded as the same race by those referring to the ancient names of the Chinese. Based on Friar William's observations, the Mo'als (Mongols) and the Tartars are two different tribes, but they live very close to each other. During the fight for supreme power between Chingis (himself a Mo'al) and Unc, Chingis was forced to flee among the Tartars. After Chingis defeated Unc and became the chief of the Tartars, he resumed the name of Mo'als among his subjects regardless of whether the subject is originally a Mo'al or Tartar.

favoured by God, whereas the Chan, in his reply, presents himself as a ruler whose power reaches every corner of the world in the same fashion as the sun spreads rays in all directions (*FWR*, 179-180).

Apart from the description of the Chan's authority and power, Friar William provides a minute documentation of the life, character and custom of the Tartars, including their dwellings, diet, clothing, hunting, law and justice as well as death and burial rituals, some of which are entirely alien to him as a European traveller. For instance, in one of the chapters on the duty and work of Mongol women, Friar William records that the Mongol women never wash clothes and dishes because they fear intimidating the God and incurring thunder. 'They are extraordinarily afraid of thunder. In that event they turn out of their dwellings all strangers, and wrap themselves up in black felt, in which they hide until it has passed' (*FWR*, 90). Friar William also finds other things strange, such as avoiding stepping onto the threshold when making entry into the Chan's court, employing fire to check if anyone carries hazardous substances to the court, and obtaining one's wife through purchase. In the burial rituals, keeping the Chan away from anything related to the deceased sheds light on the taboos of the Mongol society, while privileging an aristocrat's tomb with an encampment of guardians indicates a hierarchical social structure within the Mongol society. Moreover, the descriptions of the legal system of the Mongol empire reveal a sophisticated judiciary structure, which places premium on the role of objective evidence in judgment and distinguishes minor offenses from capital felony. For instance, '[l]arge-scale theft they punish, again, with death. For petty theft, such as for a sheep, provided the man has not been caught doing it often, they inflict a cruel beating – and when giving a hundred strokes they have need of a hundred rods' (*FWR*, 93).

Notably, Friar William's book offers a meticulous documentation of his experiences with people of different faiths, such as Nestorians, Saracens and Buddhists. Based on the observation that the Mo'als or Tartars 'believe in only one God and yet make felt effigies of their dead, dressing them in the most expensive materials and putting them in one or two wagons' (*FWR*, 156), Friar William reaches a conclusion that the Mo'als or Tartars belong to the sect of idolaters. Apart from the faith of the commoners, Friar William also attempts to find out Mangu Chan's belief through his keen observation and tentative enquiry. He spares no effort to trace evidence that can prove the compatibility of the Chan's behaviours with Christian tenets, for such evidence could increase the possibility of conversion. For

example, he draws attention to the cross placed at one of the imperial courts; he reiterates that one of the Chan's favourite wives is Christian; and he also mentions the Chan's baptism even though it remains uncertain whether the baptism has actually taken place or not.[28] These minute details suggest Friar William's good hope that Mangu Chan is Christian or at least not hostile to Christianity, but he subsequently discovers that the Chan believes in none of the religions that have their respective priests in the court. This conclusion is testified by the conversation that Friar William has with the Chan before his departure. In response to Friar William's wishes to come back to the Mongol dominion and preach God's words, the Chan elaborates on his own faith, as manifested in the following paragraph.

> 'We Mo'als,' he said, 'believe that there is only one God, through whom we have life and through whom we die, and towards him we direct our hearts.'… 'But just as God had given the hand several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths. To you God has given the Scriptures and you Christians do not observe them. You do not find in the scriptures,' he asked, 'that one man ought to abuse another, do you?' 'No, I said, 'but I indicated to you from the outset that I had no desire to be at odds with anyone.' 'I am not referring to you,' he declared…'So, then, God has given you the Scriptures, and you do not observe them; whereas to us he has given soothsayers, and we do as they tell us and live in peace.' (*FWR,* 236)

The conversation conveys the message that the Chan distinguishes himself from Christians yet does not proclaim explicit associations with any of the religious sects. It can be inferred from the mentioning of soothsayers that the Chan might be an idolater, insofar as soothsayers perform the role of priests in the idolater sect. As to this conundrum, Jackson concludes that the Mongol ruler makes the most of every religion to maintain and extend his empire (Jackson, 1990, 24).

To sum up, Friar William furnishes a panorama of the particulars of the Mongol society. In this picture, the Mongol empire looms large as an exotic land characterized by divergent custom, absolute power and authority as well as remarkable religious tolerance.

[28] Regarding the Chan's baptism, Friar William claims that he is informed by an Armenian monk (named Sergius) of the Chan's baptism and thus a feast will be held on the same day. However, Friar William does not explicitly state in his report that the Chan has been baptized. Instead, he renders a circumstantial description of the feast held for the baptism, in which Nestorian, Christian, Saracen and idolater priests gather and pray for the Chan.

1.1.2 Marco Polo

Marco Polo's book, most familiar to English readers as *The Travels of Marco Polo,* was originally called *Description of the World* in the prologue that brought it to public reading at the end of the thirteenth century (Rieu, 1958, vii). It describes the voyage of the Venetian, Marco Polo, who accompanied his father Nicolo Polo and his uncle Maffeo Polo to the East for commercial interests. They travelled through most parts of Asia (including Persia, China, and Indonesia) between 1271 and 1291, and arrived in China around 1275. As a circumstantial record of Marco Polo's seventeen years of service in Kublai Khan's court, the travelogue was allegedly written down by Rustichello da Pisa, a romance author of the time, from accounts dictated by Polo during their imprisonment in Genoa in 1298. From this partnership of 'the merchant adventurer with the observant eye and retentive memory and the professional romancer with the all-too-fluent pen emerged on of the world's most remarkable books' (Rieu, 1958, xvii). However, there is little corroborative evidence on the life of Marco Polo and also the complete original manuscripts of the book, thus it remains a conundrum to reach any conclusive remarks about the traveller or the actual text itself.

In *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Venetian*, Marco Polo details various aspects of the Mongol society, including transport, trade, custom, population, as well as the Great Chan and his religious tolerance, which share a great deal in common with Friar William's descriptions.[29] Polo affords an expatiation on the imperial roads and stations, which are so reasonably constructed that ambassadors to the court and the royal messengers are able to travel across every province and kingdom of the empire with the greatest convenience and facility (Rhys, 1908, 208). The post-houses intended as travellers' accommodations as well as the post-horses stationed at each post-house for the replacement of fatigued horses, are well-maintained by nearby residents, who receive compensation from the Khan for their service. Transport convenience further promotes the development of trade among the subjects and commercial ties with merchants beyond the Khan's dominion, as described below.

[29] Although there are currently different translations of Polo's book, the most authoritative one is commonly agreed to be the second edition of Sir Henry Yule's translation. Given the unavailability of Yule's version and also the fact that there are merely slight differences between each version in the main contents, the present thesis selects *Travels of Marco Polo: The Venetian* edited by Earnest Rhys for textual analysis.

> The multitude of inhabitants, and the number of houses in the city, as also in the suburbs without the city (of which there are twelve, corresponding to the twelve gates), is greater than the mind can comprehend…The quantity of merchandise sold there exceeds also the traffic of any other place; for now fewer than a thousand carriages and pack-horses, loaded with raw milk, make their daily entry; and gold tissues and silks of various kinds are manufactured to an immense extent. (*MP*, 201)

The above paragraph suggests thriving businesses in the Mongol society. In addition, the custom of the Mongols is also noteworthy for its incredibly high degree of decorum. The cultivation of formality and filial piety, to some extent, reveals social peace and material abundance. 'Their style of conversation is courteous; they salute each other politely, with countenances expressive of satisfaction, have an air of good breeding, and eat their victuals with particular cleanliness' (*MP*, 220).

Polo's account is also replete with his respect and admiration towards the Great Khan, who is often addressed as 'the majesty' or 'the supreme lord and emperor'. He acclaims the Great Khan as a man of robustness, courage and judgment in the following manner.

> KUBLAI, who is styled grand khan, or lord of lords, is of the middle stature, that is, neither tall nor short; his limbs are well formed, and in his whole figure there is a just proportion. His complexion is fair, and occasionally suffused with red, like the bright tint of the rose, which adds much grace to his countenance. His eyes are black and handsome, his nose is well shaped and prominent. (*MP*, 162)

> Not only was he brave and daring in action, but in point of judgment and military skill he was considered to be the most able and successful commander that ever led the Tartars to battle. (*MP*, 153)

The Khan's governance is featured by the establishment of the Council of Twelve. The tribunal of the higher rank (Thai) is composed of twelve noblemen appointed for the affairs of the military army, and the lower-rank tribunal (Sing) also consists of twelve nobles who are in charge of the general affairs of the empire (*MP*, 207). Moreover, the Khan displays himself to be a benevolent ruler with charitable and caring treatments of his subjects. To express their gratitude and respect, the Khan's subjects will joyfully participate in the annual celebration of the Khan's birth and share the happiness of the majesty on this festival day, when the grand Khan appears in a superb dress made with cloth of gold and twenty thousand nobles and military officers wear similarly styled but less richly-decorated garments. 'From

this parade an idea may be formed of the magnificence of the grand khan, which is unequalled by that of any monarch in the world' (*MP*, 186).

The grand Khan confers honour on various religious sects and commands the observation of their respective festivals. When asked for his motive for such conduct, he gives the following explanation.

> There are four great Prophets who are reverenced and worshipped by the different classes of mankind. The Christians regard Jesus Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sogomombar-kan, the most eminent amongst their idols. I do honour and show respect to all the four, and invoke to my aid whichever amongst them is in truth supreme in heaven. (*MP*, 159)

After the explanation, the Khan continues to express his unwillingness to become a Christian, claiming that the idolaters surpass the Christians in performing their art (magic), such as the power of controlling bad weather. Christians, incapable of performing anything miraculous, would not achieve victory in the confrontation with idolaters of the same number. Hence, the Khan follows the most powerful belief and avails himself of its power to serve his empire and subjects at large. The Khan's explanation aligns with the elucidation given by Jackson on how the Mongol ruler makes full use of a particular religion for the good of his empire.

As far as the discussion goes, there emerges the question: why does Polo's account depict a more prosperous and wealthy Mongol empire than that portrayed in Friar William's book? Undoubtedly, the very nature and objective of these two travels, i.e., one for commercial gains and the other for religious conversion, inevitably lead to the disparate focuses of these two accounts. However, I contend that this major divergence mainly results from the fact that Polo's visit to the Mongol dominion took place at a time when the empire reached its prime. As the fifth and last Great Khan of the empire, Kublai Khan is described by Chinese historians as different from his half-savage predecessors (Rieu, 1958, xiii). As Rieu argues,

> [h]e had absorbed many of the best elements of Chinese culture, including something of the humanitarian spirit of Buddhism, while retaining much of the simplicity and vigour of the nomad. In the courtyard of his palace at Khan-balik (Peking) he sowed seeds of prairie grass to remind him of the freer world from which he had come. And he directed the complex machine of Chinese administration with an energy and a breadth of vision which no Chinese emperor had displayed for centuries. (Rieu, 1958, xiii)

There is a time lapse of around twenty years between Friar William and Polo's visits to the Mongol empire. The Mongol empire under Kublai Khan's reign presents itself as a more civilized and advanced society than that administered by previous rulers. Therefore, the difference between Friar William and Polo's accounts is largely caused by the actual discrepancies in the progressiveness of the Mongol society during their respective visit.

1.1.3 Sir John Mandeville

Mandeville's Travels was written around 1360 and attained wide influence in the fourteenth century, but there is little iron-clad evidence about the authorship of the book. As Malcolm Letts puts it, '[w]e know very little about Sir John Mandeville, the man. There are a few facts. All the rest is conjecture' (Letts, 1953, b). It is commonly held that Jean de Bourgogne wrote the book in the name of Sir John Mandeville in order to hide himself from possible charges of homicide after fleeing from England to Liège. However, some suggest that the book, rather than a record of the author's real journey to the East, is a compilation drawn from the sources available then, including Friar William and Polo's travelogues (as will be shown in the following discussion). There are mainly three English versions of the book – the Egerton text, the Cotton text and the Defective text, among which the Egerton text 'laid the foundation for all future Mandeville studies and is never likely to be superseded' (Letts, 1953, xxix). Despite the advantages of the Egerton text, its old spellings cause considerable difficulties to the comprehension of the text. Therefore, this present thesis adopts the modernized version of the Egerton text for discussion, which was reprinted by Malcolm Letts in 1953.

Mandeville's account records various facets of Cathay similarly to Friar William and Polo's travelogues. The identical depiction of minute details enhances the above-mentioned assumption that Mandeville's book is a compilation of accessible sources. One instance is the utilisation of fire to carry out security check prior to any audiences with the Caan, which is also mentioned in Friar William's account. He writes, 'a messenger, when he brings a present to the emperor, he shall pass through a fire with the present that he brings for to make it clean, so that he bring no venom ne other things for to grieve the emperor' (*MT*, 172). In addition, Mandeville's description of the magnificence of the Caan's palace echoes Polo's account, as detailed below.

> This palace with his see is wonder fair and great; and the hall of that palace is richly dight. For within the hall are twenty-four pillars of gold; and all the walls are covered with red skins of beasts, that are called panthers…In the midward of the palace is made an ascensory for the Great Caan, enorned [adorned] with gold and precious stones; and at the four corners are made four dragons of gold. And this ascensory is covered above with cloth of silk, barred overthwart with gold and silver, and many great precious stones are hanging about it. (*MT*, 150)

In alignment with Polo's observations, the commerce of Cathay in Mandeville's account impresses the traveller with its robustness and internationality. For instance,

> [t]he land of Cathay is a great country, fair and good and rich and full of good merchandise. And thither come merchants ilk a year for to fetch spicery and other manner of merchandise more commonly than til other countries. And ye shall understand that merchants that come from Venice or Genoa or other places of Lombardy or Romany, they travel by sea and by land eleven months or twelve ere they come to Cathay, which is the chief realm of the Great Caan. (*MT*, 148)

Mandeville also speaks highly of the Mongols and the Great Caan in his account. His compliment is best illustrated by the following paragraph, which elaborates on the meaning of the circumscription on the Caan's seal and meanwhile illuminates the ruler's mentality as the sovereign emperor of all men and the lord of all lords.

> The style of his letters is this, *Caan, filius dei excelsi, omnium universam terram colencium summus imperator et dominus dominancium*, that is to say, "Caan, God's son almighty, and the sovereign emperor of all those that till the earth and lord of all lords." The circumscription of his great seal is this, *Deus in cello, Caan super terram, eius fortitude. Omnium hominum imperatoris sigillum*, that is to say, 'God in heaven, and Caan upon earth, his strength. The seal of the emperor of all men.' And the writing about his privy seal is this, *Dei fortitude. Omnium hominum imperatoris sigillum*, that is to say, 'The strength of God. Seal of the emperor of all men.' This emperor and all the folk of his land, though they be not Christian men, nevertheless they trow in great God that made heaven and earth… (*MT*, 160)

The last sentence in this paragraph reveals the faith of the Mongols. Correspondent with Friar William and Polo's explorations of the Mongols' religion, Mandeville's remarks point to the conclusion that the Mongols have their own faith, which, however, cannot be specified as a particular religion.

These three travelogues depict the Mongol empire as a powerful kingdom with material affluence, benevolent governance and remarkable religious tolerance. The writers base their respective work on different experiences. Friar William traversed the land of the Mongol empire, Marco Polo also reached the court of the Great Khan and served the Khan for a period of time, and Sir John Mandeville probably did not travel to Asia at all. However, the image of the Mongol empire in their portrayals shares a number of similarities in such aspects as trade, custom, governance and religion. Undoubtedly similar accounts could be derived from journeys to the same destination. It is also possible to conjure up accounts of alien cultures simply based on references to precedent literatures, as exemplified in Mandeville's case. Most importantly, these three travelogues introduced the mighty Mongol empire to Europe and fed Europeans' imaginations and illusions about the Far East from around 1250 to 1450, when Europe was struggling in the mire of the late Middle Ages and its aftermath. The Great Famine from 1315 to 1317, the Black Death in 1347, the uprisings of urban workers, the Great Schism from 1378 to 1418, theological controversies and other calamities reduced the people in Europe to insufferable turmoil and restlessness. It is probably due to this enormous discrepancy between the East and the West that the Mongol society specially appeared as an earthly paradise in these travel writings. As Zheng argues, these travel writings 'tend to highlight differences in the land and people, not just validating but also reinforcing the exotic image of China which continues to persuade many today' (Zheng, 2013, 4).

1.2 Chinese Philosophy in Jesuits Reports and Enlightenment Writings 1450-1800

The period from the early fifteenth century to the late eighteenth century marked a giant leap in the development of continental Europe, driven by the Age of Discovery, Renaissance and Enlightenment. The concerted strength of these three forces led to the advancement of imperialism and colonialism, the expansion of economies as well as the accumulation of human knowledge in science and culture. In the meantime, they also resulted in religious conflicts and consequently warfare between nation-states, which often took the form of sectarian discordance and antagonism.

The Age of Discovery, spanning the early fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, was distinguished by Europe's active explorations of the rest of the world (Africa, Americas,

Asia and Oceania) and a flourishing exchange of both goods and cultural products. Along with the contemporaneous Renaissance movement, the Age of Discovery ushered in the early modern period of Europe and provided fertile soil for the development of the great intellectual movement known as Enlightenment. The primary purpose of these explorations, pioneered by Portuguese and Spanish travellers, was to establish trade with the East via new routes, for the old ones had been interrupted by the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The early explorers achieved prodigious success with regard to the flow of commodities, animals, plants and people between the Western and Eastern hemispheres.

These massive explorations enabled the Europeans to discover not only trade opportunities but also remarkably diverse cultures represented by the East. They were awakened to the realization of the existence of ancient civilizations created in pre-Christian times, which further invoked doubts in the West regarding the compatibility of human diversities with biblical accounts. For instance, the philosophy of Confucius played an ineffaceable role in supporting the deist and other groups of Enlightenment thinkers, who attempted to integrate Confucianism into Christianity. Admittedly, the coetaneous Renaissance, which advocated a revived interest in Roman and Greek classics, progression of humanism and natural sciences as well as increased understanding of other faiths, also challenged the church's role as the sole source of wisdom. Moreover, the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century, such as Isaacs Newton's (1642-1726/7) mathematical explanation of universal gravitation and the contention held by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) that the earth is not the centre of the universe, propagated the seemingly unimaginable notion that the natural world is controlled and governed by laws of nature. This further contested the credibility and holiness of religious scriptures and revelations. Building on these cultural and scientific achievements, the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, aimed to promote intellectual interchange and champion the spirit of scepticism about entrenched ideas. Enlightenment thinkers proposed to carry out social reforms through reason, which was believed by the philosophers to come from the observation of nature. They were strongly opposed to religious intolerance and abusive practices of the church and state.

In the Far East of the same period, China witnessed increasing openness to the West. Due to its commercial vibrancy, China was deemed one of the most important trade partners by Western travellers in the Age of Discovery, when China was under the reign of the Ming

Dynasty (1368-1644), one of the greatest eras of social order and stability in Chinese history. In the heyday of the Yongle Emperor (1402–1424), he placed premium on developing foreign relations with the West. He entrusted his favoured eunuch commander Zheng He (1371-1433) with an international tributary mission, in which the enormous fleet consisted wholly of newly-built ships. This mission explored the Indian Ocean and reached as far as Arabia and the African coast. It was carried out to expand China's tributary trade system and spread Chinese culture. Therefore, the combined efforts of Europe and China fostered and facilitated the commercial contacts between the West and the East.

Western accounts of China from the early fifteenth to late eighteenth century fall into three major categories: Jesuit reports and correspondences on their Christian missions; Enlightenment writings which are based on Jesuit reports and correspondences; deliberate fictions and travel writings in Britain. Earlier Jesuit reports and correspondences laid the foundation for forthcoming freethinkers and novelists to utilize the China model for their own purposes. The most common practice among European philosophers of the time was to employ Chinese materials for validating their ethical and philosophical contentions, criticizing the corrupted Western society or simply appealing to the taste of the reading public. Analogous to the situation in the previous two centuries, when the mesmerizing accounts of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville fed European readers' appetite for the demystification of the Far East, the distant and exotic land of China once again aroused the interest of erudite men of letters during this period. The employment of things Chinese was outspokenly directed at sustaining the dominant role of church and Christianity or espousing social reforms in Europe. There was also a major shift in the focus of study from the emphasis on ethnographical information about China to the fascination with its philosophical traditions. However, the active investigation into the nature of China's religion as well as its ensuing debates over Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as religion or ethics have never ceased.

Before embarking on a detailed discussion of the three categories of writings about China, I would like to briefly introduce Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism and highlight the distinction between them. First, these two strands of philosophical ideas were two major forces influencing Enlightenment philosophers from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Additionally, the distinction between them provides the foundation for readers to comprehend why there emerged selective publications and disseminations of Confucianist and Neo-Confucianist thoughts in Europe.

Confucianism, as a set of philosophical canons and teachings on morality, law, government, education, and life in general, was the predominant ideology in various historical periods in China, and its influence reached beyond the Far East. The overarching principle of Classical Confucianism is the harmony between Heaven and Humanity. The Master (Confucius) refers to 'Heaven' as 'Tian' (天), which 'immanently exhibited itself in popular consensus and in regular patterns of discernible social and natural events' (Ni, 2011). Human beings are thus part of Heaven. There are several important concepts in Confucianist thought, namely, Ren (仁), Yi (义) and Li (礼). Ren, variably translated as humaneness, human-heartedness, humanity, virtuousness, benevolence, altruism and goodness, is 'a quality pertaining to one's caring dispositions toward others that has to be developed and fully embodied before a biological person can become an authentic human being' (Ni, 2011). In order to cultivate and achieve Ren, the ruler should love his subjects, and ordinary men ought to extend love to all. In this sense, love for others and goodness is a fundamental path to the realization of an authentic human being. While Ren is the internal quality that transforms a biological person to an authentic human being, Yi (appropriateness) is the external appropriateness of actions that originates from Ren and Li (ritual propriety) is the guidance for achieving appropriate actions in daily life (Ni, 2011). According to Ni, Li 'was used more broadly by Confucius to mean behaviour patterns established and accepted as appropriate through history by a community, including what we call manners, etiquette, ceremonies, customs, rules of propriety, and so forth'(Ni, 2011). Every single individual has his or her own position in a social network, and if one can practise ritual propriety in daily life, he or she will be able to fulfil the responsibilities that are attached to their unique position in society. In this way, no difficulty will be posed to the maintaining of social order and interpersonal relationships. Ren is also displayed in the course of performing necessary rituals and ceremonies in a proper manner.

Neo-Confucianism is a moral, ethical and metaphysical philosophy established by thinkers and philosophers in the Song dynasty. It originates from the Tang dynasty (618-907) and dominates the Song dynasty (960-1279) and Ming dynasty (1368-1644). 'It constitutes the Second Epoch of Confucian philosophy, at the midpoint between the Classical Confucianism of antiquity and New Confucian Movement of the contemporary world' (Berthrong, 2011). Neo-Confucianism not only revives Classical Confucianist thought by elaborating on the theories of social ethics and self-cultivation, but also adds to the original

philosophical system a new set of cosmological, epistemological, hermeneutical, axiological and practical theories. Neo-Confucians concern themselves with the exploration and comprehension of the cosmos, humanity and the interconnectedness between the two, as well as the cultivation of Waiwang (外王, the kingliness without) and Neisheng (内圣, the sageliness within). Their major discussions cluster around four key concepts: li (理, coherent principle); qi (vital energy, 气); xing (性, nature); and xin (心, the mind-heart).[30] 'In short, they explored the cosmos and the moral mind-heart within each person and tried to discern the patterns of order that can be found in a relational, realistic, and processive manifestation of the supernal connection of heaven, earth, and humanity' (Berthrong, 2011).

Influenced by Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism distinguishes itself from the former by advocating a rationalistic and humanistic understanding of nature and rejecting the superstitious and mystical elements propagated in Daoism and Buddhism (from which it also borrows certain terms and concepts for its own use). It employs metaphysics as the means and guide to the comprehension of the universe rather than treat it as the ultimate goal. Western discussions about Confucianism revolve around whether there is a religious or spiritual dimension to it. Some contend that Confucianism is religious since it talks about Heaven throughout the system, while others maintain that Confucius is never clear about his stance on spiritual things. Neo-Confucianism, however, is commonly considered to be more rationalistic and thus closer to the proclamations made by enlightenment thinkers. With a basic understanding of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as well as the distinction between them, readers can better understand the argument presented in the subsequent section, which will detail the aforementioned accounts of China in the following order: Jesuit reports, Enlightenment writings, deliberate fictions and travel writings.

1.2.1 Jesuit Reports

The early Jesuits on China missions translated and imported to Europe several volumes of Chinese classics, among which the most renowned are three of the Four Books, *Analects*, *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*, published in Paris in 1687. These books presented to the West interpretations of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism.

[30] It should be noted that 'li' in Zhu Xi's system is distinct from the 'li' in Confucianism. Although assuming the same form, the two words have different correspondent Chinese characters and denote different meanings. 'Li' in Zhu Xi's philosophy means the coherent principle, whereas 'li' in Confucianism suggests ritual propriety.

The Jesuits had inter-missionary controversies over the very nature of Confucianism as theist or atheist. The Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), as the progenitor of the Christian mission to China in 1601, was allowed to enter the high ranking of Chinese bureaucracy and acquaint himself with well-educated officials. He maintained that he identified in Confucianism vestiges of the belief in one supreme God known as Shang Ti or Tian (上帝 or 天, the Lord Above or Heaven), which reveals the connection of Chinese religion with Judaeo-Christian tradition. By contrast, Niccolo Longobardi (1565-1655), who succeeded Ricci as Superior of the Chinese mission in 1610, argued that the ancient sages in Confucianism had been just as atheistic as the advocates in Neo-Confucianism. This dissonance raged for a century, and finally Father Prospero Intorcetta (1626-1696) steered public comprehension of Chinese religion through the publications of Confucius's life and works under the name of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in 1687. According to Knud Lundbaek, the publication of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* enabled the Europeans to have accessible for the first time a systematic and comprehensive demonstration of Confucianism as the main component of Chinese civilization, and this collection was claimed by its translators and publishers to be 'a kernel of ancient philosophy which they perceived in some of the oldest classical texts' (Lundbaek, 1992, 27). This book has a one-hundred-page introduction titled *Proemialis Declaratio*, which presents the ideas of Neo-Confucianism. This lengthy introduction reaches a conclusion that the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism is 'pestiferous atheism that has to be fought tooth and nail' (Lundbaek, 1992, 33) and that in contrast to Neo-Confucianism, Confucianism demonstrates 'the humane wisdom of the ancient sages with its traces of an original theism' (Lundbaek, 1992, 35). It means that Intorcetta sided with the Ricci party by characterizing Confucianism as theist while rejecting Neo-Confucianism as atheist.

The practice of passing verdicts on Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as theist or atheist is determined by the Jesuits' intention to convert the Chinese into Christians, for the advocates of these two philosophical strands did not specify any links to a particular religion. In this light, the Jesuits' far-fetched association of them with religion reveals their true purpose. Specifically, their slanted interpretations of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as well as the knowledge disseminated among the general public in Europe propagated the idea that the Chinese have similar religions to the Europeans and it is thus possible to convert

them into Christians. The Jesuits' publications and debates over Chinese philosophy further influenced the writings of Enlightenment intellectuals.

1.2.2 Enlightenment Writings

The luminaries in the Enlightenment movement, on the one hand, concerned themselves with active explorations of the overarching principle governing the natural world, and on the other hand devoted themselves to propositions on the establishment of reformed government and the training of benevolent and competent rulers. Two terms stood out as the catchwords throughout this intellectual wave: *deism* or *natural theology* and *enlightened despotism* or *benevolent absolutism*. These freethinkers borrowed the China model to espouse and validate their own proposal. The philosophy of Neo-Confucianism met their needs to enunciate the comprehension of the universe through reason. The living example of *enlightened despotism*, the Kangxi Emperor (1654-1722), was all too often cited to demonstrate the idealization of qualified rulers. Among these intellectuals are Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) and Voltaire (1694-1778), who are the representatives of Sinophilism (in favour of China), as well as Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), who maintain an opposite stance – Sinophobia (unfavourably disposed towards China). The following section will respectively discuss these two contrary standpoints.

Leibniz, a German mathematician and philosopher, has a deep affinity with Chinese culture. His *Novissina Sinica* (*Latest News of China*), first published in 1697, contains excerpts from his extensive correspondences with Jesuit Fathers in the last decade of the seventeenth century. These correspondences form the major resources for him to conduct investigations into the Chinese language, history, philosophy and religion. He entertains the hope for a universal civilization, in which people of different cultural and religious backgrounds would benefit from collective wisdom and knowledge. By reading translated Chinese classics by earlier Jesuits, Leibniz discerns striking similarities between the essence of li (coherent principle) in Neo-Confucianism and his monadology, mainly revealed in the term 'pre-established harmony'. 'The hierarchy of monads and their "pre-established harmony" resembled the innumerable individual manifestations of the Neo-Confucian Li in every pattern and organism. Each monad mirrored the universe like the nodes in Indra's net' (Cook & Rosemont, 1983, 84). The development of monads should conform to the 'pre-established harmony' in order to attain truth and reality. 'Only the highest development of all

individual energies (monads), acting in unison in conformity with a pre-established harmony, would lead to the truth of being, the supreme harmony (reality)' (Davis, 1992, 13). Additionally, in the oldest Chinese classic, *Book of Changes* or *I Ching*, Leibniz finds numerology that uses trigrams and hexagrams, which is compatible with his own established binary arithmetic.

Moreover, Leibniz attributes superiority to European civilization in the theoretical-philosophical sciences and Chinese civilization in moral philosophy (Lach, 1983, 101). The Kangxi emperor, in his mind, is the exemplary enlightened monarch with his tolerance towards religions, interest in European science and philosophy as well as emphasis on the prime importance of learning. He contends that the Kangxi emperor 'almost exceeds human heights of greatness, being a god-like mortal, ruling all by a nod of his head, who, however, is educated to virtue and wisdom…thereby earning the right to rule' (Lach, 1983, 101). The religious tolerance of the Kangxi emperor finds the best testimony in issuing *Edict of Tolerance* in 1692, which allows the Jesuits unrestricted enterprise in China for a certain period of time. Such practices of the emperor comply with Leibniz's grand scheme to bring the whole world into religious concord.

Another Sinophile thinker of the Enlightenment period is the French historian François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire (his nom de plume). He claims himself to be a deist who advocates religious tolerance. His liberal secularism and scepticism towards established creeds conforms to Neo-Confucianist tenets, so he avails himself of the Chinese model to promote the notion of natural religion. He postulates that Chinese philosophy believes in 'a Supreme Deity who had brought the universe into being and had established natural laws to sustain it' (Davis, 1992, 19). This postulation conveys two layers of meaning: a deist interpretation of the physical world, suggesting that the world is originally created by God but left to its own running and bound by inherent natural laws; and the Chinese boast the system of natural morality, which is independent of religion. In response to the criticism against Chinese philosophy, religion and social customs, Voltaire defends China with ornate diction as follows:

> We have calumniated the Chinese, merely because they differ from us in their system of metaphysics. We should rather admire in them two articles of merit, which at once condemn the superstition of the pagans, and the morals of the Christians. The religion of their learned men was never dishonoured by fables, nor stained with quarrels or civil wars. In the very act of charging the government of that vast empire

> with atheism, we have been so inconsistent as to accuse it of idolatry; an imputation that refutes itself. The great misunderstanding that prevails concerning the rites of the Chinese, arose from our judging their customs by our own; for we carry our prejudices, and spirit of contention along with us, even to the extremities of the earth. (Voltaire, 1901 in Spence, 1999, 98)

Voltaire's lines imply that the calumniation and imputation of things Chinese arises from the prejudices which all too often go hand in hand with the act of generalizing about the Other according to the standards of the Self. It also results from the contentious spirit of the Europeans, which is their inherent characteristic. Voltaire's defence of Chinese culture stands out among both his predecessors and contemporaries who admire or detract things Chinese.

In general, the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment features a favourable cult for Chinese philosophy, but dissenting voices also exist in the form of Sinophobia sentiments. Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), the French social commentator and political thinker, directs his energy against the favourable assessments of China. He cements his renown as a philosopher by articulating the theory of separation of powers and elucidating three forms of government in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748): republics in which the body or only a part of the people is possessed of the supreme power; monarchies in which a single person governs by fixed and established laws; despotisms in which a single person directs everything by his own will and practice (Montesquieu, 1959, 8). These three species of government rely on the principle of virtue, honour and fear respectively, which lays the foundation for each category to perform their functions.

In Book XVII of *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu devotes a whole chapter to the argument that the laws of political servitude bear a relation to the nature of the climate. He asserts that heat could enervate the strength and courage of men while frigidity would equip people for arduous enterprises. Based on this fundamental argument, he reaches the following conclusion: the extensive temperate zone in Europe contributed to the equity in power between neighbouring nations, hence no nation bullying another; whereas the lack of temperate zone in Asia, which is either extremely cold or hot, resulted in different characters of inhabitants and uneven strengths of adjoining countries, hence one conquering another. Moreover, Montesquieu attributes the spirit of liberty to Europe and servitude to Asia, citing China as an example of servility and despotism.

> The nations in the north of Europe conquered as a freeman; the people in the north of Asia conquered as slaves, and subdued others only to gratify the ambition of a master.
>
> The reason is, that the people of Tartary, the natural conquerors of Asia, are themselves enslaved. They are incessantly making conquests in the south of Asia, where they form empires: but that part of the nation which continues in the country finds that it is subject to a great master, who, being despotic in the South, will likewise be so in the North, and exercising an arbitrary power over the vanquished subjects, pretends to the same over the conquerors. This is at present most conspicuous in that vast country called Chinese Tartary, which is governed by the emperor, with a power almost as despotic as that of China itself, and which he every day extends by his conquests. (Montesquieu, 1959, 267)

Apart from his characterization of China as a despotic state, he maintains that the encomia of China expressed in Jesuits reports are the consequence of false order displayed by the country.

The German philosopher and theologian Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) is an even harsher critic of China. In his major work, *The Outline of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, first published in London in 1800, Herder outspokenly alleges that the Chinese nation appears in his eyes to be 'an embalmed mummy, wrapped in silk, and painted with hieroglyphics', governed by 'unalterably childish institutions', and that the Chinese emperor is 'harnessed to this yoke of imitation and superficiality' and 'doomed to go through his exercise like a drill corporal' (Herder, 1800 in Spence, 1998, 99). Herder's writings, compared with other *philosophes*, appeared at a later time – the turn of the nineteenth century, forecasting a radical change in the general views towards China from appreciation to deprecation. Herder's indictment of China as a nation lacking progress and similar Sinophobia visions dominated Western perceptions of China from the late eighteenth century onwards.

The above discussions about Sinophilism and Sinophobia demonstrate that the employment of the Chinese model by these philosophers, rather than originating from the genuine intention to present an authentic picture of Chinese philosophy, culture and society, is meant for supporting the construction of their own philosophical system.

1.2.3 Deliberate Fictions and Travel Writings

Britain in the eighteenth century principally saw two novelists writing about China, Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774) and Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), who are diametrically different in their attitudes towards Chinese culture. Goldsmith bases his writing mostly on Chinese philosophy and government. His epistolary book, *Letters from a Citizen of the World to His Friends in the East* (1794), is mainly about the correspondences between a Chinese scholar named Lien Chi, who lives in London, and his friend Fum Hoam, who resides in Peking. Goldsmith compares British society and Chinese society from various perspectives, including social practices, political issues, religious rituals, literary circles, English characters and other facets. In the account, Lien Chi startles the English with his common sense, for it is assumed among the English that the Chinese could not possibly have common sense. The following paragraph details the astonishment aroused by Lien Chi among the English.

> They make no distinction between our elegant manners, and the voluptuous barbarities of our Eastern neighbours. Wherever I come, I raise either diffidence or astonishment; some fancy me no Chinese, because I am formed more like a man than a monster; and others wonder to find one born five thousand miles from England endued with common sense. Strange, say they, that a man who has received his education at such a distance from London, should have common-sense! Impossible! He must be some Englishman in disguise; his very visage has nothing of the true exotic barbarity. (Goldsmith, 1904, 92)

Moreover, Goldsmith's writing not only limns out the English perception of the Chinese as barbarians during his time, but also depicts how British society and culture is evaluated by Lien Chi, who summarizes its merits and drawbacks. English pride, for instance, is believed by Lien Chi to simultaneously bring about national vices and virtues (the liberal spirit) (Goldsmith, 1904, 14).

While Goldsmith criticizes his own society through a comparison of the English and the Chinese, Defoe discredits the merits of China in his account of Crusoe's wanderings in Nanquin and Pekin in the last chapter of *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Crusoe initially entertains strong interest in visiting the Chinese empire, which is said to be mighty. However, after his sojourns, he displays a strong distaste for things Chinese, such as miseries of the citizens, vulgar husbandry of the farmers and unbearable arrogance of the Chinese. Defoe writes,

> [w]e were five-and-twenty days travelling to Pekin, through a country infinitely populous, but miserably cultivated: the husbandry, economy, and the way of living, all very miserable, they boast so much of the industry of the people. The pride of these people is infinitely great, and exceeded by nothing but their poverty which adds to that which I call their misery. (Defoe, 1862, 375)

Following these comments, Crusoe tells the story of a country gentleman, who is deemed to exhibit 'a perfect Don Quixotism, being a mixture of pomp and poverty' (Defoe, 1862, 376). This greasy and corpulent squire is so lazy that he does not even want to move his hands during his meal and thus has several female slaves at his service. As Defoe depicts,

> he sat lolling back in a great elbow chair, being a heavy corpulent man, and his meat being brought him by two women slaves: he had two more, whose office, I think, few gentlemen in Europe would accept of their service in, namely, one fed the squire with a spoon, and the other held the dish with one hand, and scraped off what he let fall upon his worship's beard and taffety vest, with the other; while the great fat brute thought it below him to employ his hands in any of those familiar offices which kings and monarchs would rather do than be troubled with the clumsy fingers of their servants. (Defoe, 1862, 378)

By comparing this Chinese squire with honourable kings and monarchs, Crusoe harshly condemns his indolence and arrogance.

In this fiction Defoe characterizes a protagonist who demonstrates dislikes or even contempt for China and the Chinese. If this distaste for things Chinese originates from the writer himself rather than the protagonist fictitiously portrayed, what is interesting then is that Defoe's condemnation of China is not imbued in him from the very outset. In his earlier works, such as 'The Consolidator' and 'World in the Moon' of 1705, he seems to accept aspects of the cult favouring things Chinese prevalent in his time, 'calling them "ancient, wise, polite and most ingenious people", whose technical arts could be used to make up for the "monstrous ignorance and deficiencies of European Science"' (Defoe, 1705 in Spence, 1998 p.66). If we are to speculate about Defoe's ideological shift from appreciation to deprecation of Chinese culture, it could be his later absorption of negative views of China or his deliberate disdain for the Chinese so as to elevate the position of his countryman and appeal to the general reading public.

Regarding the cause of such different attitudes maintained by these two novelists, Ros Ballaster points to their respective political backgrounds: 'Defoe the Whig dissenter writes in praise of progress, trade, and limited forms of monarchy, while Goldsmith the Tory quietist

celebrates ancient tradition, strong forms of monarchy, and rural economy' (Ballaster, 2005, 207). This explains why Defoe ridicules the husbandry of the Chinese farmers and the striking poverty of the nation, whereas Goldsmith embraces the ancient Chinese way of handling various issues.

The polarized views of Chinese culture are also manifest in travel writings of the eighteenth century. Two realist voyages undertaken by the British to China yielded two travelogues, *A Journey from St Petersburg to Pekin, 1719-22* by John Bell, and *A Voyage round the World* by George Anson. Bell, a Scottish doctor, accompanied the Russian embassy from St Petersburg to the court of the Kangxi emperor in Pekin, while Anson, a British general, led his warship around the world and incidentally had a temporary stay in the city of Canton. Similar to Goldsmith and Defoe's contradictory sentiments towards the Chinese, the two accounts of their respective experience with China are also dramatically different in content and tone. Bell compliments the formidable Great Wall constructed by the Chinese, the enlightened Kangxi emperor, thrifty Chinese people and their respectful handicrafts. These subjects of panegyric, however, are treated with contempt and ridicule in Anson's work: the Chinese people are dishonest in transactions; there is a stiffness and minuteness in most of the Chinese productions and arts; the national history is recorded in a perplexed and unintelligible language; and the Chinese government is corrupt and venal. The following paragraphs, for instance, present two divergent opinions about the morality of Chinese people.

> The Chinese are a civilized and hospitable people; complaisant to strangers, and to one another; very regular in their manners and behaviour, and respectful to their superiors; but, above all, their regard for their parents, and decent treatment of their women of all ranks, ought to be imitated, and deserve great praise. These good qualities are a natural consequence of the sobriety, and uniformity of life, to which they have been long accustomed. (Bell, 1965, 182)

> And to their theories of morality, if we may judge from the specimens exhibited in the works of the Missionaries, we shall find them solely employed in recommending ridiculous attachments to certain immaterial points, instead of discussing the proper criterion of human actions, and regulating the general conduct of mankind to one another, on reasonable and equitable principles. Indeed, the only pretension of the Chinese to a more refined morality than their neighbours is founded, not on their integrity or beneficence, but solely on the affected evenness of their demeanor, and their constant attention to suppress all symptoms of passion and violence. (Anson, 1974, 368)

This is merely one of the prodigious examples of varying depictions of the Chinese empire by the two writers. This variation could be attributed to the contextual differences. On the one hand, their visits were paid to different locations of China and Bell's visit predated Anson's by about twenty years. On the other hand, Bell had a comfortable sojourn in the royal court of the Kangxi emperor, who accommodated the visiting embassy in a considerate manner, whereas Anson and his retinue met arduous difficulties in Canton due to their unpleasant communication and transaction with local magistrates. In addition to the differences in contexts and experiences, another possible cause is explained by Spence in the following paragraph.

> Bell was an ambitious Scotsman from modest background, in the retinue of a grandee at China's capital, and free from all personal responsibility for whatever might happen on the wider stage. Whereas Anson was from a powerful and well-connected family – one of his uncles was Lord Chief Justice of England-responsible for the lives of the crew of his ships and the safekeeping of the Spanish galleon he had just captured, his share of which would total half a million pounds sterling. Anson, furthermore, was an unwelcome visitor to China's shores, whereas Bell's presence was authorized. (Spence, 1998, 52)

Spence explains the attitudinal divergences between Bell and Anson in the same way as Ballaster expounds the dissonances between Goldsmith and Defoe. They both approach the issue by finding supporting evidence from the backgrounds and experiences of the writers. Particularly, Ballaster summarizes two polarities of China's image in the writings of Jesuit missionary accounts and merchant/trader accounts in the long eighteenth century, and attributes this disparity in writing to the writers' different experiences in China and different personal contacts with the Chinese. As she argues,

> the merchants were confined to trading in Canton, often with corrupt factors, and having to deal with those considered of the lowest order in China; whereas the Jesuits enjoyed, if erratically, the indulgence of the emperors themselves in Peking. While Jesuit commentators were seeking to defend their mission to Rome and argue for the ripeness of the Chinese to conversion (to the extent that much of the eighteenth century was spent in an attempt to convince Rome that Chinese ancestor rites were civil not religious ceremonies which could be continued even after conversion), merchants were frustrated in their attempts to gain control over production and exchange of goods by the Canton Chinese license holders. (Ballaster, 2005, 206-207)

If these explanations remain valid, these Western writers' perceptions of China are largely rendered different and contradictory by the writers themselves and have less to do with the actualities in China. This is further reminiscent of Said's argument in *Orientalism*, namely, 'Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world' (Said, 2003, 12).

The four centuries between the early fifteenth and the late eighteenth centuries witnessed increasing contacts between the West and the East, which were largely driven by the progress made in scientific technologies. The views of China during this period were mostly positive in the context where Chinese philosophy and morality brought Jesuits a ray of hope for potential conversions and presented European writers and thinkers with an exemplary model for artistic improvisations. Admittedly, amid the tremendously favourable and supportive voices there was still clamour from dissenters, who, though in the minority, foresaw a transition in Europeans' perceptions of China from positivity to negativity. The end of the eighteenth century marked a decisive shift in attitudes towards China. This shift was illuminated by the mission of Lord Macartney to the imperial court from 1792 to 1794, the first diplomatic mission dispatched by the king of Britain to the emperor of China for the purpose of establishing diplomatic relations and pursuing commercial concessions with China (Marshall, 1993, 11). This mission failed to achieve its initial goals and as a result negative evaluations of China were produced in the accounts derived from the mission. Lord Macartney's mission exerted such a transformative and pivotal role on Western perceptions of China, symbolizing a profound change from admiration for Chinese knowledge and wisdom to contempt for its stagnation and degeneration from the nineteenth century onwards.

1.3 Chinamen, 'Yellow Peril' and 'Red Peril': Diversified Views of China 1800-1988

Lord Macartney's mission to the Qing court from 1792 to 1794, as the first British attempt initiated by King George III (1738-1820) to establish formal diplomatic relations with China, marked a significant transition in European attitudes towards things Chinese and in Sino-Western relations as well. The scholarly discussions about this mission often revolve around the following issues: first, characterization of the mission as a success or failure; second, mutual misperceptions and misunderstandings of the purpose of the mission, the

ritual of koutou practised in the Qing court and the symbolic meaning of the tributes brought by the British diplomatic envoys; and finally, a large number of accounts of China written and published after this mission.

In general, the mission failed to achieve its intended objectives - the establishment of mutually beneficial diplomatic relations with China and the realization of trade concessions. Nevertheless, it was fruitful in view of the multitudinous accounts of China yielded from the mission, which can be deployed by the British and the Europeans as scholarly references, commercial information or resources for feasting one's eye on the wonders of a distant and mythical land. In the meantime, the mission was complicated by misperceptions on both sides. On the Chinese side, the Qianlong emperor, reigning at the time of the British mission, was infuriated by the envoys outspokenly expressing their true purpose of this visit: to station a permanent British embassy in Peking, open up more ports for China-Britain commercial transactions and seek trade concessions. The emperor originally thought that the British embassy came to celebrate his birthday instead of making such deliberate and imprudent requests. Lord Macartney, along with his retinues, misperceived the meaning of the ceremonial practice of koutou (kotow). His resistance to the ritual of koutou to the emperor might stem from his interpretation of the act as demeaning and humiliating, given that he himself was an ambassador from a powerful empire, the king of which was the only one to whom he would swear allegiance. As a matter of fact, koutou is a customary practice in ancient China, not necessarily implying 'any salve-like inferiority on the performer, but rather a time honoured way of expressing thanks to the sovereign' (Hevia, 1993, 64). Additionally, the tributes presented by the embassy to the Qianlong emperor triggered insidious speculations on the hidden purpose of this act. Due to earlier disappointing experiences with the envoys, the emperor considered the tributes, which consisted of gigantic curios installed in a complicated fashion, a deliberate flaunting of scientific and technological superiority of Britain over China. Thus, he displayed little interest in the invention and operation of the curios. As a result of the mutual misperceptions, no compromises were achieved in the end.

Despite the fact that the mission failed to achieve its initial aims, there was a proliferation of descriptions and summaries of the China scene, mainly including Lord Macartney's journal, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793-1794*, and books by other accompanying envoys

equipped with different expertise.[31] Lord Macartney presents his observations of the manners and characters, religion, government and other facets of Chinese society. He refers back to the travels of Marco Polo in the thirteenth century and contrasts the mightiness of the Mongol empire with the stagnancy of the Qing court.

> When Marco Polo, the Venetian, visited China in the thirteenth century, it was about the time of the conquest of China by the western or Mongol Tartar, with Kublai Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, at their head. A little before that period the Chinese had reached their highest pitch of civilization, and no doubt they were then a very civilized people in comparison of their Tartar conquerors, and their European contemporaries, but not having improved and advanced forward, or having rather gone back, at least for these one hundred and fifty years past, since the last conquest by the northern or Manchu Tartars; whilst we have been every day rising in arts and sciences, they are actually become a semi-barbarous people in comparison with the present nations of Europe. Hence it is that they retain the vanity, conceit, and pretensions that are usually the concomitants of half-knowledge, and that, though during their intercourse with the embassy they perceived many of the advantages we had over them, they seemed rather surprised than mortified, and sometimes affected not to see what they could not avoid feeling. (Tuck, 2000, 222)

The remarks made by Lord Macartney vividly mirror the situation of his audience with the emperor and other Chinese officials. Lord Macartney's critique of the conceit of the Chinese officials evokes Defoe's highlighting of the haughtiness of the squire as previously discussed. Moreover, Lord Macartney's statement that China achieved its peak of development a little before the reign of Kublai Khan and since then entered a stage of decline remains arguable, but his perception of China as a stagnant and barbarous nation anticipated the negative sentiments towards China in the forthcoming nineteenth century. The following section will demonstrate some of the important historical events that have significantly influenced Sino-foreign relations (with a focus on Britain) in the nineteenth and even the twentieth centuries.

Britain in the nineteenth century saw burgeoning economic growth, steady increase in its population and active colonial expansion, which was fuelled by its industrialisation, improved transport, strengthened military competence and social reforms. During Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901), Britain seated itself in the unchallenged throne of world economic and political leadership. By contrast, China under the rule of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in the nineteenth century was plagued by domestic rebellions and foreign

[31] Here due to different spellings, the Emperor Ch'ien-lung refers to the Qianlong emperor.

encroachment. The sufferings of the people resulted in the Taiping Rebellion (太平天国运动)[32] against the Manchu-led Qing government and the Boxer Rebellion （义和团运动）[33] opposed to foreign imperialism and Christianity. The Qing court, due to its political short-sightedness and military incompetence, ravaged the nation by signing a series of unequal treaties with foreign forces. Notably, the Opium Wars were significant turning points in Sino-British relations. Due to the long-standing trade imbalances between Britain and China as well as the failure of the Lord Macartney mission to achieve relaxation of tight restrictions imposed upon Sino-foreign commerce by the Qing court, the nineteenth century witnessed the climax of disputes over commercial and diplomatic relations between China and the British Empire. Consequently, the ineffectiveness of diplomatic tactics gave way to military force and ultimately resulted in two Opium Wars, also known as the Anglo-Chinese Wars, with the First Opium War lasting from 1839 to 1842 and the Second Opium War from 1856 to 1860. The disparity of military competence between the Qing government and foreign armies led to the defeat of China, who was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties (Hoe & Roebuck, 1999, 203), including the Treaty of Nanking (南京条约) signed with Britain and the Treaty of Wanghia (望厦条约) with the United States. These treaties specified that China should open more ports to foreign trade, cede more territories, grant extraterritorial status to foreign missionaries and pay a considerable indemnity to foreign occupiers.

Therefore, the largely negative image of China formed in the West in the nineteenth century was derived from the actual declining of China itself and also highlighted by the stark contrast between Britain's social progress and China's political chaos. In addition, the social and political restlessness in China drove the Chinese to emigrate to other parts of the world,

[32] The Taiping Rebellion is a civil war against the corrupted Manchu-led Qing court, which took place in southern China from 1850 to 1864. It was led by Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全), who claimed that he had received visions on his real identity as Jesus's younger brother. He established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (太平天国) and advocated social reforms, such as shared property, equality for women, and the replacement of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism with their version of Christianity. The Qing government suppressed the movement with the aid of French and British forces. The death toll is estimated to be ranging from twenty million to seventy million (Cao, 2001, 455 & 509).

[33] The Boxer Rebellion, Boxer Uprising or Yihetuan Movement (义和团运动), was an anti-foreign and proto-nationalist movement by the Righteous Harmony Society (also known as Yihetuan, 义和团) in China between 1899 and 1901. The uprising took place against a background of severe drought and economic disruption in response to the growth of foreign spheres of influence (Thompson, 2009, 9). Grievances included political invasion ranging back to the Opium Wars, economic incursions and missionary evangelism, which the weak Qing state could not resist (Cohen, 1997, 114). Concerns grew that missionaries could use the sponsorship of their home governments and their extraterritorial status to the advantage of Chinese Christians, appropriating lands and property of unwilling Chinese villagers to be given to the church, so this movement was strongly opposed to foreign imperialism and Christianity.

a major destination for which was the United States. Moreover, the large number of Chinese immigrants and the cruelty of the boxers in the Boxer Rebellion worked hand in hand to evoke the 'Yellow Peril' fear in Western countries. Thus, there emerged two major categories of writings about the Chinese in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first several decades in the twentieth century – Chinese coolies and 'Yellow Peril', which will be detailed in the following section.

1.3.1 Chinese Coolies: Mark Twain and Bret Harte

An important feature at this stage is that the Chinese started to appear in the accounts of American writers as industrious Chinatown coolies. The emergence of these Chinatown writings was largely triggered by social realities in the United States. The California Gold Rush of the 1850s not only led to the feverish migration of American workers to the western coastal areas, but also attracted a large number of foreign workers, a substantial part of which were from China.[34] The social turmoil back in China, as examined above, also played an important role in driving the Chinese to seek alternative living space. It was due to the influx of Chinese immigrants into American society that cultural encounters between the two races rapidly grew and fed the productions of observant and acuminous writers. The early stage of the Gold Rush saw tolerant attitudes towards the Chinese workers because the mines still abounded in gold then. However, in later decades when gold became increasingly difficult to retrieve, animosity towards the Chinese miners started to accumulate (Rawls & Orsi, 1999, 9). In addition, the Chinese immigrants, who were willing to work at lower wages, constituted a source for cheap labour, which created strong competition in the job market for the Americans. Consequently, this dislike was politicized through the introduction of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1882, in which it was decreed to exclude skilled and unskilled Chinese labourers employed in mining from entering the country for ten years. This act drove out part of the Chinese workforce and also limited the remaining ones to professions like Chinese restaurant or laundry house owners. Quietly and obediently toiling at the bottom of the social stratum in America, the Chinese labourers were disliked, ridiculed and exploited by the dominant white group.

[34] The immigration wave was also sparked by the construction of the First Transcontinental Railroad in the United States between 1863 and 1869, connecting the Pacific coast at San Francisco Bay with the existing eastern U.S. rail network at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Bret Harte (1836-1902) are two major American writers in the nineteenth century who concerned themselves with the abuse and maltreatment of the Chinese immigrants in the United States. Twain adopts Goldsmith's eighteenth-century epistolary style in *Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again* (1870), in which the Chinese protagonist Ah Song Hi relates his experience in America to his friend living in China. From the moment Ah Song Hi steps onto the land of America, he entertains the faith that America is the country of liberty and the refuge of the suppressed. In his first letter to his friend, he excitedly commends America for the succour provided to the refugees of different nationalities.

> DEAR CHING-FOO: It is all settled, and I am to leave my oppressed and overburdened native land and cross the sea to that noble realm where all are free and all equal, and none reviled or abused—America! America, whose precious privilege it is to call herself the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. We and all that are about us here look over the waves longingly, contrasting the privations of this our birthplace with the opulent comfort of that happy refuge. We know how America has welcomed the Germans and the Frenchmen and the stricken and sorrowing Irish, and we know how she has given them bread and work, and liberty, and how grateful they are. And we know that America stands ready to welcome all other oppressed peoples and offer her abundance to all that come, without asking what their nationality is, or their creed or color. And, without being told it, we know that the foreign sufferers she has rescued from oppression and starvation are the most eager of her children to welcome us, because, having suffered themselves, they know what suffering is, and having been generously succored, they long to be generous to other unfortunates and thus show that magnanimity is not wasted upon them. AH SONG HI. (Twain, 1870)

This paragraph reflects how Ah Song Hi perceives America in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when America's image as the land of freedom and tolerance makes it the ideal place for immigrants who are suppressed in their home country. Ah Song Hi defends America's perfect image wholeheartedly in spite of the various unfair treatments he receives in his dreamland. For instance, he is compelled to be vaccinated at an overcharged price on the wharf, regardless of the fact that he has already been vaccinated back in China; he is ruthlessly assaulted by the fierce dog deliberately set onto him by the police; he is ridiculed in the prison cell and deprived of the lawful right to accuse the abusing police at court. These insults do not shatter or even shake Ah Song Hi's faith in America as a nation free from racial prejudice. The following paragraph shows the court scene, in which Ah Song Hi testifies against the policeman who deliberately assaults him.

> The court opened. Pretty soon I was compelled to notice that a culprit's nationality made for or against him in this court. Overwhelming proofs were necessary to convict an Irishman of crime, and even then his punishment amounted to little; Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Italians had strict and unprejudiced justice meted out to them, in exact accordance with the evidence; negroes were promptly punished, when there was the slightest preponderance of testimony against them; but Chinamen were punished always, apparently. Now this gave me some uneasiness, I confess. I knew that this state of things must of necessity be accidental, because in this country all men were free and equal, and one person could not take to himself an advantage not accorded to all other individuals. I knew that, and yet in spite of it I was uneasy. (Twain, 1870)

From the description, it is revealed that foreign convicts with different nationalities are treated with different degrees of inequality. The Chinese are placed at the very bottom. However, Ah Song Hi dismisses the conspicuous inequality as accidental. In the trial, he has no witnesses in his favour to testify against the policeman who has abused him. The only white witness is threatened away and the Chinese witnesses, according to law, have no right to testify against the whites. Consequently, Ah Song Hi is falsely convicted of causing social disorder and thus imprisoned. The whole story ends with a depiction of the closed court, which pushes textual irony to its peak.

> By noon all the business of the court was finished, and then several of us who had not fared well were remanded to prison; the judge went home; the lawyers, and officers, and spectators departed their several ways, and left the uncomely court-room to silence, solitude, and Stiggers, the newspaper reporter, which latter would now write up his items (said an ancient Chinaman to me), in the which he would praise all the policemen indiscriminately and abuse the Chinamen and dead people." (Twain, 1870)

Twain's story also illuminates the pervasive anti-Chinese sentiments in American society. For instance, before the policeman unleashes the dog to attack Ah Song Hi, he says in exasperation, '[t]his Ching divil comes till Ameriky to take the bread out o' dacent intilligent white men's mouths, and whir they try to defind their rights there's a dale o' fuss made about it' (Twain, 1870). Interestingly enough, the policeman's utterances are not entirely random curses but reflect the economic tension between the Americans and Chinese immigrants at the time. The innocent Ah Song Hi is merely one of the multitudinous Chinese immigrants faced with adverse social and economic conditions in American society. Twain's

mirroring of such social realities is achieved through depicting the unequal treatments received by the submissive Chinese figure, which adds to the acrimony of the authorial critique of America's social disparity.

Twain's semi-autobiographical travel writing, *Roughing It* (1872), contains a chapter that provides interesting information on the living habits and social conditions of the incoming Chinese immigrants. Twain's positive depictions in the book run counter to the mainstream prejudice against the Chinese immigrants in American society.

> Of course there was a large Chinese population in Virginia – it is the case with every town and city on the Pacific coast. They are a harmless race when white men either let them alone or treat them no worse than dogs; in fact they are almost entirely harmless anyhow, for they seldom think of resenting the vilest insults or the cruelest injuries. They are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness, and they are as industrious as the day is long. A disorderly Chinaman is rare, and a lazy one does not exist. So long as a Chinaman has strength to use his hands he needs no support from anybody; white men often complain of want of work, but a Chinaman offers no such complaint; he always manages to find something to do. He is a great convenience to everybody – even to the worst class of white men, for he bears the most of their sins, suffering fines for their petty thefts, imprisonment for their robberies, and death for their murders. Any white man can swear a Chinaman's life away in the courts, but no Chinaman can testify against a white man. Ours is the "land of the free" – nobody denies that – nobody challenges it. [Maybe it is because we won't let other people testify.] As I write, news comes that in broad daylight in San Francisco, some boys have stoned an inoffensive Chinaman to death, and that although a large crowd witnessed the shameful deed, no one interfered. (Twain, 1872)

The last few lines regarding the Chinese immigrants' lawful rights are in alignment with various details found in *Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again*. Twain decries the racial prejudices prevalent in American society through contrasting the industrious Chinese with the indolent white men. Interestingly, Twain points out the necessity to convey to the East that the prevalence of oppression against the Chinese is only found among uncivilized people, including the policemen and politicians, and the real upper class over the Pacific Coast treat the Chinese with respect.

> They are a kindly disposed, well-meaning race, and are respected and well treated by the upper classes, all over the Pacific coast. No Californian gentleman or lady ever abuses or oppresses a Chinaman, under any circumstances, an explanation that seems to be much needed in the East. Only the scum of the population do it—they and their children; they, and, naturally and consistently, the policemen and

> politicians, likewise, for these are the dust-licking pimps and slaves of the scum, there as well as elsewhere in America. (Twain, 1872)

Twain's compliments to the Chinese race stand out as a dissenting voice amid the widespread hostility against the incoming Chinese immigrants at the time. Contemporaneous with Twain, Bret Harte also based many of his works on the maltreatment of Chinese coolies in America. However, Harte's poem 'The Heathen Chinee', published in *Overland Monthly* under the name of *Plain Language from Truthful James* in 1870, unexpectedly fueled the already ubiquitous hatred towards the Chinese among the white middle-class. The poem per se is a gullibly open-ended and ambiguous text, which may easily cause misinterpretation and misappropriation. It narrates the story of a card game, in which the Chinese, Ah Sin, manages to cheat his dishonest partners by playing cleverer tricks and consequently gets beaten by them. The title of the poem and Harte's use of derogatory terms in the first three stanzas cited below, such as 'heathen Chinee' and 'despise', seemingly suggest discrimination against and contempt for the equally dishonest Ah Sin, who wears a beguiling childlike smile. [35]

> WHICH I wish to remark, --
> And my language is plain,
> That for ways that are dark
> And for tricks that are vain,
> The heathen Chinee is peculiar, --
> Which the same I would rise to explain.
>
> Ah Sin was his name.
> And I shall not deny
> In regard to the same
> What that name might imply;
> But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
> As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.
>
> It was August the third;
> And quite soft was the skies:
> Which it might be inferred
> That Ah Sin was likewise;
> Yet he played it that day upon William
> And me in a way I despise. (Harte, 1888, 69)

[35] The whole poem can be found in Appendix 1, 201.

A light-hearted reading of the poem would suggest it to be a plain mockery of the Chinee's cunningness, but the fact that Ah Sin's better skills enable him to defeat his similarly fraudulent players would indicate different interpretations. Harte himself expresses indignation about the widespread misinterpretation and misappropriation of the poem.

> As early as April 1871, in a letter enclosing a manuscript copy of the poem transcribed at the request of his friend and publisher James T. Fields, Harte lamented 'all this "damnable iteration" and inordinate quotation' that 'have divested it of all meaning to me, and make me loathe it so that I can not even copy it legibly.' Harte concluded his lecture on 'The Argonauts of '49' in New York in December 1872 by decrying the stereotype of the coolie, 'what you [in the audience] call the "heathen Chinee,"' in tacit protest of the popular misunderstanding of the poem. (Scharnhorst, 1996, 387)

Margaret Duckett, as cited by Gary Scharnhorst, concludes that 'placed in context of Bret Harte's life and other writings, "The Heathen Chi-nee" can have but one interpretation: It is a satiric attack on race prejudice' (Duckett, 1957 in Scharnhorst, 1996, 379).

Harte and Twain have also co-authored a play, *Ah Sin*, which was staged at the National Theatre in Washington in 1877. The story is about how a wily and entertaining Chinese laundryman assists in the clearing-up of a false accusation of murder. Harte's play *Two Men of Sandy Bar* (1876) invents Chinese characters as well. The keenness on creating Chinese personae in literary texts is partly determined by the historical and social realities of America in the nineteenth century, when the Chinese presence as well as the variegated cultural engagements between different racial groups became an indispensable part of American society and culture.

Thomas Burke (1886-1945) is the major writer in Britain who has contributed to the repertoire of Chinatown stories. He cemented his reputation as a writer through the successful publication of *Limehouse Nights* in 1916, which is a collection of short stories centred on the poverty-stricken Limehouse district of London (also known as the Chinatown of London) populated partly by lower-class Chinese immigrants. Many of Burke's writings feature his Chinese friend Quong Lee, a Chinese shopkeeper, from whom Burke claims to gain most of his knowledge of the mythical East. As Burke's fictionalized accounts of London's Chinatown attained wide popularity, some of the stories have been adapted into films, the most famous of which is *Broken Blossoms* (1919) directed by D. W. Griffith and based on

the short story 'The Chink and the Child' from the collection.[36] The Chinese immigrants under Burke's pen, albeit honest and kind, are still the vulnerable cultural Other who are bullied and suppressed by the dominant white group.

1.3.2 'Yellow Peril' and 'Red Peril'

At the turn of the twentieth century, 'Yellow Peril' emerged as a much harsher portrayal of the Chinese. This 'Yellow Peril' concept originates from European medieval fears of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes. In the mid-nineteenth century, 'a historically specific rhetoric of the "yellow peril" entered into transnational circulation with the onset of Asian labor migration to white settler colonies around the Pacific Rim' (Lye, 2005, 18). The influx of immigrants to white settler colonies was largely driven by the gold rushes of the 1850s and the importation of labourers to build continental railroads in the United States and Canada. The Japanese emigration which began in the 1880s and the incoming of Indians at the turn of the twentieth century also added to the immigration wave in white settler colonies. Moreover, the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the twentieth century in China and Japan's 1905 victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) enhanced the propagation of formidable and threatening images of the yellow horde, which signified a 'yellow menace' to Western Christian civilization (Xing, 1998, 55). Thus, the 'Yellow Peril' concept, according to Lye, 'articulates the numerical power of a "Chinese" mass with a miraculous "Japanese" developmental capacity' (Lye, 2005, 17). The Fu Manchu series by Sax Rhomer was created out of such turbulent emotions dominating the general public. The series portrays an evil Chinese criminal who schemes to destroy the West through various means. After its successful publication, the image of Fu Manchu was extensively featured in films, radios and comics. The Fu Manchu figure has been associated with the 'Yellow Peril' label since then.[37]

[36] 'The Chink and the Child' is one of the primary texts that will be analysed at great length in Chapter 2. For more information, see 2.3 Feminization and Fetishization: Orientalist Strategy in 'The Chink and the Child', 87.

[37] Chapter 2 will refer to one book from the series, *Bride of Fu Manchu*, to illustrate the habitual association of Chinese figures with darkness and shadow in literary production. For more information, see 2.1 Playing in the Dark and Shadow: Chinese Presence in Literary Imagination, 71.

'Red Peril' appeared in the McCarthy period, when there were nationwide anti-communism sentiments and fears of treason in the United States.[38] These fears were aggravated by other historical events, such as the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the US-supported Kuomintang (KMT) in the Chinese Civil War, the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and China's intervention in the Korean War (1950-1953) against the United States.[39] Edgar Snow (1905-1972) was an American journalist known for his reportage and writings on Chinese communism and the Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong (毛泽东). His most widely circulated book *Red Star over China*, first published in 1937 in London, is an account of the Chinese Communist movement from its foundation till the late 1930s.[40] The popularity of *Red Star over China* cemented Snow's reputation as a writer in both the West and the East. As Jerome Ch'en argues,

> [h]aving already aroused considerable interest by these publications, Edgar Snow was to change the world's view of the CCP with his *Red Star Over China* in 1937. The seven editions which came out in quick succession in the United States ran to over 23 500 copies. In Britain, thanks to the Left Book Club, over 100 000 copies of *Red Star Over China* were sold within a few weeks. Soon it appeared in six other languages. Unlike Buck's and Lin's books, *Red Star Over China* has stood the test of time superbly. Even today, forty years after its first publication, it continues to inspire young radicals and to shape the image of Chinese communism. (Ch'en, 1979, 55)

The great popularity of Snow's reportage about China in the United States and Britain attests to widespread curiosity in the West about China's historical realities back then. As Snow's writings were based on his personal experiences with China at one of its most critical historical moments, the messages he conveyed to the West seemed more convincing than other fictional writings of the time and happened to appeal to the public appetite for

[38] The McCarthy period was marked by the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence. It also meant the practice of making unfair allegations or using unfair investigative techniques, especially in order to restrict dissent or political criticism. The term has its origins in the period known as the Second Red Scare in the United States, roughly from 1950 to 1956, and characterized by heightened fears of communist influence on American institutions and espionage by Soviet agents.

[39] The Chinese Civil War (1927–1950) was fought between forces loyal to the government of the Republic of China led by Kuomintang (KMT) and forces led by the Communist Party of China. The Communist Party of China won the war in the end and founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, with Chairman Mao as the Party leader.

[40] His other China writings include *Random Notes on Red China* (1957), which is replete with Chinese materials, and *The Other Side of the River* (1963), detailing the interview of Chairman Mao and another Chinese leader Zhou Enlai (周恩来) in the 1960s.

knowledge of Chinese communism. In *Red Star Over China*, Snow demonstrates a deep attachment to the homelike 'Red China' in his farewell to the country, which is depicted as follows.

> The whole Red Academy was seated out in the open, under a great tree, listening to a lecture by Lo Fu, when I went past. They all came over, and we shook hands, and I mumbled a few words. Then I turned and forded the stream, waved them a farewell, and rode up quickly with my little caravan. I might be the last foreigner to see any of them alive, I thought. It was very depressing. I felt that I was not going home, but leaving it. (Snow, 1937, 397)

Snow's book shows that 'Red China' is not as threatening as what the term 'Red Peril' indicates. Moreover, he portrays the Chinese communists as 'a number of Chinese dedicated to national integrity and social justice, embodying some of the traditional virtues and at the same time developing what was to be realized as the consciousness of socialist man' (Ch'en, 1979, 55). Due to such highly favourable accounts of the communists, Snow was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and compelled to disclose communist activities. Snow lamented this conservative anti-communist stance taken by government officials and the general public in America. Eventually, he left for Switzerland in the milieu of mounting suspicions from the government and increasingly difficult situations faced by writers in America.

In addition to government censure, Snow was also criticized by the academia for his romanticizing of communists and the inaccuracies in the depiction of truthful China. Such criticism formed an ironic contrast to the fact that Snow was one of the few foreigners who had the opportunity to sojourn in China and approach Chinese communist leaders. His actual experience with the Chinese and his testimony of China's historical progression, rather than contributing to the production of more authoritative knowledge on China, became the target of various criticisms. Following Snow's lead, a number of other Western journalists travelled to China and reported on Chinese communism. The reportage, perhaps to the disappointment of American politicians and government officials who exercised sanctions upon writers like Snow, was largely about the merits and goodness of Chinese communism. As Jerome Ch'en details, '[b]efore the outbreak of the war against Japan in 1937, Agnes Smedley, Helen Snow … and several others made the journey and came out with their equally good impressions of the communists, which were to be reinforced by the 1944 group of reporters

and to be sustained throughout the war period' (Ch'en, 1979, 55-56). This posed a great challenge to the widespread fear of 'Red Peril' among the Americans.

1.3.3 Revived Fascination with China: Ezra Pound

Ezra Pound (1885-1972), an American expatriate poet and critic of the early modernist movement, contributes to the field of poetry with his promotion of Imagism, a movement that derives its technique from classical Chinese and Japanese poetry and stresses clarity, precision and economy of language. His fascination with Chinese culture was variously manifested in his research into Chinese paintings, characters, literature, Confucianism and Taoism. He was enchanted with Confucianism like Leibniz and devoted to the inquiry into the ideal form of public administration like Voltaire. His passion about Chinese literature yielded voluminous translations of Chinese poems and folk songs, such as *Cathay* and *The Confucian Odes*.

Pound's enthusiasm about Chinese culture finds its best expression in *The Cantos,* a long and incomplete poem in 120 sections with dense cultural and historical allusions, Chinese characters as well as quotations in other European languages. He demonstrates profound knowledge of Chinese history and culture in 'Canto LII-LXXI', which contains a detailed description of the rise and fall of China's dynasties as well as the reign and governance of Chinese emperors. Pound drew resources from *Histoire générale de la Chine: ou Annales de cet empire* by Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla (1669-1748), a French Jesuit missionary sent to China in 1701. As a translation of Zhu Xi's extract from great Chinese annals, Mailla's *Histoire générale* gives an idealised account of China's imperial history and propagates views of China as an exemplary enlightened despotic state (similar to Voltaire's stance mentioned earlier). Having digested the ideas in *Histoire générale*, Pound manifests in *The Cantos* an inclination to the eighteenth-century Sinophile stance rather than the nineteenth-century Sinophobia position. As John Driscoll argues, Pound was interested in eighteenth-century evaluations of society because of the tasteless 'dynamism' of the nineteenth century (Driscoll, 1978, 231). Thus, Pound went against the anti-Chinese tide in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by dissociating himself with such negativities and reviving an Enlightenment fascination for Chinese culture.

1.3.4 Women Writers

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw for the first time a number of women writers dealing with China themes. Most of them were the wives of Western missionaries and diplomats dispatched to China, who wrote about their living experiences in China. Such writings, to name a few, include *Daughters of China* (1853) by Eliza Bridgman, *Chinese Scenes and People* (1863) by Jane Edkins, *Out in China* (1902) by Mrs. Archibald Little, *A Diplomat's Wife in Many Lands* (1910) by Mary Crawford Fraser, *Letters from China* (1909) by Sarah Conger, and *China Journal 1889-1900: An American Missionary Family during the Boxer Rebellion* (1989) by Eva Jane Price.[41] A common theme in these books is loneliness and fear, largely caused by long-term severance from families back home and also the sense of estrangement felt in a foreign country. The anti-imperialist sentiments fired by the Boxer Rebellion activists in China at the turn of the twentieth century enhanced those writers' fear of the seemingly inscrutable Chinese.

Different from the above women observers, Pearl Buck was the first Western female writer to narrate the lives of ordinary Chinese peasants. She was brought up in China and raised in a bilingual environment, tutored in English by her mother and in classical Chinese by a scholar named Mr. Kung. In addition, she had intermittent sojourns in China later in her career. It is due to such peculiar experiences that she was able to zoom in and out on the lives of Chinese peasants with ease. *The Good Earth* was the best-selling fiction in the US in 1931 and 1932, and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. She was also awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for her rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in China and for her biographical masterpieces. Ch'en notes her influence upon Western readers in an emphatic tone:

> Drawing from her own experience as a child and later as the wife of an agronomist, John Lossing Buck, Pearl Buck's novel persuaded the West to accept a more favourable image of the Chinese. For those the novel had failed to reach, there were the Broadway stage production based on it in 1933 and the film version in 1937. Tens of millions of Western people came under its influence. (Ch'en, 1979, 47)

Apart from peasant life, Buck also paid attention to issues related to Chinese women, who have long been trivialized and oppressed by patriarchy in Chinese culture and

[41] For more details on their writings, see Spence's book *The Great Chan's Continent* cited in this thesis.

constrained by stringent moral values peculiar to women, such as serving their husbands and children. The period of Buck's writing in the twentieth century witnessed thriving women's liberation movements, driven by multiple social forces, such as foreign missionaries' contribution to philanthropy and education in China.[42] Madame Wu, the heroine in Buck's *Pavilion of Women*, is a self-conscious Chinese woman who strives to break away from the shackles of conventional constraints imposed upon women and pursue spiritual freedom. Buck's characterization represents a meaningful clash of Chinese culture with Western thoughts, which emanates from the love story between Madame Wu and the Western spiritual saviour, Father Andre.[43]

1.4 Conclusion

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Western perceptions of China changed dramatically from admiration for Chinese culture and philosophy to prejudice against the unwelcome Chinese immigrants and fear of the 'Yellow Peril'. The twentieth century, however, witnessed more diversified views of China. In this new era, literary works on China were produced from writers' varying engagements with Chinese culture. For instance, Snow summoned the courage to go to war-stricken China and cultivated deep affection for the once mythical land. Pound caught a glimpse of the profundity of Chinese culture and could not help exploring further. Buck had the rare opportunity to spend her best years growing up with local Chinese and impressed readers with her portrayal of the lives of Chinese peasants. As each writer had different experiences with Chinese culture and thus produced different knowledge of China in the twentieth century, the tapestry of China woven by these Western writers has been enriched and made clearer at the same time. Thanks to these accounts, China was no longer as inscrutable and mythical as it had been in previous centuries. China's radical social changes in the twentieth century, such as the fall of the Qing dynasty (1912), Chinese civil war (1927-1936, 1946-1950), Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) and the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), played an ineffaceable role in furnishing new materials for Western literary production. Moreover, China has been attracting more attention from the

[42] Chapter 4 will have a detailed introduction to the traditional social status of Chinese women and their changing situation in the twentieth century. For more information, see 4.1.2 Historical Contextualization of Chinese Women in the Twentieth Century, 140.

[43] *Pavilion of Women* is one of the primary texts that will be analysed in subsequent chapters. For more information, refer to 4.3 Writing in the Third Space: Intercultural Translation in *Pavilion of Women*, 151.

West since the Chinese economic reform in 1978, which was initiated by reformists within the CCP and led by Deng Xiaoping. This reform substantially accelerated China's opening up to the rest of the world. Since then China has shifted its focus from national unification to economic revitalization, making China's economic progress one of the major topics for Western writings on China.

Given the voluminous and wide-ranging writing on China in the twenty-first century, it remains a strenuous task to conduct an exhaustive review of this writing. I consider it more intriguing to look at the China image in Western writing when cultural isolation, imagination and speculation are still at play. For instance, Marco Polo's journey to the Far East in the thirteenth century and his travelogue based on this journey are more likely to arouse one's curiosity than a trip made to China in the twenty-first century. The historical circumstances under which the journey was undertaken and the rarity of journeys of this kind are what make a difference here. Therefore, my historical review will not include writing produced in the twenty-first century and takes 1988 as the concluding year, given that my last primary text, *M. Butterfly*, was published during that year. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the historical review is conducted for the purpose of facilitating the understanding of how the image of China has evolved in Western writings in the past seven centuries and what historical contexts have influenced knowledge production on China. The writing examined in this chapter covers mainly general studies, impressions and imaginations of Chinese culture, literature and philosophy created by the West. It does not include representations of interracial relationships between the Chinese and Caucasians, the discussion of which will be left to the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 Western Discursive Strategies in Staging Chinese Presence in the Early Twentieth Century

2.1 Playing in the Dark and Shadow: Chinese Presence in Literary Imagination

In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Toni Morrison has examined the significance of an Africanist presence in the formation of American literature and identity, which is often consciously or unconsciously neglected by writers creating black characters in literary production. Even readers, according to Morrison, can be complicit in degrading the importance of the Africanist presence to a minor position (Morrison, 1992, 3-28). Highlighting the lack of due attention paid to the Africanist presence in America's national literature, Morrison's work helps reveal the rationale for fabricating Africanist personae in the widely-read literary works: that is, to establish a white American identity and express innermost fears by creating an alien Other. Morrison's identification of Africanist personae resonates with Edward Said's analysis of Western Orientalist practices. Said notes that 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (Said, 2003, 3). Though Morrison's discussion of Africanist fabrications is confined to American literature and Said refers to a broad Orient in Western literature, they are both pointing to a racial Other that is distinct from the white Anglo-Saxon breed. The characterization of the Other as a surrogate and underground Self affords the writer an arena for literary imagination, where it is risk-free to explore the forbidden and articulate the unexpressed in real life.

The juxtaposition of whiteness and blackness elevates the former to the status of the controlling master and reduces the latter to the controlled subordinate. This simultaneous exhibition of epidermal features further leads to an arbitrary assertion of intellectual differences. The construction of difference is what Morrison identifies as the literary technique of 'othering', which takes various forms, such as estranging language, metaphoric condensation, fetishizing strategies, the economy of stereotype and allegorical foreclosure (Morrison, 1992, 67-69). These Othering techniques are featured by the employment of surrogate and serviceable black bodies to serve certain purposes, such as establishing the superiority of the white race. Such literary techniques deployed to stage the Other can also be found in an array of texts that represent Chinese bodies in the first decades of the twentieth

century, such as *Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933), 'Johnny Bear' (1938), 'The Chink and the Child' (1916) and *Son of the Gods* (1930).[44] Chinese personae, similar to the Africanist personae in their exploitation, serve a contrasting purpose. In these texts, a dark and shadowy Chinese presence is created to arouse terror and mystery in one way or another. The subsequent section will demonstrate different manifestations of the habitual association of Chinese figures with darkness and shadow in these writings.

Fu Manchu under the pen of Sax Rohmer possesses a satanic yellow face and cunning eyes. This image dominated Western imaginations and perceptions of the Chinese in the first half of the twentieth century and has become the archetype of evil Chinese imageries since then. In *Bride of Fu Manchu*, Fu Manchu makes his appearance in the following mysterious and terrifying way:

> … It was a purple cloud; and it spread out, fan-wise, and the sections of the fan grew ever larger. So that presently half of the sky was shadowed.
>
> …
>
> It was advancing towards me, this shadowy thing; and now the jewel took shape.
>
> I saw that it was a dragon, or sea serpent, moving at incredible speed towards me. Upon its awful crested head a man rode. He wore a yellow robe which, in the light focused upon him, for the sun was away to my left as I dreamed, became a golden robe.
>
> His yellow face glittered also, like gold, and he wore a cap surmounted by some kind of gleaming bead. He was, I saw a Chinaman.
>
> And I thought that his face had the majesty of Satan – that this was the Emperor of the Underworld come to claim a doomed city.
>
> So much I saw, and then I realized that the dragon carried a second rider: a woman, robed in queenly white and wearing a jewelled diadem. Her beauty dazzled me, seeming more than human. But I knew her…
>
> It was Fleurete.
>
> The purple shadow-fan obscured all the sky, and complete darkness came. The darkness reached me, and where there had been sunshine was shadow. I shuddered and opened my eyes, staring up, rather wildly, I suppose. (*BF*, 8-9)

Two points merit special attention here. One is the symbolic meaning of shadow and darkness attached to Fu Manchu. The repeated use of 'shadow', 'shadowy', 'shadowed', 'darkness' and other words with similar denotations highlights Fu Manchu's devouring

[44] Further information on the edition of these books is as follows: Sax Rohmer, *Bride of Fu Manchu* (Cornwall: House of Stratus, 2009); John Steinbeck, 'Johnny Bear', in *The Long Valley: With an Introduction and Notes by John H, Timmerman* (London: Penguin Group, 1995), 101-120; Thomas Burke, 'The Chink and the Child', in *Limehouse Nights* (London: Forgotten Books, 2012), 15-37; and Rex Beach, *Son of Gods* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1929).

nature. Darkness, with all the connotative value it awakens, is terror's most significant and overweening ingredient (Morrison, 1993, 37). The terror is manifest in the narrator's astonishment and shuddering at the overwhelmingly encroaching darkness. The terrifying effects can also be distinctively felt by readers immersed in the scene. Another point that should be highlighted is the juxtaposition of the yellowness of Fu Manchu and the whiteness of Fleurete, Fu Manchu's captive bride.[45] Similar to the usual display of blackness and whiteness examined by Morrison in American literature, the simultaneous exhibition of yellowness and whiteness suggests an antithesis of evil and innocence. Situated within Fu Manchu's scheme to destroy the West, this stark contrast of epidermal features reveals the threatening and perilous nature of the yellow race to the white race.[46]

Unlike the evil figure of Fu Manchu, who always turns up in shadow and darkness, John Steinbeck's short story 'Johnny Bear' features the aristocrat Amy Emalin's secret lover, who is rendered invisible throughout the narrative and ultimately revealed to be Chinese at the end of the story. The only detail that indicates the existence of this clandestine lover is the mentioning of a dark figure with dragging footsteps, who hurries to flee from the Hawkins house at night.

> Passing the Hawkins place, I peered in through one of the little wicket gates in the cypress hedge. The house was dark, more than dark because a low light glowed in one window... I thought I heard a soft moaning in the Hawkins yard behind the hedge, and once when I came suddenly out of the fog I saw a dark figure hurrying along in the field, and I knew from the dragging footsteps that it was one of the Chinese field hands walking in sandals. The Chinese eat a great many things that have to be caught at night. (JB, 115-116)

Another trace that points to the Chinese identity of the secret lover is his sing-song nasal words, which are usually considered by Westerners to be what the Chinese language sounds like, and the sing-song words are deemed incoherent utterances that suggest no referential meanings. The narrative does not provide further information about the Chinese figure, who is rendered invisible and inarticulate throughout the story. In this sense, the Chinese persona is denied not only presence but also voice.

[45] Fleurete is abducted by Fu Manchu when she is a child and is forced to be his bride.
[46] For more information on the then historical contexts, refer to 1.3 Chinamen, 'Yellow Peril' and 'Red Peril': Diversified Views of China 1800-1988, 54.

Cheng Huan, the Chinatown dweller in Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child', is another shadowy and inarticulate figure found in Western literary texts. In Burke's text, the Limehouse district of London is depicted as a place infused with darkness and hideous sin.[47]

> It was Wednesday night in Limehouse, and for once clear of mist. Out of the coloured darkness of the Causeway stole the muffled wail of reed instruments, and, though every window was closely shuttered, between the joints shot jets of light and stealthy voices, and you could hear the whisper of slippered feet, and the stuttering steps of the satyr and the sadist. It was to the café in the middle of the Causeway, lit by the pallid blue light that is the symbol of China throughout the world, that Cheng Huan came, to take a dish of noodle and some tea … Like a figure of a shadowgraph he slid through the door and up the stairs.
>
> The chamber he entered was a bit of the Orient squatting at the portals of the West. It was a well-kept place where one might play a game of fan-tan, or take a shot or so of li-un, or purchase other varieties of Oriental delight. It was sunk in a purple dusk, though here and there a lantern stung the glooms. Low couches lay around the walls, and strange men decorated them: Chinese, Japs, Malays, Lascars, with one or two white girls; and sleek, noiseless attendants swam from couch to couch. (CC, 20)

The 'coloured darkness', 'muffled wail of reed instruments', 'stealthy voices', 'stuttering steps of the satyr and the sadist' and other similar descriptions make Burke's Chinatown a place of darkness, gloominess and sordidness. The picture of the bagnio, which is filled with people of different nationalities immersed in Oriental delight, continues to endow Chinatown with a touch of stagnancy, inertia, hedonism and degeneracy. The chamber, sunk in a purple dusk, is reminiscent of the purple cloud surrounding Fu Manchu in Rhomer's text. The metaphoric depiction of the bagnio as 'the Orient squatting at the portals of the West' is intriguing in the sense that later in the story Cheng Huan is always squatting at the foot of the bed on which Lucy sleeps. Such portrayals create the impression that both the Orient and the Oriental male surrender themselves to the West and the Western female respectively.[48] More interestingly, the mingling of people of different nationalities and the seemingly light-hearted mentioning of 'one or two white girls' in the bagnio work together to suggest the simultaneous display of epidermal features and potential degeneration of the white girls,

[47] The village of Loma in 'Johnny Bear', according to Alex Hartnell, is also a place of hideous sin, which justifies the existence of morally-good aristocrats like the Emalin sisters.

[48] This point will be further discussed in this chapter. I will look into whether this metaphoric language and the story as a whole are subject to the Orientalist discourse, in which an overwhelmingly powerful West attempts to take control of the Orient. For more information, see 2.3 Feminization and Fetishization: Orientalist Strategy Revealed in 'The Chink and the Child', 87.

which will be discussed at greater length in subsequent sections. Apart from the frowsy and sordid Chinatown, Cheng Huan's shadowy sliding movements evoke the features of ghosts. Similar descriptions are also applied to the 'noiseless attendants' who 'swam from couch to couch'. Notably, Cheng Huan is a silent and inarticulate figure as well. In his dialogues with Lucy, he can merely manage repetitive and discontinuous English words in the following manner.

> 'Lucia…li'l Lucia….Twelve….Twelve.' (CC, 4)
> 'Li'l Lucia, come-a-home…Lucia.' (CC, 4)
> 'O li'l Lucia!' (CC, 5)
> 'O li'l Lucia....White Blossom....Twelve....Twelve years old!' (CC, 5)

Throughout the narrative, Cheng Huan's voice is only heard through these inarticulate words and a cry of grief after Lucy is taken from him. Moreover, his gentleness is in stark contrast to the violence of Lucy's abusive father Battling Burrows.[49] The author's stereotypical and condescending characterization of the Chinese persona Cheng Huan complicates the narrative and invites further explorations of the textual ambivalences towards interracial sexuality and union.[50]

Sam Lee in Rex Beach's *Son of the Gods* is another Chinese character who is associated with darkness. The novel starts with Sam Lee's meeting with his white schoolmates one night, when Sam's physical features are perfectly covered by the darkness of the night and thus none of Sam's newly acquainted white friends discover his Chinese identity (*SG*, 4). Sam's white friends, especially the girls, show great interest in Sam as he is the son of a successful businessman in Chinatown. They chat with Sam fawningly, hoping to benefit from his wealth in some way. Everything proceeds smoothly until Sam takes them to a high-class Chinese restaurant, the light in which reveals Sam to be Chinese. When Sam 'ran a hand over his shiny black hair and turned, smiling to his guests' (*SG*, 12),

> Sam felt his gaze drawn from Alice's face to that of Kicker's girl, perhaps his attention was attracted by the fact that she broke off in the middle of what she was saying and stared at him out of startled eyes. A look of incredulity succeeded her smile! She opened her lips to speak but the obsequious proprietor of the Bird Cage bustled up at that moment with a word of welcome to Sam and an inquiry as to

[49] I will also discuss in subsequent sections the author's different characterizations of the masculinities of Cheng Huan as a Chinese male and Battling Burrows as a white male.
[50] This issue will be further discussed at great length in subsequent sections of this chapter.

where he wished his party seated. When the latter had made his wishes known, the girls were on their way to the dressing room. (*SG*, 12)

In the dressing room, the girls burst into rage and fiercely reprimand the boys who take them out and introduce them to this contemptible 'Chinaman'.

'Listen nothing! You get us out of here, that's all. The idea of your daring to take us out with a Chinaman!'

…

'And have him ask us to dance?' … 'That's just what he'd do. I'd die.'… 'Are you going to take us away?'

…

'Nasty yellow man! Ugh! I wouldn't let him touch me,' the other girl put in.

…

'Do you think we'd be seen in a public place with an Oriental?' (*SG*, 14-15)

The girls' attitudes towards Sam turn drastically from enthusiasm to disgust the moment Sam's Chinese identity is revealed in the light. Similar to the secret Chinese lover in 'Johnny Bear', who has to flee to the dark fields at night so as not to be seen by others, Sam also needs the darkness which acts as a shield to protect him from potential abhorrence and discrimination imposed by the dominant white race.

In summary, Chinese presence is always accompanied by shadow and darkness in the literary texts examined above, regardless of whether the Chinese character is portrayed as good or evil. Moreover, associating the Chinese with darkness is realized in various forms. For instance, the perilous and malicious Fu Manchu always turns up in darkness, whereas the kind-hearted and well-educated Sam Lee is respected when his Chinese identity is hidden by darkness yet relentlessly humiliated when he is revealed to be Chinese in the light. The invisible and silent Chinese lover has to escape to the dark fields at night, while Cheng Huan is similarly invented as an inarticulate figure moving in the dark Chinatown like shadowgraph. In the analysis of literary encounters with racial ideology, Morrison asserts the reflexive nature of the invention of Africanist personae.

I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer. The fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious. It is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity. It requires hard work not to see this. (Morrison, 1992, 17)

Morrison's argument here illuminates the underlying factors that trigger the creation of racial Others in literary imagination. The racial Other may take various forms in different works, but the writerly strategies in bringing out these forms and patterns share certain commonalities. The Othering techniques of representing the Africanist personae identified by Morrison can be found in literary works that fabricate Chinese figures. As Morrison has noted above, these writerly strategies point to the innermost feelings and emotions of 'the dreamer', who is the subject of 'the dream', namely, the narrative. Therefore, the invention of the racial Other stems from the need to express, discuss and explore the Self. This statement animates the subsequent sections, which take 'Johnny Bear' and 'The Chink and the Child' as examples to illustrate the following questions: (1) What authorial strategies are deployed to represent the racial Other? (2) How do representations of the Other relate to the articulation of the Self? (3) What implications about the Self are revealed through the representational practice?

2.2 Silencing the Racial Other: the 'Determinate Absence' of the Secret Chinese Lover in 'Johnny Bear'

The Long Valley is a collection of short stories written by John Steinbeck (1902-1968) in the 1930s and first published in 1938, most of which are based on the writer's birthplace, Salinas, California. Compared to the writer's other much explored works, such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *The Long Valley* remains understudied and has invited mixed critical responses. One of the early misconceptions about the collection, as John H. Timmerman has identified in his introduction to *The Long Valley*, is that 'the volume of stories represents a unified whole in the way that, for example, Steinbeck's earlier *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) presents individual short episodes that link together into a narrative and thematic whole' (Timmerman, 1995, ix). Rather than a thematically consistent whole, the short stories in this collection were crafted at different periods and published independently. Therefore, a thorough comprehension of *The Long Valley* requires both the critic and the reader to consider particular contexts that have shaped the voice of each narrative contained in the collection. Though possibly charged with diverse referential meanings, *The Long Valley* features three major themes and patterns: the desolation of loss; the sense of self-fulfilment; the isolated individual in conflict with some larger logical structure (Timmerman, 1995, xix-xxi).

The following section takes 'Johnny Bear' from the collection and centres on exploring the absence and silence of Miss Amy Hawkins's Chinese lover in the story, with the application of theories on absence proposed by Pierre Macherey, Terry Eagleton and Toni Morrison. Before the analysis of this particular aspect is undertaken, a brief summary of the story will be presented here to help understand the necessity of the invisible lover's silence within this narrative.

The story, set in the damp and foggy village of Loma in central California, furnishes Johnny Bear with the bizarre appearance of a dumb bear. He is talented in pantomiming any conversation he has heard without losing the exact words, voices and emotions of the interlocutors. However, he does not understand a single word reproduced by himself and also lacks the intelligence to make things up, so 'what he says is what he heard' (JB, 105). Fat Carl's Buffalo Bar, where the villagers often spend their spare time chatting about the news, becomes the local *newspaper* in the small village. Johnny Bear likes frequenting the Buffalo Bar because he can get free whisky if his pantomiming interests a potential patron. It is through Johnny Bear's photographing of words and voices that a shocking affair between the aristocrat of the village Miss Amy Hawkins and her invisible Chinese lover is accidentally disclosed to the public. The Hawkins sisters, Emalin Hawkins and Amy Hawkins, are considered the symbols of morally exemplary and charitable people in the village. The disclosure of the scandalous affair, however, not only casts a shadow upon the reputation of the Hawkins sisters but also leads to Amy's suicide.

The main characters – Johnny Bear, the first-person narrator and Alex Hartnell – jointly contribute to the unfolding of the narrative. The story is told by the first-person narrator, who takes up residence in the village and befriends the villager Alex Hartnell whilst supervising a swamp reclamation project. The narrator and Alex are both witnesses of the gradual disclosure of Amy's affair with her secret lover. The first-person narrator and Johnny Bear, according to Charlotte Byre, are actually the voices of John Steinbeck himself, who in the final disclosure of the secret lover raises an important question about the artist's conscience – 'is the writer responsible for revealing the truth even if doing so means violating the trust of the community about which he writes?' (Byre, 1988, 11). [51] Building upon Byre's argument, I would propose that the three major speaking voices – Johnny Bear, the first-

[51] Byrd contends that Steinbeck explores in 'Johnny Bear' the role of artist in society and the role of writing in the writer's personal life, and that a first-person narrator suggests Steinbeck's personal and vicarious participation in the story.

person narrator and Alex Hartnell – are all embodiments of John Steinbeck as the author, representing three conflicting forces in the writerly struggle with the revelation of truth.

2.2.1 The Speaking Voices

Johnny Bear, as a recorder of conversations taking place in the Hawkins family, is a dehumanized figure who carries no moral responsibilities to the village as a community. He functions as an exhibition of plain truth rather than a real live character. For instance, the first pantomime that the narrator hears from Johnny Bear happens to be the duplication of his own conversation with a pretty half-Mexican girl, Mae Romero. After Johnny Bear gulps the whiskey paid for by the patron, he begins the curious pantomime.

> …Johnny Bear moved to the door and then he came creeping back. The foolish smile never left his face. In the middle of the room he crouched down on his stomach. A voice came from his throat, a voice that seemed familiar to me.
>
> 'But you are too beautiful to live in a dirty little town like this.'
>
> The voice rose to a soft throaty tone, with just a trace of accent in his words. 'You just tell me that.' (JB, 104)

The narrator is embarrassed by Johnny Bear's reproduction of his own and Mae's voices, words, intonations and even accents. He is also puzzled at how Johnny Bear could possibly hear them as neither of them notices anyone around. Alex explains to him, '[n]o one sees or hears Johnny Bear when he's on business. He can move like no movement at all. Know what our young men do when they go out with girls? They take a dog along. Dogs are afraid of Johnny and they can smell him coming' (JB, 105). With this seemingly inconceivable method, Johnny Bear gradually uncovers the secret of the Hawkins family. Johnny Bear's pantomiming starts with two women arguing, with the cold voice rebuking the sobbing voice, which Johnny Bear's listeners recognize to be the voices of the Hawkins sisters, Emalin and Amy. The second pantomiming involves sing-song nasal words[52] and the repetition of the same words in a slower and non-nasal manner. It also reproduces a conversation between Emalin and the doctor, which reveals Amy's failed attempt to hang herself. The last pantomiming revolves around another dialogue between Emalin and the doctor, which discloses Amy's suicidal death and her pregnancy. From these three pantomiming, the

[52] The narrator believes the sing-song nasal words to be Chinese (JB, 113).

villagers gain a general picture of the clandestine love affair between Amy and her Chinese lover, which eventually leads to Amy's demise.

Apart from Johnny Bear, the first-person narrator stands as another speaking voice and also an outsider to the community, who is inclined to offering detached and objective comments on daily occurrences in the village. Alex, by contrast, is an insider to the community, who assumes obligations to the village but is emotionally torn by his instinctual curiosity in seeking truth and disturbing anxiety about the destructive effects of revealed truth upon his entrenched faiths. They share the similar trait of being honest tellers of truth, yet Alex differs from the narrator in the sense that the former abhors Johnny Bear's pantomiming whereas the latter defends it. For example, when Alex hears the name of Emalin leaking from the lips of Johnny Bear, he starts to become anxious as he knows that Johnny Bear is about to reveal the secret of the Hawkins sisters.[53] Thus, when the narrator asks him about Johnny Bear's first retelling of the Hawkins sisters' conversation, Alex becomes furious and endeavours to defend the honour of the aristocratic Hawkins family.

> Oh, damn it. Listen! Every town has its aristocrats, its family above reproach. Emalin and Amy Hawkins are our aristocrats, maiden ladies, kind people. Their father was a congressman. I don't like this. Johnny Bear shouldn't do it. Why! They feed him. Those men shouldn't give him whiskey. He'll haunt that house now....Now he knows he can get whiskey for it. (JB, 109)

Moreover, in other parts of the narrative Alex repeatedly accuses Johnny Bear of harming the community with his disclosure of secrets about the aristocrats. He even fights with Johnny Bear in the pantomiming scene where Amy's suicide is revealed. Nevertheless, the narrator as an outsider defends Johnny Bear by arguing '[i]t's not his fault' (JB, 117) and '[h]e's just a kind of recording and reproducing device' (JB, 117).

In Byrd's interpretation of the short story, he fails to attach importance to the role of Alex, who, apart from Johnny Bear and the narrator, functions as another significant informant in uncovering the secret of the Hawkins sisters. Alex remains the intricate and ambivalent figure who tries strenuously to stop Johnny Bear from disclosing the secret about the sisters. However, he is also the one who reveals the most important information about the

[53] As the neighbour of the Hawkins sisters, Alex knows more about the private life of these aristocrats than other common villagers. It is possible that he has sensed something clandestine going on in the Hawkins family prior to Johnny Bear's pantomiming.

sisters that Johnny Bear and others have no knowledge of – the identity of Amy's clandestine lover. When Alex declares an end to Johnny Bear's pantomiming in the bar, it seems that Alex succeeds in upholding the reputation and dignity of the Hawkins sisters and maintaining the order of the community as a whole, whereas his final revelation of the secret lover to be a Chinese workman to the narrator betrays all his previous efforts in keeping the secret. He brings to light the most decisive mystery in the narrative. In addition, it is depicted in the text that Alex seems 'reluctant to talk about them, and at the same time eager to talk about them' (JB, 116) and the villagers are 'ashamed of wanting to know, but their whole mental system required the knowledge' (JB, 118). This suggests that the village as a community shares a common ambivalent mentality about the secret of the Hawkins family as well as the statement and revelation of truth.

2.2.2 The Silenced Chinese Lover

A contrapuntal reading of the text, as suggested by Edward Said, draws attention to the stark contrast between the speaking voices and the silent ones.[54] The clandestine love affair between Amy Hawkins and her invisible lover occupies the centre of this narrative, but the two parties involved, the Chinese figure in particular, never make their appearance in the story, or in more accurate terms, are never made present by the author.[55] Their words and voices are repeated and reproduced by the recorder-like Johnny Bear. The love affair as an unspoken scene and these silenced figures are essential to the interpretation of this narrative. According to Macherey,

> [f]or there to be a critical discourse which is more than a superficial and futile reprise of the work, the speech stored in the book must be incomplete; because it has not said everything, there remains the possibility of saying something else, after another fashion. The recognition of the area of shadow in or around the work is the initial moment of criticism. (Macherey, 1978, 82)

[54] For more information on the contrapuntal reading of texts, refer to III Theoretical Framework, 16.

[55] Strictly speaking, Amy, together with her sister Emalin, appears fleetingly in the car passing by the narrator and Alex. Compared to other figures, however, the Hawkins sisters are elusively presented and deliberately hidden, with their conversations reproduced by Johnny Bear. There are scholars who have looked into the women characters in Steinbeck's narrative. For example, Paul Hintz's 'The Silent Woman and the Male Voice in Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*' (*Steinbeck Question: New Essays in Criticism*, 1993, 71-83) has explored the author's perception of the male and female identity. However, here I will limit my discussion to the silence of the Chinese character for the sake of relevance.

‘The area of shadow’ in ‘Johnny Bear’, therefore, is the scandalous affair that engenders the whole narrative and forms the initial moment of criticism. In this shadow, the Chinese lover is assigned to a position of complete secrecy, invisibility and inarticulacy. In contrast to the three major speaking voices that constitute the speech of the story, the recognition of silence and absence leads to further explication of the narrative. Macherey notes the centrality of absence in a book by asserting that

> [t]he speech of the book comes from a certain silence, a matter which it endows with form, a ground on which it traces a figure. Thus, the book is not self-sufficient; it is necessarily accompanied by a certain absence, without which it would not exist. A knowledge of the book must include a consideration of this absence. (Macherey, 1978, 85)

Hence, ‘the silence of the book is not a lack to be remedied, an inadequacy to be made up for’ (Macherey, 1978, 84). Additionally, Macherey argues that a text is by no means independent from its surrounding ideologies and social formations, and these realities are inscribed within the text primarily by virtue of their absence (Macherey, 1978 in Eagleton, 1986, 14). This ideologically necessary absence is capable of producing conflicts and juxtaposing multiple meanings, but ‘this conflict is not resolved or absorbed, but simply displayed’ (Macherey, 1978, 84). Terry Eagleton, as a Marxist literary critic, has similar contentions on the relationship between ideology and silence. He conceives silence as ‘the manifestation of a text’s ideological contradictions, and therefore its real relation to history which it had sought to conceal’ (Eagleton, 1976 in Dauncey, 2003, 96). The text ‘does not “really” resolve problems, but reveals them by contradicting itself – reveals them not merely by failing to resolve them but by its very efforts to do so’ (Eagleton, 1986, 27).

The interpretation of a text, therefore, is to ‘demonstrate that it does not exist in itself as some ideal plenitude of meaning, but bears inscribed in its very letter the marks of certain determinate absences which are the very principle of its identity’ (Eagleton, 1986, 14). This absence is determinate in that it defines what the text really is. Toni Morrison, in her examination of the Afro-American presence in American literature, highlights the extensive invisibility of black figures and argues that this invisibility is created for a reason.

> We can agree, I think, that invisible things are not necessarily ‘not-there’; that a void may be empty but not be a vacuum. In addition, certain absences are so stressed, so ornate, so planned, they call attention to themselves; arrest us with intentionality

> and purpose, like neighbourhoods that are defined by the population held away from them…(Morrison, 1988, 136)

In this light, 'Johnny Bear' contains such 'determinate absence' – the absence of the unspeakable love affair and the absence of the Chinese figure – which forms the principle of the narrative's identity and the centrality of literary criticism.

The narrative itself presents traces that point to Amy's strong affection for her Chinese lover. For instance, as shown in Johnny Bear's first pantomiming of Amy and Emalin's conversation, Amy's repeated utterance of 'I can't help it. I can't help it' (JB, 108) and her sobbing in hopelessness demonstrate her genuine and unstoppable attachments to someone. In spite of the longings, Amy's self-awareness of the ignominiousness of the affair, enhanced by her pregnancy and Emalin's acerbic warnings, results in her subsequent attempt at suicide. As the aristocrats of the village, the Hawkins sisters are, in Alex's words, 'what we tell our kids when we want to – well, to describe good people' (JB, 109). However, the scandalous affair questions whether the Hawkins sisters are the embodiments of goodness and chastity, qualities that the villagers look up to.

In addition, Amy's surreptitious lover remains the key to the suspense of the narrative. Prior to the demystification of the whole story in the final scene, there are several hints that point to the Chinese identity of the secret lover. For example, Alex tells the narrator that the Hawkins sisters hire some Chinese sharecroppers on their farm. The sing-song nasal words, which are usually believed by Westerners to be the features of the Chinese language, come out of Johnny Bear's pantomiming. The repetition of the same words without nasality suggests Amy learning Chinese from a farm workman. In addition, the dark figure with dragging footsteps sneaking from the Hawkins' yard to the crop field is speculated by the narrator to be one of the Chinese field hands. All these minuscule details indicate the Chinese identity of Amy's mysterious lover. For Amy, who is respected in the village, a sexual scandal that proves fatal to her chastity is undesirable and a sexual relationship with a racial minority – a Chinese – turns out to be even more unwanted and defamatory.

The sexual relationship between the aristocratic Amy and her Chinese lover is unspoken because it is unspeakable. Exposing it will strike a huge blow to the reputation of the Hawkins sisters and also the established hierarchy in the community. This determinate absence, according to Macherey and Eagleton, reflects textual ideological contradictions and concealed histories that determine the identity of the narrative. A historical review of the

social contexts in the 1930s California helps illuminate the concealed ideologies and histories. The first chapter, which has traced the social and intellectual conditions that generate and cultivate Western perceptions of the Chinese, shows that the American scene at the turn of the twentieth century was dominated by general animosities towards the Chinese workers, especially in California where the Gold Rush prevailed and Steinbeck's story takes place.[56] In addition, interracial sexual relationship in America has been 'a charged aspect of American culture, politics, and law since the beginning of Anglo settler colonialism' (Frankenberg, 1993, 72). Interracial marriages were 'either actually illegal or not constitutionally protected for most of the past four hundred years' (Frankenberg, 1993, 72).[57] Against the backdrop of widespread hostility towards the unwelcome Chinese immigrants, Chinese-Caucasian relationships loomed large as a topic of taboo, disapproval and anxiety. Although the author does not make any specific references to such social contexts in the text (except for the mentioning of Chinese sharecroppers), his handling of the interracial relationship between Amy and the Chinese lover as an unspeakable theme and his characterising of the Chinese as a taciturn figure reflect such charged emotions of anxiety and disapproval. Warren French, a specialist in Steinbeck studies, observes that

> Steinbeck's own work, besides 'Johnny Bear', is scarcely free from the typically patronizing California attitude. Despite his protests against the treatment of the migrants from the Dust Bowl, Steinbeck never raised his voice against the cruel resettlement of the Nisei (Japanese-Americans who owned some of the most desirable farmland in California) in concentration camps during World War II; and *Their Blood is Strong*, a reprinting of the newspaper accounts written in 1936 while collecting background material for *The Grapes of Wrath*, expresses a concept of Anglo-Saxon superiority, little less virulent than Norris's, when Steinbeck writes of the recent migrants in contrast to earlier Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, and Mexicans. (French, 1972, 106)

Steinbeck's conception of Anglo-Saxon superiority preconditions his silencing of the racial Other in 'Johnny Bear'. As Sarah Dauncey specifies, social silence is useful in twentieth-century literature given its potential 'to denote ideological contradictions and signal the existence of the disarticulated, the historically repressed, and oppressed' (Dauncey, 2003, 8).

[56] For more information on the historical background, refer to 1.3.1 Chinese Coolies: Mark Twain and Bret Harte, 58.
[57] For more information on interracial relationships in America, refer to Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

In ‘Johnny Bear’, the perception of white superiority and coloured inferiority, the repression suffered by the Chinese immigrants in America as well as the anxiety towards the tabooed topic of interracial relationship and marriage, cannot be outspokenly pinpointed on a textual level. However, these concealed ideologies and histories are brought to light through an investigation into the determinate absences in the narrative.

Steinbeck’s construction of community and whiteness through race in the narrative also merits attention here. The author conceives the village of Loma as a community in the narrative. As Alex explains to the narrator about the Hawkins sisters, he says, ‘[t]hey can’t do anything bad. It wouldn’t be good for any of us if the Hawkins sisters weren’t the Hawkins sisters’ (JB, 116). His concept of ‘us’ denotes a strong sense of boundary marking between the villagers and outsiders as well as between the whites and non-whites. Moreover, when Alex attempts to stop Johnny Bear from disclosing further information about the scandalous affair of the Hawkins family, the author writes, ‘[i]f he had expected opposition he was disappointed. I saw the men nodding to one another’ (JB, 119). This scene suggests the villagers’ acquiescent agreement to protecting the Hawkins sisters from potential irretrievable damage. This solidarity and cohesiveness is characteristic of the collective behaviours of a community. In this light, the narrator is just an outsider and the Chinese workman is an alienated, unfamiliar and heterogeneous Other. The surreptitious affair symbolizes a crossing of racial boundary and subversion of social hierarchy. Frankenberg aptly expounds the interrelation between boundary marking and purity in the following fashion.

> Closely connected to the question of boundary marking is the concept of purity; its opposite, impurity, is implied in anxiety over racially ‘mixed’ children. And purity, in its turn, implies difference, not just of experience or of culture, but of essence, or being. It is an anthropological truism (but perhaps a misleading one) that this kind of boundary marking might be understood as a ‘universal’ attribute of cultures, based on groups’ tendency to consolidate their own identity in contrast and opposition to others. This formulation obscures more than it explains, however, since it does not ask why, here, ‘race’ comes to serve as a criterion of differentiation. (Frankenberg, 1993, 99-100)

The highlighting of differences serves the purpose of defining the identity of the Self. This echoes Said’s proposition in *Orientalism* – the Other is deployed to define the Self – and also evokes Stuart Hall’s identification of stereotyping as an attempt to fix such invented

differences.[58] The accentuation of difference is prone to a degradation of the Other, which is compatible with French's argument on Steinbeck's Anglo-Saxon superiority. The concept of purity in 'Johnny Bear' is symbolized by the Hawkins sisters, while Amy's pregnancy eventually tarnishes this purity along with the simultaneously aroused anxiety over racially mixed children. In order to eliminate this smear, Amy has to exchange her life for the purity that concerns not only her own virginity but also the village as a white community. Amy's pitiable yet destined death manifests the author's meticulous construction of whiteness, a domain where race matters a great deal. In addition, the author's concept of community not only banishes the narrator and the invisible Chinese figure in particular from the central narrative but also removes the tarnished components of the community – Amy Hawkins – from the centre stage by keeping her out of sight of the villagers and ultimately putting an end to her life.

For white women involved in interracial relationships, there is a 'crudely stereotypic and mainly derogatory imagery' (Frankenberg, 1993, 85) attached to them. In Amy's case, death is the only way to escape from the derogatory imagery cast upon her as well as from the degradation of her status and essential being, which is evinced by the unspeakable partnership with a racial Other. Moreover, death is the most convenient way to eliminate the impurity that will potentially taint the white blood. Amy's inevitable demise is incurred by the author's innermost anxieties about the threat posed by the racial Other to the white race – the 'Yellow Peril' complex, which predominates American society in the early half of the twentieth century. Such fears are subsequently compromised by a strategic treatment of interracial relationships in literary production, which, in Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear', is manifested in the authorial strategy to silence the racial Other and conceal the unspeakable theme of interracial sexuality.

In summary, an analysis of the speaking and silenced voices in 'Johnny Bear' shows that the silencing of the racial Other reveals ideologies and histories concealed by the author, who entertains deep anxieties about interracial relationships against the backdrop of general animosities towards the Chinese immigrants in early twentieth-century America. The juxtaposition of the speaking and silenced voices not only highlights the latter but also invites further investigations into the underlying rationale for employing silencing as a representational practice of the racial Other. That the racial Other is silenced and interracial

[58] Refer to II Theorising Cultural Representations: Orientalism and Beyond, 10.

love is unspeakable is preconditioned on a keenly-felt fear of alien races threatening the purity of whiteness.

Silencing the racial Other as a discursive strategy in twentieth-century English literature can be found in one of my other primary texts, 'The Chink and the Child' by Thomas Burke. The Chinese figure in the short story, Cheng Huan, is rendered inarticulate and hardly capable of communicating in English. As mentioned earlier, he can only utter incoherent words in his conversation with the white girl Lucy. Burke could have created Cheng Huan as a fluent English-speaking figure as the erudite Lien Chi in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*, yet he chooses to characterise him with inarticulacy. However, unlike the invisible and nameless Chinese figure in 'Johnny Bear', Cheng Huan acquires more intricacies through occupying the centre stage yet remaining inarticulate in the narrative. This ambivalent treatment of the Chinese figure by the author will form the focal point of my discussion in the section that follows.

2.3 Feminization and Fetishization: Orientalist Strategy in 'The Chink and the Child'

'The Chink and the Child', the opening story in Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights* (1916), narrates a romantic tragedy between a Chinese shopkeeper in London's Chinatown, Cheng Huan, and a twelve-year-old white girl, Lucy. Cheng Huan is a wandering young man who always sits in his shop staring blankly into the street or purposelessly frequents opium-dens. Lucy is an unfortunate child under the custody of her abusive father, Battling Burrows. One day, Lucy is staggering along the street after being fiercely beaten by her alcoholic father. Captivated by Lucy's beauty, Cheng Huan takes her to his shop and treats her like a princess. When the drunken Battling is notified of her daughter's involvement with the yellow man (in Battling's own words), he ruthlessly beats Lucy to death. The devastated Cheng Huan kills Battling for murdering Lucy and then commits suicide.

The literary text was adapted into the silent film *Broken Blossoms*, directed by D. W. Griffith in 1919. The following is a stage photo of the film, in which Cheng Huan leans towards Lucy's body and stares into Lucy's innocent eyes.

Figure 1: Cheng Huan (Richard Barthelmess) and Lucy (Lillian Gish) (*Broken Blossoms*)

As a pioneering film exploring interracial relationships, *Broken Blossoms* enjoyed great popularity then and has attracted the attention of film critics and literary scholars to the present day. Its fame even casts Burke's original literary text into shade. According to Anne Witchard's wide-ranging study of Burke's Chinatown stories, 'Thomas Burke rarely receives a mention as the originator of Griffith's "masterpiece"' (Witchard, 2003, 3). Keith Wilson's review of Witchard's work reveals Burke's dissatisfaction about the adapted film.

> Burke himself despised and resented what Griffith made of the story, not least because his own role as author was obscured beneath the credit given to Griffith: 'I had always regarded this story as invented and told by me; and I was surprised when a certain skilled workman, called a producer, claimed it as his. I expressed this surprise in one or two quarters and was told not to be silly'. (Wilson, 2011, 403)

Regarding the literary quality of the original text, Gina Marchetti reduces the story to a simple description of slum life 'for the prurient imaginations of outsiders' (Marchetti, 1993, 33), lacking the moral teaching and artistic achievements for which the film is often credited. I do not mean to play down the milestone significance of Griffith's masterpiece, yet I would

disagree with Marchetti's partial evaluation of the literary text. The subsequent discussion will demonstrate that a close and critical reading of Burke's story would inspire historical, social and cultural thinking no less than that aroused by the film. Undoubtedly, there are always differences between the original text and its various adaptations. Given that there exists ample scholarship on the film yet scant attention paid to the narrative, I will confine my research to the original text without analysing the differences.[59]

'The Chink and the Child' is one of the few accounts that defy the demonization of the Chinese commonly found in early twentieth-century literary imagination. The most well-known account that instigated public negativity and animosity towards the Chinese back then was the villainous image of Fu Manchu created by Burke's contemporary Sax Rohmer. Witchard neatly summarizes the similarities and distinctions of Chinatown's symbolic meaning in both writers' works.

> For both writers, Chinese Limehouse was a resort of occult Otherness and Burke's Limehouse is symptomatic of the same cultural concerns that produced Rohmer's demonised 'Chinaman'. But whereas for Rohmer the alien element is accepted as undesirable and operates as a byword for all that is sinister and threatening, Burke's Limehouse is as alluring as it is forbidding… (Witchard, 2003, 4)

Compared with Rohmer's radicalized depiction of the Chinese, Burke seems to demonstrate a great deal more tolerance towards them by adopting a range of attitudes that 'upset social orthodoxies' (Witchard, 2003, 1). Burke's bold writings on interracial romance even caused social outrage in Britain, which is revealed in Witchard's historical contextualization as follows.

> In *Limehouse Nights*, the most English of institutions are undermined. Young Cockney girls eat Chow Mein with chopsticks in the local caffs, blithely gamble their house-keeping money at Fan Tan and Puck-a-Pu, scent their bedrooms with aromatic joss sticks and prepare opium pipes in the corner pub. The book's blend of shocking realism with lyrical romance flew in the face of consensual thought and social taboo and it played a significant part in the national hysteria which peaked in

[59] For more information on the film, refer to Susan Koshy, 'American Nationhood as Eugenic Romance', *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 12 (1), Spring 2001, 50-78 (Durham: Duke University Press); Garry Leonard, 'Tears of Joy: Hollywood Melodrama, Ecstasy, and Restoring Meta-Narratives of Transcendence in Modernity', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 79 (2), Spring 2010, 819-837 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press); Ruth Mayer, 'The Glittering Machine of Modernity: The Chinatown in American Silent Film', *Modernism/modernity*, 16 (4), November 2009, 661-684 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press).

> the late 1920s with press appeals to the Home Office to 'do something' about 'unhappy white girls fascinated by the yellow man.' (Witchard, 2003, 3)

The historical context provided above is reflected in 'The Chink and the Child' as well. As demonstrated in the beginning section of this chapter, Burke's description of the bagnio in Chinatown suggests the presence of white girls and their mingling with other races, which echoes Witchard's historical information on white girls' fascination with the yellow man here. The unconventionality of the text lies in Burke's tolerance towards the Chinese and his bold description of interracial romance, which questions Marchetti's oversimplified verdict mentioned above. Based on a textual analysis of the narrative, the following section argues that there is a lurking ambivalence towards interracial sexuality beneath Burke's seemingly unusual tolerance towards the racial Other. The ambivalence emanating from the text is manifest in the sympathetic and eulogistic characterization of the Chinese figure on the one hand and in the anxieties over blood purity on the other. Moreover, a close reading of the text reveals the author's strategic engagement with the racial Other. Cheng Huan is depicted as the first person who treats Lucy with gentle love and also the potential saviour of Lucy from the deadly hands of her abusive father. In this role, Cheng Huan is desirable and alluring. Simultaneously, Cheng Huan is presented as a fetishist fascinated with Lucy's whiteness, posing a potential threat to Lucy's purity. Feminization and fetishization are two representational strategies that are employed by the author to compromise the ambivalence he bears towards the racial Other and interracial sexuality. The subsequent discussion will look into how these two strategies are played out in the narrative and what cultural meanings are constructed in the authorial deployment of these discursive strategies.

2.3.1 Feminization: Contrasting the Masculinities of the White and Yellow Men

This section will discuss how the author engages with the alluring and threatening racial Other through the strategy of feminization and how the masculinities of the racial Other are suppressed throughout the narrative. Cheng Huan is portrayed as a kind and innocent figure, but a scrutiny of the contrast formed between Battling and Cheng Huan as well as various textual details point to the effeminate attributes imposed upon Cheng Huan by the author.

In the text, Burke characterizes Cheng Huan and Battling in dramatically different ways. Battling is a boxer[60] with strong physique, who 'could run like a deer, leap like a greyhound, fight like a machine, and drink like a suction-hose' (CC, 16). Meanwhile, he is a bully and 'a curious mixture of athleticism and degeneracy' (CC, 16), typical of the dwellers 'in the eastern districts of London' (CC, 16). He is also a brutal and merciless father who treats his daughter with indifference and violence. Battling's abuse of Lucy is ironically depicted in the text.

> When Battling was cross with his manager…well, it is indefensible to strike your manager or to throw chairs at him, if he is a good manager; but to use a dog-whip on a small child is permissible and quite as satisfying; at least, he found it so. On these occasions, then, when very cross with his sparring partners, or over-flushed with victory and juice of the grape, he would flog Lucy. But he was reputed by the boys to be a good fellow. He only whipped the child when he was drunk; and he was only drunk for eight months of the year. (CC, 17)

In addition, Battling is a racist who abhors other races and disdains the yellow man most (CC, 30). The text describes his resentment against the Chinese in an intriguing way – '[h]is birth and education in Shadwell had taught him that of all creeping things that creep upon earth the most insidious is the Oriental in the West' (CC, 30). If such partial and virulent knowledge were imparted to schoolchildren, racial prejudice could be entrenched and widespread in British society then.

In contrast, Burke does not provide much information about Cheng's physical appearance, but the characterization of him as a wandering poet who frequents opium dens suggests his idleness and inertia. As discussed above, Cheng Huan is not only a figure of shadowgraph with unnoticeable catlike movements but also an inarticulate interlocutor. Nevertheless, possessed of a poet's sensitivity, Cheng Huan 'regarded things differently from other sailors' and 'felt things more passionately' (CC, 19). Thus, he discovers Lucy's beauty, which is barely noticed by other dwellers in the Limehouse district.

> … for all the starved face and the transfixed air, there was a lurking beauty about her, a something that called you in the soft curve of her cheek that cried for kisses

[60] Assigning Battling the occupation of boxer is interesting in the sense that at the turn of twentieth century, due to the influence of the Boxer Rebellion, Westerners tend to associate the term 'Boxer' with the Chinese, although the Boxer Rebellion actually has nothing to do with the denotations of the term 'Boxer'. By characterizing Battling as a violent and cruel boxer, Burke seems to reverse the widespread stereotypical perception of the Chinese as Boxers.

> and was fed with blows, and in the splendid mournfulness that grew in eyes and lips. The brown hair chimed against the pale face, like the rounding of a verse. The blue cotton frock and the broken shoes could not break the loveliness of her slender figure or the shy grace of her movements as she flitted about the squalid alleys of the docks; though in all that region of wasted life and toil and decay, there was not one that noticed her, until… (CC, 18)

As seen from the above paragraph, Lucy's loveliness and purity forms a sharp contrast with the squalid surroundings in Chinatown. The paleness and mournfulness of Lucy's face evinces compassion and makes her beauty more prominent. However, the harsh reality does not favour this little girl until Cheng Huan summons the courage to approach her and treats her with unprecedented tender love. The following passage portrays the first physical contact between Cheng Huan and Lucy.

> For he sat by her. He looked at her – reverently yet passionately. He touched her – wistfully yet eagerly. He locked a finger in her wondrous hair. She did not start away; she did not tremble. She knew well what she had to be afraid of in that place; but she was not afraid of Cheng. She pierced the mephitic gloom and scanned his face. No, she was not afraid. His yellow hands, his yellow face, his smooth black hair…well, he was the first thing that had ever spoken soft words to her; the first thing that had ever laid a hand upon her that was not brutal; the first thing that had deferred in manner towards her as though she, too, had a right to live. She knew his words were sweet, though she did not understand them. Nor can they be set down. Half that he spoke was in village Chinese; the rest in a mangling of English which no distorted spelling could possibly reproduce. (CC, 24)

There are three points to be made with regard to this passage. First, it demonstrates what I have previously identified as the simultaneous exhibition of epidermal features, whiteness and yellowness, and also the inarticulacy of the racial Other.[61] In addition, Lucy is not repelled by Cheng's exotic features – yellow hands, yellow face and black hair – in the same way as Battling dismisses the Chinese as the most insidious creeping creatures in the world. For Lucy, Cheng Huan represents kindness and gentleness as a person rather than exoticness as a racial Other. Lastly, Cheng Huan's affectionate caressing highlights Battling's violent floggings. Compared with Battling's aggressiveness and strong physique, Cheng Huan's softness and feline movements are denotative of female traits. Also, the narrative accentuates Cheng Huan's parental care extended to Lucy. 'Each night he would tend her, as might

[61] For more information on the simultaneous display of epidermal features, see 2.1 Playing in the Dark and Shadow: Chinese Presence in Literary Imagination, 71.

mother to child; and each night he watched and sometimes slumbered at the foot of her couch' (CC, 29-30). The fact that Lucy is a twelve-year-old child also points to the maternal role of Cheng Huan.[62] Additionally, the metaphoric comparison of Lucy to a poem (CC, 29) indicates that the poet – Cheng Huan – creates Lucy just as a mother gives birth to a child. All these details denote Burke's feminization of the Chinese persona, whose masculinity is questioned and overshadowed by the much more masculine figure – Battling Burrows.

R. W. Connell identifies the relations among masculinities as hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalization. It should be noted that these four types of masculinities are characterized in relation to each other and thus the terms should be understood within their interrelations. Hegemonic masculinity, as Connell argues, can be defined as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell, 2005, 77). While hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominance of heterosexual men, subordinate masculinity points to the group of homosexual men, who are positioned at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men (Connell, 2005, 78). Complicity means masculinities 'constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy' (Connell, 2005, 79). These three types of masculinity are defined as relations internal to the gender order, whereas marginalization masculinity exists in relation to external factors, such as race and class, insofar as gender also interacts with race and class as well as constantly interacts with nationality or position in the world order (Connell, 2005, 75). In other words, race and class are both factors that influence the characterization of masculinity. Connell points out the relation between race and masculinity in the following manner.

> Race relations may also become an integral part of the dynamic between masculinities. In a white-supremacist context, black masculinities play symbolic roles for white gender construction. For instance, black sporting stars become exemplars of masculine toughness, while the fantasy figure of the black rapist plays an important role in sexual politics among whites, a role much exploited by right-wing politics in the United States. Conversely, hegemonic masculinity among whites sustains the institutional oppression and physical terror that have framed the making of masculinities in black communities. (Connell, 2005, 80)

[62] Marchetti maintains that Lucy's underage reflects the Victorian cult of the virgin child, which is carried forward to the Edwardian age. (Marchetti, 1993, 39)

In Connell's paradigm, masculinities of non-white males (black males in his case) are marginalized relative to the authority of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant white group. They assist in the construction of white gender identity by enhancing the masculine features of the white group. In this regard, Cheng Huan as the racial Other is endowed with effeminate traits that identify himself with a non-dominant social group and lacks the masculinity that largely characterizes Battling as the dominant white male.

Hence, Burke's feminization of the Chinese figure impels the interrogation of the possibility of Burke's Orientalist attitudes towards the racial Other. As Said argues, the nineteenth-century writers in his discussion, such as Gustave Flaubert, have established a seemingly essential link between the Orient and the attributes of 'silent indifference' and 'feminine penetrability' in order to justify the West's reconstruction and redemption of the Orient (Said, 2003, 206). What underpins the Orientalist discourse is the idea of binary opposition: nature/culture, primitive/modern, backward/progressive, inferior/superior, and feminine/masculine. The words before the slash are assigned to the Orient whereas the ones after are associated with the West. The Orient is invented and fabricated to be a locale of backwardness, silent indifference, feminine penetrability and supine malleability in Orientalist accounts. The silent and invisible Chinese lover in 'Johnny Bear' as well as the inarticulate and feminine Cheng Huan examined above testify to this argument.

Feminization is commonly deployed in the Orientalist discourse to hierarchize race. Burke's Orientalist mentality is more clearly revealed in various textual details. For instance, the bagnio is depicted as a chamber that resembles 'a bit of the Orient squatting at the portals of the West' (CC, 20), and in a similar vein Cheng Huan often squats on the floor holding Lucy's little hands (CC, 28). This squatting position creates the effect of elevating the West and simultaneously dwarfing the East. In another scene, Cheng Huan ministers to Lucy with food, cleanses and robes her, making Lucy a child princess 'perched on the edge of many cushions as on a throne' (CC, 29). Cheng Huan is thus made a serviceable body attending to the needs and orders of Lucy. The Chinese body is imagined in a way that propels the assumption of Burke's inclination to a hierarchical conception of race, where Cheng Huan and the Orient are perceived to be essentially inferior and subordinate to the superior and controlling West.

2.3.2 Fetishization: Ambivalence towards Interracial Union and Interracial Sexuality

The previous section has elaborated on Burke's utilization of feminization as a strategy to engage with the racial Other, whereas this section will discuss how the author turns to fetishization to represent interracial sexuality. As the following section argues, Burke displaces his fetishization of skin and blood purity onto the racial Other, hence the depiction of Cheng Huan to be a fetishist who is infatuated with Lucy's whiteness. The tragic death of the protagonists and the evasion of interracial sexual consummation reflect an authorial ambivalence towards interracial union and interracial sexuality. This ambivalence can be understood from the eulogistic depiction of Cheng Huan as Lucy's potential saviour and also from the hidden anxieties over Lucy's loss of virginity resulting from her romance with Cheng Huan.

In the narrative Cheng Huan is fabricated as a fetishist, onto whom the authorial fetishization of skin and blood purity is transplanted. Cheng Huan's fetishization of Lucy can be seen from multiple perspectives. First of all, there is a strong sense of eroticism emanating from Cheng Huan's bodily intimacy with Lucy – the burning and prolonged gaze, gentle caresses and passionate kisses, as suggested in the following scenes. [63]

> So he would lounge and smoke cheap cigarettes, and sit at his window, from which point he had many times observed the lyrical Lucy. He noticed her casually. Another, he observed her, not casually. Later, he looked long at her; later still, he began to watch for her and for that strangely provocative something about the toss of the head and the hang of the little blue skirt as it coyly kissed her knee. (CC, 19-20)

> With a bird-like movement, she looked up at him – her face alight, her tiny hands upon his coat – clinging, wondering, trusting. He took her hand and kissed it; repeated the kiss upon her cheek and lip and little bosom, twining his fingers in her hair. Docilely, and echoing the smile of his lemon lips in a way that thrilled him almost to laughter, she returned his kisses impetuously, gladly. (CC, 26-27)

As discussed above, Lucy is not repelled by Cheng Huan's yellowness in the same way that her racist father is prejudiced against the Chinese as the most insidious creatures in the world (*CC*, 30). She gladly accepts Cheng Huan's love and enjoys this unprecedented intimacy with

[63] The sense of eroticism is also reflected in the stage photo of the film, in which Cheng Huan leans over and gazes upon Lucy in an attentive and affectionate manner.

him. Furthermore, Cheng Huan's fetishization of Lucy is shown in his infatuation with Lucy's whiteness, as depicted in the following scenes.

> …the sickness which momentarily gripped him on finding in this place his snowy-breasted pearl passed and gave place to great joy. She was here; he would talk with her. Little English he had, but simple words, those with few gutturals, he had managed to pick up; so he rose, the masterful lover, and, with feline movements, crossed the nightmare chamber to claim his own. (CC, 23)

> You will observe that he had claimed her, but had not asked himself whether she were of an age for love. The white perfection of the child had captivated every sense. (CC, 23)

Prior to the discussion of Cheng Huan's fetishization of Lucy's whiteness, there are several points to be underlined here. First, Cheng Huan's 'feline movement' and the dark surroundings arouse a sense of horror. Moreover, the use of the verb 'claim' indicates that Cheng Huan exerts absolute control over the twelve-year-old Lucy. Descriptions of this kind suggest Cheng Huan's pursuit of Lucy to be a predatory act, which is threatening and perilous in nature. Cheng Huan's subsequent move to take Lucy home and keep her in his room can be interpreted as an act of imprisonment and captivity.

Apart from these loaded textual details, Cheng Huan's fetishization of Lucy's whiteness looms large as an important theme in Burke's text. As demonstrated in the quotations above, Cheng Huan is captivated by the 'snowy-breasted pearl' and the 'white perfection of the child', which both refer to Lucy's white skin. Lucy's whiteness is also repeatedly highlighted in the text. For instance, 'White Blossom' is the appellation adopted by Cheng Huan to address Lucy; and other phrases that suggest whiteness include the 'alabaster Cockney child' (CC, 26) and Lucy's 'small white feet' (CC, 29). In addition, Lucy's whiteness is contrasted with Cheng Huan's yellowness, which also receives repeated emphases in the text, such as the reiterated 'yellow hands', 'yellow face' and 'yellow man' in the text. The simultaneous exhibition of whiteness and yellowness here, similar to the paralleling display of whiteness and blackness identified by Morrison, can be considered as a fetish of skin using Homi Bhabha's theory enunciated in 'The Other Question'. As Bhabha argues,

> the fetish of colonial discourse – what Fanon calls the epidermal schema – is not, like the sexual fetish, a secret. Skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognised as 'common

> knowledge' in a range of cultural, political, historical discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies. (Bhabha, 1983, 30)

Bhabha's theory on fetishism of race and stereotype is derived from a combination of Said's analysis of psychological and discursive structures of Orientalism and the Freudian model on fetishism.[64] As Bhabha states above, skin is a signifier of differentiation and discrimination that lies within the colonial discourse as a common practice of racial hierarchization. According to Bhabha, colonial discourse is 'an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences' (Bhabha, 1983, 23). If examined carefully, Burke's fetishism of race, as strategically grated onto Cheng Huan's fetishistic desire for Lucy, does possess a recognition and disavowal of racial differences. The recognition of racial differences is embodied in a language difference, for Cheng Huan is characterized as an inarticulate figure unable to communicate in English. In addition, the fact that the yellow-faced Cheng Huan is fascinated by Lucy's inviting whiteness proves a skin difference. Differences in language and skin colour can be incorporated under the rubric of racial difference. The disavowal of racial differences is not as conspicuous as the recognition of differences but still can be traced in the narrative. For instance, there is a scene in which Cheng Huan dresses Lucy in Oriental robes to make her a 'living interpretation of a Chinese lyric' (CC, 29).

> …formless masses of blue and gold, magical things of silk, and a vessel that was surely Aladdin's lamp, and a box of spices. He took these robes, and, with tender, reverent fingers, removed from his White Blossom the besmirched rags that covered her, and robed her again, and led her then to the heap of stuff that was his bed, and bestowed her safely. (CC, 27-28)

> …now bathed and sandalled, she seemed the living interpretation of a Chinese lyric. And she was his; her sweet self and her prattle, and her birdlike ways were all his own. (CC, 29)

The idea of dressing the white girl in blue and gold silk, which is characteristic of traditional Chinese costumes, suggests both sexual fetishization and cultural fetishization. The act of

[64] My analysis of fetishism here is not focused on the Freudian psychoanalytical definition of sexual fetishism or Marxian economic conception of commodity fetishism, although Bhabha's theory is partly built on the Freudian model, which designates that the fetishist demonstrates ambivalence toward the alternately castrated woman through disavowal and acknowledgement of the woman's castration.

undressing and dressing the girl not only invokes erotic imaginings but also symbolizes the process of disavowing racial differences. Through bathing and dressing the white girl, Cheng Huan attempts to eradicate the cultural and racial differences that keep them apart, and makes Lucy a creation of his own and an object of fetishism that bears greater resemblances to his own race. Apart from the acknowledgement and disavowal of racial and cultural differences, another important feature of fetishistic fantasies is the establishment of new identities of the Self. According to Amanda Fernbach,

> [f]antasies, sometimes mass cultural ones, can help to mend or fix personal lack and fortify or redefine a sense of self; in this sense they can function as cultural fetishisms. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Fetishistic fantasies about the seemingly magical transformation of the body or self are contagious and sometimes productive, they can act as a cultural catalyst in the building of promising new subjectivities. (Fernbach, 2002, 41)

Cheng Huan's affection for Lucy has a transformative power, which is an important feature of fetishistic fantasies. Before approaching Lucy, Cheng Huan is a wandering poet who lives in a squalid room and often sits at his window watching the street and smoking opium. The encounter with Lucy transforms Cheng Huan's idleness and passivity into a powerful force of agency, with which Cheng Huan is able to find a purpose for his life – to pursue love and beauty. His poetic spirit and passion is triggered; his house is cleaned; he is motivated to protect and love another person. The lost soul is able to fortify and redefine a sense of Self. Cheng Huan's fetishistic desire for Lucy is also reflected in a later scene when Battling takes Lucy away and violently destroys the robes and decorations in the room. Cheng Huan's fantasies crumble all of sudden, with his hope and love vanishing in the ruthlessly trampled room. Battling's destructive behaviour not only awakens Cheng Huan to a keen awareness of racial and cultural differences that he is so desperate to eradicate, but also highlights the impossibility of interracial union. This brutal reality eventually leads to his revenge and suicide.

In the engagement with the racial Other and interracial sexuality, Burke displaces his anxieties onto the tragic relationship between Cheng Huan and Lucy, who are both outcasts of the society. He also grafts his fetishism of race and skin onto Cheng's fetishization of Lucy. The authorial recognition and disavowal of cultural differences is also transplanted onto Cheng Huan, the invented fetishist. Fetishization, as evaluated by Morrison, stands as a handy

device in literary imagination, which contributes to an establishment of binary oppositions. It is

> especially useful in evoking erotic fears or desires and establishing fixed and major difference where difference does not exist or is minimal. Blood, for example, is a pervasive fetish: black blood, white blood, the purity of blood; the purity of white female sexuality, the pollution of African blood and sex. Fetishization is a strategy often used to assert the categorical absolutism of civilization and savagery. (Morrison, 1992, 68)

Blood as a fetish, as examined by Morrison, creates similar effects to what skin as a fetish produces, but is handier in explaining anxieties over interracial sexuality (Morrison, 1992, 68). The mix of blood is seen by the dominant white race as a pollution of their own purity, hence their fears of interracial union.

In Burke's narrative, Cheng Huan's fetishization of Lucy demonstrates features of eroticism and proves menacing to the purity of white female sexuality. His love and compassion provides the pitiful Lucy with temporary shelter from the harm of her abusive father, but the intimacy between them turns out to be an unwanted threat. The characterization of Cheng Huan as both desirable and perilous arises from Burke's own ambivalence towards interracial sexuality and interracial union. Cheng Huan's tragic death successfully removes the potential menace and secures the purity of whiteness, whereas the shattering of his fantasies over Lucy asserts inherent cultural and racial differences that help establish the East and the West as binary oppositions. Burke's Orientalist mentality in dealing with the racial Other, summarized here and also in the section on feminization, predetermines the authorial ambivalence towards interracial sexuality and union.

2.4 Conclusion

The three sections in this chapter have discussed the discursive strategies commonly adopted by Western writers to engage with things Chinese, with each section focused on different themes. The first section revealed the staggering frequency of associating Chinese with darkness and shadow in four literary texts; the second section, under the theoretical framework of Macherey, Eagleton and Morrison, investigated the silence and invisibility of the Chinese persona in 'Johnny Bear'; the last section, as an extension of the previous one,

explored the employment of feminization and fetishization as representational strategies in the handling of the racial Other.

The primary texts discussed share similar anxieties over interracial union. The ambivalence towards the racial Other is underpinned by a 'Yellow Peril' mentality prevailing in early twentieth-century West, assuming that the primitive and barbaric East threatens to devour the modern and civilized West and pollute the purity of the white race through interracial union. When it comes to literary production, the threat posed by the Other can be eliminated by assigning death to one or both parties involved in the interracial relationship, as exemplified in the death of Miss Amy Hawkins and the lovelorn Cheng Huan. The discursive strategies utilized to jeopardize interracial union serve specific purposes, such as expressing the Self through talking about the Other or compromising the ambivalence felt towards the racial and cultural Other. The 'othering' techniques, in Morrison's terms, reveal Western writers' ideological encounters with the cultural Other, in the course of which the desires, anxieties and fears of the Self are brought to the surface.

Chapter 3 Orientalism and Counter-hegemonic Energies

3.1 Introduction

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw several literary texts (plays in particular) probing into East-West cultural differences through the lens of interracial romance, including *East Is West* (1918) by Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer, *Marco Millions* (1927) by Eugene O'Neill, and *Son of the Gods* (1929) by Rex Beach. These three texts do not completely silence the Chinese personae in the same fashion that 'Johnny Bear' (1938) deals with the clandestine Chinese lover, nor do they render the Chinese characters as inarticulate as Cheng Huan in 'The Chink and the Child' (1916). Instead, these texts bring the Chinese presence to the centre stage in their own particular way.

East Is West, as the title suggests, promotes the idea of cultural fusion, while *Marco Millions* and *Son of the Gods* employ the Oriental culture as a foil against which the social malpractices and moral degeneracies within American society are criticized, such as materialism brought about by America's progress towards modernity. Similar to Steinbeck and Burke's texts, these narratives also share ambivalent attitudes towards interracial love as a natural result of mutual affection. *Marco Millions* features the materialistic and apathetic Marco who relentlessly disregards Kukachin's love; and the other two texts both resort to an alteration in the protagonist's identity from Chinese to American, which converts the interracial relationship to an intra-racial one. This approach to interracial relationships – avoiding portraying successful interracial union or transforming interracial liaisons to intra-racial ones – can arise from multiple factors. For example, the writers may intend to sidestep the miscegenation laws enforced in the United States then or entertain anxiety over the generation of hybrid prosperities. It is also possible that these writers consciously or unconsciously consider the alien Other unsuitable to mingle with their own race. Therefore, this chapter will investigate the textual complexities and ambivalences in these three texts, which are organized into one chapter due to their thematic similarities.

In the discussion of *Marco Millions*, which is often perceived to be an obvious eulogy of ancient Chinese culture, I intend to uncover the underlying problems in the playwright's approach to and employment of the Other. Contrary to *Marco Millions*, *East Is West* and *Son of the Gods* are often dismissed as Orientalist texts, yet I will attempt to demonstrate that

linguistic hybridity and cultural hybridity in these narratives stand as resistances to the authoritative Orientalist discourse, which further question the definition of these texts as Orientalist narratives. Therefore, this chapter aims to reveal Western writers' anxiety over interracial relationships in their engagement with the racial Other and also the problems of simplistic characterizations of narratives on China as Orientalist. What matters in the examination of these texts is not the necessity to label them as Orientalist or non-Orientalist but to explore how Western writers approach and represent the Other in these texts. There is no clear-cut distinction between Orientalist and non-Orientalist texts, narratives and approaches. Moreover, thinking critically about the problems in knowledge production of the Other is more urgent and significant in cross-cultural exchanges.

3.2 Materialist Polo and Idealist Poet: the Unequal Gaze of Marco and Kukachin in *Marco Millions*

Marco Millions, one of Eugene O'Neill's minor plays, is based on the Venetian traveller Marco Polo's thirteenth-century journey to Kublai Kaan's court in the Far East.[65] Consisting of three acts, a prologue and an epilogue, the play records the Polo family's years of travelling from Venice to China, during which the young Marco grows up and undergoes a transformation in his attitudes towards Oriental cultures. Upon arrival at the Kaan's imperial court, Marco asks for the position of Second Class government commission-agent from the Kaan, a position that the Polos consider highly profitable. After a few contacts with Marco, Princess Kukachin, the Kaan's granddaughter, falls in love with him, but her love is disregarded by the indifferent Marco. This unrequited love causes Kukachin's continuing disconsolateness and ultimate demise, which leaves the great Kaan grief-stricken. The play ends with a sharp contrast between the Polo family's grand banquet held to show off the treasures brought from the Orient and the grievous court of the great Kaan lamenting over Kukachin's tragic death.

[65] Written between the summer of 1923 and January of 1925, the play did not receive its first staging until January 9, 1928, at the Guild Theatre in New York. The play originally came out as two plays of two and one-half hour each, but went through various changes in its structure, as reflected in O'Neill's extensive notes taken in the course of writing the play. For more information on these changes and O'Neill's notes, see John H. Stroupe, 'O'Neill's *Marco Millions*: A Road to Xanadu', *Modern Drama*, 12 (4), Winter 1969, 377-382; and John H. Stroupe, '*Marco Millions* and O'Neill's "two part two-play" Form', *Modern Drama*, 13 (4), Winter 1970, 382-392. In addition, due to different spellings, Kublai Kaan here refers to the same person as Kublai Khan mentioned in the first chapter. For more information on Marco Polo's travelogue, refer to 1.1.2 Marco Polo, 35.

As a rewriting of the historical travelogue, this play is 'cited whenever O'Neill's "love for China" or "love for the eastern cultures" is discussed' (Yan, 1997, 127). The sources for this play primarily consist of Sir Henry Yule's edition of *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* and other volumes on Oriental philosophy and religion, such as James Legge's translation of *The Texts of Taoism* (Robinson, 1980, 252). The depictions of Eastern cultures in the play bear much resemblance to the accounts in Polo's travel book, which proves O'Neill's references to or at least familiarity with Polo's account. For instance, Act 1 Scene 6 describes Kublai Kaan as

> a man of sixty but still in the full prime of his powers, his face proud and noble, his expression tinged with an ironic humour and bitterness yet full of a sympathetic humanity. In his person are combined the conquering indomitable force of a descendant of Chinghiz with the humanizing culture of the conquered Chinese who have already begun to absorb their conquerors. (*MM*, 61)

This passage echoes the descriptions of the great Khan discussed in the first chapter, where textual analysis of the travelogue reveals the great Khan to be an authoritative and humane king.[66] As the lord of lords (*MP*, 162), the Khan is not only 'brave and daring in action' but also 'considered to be the most able and successful commander that ever led the Tartars to battle' (*MP*, 153). His humanity is shown in the charitable and benevolent treatment of his subjects during famine. Furthermore, a great many other textual details in the play, including the Kaan's religious tolerance, also comply with the travelogue. Apart from the travelogue, O'Neill also draws on Oriental philosophy and religion for writing the play, among which Taoism strongly influences his life.[67] For instance, O'Neill's home in California from 1937 to 1944 takes the name of Tao House, which demonstrates his admiration for Taoism.[68]

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[66] See 1.1.2 Marco Polo, 35.

[67] Taoism emphasizes living in harmony with the *Tao*, which means way, path and principle. Wu-wei (action through non-action) is an important concept in Taoism, standing for naturalness, simplicity and spontaneity. *Tao Te Ching*, which contains the teachings of Laozi, is considered the key work of this philosophy.

[68] *Marco Millions* reveals a strong connection to Taoism and even Confucianism. For more information, refer to Virginia Floyd, 'Eugene O'Neill's Tao Te Ching: The Spiritual Evolution of a Mystic', in Liu, Haiping and Swortzell, Lowell (eds.), *Eugene O'Neill in China: An International Centenary Celebration.* New York: Greenwood, 1992, 3-12; Li Gang, 'O'Neill's Understanding of Chinese Thought in *Marco Millions*', in Liu, Haiping and Swortzell, Lowell (eds.), *Eugene O'Neill in China: An International Centenary Celebration.* New York: Greenwood, 1992, 37-41; Zhang Yuan-Xia, *Eugene O'Neill's Orientalism and the Search for Life: An Americanized Taoistic Response*, PhD thesis, Marquette University, 1995.

Substantial scholarship has been devoted to the interpretation of the play as a satirical parody that critiques American materialism through presenting a serene and philosophical Orient, 'particularly that of the American businessman immortalized in Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*' (Woo, 2003, 181). As Li Gang argues,

> [a]s usual with historical plays, *Marco Millions* serves as a mirror of O'Neill's time, around which the Western world saw the breakup of a civilization: All the traditional values and beliefs were challenged and in danger of being repudiated altogether. The disorientation of modern existential man seemed to be inevitable. Americans of the time were in a 'dilemma of the split self, the materialist-businessman/idealist-poet dichotomy.' *Marco Millions* is concerned with this dilemma, which O'Neill tries to solve by introducing 'the Eastern loveliness', especially the Taoist view of life, death, and dreams, to the Western audience. (Li, 1992, 37-38)

O'Neill sets Chinese and American cultures in opposition in the play: Chinese culture boasts its tranquilizing spiritualism, whereas American culture is troubled by restless materialism. In spite of this, Chinese culture turns out to be an inadequate cure for the social illness of America, given that the Polos are not changed for the better after years of contact with the Orient. In turn, the Western merchants bring catastrophic damage to the East, exemplified in Kukachin's death and the great Kaan's grief. In this light, 'Marco and the West, narrowed to America and its material priorities, are for O'Neill, immature, ignorant, and immoral. The Kaan and the East – older, wiser, and more virtuous – are overrun and defeated by the commercial, consuming urges of the true barbarian' (McCown, 2005, 160).

Commonly known for his realism and expressionism, O'Neill does not narrate American daily realities in *Marco Millions* but chooses to rewrite the famous historical travelogue. By looking to the far Orient, O'Neill distances himself from his own culture so that he can examine the Self from a better vantage point. As Thierry Dubost insightfully observes,

> [a]esthetically, for the young playwright, exoticism meant treading on unknown dramatic territory, but from a political point of view it also enabled him to address what he felt was a major American social issue: greed. Through his home-away-from-home strategy, O'Neill shunned usual realistic depictions of the daily lives of Americans. Doing so, he hoped to make them discover an image of themselves in unexpected ways, and force them to eventually acknowledge the connection. (Dubost, 2011, 138)

However, it is also due to the 'home-away-from-home' strategy in *Marco Millions* that O'Neill is accused of being Orientalist by some scholars, whose arguments generally point to his ignorance of the historical specificities in China and his reification of various Oriental cultures into one unified and permanent Orient. For example, James S. Moy argues that

> O'Neill inserts the viewer into the powerful position of the tourist before whom he parades the carefully selected "high points" of an imaginary philosophical excursion to China. Here, then, the discourse of the Orient, of the Other as articulated through the tourist culture's vision in O'Neill's *Marco Millions*, is in many ways typical. The Orient is rarely given voice for, the moment the Other speaks, it becomes a threat. [69] (Moy, 1992, 34)

Building on Moy's examination of the controlling gaze of the West upon the East, my contention is that this mastering gaze is also reflected in the unequal gaze of Marco and Kukachin cast upon each other. This unequal gaze further points to O'Neill's problematic representation of China and the East.

3.2.1 The Unequal Gaze

Materialism is what the playwright attempts to critique in the play. The mercantile Polos visit the Orient for the primary purpose of making 'millions' (*MM*, 27). However, the young Marco is not described as intrinsically materialistic but develops his greed for material gains under the influence of his merchant father and uncle as well as by the lure of the abundant East. In Act 1 Scene 1, where Marco bids farewell to his girlfriend Donata in Venice, his initial intention to undertake a journey to the East is revealed.

> MARCO (with a sigh). It's beautiful to-night. I wish I hadn't got to go away.
> DONATA. I wish, too! Must you really!
> MARCO. Yes. And I want to, too – all but leaving you. I want to travel and see the world and all the different people, and get to know their habits and needs from first-

[69] Apart from Moy, Pawley accuses O'Neill of appropriating black experiences in his projection of the black Caribbean world and contends that his treatment of the people of the black race is conditioned by his racialized consciousness and the racist American society of the 1920s. However, these disturbing dimensions of O'Neill's works explicated by Moy and Pawley are submerged in the praise of O'Neill's universality by Virginia Floyd, one of the most noted O'Neill scholars. For more information, refer to Thomas D. Pawley, 'The Black World of Eugene O'Neill'; James S. Moy, 'Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions*: Desiring Marginality and Dematerialization of the Orient'; and Virginia Floyd, 'Eugene O'Neill's *Tao Te Ching*: The Spiritual Evolution of a Mystic'. These three articles are all collected in Liu, Haiping and Swortzell, Lowell (eds.), *Eugene O'Neill in China: An International Centenary Celebration*, New York: Greenwood, 1992.

> hand knowledge. You've got to do that if you want to become really big and important. That's what Father says – and Uncle. (*MM*, 27)

However, Marco's ambition to acquire knowledge of other cultures is slowly eroded by the temptation of material gains. He gradually becomes the person who has, in the words of the great Kaan, 'memorized everything and learned nothing', 'looked at everything and seen nothing', and 'lusted for everything and loved nothing' (*MM*, 75). Even Marco's love for Donata is built upon a beneficial business relationship between the two families. His love poem to Donata is heavily tainted by materialistic greed, as illustrated below.

> You are lovely as the gold in the sun
> Your skin is like silver in the moon
> Your eyes are black pearls I have won.
> I kiss your ruby lips and you swoon,
> Smiling your thanks as I promise you
> A large fortune if you will be true,
> While I am away earning gold
> And silver so when we are old
> I will have a million to my credit
> And in the meantime can easily afford
> A big wedding that will do us credit
> And start having children, bless the Lord! (*MM*, 33-34)

As ridiculed by the Legate Tedaldo, Marco's lady is 'a bit too mineral' and his 'heaven of love a trifle monetary' (*MM*, 34). The Legate ironically concludes that Marco 'will be happier as a Polo than as a poet' (*MM*, 34), which symbolizes the triumph of materialism over spiritualism within American society. In contrast, Kukachin's poem dedicated to her happy times with Marco is the poem of a poet.

> My thoughts in this autumn are lonely and sad,
> A chill wind from the mountain blows in the garden.
> The sky is grey, a snowflake falls, the last chrysanthemum
> Withers beside the deserted summer-house.
> I walk along the path in which weeds have grown.
> My heart is bitter and tears blur eyes.
> I grieve for the days when we lingered together
> In this same garden, along these paths between flowers.
> In the spring we sang of love and laughed with youth
> But now we are parted by many leagues and years
> And I weep that never again shall I see your face. (*MM*, 71-72)

The poem above is written when Kukachin is saddened by the thought of not being able to see Marco after she marries the King of Persia under the mandate from the Kaan. She loves Marco because she deems him 'so different from other men' and 'so much stronger' (*MM,* 76). Blinded by her affection for Marco, Kukachin disregards Marco's absurd measures to repeal tax on luxuries and tax every life necessity instead (*MM,* 83). She also remains blind to Marco's attempt to stamp out the ancient culture of Yang-Chau (*MM,* 83) and his seeking of material rewards for introducing paper money and gun-powder to the great Kaan (*MM,* 85-89). Moreover, she even has the courage to disagree with the great Kaan and the Kaan's philosophical advisor Chu-Yin, who contend that Marco has 'only an acquisitive instinct' and lacks 'a mortal soul' (*MM,* 75).[70]

> KUKACHIN (*suddenly steps forward – flushed but proudly*). I will bear witness he has a soul.
> (*Kublai looks at her with a sad wonderment, Chu-Yin smilingly, Marco with gratitude, Nicolo and Maffeo exchange a glance of congratulation*.)
> KUBLAI. How can you know, Princess?
> KUKACHIN. Because I have seen it – once, when he bound up my dog's leg, once when he played with a slave's baby, once when he listened to music over water and I heard him sigh, once when he looked at sunrise, another time at sunset, another at the stars, another at the moon, and each time he said that Nature was wonderful. And all the while, whenever he has been with me I have always felt – something strange and different – and that something must be His Honour's soul, must it not? (*MM,* 90-91)

While Kukachin can only see Marco's merits, Marco remains totally blind to Kukachin's beauty and loveliness.[71] Marco is so numbed by his avarice and materialism that he cannot see Kukachin's pure love for him, even when the great Kaan and Chu-Yin have detected the Princess's passionate affection for him. Seeing that Marco's indifference has devastated the

[70] The difference in the opinion and judgment of Marco has been explicated by Eric Levin. He offers a novel interpretation of *Marco Millions* from the perspective of O'Neill's metaphysical speculation, which is strongly influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy in general and his *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in particular. Taking this as a point of departure, Levin contends that the major conflict between Marco and Kublai in the play could be the conflict between absolutism and perspectivism, with the former propagating absolute 'Truths' on the basis of a perceived fixed condition while the latter characterized by a rejection of absolute 'Truths' and a belief in pluralistic and subjective human conditions. 'Marco and Kublai can be seen as representative of the opposing views of absolutism and perspectivism; the character of Kukachin, Kublai's granddaughter, represents the modernist who is caught between the realization that absolute stances are false and the yearning for the security and certainty that absolutism brings' (Levin, 2012, 19). For more information, see Eric Levin, 'A Touch of the Postmodern: *Marco Millions* and Nietzschean Perspectivism', *Eugene O'Neill Review,* 33 (1), 2012, 14-23.

[71] Based on Kukachin's observations, it can speculated that Marco may be good in nature but is gradually corrupted by the external environment. His initial goal to gain knowledge of other parts of the world, as previously discussed, also points to the possibility that Marco has a soul.

Princess and troubled the great Kaan, Chu-Yin asks Marco to look into the Princess's eyes every day during his escort of the Princess to Persia. During this two-year sea trip to Persia, Marco fails to notice the love and grief in Kukachin's eyes. The last time Marco looks carefully into Kukachin's eyes, he is on the verge of detecting something different but is ultimately interrupted by Maffeo, who is counting a stack of coins and shouting out 'One million' (*MM*, 118). On hearing the word 'million', Marco is brought back to the habitual way of materialistic and indifferent living. Finally, Marco professes to Kukachin that he sees in her eyes the shadow of Donata, the future Mrs Polo, and that he wishes to marry a woman with 'sound common sense' (*MM*, 120) rather than great thinking. Kukachin can no longer curb her rage and starts to accuse him, '[t]here is no soul even in your love, which is no better than a mating of swine' (*MM*, 120).

The above discussions have shown that Kukachin sees all the goodness in Marco yet Marco fails to see Kukachin's innocence and attractiveness. Marco is an admirable hero for Kukachin, while for Marco Kukachin is merely a Chinese Princess distant from him. In Chu-Yin's words, Marco

> has remained a strange, mysterious dream-knight from the exotic West, an enigma with something about him of a likable boy who brought her home each time a humble, foolish, touching little gift! And also remember that on each occasion he returned in triumph, having accomplished a task – a victor, more or less, acting the hero. (*MM*, 78)

If Marco remains an exotic dream-knight for Kukachin, Kukachin could have stood as a beautiful, attractive and exotic Oriental Princess to Marco, for even the Prince of Persia falls for Kukachin at the first sight. In this sense, the gaze that Marco and Kukachin cast upon each other is unequal. The loving gaze of Kukachin could have softened Marco's cold-heartedness and awakened him to the beauty of life, but instead the indifferent gaze of Marco snuffs out Kukachin's love and leads to her eventual demise. The strength of love is defeated by the temptation of money and the idealist poet (Kukachin) is vanquished by the materialist Polo. In other words, the philosophical East in O'Neill's scheme fails to provide a cure for the mercantilist West. In turn, the West encroaches upon the East by causing the death of Princess Kukachin and the grief of the great Kaan.

The unequal gaze between Kukachin and Marco is no novelty in Western literary representations of the Chinese. In 'The Chink and the Child', Cheng Huan sees Lucy's beauty

from his window, while Battling Burrows sees ugliness and filthiness in Cheng Huan. In *Son of the Gods*, Sam Lee sees the pleasure of blending into his American schoolmates from his window, whereas the girls see in him maliciousness and foulness. In *East Is West*, Ming Toy sees the beauty and freedom of American women from her window, while Mr Benson sees her as an alien unworthy of his son's love. This gaze is unequal in the sense that the Chinese are inclined to positive perceptions of their Western counterparts whereas the Westerners (British and American) tend to project negative associations onto the Chinese.

3.2.2 Reification of Chinese Culture

O'Neill's treatment of interracial love in *Marco Millions* remains a disturbing dimension to his apparent eulogy of ancient Chinese culture. Under the unequal gaze, Kukachin symbolizes the passivity and femininity of China, which is contrasted with America's restlessness and masculinity represented by Marco. This characterization of unequal relations between China and America is conducive to the interpretation of the play as Orientalist. However, O'Neill's approach to the Orient is distinct from that of traditional Orientalists discussed in Said's *Orientalism*. On the one hand, O'Neill does not take advantage of his 'home-away-from-home strategy' to deliberately degrade and colonize the Other; on the other hand, O'Neill occupies a different position from that of the traditional Orientalists, for he has gone through a self-Orientalization process to a substantial degree. O'Neill assumes a both distant and intimate relation to his own culture, which, according to Said, should foster a better judgment of one's own culture due to the acquired spiritual detachment (Said, 2003, 259). He makes full use of this estrangement differently from Islamic Orientalists, who

> never saw their estrangement from Islam either as salutary or as an attitude with implications for the better understanding of their own culture. Rather, their estrangement from Islam simply intensified their feelings of superiority about European culture, even as their antipathy spread to include the entire Orient, of which Islam was considered a degraded (and usually, a virulently dangerous) representative. Such tendencies-it has also been my argument-became built into the very traditions of Orientalist study throughout the nineteenth century, and in time became a standard component of most Orientalist training, handed on from one generation to generation. (Said, 2003, 260)

In addition, O'Neill's self-Orientalization plays a critical role in his representation of China and the East. Regarding self-Orientalization, Arif Dirlik argues that anyone entering the Oriental culture needs to be Orientalized in one way or another.

> Said notes that orientalism, by its very epistemological assumptions, called for 'sympathetic identification' as a means of grasping an alien culture. I take this to imply that in the very process of understanding an alien culture, orientalists need in some measure to be 'orientalized,' if you like, which brings orientalists closer to the Other while distancing them from the society of the Self. (Dirlik, 1996, 101)

Enthusiastic about Chinese culture, religion and philosophy, O'Neill appreciates the Chinese way of life. He built his own Tao-House in California and even paid a visit to China in 1928. In his correspondence with Frederic I. Carpenter, O'Neill affords the following reply to Carpenter's question as to the influence of Oriental ideas upon his plays.

> As for your question regarding Oriental ideas, I do not think they have influenced my plays at all. Certainly, not consciously. Many years ago I did considerable reading in Oriental philosophy and religion, however, although I never went in for an intensive study of it. I simply did it in order to have some sort of grasp of the subject as part of my philosophical background. The mysticism of Lao-tse and Chuang-Tzu probably interested me more than any other Oriental writing. (Carpenter, 1966, 210)

Although denying the conscious influence of Oriental ideas on his plays, O'Neill admits his interest in reading Oriental philosophy and religion. In this sense, O'Neill has been orientalized in a way. However, the intellectually and sentimentally Orientalized position does not exempt the playwright from a problematic representation of Oriental cultures. O'Neill might not relegate the Orient to an inferior Other as the Islamic Orientalists have done, but his utilization of China for self-criticism is inherently Orientalist regardless of his veneration of Chinese culture. According to Dirlik,

> [t]he use of the 'orient' in self-criticism is almost a discourse within a discourse of orientalism, from Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* in the eighteenth century to Andre Malraux's *The Temptation of the West* and radical US intellectuals' critiques of the US in the twentieth. (Dirlik, 1996, 102)

In a similar vein, Said summarizes three purposes for the West to gaze upon the East. One of them is that 'the writer for whom a real or metaphorical trip to the Orient is the fulfilment of

some deeply felt and urgent project. His text therefore is built on a personal aesthetic, fed and informed by the project' (Said, 2003, 157). In the case of *Marco Millions*, the project is the playwright's critique of America's materialism and in his critique the tranquil ancient Chinese culture is appropriated as a foil. Instead of degrading the Other, O'Neill adopts an agenda similar to that initiated by such Enlightenment thinkers as Leibniz and Voltaire and the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862).[72] Like the transcendentalists, O'Neill's deployment of the Orient does not arise from an imperialist mentality but an ambition to improve and enhance the national culture of America. As Zhang Yuan-Xia argues,

> Whitman and other major figures of Transcendentalism form key links in the chain of American Orientalism. Theirs was the time when America was awakened to its sense of a new country, and the call for a distinct American literature was heard throughout the country. In order to make their glorious mission a success, the Transcendentalists searched far and wide around the world to discover Oriental philosophies, religions, literature and art. The Orient was not a simple name, nor a mere topic for a poem or novel, it was an ever-expanding national consciousness reflected in the constant endeavors of that generation to enrich and strengthen their national culture. (Zhang, 1995, 16)

Additionally, O'Neill's utopian depiction of the Orient creates a reified ancient civilization that is de-historicized and de-socialized. Reification is defined by Georg Lukács as a process in which 'the cultural manifestations are divorced from their material and historical foundation and conditions, making them independent and thereby permanent by regarding them as timeless models of human relations and universal humanity' (Lukács, 1967 in Yan, 1997, 137). In this sense, China and the East are romanticized and Orientalized into their ancient and reified state of loveliness, serenity and spirituality (Liu & Swortzell, 1992, 40). Moreover, O'Neill's Orient is a representation of representations, as he has assumed a precedent Orient through drawing on the thirteenth-century travelogue of Marco Polo. This presupposition is one of the Orientalist dogmas, specified by Said as: 'abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a "classical" Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities' (Said, 2003, 301). Said's definition of the Orientalist dogma actually aligns with the idea of reification in Lukács' terms, for they both critique the practice of de-historicizing and de-socializing other cultures.

[72] For more information on Leibniz and Voltaire's writings on China, see 1.2.2 Enlightenment Writings, 46.

3.3 Double Voices and Linguistic Hybridity as Resistance to Authority in *East Is West*

> Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
> Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!
> − Rudyard Kipling, 'The Ballad of East and West'

'The Ballad of East and West' by Kipling, first published in 1889, suggests that the boundary between the East and West is hard to traverse yet can be dissolved when such universal qualities as courage and strength come into play.[73] The Broadway play *East Is West*, published in 1918 by American playwrights Samuel Shipman (1883-1937) and John B. Hymer (1875-1953), is one of the attempts to interrogate cultural difference and interracial love, although it is unclear whether the name of the play was inspired by Kipling's ballad. *East Is West* features a Chinese girl, Ming Toy, who is rescued from a human auction on the Love-Boat in China by an American businessman (Billy Benson) and his Chinese friend (Lo Sang Kee). Ming Toy is subsequently taken to San Francisco under the custody of Lo Sang Kee. As the Chinatown warlord Charlie Yong coaxes Lo Sang Kee into selling Ming Toy to him as a concubine, Ming Toy is surreptitiously transferred to Billy Benson's house, where she works happily as a household maid. During her stay at the Bensons, she falls in love with Billy, who also expresses passionate love for Ming Toy regardless of her Chinese identity. Their mutual affection is soon disclosed by James Potter, a missionary and pursuer of Billy's sister Mildred Benson, and is met with strong disapproval from Billy's parents. In the meantime, the villainous Charlie Yong, holding a grudge over the loss of Ming Toy, threatens Billy to return Ming Toy to him. In the final conflict in which Charlie Yong plots to grab Ming Toy away, Ming Toy is revealed to be a white child stolen from her missionary parents by her Chinese father Hop Toy, who intends to seek revenge on the Christian Mission's

[73] The first line of the ballad is often quoted to indicate the unbridgeable gap between the East and the West, without considering the rest of the ballad. Thus, the ballad is frequently used as an indictment against Kipling's racism. For more, see J. K. Buda, Rudyard Kipling's 'The Ballad of East and West', available at: http://www.f.waseda.jp/buda/texts/ballad.html [Accessed 15 March 2014].

preaching in China by stealing white children and raising them to be Buddhists. With the uncovering of Ming Toy's real identity, the play ends with a happy union between Ming Toy and Billy.

East Is West enjoyed great popularity after its first performance on Christmas night in 1918. The play ran 680 performances with Fay Bainter, Lester Lonergan, Hassard Short, Ethel Intropodi, Eva Condon, Frank Kemble Cooper, and George Nash. As the play is no longer in publication, I would like to provide several stage photos taken from the original script so that readers are able to get a flavour of the Chinese costumes, furniture and decorations in the 1918 version of the play.[74]

Figure 2: Chinese Girl Auction on the Love-Boat (*East Is West*)

[74] For more stage photos, see Appendix 2, 204-205.

Figure 3: At the Bensons 1 (*East Is West*)

The play touched a chord with American audiences due to its intriguing exotic theme of the Orient (Bloom, 2004, 40). Despite its popularity among the public, Percy Hammond, in the *Chicago Tribune*, criticizes the play as an 'amazingly popular melodrama about life in China and San Francisco, which reeks with its authors' prosperous and beguiling illiteracies' (Bloom, 2004, 40). Hammond's harsh criticism of the authors of the play – 'prosperous and beguiling illiteracies' – appears slightly baffling to me, as it is not illustrated further by the critic except for an extended evaluation of the performance of Miss Bainter who plays the role of Ming Toy. Thus, it is unclear what 'illiteracies' exactly refer to. There are various possible interpretations of the phrase. For instance, Hammond may be accusing the authors' lack of knowledge of China or pointing to the use of pidgin English in the dialogues. For the sake of relevance, this question will be left to the readers to ponder over.

There is a silent film adaptation of the play in 1922 and then a talkie in 1930. Interestingly, one of the screenwriters of the 1930 film is Winnifred Eaton (1875-1954), the Canadian writer of Chinese-British ancestry who published under the Japanese pseudonym, Onoto Watanna.[75] Eve Oishi offers interesting comments on Eaton as the screenwriter.

[75] Winnifred Eaton co-authored with Tom Reed for the 1930 film adaptation. The 1922 film is written by Eaton's friend Frances Marion (Cole, 2002, 170).

> The material was familiar to Eaton; the plot could have come straight out of an Onoto Watanna novel, and Lupe Velez as the star adds yet another ironic layer of ethnic crossover (a Latina playing a white woman disguised as a Chinese woman in a part written by a half-Chinese woman disguised as a Japanese.) Nevertheless, the film, which was itself a reworking of an earlier Frances Marion script written for Constance Talmadge, exemplifies Diawara's claim that 'White people must occupy the center, leaving Black [or Asian] people with only one choice—to exist in relation to Whiteness'. (Oishi, 2006, 32)

The last conclusive sentence about the film raises various issues with regard to the original play.[76] Boldly depicting the tabooed topic of interracial relationships in America of the 1920s, the play highlights the superiority of American culture over Chinese culture in its handling of cultural encounters. However, the play also demonstrates different features from other interracial literatures of the same period, such as 'The Chink and the Child' discussed in the previous chapter. The play does not exactly fall under the popular category of texts themed on the unwelcome Chinese immigrants, who toil at the very bottom of the social strata in the United States. Furthermore, compared to Mark Twain and Bret Harte, who entertain deep sympathies towards the maltreated Chinese immigrants, Shipman and Hymer generate in the play a battlefield, where two camps contend with each other on issues of race amalgamation, cultural dissonance, religious discordance and interracial relationship. One camp is represented by Ming Toy, Billy Benson, Mildred Benson and Lo Sang Kee, and the other by Mr. Benson, Mrs. Benson and James Potter.[77] In contrast to the silencing strategies adopted by Steinbeck and Burke, the simultaneous display of two combating voices in *East Is West* poses a challenge to the single-voiced or monolithic Orientalist discourse, which attempts to silence various forms of resistance from the racial Other. The following sections will investigate double voices and linguistic hybridity as two forms of resistance against the dominant Orientalist discourse.

Prior to the analysis of the two voices, it should be noted that there emerges in the text a stark contrast between American culture and Chinese culture, with the former eulogized at the expense of critiquing the latter. For example, the Love-Boat scene that depicts a trading of girls in China – the practice of 'slavery' in Billy's words (*EW*, 11) – is meticulously

[76] I will not carry out detailed analyses of different productions of the play that have been introduced here and will focus on textual analysis of the original play instead.
[77] For more information on Twain and Harte's writings, refer to 1.3.1 Chinese Coolies: Mark Twain and Bret Harte, 58.

designed to give prominence to America as the land of freedom (*EW*, 21), where the exchange of women is strictly forbidden. In addition, the heroine Ming Toy always dismisses things Chinese and yearns for the American way learnt in the Mission school. She prefers Christianity to Buddhism even though she is raised up to believe in the latter; from Lo Sang Kee's house window she sees white women winking at men and thus imitates their moves without knowing it to be a flirting gesture; she even calls Charlie Yong 'chink' (*EW*, 78) as if she were not one of them. She also vehemently denies her Chinese identity by claiming 'Ming Toy no China girl. Got nothing China. Don't feel China. Don't think China. Don't like China. Don't know why for hell God put me in China' (*EW*, 70-71). When she is asked by Mr. Benson about her opinion of China, she metaphorically repudiates it and concurrently acclaims America.

> MR. BENSON. (MING TOY starts to go) Come here, Ming Toy. Ming Toy, what do you think about China?
> MING TOY. (Quasi-confidentially) What I think about China, I not say 'fore nice people.
> MR. BENSON. There's going to be another revolution in China.
> MING TOY. (Of no account) Revolution in China, just like alarm clock in lazy man's bed. When noise stop he go back to sleep.
> MR. BENSON. You love America?
> MING TOY. Sure. America fine place. Everybody free here, dance, make love – drink cocktails – no revolutions. (*EW*, 57)

Similarly, China in James Potter's eyes is a 'sound sleeper' and it 'takes more than the rattling of the door to wake her up' (*EW*, 56). Defining China as such is resonant with the first of the four Orientalist dogmas that Said summarizes in his book: 'the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior' (Said, 2003, 301). The undeveloped 'sound sleeper', reeking with the inhumane trade of women, the inscrutable practice of foot-binding[78], joss burning and idol worshipping, is inferior to the land of freedom and progress. The exchange of women, to some extent, shares a similarity with the practice of slavery in American history, the abolishment of which was achieved through long and hard efforts. In this light, the static and aberrant China here invokes the antique America that was still

[78] In the play, when Lo Sang Kee tells Billy about the sale of girls on the boat, he explains that '[s]mall feet in Chinese maidens denote high caste' (*EW*, 11), whereas it is difficult for Billy as an American to accept this idea, which merely smacks of absurdity to him.

striving for universal freedom and humanity. In other words, China as the static Other is actually the past Self or the underground Self in Said's terms.

Moreover, the twist in plot through revealing Ming Toy to be a white American at the end of the story is the 'point of ritual death' discussed in the introduction to this thesis.[79] Ming Toy's identity alteration symbolizes ritual death, which jeopardizes Ming Toy and Billy's interracial love by transforming the interracial romance to an intraracial one. The insertion of the 'point of ritual death' into the narrative partly arises from the necessity to sidestep anti-miscegenation laws that were still in force in the United States of the time, and partly stems from the intention to appeal to American audiences with the exoticness and curiousness of this Oriental comedy and meanwhile without arousing public pugnacity and anxiety over the sensitive topic of interracial relationship. This means that the plot twist serves the purpose of compromising the social concerns and disturbances incurred by interracial intimacy and union, for interracial romance narratives 'provide imaginative resolutions of social contradictions and offer ways to make sense of the social world particularly around questions of race, gender and class' (Poulsen, 2012, 6). The plot may be too dramatic to evince credibility, but the audiences who have consumed the production disregarded the accuracy of the representations of Otherness. As one review in the *The Times* goes, 'it [the play] provides a scene of rich colour and a chorus of stage sounds, which may or may not be Chinese, but which were on the whole more pleasing to the ear than the author's efforts in English prose' (*The Times*, 1920).

Admittedly, all the details illustrated above are designed for the subsequent disclosure of Ming Toy's American identity, but they are also connotative of the argument that America's freedom and progress is accentuated against the foil of China's inhumanity and backwardness. However, it cannot be asserted that the characters' condescending views of China are shared by the authors of the play, especially when the play has exhibited two combating voices. The display of opposing voices characterizes the play's heterogeneity within the body of interracial literatures produced in the 1920s.

[79] For more information on the 'point of ritual death', see Introduction, 3.

3.3.1 Double Voices

The play is a pioneering literary text that gives voice to the Chinese in the early twentieth century. Dramatically different from the almost contemporaneous short story, 'The Chink and the Child', *East Is West* interweaves the minor and dissenting voices of the Chinese personae into the whole thematic tapestry, thereby generating two combating forces. The minor force, represented by Ming Toy, Billy, Mildred and Lo Sang Kee, believes in the blending of races and respects cultural and religious differences. Ming Toy and Billy, the two parties involved in the interracial romance, are committed to their love for each other regardless of parental disapproval. Ming Toy, though yearning for things American, still 'believes in the blending of races' (*EW*, 58), and Billy is willing to sacrifice 'every possible chance in life' (*EW*, 74) for the love of a Chinese girl. In spite of their commitment, the innocent young lovers share the widespread anxieties over the disturbing consequence of miscegenation – hybrid posterities, which 'were seen to embody threatening forms of perversion and degeneration and became the basis for endless metaphoric extension in the racial discourse of social commentary' (Young, 1995, 5). The conversation below illustrates Ming Toy and Billy's farcical imaginings of their future children.

> MING TOY. Well, I think you should marry nice white girls.
> BILLY. Now, what put that idea into your head?
> MING TOY. Maybe, if we marry, we have little baby with pigtail and that make your family very unhappy.
> BILLY. Don't worry about the pigtails, we can always cut them off. No, Ming Toy, we'll stick it out together no matter what happens.
> MING TOY. You say so, all right. (*EW*, 85)

The hybrid form of mixed-race children is one of the contested issues in the heated debate on mixed-race marriage among scientists, anthropologists and eugenicists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[80] In this case, the pigtail is a racial trait of the Chinese, as Chinese males in Qing dynasty should have the front half of the head shaved and keep the hair on the back half bound together like a pigtail. This traditional hairstyle was once the target of ridicule in the West and thus the immigrants who came to the West in the nineteenth century abandoned it. The idea of cutting off the pigtail, suggested by Billy in his response

[80] For more information on the issue of hybridity and fertility, see Robert J. C. Young, 'Hybridity and Diaspora', in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London and New York: Routledge.

to Ming Toy's concern, symbolizes his anxiety over the hybridity of their children. Therefore, Ming Toy and Billy are both somewhat constrained by the shackles of racial prejudice and repugnance, which is best embodied by Mr. Benson and James Porter. Compared to Ming Toy and Billy, Mildred (Billy's sister) is the more entrenched upholder of free spirit and the more tolerant advocate of racial amalgamation. She stands as an objective onlooker witnessing the gradual development of Ming Toy and Billy's romance. She is also a determined opponent of Porter's (Mildred's suitor) devotion to religious preaching and conversion, his interference in Ming Toy and Billy's romance, and Mr. Benson's standpoint on racial determinism. In the scene where Porter proposes to Mildred, she voices her objection to Porter's preaching and advocates respect for the co-existence of different religions.

> Potter. Oh, just a slight favour – I want you to marry me.
> Mildred. That old story? What have you to offer besides love and money?
> Potter. Myself.
> Mildred. That counts for nothing. (Running thumbs over keys of piano.)
> Potter. Well, my career.
> Mildred. Your career is just the thing I object to.
> Potter. What's your objection to my career? I'm doing good work.
> Mildred. Yes – trying to make Christians out of heathen Chinese – a hopeless task.
> Potter. If the task is hopeless, it shows how brave I am to undertake it.
> Mildred. I don't believe in interfering with other people's God. Let each race work out its own destiny. (*EW*, 51-52)

In another scene where Mr. Benson discusses with Mildred about the question of race assimilation and blending, Mr. Benson meets forthright opposition from Mildred.

> MILDRED. Father, don't you think if Ming Toy remained in her present environment long enough, she could be made to act and behave like one of us?
> MR. BENSON. (Crosses to MILDRED – is L. of her) Never. Not if she lived under it one thousand years.
> POTTER. Quite right, sir.
> MILDRED. Not in one thousand years?
> MR. BENSON. (Sits L. of MILDRED) No, my child. Take the Polish people. For three hundred years they have been living among Austrians, Prussians, and Russians, yet in the three different environments they have remained the same Poles. The Hebrews have lived two thousand years in every conceivable environment, but their basic racial traits have not changed. There is a racial determination as relentless as the laws of the Universe. Our attempts to violate that law have caused world wars.
> MILDRED. I am afraid, dad, I cannot agree with you. (*EW*, 56-57)

Interestingly, Mrs. Benson, who forms a united front with Mr. Benson and Porter, initially seems to be holding a tolerant attitude towards his son's romantic involvement with Ming Toy by uttering 'love has no race' (*EW*, 60). However, while interrogated by Mr. Benson, she immediately denies her previous stance on the issue and begins to support Porter's interference in the love affair. Such minute details present a glimpse of Mrs. Benson's status in the family: she is not entitled to opinions under the oppressing patriarchy of Mr. Benson.

> MRS. BENSON. (Stops, goes to L. of Potter) Go easy with her, Jim. Even though she is a little Chinese girl, remember, love has no race.
> MR. Benson. Surely, you wouldn't approve of it, dear?
> MRS. BENSON. My dear, no-no! (Exits up stairs.)
> MRS. BENSON. (Crosses up to stairs) You get the truth. (*EW*, 60)

Apart from race, the issue of religious conflict looms large in the text and remains the root cause of the whole farce. There is no absolute villain in the play. Even the most loathsome figures – Hop Toy (Ming Toy's father) and Charlie Yong – are not villainous in nature. Hop Toy's stealing of Ming Toy from her missionary parents stems from his grudge against Christianity's encroachment upon Buddhism. Thus, he maintains that missionaries preaching in China should be punished by converting Christian babies into Buddhists. To locate the fictional figure of Hop Toy in historical contexts, he is the archetype of extreme activists in the Boxer Rebellion, who took violent actions against missionary activities in China at the turn of the twentieth century.[81] Charlie Yong, as the negative character in the play, ventures several illicit attempts to snatch Ming Toy away and force her to be his concubine, but he eventually gives her up upon the knowledge of Ming Toy's real identity. As an arbitrary Chinatown warlord, Charlie Yong forsakes the woman he wants in a surprisingly sensible way, claiming that he does not want 'white woman' (*EW*, 89). This suggests that he is neither a supporter of racial amalgamation nor a believer in interracial marriage, although he himself is an Americanized Chinese. He claims himself 'Fifty-fifty' (*EW*, 36) by giving clothes to America and hair to China. All the wrongful deeds committed by Hop Toy and Charlie Yong as well as their subsequent turn to rightful decisions are rooted

[81] For more historical information on the Boxer Rebellion, see 1.3 Chinamen, 'Yellow Peril' and 'Red Peril': Diversified Views of China 1800-1988, 54.

in either religious or cultural differences, which help justify their seemingly inscrutable and unlawful behaviours. The following dialogue further illustrates this point.

> HOP TOY. All right. You Charlie Yong, me, society, all good Chinese. You know Christian Mission come to China, take Chinese children, make them love Christian God, got no right to do that.
> CHARLIE YONG. Sure not.
> HOP TOY. Me good Chinese. Me take Christian children when small babies, make them love Chinese God, get even on Chinese God.
> CHARLIE YONG. You good man, Hop Toy.
> HOP TOY. You bet me good man. (*EW*, 87)

This dialogue also functions as a resistance originating from the minority on the periphery, i.e., Hop Toy and Charlie Yong, against America's encroachment upon Chinese culture and religion. Based on this forceful accusation of the dominant American culture, Lo Sang Kee, the kind-hearted Chinese character, draws a conclusion to the play by commenting on Eastern-Western cultural dissonances.

> MING TOY. You know how I feel, Lo Sang Kee. I never forget you. Come to see me all the time, and thank you so much for being a good papa to me when no one had much use for Ming Toy. I hope some day you turn out white too.
> Lo SANG KEE. The color of man's face is not the reflection of his soul. Many white people yellow, many yellow people white.
> MING TOY. You are one of them. I bet you born in the West.
> Lo SANG KEE. In the infinite, Ming Toy, whence all things come, there is no East, there is no West. West is East, and East Is West. Good evening, everybody. Good evening, Mr. Billy Benson. Good-bye, Ming Toy. (*EW*, 89)

Lo Sang Kee's notion of 'West is East, and East Is West' resonates with Kipling's ballad cited at the beginning. Although Lo Sang Kee's assertion is not necessarily the authorial voice, the title *East Is West* points to an authorial cosmopolitanism that supports Lo Sang Kee's conclusive remarks about the play. Ming Toy, Billy and Mildred's dissenting voices, Hop Toy and Charlie Yong's accusations of America's cultural hegemony as well as Lo Sang Kee's verdict on East-West fusion represent heterogeneous forces against mainstream prejudices against the Chinese immigrants. The staging of these dissenting voices, which not only originate from the Chinese Other but also from members of the dominant white group, stand out with its rarity and boldness within the social and intellectual contexts of the early

twentieth-century America. The section that follows continues to explore another form of resistance – the linguistic hybridity of pidgin English.

3.3.2 Linguistic Hybridity: Pidgin English

A prominent feature of the play is the use of Chinese dialogues and pidgin English spoken by the Chinese figures, including Ming Toy, Lo Sang Kee, Charlie Yong, the proprietor of Love-Boat and other minor Chinese roles. The mixture of this intelligible yet grammatically flawed language with idiomatic English serves a certain purpose. Morrison has interrogated 'how Africanist personae, narrative, and idiom moved and enriched the text in self-conscious ways, to consider what the engagement meant for the work of the writer's imagination' (Morrison, 1992, 16). It suggests that the idioms or the language these black figures are made to speak can be complicit in achieving a certain agenda designed by the writer. The appropriation of Black English or pidgin English is not merely an attempt by Western writers to achieve realism in some cases, but more importantly and more often it is deployed to symbolize the inarticulacy of racialized Others. In Hsin-yun Ou's analysis of Thomas Stewart Denison's play *Pasty O'Wang: An Irish Farce with a Chinese Mix-up* (1895), she maintains that the use of Chinese English in the play implies the intellectual and moral inferiority of the Chinese.[82]

> Whereas the nineteenth-century American stage often presented the vocal mannerisms of ethnic minorities to achieve realism and hilarity, in *Patsy O'Wang* the pidgin speech also signals the intellectual and moral inferiority of the Chinese, whose failure in verbal communication or body language gives rise to several dramatic conflicts. (Ou, 2013, 486)

However, the overall theme of the play - East-West fusion - does not seem to champion the assumption that the authors intentionally employ pidgin English to belittle the Chinese characters as Ou asserts above. Instead, there is a possibility that stands exactly opposite to the previous assumption – the use of pidgin English functions as a resistance to the authoritative mainstream. Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) definition of linguistic hybridity as follows is most applicable to my argument here.

[82] Thomas Stewart Denison (1848-1911) was an American writer, philologist, educator and publisher. His works include F*riday Afternoon Dialogues* (1879), *An Iron Crown* (1885), *The Man Behind* (1888) and many others.

> What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical [syntactic] and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal – compositional and syntactic – boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a single sentence. It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction – and consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents. (Bakhtin, 1981, 304-305)

In Bakhtin's words, a single hybrid utterance contains two speech manners and two axiological belief systems. The play provides various examples that could illustrate this statement. For instance, when the proprietor of the Love-Boat welcomes Lo Sang Kee and Billy on board, they greet each other in the following manner.

> PROPRIETOR. How are you today? Ging tien how ma?
> Lo. Many summer suns have kissed the sea since last we met.
> PROPRIETOR. The hospitality of my abode is ever welcome to you. Have you returned from America?
> Lo. Only on short visit to my beloved China. This is my most august friend, Mr. Billy Benson – (PROPRIETOR bows) – son of Mr. Andrew Benson, American Ambassador to our most celestial court. (PROPRIETOR bows twice, returned bow by BILLY.) Mr. Billy Benson he make China rich with American money, he make American Banks China. (PROPRIETOR bows three times, each returned by BILLY.)
> PROPRIETOR. (Crossing toward BILLY) The greetings I extend to you shall live from now until the end of my celestial days. (*EW*, 10-11)

'Ging tien how ma' corresponds to the English greeting of 'How are you today'. Interestingly, this sentence is the sound imitation of the Chinese language, which consists of a mixture of English words and misspelled (or outdated) Chinese phonetic alphabet. The reason for characterizing it as misspelled or outdated is as follows. At the time when the play was written, i.e., in 1918, Wade-Giles is the most likely romanization system for mandarin Chinese that was used in the English-speaking countries. The pinyin system that is now commonly adopted in Mainland China was not developed until the 1950s. However, the sentence 'Ging tien how ma' does not exactly follow the rules of the Wade-Giles system. If written correctly under the system, it should be 'ch'in tien hao ma'. If written under the

modern pinyin system, it should be 'jin tian hao ma (今天好吗)'. This mishmash of words from different language systems and also the incorrect use of them could be attributed to the authors' inadequate mastery of the transcription system for the Chinese language in use back then.

Moreover, the collocation of 'he make' carries the grammatical rules of the Chinese language, where the predicate verb remains unchanged even if the subject or the tense changes. Another grammatical mistake (not in this case) frequently committed by the Chinese figures is to put adverbials right after the subject and in front of the verb, as exemplified in '[s]he very near like white woman' (*EW*, 12). This also conforms to the habitual linguistic uses in Chinese. Beyond the grammatical level, the way the Chinese greet each other, marked by the respectful words and repeated bows, reflects the speech manners in Chinese culture and belief systems.

In Bakhtin's framework, linguistic hybridity has two layers of meaning: organic hybridity and intentional hybridity. 'In organic hybridity, the mixture merges and is fused into a new language, world view or object; but intentional hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure' (Young, 1995, 21-22). 'Hybridity therefore, as in the racial model, involves an antithetical movement of coalescence and antagonism, with the unconscious set against the intentional, the organic against the divisive, the generative against the undermining' (Young, 1995, 22). Bakhtin himself is more concerned with hybridity as division and separation, as revealed in Young's argument below.

> For Bakhtin himself, the crucial effect of hybridization comes with the latter, political category, the moment where, within a single discourse, one voice is able to unmask the other. This is the point where authoritative discourse is undone. Authoritative discourse Bakhtin argues must be singular, it 'is by its very nature incapable of being double-voiced; it cannot enter into hybrid constructions' – or if it does, its single-voiced authority will immediately be undermined. (Young, 1995, 22)

Similar to Bakhtin's intentional hybridity, Kobena Mercer argues that hybrid languages, such as creoles, patois and Black English, 'decentre, destabilise and carnivalise the linguistic domination of "English"' (Mercer, 1988 in Young, 1995, 25). Therefore, the linguistic hybridity in *East Is West* could suggest both coalescence and antagonism just like the hybrid identity of Charlie Yong, who claims himself half-Chinese by giving hair to China and half-American by giving clothes to America. However, in linguistic hybridity no such clear

boundaries can be established, and neither can Charlie Yong's hybrid identity be distinctly divided. On the one hand, he sticks to the view that he can only accept a Chinese wife; on the other hand, he has subconsciously absorbed elements of American culture by dressing like an American. Similarly, the employment of pidgin English in the play symbolizes the possibility of blending not only two distinct languages but also two different cultures, and this is the organic and coalescent aspect of linguistic hybridity. The intentional and antagonistic side is reflected from two perspectives. First, the ideas emanating from the pidgin English of the Chinese characters, especially Hop Toy and Charlie Yong's accusation of Christian missionaries' preaching in China as well as Lo Sang Kee's appeal for cultural amalgamation, compete with Mr. Benson and James Potter's proposition of racial determinism and division. Additionally, the motif of the play, ultimately expressed in Lo Sang Kee's pidgin English and advocating cultural equality, rightly challenges America's cultural intolerance towards the Chinese immigrants in the early twentieth century.

3.4 Negation of the 'Economy of Stereotype' and Cultural Hybridity as Resistance to Authority in *Son of the Gods*

Nearly a decade after the debut of *East Is West* in 1918, the American writer and playwright Rex Beach (1877-1949) published a novel titled *Son of the Gods* in 1929. These two literary texts share a similar twist in plot – the Chinese protagonist turns out to be white in the end, and both works were adapted into films for public consumption, but there is no evidence to show any connections between the authors. Beach is known for his writings on the American frontier Alaska. It is unclear why he chose an Oriental theme for literary production and what sources Beach has drawn on to demonstrate such remarkable familiarity with Chinese culture in the novel. According to my own analysis, Beach's experience of the Alaska Gold Rush in 1900 might have enabled him to come into contact with the Chinese workers, who were also attracted by the Gold Rush and from whom he obtained information about Chinese culture. This experience could possibly have inspired his thoughts on the situation faced by Chinese immigrants in the United States.

The story, mostly set in New York and Southern France, centres on Sam Lee's various problems of bending into American culture. Sam is a kind-hearted and versatile straight-A student, who benefits from a mixed training: traditional teachings from his wealthy and philosophical Chinese father Lee Ying and Western education received at school. However,

Sam is socially isolated from his American friends and suffers loneliness and humiliation from his peers. His friendship with schoolmates is established upon his wealth; he is denied the opportunity to approach white girls; and he is even blackmailed for a false sexual relationship with an American girl. Disappointed with America and puzzled about his own identity, Sam decides to undertake a journey to find his manhood in Europe, where he expects to witness less racial repugnance from the civilized people. During his stay with a British playwright in the Southern France, he falls in love with a beautiful American girl Alanna, who passionately loves him back. Everything goes smoothly till Alanna finds out Sam's Chinese identity and publicly slashes him with a horsewhip. Alanna falls seriously ill after the break-up and realizes that she is still in love with Sam. At the end of the story, Sam is revealed to be a white foundling adopted by his Chinese father, and this identity transformation brings the lovers back together.

Though featuring a dramatic plot, the novel realistically portrays the hierarchy of race in American society of the 1930s. With the white group at the top, the racial pyramid stratifies the minority races and ethnicities. Historically, the Chinese were categorized as the unwelcome immigrants, but in a less obvious way the racial hierarchy of late-nineteenth-century America also grouped Irish Americans as racial minorities (Ou, 2013, 496) and placed unskilled Irish workers at the bottom of the free labour system (Williams, 2000, 186). The Chinese and the Irish maintained an intricately competitive relationship with each other during that period. According to Ou,

> [i]n contrast, the Irish Americans were assimilating more effectively, albeit incompletely, than the Chinese, in order to identify themselves as white and not black, since whiteness might endow them with political power. For decades, the Catholicism of Irish Americans excluded them from full respectability in the United States, but during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, they made significant social progress. They struggled to become white and to obtain the right to naturalize through their social and political endeavours. (Ou, 2013, 483)

The Chinese and the Irish were both excluded from the dominant white Protestant group, while the aspiring Irish gained an upper hand over the Chinese in politics and hoped to improve their social status through political progress. In the labour market, however, Chinese labourers were more popular than their Irish counterparts, as Chinese servants were considered by white employers to be more docile, industrious and less demanding in contrast to the laziness and unruliness of the Irish. An 1878 article in the *New York Times* supports

this view.

> The Irish laborer has more dash, and more brawn and muscle, but not the most endurance, while his fondness for whisky and sherries, strikes, flights, and holidays sadly interferes with his usefulness…His tawny rival [the Chinese] is slow but sure; slight but steady-going, temperate and pacific; he takes his holidays in a lump at the beginning of his year, and does not allow his idle saints to take up his time and hinder him in his mundane affairs. (Ou, 2013, 489)

In his 1867 letters to the *Springfield Republican*, Bret Harte also commented on the rivalry between the Chinese and the Irish, and maintained that Irish servants will eventually be replaced by their Chinese rivals if improvements are not made about themselves.[83]

> As [Chinese] servants are quick-witted, patient, obedient and faithful, and the old prerogatives of Bridget and Norah [popular names for Irish girls] in the domestic circle are seriously threatened by the advent of these quiet, clean, and orderly male chambermaids and cooks. That John Chinaman will eventually supplant Bridget and Patrick in menial occupations seems to be a settled fact. I see nothing for Bridget and Patrick to do except to progress. (Ou, 2013, 489)

Both Chinese and Irish workers contributed to the first transcontinental railway, but they were remembered mostly as stereotypes – 'the inscrutable and slavish Chinese and the unruly and uncivilized Irish' (Ou, 2013, 496). Beach's work does not characterize the Chinese as such, but he does refer to the aggressive nature of the Irish and the difficult economic and political situation faced by the Irish in America, which is in accordance with the actual conditions examined above. Eileen, an Irish girl in the story, claims that '[p]eace troubles the Irish mind' and '[i]t was good to have a nice fight' (*SG*, 159). She also relates her family's economic troubles to Lee Ying: '[t]he Cassidy clan is in a bad way. Father hasn't made a dollar since he got out of the Assembly – politics either makes or breaks the Irish, you know – and Jim's a total loss. Mother isn't strong…' (*SG*, 120). Interestingly, Beach does not create

[83] There are various other historical connections made between the Chinese and the Irish. As Ou summarizes, 'in the first half of the nineteenth century, both Irish and Chinese male immigrants were emasculated by their lack of financial and political power. Nineteenth-century England even coupled the Chinese and the Irish, probably because the Tudor conquerors of Ireland believed that the wild Irish must derive from the barbarous "nomadic Scythian of the Eurasian steppes" (O'Toole 44). In *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), for instance, Edmund Spenser concludes that the Irish are made up of many races but that "the chiefest…I suppose to be Scaythians" (qtd. In O'Toole 45). Also, in San Francisco in the 1870s, Protestant leaders excluded the Irish as Roman Catholics and warned about the threat Catholics posed to Christianity by emphasizing the link between Catholic and Buddhist practices (the robed priests, bowing, candles, incense, and idols) (Paddison 508-15)' (Ou, 2013, 494).

the Chinese and the Irish as competitors but as intimate friends instead. For example, Eileen, as Sam's only white friend, gives Sam a Catholic scapular as a token of blessing upon his departure to Europe.[84] Lee Ying, who scorns white women in general, acclaims Eileen for being endowed with Chinese virtues, such as the appreciation of beauty and solitude (*SG*, 158-159). This characterization could arise from the author's emphasis on the shared marginality of the Chinese and the Irish in the United States. Moreover, Beach's narrative reflects the lowest position occupied by the Chinese in the racial hierarchy. According to Sam, 'the gulf between the white and yellow races' (*SG*, 22) is 'unbridgeable' (*SG*, 22).

> It amazed him to learn that these Westerners not only shrank from physical contact with him and his countrymen, but also from social and intellectual contact. It was the more extraordinary because they mingled with each other, regardless of race or religion – for example, Americans, Russians, Latins, Jews, Nordics, Arabs, Greeks, and Red Indians. Chinese, it seemed, were regarded as another human species altogether, a species set apart and to be shunned. How absurd! (*SG*, 22-23)

Additionally, before Alanna and Sam declare a formal relationship, Alanna tells Sam that she has been engaged to an East Indian prince and that 'there aren't any taboos among people of our class' (*SG*, 236), which gives Sam the impression that she is open to interracial marriage and thus relieves Sam's concerns about his Chinese identity.[85] However, when Alanna finds out Sam's Chinese identity, she bursts into rage and slashes him in public, cursing '[y]ou rotten yellow cur! I'd rather let a nigger touch me than a Chinaman' (*SG*, 262). This detail also suggests that the Chinese are socially placed at the bottom of the racial pyramid.

On the surface of the text, *Son of the Gods* seems to be a typical Orientalist narrative which propagates the hierarchy of race and interracial separation. Regarding American Orientalism, Said argues that 'there is no deeply invested tradition of Orientalism' (Said, 2003, 290) in the United States, where 'the Orient became, not a broad catholic issue as it had been for centuries in Europe, but an administrative one, a matter for policy' (Said, 2003, 290). American Orientalism, though taking a different form from that of Europe, takes over cultural hostilities and keeps them (Said, 2003, 290). Under the broad category of the Orient,

[84] On the day of his break-up with Alanna, Sam happens to forget to wear the scapular. This coincidence seems to have testified the symbolic meaning of the scapular.

[85] Sam does not look exactly like Chinese and nobody talks about his identity at the parties held by Mr. Cyril Bathurst, perhaps the only one who knows Sam's identity and whose cosmopolitanism treats Sam as a special and respected guest in his house. Thus, Sam is unsure about Alanna's knowledge of his real identity before it is revealed to Alanna's father by the cunning Alice.

the Chinese played their role in America's policy-making, best exemplified by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and anti-miscegenation laws prevalent in America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If applied to Asians in America as early as the 1860s, anti-miscegenation laws were

> laws that policed the boundaries of racial categories, naturalizing the illegitimacy of interracial love in order to restrict access to basic prerogatives of citizenship while also preventing the 'amalgamation' of the races through legitimized marriage and the eventual birth of mixed race children. Anti-miscegenation laws prevented the legal and societal recognition of mixed race individuals. Such regulation was further bolstered by representations in cultural production. It is through literary and filmic stories of miscegenation and mixed race that the yellow peril anxieties of the early 20th century were often examined. (Poulsen, 2012, 6)

Beach's *Son of the Gods* is one of the literary and filmic stories of miscegenation and mixed race that manifest the 'Yellow Peril' anxieties. Further, Melissa E. Poulsen defines *Son of the Gods* as an Orientalist text in an assured manner.

> Reflecting their connection to the discourses of interracial love and yellow peril explored above, Orientalist texts, or texts emerging around American Orientalism, deploy Asian American mixed race in the early 20th century in a variety of ways. Texts such as Rex Beach's *Son of the Gods* (1929) and films including *Limehouse Blues* (1934) all feature Eurasian figures, most often abroad, who function symbolically to work through racial anxieties. (Poulsen, 2012, 7)

Diametrically different from Poulsen's contention, I would argue that Beach's novel stands as a rare narrative of the time challenging, contesting and accusing the dominant discourse of racial prejudice and repugnance in American society. I will develop my argument from two perspectives: negation of the 'economy of stereotype' and cultural hybridity as resistance to authority.

3.4.1 Negation of the 'Economy of Stereotype'

According to Morrison, the 'economy of stereotype' 'allows the writer a quick and easy image without the responsibility of specificity, accuracy, or even narratively useful description' (Morrison, 1992, 67). In terms of stereotypes of the Chinese, the first chapter has provided a historical review of the Chinese chameleon in the Western mind. Beach's work, however, does not share the convenience and economy of such stereotypes. Although the

story limns out an anti-Chinese environment in American society, the representation of racial prejudices cannot be equated to the author's agreement with the regnant and authoritative mentality. Rather than a reductive Orientalist characterization of the Chinese characters, Beach invents positive Chinese figures who are enabled to articulate their own voices and identities. He contests Orientalist representations of the Chinese as the inferior racial Other who always clings to their Western counterparts. The counter-energies initiated by Beach also condemn the traumatic influence of racial ostracism upon the racial Other.

First of all, the Chinese characters do not fall into the repertoire of stock images, such as Chinatown coolies penned by Twain and Harte. Sam's father Lee Ying is the richest Chinese in the city. Like the Kaan's advisor Chu-Yin in *Marco Millions*, he is also a philosophic man reverenced for his charitable deeds and accomplishments. Burke sketches out his personality as follows.

> Lee Ying was a man of sedate and regular habits. His life flowed smoothly and seldom did he permit an interruption to its even current. None but real philosophers can attain that perfect mental tranquillity which is the ideal state, but he had pretty nearly done so. He was a busy and active man, to be sure, for his interests were far-reaching and his business was alive and profitable but he conducted his affairs with a prudence and a sagacity which minimized effort and obviated worries and discouragements. (*SG*, 112)

There is a 'Chinese pride' in Lee Ying, who maintains that 'China produced her greatest thinkers before Socrates and Plato were born: her literature was old when Rome was founded' (*SG*, 111). Lee Ying also teaches Sam to 'ignore prejudice and revere the good and the beautiful' (*SG*, 117) of the white race as deeply as he should honour the virtues of his own. However, Lee Ying's open-mindedness fails to extend to his opinions of women, for he 'did not hold women as a whole in high esteem and considered them unimportant creatures, except from a biological standpoint' (*SG*, 151). In contrast, Sam has cultivated 'a quixotic reverence for women' (*SG*, 152), but his respect does not win him reciprocal respect from the white girls. The first night-out with his friends narrated at the beginning of the novel ends up with the girls' refusal to be seen with a nasty 'yellow man' (*SG*, 15). One of the girls, Alice, in order to pursue her dream in Paris, takes advantage of Sam's wealth by keeping a secret relationship with him. When Sam declares his love and proposes to her, she ruthlessly insults him by saying 'I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth. Live in Chinatown! Among those people! Oh, my God! I'd cut my throat first' (*SG*, 73). Though heart-broken,

Sam still honours his promise to ask his father to sponsor Alice's study in Paris. Later in the story, Sam is blackmailed by Everett Himes, Mrs. Stevens and Mona, who together plot against Sam and accuse him of coaxing young Mona into a sexual relationship with him. All this treatment lead to Sam's resentment against white women, who are considered by him to be 'blood suckers' preying upon innocent souls like himself (*SG*, 140).

Beach's work also allows the Chinese figures to speak for themselves. No longer depicted as barbarians inferior to progressive Westerners, Sam and Lee Ying are given the rarely-granted prerogative to dismiss the dominant Caucasian race as barbarians and liars. In addition, unlike the habitual representation of anxieties over interracial intimacy among the white race, Beach's narrative depicts Lee Ying's concerns about interracial union between the Chinese and the Caucasians. Believing that Sam is a son specially sent to him by the Gods, Lee Ying repeatedly warns Sam of the danger of polluting the Chinese race with 'the blood of an inferior woman' (*SG*, 147). This superiority clearly specified and felt by the Chinese characters is rarely seen in literary representations of China in the twentieth-century.

Moreover, the predominant 'Yellow Peril' racialization at the time is ironically referenced in Beach's work as well. When the blackmailing incident is released by the press, it is turned into a false scandalous sex sensation, which accuses Sam of manoeuvring the white girl into sexual intercourse with him. As a result, Sam is expelled from school as his punishment. Beach satirically comments on the public excitements at this exotic news. He writes: '[p]roperly exploited, with editorials on the Yellow Peril in American co-educational institutions, Oriental youths in social contact with "Our Girls", and the like, this story could be kept alive for several days' (*SG*, 178).

As discussed above, different representations of the Chinese and the satire of 'Yellow Peril' racialization reflect the deviation of Beach's narrative from popular cultural productions of the time. The Chinese bodies, no longer silenced like the invisible lover in 'Johnny Bear' or inarticulate like Cheng Huan in 'The Chink and the child', are given the space to challenge the dominant ideologies of the white race. With Lee Ying representing the proud Chinese, the Other now becomes an independent Self, who is able to defend and proclaim his race as inferior to none. In other words, the cultural Other is now furnished with the prerogative to speak for themselves and contend with the metropolitan West even in the mainstream Orientalist discourse.

3.4.2 Cultural Hybridity

As discussed in the previous section, Beach's narrative works as an indictment of racial prejudices and the 'Yellow Peril' racialization within American society rather than a dose added to spice the already prevalent interracial anxiety. It is argued in this section that Sam's hybrid identity plays a critical role in contesting the dominant representations of racial anxieties in American cultural practices. Despite Sam's actual white identity, he is raised up as a Chinese. The mixture of Chinese teachings and Western education makes his hybridity not a biological construct but a cultural construct. According to Young,

> [t]he word 'hybrid' has developed from biological and botanical origins: in Latin it meant the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it: 'of human parents of difference races, half-breed'. The OED continues: 'A few examples of this word occur early in the seventeenth century; but it was scarcely in use until the nineteenth'. 'Hybrid' in the nineteenth century it was used to refer to a physiological phenomenon; in the twentieth century it has been reactivated to describe a cultural one. (Young, 1995, 6)

Within hybridity, there is a 'bizarre binate operation, in which each impulse is qualified against the other, forcing momentary forms of dislocation and displacement into complex economies of agonistic reticulation' (Young, 1995, 26-27). In Sam's case, he always feels such conflicting forces within himself, the forces not of antagonistic bloods but of 'heredity and environment' (*SG*, 79). 'He was constantly at war with himself, queer cross-currents kept him in turmoil, opposing forces, too obscure to analyze, tugged at him, dragged him first one way then another, and neither would let go' (*SG*, 79).

Apart from this dual cultural identity, the injustice, isolation and insults that Sam suffers have left scars on the innocent and earnest heart of this 'unhappy and bewildered young man' (*SG*, 154). On the one hand, Sam feels like a lonely traveller in a strange land in the same way as his father feels; on the other, different from his father who regards China as his eternal home, Sam feels homeless.

> Sam occupied an anomalous position here at Eastern: he lived on a peculiar middle ground between that small group of Chinese students and the student body itself. The whites treated him as a Chinese, the Chinese refused to recognize him as one of their own. This may have been due in part to his father's wealth and prominence and to the fact that he had been raised like a Manchu prince, but whatever the reason, Sam had no place; he was made to feel like a renegade, a man without a country.

(*SG*, 25)

Driven by this homelessness, Sam embarks on a pilgrimage to Europe to 'find his manhood' (*SG*, 193) in the hope that the civilized Europe could be more racially tolerant than America. However, Sam discovers to his dismay that racial prejudice is also widespread in Europe. Saddened by his break-up with Alanna and his father's death, he ventures to return to China, only to find that in China 'the racial line was drawn even more clearly' (*SG*, 291). Consequently and ironically he has to think of America 'as home' (*SG*, 291) after all these attempts. Lacking the sense of belonging in America, China and Europe, Sam starts to doubt his identity. He believes that he possesses an American 'white mind', but in spite of this he is constantly rejected as an inferior and repulsive 'yellow man'. The more humiliations he suffers, the more hatred he bears towards the white race; and the more drawbacks he encounters, the more he takes pride in the Chinese race. In this sense, as a hybrid of the East and the West (respectively represented by China and America), Sam is characterized by the fluidity and duality of his cultural identity, which is formed 'at the unstable point where the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture' (Chambers, 1994, 25). In the identity-exploring process, the constructed sense of place and belonging acquires 'a form that is always contingent, in transit, without a goal, without an end' (Chambers, 1994, 25).

The contingency and fluidity of Sam's identity is further accentuated at the end of the narrative, when he is revealed to be a white foundling. To his surprise, Sam feels unmoved about the disclosure, which he thought 'should have stirred him to the bottom of his being' (*SG*, 389). Contentment does not come out of the disclosure but resentment prevails instead, as depicted in the following passage.

> He was glad to know that he was white, nevertheless an odd resentment smoldered in the back of his mind; it offended him to gain stature through that fact alone. In what way was he better now than he had been at sundown? Yesterday he was the son of a gentle, a noble, a charitable and a godly man, to-day he was a guttersnipe, and yet he had attained caste. His honors had multiplied. His Princess has opened her arms. Lee Ying's blood was not his, in him ran the blood of some drunken roustabout, perhaps, or some furtive jackal of the slums. The mother who had borne him was not Pan Yi, of blessed memory, but for all he knew, an unwed woman of the streets. In that he must take pride. Great credit now attached to him. Chinese gods appreciate humor: doubtless they were smiling broadly. (*SG*, 389-390)

The description of Sam's psychological state ironically critiques the practice of associating honour, stature and cast with the white blood and in the meantime rejecting the truly honourable and noble aspects of other races. As depicted sarcastically, even the Chinese gods find the idea of racial superiority comical. Therefore, Sam pledges himself to 'build a stately monument' to his 'enduring trust' in his father. In other words, Sam finds his identity by opting for true honour and nobility, which bears no essential links to blood and race. 'Judith Butler argues that the construction of identities depends on excess: there is always something left outside, once the boundaries of specific identities have been constructed. In this sense all identities are exclusive, as well as inclusive' (Yuval-Davis, 2010, 272). In this light, Sam excludes the biological side from his true identity and includes the essential qualities that are instilled by the philosophic Lee Ying into his very being. In Lee Ying's phrase, Sam is the Heaven-sent son who belongs to neither races.

Like linguistic hybridity in *East Is West*, Beach's construction of hybridization opens up authority to the language and culture of the Other, which functions as a disarming alterity in the authoritative discourse. According to Young, hybridity is

> the form of cultural difference itself, the jarrings of a differentiated culture whose 'hybrid counter-energies', in Said's phrase, challenge the centred, dominant cultural forms with their unsettling perplexities generated out of their 'disjunctive, liminal space'. Hybridity here becomes a third term which can never in fact be third because, as a monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them. (Young, 1995, 23)

The 'unsettling perplexities' of Sam's hybridity, carried through the whole narrative, challenge the oppressive metropolitan centre at the end of the narrative. Sam's resentment of becoming a white American in the end strikes a huge blow to the claimed superiority of those who have thrown relentless insults at him. Additionally, the 'Yellow Peril' racialization, which is characterized by Colleen Lye as an aspect of American Orientalism and which defines Asian Americans as 'a host of modernity's dehumanizing effects' (Lye, 2005, 11), also falls apart as unfounded and invalid broken pieces.

3.5 Conclusion

The three primary texts examined in this chapter, *Marco Millions*, *East Is West* and *Son of the Gods*, reflect social realities in early twentieth-century America – racial ostracism and

mixed-race anxiety. The analyses also shed light on the problematics of the characterization of Orientalist texts. Ostensibly eulogistic representations of the racial Other, such as *Marco Millions*, may be subject to Orientalist dogmas and ideologies, whereas those that are dismissed as Orientalist texts could possess counter-hegemonic energies if examined within the formation, i.e, a group of texts of the same period or of the same topicality. For instance, *East Is West* and *Son of the Gods* challenge the Orientalist paradigm by forsaking the convenient application of stock images of the Chinese and turning to hybridity as an alternative site, where the authoritative Orientalist readings of China become contested and problematized. Therefore, it is of more importance to uncover the Orientalist ideologies and potential counter-energies within a particular literary text and other cultural productions than to embrace a simplistic characterization of them as Orientalist or non-Orientalist.

Chapter 4 Unveiling the *Harem*: Writing in the Contact Zone and the Third Space

4.1 Introduction

The mid-twentieth century witnessed subtle changes in Western literary representations of interracial relationships between the Chinese and Caucasians. Before the 1940s, Chinese characters involved in interracial romances were always associated with shadow and darkness, exemplified by the invisible Chinese lover in 'Johnny Bear' and Cheng Huan in 'The Chink and the Child' discussed in the second chapter. In addition, interracial relationships were played out in diverse ways. For instance, O'Neill's *Marco Millions* – an adaptation of the historical account *The Travels of Marco Polo* – narrates a tragic romance between the Chinese princess Kukachin and the merchant Marco Polo, while *East Is West* and *Son of the Gods* feature similar plot twists, in which the Chinese protagonists are revealed to be white at the end of the narratives. None of the literary texts examined in previous chapters portrays successful interracial union. It was not until the 1950s that Richard Mason's novel *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957) depicts an interracial liaison with a happy ending for the first time. Furthermore, Pearl S. Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946) became the pioneering text to engage with the representation of Chinese women from an ethnographic perspective. Compared with the aforementioned writers, Mason and Buck have the actual experience of living in China and their works are derived from such experiences. Mason's story is inspired by his sojourn in Hong Kong whereas Buck's myriad works are largely based on her experience of living in Mainland China.

The increasingly widespread encounters between cultures in the twentieth century, enabled by advancements in transportation and communication, fostered important changes in literary production. Taking Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957) and Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946) as examples, this chapter employs Mary Louise Pratt and Homi Bhabha's respective theories on the contact zone and the Third Space to detect the changes in the portrayal of interracial relationships and in the representation of the Other against the backdrop of widening and deepening cultural communications.

4.1.1 The Contact Zone and the Third Space

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt defines the term 'contact zone' as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today' (Pratt, 1992, 4). It is the spatial and temporal co-presence and co-existence of subjects who are previously separated by geographic and historical disjuncture and whose trajectories now intersect (Pratt, 1992, 7). Pratt further explains the essential meaning of the word 'contact' as follows:

> [b]y using the term 'contact', I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travellers and 'travelees,' not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (Pratt, 1992, 7)

In this light, Mason and Buck both write in the contact zone where Chinese culture and Western culture meet and interact with each other during their sojourns in China. Nevertheless, it remains an intriguing question as to whether their contact with Chinese culture is set within the structures of power, as the term 'contact zone' suggests. Strictly speaking, China was never entirely reduced to a colony of the European or American powers, yet some parts of China, the southeast port cities in particular, were historically occupied and ruled by foreign powers. Hong Kong, for example, was under British rule from 1841 to 1997 (excluding Japanese rule from 1941 to 1945). China was and has been under Western colonial influence since the nineteenth century, which has given rise to multiple cultural, economic and political ramifications, such as the cession of territories and the cultural influence of foreign missionary work upon the Chinese. Hence, it is inappropriate to exclude China-West relations in the twentieth century from the influence of colonialism and its aftermath. China has its specificity, but its cultural and political encounters with the West cannot elude the far-

reaching implications of asymmetrical power relations in operation.[86] Pratt's definition of the contact zone shares some common ground with Bhabha's theory of hybridity and the Third Space, which receives a detailed discussion in *The Location of Culture*. Both Pratt and Bhabha highlight the importance of cultural interaction, but Bhabha further develops the term of contact zone and puts forward the concept of hybridity or the Third Space, where intercultural penetration could trigger the generation of new positions and new meanings. The construction of new meanings through linguistic and cultural hybridity has been touched upon in the previous chapter. The manifestations and ramifications of hybridity and the Third Space will be elaborated at greater length in this chapter. According to Bhabha, hybridity is the Third Space that enables new positions to emerge and gives rise to the construction and negotiation of new meanings. The Third Space is

> [the] precondition for the articulation of cultural difference […] the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but rather on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end, we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting-edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture […] and by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerges as the others of ourselves. (Bhabha, 1994, 56)

In Bhabha's theory, the Third Space or the in-between space is capable of breaking down binary thinking that dominates the colonial discourse. The dichotomy of colonizer/colonized, metropolis/periphery and others is no longer valid in this space. The in-between space is not about tracing two original cultures but the creation of a new position that enables the conceptualization of an international culture. This international culture is 'located in the in-between space of translation and a constant negotiation of meaning and cultural identities' (Archeraiou, 2011, 92). As an essential part of hybridity, intercultural translation allows individuals to divert themselves from the comfort zone of cultural sameness and take a bold step to experience cultural Otherness. Intercultural translation, as Archeraiou argues in his critique of Bhabha's hybridity discourse, 'involves a self-othering process, one in which cultural sameness and difference are transcended to allow for new and wider modes of

[86] This point has also been discussed in the Introduction. For more information, see III Theoretical Framework, 17-19.

personal and collective cultural identification' (Archeraiou, 2011, 92). In the analysis of Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* in the previous chapter, the idea of self-Orientalization proposed by Dirlik is employed to suggest that anyone entering the Oriental culture needs to be orientalized in one way or another.[87] Self-Orientalization includes a self-othering process, that is, to emerge as 'the others of ourselves' in Bhabha's terms.

The hybridity discourse initiated by Bhabha is critiqued by Amar Archeraiou for being inadequate to bring down the center-periphery mode of organization and thinking. As seen from above, Pratt recognizes the important role of asymmetrical power relations in cultural encounters, whereas Bhabha disregards the presence of unequal power structures within the in-between space. Archeraiou argues that

> like all structures of power, hybridity discourse is profoundly protean; it functions positively as well as negatively. On the positive side, hybridity discourse produces alternative forms of identification, new inclusive systems of knowledge and representation, and discourses of emancipation. On its negative side, hybridity denies, restricts, and represses discursive modes, perceptions, and forms of knowledge that do not conform to its theoretical and empirical frame or purposes. Among the things repressed, denied, or occluded by the postcolonial theorists of hybridity are, as we have seen, non-western postcolonial scholarship, class and race politics, and economic and political structures of power and inequality. Added to these are discursive practices based on binary perceptions of power, culture and identity. (Archeraiou, 2011, 157-158).

In Archeraiou's criticism, the hybridity discourse not only disengages with global neocolonialism, but also considers the diaspora narrative produced by migrant elites living in the West as the foci of study as if it were emblematic of the global postcolonial condition. Thus, it disregards various forms of intervention and control that developed countries have exerted on developing countries in the globalization era, and also marginalizes non-Anglophone literatures and non-Western scholarship. In addition, Bhabha neglects the fact that intercultural translation constituting the Third Space is never free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment as cultural translators often empower the same and disempower the Other or vice versa, depending on cultural, political, economic and ideological terms (Archeraiou, 2011, 92-93). Archeraiou's critique of Bhabha is revealing in the sense that cultural translation does not necessarily collapse the politics of polarity into a flat and disempowered narrative of equivalence and entropy. It merely reshapes the terms of

[87] For more information, see 3.2.2 Reification of Chinese Culture, 109-111.

polarity politics, thereby masking the will-to-power and hegemonic impulse. The presence of unequal power relations and the possibility of collapsing polarity in the Third Space will be discussed in the following textual analyses of Mason and Buck's narratives.

Employing the concepts of contact zone and hybridity, this chapter intends to examine Mason and Buck's intercultural translation practices. In Mason's case, his short sojourns in Hong Kong locate him in the contact zone, where Mason's English culture grapples with Chinese culture at an external level. For Buck, the interaction between her home culture (American culture) and Chinese culture is substantially internalized due to the fact that she grew up in China and received both Chinese and Western education. Both Mason and Buck have undergone the self-othering process in their intercultural translation practices wherein cultural sameness and divergence are transcended to create new perspectives, yet the degree of Buck's self-othering is more thorough than Mason's. Therefore, Bhabha's hybridity is a more appropriate term to be applied to Buck's case. The questions that will be addressed in this chapter include: what are the major features of writing in the contact zone and the Third Space compared to Orientalist representations of China? What new positions have emerged and what new meanings have been constructed from this social space? Have the binary oppositions of Self/Other, East/West and metropolis/periphery been shattered in the Third Space as suggested by Bhabha? This chapter will also place emphasis on the representation of Chinese women, who are portrayed differently from the images found in previous texts. Buck's depiction of Chinese women in particular reflects the profound influence of Western modernity upon Chinese culture in the mid-twentieth century. In order to better understand Buck's realism, a historical context of the changing role and status of Chinese women in Chinese society in the twentieth century is provided in the following section.

4.1.2 Historical Contextualization of Chinese Women in the Twentieth Century

Before the 1900s, the Confucius ideology and economic dependence upon men reduced Chinese women to a subordinate position. Over the centuries the teachings of Confucius have been the predominant social ideology that specifies the rules of conduct appropriate to each type of social relationship, such as between prince and ruler, father and son, as well as husband and wife. In Confucianism, women are considered to be different from men just as earth is different from heaven. As noted in the *Book of Changes*, '[g]reat Righteousness is shown in that man and woman occupy their correct places; the relative positions of Heaven

and Earth' (Croll, 1978, 13). Furthermore, as women were secluded from public affairs and denied official positions, they were economically dependent on men and submit to the male dominant institution. As Croll argues,

> [t]he interaction of ideological factors upon economic dependence continued to reinforce the physical constraints that held women in their place. Isolation and lack of identity made it difficult for them to actively articulate their own oppression and relate to other oppressed groups; any unified expression of protest or concerted group action was well-nigh impossible. It was not until the twentieth century that each of these three embryonic forms of challenge or forces for change, the intellectual questioning of the traditional social institutions, the formation of feminist associations and the linking of the fortunes of women to those of other oppressed groups, combined to give rise to a women's movement in which women began to widely and collectively protest against the traditional role and status assigned to them in the family and in society. (Croll, 1978, 44)

The New Culture Movement of the mid 1910s and 1920s, and the May Fourth movement in 1919, injected renewed social and political consciousness into women's movements.[88] This period witnessed thriving interest in women's problems, which received heated discussions in circulating journals like the *avant-garde New Youth* among Western-educated scholars. Old practices that were prevalent under the Confucian ideology, such as the seclusion of women, arranged marriage and foot-binding, were severely criticised and dismissed as outdated rules against women's rights and interests. Issues including women's right to education and political participation, monogamy, free love and birth control were also brought to attention in the press and media. This period also marked the height of Western influence upon women's movements that aimed for independence and emancipation from traditional familial and societal restraints. New ideas originating from Europe and America gave birth to a feminist wave in China. For example, the notion of individualism imported from the West stressed the status, rights and obligations of the individual. Myriad associations and organisations were established for the purpose of protecting women's rights and interests and redefining Chinese women's role and status in the family and society.

[88] The New Culture Movement, in questioning the dominant Confucian culture, advocated a new Chinese culture as per global and Western standards, especially democracy and science. Leading scholars in the movement such as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei and Li Dazhao called for vernacular literature, individual freedom and women's liberation, re-examination of Confucian texts and ancient classics and other progressive notions. The May Fourth Movement in 1919 is an extension of the New Culture Movement, with students protesting against the Paris Peace Conference that transferred German rights over Shandong to imperial Japan. Consequently it developed into a cultural and political movement promoting new cultural forms and political reforms.

Chinese women themselves were also encouraged to participate in public affairs and take up positions in government and private businesses. According to what Han Suyin rightly notes in the preface to *Women's Liberation in China*,

> [i]t is the profound transformation of woman herself, in her own evaluation of self and the group, the revalorization of every so-called 'value' ascribed to woman's relations with society, with the family, with men, with their own function as mothers and wives as well as workers, which is described in detail, and which will be a revelation to many women who want their condition to change, but often get hold of the wrong way of doing it. (Broyelle, 1977, vii)

Missionary work in China also exerted a great influence on Chinese women and Chinese women's movements. Missionaries not only offered shelter for discarded girls but also provided education for women and championed their rights in the family and society (Snow, 1967, 72). Western thoughts on freedom and individualism were introduced to a large population of uneducated women. In addition, a large number of Western-style schools were set up across the country in the first half of the twentieth century. These schools played an important role in converting babies and young girls abandoned by Chinese parents. Nevertheless, foreign missionary activities were met with disbelief and fear among Chinese parents who could not comprehend foreign religions and strived to prevent their children being converted.[89]

Women's movements in the 1920s subsequently joined efforts with the nationalist and revolutionary movements that aimed for a unified China. This 'marked a turning point in the history of the women's movement and set it on a new path of development' (Croll, 1978, 116). The following sections, especially the discussion of Buck's *Pavilion of Women*, will look at how Chinese women are represented in literary works of the mid-twentieth century, when the role and status of Chinese women in Chinese society started to change with the influx of progressive ideas from the West.

[89] The unpopular Little Sister Hsia in *Pavilion of Women* was probably inspired by this historical fact. Her withered complexion, dull dressing style, incomprehensible way of preaching and adherence to virginity at an awkward age make her an unwelcome creature among the local Chinese, who always laugh at her and try to avoid her.

4.2 Challenging the 'Madame Butterfly' Narrative: The Oriental Woman Gazes Back in *The World of Suzie Wong*

The World of Suzie Wong by Richard Mason (1919-1997) narrates a romantic relationship between a young British artist (Robert Lomax) and a Chinese prostitute (Suzie Wong) in mid-twentieth-century Hong Kong. Robert comes to Hong Kong in search of artistic inspiration. He rents a room at the Nam Kok Hotel, a place frequented by Western sailors and Chinese prostitutes. He befriends quite a few young prostitutes, among whom Suzie catches his eye with her attractiveness and innocence. Robert undergoes various psychological struggles with Suzie's love before his final decision to consummate their mutual affection in marriage. The novel inspired a Broadway play in 1958 as well as an eponymous film in 1960. It also spawned a ballet premiered by the Hong Kong Ballet in 2006 and two sequels written in 2008 and in 2010 respectively.

Richard Mason's living experience in Hong Kong at the time of the Korean War (1950 – 1953) inspired the novel *The World of Suzie Wong*, which is said to be based on real incidents and real characters (Kar, 2002, 68). Mason's sojourn in Hong Kong strongly influenced his writing of the novel. The geographical and societal details in Mason's account remain authentic reflections of Hong Kong as a former British colony in the mid-twentieth century. For instance, the Nam Kok Hotel featured in the story is based on the Luk Kwok Hotel on Gloucester Road in Wan Chai, where Mason stayed during his time in Hong Kong. The presence of Western sailors also points to Hong Kong's status as a colony. Nevertheless, the novel revolves around the lives of a plethora of Chinese prostitutes restricted to the Nam Kok Hotel, hence excluding the wider geographical and societal facets of other places and residents in Hong Kong.

4.2.1 The Tourist Gaze That Is Male and Imperial

In the narrative, Robert is curious about the mystery of Hong Kong and decides to make a trip there in search of inspiration for his paintings, while Suzie is portrayed as a beautiful and attractive Chinese bar girl. Different from other bar girls, Suzie is unsophisticated and rebellious. She steals money from men as a punishment for their irresponsible treatment of women. She is also superstitious as she often consults a fortune-teller for her decision-making. In the meantime, the innocent Suzie is possessed with an eagerness for knowledge even

though she is denied access to education. All these qualities and features rivet Robert's attention on Suzie.

As a traveller, Robert casts a tourist gaze upon the exotic land and bar girls that he encounters. For instance, through Robert's inquisitive and curious eyes, the basic features of Suzie are limned out during their first encounter.

> I turned to look at the girl beside me. Her face was round and smooth, her eyes long black ellipses, and her eyebrows so perfectly arched that they looked drawn – but in fact they had only been helped out with pencil at their tips. Her cheekbones were broad, with hints of Mongolia. (*WSW*, 5)

In Robert's eyes, Suzie's black eyes and broad cheekbones suggest the countenance features typical of the Chinese. In their first encounter, Suzie lies about her real identity and profession by telling Robert that she is the daughter of a wealthy tycoon and also a virgin. Robert looks attentively and curiously at this unearthly girl, not knowing that their subsequent life paths would converge.

Robert's tourist gaze is also cast upon other bar girls who work with Suzie. The bar girls live on their sexual services to Western sailors in the hotel. The vivid description of the motley conglomeration of bar girls in the narrative is reminiscent of the Orientalist paintings of the East at the peak of Western imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's 1862 painting, *The Turkish Bath*, which displays titillating female nudity in a harem. Mason's descriptive narrative puts each bar girl on display through the lens of Robert, producing the same effects as what an actual painting presents. Furthermore, the depiction of bar girls is laced with a sense of eroticism and sensuality characteristic of Orientalist paintings on undressed Eastern female bodies. For instance,

> [t]he girls I came to know best, apart from Gwenny and Typhoo, were Wednesday Lulu, Minnie Ho, and Jeannie Chen. Jeannie was a luscious-looking little creature with chalk-white face, crimson splodge of a mouth, and great masses of black hair about her shoulders. She wore a black split skirt stretched tautly over undulating hips, black stockings, and enormously high heels…Across the room, one gasped at Jeannie's voluptuousness. (*WSW*, 38-39)

The bar girls who are scrutinized by Robert have different appearances and temperaments: the luscious-looking Jeannie, the cuddlesome and kittenish Minnie Ho, the

stubbornly honest and high-principled Wednesday Lulu, the sluttish heroin smoker Big Alice, the plump little giggler Little Alice, the experienced forty-one-year-old Lily Lou, the unpopular hard-calculating Doris and other minor characters. The plethora of bar girls constitutes a modern *harem*, a topos that recurs in Western representations of the East in either paintings or literature. Robert's eyes become the conduit for a voyeuristic look into the *harem*.

In particular, Suzie emerges as the major target of Robert's tourist gaze, which is not only male but also imperial. As a model for Robert's painting, Suzie subjects her tantalizing female body to Robert's male gaze. The fact that Robert later exhibits the paintings modelled by Suzie in London places the Oriental woman under the public gaze of the West. The exhibition's huge success reveals the West's keen interest in the exotic Oriental women. In this 'seeing – being seen' relationship, the West occupies a privileged position to pass judgement on the alien Other. The West's zealous consumption of the Oriental woman through the act of looking points to the unequal looking-relation between the East and the West, within which the imperial eyes of the white Western 'seeing-man' look and possess the newly annexed territories (Pratt, 1992, 7). The historical context of Britain's colonization of Hong Kong also indicates symbolic meanings in the comprehension of this unequal looking-relation. In Mason's text, the object of this male and imperial gaze cast by the Western 'seeing-man' are the miscellaneous Chinese prostitutes, who are sexually available to Western sailors seeking bodily pleasure in the colonized territory of Hong Kong. The male gaze is also an imperial and patriarchal gaze 'wherein the colonized Asian figure is reduced to a caricature' (Rajgopal, 2010, 157). The *harem* in Mason's text consists of such caricatures of colonized Asian females who live on their submissiveness to the colonizing male. 'The imperial gaze reflects the assumption that the white western subject is central much as the male gaze assumes the centrality of the male subject' (Ma, 2011, 71).

The World of Suzie Wong invokes the 'Madame Butterfly' trope, in which the Oriental woman is deserted by and dies for the unworthy Western man. It is often discussed in parallel with other narratives such as *Madame Butterfly* and *Sayonara* (1957), which both feature

tragic relationships between Western men and Oriental women.[90] In Mason's narrative, Suzie is abandoned by a Western sailor but chooses to give birth to his baby and surreptitiously take cares of the baby on her own. Additionally, Suzie's corporeal conquest by Robert is depicted as her rebirth, reminiscent of the 'white knight' paradigm within which the Oriental woman necessitates the enlightenment and salvation of the 'white knight'. As Peter Kwan notes, 'Lomax's sexual conquest is re-presented as Suzie's salvation' (Kwan, 1998, 113). Therefore, Thomas Y. T. Luk argues that Mason's novel is another text subject to the 'Madame Butterfly' discourse, which has been circulating in the West for centuries.

> The world in *The World of Suzie Wong* is treated as a location or a site of the fin de siècle Puccini's fantasy of Madame Butterfly and the story an update of this fantasy, that is, the male fantasy of a beautiful, available and submissive Asian woman. This cityscape is topography for the projection of racism, sexism, media stereotyping, all ready made vocabulary reserved for the Asian other, and Asian woman in particular. (Luk, 2002, 74)

Undeniably, substantial evidence in the narrative points to *The World of Suzie Wong* as another 'Madame Butterfly' story, including the male and imperial tourist gaze discussed above, yet my subsequent discussion argues that Mason's text challenges the trope in three ways: first, it is the pioneering text that narrates a successful interracial liaison; second, Mason characterizes the male protagonist Robert as different from the colonizers who are prejudiced against the Chinese; and finally, the Oriental woman gazes back at the Western 'seeing-man', thereby creating space for the articulation of her own identity.

4.2.2 Challenging the 'Madame Butterfly' Narrative

The World of Suzie Wong challenges the Oriental woman construct through its pioneering depiction of successful interracial union, which is ultimately consummated in marriage. Based on what has been examined in previous chapters concerning the representation of interracial liaison, a successful consummation of mutual affection between races is deemed impossible and unthinkable, whereas in Mason's story the white man

[90] *Sayonara* (1957) is an American film adapted from James Michener's homonymous novel by Paul Osborn. It tells the story of Major Lloyd 'Ace' Gruver, who is an ace fighter pilot during the Korean War. He falls in love with a Japanese entertainer, Hana-ogi. Ace's friend, Airman Joe, marries a Japanese woman, Katsumi, regardless of the disapproval of the United States Military. Later Joe and Katsumi both commit suicide as a result of Joe's inability to bring the pregnant Katsumi back to the States when those who are married to Japanese are ordered back. This strengthens Ace's resolve to marry Hana-ogi.

chooses a Chinese prostitute over a rich white girl. Mason's account also touches upon the unspeakable theme of interracial sexuality, which can be found in various scenes throughout the narrative (*WSW,* 176-178). According to Vera Mackie, in colonial situations 'spatial displacement from the metropolitan centre may allow inter-racial relationships which would be unthinkable in the metropolis' (Mackie, 2000). In other words, interracial romance is enabled by a geographical displacement from the metropolitan centre where the interracial liaison cannot be condoned. In Mason's narrative, Robert and Suzie consummate their love in marriage in colonized Hong Kong. During their subsequent short stay in London, the way people there see their relationship causes anxiety for both of them. The story draws to an end with their decision to settle in Japan, a place still falling within the geographical scope of the Far East. In this light, Robert's location in the periphery or displacement from the metropolis forms the precondition for the unspeakable subject matter of interracial relationship to exist and survive.

Furthermore, although Mason's account does reflect the colonial mentality of the West vis-à-vis the East (*WSW,* 73, 200), it casts doubts on whether the protagonist – Robert Lomax – shares this common mentality. As the first two section headings of the book – 'The Girls' and 'The Men' – suggest, Robert is not only the tourist who looks at the Oriental women but also the observer who registers the behaviours of Western men in their cultural encounter with Oriental women. Robert functions as the by-stander who watches and records Western men's mentality towards the Chinese and Chinese girls in particular. One typical example is the ship surveyor Wildblood, who 'was always at pains to conceal his interest in Chinese girls and to imply that he would not touch them with a barge pole' (*WSW,* 100). Another more revealing instance is the sailor Ben, who awakens to the realization that 'oriental women had a femininity that Western women had lost – that they were dedicated to building up masculinity, whereas Western women were dedicated to its destruction' (*WSW,* 100). Ben derives this new 'truth' from watching a Chinese woman (Moria Wang) dine with her Western companion (Harper). During the dinner, Moria Wang wipes Harper's chopsticks and helps him to some choice morsel (*WSW*, 100). Moria Wang's femininity triggers Ben's yearning for Chinese girls, as depicted in the text.

> He continued to watch the couple at the table. The feminine tenderness of Moria Wong's manner filled him with fresh anger at the thought of Elizabeth, who for so long had starved him of his masculine due. He began to feel an almost intolerable

> yearning. He had never been troubled by a promiscuous desire for women. But now he hungered for a woman – for tenderness, for love. He made up his mind. He turned to Wildblood and said bluntly: 'Where can I get a Chinese girl?'
>
> Wildblood gave him a peculiar look, then avoided his eyes. 'Why ask me? I wouldn't go with a Chink if you paid me.'
>
> …
>
> 'I can't go to a dance hall,' Ben said. 'Too public. I've too many Chinese clients.' (*WSW*, 100-101)

This scene well instantiates the predominant Western male fantasy of the Oriental female, who is imagined as mysterious, sensuous, innocent, submissive and most important of all, able to readily attend to the sexual needs of the Western male. Both Wildblood and Ben have a burning desire for Chinese girls yet stand unwilling to admit this desire or to be seen with Chinese girls in public, though the quotation above indicates that Ben is more willing to admit to it than Wildblood.[91] They objectify the Chinese female into something that can be exchanged and abandoned at will. In addition, Ben prefers Oriental women to Western women as he assumes that the former's femininity is conducive to the construction of his masculinity and that the Oriental woman's femininity is enhanced by her Oriental identity. In this sense, he not only exerts a male and patriarchal control over the Oriental female but also reveals his gendered perception of the Orient as a subservient feminine Other. In doing so the Western male subjects the Oriental female to the double colonization of patriarchy and imperialism.

As discussed above, the difference between Mason's account and other 'Madame Butterfly' narratives lies in the fact that the protagonist Robert does not seem to champion the predominant male power-fantasy of the Oriental female, but he remains hesitant when it comes to the serious matter of marriage. He is troubled by a defiant inner voice upon the thought of marrying Suzie.

> And I was carried away by the notion of marrying her that I was on the point of interrupting the talk about spiders and proposing to her impulsively there and then – but at that moment a voice inside me nagged, 'Don't be a fool – you know you'll regret it! You only want to marry her because her ignorance inflates your ego – because she makes you feel like a god.'
>
> 'Well, what's wrong with that?' I asked the inner voice defiantly. 'Why shouldn't I enjoy feeling like a god? Anyhow, sometimes she makes me feel the opposite.

[91] This scene shares similarities with one of the scenes in *Son of the Gods*, in which the white girls are repulsed by being seen with Sam Lee in public. Refer to 2.1 Play in the Dark and Shadow: Chinese Presence in the Literary Imagination, 71.

> Sometimes she makes me feel very humble, because her own vision is so much more innocent, so much fresher than mine. I learn as much from her as she learns from me. I am learning from her all the time – seeing life freshly through her eyes.' (*WSW*, 246-247)

This psychological battle explains Robert's hesitation about marrying Suzie: for Robert, Suzie is first of all a Chinese and then a prostitute. Taking a Chinese prostitute as his wife is considered inappropriate among his fellow citizens, who hold the yellow race in low esteem. Ironically, it is the despised traits of Suzie – being Oriental and being a prostitute – that inflate Robert's ego by making him feel like a god. The Oriental woman, as the prevalent male fantasy goes, helps saturate the Western man's ego and validate their authority and masculinity as a male. Nonetheless, what is notable here is that Robert emerges from this same old fantasy and creates a new horizon, from which he is able and willing to appreciate Suzie's opinions, see life through her eyes, and occasionally admit his humbleness in front of her. At times like these, Suzie is no longer the submissive and timid Oriental woman but an equal interlocutor whom Robert loves and admires. The defiance against a stereotyped portrayal of Suzie as the Oriental female is also reflected in Robert's recognition of Suzie's individuality in one of the painting scenes.

> I began in the heat of the afternoon, three days after we were married, as she lay on the tumbled bed. She herself looked gloriously tumbled, with her limbs sprawled at absurd angles as if she had been dropped there from a height; and she had no intention of moving, for she was quite obviously deriving profound satisfaction from her own complete wreckage. She radiated a glow of fulfilment that was as womanly as a breast swollen with milk. It was thus that I had intended to paint her; but as I studied her from across the room her expression changed. For no doubt I had been looking too pleased with myself, too smugly satisfied with the scene of destruction and my role of conquering male – and now there came into Suzie's eyes a twinkling half-mocking defiance, which might have been expressed in these words: 'All right, you may have conquered me – but only because I wanted to be conquered, and in a minute, when I've savoured my destruction a bit longer, I shall become independent again.' And so that was how I tried to paint her, showing the reassertion of individuality that must always follow total surrender in love. (*WSW*, 302-303)

Robert exerts a dominant male gaze upon Suzie's titillating body through painting. Suzie's posing embodies the objectification of her into a static painting of the exotic Oriental female under the scrutiny of the Western 'seeing-man', who 'has enjoyed for three thousand years the privilege of seeing without being seen' (Ma, 2011, 74). However, in the above

scene, the Oriental woman Suzie gazes back whilst being scrutinized by the Western male Robert. From her eyes radiates 'a twinkling half-mocking defiance', which declares her own individuality and independence as a human being regardless of her race, gender and class. Suzie's individuality is reconfirmed in her decision to face the Western public at the London exhibition of Robert's paintings modelled by herself. Her presence at the exhibition works as another declaration of herself as a fleshy human being with agency rather than an invented static object. These declarations challenge the 'Madame Butterfly' paradigm in such a way as to contest further the white man's corporeal conquest of the Oriental female and also Britain's territorial colonization of Hong Kong. The dominant male and imperial gaze is met with resistance from the inverted spectator – the Oriental woman.

In summary, *The World of Suzie Wong* seems to be another repetition of the 'Madame Butterfly' narrative, yet in my argument this account demonstrates traces subversive of this predominant paradigm. On the one hand, themed on a plethora of Chinese prostitutes who are sexually available to Western men, the text restricts its depiction of Hong Kong to the Nam Kok hotel. As a result, the broader aspects of the society of Hong Kong are ignored. In addition, the protagonist Robert Lomax and other Western men are privileged to exert a dominant male and imperial gaze upon Suzie and other Chinese bar girls, consuming the exoticness and mysteriousness of the stereotyped Oriental woman. On the other hand, Robert is characterized as an ambivalent figure who does not wholly embrace the prevailing imperialist ideology and the 'Madame Butterfly' construct of the Oriental woman. In his corporeal conquering of Suzie, Robert simultaneously recognizes Suzie's individuality as an independent entity in defiance of the objectified and trivialized Oriental woman construct. Furthermore, Suzie is given the chance to occupy a spectator's position and gaze back upon the Western 'seeing-man'.

The subversive features of Mason's account can be attributed to his travelling experience in Hong Kong and possibly other Asian countries as well, which places him within the contact zone in Pratt's terms. Just like the protagonist Robert, who is Mason's alter ego (Kar, 2002, 68), Mason comes into contact with the East and coexists with the East spatially and temporally. Against the background of Hong Kong colonized by the British, Mason is not only an individual traveller but also a member of the colonizer bloc, so he habitually casts a male and imperial gaze on the colonized. However, the spatial displacement from the metropolis gives space to probable interracial romance. More importantly, 'the interactive,

improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters' (Pratt, 1992, 7) open up possibilities of interlocking understandings and practices in the contact zone where two cultures meet and grapple with each other. The location in the contact zone could allow a new horizon to emerge, in which the Western 'seeing-man' or the traveller could possibly articulate and comprehend cultural differences as well as perceive the colonized subjects as changing and distinct individuals rather than a category. It is through this awareness of multiple perspectives that Mason's account poses challenges to the monolithic discourse of submissive Oriental woman construct. Therefore, despite the subversive features, Mason's narrative is ultimately located in the colonizer/colonized or traveller/travelee dichotomy and thus cannot be free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment. Nevertheless, Pearl Buck's *Pavilion of Women,* which will be analysed in the following section, complicates the presence of power relations in the hybrid space. In contrast to Mason's location in the contact zone in Pratt's terms, Bhabha's theoretical underpinnings of the Third Space or hybridity seem more fitting to explicate Buck's cultural translation practices in between two cultures.

4.3 Writing in the Third Space: Intercultural Translation in *Pavilion of Women*

Growing up with her missionary parents in China, Pearl Buck (1892-1973) wrote prolifically on the lives of ordinary Chinese people, such as the industrious peasants in *The Good Earth* (1931), which secured Buck the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. She mastered the Chinese language well, an advantage that enables her to communicate with the local Chinese and evade the secluded life that most missionaries' family members have led in the alien land of China.[92] *Pavilion of Women* (1946) is another piece of work devoted to the depiction of ordinary Chinese people. In the narrative, the beautiful, elegant and intelligent Madame Wu, who is in charge of the domestic affairs of the wealthy Wu house, decides to take a concubine for her husband Mr. Wu on her fortieth birthday. Surprising and confusing to all, this decision meets resistance from Madame Wu's sons. Despite the disapproval, Madame Wu takes into the house a healthy and plump village girl named Ch'iuming. After her retreat from marital life, Madame Wu feels relieved and content with her solitude. In the course of sitting in her third son Fengmo's English lectures given by the foreign priest Brother Andre, Madame Wu develops strong affections for Brother Andre, yet does not have

[92] Chapter 1 has exemplified similar cases where missionaries' wives write to their family back home to complain about their lonely lives in China. For more information, see 1.3.4 Women Writers, 68.

the opportunity to express her love before he dies a sacrificial death for saving a family from a gangster. Madame Wu, upon Brother Andre's request on the deathbed, agrees to take care of the orphans living under his roof and determines to carry on his good deeds. Along with her sons and daughters-in-law, Madame Wu finds great satisfaction in helping and educating the poor. Madame Wu's spiritual love for Brother Andre becomes the beacon in her pursuit of freedom and self-fulfilment.

My discussion in the following section will focus on Buck's representation of Chinese womanhood in the novel and the referential meanings emanating from the representations. It will also probe into the potentiality and problematics of Buck's intercultural translation practices in the Third Space under Bhabha's theoretical framework.

4.3.1 Representation of Chinese Womanhood

Pavilion of Women is a kaleidoscope that displays a diverse range of Chinese women's lives and personalities. It centres on Madame Wu's psychological journey from the shackles of patriarchy and domestic duties to the blessings of true love and freedom. Madame Wu is the embodiment of Chinese virtues, yet underneath her delicate body lies the yearnings for liberation. Unlike the large population of uneducated Chinese women, Madame Wu is literate and 'saved' from foot-binding by her foreign-educated father (*PW*, 94).[93] With her kindness, intelligence and wisdom, Madame Wu takes good care of the domestic affairs and business of the Wu family, and is fully respected in the family. Madame Wu's seemingly peaceful and enviable life is thrown into doubt when she announces on her fortieth birthday that she will select a concubine for her husband. This sudden decision amazes everyone in the house, for the handsome Mr. Wu seems wholeheartedly dedicated to Madame Wu by not taking any

[93] Foot-binding, also known as 'lotus feet' and possibly originating from upper-class court dancers in the tenth or eleventh-century imperial China, is a symbol of status (girls from wealthy families usually have their feet bound) and beauty. This practice finally died out in the early twentieth century due to changes in social conditions and anti-foot binding campaigns. The use of the word 'save' in the text reveals Buck's standpoint on the practice of foot-binding as an inhuman practice imposed on Chinese women. To emphasize that Madame Wu is saved by her foreign-educated father further points to Buck's potential superiority, which she is accused of by critics yet she herself vehemently denies. This question will be addressed at greater length in subsequent sections.

concubines himself.[94] In Madame Wu's mind, however, she will be able to retreat from wifehood if a concubine can satisfy Mr. Wu's sexual needs and bear children for the Wu family. On the first morning of her retreat, she feels unprecedented freedom and relief.

> Her first feeling was one of complete rest. Fatigue was gone out of her body and out of her soul. But there was something familiar, too, in this relief. She sent her mind backward over her rich life and found the memory. Thus she had felt after each of her children had been born. Each time through the ten moon months the burden within her had grown heavier, closer, and more invading until only her most careful self-control had made it possible for her to keep the gentle poise which was her atmosphere. Then had come the birth of the child. But to her it was not birth so much as reclaiming her own body. Her first thought when the pain stopped abruptly and when she heard the sharp cry of the separate child was always of her own freedom. As soon as the child was brought to her, washed and dressed, she began to love him for what he was, but never because he was a part of herself. She did not, indeed, wish for any division of herself. She wanted only to be whole again. (*PW*, 93)

Madame Wu's thoughts are quite different from the Chinese women around her. She deems childbearing as a kind of burden and emphasizes the wholeness of her own being. In addition, she considers men and women 'equal in importance, equally necessary to life, but not the same' (*PW*, 46). She longs to 'rise out of the four walls and travel everywhere upon the earth to see everything and to know all' (*PW*, 156). As depicted in the text, 'she was too lonely for anyone to reach her soul' (*PW*, 110). It is this awareness of equality and freedom that separates Madame Wu from others and renders her a lonely and wandering soul. However, in the pursuit of a free and whole self, Madame Wu at times feels guilty about her retreat from marital life (*PW*, 158), and cannot fully liberate herself from the duties and responsibilities of the great house that constrains her body within the four walls, as shown in the following passage.

> She, left alone, pondered on many things. Now more than ever her life was divided into two – that part which was lived in the house and that part which was lived inside herself. Sometimes one prevailed and sometimes the other. When the household was

[94] When *Pavilion of Women* was published in 1946, concubinage was still not outlawed. It was not until the promulgation of the Marriage Law by the Communist Party of China in 1950 that the practice of concubinage was abolished (Perkins, 2013, 99). Prior to that, a man with good financial resources may take any woman he likes as his concubine as long as he can afford it. In most cases, concubines are lower-class village girls or show girls in the brothels, and are purchased from the girl's family or from brothel owners. Concubines are considered inferior to the wife in status, but they still compete with the wife for the husband's favour. To take concubines or not lies in the man's choice and is usually resented by the wife, so Madame Wu's decision to choose a concubine for her husband baffles everyone in the house.

> at peace she lived happily alone. When there was trouble of some sort she went into it and mended it as she could. (*PW*, 145)

The encounter with Brother Andre plays a crucial part in Madame Wu's psychological journey to freedom. When Brother Andre is brought into the house to give English lessons to Fengmo (Madame Wu's third son), Madame Wu entertains doubts and worries about the foreign priest, presuming that 'all Western men are very lusty and fierce' (*PW*, 100). Thus, Madame Wu sits in the lectures to make sure that no strange religious ideas are inculcated into her son's mind by the priest. Gradually Madame Wu deserts this stereotyped presumption about Western man and comes to the realization that Brother Andre is the person with whom she can share her solitude and unhappiness. With his enlightening thoughts and wisdom, Brother Andre greatly relieves Wu's loneliness. He even boldly points out Madame Wu's three sins in spite of the fact that Madame Wu is deemed a flawless woman by her townspeople. Brother Andre says,

> [y]ou have despised your husband, you have held in contempt a sister woman, and you have considered yourself unique and above all women. These sins have disturbed your house. Without knowing why, your sons have been restless and their wives unhappy, and in spite of your plans no one is happy. (*PW*, 200)

Madame Wu is startled at these accusations as she has never received such criticism from anyone before, but then she comes to acknowledge that all the duties falling upon her shoulders are performed and fulfilled for her own freedom. According to Brother Andre's accusations cited above, Madame Wu disregards Mr. Wu's opinions, purchases Ch'iuming as if she were exchangeable goods, and burdens the poor girl with responsibilities that she herself attempts to get rid of.[95] As a consequence of this loveless match, Ch'iuming attempts to hang herself, and Mr. Wu ends up frequenting the brothel and taking into the house a brothel girl as his second concubine.

The love between Madame Wu and Brother Andre is purely spiritual, yet it is not until Brother Andre's sacrificial death that Madame Wu proclaims her genuine love for the foreign priest. Triggered by Brother Andre's death, Madame Wu is determined to start living out of love rather than out of duty (*PW*, 215) and promises to do her utmost to preserve the soul of

[95] This accounts for the reason why Madame Wu feels guilty when she is instructing Ch'iuming on how to serve and please the master.

Brother Andre, who leads a life of universal love for others.[96] The decision to carry on Brother Andre's humanity exerts an ineffable influence on Madame Wu's perception of her own being and her faith, which is described as follows:

> [t]his recognition she made, and in the instant she accepted it she felt her whole being change. Although she did not move, her body tingled, her blood stung her heart, and her brain was clear. Her whole frame grew light and strong. She lifted her head and looked about the room. The four walls stood, but she felt free and whole. Upon his bier the body lay as it had since he died, but now looking down upon it she knew that he had escaped it. She was skeptic to the soul. Not in years had she entered a temple or burned incense before a god. Her father had cleansed her of the superstition common to women, and Old Gentleman had finished the work. She did not now believe in an unseen God, but she knew certainly that this man continued. (*PW*, 210)

Madame Wu never expects that she will fall in love with 'a man, a foreigner, a stranger, a man who had never once put out his hand to touch hers, whose touch would have been unthinkable' (*PW*, 214). She also believes that Brother Andre loves her, but she is keenly aware of the fact that 'for Andre to have violated his priesthood would have caused him as much pain as her own were she to violate the duty she had to her family' (*PW*, 215).[97] Thus, Madame Wu even feels 'an impulse of gratitude toward those robbers of the Green Band who had removed such danger' (*PW*, 215). Brother Andre's death enables Madame Wu to consummate her love for him in the soul rather than the body and the flesh.

Apart from Madame Wu, *Pavilion of Women* depicts other types of Chinese women as well. For instance, Madame Kang, Madame Wu's closest friend, and Meng, Madame Kang's oldest daughter and also Madame Wu's first daughter-in-law, are the prototypes of traditional Chinese women, who are wholeheartedly and selflessly devoted to the service of their husband, children and family. Rulan and Linyi, Madame Wu's second and third daughters-in-law respectively, have a greater sense of individuality and remain more resistant to the predominant patriarchal ideology. This is largely due to their Westernized education, which introduces them to progressive ideas so different from the conventional teachings at home.

[96] This universal love is also Brother Andre's religion, which, in his own words, lies in 'bread and in water…in sleeping and in walking, in cleaning my house and making my garden, in feeding the lost children I find and take under my roof, in coming to teach your son, in sitting by those who are ill, and in helping those who must die, that they may die in peace' (*PW*, 153).

[97] Different from the novel, the eponymous film *Pavilion of Women* presents bodily intimacy between Madame Wu and Brother Andre. The literary text makes no mention of such intimacy, which is why I argue here that Madame Wu and Brother Andre's love for each other is purely spiritual.

They both cut their hair short according to the new fashion trend, which is utterly unthinkable to Meng and Madame Kang and even incomprehensible to Madame Wu as well; Rulan actively participates in campaigns against concubinage; and Liyin pursues a childless marital life. In contrast to the wealthy upper-class cohort, the impecunious Ch'iuming represents the lower-class girls who have to behave obediently in order to get food and shelter. As a child bride, a widow, a purchased concubine who is unable to please her master and a young mother of a disliked baby girl, Ch'iuming looms large as a pitiful figure whose fate is in the hands of others.[98] Her ultimate decision to break away from the Wu family and join Madame Wu in helping and educating the poor (including herself) enables her to discover autonomy in her life. Finally, Jasmine, the brothel girl, is portrayed as a pragmatic character keenly aware of the fact that being a concubine in the Wu house would secure material abundance for her. However, her love for Mr. Wu is genuine. It is also mutually satisfactory and rewarding in the sense that they both get what they desire: Jasmine is after subsistence while Mr. Wu is seeking pleasure.

Furthermore, the book is as much about different types of women as it is about different types of love. Madame Wu and Brother Andre's spiritual love provides Madame Wu with salvation and enlightenment. Rulan's fervent love for Tsemo (Madame Wu's second son) turns her into a slave to love. Additionally, the mutually rewarding love between Mr. Wu and Jasmine, Madame Kang's selfless love for Mr. Kang, Ch'iuming's secret and unrequited love for Fengmo and Fengmo's bold love for the Western girl Margaret, are what enrich the narrative and add to the diversity of Buck's representation of Chinese womanhood.

With regard to Buck's handling of interracial love, all the interracial romances in the narrative do not end up in the same way as what Mason sets up for Robert and Suzie, who finally get married and settle down in Japan. Madame Wu can only situate her love for Brother Andre in spirituality, whereas Fengmo has to part with Margaret due to his responsibilities to the family. As discussed in previous chapters, writers in the first half of the twentieth century tend to deny the possibility of interracial union. The reasons include deliberate circumvention of anti-miscegenation laws or authorial anxiety about interracial

[98] Ch'iuming is adopted by a poor family and taken into the family as a daughter-in-law-to-be. She becomes widowed before she is married to the son of the family, who suffers an unfortunate early death. Towards the end of the story it is revealed that Ch'iuming was accidentally separated from her family in the war and finally reunites with her birth family.

relationships. In the case of Buck, she demonstrates her embracing and championing of miscegenation in many of her works. As she writes in *The New Year* (1968),

> [w]hen we combine oxygen and hydrogen, we obtain water…When we combine zinc and copper, we obtain an alloy, bronze, which has far greater strength, and numerous other qualities, than the unalloyed metals comprising it; that is certainly getting more out of a mixture than was put into it. When two pure bred varieties of plants or animals unite to produce offspring, the latter often show many more desirable qualities and characters than the stock from which they were derived. Surely the varieties which man presents in his various ethnic forms would suggest that something more has been produced out of the elements than was originally brought into association. (Buck, 1968 in Munira, 2012, 2)

Moreover, in *The Hidden Flower* (1952), Buck calls the mixed race children 'world children' (Buck, 1952 in Munira, 2012, 5). Buck also dismisses racial prejudice as the culprit for strangulating love in her works. As Munira argues,

> [t]he political history and human meanness either strangulate love or separate lovers. *Letter from Peking*, *The Time Is Noon*, *The Hidden Flower* and *The New Year* are such novels that prove that love, though so much idealised, has no power in the face of stark reality of human meanness manifested in racism. Nevertheless the writer is able to make a plea for the fruits of such love. (Munira, 2012, 7)

In spite of Buck's proclaimed support of interracial union, the handling of interracial relationship in *Pavilion of Women* poses a challenge to or at least does not support her proclamation. For instance, Brother Andre's love for Madame Wu is not clearly stated in the narrative. The only clue is found in Madame Wu's self-assurance of Brother Andre's love for her. Such narrative details, together with the absence of successful interracial unions depicted in the text, could possibly point to Buck's hesitation and reservation about interracial romance, which is similar to the textual and authorial ambivalences found in the texts discussed in previous chapters.

4.3.2 Intercultural Translation in the Third Space

Buck's experience living in China and her profound knowledge of China wins her the title of 'Popular Expert on China' given by the historian Michael Hunt (Yoshihara, 2003, 150). Her miscellaneous works on China helped to construct the China image in the American mind in the first half of the twentieth century. As the historian Harold Isaacs comments, '[i]t

can almost be said that for a whole generation of Americans she "created" the Chinese, in the same sense that Dickens "created" for so many of us the people who lived in the slums of Victorian England' (Isaacs, 1958 in Yoshihara, 2003, 151). She is 'an authority on China', 'a cultural mediator and political commentator during the 1930s and 1940s' (Leong, 2005, 12), who uncovers the mysterious veil of ordinary Chinese lives for American readers. More importantly, her works and speeches contribute to the repertoire of images of China, guiding Americans to a more positive recognition of industriousness and simplicity as commendable virtues of the Chinese.

Albeit a popular authority on China, Buck is critiqued by Yoshihara for the use of domestic narrative or ethnographical narrativization in her Nobel Prize winning novel, *The Good Earth*. As Yoshihara argues, the genre of domestic fiction not only glosses over the geographical and historical specificity of the Chinese setting and turns the story into a universal narrative, but also highlights the non-Western nature of the Chinese (Yoshihara, 2003, 165).

> By annihilating geographical and historical specificity, the narrative denies the temporal coevalness of the land and people being described and turns them into static, ahistorical objects, turning the tale into a sort of allegory that generates another – more 'universal' – level of meaning beyond the specifics of the narrative. The technique also functions to evade positioning the novel in relation to the political and ideological debate over China's modernization, a subject Buck was more than qualified to discuss and addressed in her numerous articles and lectures. (Yoshihara, 2003, 155)

Pavilion of Women, as another domestic fiction, reveals clues for the historical background against which the story takes place. For example, Buck makes references to the war (*PW*, 100), which is probably the contemporaneous civil war between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party spanning from 1927 to 1950. She also briefly describes the story's location as one of the 'provinces away from the sea' (*PW*, 100). The presence of Brother Andre and Little Sister Hsia suggests missionary activities in China back then, echoing the active role of foreign missionaries in China's modernization, as introduced in the section on historical contextualization of Chinese women in the twentieth century. Buck depicts Little Sister Hsia as follows:

> [s]he was a tall, thin, pale woman, now nearly middle-aged, whose birthplace was England. The scanty hair on her head was the color of sand, and she had fish eyes. Her nose was thin and high, and her lips were blue. In her Western dress of striped gray cotton she looked older than she was, but even at her best she could never have been pretty. Long ago the two Chinese ladies had come to this conclusion. But they liked her for her goodness and pitied her for her lonely life in the city where there were so few of her kind. They did not, as some of their friends did, put her off with excuses when she came to see them. (*PW*, 11)

Little Sister Hsia is a staunch believer in her religion and dedicates her whole life to preaching, but her preaching is met with indifference among the local Chinese, making her an unpopular figure in the neighbourhood. As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, foreign missionaries who came to China often took in abandoned children and educated them for the primary purpose of conversion, as a result of which some Chinese parents strove to protect their children from the missionaries. Little Sister Hsia is the historical prototype of foreign missionaries whose preaching activities evinced fear and resentment among the Chinese parents in the twentieth century. However, Buck portrays Brother Andre and his religion differently from Little Sister Hsia and her belief, and she manifests an inclination to Brother Andre's faith.

As it is introduced earlier that new ideas and notions from the West heavily influenced China's various cultural movements and women's liberation in the twentieth century, Buck's narrative also reflects Western influences upon China's modernity on those fronts. One instance of China's progress towards modernity can be found in Rulan's description of her participation in campaigns aimed at the abolishment of concubinage.

> 'Many of us worked hard to abolish concubinage,' she declared. 'We marched in procession in the Shanghai streets in hottest summer, and our sweat poured down our bodies. We carried banners insisting on the one-wife system of marriage as they have it in the West. I myself carried a blue banner that bore in white letters the words, "Down with concubines." Now when someone in my own family, my own husband's mother, does a thing so old-fashioned, so-so wicked-for it is wicked, Mother, to return to the old cruel ways-' (*PW*, 46)

Another example that demonstrates the changing social perceptions of Chinese women is revealed in the words of the match-maker Liu Ma, who informs Madame Wu of what type of girl is popular with men.

> ‘Why did you want a book of foreign women?’ Madame Wu inquired.
> ‘Some men like to look at such faces,’ Liu Ma explained. ‘It rouses their desire and gives me business. Then also there are the new men who want modern women, and they point to one of these and say “I want one like this.” I find a girl somewhere who will make herself look as near as she can to the one chosen.’ (*PW*, 54)

As the trend suggests, modern women and foreign women become favoured by men. Traditional female qualities of illiteracy and submissiveness are no longer deemed desirable in men’s search for a wife. Against such a changing social background, Ch’iuming’s illiteracy and ignorance is considered by Liu Ma to be a disadvantage for the concubine position in the Wu house. She asserts that Ch’iuming’s simplicity ‘would have been considered even a virtue’ in the old days, ‘but now, of course, it is fashionable for girls to read even as boys do. It is the foreign way that has crept into our country’ (*PW*, 56).

Therefore, Buck’s portrayal of Chinese women’s liberation movements that promote freedom and self-realization is based on historical realities rather than annihilating geographical and historical specificities. Buck writes about cultural encounters between China and the West, as well as the interactions of China’s modernization with the West. The story per se is rightly located within such a milieu and rendered a result of it. Moreover, Buck celebrates the East-West cultural encounter in such a way that challenges the validity of Karen J. Leong’s argument as follows.

> Buck’s elaborations of travel, distance, and change between China and America served as a metaphor for an American society looking to the past for inspiration while undergoing dramatic transformation. Buck expressed nostalgia for the ‘unwesternized’ and ‘authentic’ China that, realistically, she could not have known – in order to make sense of the American present to which she was yet a stranger. In her books she mourned changes in Chinese society that had been wrought largely through the Western influence of missionaries such as herself. (Leong, 2005, 33)

In Shik Bang also pinpoints that writers like Buck, Twain, O’Neill and many others have once looked at an alien culture for its primitiveness and expressed nostalgia for the once agrarian American society.

> Twain and Buck traveling to Asian countries are, thus, not only experiencing a temporary escape from a highly modernized Western country, the United States, to resuscitate their fragmented identities, but they also are experiencing a desperate exploration for an ideal community where natives and their cultural traditions are not ‘polluted’ by modernity. In contrast to their expectations, however, they

> discover that China and India in the period were also disturbed by modernity under the regimes of a colonial/imperial structure. Hence travelogues by Twain and Buck are filled with a series of intersecting emotions such as expectation, confirmation, confusion, and/or frustration for/against the modernized Third World under colonialism and imperialism. (Bang, 2012, 2)

However, I would like to contest Bang's argument that Western modernity is considered a disturbance to Chinese culture. In *Pavilion of Women*, Buck does not consider China to be a primitive land where she can place her nostalgia for an un-modernized America. Moreover, unlike what Bang has asserted above, Buck does not express confusion or frustration about China's progression into modernity under the influence of the West. Instead, she observes and registers the social changes through narrating a Chinese woman's psychological journey from the shackles of patriarchy to freedom and self-fulfilment. As Buck is neither a complete outsider distant from these changes nor an insider taking part in these changes, she is the exile in Edward Said's definition, who blurs the boundaries of outsider and insider. In Said's terms, the exile is placed in 'the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home' (Said, 2001, 173). As Said further argues,

> [m]ost people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*.
>
> For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique in this sort of apprehension, especially if the exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy. (Said, 2001, 186)

Buck's exilic life affords her an awareness of simultaneous dimensions and contrapuntal juxtapositions with which she is capable of comprehending the divergent cultural differences between China and America. Living among another race, as Buck herself once notes, 'has given me invaluable training in detachment, so that I am able to look at white people as though I were not one of them. Indeed, there have been times when I wished I were not one of them' (Leong, 2005, 31). Buck's own words comply with Bhabha's theorization of the Third Space, which forms the precondition for the articulation of cultural differences and in which one may emerge as the Other of ourselves. This also accounts for the reason why Buck

is aware and capable of spelling out how Brother Andre and Little Sister Hsia are perceived by the Chinese in the narrative.

In addition, Buck's bilingual background further brings her from the comfort zone of cultural sameness into the contact zone of cultural dissonance. As Mikhail Bakhtin states, 'multilingual environments liberate man by opening up a gap between things and their labels; furthermore, because the ultimate nature of language is socio-ideological, the knowledge of another language also challenges totalitarian monologic ideologies' (Ma, 2003, 11). Buck's fused horizons in *Pavilion of Women* are reflected in her appreciative understanding of Chinese culture, in her insights into Chinese women's lives and keen observations of the changes in women's quarters, and most importantly in her highlighting of Sino-Western cultural interactions. In this process, she is capable of customising the English language spoken by the Chinese characters into one carrying the characteristics of the Chinese language, from which notions and ideas specific to Chinese culture emanate. She also gives voice to both cultures and happily exhibits cultural uniqueness as it is. For example, Buck illustrates the essence of marriage in both cultures through a conversation between Fengmo and Margaret. Fengmo falls in love with Margaret during his sojourn in a foreign land, but he cannot happily unite with Margaret because he is already married to Linyi, whom he does not love. In the conversation, Fengmo contends that marriage in China is a duty not to love or to ourselves but to our place in the generations and to the family, whereas Margaret explains that marriage in the West is for love (*PW*, 295-297). Buck is keenly aware that marriage in China cannot be dissociated from family duties and the notion of collectivism, which form the essence of Chinese culture. She is able to respect the differences and evade a judgmental approach to the handling of cultural dissonances. In the final analysis, although the story is told from the perspective of an omnipotent narrator, Madame Wu occupies the closest position to this omnipotent narrator as if she were telling the story. This narrative technique enables the Oriental woman to see and scrutinize both the Self and the Other, thus producing subversive effects to the looking-structure between the West and the East.

The new meanings and positions indicated above could not have been achieved without Buck's physical and psychological location in the Third Space. Buck's intercultural translation contributes to a positive assessment of the Chinese in American society. It is also conducive to the generation of appreciative understanding of the Other as evolving entities rather than eternally static objects fixed by Orientalists.

4.3.3 Problematizing Intercultural Translation

I have discussed Buck's ability to acknowledge and appreciate cultural differences and dismiss the monolithic discourse of representation. The experience of and familiarity with both cultures, the mastery of two languages as well as the identification with and attachment to the Chinese locate Buck in the in-between space which generates infinite possibilities of new meanings, new horizons and new identities. As preliminarily discussed in the introductory section, Pratt's contact zone differs from Bhabha's hybridity and the Third Space in the sense that Pratt recognizes the functioning of an unequal power relation in this space, whereas Bhabha disavows its presence. In addition, according to Archeraiou, intercultural translation cannot be free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment. Therefore, the following section probes into whether Buck's representation of the Chinese is free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment.

First of all, it stands true that Buck writes from the in-between space, where she indeed forms a fluid cultural identity and blurs the boundary between the Self and the Other. Like O'Neill, Buck has also gone through the self-othering process wherein China and the Chinese is no longer the Other but an essential part of her own Self. In this sense, Buck problematizes the dichotomy of Self and Other as well as East and West in such a way as to challenge conspicuous Orientalism. However, as Bhabha contends that it is possible to bring down binary oppositions in the Third Space, I would like to uncover if Buck succeeds in doing so by looking at how Buck writes about the Western influence on China's modernization.

From a historical point of view, China's modernization burgeons and matures as a result of the interactions between Chinese and Western culture, yet the question that needs to be asked at this point is: how big a role does the West play in triggering the social changes that brought China to the modern phase? In Buck's narrative, the West is given prominence in its role to enlighten China's social changes. For example, Madame Wu is saved from foot-binding by her father, whose experiences in foreign countries enable him to see the inhumanity of obsolete practices in China; Rulan and Linyi's avant-garde way of thinking is attributed to their Western education; campaigns against concubinage are inspired by the West; girls with a foreign look are preferred in match-making; and most importantly, Madame Wu finds no Chinese to be her equal yet is saved from her psychological

predicament by the foreign priest. Buck's narrative represents the West as the omnipotent saviour of China from its backwardness. In doing so Buck disregards other important social factors and conditions that have contributed to China's modernization in the twentieth century. Furthermore, Buck fails to recognize the Sino-Western cultural encounter and interaction as a two-way process, in which both sides are mutually influenced in one way or another. Buck highlights in the text the decisive role of the West in promoting China's modernity, whereas she disregards China's potential effects on the West. In this light, Buck empowers the West and disempowers China in their interactive process. This is in alignment with Archeraiou's argument discussed earlier: intercultural translation cannot be free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment, and cultural translators tend to empower the same and disempower the Other. Therefore, Buck helps establish the East-West polarity instead of collapsing it. As Leong notes, despite the fact that Buck adopts an ethnographic perspective in her portrayal of the Chinese, she still enjoys the privilege of being a protected elite in a foreign land and a member of the more advanced Western world.

> Buck's ability to reorient Americans toward a more positive assessment of China without fully rejecting orientalism facilitated America's embrace of the China mystique; it also provided her with an opportunity to shape the international perspective with which Americans would increasingly view the United States and its emerging role in world affairs. (Leong, 2005, 12)

In Leong's argument, Buck 'absorbed the American missionary discourse of Orientalism' (Leong, 2005, 13) to spread the message of America's superiority and its responsibility to enlighten the less progressive cultures. Additionally, Yoshihara observes that women like Buck preach 'the gospel of gentility' by exercising the power of intimacy.

> During the height of the missionary enterprise, women played important roles despite their exclusion from actual religious work, by exercising the power of intimacy and preaching what historian Jane Hunter has called 'the gospel of gentility.' Women missionaries generally mastered the language more quickly than men, had access to women's quarters, gained intimate, personal relationships with native men and women, and engaged in moral and intellectual instruction. However biased by their religious beliefs and racial thinking, their reports to the home missions and their letters to families and friends were a rich source of information about the culture and peoples of foreign nations. (Yoshihara, 2003, 157)

Buck herself has made ambivalent remarks about China and the Chinese on different occasions as well. For instance, in her report to the church and family supporters, she used the words 'stupidity and barbarity' to describe the Chinese with whom she worked and criticized Chinese women as 'totally unaccustomed to using their minds for anything more difficult than gambling or their very simple housekeeping' and incapable of comprehending a sermon (Leong, 2005, 18). In one of her speeches at a conference on missions to China in 1932, she stated that China 'did not need American help but rather desired the best of what Americans could offer' and 'foreign missions could be justified so long as missionaries interacted with Chinese and learned Chinese culture, rather than demanding that Chinese become more American' (Leong, 2005, 31-32). Therefore, it cannot be asserted that Buck's own comments about her working experience in China are deliberately made to degrade the Chinese and justify the missionary cause. Neither is Buck entirely free of the influence of Orientalist ideology commonly found in the East-West encounter. Buck's work cannot be simply dismissed as Orientalist, for her writing in the hybridity of two cultures constructs new meanings and new positions that challenge Orientalist stereotypes. Buck is able to negotiate her cultural ambiguity which blurs the boundaries of insider and outsider. However, due to cultural, political and ideological constraints, Buck's obscuration of the dichotomy of Self/Other and East/West is still not powerful enough to deconstruct the binary oppositions that separate cultures.

4.4 Conclusion

The two primary texts in this chapter, namely *The World of Suzie Wong* and *Pavilion of Women*, both help unveil the Chinese *harem* to Western readers. Mason's text displays a plethora of mysterious and alluring Chinese prostitutes. Buck's text also exhibits a cluster of traditional or avant-garde Chinese women and reflects the historical and social conditions of Chinese women during a time of increasing Sino-Western cultural interaction. Both texts are, to some extent, subversive of the predominant Orientalist construct of the Oriental female, thanks to the authors' location in the contact zone or the Third Space. Nevertheless, both are unable to fully subvert the monolithic Orientalist discourse and the dichotomy of Self/Other and East/West.

Regarding the authors, neither Mason nor Buck are entirely free from the dialectics of empowerment and disempowerment. In contrast, Mason is more like a traveller who casts a

tourist gaze upon the destination and its subjects. Partly curious and partly sympathetic, Mason remains the privileged beneficiary of Britain's colonization of Hong Kong, whereas the colonial encounter also opens up new channels to interact with the colonized and conceptualize the Other. Buck is more of an exile who lives in between two cultures and immerses herself in multiple perspectives, thus her work remains closer to the represented subjects and demonstrate more subversive features. This difference between the two authors' representations of the same subjects – Chinese women – could possibly arise from their own lived experiences both at home and in the foreign land. Another possible explanation is revealed in Buck's own argument, namely, 'men and women experience border crossings differently; whereas men strive to prove themselves in destinations abroad, women consistently attempt to create a community wherever they are' (Leong, 2005, 41). Thus, Mason's narrative reflects a masculine tendency to conquer the sexually-available Chinese women, while Buck's work stands as a more adaptive feminine attempt to gain knowledge of the Chinese women.

With regard to the representation of interracial relationships, the subversive part of these two accounts challenges the 'Madame Butterfly' paradigm, but both texts also demonstrate a certain degree of compliance with the 'white knight' trope, elaborated by Marchetti as follows.

> The myth of the white knight circulates within a Western culture that has continuously defined itself against what it has identified as the non-white other from the Moor or the Jew of the medieval imagination to the black, Asian, or Hispanic of today. Thus, the myth operates to perpetuate not only gender inequalities but racism as well. Clearly, the knight's 'whiteness' signifies his moral purity, his unquestionable natural right to carry the heroine away without being accused of abducting her. (Marchetti, 1993, 114)

This 'white knight' trope is also reminiscent of 'Gayatri Spivak's famous description of the white men trying to save brown women (persecuted by) their own brown mensyndrome' (Rajgopal, 2010, 150-151). In the two narratives, both Suzie and Madame Wu benefit from the physical and spiritual salvation from the white knights – Robert and Brother Andre. The failure to be completely divorced from the 'white knight' trope further casts into doubt the narrative potential to bring down the East/West opposition, a motif that keeps circulating and recurring in different forms of Western cultural productions. The next chapter will further explore this issue through the analysis of accounts by Western writers of Chinese origin,

attempting to find out how they represent interracial romance differently from their Western counterparts.

Chapter 5 The Politics of Intercultural Representation and the Potentiality of Cultural Hybridity

5.1 Introduction

As shown in the introduction, Fredric Jameson conceptualizes cultural contact as unnatural, accidental and external, hence cultures are beyond representation and stereotypes are inevitable in intercultural representation. Jameson's conceptualization of cultural interrelationship, in my view, can be cast into doubt on such occasions (becoming increasingly commonplace nowadays) where people crossing borders and cultures can carry this coincidental and superficial relation between groups onto a deeper level. For instance, cultural interaction in the contact zone, which denotes the encountering and grappling of one culture with another, could possibly challenge Jameson's argument. The intersection of cultures can take place in an external and physical sense, as exemplified by the tourist experience in an alien destination narrated by Richard Mason; on a more significant level, it can be internalized and elevated to reach an abstract, intangible and psychological site, where cultural differences become interiorized in such a way that complicates the sojourner's (or tourist's) cultural identity and national boundaries. The case of Pearl Buck discussed in the previous chapter revealingly demonstrates this transformative process of internalizing racial dissonances, which consequently complicates the identification of the Self on an unconscious or subconscious level. This identity complication or transformation bears resemblance to assimilation, as both processes are marked by an altered cultural identification through absorbing customs and values that define a new culture, meanwhile abandoning old habits and perceptions that are developed in the culture of one's origin. As Renato Rosaldo asserts,

> [t]he model for cross-cultural understanding that produces immigration as a site of cultural stripping away is the academic version of the melting pot: theories of acculturation and assimilation. In this view, immigrants, or at any rate their children and grandchildren, are absorbed into the national culture. Above all, the process involves the loss of one's past-autobiography, history, heritage, language, and all the rest of the so-called cultural baggage. (Rosaldo, 1988, 81)

For mixed-race offspring, this internalization and amalgamation of multiple cultures is not a process germinated through one's contact with a new culture but is carried with them

since their birth. They are distinguished by a between-world consciousness, biracial heritage, or cultural duality, regardless of how this hybridity is labelled. They hold within themselves two or more different (sometimes contradicting) cultures that ultimately determine and give form to the Self, which features a certain degree of hybridity and also a potential risk of fissure and division. This divisive attribute in one's identity evokes Bakhtin's theorization of linguistic hybridity, the intentional part of which 'enables a contestatory activity, a politicized setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically' (Young, 1995, 22).[99] For Bakhtin, any authoritative discourse must be singular and thus, hybridization, being double-voiced, constitutes a potential subversion of authority (Young, 1995, 22).[100] Bhabha, however, insightfully points out the hybridity of the colonial discourse, in which the interaction between the colonial and indigenous cultures opens the authoritative colonialist discourse to the resistance from the Other. In this shift, 'Bakhtin's intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant cultural power' (Young, 1995, 23). Bhabha's definition of hybridity, as enunciated in the previous chapter, gives prominence to an intercultural translation in the Third Space, where the intercultural agent transcends cultural sameness and difference and produces new meanings that reshape their own cultural identity.

Continuing to utilise Bhabha's illuminating conception of hybridity, this chapter attempts to explore how Western writers of Chinese origin (or partial Chinese ancestry) represent interracial relationships between the Chinese and Caucasians. The term 'Western writers of Chinese origin' here refers to writers of Western nationalities and Chinese ancestry who write in the English language. The writers that will be studied in this chapter include the China-born Eurasian writer Han Suyin[101] (1917-2012) and the Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang (1957-). Han Suyin, born in China, held British citizenship and received both an Eastern and Western education, while David Henry Hwang, born in America, is a second-generation Chinese American who is entirely Western-educated. In their writings, both writers have in one way or another engaged with their hybrid experience in China or the West. Han's novel *A Many Splendoured Thing* (1952) and Hwang's play *M. Butterfly* (1988) are both narratives of interracial romances, with the former based on the author's personal

[99] See 3.3 Double Voices and Linguistic Hybridity as Resistance to Authority in *East Is West*, 112.
[100] The subversive power of hybrid language has been discussed in the section 3.3 Double Voices and Linguistic Hybridity as Resistance to Authority in *East Is West*, 112.
[101] Han Suyin is the pen name of Elizabeth Comber or Rosalie Matilda Kuanghu Chou, who is a China-born Eurasian and the author of a range of books on modern China.

experience while the latter is inspired by a real-life political scandal. Contrasting these two writers' fictionalized representation of cross-racial relationships with the portrayals by their Western counterparts, this chapter aims to uncover whether there are differences between the two categories in terms of the representational methods. Additionally, it will also probe the role of hybridity in bringing out the representation of the Chinese as a group that defies the neat categorization of the familiar Self or the alien Other. Accordingly, the representational practice is neither entirely self-representation nor the representation of the Other insofar as both the Self and the Other are represented simultaneously. In other words, the writerly representation of both the Self and the Other is as hybrid as their cultural identity that blurs a definite demarcation between two worlds or two cultures. However, in this in-between space, they may manifest an inclination to a particular side, and this singular side suggests fixity and stability that is set in stark contrast to duality and hybridity. For example, in Han Suyin's representation of Chinese culture, the Chinese can be regarded as the Self in view of her Chinese ancestry and also as the Other if seen from the perspective of her European descent. The categorization of the Self and the Other in this case is indeterminate, fluid and susceptible to changes in the author's own identification with a particular culture. As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, Jameson asserts the inevitability of stereotypes in intercultural representation and the unrepresentability of even the very outer edge of one group by another. In this case, I would like to ask the following questions: (1) What is the scenario where writers of hybrid cultural identities represent something that partially constitutes and defines themselves? (2) How is the Self/Other being defined, identified and constructed under such circumstances? (3) Does stereotypical abstraction exert any influences upon the perceptions and representations of the Self/Other? The subsequent sections will attempt to answer these questions.

5.2 The Politics of Representing Hybridity in *A Many-Splendoured Thing*

> After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. 'You are you and I am I,' says Confucius. I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant 'connecting link'. And that's all.
> - Sui Sin Far, 'Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian'

The above quotation derives from the work of Edith Eaton (1865-1914), the Chinese-American writer who published under the pen name of Sui Sin Far. As the child of a British father and a Chinese mother, Edith Eaton wrote voluminously on the Chinese American experience that is characterized by a cultural duality. Eaton's biracial heritage locates her in a between-world consciousness that requires her to strike a balance between the two estranging cultures and unify them into non-conflictual co-existence. For Eaton, as the quotation indicates, an individual sense of belonging and identification overrides the significance of a nominal indication of one's nationality. Working as a bridge connecting the Occidental and Oriental cultures, Eaton represents one of the many who live in the in-between spaces managing to undo the ruptures caused by cultural dissonances.

The term 'connecting link' in the quotation is reminiscent of Pearl Buck (1892-1973), the intercultural mediator, who has been examined at great length in the previous chapter. It also evokes the Eurasian writer – Han Suyin (1917-2012), who named herself the most significant 'bridge builder' between China and the outside world at a time when China was isolated from other countries from 1947 to 1970 (Wang, 1996, 2). What these three female writers have in common is that they have all been immersed in two divergent cultures and representing Chinese culture to the outside world. They spent a lifetime reflecting upon and dealing with the influence of Chinese-ness on the construction of their cultural identities.[102]

Born to a Chinese father and Belgian mother in a north-central province of China, Han trained to be a doctor rather than a writer.[103] She undertook medical studies first in China and then in Brussels and London respectively. Han had three marriages: she was first married to Tang Paohuang, a Nationalist army officer in China in 1938, then to Leon Comber, a British officer in the Malayan Special Branch in 1952, and finally to Vincent Ruthnaswamy, a colonel in the Indian Army in 1971. Between Han's first and second marriage, she worked at the hospital of Hong Kong University after completing her medical studies in London. In 1949, Han encountered her great love, the *Times* correspondent Ian Morrison, and developed a passionate relationship with him. This short-lived transnational romance ended with Morrison's death in the Korean War in 1950, but it inspired the novel *A Many Splendoured*

[102] In Buck's case, she once identified herself with the Chinese rather than her American ancestry. See 4.3.2 Intercultural Translation in the Third Space, 157.

[103] Han's father, from a landowning clan in Sichuan province of China, met her mother while studying in Belgium and then took her to the semi-feudal China, where Han was born.

Thing, in which Mark Elliot, a married British correspondent, is the fictional embodiment of Ian Morrison. Though fictional, the novel is strongly autobiographical in nature.[104]

The novel is narrated from the first-person perspective and involves numerous historical and ethnographical facts. Structured in three parts – onset, progress and crisis – *A Many Splendoured Thing* mainly relates the evolution of Han's romantic involvement with Mark, from their acquaintance with each other in Hong Kong[105], progressively into a climax of their romantic relationship in the milieu of pervasive imperialism and racism, then down to a crisis and ultimately to the denouement of Mark's death in the war. Multiple issues arise from Han's portrayal, such as the social status of Eurasians in Hong Kong, people's attitudes towards cross-racial relationships then, as well as the negotiation of hybrid identities in the society of Hong Kong. The following section will look at how Han portrays interracial relationships in this narrative. It also attempts to demonstrate Han's approach to the reconciliation of her cultural duality and the way in which Han addresses the relationship between the Self and the Other in the representation of the Chinese.

5.2.1 Portraying Eurasians and Interracial Romance in Hong Kong

Han's narrative reflects the sociocultural context of how Eurasians and interracial relationships were received in the Hong Kong society, which was still under British rule at the time of Han's writing in the 1950s. Boasting its openness and diversity, Hong Kong was historically deemed the 'melting-pot of the Orient' (*MST*, 69) as a result of the colonial conquest by the British. As described by Han in the narrative, in Hong Kong

> [a]ll the ingredients were here, ready for the mixing. The melting-pot of the Orient, they called Hong Kong. Indeed no. The place where everyone met and many stayed apart, divided by hedges of prejudice and hearsay. However much one shook the mixture, it stratified in to immiscible layers again. (*MST*, 69)

[104] Han produced a series of autobiographies from the year of 1965 onwards, including *The Crippled Tree* (1965), *A Mortal Flower* (1967), *Birdless Summer* (1968), *My House Has Two Doors* (1980), *A Share of Loving* (1987) and *Wind in My Sleeve* (1992).

[105] In the year of 1949, Hong Kong was a retreat for refugees from Mainland China imperilled by the ongoing Chinese Civil War fought between Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) from 1927 to 1950. The war eventually led to two *de facto* states, the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Mainland China, both claiming to be the legitimate government of China.

In the narrative, Han relates her personal experience as a Eurasian, who suffers a lack of confidence from an early age. Historically, Eurasians in Hong Kong were often regarded as 'the living embodiment of colonial encounters' (Lee, 2004, 8), belonging to 'a marginalized and isolated colonial category that straddled racial, ethnic and sometimes national boundaries' (Lee, 2004, 8). According to Lee, 'Eurasian as an ethnic category or sub-category had never been recognized officially or unofficially by the Chinese or British communities in pre-war or post-war Hong Kong' (Lee, 2004, 10). Thus, Han's diffidence might partly arise from social misrecognition and marginalization faced by Eurasians in Hong Kong. Furthermore, Han's life experience also plays an important part. In Han's recollection of her childhood, she was told about her ugliness and even excluded by her own mother and sister from their feminine universe (*MST*, 112). In her own words, 'the world of personal beauty, had been denied to me' (*MST*, 113). Han's portrayal of other Eurasians further sheds light on Eurasians' perception of their own cultural hybridity against the backdrop of such a diverse society like Hong Kong. For instance, Han's Eurasian friend Suzanne is also victimized by social contempt imposed upon Eurasians, as a result of which Suzanne chooses to pass as white and deliberately pursues white partners in order to enjoy the convenience and privileges afforded to the white race. Another Eurasian is Han's sister Suchen, who finds herself incompatible with Chinese society and eventually decides to leave for America. Both Suzanne and Suchen are trying to suppress the Chinese side within their cultural duality, while Han differs from them in this regard, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Regarding interracial romance, Han's representation of her romantic involvement with Mark in this narrative does not comply with the conventional 'white knight' paradigm, in which, as scrutinized in previous chapters, the Oriental female needs the enlightenment and dominance of the Western male. Han does not emerge as the subservient Oriental woman and correspondently Mark is not the eternal Western saviour. However, there is one scene in the narrative where Han tells her Third Uncle about her willingness to serve Mark. The original conversation goes as follows:

> I said shyly, for I was very moved: 'I would have liked him to come here one day, and stay with us. He is so English, yet he will not offend you. He is different. He has no fierceness, and he is not afraid and therefore not arrogant. He is always gentle and courteous. He has great virtue, and the only thing that makes me suffer is that he has to suffer in order to marry me, and make other people suffer. But so it is in his world, alas! If it were fifty years ago and he was Chinese, I would so gladly be

> his concubine and serve him and his wife, for it would be an honour to serve a man like him, even as a slave.' (*MST*, 130-131)

Such remarks seem to suggest Han's subservience to Mark, which is typical of the 'white knight' discourse. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Han's willingness to succumb to Mark's charm is unrelated to Mark's Englishness and is instead determined by his such good virtues as modesty and courtesy, which bear greater resemblance to what Chinese culture sees important in an exemplary gentleman. This argument is also supported by Han's proclaimed wish that Mark were Chinese. Thus, the utterances cited above are more likely to result from the passion of a woman who is madly in love rather than from an assumed submissiveness of the Oriental woman to the Western man.

Most importantly, Han considers herself an equal to Mark and has the freedom to determine her own fate, while Mark treats Han as his equal and respects her decisions. Compared to Robert Lomax in Mason's narrative, who remains ambivalent towards Suzie's love, Mark is more assertive of his romance with Han. He subverts the white knight image by his dismissal of stereotypical and condescending views towards the Oriental woman. In addition, the depiction of interracial relationship, partly due to the autobiographical nature of the novel, is more realistic than the ones discussed earlier. For instance, Han's text describes interracial intimacy and sexuality (*MST*, 81, 88) in a detailed and open fashion that is rarely seen in the writing analysed in previous chapters.

In spite of Han's ground-breaking portrayal of interracial relationships, interracial romance still remains a socially sensitive issue that easily engenders prejudice and discrimination, which is amply evidenced in Han's narrative. Han's relationship with Mark is considered by their Western friends to be unimaginable and impossible because they associate hybridity with inferiority (*MST*, 155-156). As Han narrates, the 'many-splendoured thing' (*MST*, 173) 'would be smeared across the lips of the complacent and the righteous, thrust at with daggered hints in meetings where hearsay blossomed' (*MST*, 173). Even Han herself anticipates an ill-ended future for her romance with Mark.

> '…We must not all be madly romantic. You may be losing your head over some cheap woman. I am Eurasian, and the word itself evokes in some minds a sensation of moral laxity. People never think about words, they only feel them. I am Chinese, and at a certain moderate middling level people do not marry Chinese girls. Neither, in China, do girls marry foreigners. It's only big enough people who can afford, occasionally, to be untrammelled by ordinary prejudice.' (*MST*, 187)

In the face of Han's pessimistic prospect about their relationship, Mark helps build her confidence by reaffirming her beauty (*MST*, 113) and the numerous advantages conferred by cultural hybridity (*MST*, 86).

Han's relationship with Mark and her hybrid identity are two interweaving plotlines that drive the development of the narrative. It is through this interracial romance that Han finds a way to negotiate her hybridity and awakens to the ultimate goal of serving China. In the narrative, the main characters and locations symbolize different components of Han's hybridity. For instance, Mark represents the European side of Han's bicultural heritage, whereas Mainland China embodies her Chinese side. Hong Kong, as the convergence of the East and the West, aptly depicts Han's hybridity. To choose China over Mark reflects the author's inclination towards the Chinese side in her identity. This decision, nevertheless, neither negates the true love between the protagonists nor represents Han's denial of her hybridity. Instead, the decision-making process demonstrates Han's approach in coming to terms with her hybridity, which she initially resents. The following section will illustrate how Han negotiates her cultural hybridity through her interracial relationship with Mark.

5.2.2 Negotiating Cultural Hybridity through Interracial Romance

In the course of identity construction, Han undergoes a psychological transition from feelings of discontentment with her hybridity to an acceptance of her cultural duality. From the very outset Han is unhappy about her cultural duality, complaining that 'it is awful to be two or more people all the time' (*MST*, 86) and '[i]t's schizophrenia' (*MST*, 86). Different from Suzanne and Suchen, who aspire to an association with their Western side, Han rivets herself to her Chinese identity and China's soil rather than edging herself into the privileged white circle. She tries to eliminate her hybridity by proclaiming her propensity for her Chinese-ness. As Han relates,

> I had wanted to be all Chinese, not a counterfeit semi-European, one of those gay, generous people who lived on the brink of the small European circles of Shanghai or Peking, in that curious half-world of concessions and colour bars, a world now dead, like the missions, and the superiority of the whites, and many other things. (*MST*, 62)

Han's repeated announcements of her identification with the Chinese in the narrative merit special attention here. Hugo Restall points out that 'Han's tenuous sense of Chinese identity as a Eurasian probably also meant that she craved acceptance from Beijing authorities' (Restall, 2012). Moreover, Han is often dismissed as 'an apologist or propagandist for whatever regime holds power in China' (Wang, 1996, 3). Apart from such political impact upon Han's identity construction, it is argued in this thesis that Han's seemingly overstated stress on an inclination towards the Chinese manifests an intention to eliminate her cultural hybridity. As discussed earlier, Han's hybridity as a Eurasian places her on the margin of the Hong Kong society, and this marginality further leads to her diffidence and insecurity. To identify with her Chinese-ness represents Han's attempt to fix and stabilize her identity.

Han's rejection of her cultural duality and hybridity is subsequently dissolved in her various trips made between Hong Kong and Mainland China. In this mobility, Han's reiteration of her Chinese identity transforms into an embracing of her cultural duality, which, to her realization, is constituent of her social role as an intellectual Eurasian – the group of Eurasians who are brought up between two worlds and belong to the privileged upper class (*MST*, 257). Educated in the West and '[e]motionally held to our own land by sound and warmth of childhood, by sensuous unworded memories as background to adult feelings' (*MST*, 257), intellectual Eurasians come back to the East, the 'worlds of hunger, of unspeakable need, of flagrant corruption and blatant injustice, begging hands and hideous sores' (*MST*, 258). They take a journey '[f]rom the academic abstractions of the West to the stark wants of the East' (*MST*, 258). The stark contrast between the two cultures generates a large gap between the intellectual Eurasians and their people, and the gap requires them to 'acquire split, two-layered souls' (*MST*, 258). Han sees it a duty for intellectual Eurasians to return to the East, which is in need of their knowledge and support in every conceivable way. Han critiques the phenomenon where some Eurasians look down upon or resent a particular side of their hybridity and also justifies Eurasians' acceptance of their Asiatic side in the following manner.

> Racial Eurasianism is not worth talking or writing about. It is a small, negligible prejudice, kept up in outposts of Empire where it remains a topic of unhealthy speculation and vicious gossip for bridge-bored white women: an offensive, harmless mania. If some racial Eurasians carry chips on their shoulders, resent the whites, grumble at inequality, it is because they ape white ways of living and white

> injustice, instead of laughing at the whole comical pompous humbug which is the white man's life out East. There is no problem for Eurasians who accept their Asiatic side. *(MST,* 257)

Therefore, neither does Han escape from the backwardness of her country as her sister Suchen does, nor does she forsake the less privileged Chinese identity as Suzanne does. Keenly aware of the responsibilities that intellectual Eurasians carry upon their shoulders, Han is thus faced with a dilemma between China and Mark. Han desires to serve the country by returning to the wartime mainland, but Mark is unable to follow her as the then authorities restrict the entry of foreign correspondents into Mainland China and dismiss them as '[c]ounter-revolutionary' (*MST*, 213) agents 'from the imperialist camp' (*MST,* 213). Even if Mark luckily makes it, he would have a difficult time making a living as a reporter due to the mistrust, misrecognition and surveillance from the government of New China (*MST,* 215). The dilemma awakens Han to the fact that she is after something bigger than love, as the following conversation explains.

> I said: 'I do not know whether I love you. I do not know what love means, it is such a big thing. Should we be free to marry now, I would hesitate. For although I crave the sight and the sound of you, although everything I touch is you, yet it is not the aim and end of my feeling for you to become Mrs Elliot. I want to look after you, cook your breakfast, clean your shoes, bear your children. But there is something else, something in me that wants…I know not what. China perhaps. I cannot explain it.'
> 'If I thought I were doing you any harm,' Mark said, 'I would go away from you immediately. If I thought I prevented you from fulfilling yourself in any way.'
> 'And how would your going away undo what is already done to me? For your absence is even more potent than your presence to evoke you to me.' (*MST,* 175)

The conversation reveals that becoming Mark's wife alone fails to fulfil Han, who admits her bigger aspirations. Han's fulfilment in this context refers to her service to China, which is, to use Mark's metaphor, Han's bones (*MST,* 302). Mark also asserts that Han will leave him one day 'for the unknown, the challenge…or for China' (*MST,* 302), whereas Han makes similar confessions that 'Mark loved the passionate flame, the single-hearted ecstasy' and 'the eternal quest' (*MST,* 279). Hence, they become illusions to each other (*MST,* 302).

Amid such complexity Han ultimately passes a verdict on the nature of her relationship with Mark. As she summarizes, 'in the end it was not a question of love between two people who loved each other. In the end it was not Mark as a man and a lover who stood between

me and China, but what he represented and what he meant. The world that he was' (*MST*, 261-262). These conclusive remarks imply that Han attributes the necessity of making a choice between Mark and China to the irreconcilable conflicts between the East that her Chinese side stands for and the West that Mark represents. In other words, Han's experience of her interracial romance with Mark brings to the surface the spiritual division between the Asiatic side and the European side within herself. However, it is worth noting that Han's opting for her Chinese-ness does not suggest a rejection of her European heritage. As enunciated earlier, as an intellectual Eurasian she is keenly aware of the necessity to have two-layered souls in order to comprehend cultural differences between the East and the West, and she holds racial Eurasianism in contempt by pinpointing its problematics and limitations. Therefore, Han is actually embracing her cultural duality and hybridity rather than denying it, and her final identification with the Chinese is rendered a result of this in-between consciousness. It is the recognition of her cultural hybridity that enables Han to decide upon the respective importance of the co-existent dual forces for herself. Through her romantic involvement with Mark, Han learns to come to terms with her hybrid identity and finally constructs a new and assertive individual identity in the in-between space.

5.2.3 Making a Virtue of Hybridity and Marginality

It is argued in the section above that Han's inclination towards her Chinese-ness is not a resistance against her cultural duality but a reconciliation of the split-ness within her identity. Rather than rejecting her English-ness, Han takes advantage of the coexistence of her Chinese-ness and English-ness to better comprehend both worlds and fulfil an intellectual Eurasian's social responsibilities.

Although Han's hybridity historically locates her in the periphery, this section will illustrate how Han successfully makes a virtue of her marginality, fluidity and plurality. As Rosalind Silvester notes, '[w]hen one is interested in seeing the whole, the marginal position becomes the advantageous one, for only from the outside can the true nature of the inside be best seen' (Silvester, 2011, 422). For Han, the peripheral position enables her to observe China and the West as well as their interactions in a more illuminating way. In the novel, Han sketches out the colonial mindset of the English in Hong Kong, represented by Mr Franklin who is symbolic of the ideology of white man's superiority to the native. Moreover, Han astutely critiques the mentality behind Western misperceptions and misrepresentations

of the East, and in Han's emplotment it is Mark – the white man – who makes a statement about this Western logic, which enhances the effect of the critique.

> Mark said, 'Anglo-Saxons are muddled with wishful thinking about your country. To us it is still a wonderland of hidden wealth and subtle wisdom. We suspect that it may not be true, but we go on hoping, for we are sentimentalists. Our tourist minds are intent on preserving old customs in other countries, exotic manifestations of natives of other lands. We like to dream of Eastern nations drawn up in picturesque pageant, a perpetual durbar, wrapped in gold brocade and gorgeous embroidery and charming rags, practising old magic dances by moon and torchlight; and especially being very photogenic. We say with complete disregard of them as human beings: "How awful of you to give up those dear old customs, that wonderful family system we admire so much (since we did not have to live under its yoke). It's not you we want, but your traditions, your culture, your civilization." We are museum-haunted, collectors of a glass-encased past labelled: "Do not touch." But some of us, I think, do understand the present.' (*MST*, 134)

What Mark summarizes above is an Orientalist view of the East, in which the Orient, as an invented imaginary image in the Western mind, is perceived by the imperial West to be primitive, static and inferior. This reification of Eastern cultures is ahistorical, arbitrary and finally essentialist. China, for instance, may still assume in the Western mind the image of what Herder describes as an isolated and stagnant ancient civilization like an embalmed mummy.[106] 'The China Mystique', pinpointed by Han as follows, disregards China's historical specificities and potential revolutionary forces that make China what it is today.

> Foreigners have such rigorous ideas of how Chinese should behave, speak, philosophize, display at all times fatalism, inscrutability, serenity, these figments of Western imagination so wrongly attributed to my earthy, extrovert race. They lose the reality of China in the myth of a Cathay old enough to Charm them. They don't want the uncomfortable truths about China, its enormous and collective hunger, its exorbitant poverty, its violence, its urge towards assertion, and the inevitability of its revolution. (*MST*, 134)

Han's ability to differentiate the West's perceptions of China from China's actualities benefits from her cultural duality, which equips her with multiple horizons. As mentioned above, hybridity is historically and socially associated with marginality – a vantage point from which a more distant and thus clearer view of the centre can be achieved. This dual and

[106] For more information on Herder's writing on China, see page 49.

peripheral position is reminiscent of the Third Space in Bhabha's terms, the counter-energies of which intervene to 'challenge the centred, dominant cultural norms with their unsettling perplexities generated out of their "disjunctive, liminal space"' (Young, 1995, 23). The potential to undermine the authoritative discourse is reflected in the process of constructing new meanings in the hybrid space enunciated by Bhabha. Han's incisive observations as such function as an indictment of the Western Orientalist projection of China that perpetuates 'the China Mystique' for centuries long. Notably it is less likely to produce subversions of this kind from a monolithic perspective, as shown in the accounts of Western writers analysed in previous chapters. For instance, Richard Mason's account also points out the Orientalist ideology of the English in the colonized Hong Kong, but he fails to denounce it in such a direct way as Han assigns the critiquing task to the white man, Mark, who accuses his own people of the static view of Eastern cultures. Moreover, Han's hybridity plays a significant part in making the white man realize and recognize the potential impact of Orientalism upon their cultural encounters with the Other. Seeing from Han's European heritage, this recognition is also Han's self-reflection upon intercultural perception and representation.

Now that the counter-energies possessed by hybrid identities have been explored, it should be noted that Han's semi-autobiographical novel portrays the lives of the privileged upper class in China rather than the general Chinese. As a productive writer, Han's fictional novels and autobiographical accounts are precious records of the historical, political, social and cultural aspects of China in the tumultuous twentieth century. As John Gittings notes in his obituary of Han, '[w]hen the epic of modern China is re-examined she and her works will provide important evidence' (Gittings, 2012). Bertrand Russell also makes the following comments on Han's works, claiming that '[d]uring the many hours I spent reading Han Suyin's books, I learnt more about China in an hour than I did in a whole year spent in that country' (Wang, 1996, 2). However, Han's semi-autobiographical text does not represent the experience of the general Chinese insofar as Han belongs to the privileged upper class. She highlights her favoured social status in the novel as follows.

> It is nice to belong to the top class, even though one knows that in a few weeks nothing will be left of it. It is comfortable to have a car and to have one's plane ticket fixed. It is privilege, graft, and corruption, but I enjoyed it, knowing it would soon be gone. For I too belonged to this corruption, which had made possible my expensive hybrid education and which in turn had made it possible for Mark and me to meet, to comprehend each other, and to love. (*MST*, 126)

In wartime China, it is the privilege of the rich upper class to receive Westernized education and experience the comfort of cars. As a well-educated intellectual Eurasian, Han's experience merely represents a small selected group of Chinese. In addition, the autobiographical nature of this novel works as a double-edged sword, which simultaneously enhances and undermines the authenticity of the narration. Norrine Voss expostulates the complexities inherent in the genre of autobiography, arguing that 'in self-revelation there is always the problem of reconciling the inner and outer person and as well as various other challenges' (Siegel, 1999, 25), such as the obstacles in truth-telling and the avoidance of seeming conceited (Siegel, 1999, 25). Hence, it cannot be assumed that Han's strongly autobiographical narrative presents a completely authentic picture of the Chinese during that particular historical period. Nonetheless, Han's narrative is a valuable record of both the historical context and the lives of a particular category of people. It is also a mirror that reflects cultural perceptions and misperceptions in Sino-Western interactions and exchanges.

Another issue that is worth exploring here is how Han handles the relationship between the Self and the Other in view of her hybrid identity. In the narrative Han's identity is not only marked by its plurality but also by its fluidity, which complicates the boundary between the Self and the Other. As Han travels 'back and forth in spirit and body between Hong Kong and China'[107] (*MST*, 262), the two sides within her identity undergo subtle changes, with the Chinese side encroaching upon the European side whenever she goes back to Szechuan in Mainland China. The following conversation between Han and Mark well illustrates the process in which Han's Chinese-ness is enhanced by returning to her native land.

> 'In your province of Szechuan,' said Mark, 'the Chinese *you* will dominate, to the exclusion of all the other *yous* I know. You will look at me from over there with purely Chinese eyes, and wonder whether to keep me or not.'
> 'That I shall do; I want to see you from there; see what you are like. For we must live together, the Chinese *me* and the English *you* as well as all the other *us*.'[108] (*MST*, 98-99)

[107] China here refers to Mainland China only, as Hong Kong was still a British colony when the book was written and published in 1952.
[108] These personal pronouns are italicised by the author in the original text, which point to the author's intention to highlight these terms.

It can be seen that both Han and Mark agree on plurality as an attribute of one's identity, manifested in the phrases 'other *yous*' and 'other *us*'. Mark shows his concerns about the prospect that Han's Chinese side will reign supreme upon her return to Mainland China and she will re-examine their interracial relationship from the perspective of a complete Chinese. Mark's fear indicates his Englishness as a potential obstacle to their relationship. For them to live together, Han suggests that her Chinese-ness and Mark's English-ness have to be in harmony with each other. This conversation is revealing in the way that it implies the antagonistic potentiality of the Chinese and the English as two different races and cultures. In a similar vein, consisting of partial Chinese-ness and partial English-ness, Han's hybridity requires the compatibility of these two. When Han assumes wholly Chinese-ness, her English-ness is squeezed out of the Self and transformed into the Other. In this light, there is no clear boundary between the Self and the Other due to the fluid and dynamic nature of identity, and the demarcation is even more blurred in a hybrid identity that features inter-convertible opposites.

The fluidity, hybridity as well as marginality of Han's cultural identity leads to different representations of the Chinese from those of Han's Western counterparts. In the accounts of Western writers, regardless of positive or negative imageries the Chinese are often perceived as the Other. The more the writer is aware of cultural diversity and open to multiple horizons, the more blurred the boundary between the Self and the Other becomes. For instance, Pearl Buck's writing in the Third Space complicates her cultural identification and from her accounts emanates counter-hegemonic energies conducive to the construction of new meanings. Compared to Buck, Han's hybridity is further enhanced and thus in Han's representations the line between the Self and the Other is even more obscured. The Chinese in Han's narrative negates the neat classification as the Self or the Other and is subject to a dynamic movement between the two extremes of the Self-Other polarity.

Similarly to Han's account, David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* constitutes a significant inversion of the dichotomy of masculine West and feminine East. The following section will explore in what way Hwang's narrative is subversive of the monolithic Orientalist discourse, how his representations of the Chinese differ from those of Han and the Western writers previously examined as well as what limitations and problematics his representation possesses.

5.3 Who is the Butterfly? Collapsing the 'Madame Butterfly' Fantasy in *M. Butterfly*

M. Butterfly (1988), a three-act play by the Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang (1957-), is based on Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.[109] Based on a real-life scandalous relationship between the French diplomat Bernard Boursicot and a male Peking opera singer Shi Pei Pu, the play features Rene Gallimard, a civil servant attached to the French embassy in China, and Song Liling, a Peking opera diva.[110] During his visit to a Chinese theatre, Gallimard is touched by Song's performance as Cio-Cio-San in *Madame Butterfly* and falls in love with Song, who is actually a male spy for the Chinese government masquerading as a woman. Gallimard keeps a secret relationship with Song for more than twenty years without the knowledge of Song's real identity and gender, during which Gallimard is coaxed by the beautiful Song into passing classified documents to the Chinese government. Back in France, both Gallimard and Song are convicted of treason and Song's real gender is revealed in the trial. Disheartened and disillusioned, Gallimard commits seppuku (abdomen-cutting)[111] in front of Song, who is smoking a cigarette and calling out 'Butterfly? Butterfly?' (*MB*, 93). This Tony Award-winning play premiered on Broadway at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre in 1988 and closed after 777 performances in 1990.

Prior to the discussion of Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, a few words should be said about Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, which Hwang's text speaks to. As one of the popular classics in Western opera repertoire, *Madame Butterfly* constructs a binary opposition of the power-wielding Western man and the subservient Oriental woman, and facilitates the circulation of the 'Madame Butterfly' discourse in the West since its premiere at La Scala, Milan in 1904. Precedent to Puccini's opera, the Madame Butterfly image has several prototypes, including

[109] It also inspired an eponymous film in 1993, *M. Butterfly*, directed by David Cronenberg.

[110] The French diplomat Bernard Boursicot fell in love with the male Peking opera singer Shi Pei Pu, who performed female roles in Peking opera and deliberately made Boursicot believe in his female identity. Boursicot was seduced by Shi to participate in passing classified documents to the Chinese government. Boursicot maintained the relationship without the knowledge of Shi's real gender for more than twenty years till they were both convicted of spying against the French government in 1986. In the trial, Shi's real gender was disclosed. Boursicot refused to accept the fact until he was shown proof of Shi's body, as a result of which he attempted an unsuccessful suicide in prison. This espionage case was brought to public spotlight when Hwang's play *M. Butterfly* premiered in 1988 and Cronenburg's film of the same name was released in 1993.

[111] Seppuku is a form of Japanese ritual suicide by disembowelment. Originally reserved for samurai, seppuku was used either voluntarily by samurai to die with honour rather than fall into their enemies' hands, or as a form of capital punishment for samurai who had committed serious offenses, or performed because they had brought shame to themselves. The ceremonial disembowelment consists of plunging a short blade into the abdomen and drawing the blade from left to right, slicing open the abdomen.

Pierre Loti's novel *Madame Chrysantheme* (1887), John Luther Long's short story *Madame Butterfly* (1898) and David Belasco's play *Madame Butterfly* (1900). Jonathan Wisenthal insightfully summarizes the evolution of the Butterfly story as follows:

> [o]ne of the fascinating characteristics of the Butterfly story is that it is a modern myth that has expressed itself in such a variety of media. It began in the dress of prose fiction and then changed to that of theatre, and then to opera, and then to early films, and then to drama, and then to more recent films. The media keep changing, and so does the shape of the narrative itself. (Wisenthal, 2006, 15)

The genre in which the story is narrated keeps evolving, yet its content remains almost unchanged. The Oriental woman is always Cio-Cio-San-like – feminine, submissive and sacrificial – and 'the Pinkerton figure's Orient is a feminized, infantilized, and aestheticized construct' (Wisenthal, 2006, 5). The production and consumption of the Butterfly story is laden with stereotypical preconceptions of the East derived from previous literatures, paintings, sculptures and other cultural artefacts. The static fantasized view of the East that dominates various circles of the West has been defined by Said in *Orientalism* as the Orientalist ideology, which is marked by a repetition of stereotypes. The Orientalist view of the East is well exemplified by Pinkerton's first meeting with Cio-Cio-San, where he utters the following words with astonishment. 'Heavens! Why, I know her already! Long before ever setting foot in Japan, I had met with her on every fan, on every teacup' (Loti, 1985, 69). Just like the Pinkerton figure, Western men tend to have a preconceived fantasy of the ideal Oriental woman as the exotic and titillating image found on teacups. Hwang's play, however, writes back to the 'Madame Butterfly' discourse and inverts the dichotomy of authoritative Western man and subservient Oriental woman. The following discussions aim at exploring the way in which the intended inversion is carried out and how the Chinese are represented in the play.

5.3.1 Collapsing the 'Madame Butterfly' Fantasy

In contrast to Richard Mason's contesting of the 'Madame Butterfly' fantasy, Hwang's play takes a step further by tactically making use of and then artfully collapsing the Butterfly trope. As the title *M. Butterfly* suggests, Song's gender remains a suspense throughout the play. The moment the suspension is uncovered, the fantasy simultaneously collapses.

The main character, Rene Gallimard, is depicted as a neither clever nor good-looking 'patron saint of the socially inept' (*MB*, 4), who is 'least likely to be invited to a party' (*MB*, 2), yet he desires to be loved by the 'Perfect Woman' (*MB*, 4). The Perfect Woman, in Gallimard's definition, is best represented by the Cio-Cio-San figure in his favourite opera *Madame Butterfly*, in which the submissive woman sacrifices her life for the irresponsible American lieutenant Pinkerton. Gallimard makes the following confessions in his monologue:

> GALLIMARD: …We, who are not handsome, nor brave, nor powerful, yet somehow believe, like Pinkerton, that we deserve a Butterfly. She arrives with all her possessions in the folds of her sleeves, lays them all out, for her man to do with as he pleases. Even her life itself – she bows her head as she whispers that she's not even worth the hundred yen he paid for her. He's already given too much, when we know he's really had to give nothing at all. (*MB*, 10)

Keenly aware of the fact that such an ideal woman does not exist in the West, Gallimard entertains the hope of meeting his Butterfly in the East. Oriental girls, according to Gallimard's friend Marc, are available like packed sardines on trucks, hopping out once the back flips open (*MB*, 8). When Gallimard first encounters the charming Song, he is performing the saddening character of Cio-Cio-San from *Madame Butterfly*. Without the knowledge that all the female roles in Peking opera are performed by male actors, Gallimard is hopelessly fascinated by Song, who appears to be the ideal Butterfly for him. Song, on the other hand, plays up to Gallimard's Butterfly fantasy by masquerading as a conservative and obedient woman so that he can carry out the Party's mission of obtaining information from Gallimard. When Gallimard asks Song whether he is his Butterfly, Song deliberately saturates Gallimard's pride as a Western man by falsely admitting his role as Madame Butterfly.

> GALLIMARD: Are you my Butterfly? (*Silence; he crosses the room and begins to touch her hair*) I want from you honesty. There should be nothing false between us. No false pride.
> *Pause*.
> SONG: Yes, I am. I am your Butterfly.
> GALLIMARD: Then let me be honest with you. It is because of you that I was promoted tonight. You have changed my life forever. My little Butterfly, there should be no more secrets: I love you. (*MB*, 39-40)

Song's obedience as Madame Butterfly boosts Gallimard's confidence which further brings him an unexpected promotion. Given that Gallimard is denied popularity with Western women, the extramarital relationship with an Oriental woman allows him to wield power arbitrarily and affirms his role as a man – a Western man in particular (*MB*, 32, 36).[112] Revealingly, whilst the Western man's masculine and patriarchal role is threatened in the West, it remains unchallenged in the East, consisting of peoples who are, as sung in Puccini's opera, '[h]umble and silent' (*MB*, 56). In other words, the Western male, no matter how trivial and impotent he is perceived to be in the West, can always resume his power in the East insofar as the East is already preconceived to be feminine and subservient by the West.

While Act One and Two of the play present the Orientalist ideology that subjects the Oriental woman to a dual domination from the patriarchal and imperial Western man, Act Three ruthlessly inverts the Butterfly story by disclosing Song to be a male spy for the Chinese government. In the trial, questioned by the judge as to why he can so tactfully conceal his gender in his relationship with Gallimard, Song explains two rules.

> SONG:…Rule One is: Men always believe what they want to hear. So a girl can tell the most obnoxious lies and the guys will believe them every time – "This is my first time" – "That's the biggest I've ever seen" – or *both*, which, if you really think about it, is not possible in a single lifetime. You've maybe heard those phrases a few times in your own life, yes, Your Honor? (*MB*, 82)
>
> SONG: Rule Two: As soon as a Western man comes into contact with the East – he's already confused. The West has sort of an international rape mentality towards the East…
> The West thinks of itself as masculine – big guns, big industry, big money – so the East is feminine – weak, delicate, poor…but good at art, and full of inscrutable wisdom – the feminine mystique.
> Her mouth says no, but her eyes say yes. The West believes the East, deep down, wants to be dominated – because a woman can't think for herself. (*MB*, 82-83)

Song's response to the judge sketches out what the playwright attempts to critique in the play – patriarchy and imperialism. In the afterword of this play, Hwang himself explains that the seemingly incredible story of a French diplomat duped by a Chinese man passing as a woman does make sense in the context of misunderstandings of various kinds between men and women and also between the East and the West (*MB*, 98). Towards the denouement of the

[112] The phenomenon that Western men tend to believe in Asian women's positive role in building their masculinity is also manifested in Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong*. For more information, see page 147-148.

play, the disclosure of Song's real gender shatters Gallimard's vision of the Orient, as explicated by Gallimard himself in the prison cell.

> Gallimard: There is a vision of the Orient that I have. Of slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be the perfect woman. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally. It is a vision that has become my life. (*MB*, 91)

Before committing seppuku, the disillusioned Gallimard makes the same utterance as Cio-Cio-San does in *Madame Butterfly*, '[d]eath with honor is better than life…life with dishonor' (*MB*, 92). Ironically, while Gallimard is thrusting the knife into his body, Song stands in a man's posture smoking a cigarette and calls out 'Butterfly' to the dead Gallimard (*MB*, 93). Gallimard's awakening to the truth and his subsequent death embody his transformation into the real Madame Butterfly, which reverses the established binary opposition of the authoritative Western man and the submissive Oriental woman. Gallimard's tragedy, according to what the playwright has inferred from the bizarre story of Bouriscot and Shi Pei Pu, arises from his infatuation with the cultural stereotype of 'Madame Butterfly' rather than the real person (*MB*, 94). All the pleasure, satisfaction and meaning that are derived from the East-West romance vanish with the dismantlement of this cultural fantasy. As Robert Skloot argues,

> the richest and most subversive conclusion would be drawn from Hwang's historical and psychological models of cultural interaction: that we are more likely to be imprisoned by our imaginations than be liberated by them, or that, in more postmodern parlance, we usually behave the way we do because it has been culturally imagined for us already. The impress of pre-reading on what we read, and previsioning on what we see, is exactly like pre-living before we live. Thus, Gallimard can only act the way he does because he knows and believes in the artistic structure of *Madame Butterfly*. We can accept (indeed welcome) his suicide because we in the audience 'know' it too…(Skloot, 1990, 61-62)

Hwang's narrative is a straightforward critique of the 'Madame Butterfly' discourse that not only probes into the power relations between genders but also highlights the misunderstandings and misperceptions in cultural encounters. However, Hwang's representation of the Chinese, compared to the writings of his Western counterparts, has its specificity that is enabled by his cultural hybridity. It also has its own confinements and

problematics that are worthy of extra attention. The section that follows will explore how Hwang's cultural hybridity influences his representation of the Chinese, which also resists the neat classification as either the Self or the Other in Hwang's case. In addition, it will also look into how Hwang's hybridity enriches what he endeavours to critique in the play.

5.3.2 The Problematics of Representing the Chinese

Hwang's play not only aims to deconstruct the Western fantasy of 'Madame Butterfly' in a straightforward manner but also skilfully critiques China's political regime. Hwang expediently locates part of the story within the historical period of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a controversial socio-political movement noted for its irrational and arbitrary abuse of power.[113] In Hwang's emplotment, Gallimard becomes the vehicle to express and convey the critique of the Cultural Revolution to the audience.

> GALLIMARD: And then, China began to change. Mao became very old, and his cult became very strong. And, like many old men, he entered his second childhood. So he handed over the reins of state to those with minds like his own. And children ruled the Middle Kingdom with complete caprice. The doctrine of the Cultural Revolution implied continuous anarchy. Contact between Chinese and foreigners became impossible. Our flat was confiscated. Her fame and my money now counted against us. (*MB*, 68)

Rather than acutely repudiating the Cultural Revolution, Hwang indirectly points out the mistakes committed by the Maoist regime through Gallimard's euphemistic language. In contrast, Han Suyin champions the Maoist Regime and is thus accused of being a propagandist for the Chinese government (Restall, 2012). While Han observes the issues of China from an insider viewpoint by identifying herself with the Chinese, Hwang seems to approach them from the perspective of an outsider. Hwang's criticism is simultaneously directed at the West and the East regarding their respective flaws. Hwang challenges the authoritative discourse of 'Madame Butterfly' by inverting the power relations between the

[113] The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is a socio-political movement initiated by Chairman Mao, which aims at establishing the Maoist thought as the dominant ideology in China by wiping out capitalist and traditional remnants from Chinese society. Millions of people were abused and persecuted in the violent struggles, including public humiliation, physical and mental torture as well as property confiscation (Lu, 2004, 59-61); historical relics and cultural artefacts were ransacked as well. A large segment of the population was forcibly displaced, most notably the transfer of urban youth to rural regions during the Down to the Countryside Movement (King, 2010, 10). The punishment that Song suffers in the play is similar to this kind of displacement to rural regions, where the convicted ones work as labourers for rehabilitation purposes.

Western man and the Oriental woman. Meanwhile, in the deconstruction of the cultural stereotype that dominates the West's view of the East, Hwang sketches out his critical observations about Chinese society as well. The ability to see both sides with a change of perspective is one of the advantages offered by a location in the Third Space in Bhabha's sense.

Hwang's cultural hybridity enables him to observe both cultures from a certain distance with greater objectivity and in the play he seemingly endeavours to justify the objectivity of his judgment on both cultures as well. In Act One Scene Eight, when Gallimard is questioned by Song as to how he can objectively judge his own cultural values, he replies, 'it's possible to achieve some distance' (*MB*, 21). Similarly, Song also states that 'I too can distance myself from my people' (*MB,* 21). Such declarations from both Gallimard and Song indicate the playwright's belief in the possibility of objective observations of one's own culture if a certain distance is maintained. Hwang's location in between the Eastern and Western worlds displaces him from the centre to the margin of both cultures and affords him a better vantage point from which the centre can be examined in a more detached manner. As Dorinne K. Kondo comments,

> *M. Butterfly* claims a narrative space within the central story for Asian Americans and for other people of color. Never before has a dramatic production written by an Asian American been accorded such mainstream accolades: a long run on Broadway, a world tour, Tonys and Drama Desk Awards for both Hwang and the radiant, charismatic B.D. Wong, and a nomination for the Pulitzer Prize. For me, as an Asian-American woman, *M. Butterfly* is a voice from the Borderlands, to use a metaphor from Gloria Anzaldua and Carolyn Steedman, a case of the "other speaking back," to borrow Arlene Teraoka's phrase. Hwang's distinctively Asian-American voice reverberates with the voices of others who have spoken from the borderlands, those whose stories cannot be fully recognized or subsumed by dominant narrative conventions, when he speaks so eloquently of the failure to understand the multiplicity of Asia and of women. (Kondo, 1990, 27-28)

Nevertheless, Hwang's play, in its attempted deconstruction of the cultural stereotype, is problematic in several ways. First of all, Hwang's representation of the Chinese characters is appropriative. Hwang creates the Chinese figures for the main purpose of critiquing rather than fleshing them out as a group distinguished by Chinese characteristics. The major Chinese characters in the play – Song and his leader Comrade Chin – are merely caricatures endowed with no particular characteristics that can define them as Chinese. The most

identifiable detail that points to their Chinese identity is their affiliation to the Chinese Communist Party. Miss Chin, created as a devoted propagandist for the Communist Party, is entirely brainwashed by the Party's mandate and deprived of her own personality. The words she utters and the way she speaks are so mechanical and programmed that they strip her of any human features. For instance, the following scene shows the situation where Miss Chin warns Song of possible deviations for him to conduct the spy mission.

> CHIN: You're not gathering information in any way that violates Communist Party principles, are you?
> SONG: Why would I do that?
> CHIN: Just checking. Remember: when working for the Great Proletarian State, you represent our Chairman Mao in every position you take.
> SONG: I'll imagine the Chairman taking my positions. (*MB,* 48)

Seen from a panoptic viewpoint, Song is rendered an instrument for the Communist Party in a more tragic way than Miss Chin. As Hsin-Fa Wu notes, 'the instrumentality of the state apparatus is the very *raison d'etre* of Song Liling, the very reason for his pathetic existence' (Wu, 2010, 72). In order to fulfil his mission, Song masquerades as a woman to seduce Gallimard, and because of such allegedly perverted behaviour (*MB,* 70), he is severely punished by the Party during the Cultural Revolution. Thus, the fact that Song's wholehearted devotion to the Party is rewarded with ruthless penalty adds a touch of irony to the play and reverberates with the playwright's criticism of the Maoist regime. James Moy incisively pinpoints the problematic representation of the Chinese in the play.

> 'Thus marginalized, desexed, and made faceless, these Asian characters constitute no threat to Anglo-American desire, now doubly displaced into the new order of stereotypical representations created by Asian Americans'. While Chin's words 'offer a clear indictment of the cultural hegemony of the west,' as the butt of the joke her representation as a buffoon undermines the force of that indictment. (Boyd, 2006, 68)

Hwang's oversimplified representation of the Chinese personae may be attributed to his unfamiliarity with Chinese culture, which leads to a less convincing stance in the representation of the Chinese. Born and educated in the West, Hwang claimed in an interview in 2011 that he is 'not actually bilingual' (Raymond, 2011) and has only been to China 'a fair amount for the past five or six years' (Raymond, 2011). Unlike Han's tenuous identification

with the Chinese, Hwang as a second-generation Chinese-American feels identified with American culture more than his Chinese ancestry. Nonetheless, his cultural hybridity still plays an undeniably significant part in his attitudes towards both cultures, as shown in his simultaneous critique of the East and the West.

Furthermore, Hwang's critique of the dichotomy of the Western man and the Oriental woman runs the risk of establishing a new binary opposition of the same type. Hwang's play presents mutual stereotypical conceptions of the Other from both the East and the West. Whilst Gallimard criticizes the Chinese as 'an incredibly arrogant people' (*MB,* 18), Miss Chin dismisses the West as 'the place where pollutions begins' (*MB,* 71-72). This antagonism and misconception is what Hwang intends to contest in the deconstructionist play, yet the act of revealing Song to be a man and simultaneously turning Gallimard into Madame Butterfly helps reinforce the East and the West as two incompatible opposites. The power inversion in both gender and racial terms fails to deconstruct conventional binaristic categories in a real sense. It is arguably true that the trope of the East as Madame Butterfly is successfully subverted, but a new trope of the West as Madame Butterfly is established. In this sense, Hwang's critique of Western hegemony, the Orientalist discourse and the consequences of racist and sexist stereotyping is more of a rearrangement of power or a shift in power than a complete shattering of binary oppositions. The newly constructed polarity will not demystify the East and the West for each other, and the myths, according to the playwright, 'have so saturated our consciousness that truthful contact between nations and lovers can only be the result of heroic effort' (*MB,* 100). In the exposition of counter-strategies that can potentially challenge, contest and change a dominant regime of representation, Stuart Hall underlines the danger of employing the strategy of 'reversing the stereotypes' as one of the counter-authoritative methods. Hall's warning most aptly expounds the trap that Hwang's narrative slips into. Hall argues,

> [t]o reverse the stereotype is not necessarily to overturn or subvert it. Escaping the grip of one stereotypical extreme…may simply mean being trapped in its stereotypical 'other'…it[114] has not escaped the contradictions of the binary structure of racial stereotyping and it has not unlocked what Mercer and Julien call 'the complex dialectics of power and subordination… (Hall, 1997, 272).

[114] Hall's discussion focuses on American cinematic representations of black people. Here 'it' refers to filmmakers' strenuous efforts to reverse the evaluation of popular stereotypes of the blacks in order to secure box-office success and appeal to black audiences.

Therefore, the analysis of Hwang's play well illustrates the philosophy of 'contrapuntal reading' in Said's terms: namely, it is important to note the counter-hegemonic energies emanating from a narrative and it is of the same significance to highlight the problems and limitations of the counter-strategies in use. Hwang's play notably succeeds in the deconstruction of the Western 'Madame Butterfly' fantasy and his critique of the Maoist regime, which is enabled by his cultural hybridity, but the appropriative representation of the Chinese and the newly established binary opposition problematizes the narrative in such a way that gives prominence to the complexities of intercultural representation.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter takes Han Suyin and David Henry Hwang as examples in an attempt to explore how Western writers of Chinese ancestry represent the Chinese, which partially constitutes their hybrid cultural identities. It has also investigated the influence of cultural hybridity upon the representational practice.

The discussion reveals that both writers designate their text as a form of writing back to the metropolitan centre and their Western counterparts through challenging Western Orientalist readings of the East. For instance, in Han's narrative she makes the Western man (Mark) admit their stereotypical and hegemonic view of the East, whereas Hwang more tactfully deconstructs the West's feminization and infantilization of the East through unexpected gender and racial reversal. The construction of new meanings in the employment of counter-strategies is enabled by their cultural hybridity, which places them on the cultural periphery and equips them with double visions. The authorial inclination towards a particular side of the cultural duality exerts great influence upon the representation of the Chinese. Han's identification with the Chinese renders her representation more fully fleshed-out (such as the traditional Third Uncle), while Hwang's alienation from the Chinese leads to more appropriative and caricatured representations. Regardless of the differences, what stands out in the representational process is that the boundary between the Self and the Other is blurred and accordingly the negotiation of cultural identity becomes increasingly complicated.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that representations of the Chinese by such Western writers of Chinese origin as Han and Hwang are problematic in a way. Han's narrative is confined to the representation of the lives of a selected group of immigrant elites, whereas

Hwang's play falls into 'the new order of stereotypical representations created by Asian Americans' (Boyd, 2006, 68). Additionally, Hwang's meticulously planned deconstruction of the binary opposition of the East and the West runs the risk of establishing a new polarity of the same nature. Therefore, in the context of more fluid and diverse cultural identities as well as more blurred and dynamic boundaries between the Self and the Other, it remains an urgent task for the intelligentsia to break away from fixed meanings so as to uncover more cultural possibilities in intercultural representations.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined a wide range of literary texts produced at different stages of the twentieth century in an attempt to explore how interracial romances between the Chinese and Caucasians are represented and how the representations have evolved across the twentieth century. Following a chronological discussion of the primary texts, this thesis has discovered that interracial romances often end tragically with the death of one or both protagonists or conclude evasively with a disclosure of the Chinese character to be American. The exceptional case of Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957) consummates Suzie and Robert's love in marriage, but the protagonists have to displace themselves from London and settle down in Japan, for their interracial relationship cannot be condoned in the metropolitan West. Another finding is that the primary texts reflect widespread social concerns about and prejudices against Chinese-Caucasian romance in the West (mainly the United States and the UK). Enlightened by the socio-historical contexts in both the West and China, this thesis argues that the anxieties and ambivalences about cross-racial relationships mainly stem from the intention to sidestep anti-miscegenation laws enforced in America from the long nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, and also result from eugenic concerns over the degeneration of the Caucasian race due to its liaison and intermarriage with the Chinese race. This explains the absence of portrayals of successful interracial union and interracial sexuality in the literary texts studied.

The repertoire of Chinese characters that have been invented in these texts is as diverse as the Chinese chameleon surveyed in the first chapter: the Chinatown shopkeeper Cheng Huan, the faceless and nameless farm workman, the beautiful Chinese princess Kukachin, the purchased Chinese girl Ming Toy, the straight-A student Sam Lee, the tantalizing prostitute Suzie Wong, and the elegant and lonely Madame Wu. The Chinese males are either feminized (Cheng Huan), invisible (the surreptitious Chinese lover) or ostracized (Sam Lee), whereas all the Chinese females invented in these texts, including Kukachin, Ming Toy, Suzie Wong and Madame Wu, always look up to the heroic Western male for love. Thus, it can be argued that these narratives conform to the widely-circulating 'white knight' trope or 'Madame Butterfly' discourse, which perpetuates the dichotomy of omnipotent Western man and submissive Oriental woman as well as propagates a gendered

conceptualization of non-Western cultures.[115] In contrast, Western writers of Chinese ancestry, Han Suyin and David Henry Hwang, openly critique the West's Orientalist readings of the East and also contest the 'white knight' and 'Madame Butterfly' discourses. Their cultural hybridity blurs the boundary between the Self and the Other, hence complicating the practice of intercultural representation.

In addition, the chronological discussion of the primary texts finds noticeable changes in the representation of Chinese characters and interracial romance across the twentieth century. In Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child' (1916), John Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear' (1938), Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer's *East Is West* (1918), and Rex Beach's *Son of the Gods* (1929), the Chinese personae are habitually associated with darkness and shadow. In particular, the inarticulate Cheng Huan in Burke's text as well as the invisible and nameless Chinese lover in Steinbeck's story most fully exemplify the discursive Orientalist strategies deployed by the authors to engage with the racial Other, such as the strategies of feminization and fetishization utilized by Burke to characterize the Chinese figure and interracial love. Towards the mid-twentieth century, Chinese figures are no longer linguistically incompetent. They are at least given language competence and agency, which is especially manifest in Pearl Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946), Han Suyin's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952), and also David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988). The representation of interracial romance demonstrates conspicuous changes as well. The texts published in the first half of the twentieth century mostly confine interracial love stories to the West, whereas the mid-twentieth-century texts, including Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957), Buck's *Pavilion of Women* and Han's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* and Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988), start to set their stories against the backdrop of China.[116] In addition, compared to earlier literary texts, these four texts afford more true-to-life portrayals of interracial love and engage with slightly more open discussions of interracial sexuality. These changes in the representations are largely incurred by the increasing cultural contacts and enhanced cultural understandings between China and the West across time. For instance, Mason and Buck's writings in what Pratt refers to as the contact zone manifest counter-hegemonic energies that challenge the predominant Orientalist readings of the East. Han and

[115] In spite of this, some texts demonstrate counter-hegemonic energies that challenge the predominant Orientalist readings of the East, which will be discussed later.
[116] The exception is Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions* published in 1927, which sets the imaginary account in the Khan's court in Cathay.

Hwang's cultural hybridity helps strengthen such counter-energies by observing the centre from the periphery and constructing new meanings and new horizons in the in-between space. Different from their Western counterparts examined in this thesis, both Han and Hwang outspokenly critique Western imperialism and the West's ahistorical and static perception of the East in their encounters with non-Western cultures. Han's semi-autobiographical narrative, with her choice of China over Mark for the purpose of self-fulfilment, contests the 'white knight' trope that designates the Western man as the eternal saviour of Oriental women, whereas Hwang's play straightforwardly collapses the 'Madame Butterfly' paradigm by inverting the dichotomy of authoritative Western male and submissive Oriental woman. In addition to these counter-energies, the cultural hybridity of Han and Hwang complicates the boundary between the Self and the Other in their representations. Han's text particularly gives prominence to the interchangeability and fluidity of the Self and the Other, representing the Chinese as neither wholly the Self nor the Other.

I The Heterogeneity of Texts

As one of the research aims set out in the introduction is to examine the alternatives to Orientalism, this section summarizes the heterogeneity and counter-hegemonic attributes of the corpus of primary texts, which have been discussed with the employment of what Said calls *strategic formation*.[117] Commonly themed on interracial romance, the primary texts do not resort to overt Orientalist readings of the Chinese in the same way that Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu series does, and the analyses of such texts demonstrate the complexity of characterizing a particular narrative as Orientalist or non-Orientalist. The following categorization of the primary texts well exemplifies this point.

(1) Some texts seem to have nothing to do with other cultures because the Other is deliberately or unconsciously silenced and hidden or the Other occupies such a minor position that no attention is paid to it or seems necessary, while a contrapuntal reading reveals the significance of the unspoken or the gap to the comprehension and interpretation of the texts, such as John Steinbeck's 'Johnny Bear'.

[117] See III Theoretical Framework, 19-20.

(2) Some texts display unprecedented tolerance or admiration towards the racial Other (especially at a time when the general public hold exactly opposite opinions about the racial Other) and emanate counter-hegemonic energies that challenge the Orientalist mentality towards the East, but underneath such positive feelings and counter-energies lurk various forms of problematic representations of the Other, such as gendered or ahistorical perceptions of other cultures, which further point to the fundamentally Orientalist tendency in the narrative. The instances under this category include Thomas Burke's 'The Chink and the Child', Eugene O'Neill's *Marco Millions*, and Pearl Buck's *Pavilion of Women*.

(3) Some texts are commonly classified as Orientalist texts, but if examined in comparison with preceding or contemporaneous texts of the same topicality and situated within the historical contexts, such texts manifest innovative practices in their representation of the Other that further contest the general verdict passed on them as Orientalist, such as John B. Hymer's *East Is West*, Rex Beach's *Son of the Gods* and Richard Mason's *The World of Suzie Wong*.

(4) Some are written for dialogic purposes with particular text(s) or in an attempt to deconstruct certain ideology/ideologies. Even if they succeed in doing so, it is important to examine the limitations and problematics of such counter-energies and deconstructions. Han Suyin's *A Many-Splendoured Thing* and David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* are cases in point.

The above classification is merely based on the ensemble of primary texts explored in this thesis and may not include other cases. The purpose in making such classifications is to draw attention to textual heterogeneity and potential alternative voices that together remind us of the risk of an indiscriminate application of Orientalism. Notably, the West's representation of the Chinese is not always charged with Orientalist ideologies, for alternative discourses and counter-hegemonic narratives could possibly emerge from increased cultural understandings, newly-constructed common grounds and cultural hybridity. In addition, it is feasible to produce textual dialogues between Western and non-Western cultures, in the course of which the East and the West could exchange perspectives and read themselves as their Others and also as the Others of their Others, for the boundary between the Self and the Other is indeterminate (exemplified by the writings of Han and Hwang). Another important point derived from the analyses and comparisons of these texts is that an individual literary

text has to be examined within a *strategic formation* so as to detect its position across time and among the ensemble of similar texts. The position here includes a text's similarities and differences from other texts. These features help determine whether it is possessed with potential heterogeneity from the others. For example, *East Is West* and *Son of the Gods* demonstrate a certain degree of heterogeneity when they are put into comparison with their predecessors. If they are not investigated from the perspective of *strategic formation*, they can be dismissed as Orientalist texts.

Nevertheless, as a difficult task and an easily appropriated site, intercultural representation is often problematic. Based on the above classification and discussions of the primary texts, this thesis proposes two new terms – manifest stereotyping and latent stereotyping – to summarize and distinguish various forms of stereotyping practices in intercultural representation.

II Manifest Stereotyping and Latent Stereotyping

As shown in the introduction, Fredric Jameson indicates the unrepresentable nature of culture and the inevitability of stereotyping in intercultural representation.[118] The previous chapters have noted the pervasiveness of stereotypes in the West's perception of the Chinese. The primary texts examined are largely reflective of the widespread prejudices against the Chinese in the West, but in terms of portraying the major Chinese characters, they do not resort to what I call manifest stereotyping as the method of representation. Drawing on Said's definition of manifest Orientalism and latent Orientalism, manifest stereotyping here refers to an uncontroversial negative representation of the Other, such as Sax Rohmer's relentless demonization of the Chinese. In contrast to manifest stereotyping, latent stereotyping is a less conspicuous, hidden or even unconscious abstraction of the Other. Latent stereotyping does not necessarily represent the Other in a negative manner and may thus deal with the Other in a sympathetic, condescending and eulogistic way. Moreover, latent stereotyping may hide its stereotypical nature so strategically that a casual and inattentive reading would suggest entirely divergent interpretations. The textual analyses conducted in this thesis (such as *Marco Millions* and *M. Butterfly*) as well as the above categorization of the texts amply exemplify how latent stereotyping works in intercultural representations.

[118] Refer to II Theorising Cultural Representations: Orientalism and Beyond, 10.

Despite the differences, manifest and latent stereotyping share a common feature that fundamentally defines them as a stereotyping practice: namely, they are both representational strategies discursively deployed to fix meaning, or in more accurate terms, to fix differences between groups, races and cultures. According to Hall, stereotyping helps construct cultural boundaries that are merely symbolic and imagined (Hall, 1997, 258). In other words, stereotyping is conducive to the shoring up of cultures through a stigmatization and dismissal of whatever is marked as different and thus abnormal. In cultural representation, representing difference and otherness emerges as an important strategy, for difference and otherness contribute to the understanding and construction of the Self in complicated ways. Moreover, as demonstrated in the introduction to this thesis, the practice of marking differences between the Orient and the West as well as making abstractions of the Orient is enunciated by Said as the dogmas of Orientalism.

As explicated by the above scholars, the necessity or the tendency to denote and invent differences explains the pervasiveness of stereotypical abstractions of other cultures in intercultural representation. Given that stereotyping is difficult to circumvent, it is of great importance to recognize and decipher manifest stereotyping and latent stereotyping in particular. Latent stereotyping as proposed here is salutary to the understanding of various hidden forms of problematic representations of the Other. Notably, problematic representations are not necessarily Orientalist and could refer to whatever signifying practices that are deployed to invent and fix differences between groups and cultures.

In this light, Porter's call to 'replace the notion of a place of truth with that of a knowledge which is always relative and provisional' (Porter, 1994, 153), as argued in the introduction, seems especially illuminating for the discernment of meaning-fixing practices in intercultural representations. In regard to China-West cross-cultural studies, Gu proposes that '[i]n knowledge production about China the only viable way out of Sinologism is a hermeneutic approach to knowledge that requires one to constantly modify and refine one's knowledge of China' (Gu, 2012, 137). Therefore, an acknowledgement of the relative, provisional and modifiable nature of knowledge is crucial to the representation of difference and Otherness, as the ontology, i.e., the object being represented, exists on its own terms rather than relying on the epistemology of those who perform the representational practice.

III Contributions, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Work

In summary, this thesis has provided an overview of Western literary representations of interracial relationships between the Chinese and Caucasians across the twentieth century, which, prior to the current attempt, remains an uncharted territory. It has also examined why Chinese-Caucasian interracial romance emerged as a topos for literary production at the beginning of the twentieth century and highlighted the evolution of such representations and possible causes for the changes. The discussion of the primary texts helps draw attention to some of the forgotten literatures that inform historically inscribed intercultural perceptions in both China and the West, and explains why interracial romance is portrayed evasively in literary production. The investigation of Western writers' varying strategies in dealing with the Chinese in their works illuminates the complexity of applying Orientalism. The comparison drawn between Western writers and Western writers of Chinese ancestry in their representational practices demonstrates the influence of cultural hybridity upon the conceptualization of the Self and the Other. The above classification of texts as well as the definitions of manifest stereotyping and latent stereotyping could possibly remind general readers and scholars of the diversity, heterogeneity, potentiality and problematics of not only literatures but other cultural products that involve intercultural perceptions and representations.

However, this thesis has its inevitable limitations, which future research could aim to redress. For practical reasons it lies beyond the scope of this research to take into account the readership and reader reception of the primary texts in both the West and China then and now, the analysis of which will not only better inform the socio-historical contexts but also offer alternative perspectives to the interpretation of such literatures. In addition, the film adaptations of these literary texts, as mentioned sporadically in the chapters, are also worth further exploration. Another possible research orientation is to look at how contemporaneous Chinese writers represent Chinese-Caucasian romances and conduct a comparative study of Western writers, Western writers of Chinese ancestry and Chinese writers in their respective engagement with interracial romances. Hopefully the present thesis could provide a reference point for such future work.

Appendices

Appendix 1

The Heathen Chinee

WHICH I wish to remark, --
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar, --
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name.
And I shall not deny
In regard to the same
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third;
And quite soft was the skies:
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;

But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve.
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve:
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see.--
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, “Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,”
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand;
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game “he did not understand.”

In his sleeves, which were long,
He had twenty-four packs,--
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,--that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,--
Which the same I am free to maintain.

Appendix 2

Figure 4: The Love-Boat (*East Is West*)

Figure 5: Lo Sang Kee's House (*East Is West*)

Figure 6: At the Bensons 2 (*East Is West*)

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