Modernity: From the West to the East

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This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Liqian Yang

Contents

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My sincere thanks also go to my family and friends. It is their financial and emotional support that ensures the completion of my project. There are two special members among them – my cats Qiu Qiu and Mango. One of them likes accompanying me to study, and the other takes every opportunity to remind me to take a break. Thanks for your care and understanding. Love you all.

List of Abbreviations

Works by Yang Lian

GWIS *Guihua Zhilide kongjian=Ghost's Words Intellectual Space*, Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1998.

NP *Narrative Poem*, translated by Brian Holton, Hexham, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 2017.

RPPFC *Riding Pisces: Poems from Five Collections*, translated by Brian Holton, London: Shearsman Books Ltd, the United Kingdom, 2008.

WSSS *Da hai ting zhi zhi chu=Where the Sea Stands Still – Yang Lian's Works 1982-1987 Poetry*, Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1998.

Works by Ha Jin

IP *In the Pond*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

TC *The Crazed*. New York: Pantheon Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 2002.

TWM *The Writer as Migrant*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

W *Waiting*. New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 1999.

WT *War Trash*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2004.

Works by Nicholas Jose

AEP *Avenue of Eternal Peace*. New York: Dutton, 1991.

OF *Original Face*. Artarmon, NSW: Giramondo, 2005.

TRC *The Rose Crossing*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1995.

TRT *The Red Thread*: A Love Story. San Francisco, Calif: Chronicle Books, 2000.

Works by Ouyang Yu

BOCA *Bias: Offensively Chinese/Australian: A Collection of Essays on China and Australia*. Melbourne, Vic: Otherland Publishing, 2007.

DNO *Diary of a Naked Official*. Yarraville, [Vic: Transit Lounge Publishing, 2014.

ESC *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*. Rose Bay, N.S.W: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2002.

EC *The English Class*. Yarraville, [Vic: Transit Lounge Publishing, 2010.

LAWH *Loose: A Wild History*. Kent Town, S. Aust: Wakefield Press, 2011.

Works by other scholars

AAID Woodward, Kathleen M. *Aging and Its Discontents: Freud and Other Fictions*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

AAIPI Zhang, Hui 一个诗歌身份的暧昧指认——杨炼"中文性" "An Ambiguous Identification of the Poetic Identity – Review of Yang Lian's 'Chineseness' Poetics", *Journal of Changsha University of Science & Technology (Social Science) [长沙理工大学学报（社会科学版）],* no. 2 (2014): 80-84.

ADS Marshall, Gordon. Scott, John. *A Dictionary of Sociology*, edited by Gordon Marshall and John Scott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

AFAAH Jacobs, Lyn. "About Face: Asian-Australians at Home", *Australian literary studies* 20, no. 3 (2002): 201-214.

AIDLP Evans, Dylan. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1996.

BNTPIM Navarro, Sharon. "Border Narratives: The Politics of Identity and Mobilisation", *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no. 3 (2003): 129-139.

BOB Ruti, Mari. "Breaking the Obstinacy of Being: Levinas's Ethics of the Face". In *Between Levinas and Lacan: Self, Other, Ethics*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015: 1.

BQTICC Alexander, Jonathan. Anderlini-D'Onofrio, *Serena. Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Connections and Challenges*. London: Routledge, 2012.

DAFHJN Zhang, Hongxuan. Domination, Alienation and Freedom in Ha Jin's novels: A View from Afar. Doctoral thesis of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2015.

DDITE Brinkerhoff, Jennifer M. *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

EAS Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror stage as Formative of the Function of the I". In *Ecrits: A Selection*, London: Routledge, 2020.

EE Hall, Stuart. *Essential Essays*, Volume II, edited by David Morley, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

IU Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

IWMK Segal, Hanna. *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth, 1973.

JL-1 Homer, Sean. *Jacques Lacan*. London: Routledge, 2005.

JL-2 Homer, Sean. *Jacques Lacan*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.

NJTWAEP Wang, Labao. Zhang, Lili. 尼古拉斯·周思小说《长安街》中的"跨文化书写" "Nicholas Jose's Transcultural Writing in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*", *Contemporary Foreign Literature (当代外国文学)* 37, no. 3 (2016): 92-100.

OACAB Liang, Yujing. Ouyang, Yu. 关于反学院、"愤怒"与双语——欧阳昱访谈 "On Anti-College, 'Anger' and Bilingualism – Interview with Ouyang Yu", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2012): 28-33.

OYRCATESC Ding, Yongjiu. "Ouyang Yu's Representation of Chinese Australians in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*", *Cultural Studies and Literary Theory (中外文化与文论)*, no. 2 (2008): 76-89.

PAAL Chae, Youngsuk. *Politicising Asian American Literature: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism*. Florence: Routledge, 2008.

PD Hofmann, Wilhelm. Nordgren, Loran F. *The Psychology of Desire*, edited by Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren. New York: The Guilford Press, 2015.

PM Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Planetary Modernisms Provocations on Modernity Across* Time. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

SCFL Shen, Fu. *Fu sheng liu ji=Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, translated by Yutang Lin, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1999.

SF Roudinesco, Élisabeth. *Sigmund Freud*, translated by Hui Chen, Chencen Luo, Shanghai: East China University Press, 2019.

SPAC Lin, Geng. Feng, Yuanjun. *Zhong guo li dai shi ge xuan=Selected Poems of Ancient China*, edited by Geng Lin and Yuanjun Feng, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1984.

TBAKJV Carroll, Robert P. Prickett, Stephen. *The Bible Authorised King James Version*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

TCB Chen, Beibei. 双语的错乱——论欧阳昱小说《英语班》的移民困境 "The Confusion of Bilingualism: On the Dilemma of Migration in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2017): 52-57.

TFFCP Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

TLG Marshall, Leni. "Through (with) the Looking Glass: Revisiting Lacan and Woodward in 'Méconnaissance,' the Mirror Stage of Old Age", *Feminist Formations* 24, no. 2, (2012): 52-76.

TLTB Jay, Paul. *Transnational Literature: The Basics*. United Kingdom: Routledge, 2021.

TP Grant, Jan. Jim, Crawley. *Transference and Projection: Mirrors to the Self*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002.

TPI Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Blackwell: Oxford, UK, 2010.

TSFTI Tang, Xiaodu. "终于被大海摸到了内部"——从大海意象看杨炼漂泊中的写作 "The Sea Finally Touched the Interior – From the Sea Image of Yang Lian's Exile Writing", *Contemporary Writers Review (当代作家评论)*, no. 6 (2007): 28-44.

TTSJL Lacan, Jacques. *Transference: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book VIII, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Bruce Fink, London: Polity Press, 2015.

TWCCC Zhang, Lili. 跨国文化与跨文化交流——澳大利亚小说家尼古拉斯·周斯访谈录 "Transnational Writing and Cross-Cultural Communication – An Interview with Australian Novelist Nicholas Jose", *The World Literature Criticism (世界文学评论)*, no. 2 (2015): 1-7.

Abstract

‘Modernity: From the West to the East’ evaluates how contemporary writers treat China in their works. It considers Chinese writers both living in China and living abroad, and Western writers with Chinese cultural backgrounds who take China as a principal subject of their work. Deploying the cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall’s critical framework of identity theory, this thesis examines personal and national identity in my chosen writers: Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu. The identity in these writers is eye-catching as a product under the influences of both Chinese and Western cultures which is triggered or facilitated by the opening-up policy in comprehensive modernisation in China. Their efforts to find an inner balance between two cultures fulfil the process of their identity construction, which has been expressed in their works concerning China. Under the umbrella cases of identity theory, this thesis will engage with Jacques Lacan’s interpretation of the relation between the subject and the other/Other, The Mirror Stage, transference and projection, Kathleen Woodward’s the second mirror stage, Manuel Castells’ three divisions of identity, and other scholars’ interpretations to analyse how they explore their own identity as transnational diasporic writers and how characters build up the identity by virtue of their experience of travelling between China and the West in their poems and novels. Such writing in more than 20 years (1990-2014) is based on the writers’ experience of living in China. It portrays modern China from different angles, which reflects their attitude towards this country, its culture and Chinese modernity literarily.

Introduction

> The more 'modern' you are, you are necessarily more 'traditional' than anyone else – either positively or negatively, tradition is incorporated into you and opened up again by you. If you are 'traditional,' you have more 'modernity' than anyone else – because that is the only dynamic force that gives tradition an 'ever-present tense.'[1]
>
> ——Yang Lian

The dialectical relation between tradition and modernity asserted in Yang Lian's maxim provides a window onto how writers negotiate the cultures of their birthplace while pursuing a modern vision of cultural expression through literature. The writers grouped with Yang Lian in this thesis – Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose, and Ouyang Yu – each interrogate notions of tradition in their foray into modernity East and West. Without a critical sense of tradition this pursuit would be rootless, ungrounded. Tradition and modernity mutually reinforce one another, and for each writer this dialectic provides the means to interpret Chinese modernity with the tools and techniques of modern literature.

A considerable body of research in the humanities and social sciences dealing with Chinese modernity has given focus to gender, mass media, religion, politics and history. When this is applied to the interpretation of Chinese literature in the twentieth century, the focus tends to rest on developing sociological and anthropological perspectives, primarily by using Chinese writers and their works to illustrate the cultural dynamics of a rapidly modernising society.[2] However, few of these studies focus on Chinese writers who live both in China and abroad, or on Western writers with cross-cultural backgrounds and expertise, who incorporate China into their work as a principal subject or theme. This thesis aims to address this research deficiency by exploring the thought, culture and work of writers with dual cultural backgrounds using

[1] Lian Yang, Guihua Zhilide kongjian=*Ghost's Words Intellectual Space* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1998), 310. Hereafter cited as *GWIS*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[2] For example, Ning Wang, *Translated Modernities: Literary and Cultural Perspectives on Globalisation and China*, (Ottawa: Legas Publishing, 2010). Xiaoping Wang, *Contending for the Chinese Modern: The Writing of Fiction in the Great Transformative Epoch of Modern China, 1937-1949*, (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2015).

identity theory[3], comparing Chinese and Western modernity. To achieve this, the thesis will evaluate how three writers – the Chinese émigrés Yang Lian, Ha Jin, and Ouyang Yu, and the Australian writer Nicholas Jose – treat China in their works, and how, following a west to east development path of modernity, they examine the development of Chinese modernity in thought and culture following the 'Reform and Opening Up,' the period of liberalisation following the Cultural Revolution (1978).[4] Because of the Reform and Opening up, Chinese people have had the opportunity to study, visit and settle abroad, and foreigners have had the opportunity to study and work in China. These opportunities provide these three contemporary writers experiences in foreign countries absorbing and reacting to foreign cultures.

This thesis will engage with several theories of identity, ranging from Jacques Lacan and the formation of the subject and the Other to Stuart Hall's dialectical notion of individual and collective identity generated from the self's negotiation with otherness in its various formations. Under the umbrella cases of identity theory, Stuart Hall's interpretation of the relationship between the self and the Other would be used to analyse from social implications, especially in Yang Lian's poems. Yang Lian's exploration of identity is obviously embodied in three stages of his writing in exile, which could be summarised as confusion of identity, crisis of identity and harmonisation of identity. The search for the self is always accompanied by influences from others. Stuart Hall's interpretation of the relationship between the self and the Other undergirds my analysis of this process reflected in Yang Lian's poetry. When it comes to psychological activities of characters, Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the relation between the subject and the other/Other, The Mirror Stage, transference and projection will be used to analyse some of Ha Jin and Nicholas Jose's novels. In Ha Jin's *Waiting*, I will use Lacan's interpretation of the relation between the subject and the Other to analyse the process of identity-building of Shuyu Liu. In Ha Jin's *War Trash*, I will use the interpretation of The Mirror Stage and transference from Lacan to analyse how the individual became detached from the group and then find his identity. In Nicholas Jose's *Original Face*, I will use Lacan's interpretation of other/Other and projection to analyse how the identity of Zhou Huang gradually became complete, what contributions Australian characters and other Chinese ones

[3] I will use the cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall's critical framework of cultural identity and diaspora to examine matters of personal and national identity in my chosen writers: Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu.

[4] Reform and Opening Up is a policy that China began to implement at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1978, which is to reform in China and open to the outside world.

have done to this process and how Jose explained the communication between China and Australia and kept the ongoing introduction of Chinese culture to the West. For more individual writers, I use interpretation from other theorists. In Ha Jin's *In the Pond*, I will use Manuel Castells' interpretation of three stages of identity categorised as legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity to analyse Shao Bin's identity-building. Castells' three divisions of identity according to forms and origins also correspond to three stages of Jian Wan's self-development in Ha Jin's *The Crazed*. In Nicholas Jose's *The Rose Crossing*, I will use Kathleen Woodward's interpretation of the second mirror stage to analyse Edward Popple's emotional and identity shifts, trying to rationalise his acceptance of Chinese culture, and then help readers to understand Nicholas Jose's intention to introduce China and its culture to the west, especially to Australia. In Nicholas Jose's *The Red Thread*, I will analyse this novel with Ruth as the main objective, using the interpretation of bisexuality and its presence in feminist theory to support my analysis of the triangular relationship among two females (Ruth and Han) and one male (Shen Fuling) and see how Nicholas Jose introduces China, especially classical ancient Chinese works to the west. In Ouyang Yu's *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, I will use the interpretation of stereotype (in)accuracy from Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee to explain how Chinese characters find their way out physically and spiritually through breaking the stereotype of both Chinese and western world with Ouyang Yu's subjectivity. In Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*, I will use the interpretation of relationship between desire and happiness from Shigehiro Oishi, Erin Westgate, Jane Tucker and Asuka Komiya to explain why and how Jing Ying focused on the ideal instead of the present. In Ouyang Yu's *Loose: A Wild History*, I will use Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff's interpretation of diaspora identity, especially the relation between life story telling and identity to analyse this process, trying to figure out his feelings for Australia and China when he needs to travel between them. In Ouyang Yu's *Diary of a Naked Official*, I will use Hanna Segal's interpretation of projective identification to analyse the self-object relation between the protagonist and female characters, trying to figure out the role which female characters played in the development of protagonist's self.

Character is a consistent literary term used throughout the thesis as it is the most frequent topic of content analysis. Except for literary theorisations, the interpretations of identity from Stuart Hall, Jacques Lacan and Manuel Castells which belong to cultural studies, psychoanalysis and sociology are widely deployed. The use of extra-literary theorisations of identity in the analysis of personae on poems and fictional persons in novels is because four writers imbue characters with cultural imprinting from both West and China. Julian Murphet illustrates that characters

are not particularly invented out of the wishes of a writer, 'those wishes are already shaped and informed by the objective social conditions of literature itself, very much including contemporary character systems. So the multivoiced condition of modern characters is, in part, a layered effect of the novel's ability to cannibalise a range of structural organisation. What a character says, how he/she thinks or reflects, the various semes that gather to his/her name, all this amounts to a spectroscopic analysis in the medium of language of the various constituent components of his/her genetic and ideological make-up, the inconsistent residual stock types.'[5] This also echoes what Fernando Ferrara calls the 'social personalities available for representation on the social market itself.'[6] To resolve the social, cultural and psychological representations of characters, the thesis rests the model of identity as a methodological instrument, which includes these perspectives.

Stuart Hall's theoretical work in cultural studies provides a clarifying framework within which to consider writers' negotiations with their home country and their status within their adopted nations and cultures. 'Hall's work develops a narrative model of identity, whereby the subject's identity is narrated in one's own self constructed from the position of the "other".'[7] 'The self – the human subject – is formed and maintained through bonds with others, to which the self owes its existence. Others have also facilitated the coming-into-being of the self and sustain its ongoing attempts to claim a foothold in the world.'[8] Humans are naturally social, so from the earliest stages of human history, the self has been involved in an ethical relationship with others. This theoretical framework underpins much of the substance of the thesis and its investigations into how four writers negotiate matters of identity, and it will be made explicit as a heuristic in interpreting the poetry of Yang Lian. Protagonists in Ha Jin's novels either try to reshape identity but fail, or else in the process of self-development or otherwise detached from the group are able to discover their identity. Therefore, it is suitable to refer to Manuel Castells' three divisions of identity and Jacques Lacan's relationship between the subject and the Other, The Mirror Stage and transference for Ha Jin chapter's analysis. Nicholas Jose intends to

[5] Julian Murphet, "Character". In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, ed. Paula Rabinowitz (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 198.
[6] Fernando Ferrara, "Theory and Model for the Structural Analysis of Fiction", *New Literary History* 5 (1974): 254.
[7] Stuart Hall, *Essential Essays*, Volume II, ed. David Morley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 70. Hereafter cited as *EE,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[8] Mari Ruti, "Breaking the Obstinacy of Being: Levinas's Ethics of the Face". In *Between Levinas and Lacan: Self, Other, Ethics* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 1. Hereafter cited as BOB, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

introduce a greater understanding of China to the West (especially Australia) through his writing. His focus on intertwining Chinese with Australians in his novels attempts to promote the relationship between China and the West through the mutual influence between both groups of characters. Kathleen Woodward's interpretation of the second mirror stage, Lacan's other/Other and projection and Marjorie Garber's bisexual triangle are used to analyse his characters. Ouyang Yu is more concerned about the state of Chinese people living in Australia. They have a dual cultural identity, so are more likely to struggle in the process of self-construction. The writer keeps an eye both on the development of protagonists' self and their feelings in the process. To explain how characters find their way out physically and mentally, I will use the interpretation of stereotype (in)accuracy from Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee, the relationship between desire and happiness from Shigehiro Oishi, Erin Westgate, Jane Tucker and Asuka Komiya, diaspora identity, especially the relation between life story telling and identity from Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, and interpretation of projective identification from Hanna Segal as strong support.

The works of Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu are apt cases to apply Hall's cultural studies framework regarding identity. Each author's writing involves China, and their works reflect and evaluate the modernisation of China, mirroring the development of Chinese modernity in ideology and culture. When each of these four authors wrote about China from 1990s to 2000s, China was at the height of its modernisation drive. China actively participates in economic globalisation, encouraging transnational economic and cultural exchanges. It was in this era that these four writers went abroad/came to China.

Yang Lian was born in Bern, Switzerland, and settled in Beijing with his parents at six years of age. From 1988 he travelled widely as a visiting writer and scholar; today he resides between Berlin and London. As an overseas Chinese writer with a Western cultural background, Yang Lian combines Western culture and a deep knowledge of Chinese tradition in his poems. Poetry is the only free part in his life. Therefore, he expresses himself freely through writing poems in Chinese. Elements regarding traditional Chinese culture are commonly seen in his poems, such as Buddha, arhat, Eight-Diagram and ancient Chinese poetry. His exploration of identity has also been reflected in poems, which could be separated into three stages – confusion of identity (*Masks and Crocodile* and *When the Sea Stands Still*), crisis of identity (*Concentric Circle*, *Sixteeners*, and *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*) and harmonisation of identity (*Narrative Poem*). He writes about his adherence to Chinese tradition in the form of modern poetry.

Ha Jin joined the People's Liberation Army at the age of 14 before applying for a scholarship from the Department of English, Brandeis University (United States), in 1985. Following his doctorate in 1993 he moved to Massachusetts and has taught at Boston University ever since. Ha Jin is a productive writer, composing in English since his first novel was published in 1998. Among all his novels, main characters are Chinese, and four of them which I chose to analyse – *In the Pond*, *Waiting*, *The Crazed* and *War Trash* – are set in China after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The narrative events befalling his characters portrayals of that time. Ha Jin rarely went back to China after studying in the United States, but he wrote about what had really happened in his life when he was in still China. He writes about China in a broadly Western writing style. In this way, he works on realistic themes which could be accepted by both Western and Chinese readers.

Nicholas Jose arrived in China in 1983 as part of a 'studying abroad' program. From 1986 to 1987 he worked at the Beijing Foreign Studies and East China Normal universities, and from 1987 to 1990 at the Australian Embassy in Beijing as a cultural counsellor. Four of his seven published novels involve Chinese culture, history and lifestyle: *Avenue of Eternal Peace*, *The Rose Crossing*, *The Red Thread*, and *Original Face*. Of these, *Avenue of Eternal Peace* was written while at the Australian Embassy in Beijing, where he was treated as a friendly envoy of cultural communication between Australia and China. Jose has a Chinese cultural background, has observed China from a Western perspective, and his works on China combine Chinese culture and Western tradition. His works, therefore, provide a perspective from the 'other' to understand the development of Chinese modernity, providing an added dimension to the subject matter and themes of this thesis.

Ouyang Yu settled in Melbourne, Australia after his graduation as a PhD from La Trobe University, yet he repeatedly hit a wall when trying to enter Australian academia. His unpleasant experiences in China as a youth and in Australia while trying to establish an academic career has resulted in critical views towards both countries and their cultures, reflected in both his poems and novels. I will mainly focus on his four novels regarding writing about China – *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, *The English Class*, *Loose: A Wild History* and *Diary of a Naked Official*. Different from Ha Jin's satiric realism and Nicholas Jose's tendency towards romanticism, Ouyang Yu develops and exhibits a range of postmodern techniques when writing these books. This causes difficulties for readers to put themselves in his shoes,

but his work and the attitudes towards China and Australia conveyed by his words are worthy of close consideration.

Transnational and global viewpoints are necessary when discussing the meaning of modernity. In *Planetary Modernism Provocations on Modernity Across Time*, Susan Stanford Friedman suggests the importance of scale in rethinking modernity. 'To remain locked into the conventional periodisations of modernity (e.g., early, middle, and late modernity) and modernism (e.g., late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries) results in a centre/ periphery and diffusionist model that undermines transnational or global revisionisms.'[9] To strengthen cultural dimensions of modernity, she refers to Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar who insists that 'Western modernity came first, and alternative modernities are in some sense always already reactive to it in the globalised present.' (*PM*, 150)

> Born in and of the West some centuries ago under relatively specific sociohistorical conditions, modernity is now everywhere. It has arrived not suddenly but slowly, bit by bit, over the longue durée – awakened by contact; transported through commerce, administered by empires, bearing colonial inscriptions; propelled by nationalism; and now increasingly steered by global media, migration, and capital.[10]

The contact with the West witnesses the emergence of Chinese modernity, whose development undergoes a process from enforced to participatory within a global model. While focusing on this trend, the place of Chinese modernity as a response to Western modernity is worthy of sustained literary attention.

This thesis represents an exploration of how these four writers navigate the ideological and cultural development of Chinese modernity following China's Reform and Opening up, a process strongly influenced by the West.[11] A thumbnail sketch of that history will put this East-West relationship in context, suggesting how China absorbed Western ideas and practices, and how in turn these were directed to the development of a modernity with Chinese characteristics. From the time of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century China has charted a course of modernisation, at times imposed forcefully by rival nations. Early pathways to economic and

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[9] Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 8. Hereafter cited as *PM*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[10] Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 1.
[11] The understanding of modernity in this thesis is mainly from the ideological and cultural aspects.

cultural influence were forged through trade and war. Such events as the MacCartney Embassy in 1793 provided an inroad for Western modernisation to impose itself upon China by virtue of trade, ambassadorial representation, and the establishment of ports friendly to Western trading interests. This eventually led to the promotion of China's modernisation.

After the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century, China's ideological and cultural fields were stalled until prominent figures in China recognised the importance of and advocated for learning advanced science and technology to develop talent. Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan were advocates of the Westernisation Movement in the late Qing Dynasty. To 'enrich the country and strengthen the army', they grasped this chance to gradually develop China's modernised military and civilian industry. 'Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who led Hundred Days Reform of 1898, advocated learning from the West, promoted the development of science and culture, reformed the political and educational systems, and developed agriculture, industry, and commerce.'[12] The infiltration of Western ideas continued in gradual fashion, but their effect was not fully transformative until the Reform and Opening Up (1978). Thereafter, China learned from and communicated with the West to improve its economic, political and cultural strengths, and effectively adapted international measures to local conditions.

The transport of modernity often accompanies migration. Freidman refers to Nikos Papastergiadis to illustrate that 'migration is a central force in the constitution of modernity … The metaphor of the journey, the figure of the stranger and the experience of displacement have been at the centre of many of the cultural representations of modernity.'[13] To echo Papastergiadis, Freidman further explains the journal of modernity. 'It invokes human mobilities as constitutive of the modern – movements from the physical and geopolitical to the psychological, philosophical, etc. As such, diasporas reflect dislocations of both space and time – material movements that signal the far more profound psychological effects of displacement.' (*PM*, 284) By virtue of this, the writing in conditions of diaspora/migration by four writers showcases the constitution of Chinese modernity as a response to Western modernity. The focus of this thesis on writers and their works to have emerged from China after its Reform and Opening Up also helps to identify the period of the development of Chinese modernity in

[12] Bansi Chen, *Wu xu bian fa=Hundred Days Reform* (Beijing: Beijing Times Chinese Press, 2016), 10.
[13] Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 10.

ideology and culture. Identity theory is a vital methodological strut to support the analysis. To achieve this, I use Hall's critical framework to examine matters of personal and national identity in the writings of Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu.

'Identity is not a sealed or closed totality, but rather it is composed of more than one discourse and written in – and through – ambivalence and desire.' (*EE*. 71) Therefore, the notion of identity is fundamentally contradictory. Hall incorporated the ideas of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault to enrich the content of his theory from the perspectives of difference and discourse. Homi Bhabha argues: 'Ambivalence and antagonism accompany any act of cultural translation because negotiating with the 'difference of the other' reveals the radical insufficiency of our own systems of meaning and signification.' (*EE*, 114). Foucault defines discourse as 'the practice of producing meaning; because all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect, and discourse then enters into and influences all social practices.' (*EE*, 155) This interplay aligns with what John Scott thinks of tradition, which is 'a special sort of discursive concept in the sense that it performs a distinctive kind of labour. It depends upon the interaction between conflict and contention. It is a space of dispute as much as of consensus, of discourse as much as of accord.'[14]

These writers' diverse histories and cultural backgrounds shapes their cultural identities. This cultural identity constitutes a 'positionality,' provisionally referred to as an 'identity.' So, 'each identity-story is inscribed in the positions we take up and identify with, and a writer's cultural identity will change with geography and culture. We have to live this ensemble of identity-positions in all its specificities.' (*EE*, 204) Thus, the identity of a writer warrants investigation insofar as it might shape or explain narrative choices, imagery, point of view, characterisation, and other technical aspects of poetry and prose.

'To have a cultural identity is to be in touch with an essential core – a specific history and culture which binds the future, present and past into an unbroken line. This umbilical cord is what we call "tradition," the test of which is its truth to its origins, its self-presence to itself, its "authenticity".' (*EE*, 209) For my four chosen writers, their historical and cultural backgrounds (Chinese or Western) in which they were born, find expression through their works. We can

[14] Gordon Marshall, John Scott, *A Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Gordon Marshall and John Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 119. Hereafter cited as *ADS*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

see a writer's preservation of tradition in Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu's cultural backgrounds. For example, tradition is what the contemporary Chinese poet-in-exile Yang Lian adheres to in his restless works, in which the self negotiates its identity.

In the following chapters, I seek to explore the authors' identity construction in the analysis of fictional personae because the writers project their experience and feelings on characters, which would be reflected in fictional modelling. John Frow demonstrates its feasibility as 'fictional characters have a more clearly modal existence than real people do (they are more clearly constructs of the imagination), and in that sense they are exemplary of the way a mode of reality is ascribed to persons of all sorts.'[15] As such, fictional characters act as textual proxies for authors themselves and speak for them in their own writing.

The thesis will comprise four main chapters, each subdivided into sections, structured as follows.

Yang Lian

Chapter One examines Yang Lian's works composed when he first travelled abroad (*Masks and Crocodile*, *When the Sea Stands Still*) – a period of time during which he explores and negotiates confusions over his identity. As a foreign poet his identity is not yet established, so the question of 'the self' cannot be answered definitively. I will then progress to a focus on contradiction in his collections *Concentric Circle*, *Sixteeners*, and *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*. Contradiction, a manifestation of the contrast between two opposites, signals a condition of despair. Yang Lian strives to find an adequate response to contradiction, and his questioning of 'self' reaches its crisis. My exposition will then progress to exploring Yang Lian's description of family affection and love in *Narrative Poem*. In the company of his family, the atmosphere of his self-questioning becomes intimate and warm. This represents the first time that Yang Lian composes an extended piece to describe family and love, wherein his writing style evolves to reveal a warmth between the lines, rather than his former somewhat remote style. Here Yang Lian temporarily escapes the predicament of conscious creation, slowing the frequency of his questioning of his identity and its relation to his world.

[15] John Frow, *Character and Person* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), vi.

Ha Jin

Chapter Two demonstrates how the changing context of Ha Jin's creative content is consistent with the pace of development in China. As his works progress his thinking evolves from current social phenomena to the principles of self, gradually expanding out to social reality. My analysis of his works first examines *In the Pond*. Through the description of the long-standing social phenomenon of drawing caricatures to satirise leaders, I reflect on Ha Jin's attention to Chinese subject matter when then living in a foreign country. The protagonist Shao Bing in *In the Pond* is dissatisfied with his becoming a victim of unit leaders flattering the boss, so he draws caricature to satirise their behaviour. The year in which this novel was created (1998) was not an era during which Chinese satirical cartoons were popularised (in the 1930s and 1950–1970s), but Ha Jin keenly captures a theme prevalent in period satirical cartoons and manages to convey this in his characters. This is a reflection of Ha's sensitivity to social developments in China at that time. I then progress to *Waiting*, wherein Ha Jin expresses conflict between Party spirit and human nature. In this novel the protagonist, a soldier Kong Lin who serves as a military doctor, is not permitted to divorce his wife from an arranged marriage, so remains with his family. The self abides by the popular Party principles of the time, but risks getting lost in these principles. My focus then progresses to *The Crazed*, wherein Ha Jin starts to write about the value of the self, family, work and society. The protagonist Jian Wan is arranged by the department to take care of Professor Yang, who was hospitalised after suffering a stroke. Professor Yang is both his teacher and his future father-in-law. Because of his illness the venerable professor acts erratically and often complains that his academic life is meaningless. These 'crazy words' make Wan, preparing for his PhD at Peking University, lose himself in thought, uncertain if the life he pursues has meaning. This kind of inquiry is reflected in Ha Jin's works not only at an individual level, but also at a level of broader social significance. Here, Ha Jin's focus gradually shifts from self to society. This chapter then concludes my analysis of *War Trash*, wherein Ha created the image of a soldier who had experienced the Korean War in the People's Volunteer Army, using the words of his characters to show that a person living in a fantasy can only see reality clearly when they suffer physically and mentally, and progressively become more self-aware. The main characters in this novel are fictional, but many events and details are based on reality, written by Ha Jin after reading dozens of Chinese and English texts regarding the Korean War. Ha Jin concentrates on the experience of a special group of people in Chinese society. While he lives abroad and writes in English, several of his novels reveal his commitment to his Chinese cultural identity. In Ha

Jin's words, 'the most significant literature dealing with human migration has been written after experiencing exile.'[16] The analysis of Ha Jin's writing in exile is structured mainly around his notions of cultural identity embodied in his works.

Nicholas Jose

In Nicholas Jose's four novels involving China, the significance of Chinese characters in his works increases as the settings for his works increasingly resemble China. I will first discuss *The Avenue of Eternal Peace*, wherein the protagonist Walley Frith is a doctor and university professor who specialises in cancer. After burning out in Australia he accepts an invitation as a visiting professor to Peking Union Medical College, looking forward to a new life, and to seeing Professor Hsu Chien Lung, a famous expert in his research field. However, in a bizarre twist, it transpires that Professor Hsu has either disappeared, or seems never to have existed. Walley's background in Western culture combined with his new living situation in China leads to a state of contradiction in his life. As Jose's first novel on Chinese themes, the author has yet to integrate Chinese and Western elements into his work, resulting in a dominant structure of opposition. My analysis then will progress to Zhu Taizhao, a Chinese person and main character in his work *The Rose Crossing*. Taizhao is an incompetent Chinese prince of the Southern Ming Dynasty who gets lost on his way to Rome to petition the Pope. On an unknown island in the Indian Ocean, Taizhao meets and falls in love with an English girl Rosamund. She keeps her father Edward Popple's company for a voyage. At the beginning of the novel, Edward has unusual feelings for his daughter, but he eventually accepts his daughter and Taizao's love and is willing to be her guardian. In this work the collision of Chinese and Western cultures gives birth to a new life. My exposition will then progress to the past and present lives of a Chinese and Australian couple in *The Red Thread* based in Shanghai. The protagonists are Shen Fuling (a Chinese appraiser for an Auction house) and Ruth (an Australian painter) whose romance spans two centuries, having transmigrated from their former identities of Shen Fu and Yun. These two characters are derived from the classical Chinese literature *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, which, according to Jose, also represents the inspiration of his *The Red Thread*. Here, the background of Jose's writing in China has shifted to its mainland, and Chinese characters represent one present-day protagonist, and two in their previous lives. Finally, this

[16] Jin Ha, *The Writer as Migrant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), x. Hereafter cited as *TWM*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

chapter will conclude with the theme of terror, which reigns again in *Original Face* based in Sydney, Australia. Here Lewis Lin, a taxi driver, photographer, and recent arrival from Beijing, happens upon a crime scene, and then later finds himself embroiled in an immigration scam. This work is adapted from an ancient Zen koan. People mask their identities, but these hidden selves are eventually revealed. It tells a story between a Chinese person and other Australians, with the Chinese person as the protagonist. Jose's works are typical of cross-cultural literature, where Western tradition and Chinese culture become increasingly integrated in his books.

Ouyang Yu

Chapter Four will focus on Ouyang Yu's four novels which concern writing about China in English: *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* (2002), *The English Class* (2010), *Loose: A Wild History* (2011) and *Diary of a Naked Official* (2014). The first three were called *The Huangzhou Trilogy* (because Ouyang Yu was born in Huangzhou, Hubei Province) which attracted a good deal of scholarly attention and critical analysis. Much of this work concentrated on Yu's narrative method (trauma), his creative style (post-modern and avant-garde) and his exploration of identity crisis (double identity and cultural identity). Scholars used such interpretive frameworks as the 'other' as well as cultural hegemony in Orientalism to support their arguments. Few scholars take all of his English novels as the object of analysis, nor do they explain how he contributes to a more comprehensive image of modern China by reflecting both modern Australian and Chinese cultural backgrounds in his novels as a fusion of two cultures. Ouyang does not care for the feelings of readers; instead, he emphasises the importance of expressing oneself, intentionally inserting a lot of his own feelings and commentary while writing, which has seen his writing classified as metafiction.[17] I will analyse how he as another cultural minority writer expresses his thoughts on mainstream culture (some of them negative and all of them candid) and how he might be taken seriously through a combination of projecting his experience in fictional plots, and trying to discern why he received very different reviews In Australia and China, keeping in mind the dangers of conflating characters with their author. Compared with W. G. Sebald's usage of photography, his techniques have been

[17] Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion. In other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction'. See Mark Currie, *Metafiction*, (Oxon [England: Routledge, 2013), 43.

associated with metafiction among other characteristics of postmodern prose. This moves away from naive realism emphasises the artifice of his writing, which Ouyang puts to effect in his critique of arguments around Orientalism, but he then takes this further into a China-Australia relation in a globalist, post-WTO order.

My research will address the development of Chinese modernity through the works of overseas Chinese writers with dual cultural backgrounds, and a foreign writer whose subject of creation is China. These writers and their works are representative of the time. The writing theme and dual cultural backgrounds are what these writers have in common. The most important reason I chose these writers is that their thinking and education, being influenced from the West to China, is consistent with the title of my thesis 'Modernity: From the West to the East'. The path and the direction are the same. Yang Lian's poems reflect the exploration of his personal and national identity as an overseas Chinese poet. Although Ha Jin lives abroad, his works reflect the current situation of Chinese society at that time. Nicholas Jose's novels, which are works of a foreign writer, provide a unique perspective for obtaining a complete picture of the development of Chinese modernity at that time. Ouyang Yu focusses more on the lives and mental state of Chinese people living in Australia. Their works are characteristic of the time, which can truly reflect period personal and social development.

Chapter One

Transcultural Identity in the Poetry of Yang Lian

The poetic output of Yang Lian, the subject of this chapter, straddles China and life in Europe, New Zealand, Australia and the United States, contributing to a complex, multiple sense of poetic identity. He writes in Chinese despite being fluent in several European languages, persisting in his exploration of traditional Chinese culture despite the obvious influence of Western culture and modernity more generally. His poetry combines modernity and tradition in terms of its subject matter and prosody, reflecting his life in which he is able to bring the outside world and traditional Chinese culture into fruitful dialogue.

Stuart Hall's interpretation of identity can be broken down into three components, the combination of which will structure the following discussion of Yang Lian's poetry: confusion of identity (exploration in confusion), crisis of identity (the exploration reaches a point of coherence) and harmonisation of identity (the poet is warmed by his wife's love and the hope that his father brought him when his heart drops into struggle and entanglement). Rather than only being imposed from outside, identity for Hall is also established from within through the differences of different subjects. This sense of self is acquired via further reinforcing one's previous role by comparing oneself with others. The subject is constructed through the differentiation with 'the Other,' where to affirm the self means to deny the 'non-self.'[18]

This chapter is structured in the following way: section 1 examines Yang Lian's works composed when he first travelled abroad – *Masks & Crocodile* and *When the Sea Stands Still* – in a period of confused questioning: since the poet's identity as an overseas poet had not yet been established, the question of 'the self' could not be answered definitively. Section 2 focusses on contradiction in Yang Lian's collections *Concentric Circles*, *Sixteeners*, and *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*: in these books, contradiction, written in words of despair, is a manifestation of the contrast between two opposites – persistence to identity exploration and struggle in the process. The poet strives to find an answer in contradiction, and his questioning of 'self' also

[18] Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference", *Radical America* 23, no. 4 (1991): 20.

reaches a critical point in this stage. Section 3 concerns Yang Lian's description of family affection and love in *Narrative Poem*: in the company of his family, the atmosphere of the poet's self-questioning turns from the chill of contradiction to the warmth of affection. This is the first time in his career that Yang Lian composes an extended piece to describe family and love. He reveals warmth between the lines, departing from his earlier dispassionate and straightforward language style. In this stage the poet temporarily escapes the predicament of conscious creation, where the pace of questioning slows but persists. The process of questioning can never really end, but at this point it grants him a reprieve.

Self and Other: Yang Lian as Emigré

This chapter will first develop an interpretation of Yang Lian's work as an emigré poet structured by Hall's identity theory. Since Yang's poetry as composed after he left China, it can be interpreted both from the inside (a Chinese poet who insists on writing in Chinese), and from the outside (a Chinese poet living abroad). His experience in exile as an overseas Chinese writer inevitably divides his identity, embodied in his writing. Scholars have yet to clarify how this manifests in his work. Second, I intend to explain how Yang Lian attempts to install a mode of modernity in Chinese poetry. He is one of the first contemporary poets to seriously consider the relationship between 'tradition' and 'modernity', and to make the tradition 're-open' or transform to 'modernity.'[19] According to Yang Lian, 'any living and open "tradition" is naturally built upon the base of "the self", that is to say, upon the base of the subject located within the moment of "modernity". The "modernity" of any human subject must include a "rediscovery" of tradition located within, making tradition and subjectivity interdependent.' (*GWIS*, 190) For example, Confucius' doctrine is the product of his personality. Today, the adherence to the Confucian tradition is actually his students and their descendants' interpretation and adaptation based on inheritance of Confucius' personal theory, beginning with Mencius and continuing through the Neo-Confucian movement in the 11th-12th century. In the process, Confucianism is mediated by texts and traditions sometimes far removed from the historical Confucius. Scholarly analysis of contemporary Chinese poetry would benefit from attention to the spirit of questioning the self, which is reflected in Yang Lian's poems and in his poetics.

[19] Xiaodu Tang, "终于被大海摸到了内部"——从大海意象看杨炼漂泊中的写作 "The Sea Finally Touched the Interior – From the Sea Image of Yang Lian's Exile Writing", *Contemporary Writers Review (当代作家评论)*, no. 6 (2007): 28-44. Hereafter cited as TSFTI, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

Stuart Hall's theoretical work in cultural studies shows that 'identity is narrated in one's own self but is constructed from the position of the Other.' (*EE*, 70) 'The self – the human subject – is formed and maintained through bonds to others, to whom the self owes its very existence. Others facilitate the coming-into-being of the self and sustain its ongoing attempts to claim a foothold in the world.' (BOB, 1) 'This is the Other that one can only know from the place from which one stands. This is the self as it is inscribed in the gaze of the Other.' (*EE*, 69) Human beings are social in nature. From the very beginning, the self is involved in the ethical relationship with others.

In Stuart Hall's view, 'identity is not a sealed or closed totality; instead, it is composed of more than one discourse and written in and through ambivalence and desire.' (*EE*, 71) Therefore, the notion of identity is fundamentally multiple, divergent, and potentially contradictory. Hall develops his concepts of difference and discourse by drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. As Homi Bhabha argues, 'Ambivalence and antagonism accompany any act of cultural translation because negotiating with the "difference of the Other" reveals the radical insufficiency of our own systems of meaning and signification.' (*EE*, 114) Differences shade imperceptibly into each other. Stuart Hall Summarises Foucault's notion of discourse as 'the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So, discourse enters into and influences all social practices.' (*EE*, 155) This interplay aligns with what John Scott defines as tradition: 'a special sort of discursive concept in the sense that it performs a distinctive kind of labour.' (*ADS*, 119) To be more specific, people of different nations should persist and inherit their traditions. They need to find a balance between conflict and reconciliation – everyone from the same cultural background need to digest tradition and recognise it as part of himself/herself. 'It is a space of dispute as much as of consensus, of discourse as much as of accord.' (*ADS*, 119) Tradition is what the contemporary Chinese poet-in-exile Yang Lian always returns to in his works, in relation to which the self-negotiates its identity.

Yang Lian's identity as a Chinese poet is worth studying for two reasons: firstly, the particularity of the poet's experience shapes the complexity and multiplicity of his identity. When he was a child, the poet lived as an overseas Chinese. In his prime in the 1990s he was forced to go abroad and lived in several places until he settled down in London. His growth has been influenced by the cultures of Switzerland, China, Australia, and other countries, but

Chinese culture still has the deepest influence on him. In particular, Chinese classical poetry, such as Qu Yuan's poetry written during the Warring States period in the fourth century BCE, has exerted a significant influence on Yang Lian's work. Secondly, although he is physically separated from his cultural traditions, he has been deeply influenced by tradition, absorbing it into his transient life. The search for the self is always accompanied by influences from others. Stuart Hall's interpretation of the relationship between the self and the Other undergirds my analysis of this process reflected in Yang Lian's poetry.

Yang Lian insists on writing in Chinese even when writing abroad. Although he grew up bathed in modernisation and influenced by Western culture, he persists in the pursuit of tradition: by which he means traditional Chinese culture. In the poet we can see the harmonious coexistence of modernity and tradition. Modernity does not stand in contradiction to tradition; instead, its development relies on the recognition of tradition. As Yang Lian said, 'The rediscovery of tradition in a human being – that is, a "living tradition" – must be based on the "self" (the premise of "modernity") and its energy.' (*GWIS*, 190) Everyone – the self – bridge both sides (modernity and tradition). Yang Lian is a representative as a modern poet who deploys the resources of tradition. On the one hand, he pursues freedom; on the other hand, he maintains tradition by choices of poetic genre, subject matter and figurative language. His adherence to tradition and, like Qu Yuan, his creation of a 'poetic world' both echoes and resists the real world. He draws on the essence of his own language and uses words to reveal the hidden inspiration of his own culture. At the same time, he leaves his country to reach out to the new world while opening up the outside world to share what he has learned from his culture. In this way, with his own efforts, Yang Lian's mother tongue has gained new life, and the culture has been more widely spread. This is Yang Lian's self-consciousness, his active inquiry, and his heartfelt love for his mother tongue and the culture of his home country.

In addition to Qu Yuan's poems, there is clearly a link between Yang Lian's poems with other classical Chinese poems in each section. For example, in Section 1, it is the pine in Neighbour 1 and Zhen Liu's Zeng Zong Di (For Cousin). In Section 2, it is the joy in early spring in Notes of a Blissful Ghost 8 and Zhizhang He's Yong Liu (Praise the Willow). In Section 3, they are the love in A street name makes a love look fondly back and Li Bai's Chang Gan Xing[20] 2, and

[20] It is the title of a song medley collected by Yuefu, an institution specialising in the management of music, dance and singing. It was formally established during the reign of Emperor Wudi of the Western Han Dynasty.

the romance in Ocean, requiem, the first time and once more and Beifeng·Jigu in *Shi Jing*. Different classical Chinese poems are useful in different stages of Yang Lian's writing, but all of them reflect how the poet deals with tradition. 'Any poet's spiritual vision, if it is to avoid being incomplete and thin, must also include a profound reflection on the level of "tradition" .' (*GWIS*, 190) For Yang Lian, as discussed above, it means to combine traditional Chinese poems with modern poems he created.

> I (Yang Lian) often refer to Qu Yuan in some places – especially in discussing the influence of his Tian Wen and Li Sao on me from a 'structural' point of view – because Qu Yuan's poems have nothing to do with who he is, what he has experienced, or even whether he exists. The cross-referencing of his poems and mine has become an interesting, even organic phenomenon in the China-Chinese poetic tradition. When the poem tears away the illusion of time, all the works written in this language formed a multi-level spatial structure. It is complete because every author is inevitably a part of it and is considered by it; It is also open and ready to accommodate any new possibilities. Only in relation to this whole can one speak of the meaning or meaninglessness of a poet's writing. (*GWIS*, 279)

The same is true for his focus on the other ancient Chinese poets' works – all of them contribute to the meaning of Yang Lian's poems. The reason why any style of ancient Chinese poets can be directly compared with Yang Lian's own creative style is that there is no time limit in classical Chinese poems. On the one hand, Chinese verbs have no tenses. Each action could take place either in the present or in the future. Yang Lian believes that 'the ancient writers, faced with Tang Poetry, Song Poetry, Yuan Drama, etc., did not have a standard of value judgment based on the sequence of "time", and they would not belittle it or even discard it because it was a "past" form or a form which was mainly popular in the past.' (*GWIS*, 279) This is the difference in time consciousness between Chinese and Western poetry.

> In the West, a poet who establishes a style, initiates a genre or even a movement is to create a stage in literature and art history marked by his/her own language. This stage must not be repeated with other stages, or it risks disappearing. Thus, a language type is always associated with a specific time. In China, time is not an issue. Many forms in ancient Chinese poetry, such as ancient style, four-character, five-character, seven-character poems in four lines, rhyme, and names of the tunes to which ci poems are composed, can be used for hundreds or thousands of years. It is enough that the poet writes his own style and is connected to all other poets through that style. (*GWIS*, 277)

On the other hand, the development of Chinese characters has never been interrupted. It is easier for modern Chinese poet to connect their poems with classical ones – their cultural heritage – regarding imagery.

Much of the existing research on Yang Lian's diasporic writing focuses on the analysis of certain images in the poems (such as the sea), or on the interpretation of language and structure. However, these studies mainly analyse Yang Lian's poems as expressions of the East and tend to interpret the concept of foreign land from the perspective of Chinese territory. Few studies start from the perspective of treating Yang Lian as an overseas Chinese poet, nor do they consider his creative process reflected through poetry, let alone study how his identity is constructed through the poems themselves. For example, from Chinese critic's perspective, in 'The Sea Finally Touched the Interior – From the Sea Image of Yang Lian's Exile Writing', the writer Xiaodu Tang analyses the ocean imagery and its relationship with other imageries together with Yang Lian's feeling in exile in his writing after he went abroad. He tended to only focus on technical and poetic matters in Yang Lian's poems, while I would be drawing works on Yang Lian from time to time, analysing what stylistic symbols, such as ocean, mean quite different in different stages of the poet's career and how they make contribution to the poet's exploration of identity. In 'Reshaping the Beauty of Tradition: On the 'Chineseness' Poetry Language in Yang Lian's Overseas Poetry', the writer Wangjunxiong Hu strengthens that 'Yang Lian inherited Chinese tradition, which was mainly reflected in writing in Chinese.'[21] In addition to language, I also focus on the link between classical Chinese poems and Yang Lian's poems to see how this transcultural immigrant poet combine tradition with modernity. In Hu's other papers, he analyses the language style and structure in *Concentric Circles*, *Notes of a Blissful Ghost* and *A tower built downstairs*. The writer Xiaofan Li analyses the sound and rhyme in *Narrative Poems* in 'On the Musical Creation of Yang Lian's *Narrative Poem*'. I will be absorbing these convincing analyses from other scholars and paying attention to more relevant poems from Yang Lian to more specific research on his transmission of Chinese tradition and the rationale of his identity exploration. My research aims to explore the process of how this poet's identity was built up, as a writer who insisted on creating poems in Chinese after he left China. Stuart Hall's identity theory helps elucidate these aspects of Yang Lian's poetic identity.

[21] Wangjunxiong Hu, 重塑传统之美：论杨炼海外诗歌的"中文性"诗语 "Reshaping the Beauty of Tradition: On the 'Chineseness' Poetry Language in Yang Lian's Overseas Poetry", *Journal of Guizhou Education University (贵州师范学院学报),* no. 11 (2016): 1-6.

Confusion of Identity

Exploration in Confusion — *Masks and Crocodile*

In Hall's view, identity originates in the narration of the self. As the rational part of a person, 'the self' coordinates contradictions according to the reality principle and finds expedient solutions as far as possible. It knows the purpose and direction of the activity and is the decision-maker of the individual's final behavioural performance.[22] Identity is not generated externally and then used to speak to others but is expressed through a narrative of the self. That is to say, identity is narrated in and by the self.

In the process of this narration of self, the position of the Other also contributes to the construction of identity. In contrast to the self, the Other can examine the self from another angle, and provide new information for the establishment of identity, making the content of identity more comprehensive. 'This is the self as it is inscribed in the gaze of the Other.' (*EE*, 69) A relatively well-formed identity cannot be obtained without objective evaluation from others.

I will now turn to Yang Lian's 1990 collection *Masks & Crocodile* – his first collection after leaving China – and will concentrate on the use of images referring to the 'face.' Yang Lian uses the image of the 'face' to consider the self from the Other's perspective. It represents the reflection of the self from the Other. As people cannot see their faces without help, the descriptions of faces come from others, who are the direct observers. The face here means what the self is like in others' eyes:

> face silent all along
> and you hide behind it
> lying

[22] Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Sigmund Freud*, trans. Hui Chen, Chencen Luo (Shanghai: East China University Press, 2019), 102. Hereafter cited as *SF*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

face spoken out too
like the same cruelly cheated
lie[23]

(Poem 7, ‘Masks’)

The image of the same person may vary when he/she/they are seen by many different eyes, as a thousand readers may create the visage of a thousand Hamlets:

staring face knocking into face on
the cracked dry wall
unable to see the you who is before the mirror

(Poem 4, ‘Masks’, *RPPFC*, 105)

These perceptions of the same self from different perspectives are bound to be inconsistent, and even collide when facing each other, resulting in contradictions and conflicts. After trying but failing to persuade each other, it would be wise to head separate ways without interfering:

so the face has turned around
wind and wave are calm and still
is another face

(Poem 20, ‘Masks’, *RPPFC*, 113)

The others from different perspectives draw conclusions about themselves which cannot be completely accepted and need to be selected due to the differences in standpoints and cognitive levels. The good and bad are intermingled in these conclusions, where deceptive and extreme views should be abandoned directly. Admitting to such statements can spread misdirection and, even worse, can lead to self-doubt:

[23] Lian Yang, *Riding Pisces: Poems from Five Collections*, trans. Brian Holton (London: Shearsman Books Ltd, the United Kingdom, 2008), 105. Hereafter cited as *RPPFC*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

people who have abandoned their faces
recognise each other at last

(Poem 21, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 113)

These 'faces' should be discarded so that the self is not blinded and covered up by improper opinions. However, those words will not go away, like how a criminal premeditating a crime will be easily caught:

lying has murdered the liar
like a face killing death
a person chasing a face

(Poem 23, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 115)

The conceited other wants to prove its absolute status and even to obliterate the self and replace it:

and the face killed too
forsaken on the wall by lying
lips widening in a rip-like grin

(Poem 24, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 115)

The struggle between the self and the Other continues in Masks 24, which is mainly reflected in the face's being killed. 'There is obviously something about the face that most viscerally conveys the vulnerability, defenselessness, woundability, and mortality of the Other.' (BOB, 3) As Emmanuel Levinas indicates, 'the face represents extreme exposure – before all human intending – as to a shot at "point blank" range.'[24] The face is also the location of 'ethics as first philosophy' – that is, Being for Others. However, it, the conceited other, will not succeed. The outcome of the struggle must be that the righteous self prevails over the vicious other. Although

[24] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 145.

the process will be tortuous, which is full of difficulties and dangers, including self-doubt, it is still the persistence of the right position that wins in the end.

On the way to discover the self, the poet will hear different voices. He records these sounds from different people in his poems, 'numberless faces below every face.' (Poem 30, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 119) When they talk together, it sounds like a symphony. To distinguish some specific part of the voice, you need to listen carefully. It needs to be more carefully identified to grasp the theme of these voices. Otherwise, the whole person will be covered by the wave of sound washing over them. It is not difficult to get lost in the rising and falling sound wave, but it is difficult to discern a relatively accurate tone. Just like these faces, if the eyes on them blink together, 'a liquid glance submerges you.' (Poem 30, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 119) You who float along the flood will find that everything reflects you. As long as the eye is watching, then the eyes of all things reflect you. As for which one is relatively true, the poet is at a loss, and the poet is still searching for it.

The mask is a concept that Yang Lian defines as the human visage after receiving the evaluation of the self from others. Stuart Hall states that 'the self is inscribed in the gaze of the Other.' (*EE*, 69) The influence of the Other is important for the integrity of the self. In Yang Lian's opinion, the mask is blank, covered with blank space, and simulates the face but is different from it. On the one hand, the mask, based on the self in the eyes of the Other, is influenced by the other, but not entirely consistent with the Other's view. On the other hand, 'a mask never talks to itself.' (Poem 29, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 119) which means there is no communication between the mask and the self. It follows that the mask is the mediating surface between the Other and the self. As the poet describes, it is blank, so there are infinite possibilities to write on it. For example, 'the gravestone is the last mask to be taken off.' (Poem 21, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 113) Here, the mask, which smells of death, marks the end of life. The next step after the end is rebirth, where people who have discarded their faces recognise each other and take a step toward an answer in their search for the self. The mask may seem like a hindrance, but at another angle, it becomes a help.

The mask is closely related to death. As Yang Lian writes, 'you see masks in a room by the sea.' (Poem 29, 'Masks', *RPPFC*, 119) The sea imagery and death imagery always appear together in Yang Lian's poems. Xiaodu Tang, one of Yang Lian's friends, believes that 'before creating poems of *When the Sea Stands Still* (1994), the split and variation of the image of the

sea shows a tendency of acceleration in Yang Lian's works, which coincides with his concentrated exploration of the themes of loneliness and forgetfulness in this period. Both are variations on the theme of death. Although these images of the sea in different contexts have different meanings and functions, they are full of the ruthless breath of death.' (TSFTI, 36) The self only recognises 'all things are you' when it sees the mask of death, and is drowned in the words of the Other, and carried away. In other words, every witness has an image of the self in their eyes, but authenticity needs to be screened by the self, and the mask can only do so much. On the way to self-cognition, the mask not only helps but also guides and prompts the poet. It helps the poet keep objective comments and be on the right track when exploring his identity.

The despair and loneliness of the poet in his search for his own identity is embodied in the section of his collection titled 'Crocodile'. At the beginning of this process, the poet appears in a new gesture, which is like a blank page waiting for the words to fill it:

> the crocodile's nostrils are sealed like a word
> disdaining to notice you
> merely floating on this white page
>
> (Poem 7, 'Crocodile', *RPPFC*, 123)

The crocodile may not seem to care about you, but it does. Here, the Other meets the self in the cruel image of the crocodile, frightening the latter:

> you despair of calling for help
> with long submerged words
> sink into water full of crocodiles
>
> (Poem 7, 'Crocodile', *RPPFC*, 123)

Living in a foreign land which is full of others, the poet needs to be involved in it, but he is not passive, because he observes that a word can make a crocodile close its snout. So he put forward his long-stored words and then chooses to sink into the water. This shows that the self is not passive in the action of others; on the contrary, it can actively communicate with them, so that both parties can clarify each other's intentions in order to gain a clear identity image. Identity,

woven into stories, partly exists in the imagination, and so the process itself is doomed to be fictional. Therefore, 'identity is partially constructed in the imagination, or at least in the realm of the imagination.'[25] In addition to words here referring to water (with crocodile), the links to page and writing also draw readers' attention. Here, the poet combines these elements he cannot live without when writing poems with imagination to show that the exploration of his identity has never slipped away from his mind:

in the night when you sit isolated and lonely
too many crocodiles come quietly ashore
like unreachable poems

(Poem 13, 'Crocodile', *RPPFC*, 127)

A poet abroad is lonely, and so are you exploring yourself. He is the most vulnerable and easily influenced when he is meditating, and this is an opportunity that the sensitive others will not miss:

creeping between five fingers
below the dense grass
you have long been unknowingly bitten

(Poem 13, 'Crocodile', *RPPFC*, 127)

This does not mean that the self is completely swallowed by the Other, and it does not conform to the Qu Yuan style of questioning spirit[26] that Yang Lian has always shown – endless insistence when exploring. It reflects the poet's momentary confusion, like the black in the crocodile's mouth, obscured, and yearning for the light of identity.

[25] Liang Zhang, "How to understand Stuart Hall's 'identity' properly?" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 18, no. 2 (2017): 188-196.
[26] Qu Yuan style of questioning spirit is a kind of independent thinking and the unremitting pursuit of truth. Qu Yuan is a very important classical Chinese poet. His style is called Sao ('骚'). It abandons the strict style of *Shi Jing* (《诗经》), which is like free verse in English.

Exploration in Confusion — *Where the Sea Stands Still*

In *Where the Sea Stands Still*, the poet recounts the next stage of his story exploring identity. At the beginning, the self's place is taken by the Other, which is represented by shadow and darkness. As Daniel-Henri Pageaux writes, in the process of 'self-construction' and 'self-speech', literature inevitably describes the image of the Other. In the words of Pageaux, 'I look at the other, and the image of the other also conveys a certain image of me, the watcher, speaker and writer':[27]

那是你的房子
没有你的房子 你被欠下像噩梦的债[28]

That is your house
a house without you in it you are in debt like a nightmare

Yang Lian refers to the self in the second person: you own the house, but you cannot stay there. The shadow takes charge of your property:

阴影类似一个主人
慷慨地敞开夜的阳台 眺望那风景

the shadow resembles an owner
generously open the balcony of night look at the landscape

('A House like a Shadow', *WSSS*, 417-418)

The shadow lives comfortably there. It, together with the darkness, tries to erase the traces of its true master's life here – the self's life:

[27] Hua Meng, *Bijiao wenxue xingxiangxue=Imagologie en littérature compare* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2001), 4.
[28] Lian Yang, *Da hai ting zhi zhi chu=Where the Sea Stands Still – Yang Lian's Works 1982-1987 Poetry* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1998), 417. Hereafter cited as *WSSS*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

瘫痪的黑暗笔直耸立起来
涂掉一天衰老一岁的你
像可怕的月光 涂掉这土地

The paralysed darkness rises straight up
black out you who become one year older in a day
like scary moonlight black out the land

('A House like a Shadow', *WSSS*, 418)

Shadow and darkness as representatives of the Other team up as 'you' (plural). They want the poet's identity to be fully controlled by themselves, so they plan to eliminate the self to exclude it from developing identity. The pine tree is green with energy all year around. The poet draws on the vitality of pine in the poem, indicating that it keeps burning for a hundred years without going out. It is the fire that ensures the pot stays boiling, which means that others will not stop hurting the poet as long as he sticks to exploring his identity. Also, the inversions of seasons and temperatures invoke a sense of nature turned upside down. This contradiction reflects the sorrow in the poet's establishment of identity. The ordeal that the poet has experienced makes the sunny summer seem cold to him. The cold winter is hard enough, but the poet has to get there via burning fire, which doubles the pain:

你们在相邻的锅里烹调的死亡很鲜美
你们相邻的壁炉里
一节松木静静燃烧了百年

夏天总是阴冷的 像饲养常春藤的石墙
而道路穿过火深入冬天

the death you cook in neighbour pots is tasty
in your neighbour fireplaces
a section of pine quietly burned for a hundred years

summer is always cold like the stone wall which feeds ivy
while the road goes deep into winter through the fire

(Poem 1, ‘Neighbour’, *WSSS*, 421)

However, there is conflict among the others. For example, iron shadow of the pine separates itself from the shadow group, and challenges the other shadows straightforwardly to the point, which is their bones:

松树被修剪的铁皮影子站在窗外
删改你们的骨骼

the sheared iron shadow of the pine stands outside the window
prune your bones

(Poem 1, ‘Neighbour’, *WSSS*, 421)

Facing the arguments between the self and the Other, the poet is too confused to utter a word. He is unaware of whose idea to follow:

诗人脱臼的嘴
你们相似如一同烘烤的鱼

the poet’s dislocated mouth
you are like fish roasted together

(Poem 1, ‘Neighbour’, *WSSS*, 421)

At the same time, shadow and darkness are struggling as well, due to also being challenged. That sky presses the bird and one’s voice presses themselves resemble the feeling of being betrayed by an indispensable entity in life:

另一个时间里

天空沉重的蓝
把鸟儿压进一块粘土

In another time
the heavy blue of sky
press the bird into a piece of clay

(Poem 2, 'Neighbour', *WSSS*, 422)

另一刻
我们还是这片寂静未完成的作品
被各自的嗓音压进粘土

another moment
we are still this silent and unfinished work
pressed into clay by each other's voice

(Poem 2, 'Neighbour', *WSSS*, 422)

In the game between those two sides, the self has been tortured and shaped beyond recognition. Having witnessed its pain, the poet becomes more silent. This perseverance can be linked to the pine tree which is often praised in ancient Chinese poems. For example, '*Ting ting shan shang song, se se gu zhong feng. Feng sheng yi he sheng, song zhi yi he jing*!'[29] Pine trees have not been completely bent due to persistent winds and become images of endurance against external forces. With this spirit, the poet persists in exploration although he has been hurt:

被一把虚无的凿子凿出脸
锋利的脸 雕刻花瓶中升起的舌头
风声在咽喉里繁衍 掐紧时

[29] The poem was written by Zhen Liu, who was a poet in the late East Han Dynasty. These two sentences mean that the pine tree stands tall on the high mountains against the howling wind in the valleys. The wind is so fierce, and the pine branches are so strong! See Qinli Lu, *Xian qin wei jin nan bei chao shi= Poems of Pre-Qin, Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties*, Volume II, ed. Qinli Lu (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983), 123.

诗人 破旧胎衣般被一首诗脱落

chiselled the face with a chisel of nothingness
sharp face sculpt the tongue rising from a vase
the wind is multiplying in the throat when it is tight
poet is fell off like shabby afterbirth by a poem

(Poem 5, 'Neighbour', *WSSS*, 426)

Here, we can find Western poetry's influence on the poet from his mentioning the images from sculpture – an allied art of poetry. When oppressed to a certain extent, they must resist. It is a way of living in nature. Some of the others are forced to show their aggressive and hostile faces:

某只蜷缩的手腕
抽搐 颤抖 骤然伸出野兽的爪子

some curled wrist
convulse tremble suddenly stretch out a paw of beast

(Poem 5, 'Neighbour', *WSSS*, 426)

发狂的 什么也没写下
才被死在心里的刻出了

insane nothing has been written down
engraved by dead in heart

(Poem 5, 'Neighbour', *WSSS*, 427)

It is difficult for trapped animals to win in a fight because their fate has been already in someone else's hands. They are forced to change their nature. Even if they compromise with the enemy in the end, they cannot live for long. Having been tortured repeatedly, shadows, representation of a group of the Other, becomes visible:

我们被磨损得 剥夺得再残破一点
影子就在地上显形

we were worn out and stripped a little more
shadows show themselves on the ground

('Where the Sea Stands Still', *WSSS*, 521)

At this point, the poet is aware of the purpose of the Other. After destroying the self and taking its right to narrate identity, it intends to let the poet be erased by what he writes:

让辞与辞 把一个人醒目地埋在地下
一首诗的乌云外什么也不剩
谁 被自己的书写一口口吃掉

let the word and the word bury a man conspicuously under the ground
a poem leaves nothing but dark clouds
who was eaten bite by bite by his/her own writing

('Where the Sea Stands Still', *WSSS*, 522)

The poet does not give in, but bravely looks in the direction where the search for identity all begins:

这是从岸边眺望自己出海之处

this is looking out from the shore at where you are out to sea

('Where the Sea Stands Still', *WSSS*, 524)

The sea imagery appears more frequently in Yang Lian's works after emigrating from China. It has since become the most common visual image in his work, due to the places he has lived

– Auckland, Sydney, New York, and Los Angeles – and becomes a kind of poetic companion as he moved from country to country, continent to continent. (Before this, the sea is more a figure of imagination to him.) For Yang Lian, the sea means, 'first of all, a reality, and the so-called "reality", like "history", "culture" and "self", is never external but internal to him.' (TSFTI, 35) The sea is commonly seen in his life. Most of the cities where he lives are by the sea, and he could see the sea when he travels. The sea is a witness when he is in exile. It is one of his habits to write about the sea along with his exploration of identity. Where he is out to the sea is the place that he starts to explore. He knows very well that it is a cycle, that the process of struggle would repeat itself. However, the poet has the spirit to face the difficulties, trying to break through this cycle and find who he truly is.

As the rational part of a person, 'the self' coordinates contradictions according to the principle of reality and finds expedient solutions as far as possible. 'It knows the purpose and direction of the activity and is the decision-maker of the individual's final performance.' (*SF*, 102) The concept of 'the self' shown in Yang Lian's poems promotes the argument that although it is up to the self to narrate identity, nevertheless the identity construction of Yang Lian as an overseas Chinese poet is realised through his self-questioning in his early poetry, because the poet's self is constantly improved upon in the process of overseas wandering while being constructed by the Other. As an exiled writer, the poet himself is an Other not only to western culture, but also to his home culture. The dislocation in his new home impels him to look for a sense of belonging. In the process, the poet takes the initiative to create his own dilemma, and he keeps moving forward in an attempt to resolve his trouble. In this he emulates Qu Yuan in *A Request to God* (*Tian Wen*), who asks more than two hundred questions at a stretch but receives no answer. Following this model, Yang Lian says, 'The poet should construct his own consciousness – turn all external questions back to questioning "me".' (*GWIS*, 303) His questioning goes through three distinct phases, reflected in his poetic activity after he went abroad.

Crisis of Identity

In the second stage of identity formation, the poet's searching for the self moves forward in contradiction. He walks between two opposing cultural identities. His pain and entanglement during this process are laid bare by desperate words, which begin in *Concentric Circles* and

climax in *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*. I will keep using Stuart Hall's interpretation of ambivalence in identity and cultural identity to analyse Yang Lian's despair when his exploration of identity reaches its climax.

Identity connotes the process of identification, i.e. in seeing like for like, or sameness, in things or selves. However, for Hall 'the structure of identification is always constructed through ambivalence.'[30] 'An identity is not a sealed or closed totality; instead, it is composed of more than one discourse and written in and through ambivalence and desire.' (*EE*, 71) Therefore, the notion of identity is fundamentally contradictory.

'To have a cultural identity is to be in touch with an essential core – a specific history and culture which is durable, binding the future, present and past into an unbroken line. This umbilical cord is what we call "tradition", the test of which is its truth to its origins, its self-presence to itself, its "authenticity".' (*EE*, 209) The diverse history and culture experienced by the poet affects his cultural identity, which is, in essence, 'fixed by birth, part of nature, imprinted through kinship and lineage in the genes, and constitutive of our innermost selves.' (*EE*, 208) 'It develops from specific histories and cultural repertoires.' (*EE*, 204) Therefore, cultural identity is both innate and socialised. Whether writers are born in China or the West, they have an identity rooted in their era and cultural background. This cultural identity constitutes a 'positionality,' provisionally referred to as an 'identity.' So, 'each identity-story is inscribed in the positions we take up and identify with, and a writer's cultural identity will change with geography and culture. We have to live this ensemble of identity-positions in all its specificities.' (*EE*, 204) Thus, the identity of a writer warrants investigation.

Exploration in Crisis — *Concentric Circles*

诗 不可能不是普遍的屈服
舌头敲击鼓面 不可能
不击中真理
……

[30] From Hall's viewpoint, this is something we have learned from the discussion of identification in feminism and psychoanalysis.

不可能 活人不属于树下的落叶
蝴蝶被钉在墙上不可能不是一只孔雀
漫步 死是唯一的花园
不可能不把婚礼排泄到星期六的草地上
轰鸣的吻 不停粘成石块轰炸眼睛

poetry cannot be anything other than universal submission
the tongue hitting the drum. is impossible to
miss the truth
…
it is impossible for a living person not to belong to the leaves under the tree
there is no way a butterfly pinned to a wall is not a peacock
wandering death is the only garden
it is impossible not to drain the wedding into the Saturday grass
the thundering kiss keeps sticking into stones and bombarding the eyes

('Chapter One', *WSSS*, 532)

The poet keeps denying everything. Although he uses the double negative many times to express the meaning of the positive, the content of his positive is negative. After all, for Yang Lian, poetry is 'universal submission.' In Chapter One, a living person belongs to the leaves under the tree. It is possible to drain the wedding into the Saturday grass. He makes beautiful subjects to do rude or violent things. This makes readers feel a disharmony in the collocation of beautiful and violent stuff and try to figure out the poet's purpose of doing so. That is how his negative emotions during his exploration at this time would be discovered by readers, which last to the next poem Schloss Solitude:

海与海泛滥于窗台与窗台之间

海与海 坠落 积雪的大手捂住啼哭

无声 就决定我们

是无人的 一座地下花园挥霍脸上的四季
肉的鲜红水泥 越斑驳
死在一年两端的苹果树越攥紧幻想
坟墓与坟墓寄出的头
越蓝 渗透沉思的不洁的美

光与光泛滥于无光的此刻
十二个月的田野 像语言从耳边滑走
十二种收割自己的庄稼移入冷藏的天空
十二场演出 来到的都是消失的
石头与石头虚构成我们
本质的 屈服的美

蝴蝶 嵌进一扇门就夜夜最后冲刺
舌尖上 世界没用得如一枚金色的耳垂

流去与流去 而灯火
拥挤在一块玻璃悬崖后面
不流 不知不觉被窥视的时间所残害
太危险 鬼魂和水每天一岁
太美 步下游客远隔世纪的惊叫的台阶

sea and sea flood between windowsills

sea and sea fall snow's big hand covers cry

silence determines us
are non-person an underground garden squanders four seasons on the face
red cement of the meat is more mottled
apple trees which die at both ends of the year grip fantasy more tightly
head posted by grave and grave

is more and more blue permeating the impure beauty of contemplation

light and light flood the moment without light
  twelve-month field slips away like words
  twelve crops which harvest their own are moved into the frozen sky
  twelve shows which come are gone
stone and stone make us
essential submissive beauty

  a butterfly enters a door and makes a final push every night
  on the tip of the tongue the world is useless like a golden earlobe

flow and flow and lights
  huddle behind a glass cliff
not flow unknowingly destroyed by the prying time
  too dangerous ghost and water grow one year old every day
too beautiful down the steps where visitors scream centuries away

(‘Schloss Solitude’, *WSSS*, 563-564)

From now on, in Schloss Solitude, contradictory descriptions begin to appear in the poems. Windows are supposed to be where people enjoy the beauty of the sea, but the sea floods between windowsills. The garden will bloom with different beauty throughout four seasons, but an underground garden in Yang Lian’s poem above squanders them. People believe that contemplation is beautiful. When the crops have been harvested, they should be frozen instead of eaten. When the show is over, there is nothing to applaud for because it is gone. The poet confirms that it is worth exploring between his Chinese and Western cultural identities, but now he is a little doubtful that maybe it is not as meaningful as he thought. Therefore, he compares the world to a golden earlobe. People pierce their earlobes to wear earrings, but damage to this part does not affect the function of the ear. This part is small, but it shines like gold. He is in a dilemma of moving or not. If he moves, he will be pushed over the edge of a cliff with his life hanging in the balance. If he does not move, time will soon destroy him. It reminds readers of the classical question asked by Hamlet, ‘To be, or not to be?’ The poet is always on the way to question:

春天倒置在窗外 像一口蔚蓝干枯的井
塔 俯瞰流产的深度
一张田野的旧唱片又塞进犁下
一本黄昏的书加速发育成即将收割的
一群暴风雪已等不及烫死地平线上升起的情人
十二个月沿着一个月血污的辙迹
战争不得不轮回于一个人之内
哑巴比辞更混乱 更疯狂

spring turns upside down outside the window like a blue and dry well
the tower overlooks the depth of the abortion
an old field record is tucked under the plough again
a nightfall book accelerates into a harvest one
a bunch of snowstorms cannot wait to scorch the lovers rising on the horizon
twelve months along the trail of a month's blood
the war has to be reincarnated in one person
dumb is messier than speech and crazier

(Poem 3, 'Capella Tower' *WSSS*, 583-584)

The poet lists more 'disharmonious' matches, such as nightfall and harvest, and snowstorm and scorch. The dumb person cannot speak, but it does not mean that they have nothing to say. It is like his own miserable state right now. Even though there are thousands of words in his mind, he does not know where to start and who to tell. The knowledge is ploughed into the earth, hidden away. But being in the earth, it can be excavated and restored. Moreover, here is trace of his acceptance of Western literature. The poet uses images of books and agriculture. There are strong associations between them in Western literature, such as *Works and Days* from ancient Greek poet Hesiod, *Georgics* from Latin poet Virgil, etc., which reflects the influences of them on him.

Exploration in Crisis — *Sixteeners*

The poet keeps writing contradictions. The next grouping in his poetry is pain and beauty:

pain is like beauty with the self as the aim

('Shadow Play', *RPPFC*, 187)

write out all my madness lick out all the brown beer's froth
the bell's toll in a little bird's brain vibrates like a gloomy verse unemployed
the city is part of the word the most terrifying part of me
showing my insignificance accepting

('London', *RPPFC*, 165)

Having suffered in the process of moving between his two cultural identities, Yang Lian expresses the changes to his psychology. The poet lived in London when he wrote this poem (2008). This poem reflects his depression when he lived abroad. He needs to vent, or he might go mad. Interestingly, some Chinese beer brands he mentions in the poem also has dual cultural identities. Major Chinese breweries, such as Harbin – the earliest Chinese brewery – was established by Russians, and Qingtao was established by Germans. He is afraid that his poems may become meaningless, and he may become insignificant. A series of negative emotions lock together:

stone gyrates to become the corner that locks itself in
letting our flesh be locked out from each other

('A Night in the Tower', *RPPFC*, 167)

His exploration temporarily hits a dead end, and he finds himself locked in a glass corner, so he tries to find a way out:

the glass chattering all around is breathed into your lungs
a dead space slower than immobility sits into

('Lento for the Sea', *RPPFC*, 169)

It is not a smooth process. The noise outside is in stark contrast to the quietness in the corner. The pain of breathing in glass is unimaginable:

> pain will find you for longer than the future
> life will be simplified to being just like this life

('Harmonica', *RPPFC*, 171)

The pain is meant to be long-lasting:

> a thermometer stuck into the vein stuck in the window
> lets leaves resemble climbing panthers
> rushing to jump down the half-vanished dream
> someone abruptly pulls from your body lost nothingness

('Linden Tree', *RPPFC*, 173)

Contradictions are still there. A thermometer is stuck into the vein, and leaves are like predators. The poet is clear that he must be on the track of identity exploration, so the negative elements are chased out of his body. After he calms down, the poet decides to start again with poetry – his way out and his weapon:

> masterpieces know too well how human flaws are cooked
> polishing up a star chart in children's palms
> who has ducked into the wind's sound don't drop into the foot's black oyster
> die poetry is the only address worth being reborn in

('12 Storkwinkel, Berlin', *RPPFC*, 181)

> distantly reflecting pain that's left
> waiting to switch off this world

(‘The Time That’s Left’, *RPPFC*, 193)

Masterpieces are created by human beings, but they, on the contrary, play tricks on human beings to maintain its long-lasting existence. They know human flaws. To make sure that people can accomplish great works, they encourage them to pay more attention to advantages. For example, help children polish up a star chart in palms and remind people not to drop into the foot’s black oyster. Otherwise, they might destroy the pearl in the oyster, although only 1 in 10,000 wild oysters will yield a pearl. The world is like a web of intrigue, and people would experience pain when suffering in it. The pain he has just experienced is so deep that the poet wants to pause the world for a while to heal himself. He knows that he needs to take a rest before fighting against fiercer storms. Pain has no mercy on him. All he can do is rise up and face it. This echoes the theme ‘exploration of identity in crisis’ of his writing at this stage. He keeps exploration of his identity in mind, so he never stops no matter how many difficulties he has been coming across.

Exploration in Crisis — *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*

In this section, the poet recovers his desperate writing style. Misery lies throughout the poems, although ‘blissful’ is in the name of this collection:

> snow’s touch always half-rotted
> tumbledown ruins mask yesterday
> painted a colour less than white
> horizon sprints back against the wind toward a drop of water
>
> a teardrop has a pear-stalk to lead a great hue and cry
> bliss bliss

(Poem 1, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 141)

Next come the bright colours which are rarely seen in the poet’s work. Red and yellow represent passion and light, but are contradicted by the cold and loneliness in this poem:

a taxi floats up like a fire-red submarine
collage in a forgotten margin
confronting alone a khaki storm

(Poem 6, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 145)

The newborn who comes into the world with hope has an innate gift to focus on silence. The flourishing spring is meanwhile beset by undercurrents. Sweetness competes with sludge. The poet continues to balance all these contradictions:

… that gives birth to a big bird in a down coat
flapping space destroyed by the sound of melting snow
soaking an ear hearing the sinking

(Poem 7, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 145)

spring is a foreign language
grammar of perfume carved and polished with precision
light stirring the little pale black eddies behind every petal

call elapsed emptiness the now
immature craftsmanship inlaying the blue
time’s jeweller bows down filing
february so sweet to the ear, the sound made by cutting metal
reflecting the crowd soaking the beach with ink marks

street hanging inverted in the eyeball
is buried under its own foundation
greeting
spat out sweet sludge

(Poem 8, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 147)

From melting snow to petal, the poet describes the change of seasons from winter to spring. The sound made by cutting metal in February is easily to relate to an ancient Chinese poem regarding early spring – '*Bu zhi xi ye shei cai chu, er yue chun feng si jian dao*.'[31] The poet compares the spring breeze to scissors, which cuts images of all things, permeating with the joy of everything's growth in early spring. However, each section describing spring ends with dark imageries – pale black eddies, ink marks and sludge – which are in contrary to the scenes full of hope before. Beautiful elements seem to shine through this bizarre picture, but they never overcome the negative effects:

> the material in the smell is greasier and blacker
> this is your air
> tonight the dead present you with flowers

(Poem 15, 'Notes of a Blissful Ghost', *RPPFC*, 153)

> wild child's laughter swoops in the window
> twine of time tying up your tinnitus
> swinging back empty space is never empty
> just as a whistle beyond a concrete wall
> wakes you with a start too in moonlight a sharpened sickle
> is scything the roots of your sleep

(Poem 19, 'Notes of a Blissful Ghost', *RPPFC*, 157)

It is impossible for the poet to sleep deeply. People wake the poet up when he is sleeping. Even the moonlight is ready to scythe his throat:

> only when it disdains to endorse any truth
> does happiness accumulate lies

[31] The poem was written by Zhizhang He, who was a poet in Tang Dynasty. These two sentences mean that I wonder who cut out these thin willow leaves? It is the spring breeze in February, which is like a magic pair of scissors. See Geng Lin, Yuanjun Feng, *Zhong guo li dai shi ge xuan=Selected Poems of Ancient China*, ed. Geng Lin and Yuanjun Feng (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1984), 310. Hereafter cited as *SPAC*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

(Poem 10, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 149)

In the poems, it feels like reality will never change, is out of reach, and that happiness could be a lie, and so some people use lies to cover up lies:

> a few steps away, and no-one can reach the world whose existence no one has ever proved.
>
> yellow earth, to expose is to cover up, covering up with exposure. disappearance piles up, layer on layer. illusion of home, emptier than emptiness. I stand here, fewer than nobody.

(Poem 11, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 149)

There is a deep loneliness in this book. His family becomes more and more blurred in his mind. It is good timing when his family take the poet out of this dilemma via exploration of the poet’s identity. This also sets the stage for his later description of the warmth brought by family:

> family photos decided shifted to the negatives

(Poem 17, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 155)

> take aim at the next stupid cycle

(Poem 13, ‘Notes of a Blissful Ghost’, *RPPFC*, 151)

Again, the poet knows that this exploration will be an endless cycle, but he goes on without hesitation. His pain and despair reflected in the poetry echo the core message – exploration in crisis – disseminated within the second stage of his writing. At this stage, the poet has been confused, has suffered, has struggled, and has been angry. Yet he sets out again. In the third stage of his exploration, which is harmonisation of identity, he has the company of his family and feels the warmth they bring to him. This warmth is always there but had been ignored by the poet. Fortunately, he notices this and reflects the warmth from his family in poems from the next stage.

Harmonisation of Identity

The arc of Yang Lian's poetry in this third phase of his search for identity has his poetic persona fearing dissolution and loss of selfhood. At this pivotal point his family, especially his wife and father stand and support him, leading him to understand that love and hope will take him out of the shadow, heal his inner wounds, and light the way for him to move on. This capacity to assist the poet to the mirror, to reflect on his identity and understand it better, calls up that other psychoanalytic mirror.

> In the mirror stage, the infant who has not yet mastered the upright posture and who is supported by either another person or some prosthetic device will, upon seeing herself in the mirror, 'jubilantly assume' the upright position. She thus finds in the mirror image 'already there,' a mastery that she will actually learn only later. The jubilation, the enthusiasm, is tied to the temporal dialectic by which she appears already to be what she will only later become.[32]

This process marks out the passage of time. The infant can only master the skill in the future, while what Yang Lian's family wants him to realise is that he already has warmth and connection. In the following section, I will mainly focus on others' function in building up the poet's search for self. The poet's affection and intimacy with people who are close to him cannot be excluded when analysing his identity. This is a transition from a sociological consideration of identity to a psychological approach.

Exploration in Harmonisation — *Narrative Poem*

1. Love – wife

Love Elegy is written for YO YO (Yang Lian's wife). He recalls the romantic moments they had shared together, starting from their wedding to their loving daily life. Their current life is plain, but it is easy to find their care and love for each other. By reading Yang Lian's poems in

[32] Jane Gallop, *Reading Lacan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 78.

their entirety, readers will find that what drives the poems is not the individual words, but his deep love for his wife:

a street name makes a love look fondly back
all our wavering permeated with the taste of water[33]

As he passes the street where they have walked, the poet recalls the romance between him and his wife:

we walk and two little figures so like you and I
are impatiently led leap over the railings
candy-sweet gazes folded into the river's curiosity
swans throw snow-white necks as dense as thickets
the harbour curls around slow-witted rust
boats' names open a bunch of lotus blossom in laughter

(Poem 1, 'A street name makes a love look fondly back', *NP*, 111)

When this couple start their relationship, despite being adults they are happy like children every day. 'Two little figures like you and I' can be linked to the lines from Li Bai for deep affection, '*Lang qi zhu ma lai, rao chuang nong qing mei. Tong ju chang gan li, liang xiao wu xian cai*.'[34] (*SPAC*, 347) Also, lotus viewing by boat is a long-standing symbol of romance in Chinese culture. In ancient Chinese literary works, childhood sweethearts often first meet on boating excursions to a lotus pond, and young couples like going to see lotus by boat when dating. Innocent and pure feelings run deep. They share common interests and travelled happily. The usual scenery in their eyes has a romantic colour because of the different mood:

endless rowing instants of stone
your gaze and mine meet
clouds scurry over the sky always rolling up the stage curtain

[33] Lian Yang, *Narrative Poem*, trans. Brian Holton (Hexham, Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 2017), 111. Hereafter cited as *NP*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[34] The poem was written by Li Bai, who was a poet in Tang Dynasty. These sentences mean that you (the boy) came on a bamboo horse, and we went around the well fence together, throwing green plums at each other for play. We have lived together in Changgan since childhood, and there was no suspicion between us.

recognise a coat of yellow lamp-wick down worn by mistake

(Poem 1, ‘A street name makes a love look fondly back’, *NP*, 111)

They two could understand each other so well that the nature is touched by them and then cooperates with them:

cellos in the headphones answer a sea composed in jet-black
a recording lasting twenty-three years
adds the murmur into the river that flows even in its dreams
subtracts a world from love’s shimmer and shine
a staircase competing to be empty
slants into the depths

(Poem 1, ‘A street name makes a love look fondly back’, *NP*, 111)

The poet compares their love to a piece of cello music, and their 23 years’ marriage to a recording, where each note represents their love. The audiences would not feel bored when they listen to the long recording because every note is singing about their undying love. This is also the record of love and warmth from the poet’s family:

life’s decisions sometimes too hard sometimes too easy
the plank walls of this rented room are gloomy and dark
like a negative that has developed many images
fixative soaking though into a wedding
you and I clothes as clean as a hotel bed sheet
you have newly washed and starched
Minford Duncan Stuart
three friends bringing champagne and flowers
that weird October spring setting alight
the little mushroom-shaped trees across the street
this was Auckland the lawns inlaid with life
carefully written down in the witness column
the bluest sea in the world

(Poem 3, ‘Anniversary, 9th October 1989’, *NP*, 121)

In the poem Anniversary, 9th October 1989, the poet describes their wedding. In the southern hemisphere spring, he and YO YO hold a simple ceremony in front of friends and family and live happily ever after. The musical references here are worth connecting with the title *Love Elegy* as a thread, and Yang Lian believes musicality is essential for poetry. ‘After my (Yang Lian’s) recitation, almost all Western audiences say although they do not understand a single Chinese word, the energy of poetry and the weight of language can be clearly felt. … In this sense, we should admit that the Chinese music is possible to be accepted all over the world. … If a poem does not have the musical energy, it cannot really exist.’[35] This explains why there are many musical elements in Yang Lian’s poems.

in fact I am as hard-working as a gramophone record
blaring from room to room all day
calling to you all day calling even when you’re not there
two overlapping worlds ruminating on a gourmet miracle
flowers that fill the room read and re-read your step on the stair

(Poem 1, ‘A street name makes a love look fondly back’, *NP*, 113)

It is his wife that make their home sweet. The poet thinks of her every day, keeps her in his mind, and has her name shaped in his mouth as a figure of memory and constant thought. Even the stairs at home remember the sound of his wife’s footsteps. But every once in a while, the poet is in pain and struggles to search for his identity. The difference is that he has his wife by his side, who could understand what he is experiencing:

our minutes and seconds thicken the jug of rice wine
like a glass of Voronezh vodka poured on frozen ground
the party drove to the graveyard carnival of departed souls
  Mandelstam only wives

[35] Meijing Lv, 诗人杨炼：个人构成史诗 神在我们之内“Poet Yang Lian: Individuals Constitute Epic Gods are within Us” (2014). https://www.whb.cn/zhuzhan/JTHD71/20140326/4749.html

could be infatuated with our gently-breaking seizures

(Poem 2, ‘Watermint’s tale’, *NP*, 117)

It is YO YO’s love that changes the poet, letting him become emotionally stable and find inner peace. His wife’s hands could not only do housework, but also soothe his inner wounds. Their chat is warm enough to resist the cold wind. The reference to Mandelstam is worth noticing here. He and his wife, like Yang Lian and YO YO, are a model of loving couples. Osip Mandelstam is a Russian poet in internal exile with his wife for many years. They support each other and memorise his poetry so he would not be caught with written copies of his work. As for Yang Lian, if it were not for his wife, the poet’s life would not be so peaceful and beautiful:

if not for you who could know the ashes of one first draft page?
how to keep on burning hands wiped clean on an apron
how to strip away the ocean waves slowly cast in bronze by time
our kitchen stretches out their wilderness lolling
by a chatty fire even chill November winds aren’t empty

(Poem 2, ‘Watermint’s tale’, *NP*, 117)

Unknowingly, this couple have gone through many years together, but their relationship is still as good as when they were just together:

oh we have sailed across so many oceans so much lustre
keeping young whetted penknives like wings

(Poem 5, ‘Ocean, requiem, the first time and once more’, *NP*, 127)

They become more mature together and form a loving family. Before he met his wife, the poet’s life was adrift physically and mentally. However, things are different now. There is a home waiting for him, where he is welcome. He has YO YO to rely on and worry about. Moreover, it is worth noting the references to writing and drafting images in the midst of natural imagery (including the density of water/ocean imagery above and below). They suggest Yang Lian’s notion of creativity, as a part of the world and also a view upon it:

a bed dragging the boat's trace sailing into our
maturity home looking out from this word the sea is vaster
doubts spread over the table-top of tides once again defer
a line of verse and then it's a pumice stone farther
oh, very near we can feel it hatch in our inner being
love from this word we conjure up the image pounded out by the waves' roar

(Poem 5, 'Ocean, requiem, the first time and once more', *NP*, 127)

The poet wants nothing more except for YO YO and him being together. When the poet stands in front of the mirror, he wants his wife to keep his company instead of being alone. It is the love and companionship from her wife that bring harmonisation to his poems in this section, which encourages him to be on the right track to explore:

only two people plus a starry sky seeking no less
only one day a rhythm squeezed bright then quenched

(Poem 5, 'Ocean, requiem, the first time and once more', *NP*, 127)

The figure of the wife is indispensable to the poet's exploration of identity. She accompanies him, teaches him love, and lets him know happiness. The poet's love for his wife runs deep. Both of them are like each other's shadow. They cannot and do not want to separate:

put your hand in mine an itinerary
memorised once then experienced once more so a poem is born
in a million years watermint's fibres have only once woven
so green you and so green me appointing a bitter poetic
learning to love is learning how to stand steady on the street's deck
learning to die nothingness how deep gentleness how deep so delight
is born the heat in your palm has seeped into my marrow
once two water birds' wingtips collide it brings our created images to a halt

(Poem 5, 'Ocean, requiem, the first time and once more', *NP*, 129)

The line 'put your hand in mine' can be connected to '*Zhi zi zhi shou, yu zi xie lao*'[36] in *Shi Jing*. This is what a soldier who is going to the front says to his wife before leaving home, and it is widely used as a vow between husband and wife. The poet begins with a vow and ends with deep love for his wife, which fully shows the depth of affection between these two people. It is the expression of love for his wife that gives readers the opportunity to see the tender side in Yang Lian's poetry and gives him a respite from the pain and struggle of exploration.

2. Hope – father

> It was hard, but in the end, he was my father, and finally he chose beauty, though his heart was breaking. He maintained that beauty was not wrong, though betrayal was. It was only long after I heard this story that I understood: was it because of this that, even while the storm was gather ominously outside our window, our family was able to preserve a little micro-climate of reason and love, which allowed me to grow up relatively sound and psychologically whole? What I admire is not that he identified with Beethoven, but that this identification itself embodied a kind of strength that emanated from humanity, and the strength to re-examine history. So I wrote those lines in Hometown Elegy with compete conviction: 'by pass the starry firmament, slow steps towards father, return to the origin of the allegory of self.' (*NP*, 22-23)

Father is not a light that suddenly shines into the poet's life, but a burning torch that illuminates the road ahead for him and brings light and hope. For Yang Lian, his father has always been a role model. 'Under the influence of my father, I learned to appreciate beauty and started the process of writing poems.' (*NP*, 22) In *Narrative Poem*, Yang Lian records many of his father's words, which are enough to prove his deep influence on the poet.

In ancient China, early evening was the time of a day when people were most likely to feel homesick, especially those living in the village. At that time, each family started cooking dinner and smoke curled up from kitchen chimneys. The poet is no exception. He misses his father at this time, recalling his heavy love:

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[36] This is from *Shi Jing* (*The Book of Songs*), which means that I will hold your hand and grow old with you. See Guanying Yu, *Shi Jing Xuan* (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2002), 25.

from past to past this city an afterglow in every colour
dad that's you brewed to time's thick texture

(Poem 3, 'Road', *NP*, 167)

The poet misses the old days when he was at his father's house, but he could not go back to those days, so there is a trace of sadness in the poem:

father's home has an address made out of pounding surf
my rolling walk is like it was thrown into
so many mouths that have been chewed by one bitter apricot kernel

(Poem 3, 'Road', *NP*, 167)

The taste of hometown dishes has been remembered on the tip of the poet's tongue, and the scenery of hometown has been engraved in his mind. The poet in drifting misses his hometown even more:

carefully the door is shut the room in a line of verse roosting
tastes to catch up the dancer's home-cooked bearing
falling asleep and feeling narcissus arms by the bolster
a gentle overflow holding a second of exquisite refinement
oh listen vanishing discharges the sound of the waterfall colliding
we are visible in our true form drifting all over again from the beginning

(Poem 3, 'Road', *NP*, 167)

In addition to the above-mentioned elements, the most important representation of hometown in the poet's mind is his father. The moment he sees his father, the moment his journey home ends:

three minutes the *Condensed Huang Tingjian*[37]
broadcasts the homeward trek father deduces a destination

(Poem 7, 'Road', *NP*, 175)

In *Home Elegy*, 'home' has two meanings. One is the house of the poet's father. The other is homeland. Although the poet misses his father, hometown and motherland, he is afraid to go back home because he does not have a result for the exploration of identity. He compares the result to the clam meat and the exploration to a clam shell. If he goes home now, he has to bring an empty clam shell, which he is not willing to:

… motherland pronounced like the stone
colliding with father's kidney that sinks each day down
and doesn't going home imply bringing back an empty clam shell?
the gouged-out clam doesn't exist for other eyes
in the same way it doesn't exist for me

(Poem 3, 'Road', *NP*, 167)

With time passing by, his father gradually grows old, but the poet could not be together with him. The poet is disconsolate, and he misses father and motherland even more:

… all boys on skateboards
who have leaped over clouds are entirely weightless
isn't the sun like slowly blackening senile plaque too?
isn't the longed-for one still expelled by their own self?
still not caught up with father used up a lifetime of chances
that faint smile

(Poem 3, 'Road', *NP*, 167)

[37] Huang Tingjian (1045-1105) was a famous poet, ci poet and calligrapher in the Northern Song Dynasty. The reason why the poet connected Huang Tingjian with his father is that his deep love for traditional Chinese literature was influenced by his father.

The poet thinks that his mother tongue is exotic, which implies that his Chinese and western cultural identities have been mixed together and inseparable from each other:

three minutes you've walked the family tree of rejoicing or regret

(Poem 7, 'Road', *NP*, 175)

The poet's search for identity is full of difficulties and dangers. Fortunately, his father is always with him in his mind. This time, he has his father standing with him in the mirror, who brings him hope when exploring:

those ocean liners, my slippers have been beaten black and blue
by ten-thousand league waves freed from or fallen into
the deepest oceanic trench? between the buoys of father's
coughs each step catches up with the channel

(Poem 7, 'Road', *NP*, 175)

He and his father talk like friends and inspire each other sometimes. They think of each other and comfort each other:

DAD the days are edited into every old photo
separately yellowing whose shadows do we flip through by lamplight?
SON a sequence of snapping shutters disintegrates you
then fixative viscous and bitter in the mouth bonds you

(Poem 9, 'Road', *NP*, 179)

The poem draws on images of technology more modern than contemporary: ocean liners instead of aeroplanes; old photos from film stock rather than digital photos, strengthening the long distance in the poet's journey of exploration and his reluctant separation from his father. The authentic meaning behind these images is the discussion of tradition, signified in the poet's preference for traditional transport.

Yang Lian and his father are deeply engraved in each other's minds. Writing poetry is the best way for the poet to keep in connection with his father. There is a common saying in China, '*Yang'er yi bai sui, chang you jiu shi jiu*', which translates as that parents spend a hundred years raising their children, ninety-nine years of those years are spent in worrying about them. Parents worry about their children no matter how old they are. In the opposite, children worry about their parents in the same way. In his exploration of identity, his father is his source of hope, guiding him in the right direction:

SON there's no knowledge that isn't joyful

(Poem 9, 'Road', *NP*, 179)

The poet keeps his exploration. In the process, his father plays an important role in building up Yang Lian's home cultural identity through leading him on the right track to appreciate beauty and to focus on tradition.[38] Yang Lian's father is a man who attaches great importance to traditional Chinese culture, especially Beijing Opera and Kunqu Opera. In the following exploration, he imitates his father's way of in-depth study and tries to make his dual (Chinese and Western) cultural identities clearer:

I copy father's daily-slower steps
crowded red-brick buildings imitate craggy boulders in the seas
a pincer movement a raging a cicada visiting home
comes from nowhere and goes nowhere unless
there's the hardness that's carved along with a tongue
a tongue stretching out from the earth a demolished distress call
directly singing a reality that enters deep inside death

(Poem 11, 'Road', *NP*, 183)

[38] 'In Preface of Narrative Poem, Yang Lian told a story happened to his father, which explained his father's influence on Yang Lian about sense of beauty, focus on Chinese tradition and Chinese culture. The story of his early years was that he was born into a wealthy family whose property included the Fortune Theatre (one of the most famous Peking Opera theatres), but, though at first an enthusiast for Kunqu Opera, he became very attached to Western classical music, and by the time he graduated from university, he had an extensive knowledge of it. His six years as a diplomat in Switzerland after 1949, served, along with the European way of life, to convince him even more of the rational beauty which infuses music.' (*NP*, 22)

Yang Lian compares himself to red-brick buildings and compares his father to craggy boulders in the seas. Father is in his old age and walks slowly, but his image is always tall in the poet's mind. The image of earth represents stability, and the image of ocean represents fluidity and change. In his process of exploration, Yang Lian is moving between Chinese and western cultures. However, he has laid a solid foundation for the development of his identity in the future and a pathway to follow. In the history of ancient Chinese poetry, earth closely relates to motherland and tradition. People believe that no one should live far from hometown and family. Ocean, together with moon, closely relates to homesickness. It is far from where people lived, representing a long distance. Both ancient Chinese poets and Yang Lian persist in tradition. Tradition is a contested field and is not immune from changed interpretations over time. That is also one of the reasons why Yang Lian remains faithful to tradition. He witnesses its changes and wants to contribute to it with his own experience.

Conclusion

Yang Lian's poetry repays critical attention in three ways. First, it embodies the spirit of questioning. He admires Qu Yuan's questioning spirit when reading poems written in the Warring States period. His inheritance of Qu Yuan's questioning spirit, on the one hand, shows his insistence on tradition; on the other hand, it shows his determination to explore his identity. From his poems in the three stages discussed above, we can see that he comes across many difficulties, but he never gives up and rather explores the contradictions inherent in these difficulties through figurative language and finds a way to process his changing sense of self and identity. Most of the questions he comes up with are for himself. 'How can you sweep the world if you do not sweep the floor of a house?'[39] 'If someone is indifferent to his/her own affairs, how can they care about the affairs of the world?' What is more, the imageries Yang Lian used in his poems such as ocean, death and musical elements act as threads to connect three sections of his writing and help describe the process of his exploration of identity as a whole.

[39] This is a Chinese allusion in *Book of Later Han* (432-445). It is a historical literature compiled by Fan Ye, a historian in the late Nan Dynasty.

Second, he is a representative for both China and the Western world. He is a Chinese poet with a strong western cultural background, and his works are published and distributed mainly in the West. However, his poetry draws on and deploys many aspects of Chinese tradition. He keeps writing in Chinese. He mentions the influence of classical Chinese literature on his work multiple times, especially Qu Yuan's works. Apart from Qu Yuan's poems, Yang Lian subconsciously links his poems with other classical Chinese ones in different stages of his career. Different ancient Chinese poems echo the theme of each stage of Yang Lian's writing, which are confusion, crisis, and harmonisation. All of them reflect how the poet deals with tradition. Although his long poem *Norlang* was criticised as spiritual pollution, forcing him to leave mainland China – his motherland – he has no complaint against his country and home culture. He tries to resolve the issue of being between two identities through embracing contradiction. No matter how difficult the path, he persists with his exploration of identity, motivated by his wife and father's love and support.

Another effort Yang Lian makes is the adaptation of Western poetic norms punctuated by adherence to Chinese prosodic conventions. In his diasporic life, he notices the significance of 'Chineseness'. In 'An Ambiguous Identification of the Poetic Identity', Hui Zhang reviews Yang Lian's 'Chineseness' poetics. He summarises the two layers of 'Chineseness': First, the uniqueness of Chinese compared with the other languages; second, the uniqueness of the Chinese poet's language. '"Chineseness" refers to the internal factors that make Chinese exists. It should be opened to the unknown – each poet rediscovers Chinese expression by the model of his/her own experience in contemporary society, which has long been contained in Chinese but has not been fully explored.'[40] Chinese expressions do not change along with the use of different tenses and personal pronouns. Zhang concludes what Yang Lian finds as the spatial consciousness of Chinese poetry: 'Signaling a departure from Western poetry's competing for time, the language formation of Chinese poetry is to "cancel time" and restore people's current situation. Therefore, when you read poetry, you are tapping into the depth of "present" human nature.' (AAIPI, 83) This echoes Claude Lévi-Strauss's interpretation of structuralist approach to myth – myth is constructed in a shared fundamental generic unit of narrative structure. Yang

[40] Hui Zhang, 一个诗歌身份的暧昧指认——杨炼"中文性" "An Ambiguous Identification of the Poetic Identity – Review of Yang Lian's 'Chineseness' Poetics", *Journal of Changsha University of Science & Technology (Social Science) [长沙理工大学学报（社会科学版）],* no. 2 (2014): 80-84. Hereafter cited as AAIPI, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

Lian adapts structuralist poetics to enrich his 'Chineseness', which supplements Chinese poetics. He tries to find a balance between the West and China instead of letting the Western norms take the place of Chinese modes.

Finally, as his poetry develops, it comes to represent and understand family as being the answer to the contradictory questions emerging in his search for identity. He always saves a place in his mind for his family. When reading his poems about his wife and father, it is hard to imagine that these are written by the same person whose works used to be full of despair. Although the poems concerning his mother relate to desperation, it is more a representation of real, lived emotion. Yang Lian's reputation in both spheres (China and the West) is worth considering. He is a well-known poet in the western world. In recent years, he and his poetry are being accepted by more and more Chinese scholars, seen from increasing critical attention represented in a growing bibliography (in works cited), such as analysis of imageries (ocean, death, etc.) in Yang Lian's diasporic writing, interpretation of the poet's persistence to tradition – basically the use of Chinese language, and analysis of his poems written before he goes abroad (Ritual Soul, etc.) I start from the perspective of treating Yang Lian as a transnational poet, consider his creative process reflected through poetry, and study how his poetic identity is constructed through the poems themselves. Yang Lian's search for identity crosses and re-crosses the east and the west, producing many valuable poems about the exploration of Chinese and Western cultural identity. He suffers political turmoil and geographical distance, but he seldom complains about what happened to him. Through his exploration of identity, he combines tradition with modernity, trying to bring Chinese cultural heritage to the Western world, which is also part of all people's heritages.

Chapter Two

Beyond the Dilemma as a Cultural Minority Writer: Ha Jin and his Ethnic Writing

A comparative literary study of modern China and the West needs to take into account the status of Chinese American writers, due both to the flourishing literary scene among Chinese expatriates and Chinese-Americans, but also as a refraction of Chinese cultural studies. Ha Jin is an example of a prominent diasporic writer living in America while writing about China in English. He mediates his Chinese and American identities and experiences to create works that can resonate with readers from different cultural backgrounds. The writer's transnational identity, as Andrew Hatfelder interprets, 'is defined neither by national, ethnic, or cultural origins nor by geopolitical locations. It is the comparative perspective across these boundaries that bestows identity. As such, this comparative perspective is the foundation of a particular kind of multiculturalism, and without the comparative perspective this multiculturalism exists in name only.'[41] Specific racial or national identities attributed to an overseas writer can overlook or erase the marginal identity position taken relative to both cultures. Wei-ming Tu explains this from an overseas Chinese writer's standpoint. 'While overseas Chinese may seem forever peripheral to the meaning of being Chinese, they [can] assume an effective role in creatively constructing a new vision of Chineseness that is more in tune with Chinese history and in sympathetic resonance with Chinese culture.'[42] Ha Jin is the product of the fusion of two cultures, concretely reflected in his works.

In this chapter, I will analyse the four novels Ha Jin composed in a concentrated burst between 1998 and 2004 – *In the Pond*, *Waiting*, *The Crazed* and *War Trash* – to evaluate how the author, as a cultural minority writer in the US, writes on themes relating to China, working within the American social system and its cultural values. The primary reason for choosing these four books for analysis is that their stories are set in China and all the characters are Chinese. Their

[41] Andrew Hatfelder, *Literature, Politics, and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), I.
[42] Wei-ming Tu, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center", *The Living Tree* 134, no. 4 (2005): 145-167.

popularity is the best representative of how the author is able to break through his dilemma as an intercultural writer.

The changing context of Ha Jin's creative content is consistent with the pace of development in China. As his works progress, the relation between self and larger social or political structures changes with the balance of the focus shifting across these novels. My analysis of his works first examines *In the Pond* (1998). Through the social phenomenon of drawing caricatures to satirise leaders, I reflect on Ha Jin's attention to Chinese cultural tendencies when living in a foreign country. The protagonist Shao Bin in *In the Pond* is dissatisfied with his becoming a victim of work unit leaders flattering the boss, so he draws caricature to satirise their behaviour. The year in which this novel was published (1998) was not an era during which Chinese satirical cartoons were popularised, but in producing this narrative theme and setting his novel in the 1970s Ha Jin refers to earlier phases of Chinese history in which satirical cartoons were more prominent, such as the 1930s and 1950–1970s. Ha keenly captures a theme prevalent in period satirical cartoons and manages to convey this in his characters. This reflects Ha's sensitivity to social development in China at that time. I then progress to *Waiting* (1999), wherein Ha Jin expresses conflict between the Chinese Communist Party spirit and human nature. In this plot the protagonist, a soldier Kong Lin who serves as a military doctor, is unable to divorce his wife from an arranged marriage, so remains with his loved ones. Kong Lin is the representative of intellectuals who strictly obey Party spirit principles. The self attempts to conform to period principles popular with the people, but in fact the self becomes lost in these principles which are shown to be shallow and lacking integrity. My exposition then progresses to *The Crazed* (2002), wherein Ha writes about self-valuation, family, work, and society. The protagonist Jian Wan is assigned by his university academic department to take care of Professor Yang, who is hospitalised after suffering a stroke. Professor Yang is both his teacher and his future father-in-law. Because of his illness the venerable professor acts wildly and often complains that his academic life is meaningless. These 'crazy words' causes Wan, preparing for his PhD at Beijing University, to lose himself in thought, uncertain whether the life he pursues has meaning. This kind of inquiry is reflected in Ha's works not only at an individual level, but by drawing out broader social significance. Here, Ha Jin's focus gradually shifts from self to society. This chapter then concludes with my analysis of *War Trash* (2004), wherein Ha Jin creates the image of a soldier who has experienced the Korean War in the People's Volunteer Army, using the words of his characters to testify that a person engaged in fantasy can only see reality clearly when they suffer physically and mentally, and then progressively

becomes more self-aware. The main characters in this novel are fictional, but many events and details are based on reality, written by Ha after reading dozens of Chinese and English texts regarding the Korean War. Ha concentrates on the experience of a group of veterans who survived the Korean War in Chinese society. While living abroad and writing in English, several of his novels reveal his commitment to his Chinese cultural identity. In Ha's words, 'the most significant literature dealing with human migration has been written after experiencing exile.' (*TWM*, x) The analysis of Ha Jin's writing in exile is located mainly in his explorations of cultural identity embodied in his works.

The influence of Chinese and American culture on Ha Jin is reflected in the characters he creates in the four novels under discussion. I use Manuel Castells and Jacques Lacan's theories about identity to develop Ha Jin's use of character to explore cross-cultural identity. The three stages of Manuel Castells' interpretation of identity – resistance identity, project identity and legitimising identity – respectively correspond to the phases of Shao Bin's identity in the novel *In the Pond*. Resentful of his mistreatment by corrupt officials in his factory, he acts against the authorities. After repeated failures, he seeks to change the unjust social system on his own volition. It does not work out, and his search for his identity is left incomplete. The identity of Shuyu Liu is also incomplete. In *Waiting*, she has lived her life as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, as expected, but as a consequence she has sacrificed any sense of self. As Jacques Lacan explains, these roles satisfy social expectations, which is one manifestation of the Other with regard to the Self. However, she has no self. In the novel, the society represented by the courthouse and army hospital in Muji city never stops encouraging Shuyu to develop her subjectity. However, she is still in the process of building up her identity when the story ends. In *The Crazed* we can read Jian Wan's identity development according to Manuel Castells' three stages of identity in a different way. Jian has planned to be a scholar like his supervisor and father-in-law before he suffers a stroke. His seemingly insane words and actions cause Jian to rethink his life and make other choices than what society and others expect. However, during the transition period, he fails to stand firm in the face of social change, and finally gives up his original identity to seek a new life path. In *War Trash* Commissar Pei is indispensable in the evolution of Yu Yuan's identity. In light of the Mirror Stage as explained by Jacques Lacan, the reader can see how Commissar Pei helped Yu Yuan to become aware of the self, while his public image reminded Yu Yuan not to emulate him. Yu Yuan and Commissar Pei swap roles as analyst and analysand in a process of transference, with the subordinate figure becoming the

therapist of his superior. This process is central to the development of Yu Yuan's identity which gradually becomes clear to him and leads to personal growth and increased self-awareness.

'Publishers and market-oriented culture industries show a tendency to exploit cultural differences by playing up the exoticism of foreign or émigré identity.'[43] The dilemma facing racial/cultural minority writers rests in how to meet the demand of targeted readers when writing stories exploring and challenging their own ethnic identities. When discussing this dilemma, I will deploy Graham Huggan's explanation that 'minority writers are often caught between the desire to achieve recognition with a wider audience and their awareness of the constraints this might place on their writing and the ways in which it is received. The danger exists, for example, at the edges of an unmistakably politicised kind of writing becoming blunted by a coterie of publishers and other marketing agents anxious to exploit it for its "exotic" appeal by dampening any potential controversy.'[44] The popularity of Ha Jin's works caters to mainstream readers, but trace out a path in which he addresses the problem he must face as a Chinese writer in America: namely to speak to his hybrid cultural identity to a mass audience but to do so authentically. 'The dilemma that minority writers face is how to react to the publisher's demand for ethnic writings.' (*PAAL*, 32) Ha Jin is able to break through the dilemma without blindly following the demands of the mainstream literary market to cater to dominant political forces. There are heroic characters in his works, but his narratives do not conclude with an unambiguous success or failure of the hero, and thus work against the expectations of mainstream western readers. Instead of really shaking up the system, the 'hero' in Ha Jin's novels tends to simply believe people in power being hypocritical in agreeing to help him realise his original ideals. Although he has evidence of officials' corruption, he misses the perfect timing to reveal the truth. What makes this worse is the consequent isolation of the hero figure, losing the hard-won protections of his supporters whilst enduring manipulations by corrupt officials.

The reason that Ha Jin sets this series of novels in the near past is due to his life abroad, outside of contemporary China. If inspiration derives from one's real experience of life, Ha Jin does not believe that he could be such a spokesman for contemporary Chinese experience: 'On several occasions, I said I would stop writing about contemporary China. People often asked

[43] Youngsuk Chae, *Politicising Asian American Literature: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism* (Florence: Routledge, 2008), 172. Hereafter cited as *PAAL*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[44] Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 165.

me, “Why burn your bridges?” or “Why mess with success?” I would reply, “My heart is no longer there.” In retrospect, I can see that my decision to leave contemporary China in my writing is a way to negate the role of the spokesmanship I used to envision for myself. I must learn to stand alone, as a writer.’ (*TWM*, 28-29) This does not mean that Ha Jin endorses a view that writers should live in their constructed world and fail to pay attention to the real world. The fact that his works reflect some of the realities of Chinese society at that time, in the period following the Cultural Revolution, shows that he believes that writers should speak out not only for themselves, but also for their compatriots. Ha Jin would agree with Nadine Gordimer that ‘a writer must be “more than a writer” and must be responsible to the well-being of their fellow citizens.’[45] He/She must be responsible for the substance of the writing, instead of being styled as a self-centred interpreter or narrator of external events and stories. Writers can strive for a personal voice that is also as representative and authentic as possible.

Ha Jin’s intention – to select and develop a character as a representative of a group – changes across the four novels, especially in *War Trash*. Yu Yuan is unique compared with other Chinese soldiers at the time. He has neither the ambition to die for his country, nor the spirit of death. All he achieves is to survive. He is a character created in a period when the writer fuses elements of Chinese and American culture. He expresses Chinese filial devotion in his duty to his mother. In the face of temptation from the Nationalists and the American Army to defect to Taiwan he always insists on going back to mainland China with the only reason being that his mother is located there. However, he takes his own interests seriously: once in possession of the chance to go to a third country before his repatriation to China, he carefully plans which country would offer him the best opportunity. The existence of a character so out of step with the times has not impeded his popularity as a writer with Chinese and foreign readers, proving Ha Jin’s mastery of narrative and his credible development of complex and conflicted characters.

Much of the existing research on Ha Jin’s ethnic writing focuses on the interpretation of style and narration (such as trauma, history and war), the analysis of Chinese images, especially diasporic identity or ethics (such as life and living). However, these studies only consider Ha Jin’s novels as reflection on Chinese culture and tradition or the writer’s life experience in the

[45] Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, and Places*, ed. Stephen Clingman (New York: Knopf, 1988), 290.

US as a migrant intellectual. Few studies mention that Ha Jin absorbs Western literary tradition in his writing, nor do they analyse his creative writing both from his Chinese and American cultural backgrounds, let alone consider how different social and political environments influence shaping different Chinese characters.

For example, Hongxuan Zhang analysed Ha Jin's five novels *In the Pond*, *Waiting*, *The Crazed*, *War Trash* and *A Free Life* (2007) in her Doctoral thesis *Domination, Alienation and Freedom in Ha Jin's novels: A View from Afar*. She interprets Ha Jin's novels 'primarily as a critique on tyranny; the analysis therefore will be informed by sociological and psychological theories and understandings provided by Arendt, Fromm, Solzhenitsyn and other critics of tyrannical governments. Erich Fromm in particular, whose analysis of domination focuses chiefly on the psychological dispositions of the dominated individuals, will offer most illuminating insights.'[46] I will mainly compare the first two chapters of this thesis with my chapter because the scholar chooses the same four novels to analyse as I do. 'Chapter 1 of this study examines Ha Jin's first two novels *In the Pond* and *Waiting* by focusing on the relationship between tyrannical domination and the individual psyche, revealing the individual's authoritarian mentality that helps to allow and perpetuate tyrannical domination.' (*DAFHJN*, 12) In Chapter 2, she analyses novels *The Crazed* and *War Trash* from the perspective of alienation. 'The story of *The Crazed* can be read through the lens of existentialist alienation theory.' (*DAFHJN*, 19) 'In *War Trash*, Ha Jin examines the phenomenon of alienation from the psychological perspective. Erich Fromm's Freudian interpretation of Marxist alienation will serve as the theoretical basis for my interpretation of this prison drama.' (*DAFHJN*, 20) I approach four novels from different perspectives which are supported by different theorists' interpretations. I focus on the establishments of main Chinese characters' identities, which are products of cultural communication between China and US. In section 1 of this chapter, I will use Manuel Castells' framework of three stages of identity (start from resistance identity) to analyse Shao Bin's identity-building in *In the Pond*. Section 2 will use Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the relation between the subject and the Other to analyse the process of identity-building in the character of Shuyu Liu in *Waiting*. In section 3, I will use Manuel Castells' interpretation of identity again (start from legitimising identity) as the theoretical framework of my analysis to examine differing structures of personal consciousness in Chinese and American society

[46] Hongxuan Zhang, *Domination, Alienation and Freedom in Ha Jin's Novels: A View from Afar*, Doctoral thesis of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2015): 10. Hereafter cited as *DAFHJN*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

through the portrayal of the protagonist Jian Wan in *The Crazed*. In section 4, I will use the interpretation of The Mirror Stage and transference from Jacques Lacan to analyse how the individual Jian Wan becomes detached from the group and then finds his identity in *War Trash*.

Moreover, in 'English Diaspora Literature Written by Chinese Writers in North America and Their Literary Traditions – An Analysis of Ha Jin and Yan Li's Literary Works', the writer Xiaohui Cai claims that 'Ha Jin focuses on the literariness of works, trying to transcend or dilute Chinese ethnicity and emerge into Western literary tradition.'[47] In my opinion, Ha Jin recognises the influences of Chinese and Western literary traditions on him and projects those influences to Chinese characters in his novels, reflecting his attitude towards both cultures. In 'Features of Postmodern Discourse in Ha Jin's Novels – Take *Waiting* and *In the Pond* as Examples', the writer Wei Sun points out that 'the "uncertainty" of characters' fate shows the relationship between individuals and society.'[48] I specify the relationship as between the individual and social or political structures in China and explain its influence on different Chinese characters. Although the stories are set in China, Ha Jin inputs plots known to Western readers, such as 'small guy' fulfill the role of a hero, to help them better understand. In 'Female Other in "Waiting"', writers believe that 'the female protagonist Shuyu Liu in *Waiting* is in a miserable situation.'[49] I read her in a different way. Shuyu deserves to be valued for her spiritual abundance, not just for the disappointments in her life, such as the arranged marriage, taking care of parents-in-laws alone in her hometown after marriage, and her husband's infidelity. Moreover, she receives support to change the current situation and awaken her self-consciousness from the rest of her family, mainly her daughter and younger brother, departments such as courthouse and army hospital in which her husband work. Only with these considerations can a critical view be provided in this analysis. My research aims to explore how the identities of main Chinese characters in Ha Jin's novels set in China are built up under the influence of both Chinese and American cultures, and how they develop with changes of

[47] Xiaohui Cai, 北美华人英语流散文学与中西文学传统——以哈金、李彦作品为例 "English Diaspora Literature Written by Chinese Writers in North America and Their Literary Traditions – An Analysis of Ha Jin and Yan Li's Literary Works", *Comparative Literature in China (中国比较文学)*, no. 4 (2017): 158-170.
[48] Wei Sun, 哈金小说中后现代主义话语特征——以长篇小说《等待》《池塘》为例 "Features of Postmodern Discourse in Ha Jin's Novels – Take *Waiting* and *In the Pond* as Examples", *China Journal of Multimedia & Network Teaching (中国多媒体与网络教学学报)*, no. 8 (2020): 210-212.
[49] Haiyan Zhang, Jingchun Zhao, Haitao Mao, "等待"中的女性他者 "Female Other in 'Waiting'", *Comparative Study and Cultural Innovation (文化创新与比较研究)*, no. 3 (2018): 42-43.

the relationship between self and social or political structures in a transnational way, as well as situate Ha Jin within a broader context of Chinese expatriate writing.

In the Pond

The protagonist of the novel, Shao Bin, dares to struggle as an individual worker against a corrupt collective, constituting a popular theme in literature and film in both China and the West. His series of heroic actions such as exposing corruption and challenging authority win him much attention despite beginning as a humble nobody. This kind of characterisation is familiar to western readers – the plucky underdog fighting against graft, vindictive displays of power, and complacency – but things do not end up as well as expected. Shao Bin's impulsiveness and short-sightedness prevents him from becoming a true hero, let alone shaking up the unjust system of his collective.

I will use Manuel Castells' framework of three stages of identity to analyse Shao Bin's identity-building. Castells proposes a distinction among three forms of identity: resistance identity, project identity and legitimising identity. 'Resistance identity is generated by those actors who find themselves in positions or conditions which are devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination, and thus build trenches of resistance and survival based on principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society.'[50] At the beginning of the novel, Shao Bin should have been assigned a larger house but has his application rejected by the leadership of the Harvest Fertiliser Plant. His intense dissatisfaction with the arrangement of the collective sees him plan to fight against the collective. He not only wants to expose the corruption of the leadership, but also tries to change the whole unjustified system as a representative of all workers in the plant. That is how his project identity formed out of an initial resistance. Project identity, as Castells defines, 'is built by social actors to redefine their positions in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of the governing social structure by engaging whatever cultural materials are available to them.' (*TPI*, 8) He further explains how it occurs: 'Naturally, identities that start as modes of resistance may induce projects, and may also, along the course of history, become dominant in the institutions of society, thus

[50] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Blackwell: Oxford, UK, 2010), 8. Hereafter cited as *TPI,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

becoming legitimising identities to rationalise their domination.' (*TPI*, 8) 'Legitimising identity is introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalise their domination vis a vis social actors.' (*TPI*, 8) Shao Bin's narrative trajectory aims at his completing the process from project identity to legitimising identity. He is supposed to achieve his goal by exposing corruption and inducing change in the system, but he falls into the trap set for him by the leader and makes the wrong decision, rendering all his efforts in vain. The process of building his identity becomes circular, with Shao Bin ending where he began.

Shao Bin is an ordinary worker in the Maintenance Division of the Harvest Fertiliser Plant. Since he has worked in the plant for six years, he thinks that he deserves a new apartment allocation, but his request backfires. His colleague Hou Nina (who is believed to have had an affair with the Party Committee secretary), who has worked at the Plant for only three years, receives a new apartment instead, deepening Shao Bin's dissatisfaction. In addition to this injustice Secretary Liu, already in possession of a good apartment, takes an even larger one. This confluence of misfortune has Shao Bin firmly believe that the leadership influences the decision-making of the Housing Committee, denying Shao Bin his deserved apartment. His resistance identity is generated at this point by virtue of his being devalued by his community. 'The identity of resistance constructs a defence against unbearable oppression defined by the collective in power. This may be the most important type of identity because it leads to the formation of new communities and forcing a difference from prevailing conditions.' (*TPI*, 9) Shao Bin seeks to make changes to the existing system due to the harmful decisions being made and their impact upon him.

> Choking with anger, he (Shao Bin) is determined to do something about the injustice. Even though he couldn't correct the leaders' wrongdoing, he wants to teach them an unforgettable lesson and show them that he wouldn't swallow am offense.[51]

Shao Bin's motive is fine, even noble, but his methods are misdirected and ill-advised in light of the ritual abuse of power in his workplace.

Shao Bin draws a caricature and sends it to the *Lüda Daily*. He has published three works of calligraphy in this local newspaper before.

[51] Jin Ha, *In the Pond* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 7. Hereafter cited as *IP,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

> On a large sheet of paper, he draws a huge official seal, standing upside down. Then on the seal's bulky handle he sketches an ecstatic face with a few hairs on the crown. Upon the seal's flat top, which is in the form of an oval stage, he puts a dozen midget men and women sitting together in two rows. He makes sure that two of them in the centre resemble Secretary Liu and Director Ma. Liu, wearing a handlebar moustache, sits with his short arms crossed before his chest, while Ma's long face is pulled downward as though his mouth is filled with food. Behind the human figures, Bin sets up a six-story building with broad balconies and tall windows, from which fluorescent rays are darting out. The drawing finishes, Bin dips a smaller brush in the ink, then writes a line of bold characters at the top of the paper as the title: 'Happy Is the Family with Power'. (*IP*, 9)

Other workers who are unhappy with the unfair distribution of apartments show their emotion by pasting big-character posters and dumping human excrement. Compared to these anonymous acts, Shao Bin confronts and exposes unfair treatment and fights openly with his superiors. At this point Bin occupies the narrative role of a heroic figure fighting a corrupt and unjust system, a role deeply familiar to Ha Jin's audience of western readers. Bin is an ordinary worker of a small plant in a county in north-eastern China. Due to the unfair treatment by the leaders, he loses the apartment he claims to deserve and dared to confront the leaders head-on. The unfamiliar cultural background and characteristics of the time give the story a mysterious and novel colour in the eyes of western readers, arousing their interest and combined with the familiar formula of the lone hero, making it easier for them to accept the story.

After the publication of Shao Bin's first caricature, the leaders hold a workers-and-staff meeting at which they propose a threefold solution.

> One, Finance will withhold Bin's bonus for six months; two, he must write out a self-criticism and admit his wrong publicly, in front of all people in the plant; and three, he must send a letter, without delay, to the *Lüda Daily* and explain the facts and his true intention and ask the editors to publish a note of correction. (*IP*, 17)

They take advantage of their status and the pressure of public opinion to disparage Bin's character, which further enrages him. Instead of admitting defeat, 'Shao Bin feels a strong sense of justice and an impulsion to civil duty rose in him. An upright man ought to plead in the name of the people. He believes he is going to voice not only his own discontent and indignation but also the oppressed brothers' and sisters'. Yes, he wants to speak for all the workers in the plant.' (*IP*, 20) However, Shao Bin's ambition of 'seeking welfare for the people'

is shown to be nothing more than his own wishful thinking without a solid foundation. Workers like Hsiao Peng (who is the director of Maintenance) do not really support him even when they encourage him to take the lead, putting their own interests at the centre of everything. If Shao Bin's resistance succeeds, they can benefit. If not, they have nothing to lose. As Wenyan Cheng argues in 'On the Tragic Significance of Nobody in Ha Jin's *In the Pond*', 'the other employees in the Harvest Fertiliser Plant support Shao Bin for their own benefits.'[52] Because of their free-riding, they would even throw stones at him when their interests are damaged. Team workloads are increased due to Shao Bin's behaviour as punishment. They immediately show their true colours and directly target Shao Bin to express their dissatisfaction. Here Ha Jin shatters readers' illusions about the nature of the 'hero'. People do not expect much from Shao Bin. His easy character foreshadows the loss of public support, and his fight for an ideal of equity and fairness comes up against the reality of the lone whistle-blower being victimised and ostracised. As events begin to escalate, there is a feeling that the higher you climb, the heavier you fall.

The shape of the narrative gradually alienates Bin from the reader as well as from his fellow workers as his escalating attempts to attain justice expose him to increased jeopardy. This psychological gap between protagonist and reader increases the sense of expectation for the story's development. From this, we can see that the author consciously breaks the expectation horizon of the readers. This is a risky strategy, where the reader's alienation from Bin's personal fate is weighed against the lurid interest of his ill-advised quest. 'Literary works are measured against an existing horizon of expectations consisting of readers' current knowledge and presuppositions about literature, and where the meanings of works change as such horizons shift.'[53] For western readers, the destruction of the hero's image is tantamount to challenging the authority of the popular perception of the creation of the subject. However, it is not surprising for Chinese readers to know that an ordinary person fails to fulfil the role of hero. The character of Ah Q in Lu Xun's novella *The True Story of Ah Q* is an apt example, whereby he displays moral cowardice in his deference to the powerful figures in his life and abuse of the weak, using his notion of the 'spirit of victory' to console himself in defeat or luxuriate in his domination over others. Such characters do not wish to admit their failures in life but lack sufficient determination to persist in changing their fates. They fight for themselves at the very

[52] Wenyan Cheng, 论哈金《池塘》中小人物的悲剧意义 "On the Tragic Significance of Nobody in Ha Jin's *In the Pond*", *Dazhong Wenyi (大众文艺)*, no. 11 (2017): 22.
[53] Chris Baldick, "Reception Theory", in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2015), 98.

beginning rather than for the goods of others or the collective, and thus are easily deceived by false promises.

The next phase of Shao Bin's moral crusade has him report in a lengthy letter the collusion of Secretary Liu and Director Ma to Yang Chen, the Party secretary of the commune and Liu's and Ma's immediate superior. The letter is directed instead to Liu and Ma, who requests the accountant Hou Nina deduct half a yuan from Shao Bin's bonus. Shao Bin confronts Liu and Ma, ignoring the presence of Yang Chen and guests, and shouting directly at them. Two of the leaders respond to his outburst by stating that he has a brain problem and needs to go to the hospital. Later, he is beaten and slapped by the leaders, and ejected from the office. Through the door, Shao Bin hears the superiors still calling him 'idiot'. 'He angrily lashes out at the leader, "I screw your ancestors! I screw them pair by pair!" before leaving.' (*IP*, 29) At this point, the two hostile parties are formally formed: Shao Bin, on one side, and the corrupt officials led by Secretary Yang on the other. Shao Bin publicly exposes Yang Chen's complicity with the leaders of the fertiliser factory at the election site, which shocks Director Ma and Secretary Liu.

Having taught the leaders a lesson Shao Bin now seeks to change the social system. He insists on reporting collusion between leaders and their superiors. This revelation, if taken seriously enough, could lead to significant changes in the leadership of the community in which he lives. His exploration of identity will transit from resistance identity to project identity because his appeal develops from personal resistance to the transformation of social structure, the defining characteristic of project identity. He tries to give his revelations their full impact – for instance, by harnessing the power of the media again to increase exposure.

Neither Ma nor Liu punish Shao Bin for the moment. However, Bin misunderstands, thinking that they are afraid of him. He begins his 'pursuit of victory' and arranges for further counterattacks – drawing and publicising his second caricature. This time, he sends it to *The Workers' Daily* in Beijing, a union newspaper without a large circulation but read throughout China. In his mind, he is ready to engage any enemy with his brush. To Shao Bin's astonishment, his caricature is published quickly in two weeks. Since it depicts leaders received gifts during the Spring Festival, the editor surely intends it to come out before Spring Festival to combat this unhealthy wind.

> As a result, the cartoon spoils the leaders' Spring Festival. Unlike other years, when they would have twice the amount of rice, meat, fish, sugar, and soybean oil a worker had, this year they take home only the same portion as everyone in the plant. (*IP*, 57)

Shao Bin succeeds in provoking the leaders. 'After the Spring Festival, the leaders assign all of Maintenance to overhaul two boilers and replace a distiller for the Fourth Workshop, which mainly produce explosives for the People's Army.' (*IP*, 58) They do this, on the one hand, to divert Shao Bin's energy and make him too busy to make trouble; on the other hand, to alienate him from his workmates. As they all knew, it was Shao Bin's fault that the work quantity of the whole department had increased. The description of workmates here lays the foundation for the head-on conflict between Hsiao Peng and Shao Bin. When shaping the 'hero' image, the author is making subtraction, slowly hollowing out the character's inner solidity, finally leaving only an empty shell that will fall at the slightest wind. Moreover, he does not have the support of the masses. Even if he flies like a kite, there is not a string to hold him back. Shao Bin's image is ultimately untenable.

Following Shao Bin's acts of defiance, the plant erects a propaganda board. Shao Bin's eagerness to paint, allied with his talent, has him put aside his feud with his superiors and visit Director Ma's office to inquire about possibilities. Not only is he refused by Secretary Liu who happens to be present, but he is also insulted: 'We know you're talented, but we don't want to utilise your talent. You have something to sell, but remember, we don't have to buy it from you. To tell you the truth, we have decided to hire someone from outside and let your talent rot in you. Go back and learn to do your own work well. Stop dreaming that heaven will drop a roasted quail into your mouth.' (*IP*, 61) The leaders would rather spend money to hire people from outside to produce art for the propaganda board, and Shao Bin's talents lie fallow. Coincidentally, the person named Yen Fu who is employed in this role is acquainted with Shao Bin, respectfully calling Bin 'master'. He is aware of Shao Bin's artistic attests and speaks well of him to the leaders, suggesting that the leaders also let Shao Bin draw propaganda boards, a suggestion which receives another sarcastic remark from the leadership. Secretary Liu says: 'You know our plant is not a large unit. Only three hundred people here, it's too small a pond for a large turtle like you, so we hope you'll transfer to another place that can offer you a suitable job. We won't keep you here and let you miss the opportunity to develop your talent. You see, we are always concerned with our young people's growth.' (*IP*, 69) Director Ma makes it clear that if Shao Bin finds a better opportunity, they will happily let him go. What he would do next, however, proves once again that he fails to keep his word.

The escalating struggle between Shao Bin and the corrupt officials includes two stages, bounded by the publication of Shao Bin's second caricature. The main reason for the increasingly serious situation is the leader's malicious slander against Shao Bin.

> One day in early May, Bin receives a letter from Gold County's Cultural Centre, which notifies him that they would like to 'borrow' him from the plant for a year, and they might keep him if everything worked out properly. He would be given an office and a small fund for stationery. The letter also says the centre has already written to the Harvest Fertiliser Plant for his file. (*IP*, 73-74)

Liu and Ma are surprised that Shao Bin is in such demand and possesses such industry connections. They would prefer not to allow their sworn enemy to gain a position higher than either of theirs, but they have no real way to stop it. In order to keep him under their control, they concoct a rumour that Shao Bin has mental issues and has cheated visitors in the past. Shao Bin realises that he has been tricked again: subsequently, Shao Bin's remaining trust in the leaders begins to crack. His single-mindedness blinds him to the true nature of the allegiances he takes as transparent, unable to see that his fellow workers encourage him to focus the ire of the officials rather than really standing with him.

Shao Bin takes the College Entrance Examination and receives an offer from Professor Gong Zheng of the Department of Fine Arts at the Provincial Teachers University. With the previous lesson in mind, Shao Bin decides to strike first. He brings a letter of complaint to a conference gathering to make trouble, which results in physical conflict with Secretary Liu. In a scene of high farce and physical comedy, Secretary Liu aims to subdue Bin by sitting on him, who responds by biting Liu on the buttocks. Following this dramatic turn, Hsiao Peng and his workmates withdraw public support for Bin, afraid of being implicated by him again. They accuse Shao Bin of understanding everything tied to his situation but never trying to change: 'You only know how to mess things up. To be honest, I wish you weren't in our Maintenance. Who can keep watch on you all the time?' (*IP*, 95) After Secretary Liu takes photos of the injury, the leaders hold a general meeting and require Shao Bin to leave temporarily and to compose a statement of self-criticism, which Shao Bin refuses. The leaders believe that he would not expose his private parts to the public and further stimulate him with words. Finally, Shao Bin leaves angrily, with the contradictions between the two sides further intensified.

Shao Bin and his wife Meilan visit Director Ma's home and give him four Indian Green apples as an inducement not to block Shao Bin's admission to the Fine Arts Department of Provincial Teachers University. The apples are not to Mr. And Mrs. Ma's liking and the plan fails. Later, Shao Bin is asked to attend a family-planning meeting in the union office which is instead a frame-up. Ma replaces Shao Bin's four green apples with a large string bag of National Glory apples, accusing Shao Bin of bribing him. Considering that Bin bit Liu Shu (Secretary Liu) three weeks previously, the leadership feels that he is not suitable for college mentally nor morally. As soon as this news emerges, Shao Bin breaks down on the spot and cries.

> The meeting turns chaotic. Some people say the leaders has promised to support whoever takes the entrance exams, and now Bin is admitted, which is event that should be celebrated in the plant, why don't they keep their word? Who would try again the next year? Who would believe them in the future? Liu and Ma as leaders are too nearsighted and narrow-minded. As for the bag of apples, Bin must have done it in desperation; it is perfectly understandable if you are utterly confused and frightened and have no idea what to do. However, those who have always hated this pseudo-scholar remain silent, smirking. (*IP*, 113)

At this point, the two sides of the conflict reach the point of irreconcilability. From this point Shao Bin can no longer be considered a hero, fighting for larger principles of integrity and equity, but is instead merely fighting for himself. With little to lose Shao Bin seeks to reveal to the public the truth of official corruption at all costs.

Song Zhi, a reporter, and a colleague of Yen at the newspaper *Environment*, visits Shao Bin's house for the case. After the publication of Song Zhi's piece Ma and Liu threaten Shao Bin to reveal the author's identity but Shao Bin keeps silent. The report causes such a stir that county leaders asked Jiang Ping, the editor in chief of *Environment*, to write a self-review and withdraw the report. Despite this, an official team visits the plant to investigate Secretary Yang. The bureau demands Jiang Ping's resignation, upon which the newspaper is shut down. With the help of Jiang Ping's aunt, who works for a major journal *Law and Democracy* in Beijing, Shao Bin explains what happened to editor in chief Wang and as a result the piece is published. At the same time Yang, Ma and Liu sit together and discuss countermeasures. At last, Yang Chen, the immediate superior of Director Ma and Secretary Liu, bribes Bin with a position higher than both Ma and Liu, but the problem of the house is never mentioned nor resolved. The end of this complex narrative arrives unexpectedly, with Shao Bin's exploration of identity suddenly interrupted. He never reaches the stage of legitimising identity which bear the

potential to generate structured and organised social actors, and the possibility of social change. His confrontations with the leadership gain such momentum that it is easy to forget who he is – a powerless member of the underclass who has never experienced the temptations that come with power. Ironically, his battle against corruption eventually gives way because corrupt officials promise him favours. What is more, he is immersed in the satisfaction of being recognised by the leader for his abilities. In 'Nobody's Farce – Ha Jin's *In the Pond* from the Perspective of Spacial Criticism', the writers believe that: 'Now, for Shao Bin, the apartment is not the priority. It is more important that someone "appreciates" him.'[54] Shao Bin's vanity is satisfied, and he prefers to maintain the status quo. His efforts are brought to naught, and his quest returns to the beginning, dismantling the potential to establish even a resistance identity.

Ha Jin's stories are not structured on significant characters and historical events, but instead are representative of everyday life in China. Firstly, the story and its themes are representative. The time and historical context of the story is in the service of the creation, but such a story can be viewed from a position outside of this environment, pointing to the translatability of Shao Bin's problems to almost any era. Unfairness caused by conspiracy of power is not uncommon but rather a feature of most organised political and social structures. Secondly, the characters are representative. The main character is a person who lives around us, and the injustice he suffers is something that might happen every single day. His judgement under this circumstance to uncover corruption and to make things right is what normal people might aspire to do. This suggests that, despite some of its outlandish moments of absurdity and physical comedy, the plot is plausible and reasonable. Whether Chinese or not, the reader can understand what happens to the protagonist and what befalls him. 'Anger its misfortune, mourn its dispute.'[55]

'One aim of a culture especially concerned with the threat posed by big government will be to hold in high regard citizens who resist excessive reaching by the state into private domains. Such a culture will produce works that extol whistleblowing about the government (and large

[54] Lihong Wang, Haixin Zhang, Yuexin Li, 小人物的闹剧——空间批评视域下哈金的《池塘》 "Nobody's Farce – Ha Jin's *In the Pond* from the Perspective of Spacial Criticism", *Journal of Lanzhou Institute of Education (兰州教育学院学报)*, no. 6 (2017): 41-43.

[55] This is what Lu Xun used to comment on the British Poet Byron in his paper *Moron Shi Li Said* in 1907. Generally, it refers to feelings of sympathy and resentment toward the unenlightened.

entities that may have captured it) rather than about individual wrongdoing.'[56] Shao Bin is a whistleblower created in such social background. People represented by him are not entitled to welfare, such as the allocated apartment, which is caused by the dereliction of duty of government officials. Shao Bin, the protagonist in the novel, which is a product of an age, has heroic behaviour. When he is treated unfairly, he dares to rebel by drawing caricatures twice and publishing them. When he is targeted and publicly humiliated by his superiors, he tries to bring injustice to light via reporting the situation to his higher authority and demanding justice for himself. These behaviours, which are inconsistent with the characters' calmness and gentleness, bring the reader a sense of contrast, enrich the characters and bring a turning point to the development of the story. All these, however, is in vain. He chooses to believe his leader's promise to give him an apartment, which in fact is a delaying tactic by the leadership. All his struggles are crushed to dust by the deceit of his leaders. He has made himself a bigger joke. It turns out that Shao Bin is just an ordinary man, an underclass trying to make a living, not a hero. His whistle blowing will not change the environment, much less the system.

As an immigrant, Ha Jin views the American system and its cultural values with a critical eye. 'For some expatriate Chinese, physical distance from the mainland presents useful opportunities to transcend divisions within Chinese nationhood. It allows for the pursuit of alternative means of cultural self-identification.'[57] Ha Jin seems to agree with the largely American propensity that the resistance of the 'small guy' is the product of an uncaring system. In *In the Pond*, this is caused by corrupt officials such as Secretary Liu and Director Ma. A typical example of this kind of narrative in western literature might be Boo Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, misunderstood as a monster, but eventually found to have protected the lawyer Atticus Finch's children from harm by killing the villain, Bob Ewell. In that narrative the sheriff chooses to hide the truth, making the decision to 'let the dead punish the dead' (to have Tom Robinson punish Bob Ewell). The everyman Boo achieves a kid of fairness that the laws of the time could not. But the nobody figure created by Ha Jin is not the embodiment of fairness and justice, and his ending is not satisfactory. Shao Bin dares to fight against injustice, but he is impetuous and impulsive, which sets many stumbling blocks for his pursuit of justice. Even though he knows his actions will not change the way his leaders behave, he wishes to teach

[56] Saul Levmore, Martha Craven Nussbaum, *American Guy: Masculinity in American Law and Literature*, ed. Saul Levmore and Martha Craven Nussbaum (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 219.
[57] Julia Kuehn, Kam Louie, David M. Pomfret, *Diasporic Chineseness after the Rise of China: Communities and Cultural Production* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 10.

them a lesson. The narrator's precise grasp of language helps to shape the image of the characters and endows the story a stronger rationality. The verbal abuse between Shao and his leaders is a good example. This shows the small guy's easy loss of emotional control and fits the situation of the story. Compared with ordinary workers who only dare to post big-character posters anonymously and secretly cause damage to vent their anger, Bin can achieve positive exposure through newspapers. His motive is fine, but the delivery is wrong, and the consequences are outsized. Venomous transgression does not end well, especially in a social group where the abuse of power is not only plainly evident but a commodity to be coveted and exercised when the opportunity arises.

Waiting

The novel *Waiting* can be regarded as a particular kind of historical novel in that it reflects reality through the life of main characters, manifested in two ways. First, individual will is insignificant in the face of the collective. Because of the rules of the community, Lin Kong (the male protagonist) and Manna Wu (Lin's girlfriend, who later becomes his wife) are not permitted to have a public relationship. They are unable to find any privacy to be together once Ran Su (their leader in the army hospital) bans them from fraternising outside their compounds. Manna instead is compelled to accept arranged blind dates, while the feelings between the two are slowly wasting in a period of forced 'waiting'. As Robert Sturr concludes, '*Waiting* critiques the uniformity of thought and the suppression of individuality that typified Chinese society in the 1970s.'[58] Individual freedom is subordinated to group unity in line with the mandates of communist ideology. Second, in the process of Chinese urbanisation, people's lives have changed, mainly due to the transformation of an agricultural population into a non-agricultural population. This is especially true with Shuyu. She was born in a village and after marrying Lin, she remains there with her parents-in-law and daughter. Later, Lin helps her acquire an urban hukou or Household Registration, permitting her to work in the city. Although she misses her hometown and the days she spends there, she enjoys her new life in the city. Social progress drives individual change. In Shuyu's case, the change of Chinese social atmosphere from the old to the new has her exist between two modes of behaviour. Her feet

[58] Robert D. Sturr, "The Presence of Walt Whitman in Ha Jin's Waiting", *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 20, no. 1, (2002): 2.

are bound, a sign of women's oppression in old China. She would not show her three-inch 'golden lotuses'[59] to others in addition to her husband because only her husband is at liberty to appreciate them. After moving to the city, she chops off her long hair and replaces it with a shorter style. This physical transformation is Shuyu's farewell to her old life and her embracing a new life, as well as reflecting the changing ethos of Chinese society. Her personal changes epitomise social change.

Ha Jin's novel is structured on the principle of enduring time in order to finally realise happiness. This theme is not unique in Chinese literature, also being used as a governing device in Xianliang Zhang's short story *Body and Soul* (《灵与肉》). The heroine Li Xiuzhi, an impoverished rural girl from Sichuan Province, leaves her hometown and travels to the northwest in an attempt to find a man to marry. The hero Xu Lingjun is the son of a capitalist master and a landlord lady but is abandoned by his father after his mother dies young. After graduation, he becomes a teacher, but because of his background, he is classified as a 'rightist' and assigned to a farm in northwest China for reform through labour. Thanks to their being introduced by a warm-hearted herdsman, the two are married the day they meet. Xiuzhi recognises Lingjun's honesty, and Lingjun is moved by Xiuzhi's optimism, diligence, and kindness. After Lingjun's rightist identity is cleared, his father, who had been abroad for many years, seeks him out and asks him to go abroad accompanied by his wife and daughter. Before Lingjun leaves for Beijing to meet his father, Xiuzhi and their daughter Qingqing sees him off. 'On the way, old Zhao (who was the carter) teases Qingqing, "Your father is going far away this time! Probably going abroad with your grandfather." Xiuzhi sits with her legs curling behind old Zhao and smiles at Lingjun. She did not speak, but her smile showed her trust and loyalty.'[60] In the craft shop on Wangfujing Street, Lingjun's father orders a set of Jingdezhen blue and white tableware with fine workmanship for 600 yuan, while Lingjun chooses a pickle jar costing more than two yuan in the porcelain shop, because it is Xiuzhi's favourite, demonstrating the overwhelming love between the two. Finally, Xiuzhi's long vigil is answered. Lingjun gives up the chance to go abroad and returns to her and their child. In *Waiting*, Shuyu is not as lucky as Xiuzhi. Although she is finally reunited with her husband, the process is far harsher. *Body and Soul* is one of Xianliang Zhang's representative works and is one of the most

[59] Women's bound feet in feudal age.
[60] Xianliang Zhang, "Body and Soul", *Shuo Fang Literature*, no. 9 (1980): 254.

well-known Chinese contemporary short stories. Ha Jin is very likely to be familiar with its plot and the circumstances surrounding the love affair between Lingjun and Xiuzhi.

This chapter will use Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the relation between the subject and the Other to analyse the process of identity-building in the character of Shuyu Liu. 'The big Other is the absolute otherness that we cannot assimilate to our subjectivity.'[61] It is the symbolic order which affects or even decides one's life track, such as the society (which is a representative of big Other). In the novel Shuyu occupies the multiple roles of wife, daughter-in-law, mother, and Chinese citizen protected by law, in line with the expectation of women in Chinese society at that time. 'The big Other is also the social discourse comprised of the desires of those around us, through which we internalise and inflect our own desires.' (*JL-1*, 70) Chinese society at this time places a premium on the importance of an intact family in a woman's life. With this belief, Shuyu tries her best to live her life and to act as convention demands, but her lack of self-awareness proves to be a hindrance to her progress, never thinking of herself. However, in the process of her life she receives encouragement from certain representatives of society, encouraging her awakening. This is the embodiment of the collision of eastern and western cultures that the author feels regarding the female's fate after marriage at that time – stay at home and serve the whole family or enter the society and achieve value of life. The theme of female's self-awakening might remind readers of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899). Although the two books are written nearly a century apart, both entail plots regarding the awakening of women's self-consciousness under the influence of others. The difference is that Edna has chosen to step out of motherhood and live for herself, while Shuyu remains within the purview of her family in her more modest process of self-discovery. Both novels are products of their time.

Shuyu Liu, a typical Chinese rural woman, is Lin Kong's first wife and is the main subject of analysis in *Waiting*. Shuyu is the character in the novel most impacted by the process of waiting: waiting eighteen years for her husband to come home, waiting for him to change his mind about their relationship, and waiting for him to come back to her. Although this narrative of waiting is not unique to Chinese literature and culture, it does bear a specific weight in its provenance: As early as the Tang Dynasty Li Bai's poem Chang Gan Xing 1 depicts a merchant woman

[61] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2005), 70. Hereafter cited as *JL-1*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

futilely hoping for the return of her husband. The poem captures her pain at his absence and the radical uncertainty it brings to her life. As early as the *Shi Jing* in the sixth century BCE can be found poetic exhortations for women waiting for their men:

> Ah, girls,
> Don't indulge in pleasures with young men.
> Men's indulgence
> May still be excused,
> Girls' indulgence
> Never to be excused.[62]

Shuyu does not live for herself but applies her thoughts and labours to the benefit of her husband's family. Ha Jin creates her as a female image without self-consciousness, which breaks through the consistent cognition of independent and thoughtful female images in Western literary works. Shuyu is bound to Chinese feudal moral concepts. As Xin Wang writes in 'Ha Jin's Literary Journey of "Returning Home" in *Waiting*', 'In her (Shuyu's) mind, just as a wife's three-inch "golden lotuses" can only be shown to her husband, her fate is in the hands of him. As for divorce and standing up for herself from it, it is beyond her comprehension. She, a traditional Chinese rural woman who has been sticking to the feudal concepts, waits 18 years out of the chronic waiting and deep-rooted loyalty to the family.'[63] Shuyu's cognitive limitation is a product of China's feudal times. It is the prevailing patriarchal ideology in Chinese rural areas at that time that deprives of her chance to learn and her motivation to actively break this limitation. Her not being educated is the main reason why her husband wants to get rid of her. The pain on Shuyu is inflicted by others, and it is easy to arouse sympathy from readers. Yet in the end, the woman who receives the reader's pity finds herself in the most successful position: she attains the return of her husband and a full family. She is the only character in the book who experiences a happy ending.

Shuyu's ending is not altogether surprising, but nor is it representative. Shuyu's constant personality is the main reason why Lin chooses to come back to her. What has changed is Lin's

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[62] Ha Poong Kim, *Joy and Sorrow: Songs of Ancient China: A New Translation of Shi Jing Guo Feng*, trans. Ha Poong Kim (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2016), 81.
[63] Xin Wang, 《等待》中哈金的文学"返乡"征途 "Ha Jin's Literary Journey of 'Returning Home' in *Waiting*", *Youth Literator (青年文学家)*, no. 11 (2016): 84-88.

needs at a different stage of his life. At the end of the novel, Lin yearns for a warm and harmonious home and a virtuous and understanding wife, which Shuyu could give him. So, he finally chooses to return to Shuyu and his original family. But a significant factor in all this is Manna's illness. Without Manna's poor mental and physical state, Lin might not have made the decision so quickly.

The author gives Shuyu Liu many social identities, as wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, which are the roles the Other (society) anticipates her to occupy. Shuyu is a hardworking and capable rural wife who keeps her yard (plants, poultry, and livestock) well.

> (When Lin Kong returns to his home in Goose Village,) beside him, chickens are strutting and geese waddling. A few little chicks are passing back and forth through the narrow gaps in the paling that fence a small vegetable garden. In the garden pole beans and long cucumbers hang on trellises, eggplants curve like ox horns, and lettuce heads are so robust that they cover up the furrows. In addition to the poultry, his wife keeps two pigs and a goat for milk. Their sow is oinking from the pigpen, which is adjacent to the western end of the vegetable garden.[64]

While taking care of her parents-in-laws and daughter on her own, Shuyu is able to raise poultry and livestock and grow a fruitful vegetable garden, which is evidence of her being productive as a rural wife. She is not only industrious and capable at farm work, but also good at housekeeping.

> She grows pumpkin, taro, corn, and glutinous millet on their squarish half-acre of land, about five hundred yards west of the village. The soil is fertile, and the produce is more than she and Hua (her daughter with Lin) could use, so her brother Bensheng would sell the surplus for her in Wujia County and Six Stars, a nearby commune town. (*W*, 86)

The frugality and industry are reflected in her later life in the city. When Lin gives Shuyu one yuan for a haircut she is reluctant to spend more than 30 cents, and even then, she keeps the haircut as short as possible to maximise the time before her next one. Another instance of Shuyu's frugality arises when Lin finds Shuyu's grocery shopping list. Going by the list, the whole family eat less than half a pound of cooking oil and about a pound of pork every month. This surprises Lin because he remembers having pork or fish every day when at home. He asks

[64] Jin Ha, *Waiting* (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 1999), 4. Hereafter cited as *W,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

Shuyu if she has enough money or if she requires more, but Shuyu affirms she needs no more. Indeed, Shuyu gives Lin 30 yuan she has saved, even this only a fraction of the 100 yuan she has saved over the last year. When Lin's father dies, Shuyu spends some of her savings, leaving 30 yuan. Lin is touched by Shuyu's kindness, frugality, and virtue. He does not do what a husband should do, but Shuyu does. By contrast, he feels ashamed. He cannot face his wife now, so he hides out of the house.

Throughout the time in which Shuyu's life is put on hold, she still saves money for Lin due to her love and concern for him. Lin lives alone in the city and sends most of his salary back to his family. Shuyu is worried that he sacrifices his wages for his family at the expense of his own needs, so she saves a little money for him while supporting the whole family's expenses. If Shuyu's kindness and thoughtfulness draw readerly admiration, Lin's decision to abandon his wife appears even more cynical, diverging so sharply in his sense of family responsibility and marriage. In contrast with Lin, Shuyu's image is more three-dimensional and more richly developed. Born into an ordinary rural family, frugality is a necessary skill for her to master.

Although Lin initially insists on divorcing Shuyu due to his new love interest, he cannot help but admit that Shuyu's efforts produce a relaxed, free, and comfortable home environment.

> He (Lin) likes the fresh and tasty home-cooked food, such as the multigrain porridge into which Shuyu always urges him to add some brown sugar though she wouldn't take any herself. It is so soft and delicious that he could eat three bowls at a meal without feeling stuffed. The eggs sautéed with leeks or scallions would make his belches redolent of the dish even hours later. The steamed string beans seasoned with sesame oil and mashed garlic give him a feeling of ease and freedom, because he would never dare touch such a homely dish in the hospital for fear of garlicky breath. What is more, it is so relaxing to be with his family. There is no reveille, and he don't have to rise at 5:30 for morning exercises. When their black rooster announces daybreak, Lin would wake up, then go back to sleep again. The morning snooze is the sweetest to him. He has been home four days already. If only he could stay for a whole month. (*W*, 88)

Although he and Shuyu has long since slept in separate rooms, Shuyu creates the family environment he enjoys. Even readers could feel how cosy Lin Kong would be when he stays at home, and they are more favourable to Shuyu. This carries a foreshadowing of Lin Kong's return to Shuyu, which meets readers' expectation. At the end of the novel, Lin asks himself to

choose between love and a peaceful mind, representing Manna (his second wife) and Shuyu respectively. He chooses the latter, only to confide when drunk that Manna would die soon and he wants Shuyu to wait for him to return to their family. After moving to the city, Shuyu's image has changed, but her essence has not. She remains a simple and virtuous wife.

Shuyu is a good daughter-in-law and is very filial, which is made evident in three principal aspects. Firstly, from her brother Bensheng when he speaks up for his sister in court: 'It's unfair for Lin Kong to do this to her. She has lived with the Kongs for more than twenty years, serving them like a dumb beast of burden. She looks after his sick mother until the old woman dies. Then his father falls ill, and for three years she takes care of the old man so well that he never had a single bedsore.' (*W*, 12) Lin's family originally ask him to marry Shuyu because they need someone to take care of his ailing mother. For so many years, Shuyu has taken on this task and acquitted herself to universal praise. Secondly, Lin's perspective confirms the goodness of Shuyu's character. When Lin states his intention to visit his parents' graves, Shuyu takes time out of her busy schedule to prepare sacrifices early, including dishes Lin's mother loved. Then she takes Hua to cut grass for pigs. When Lin rises, the food basket is still warm, and when he arrives at the graveyard, 'apparently somebody has cleaned up the place lately. Against the head of both grave leans a thick bunch of wild lilies, still soaked with dew, but their small yellow flowers have withered long ago. Lin knows that it must have been Shuyu who has gathered the flowers and laid the bouquets, because his elder brother couldn't possibly think of such a thing, he is too deep in the bottle.' (*W*, 93) It is a traditional ritual in Chinese culture to offer sacrifices to deceased relatives. In addition to dishes that her parents-in-law liked, Shuyu specially picks fresh flowers to decorate their graves, which indicates her care and respect for them. Thirdly, Hua's repetition of Shuyu's words. After Shuyu and Hua settle down in the city, Lin asks Hua how her mother is doing. Hua says that she is feeling better now, but sometimes she misses home village.

> Shuyu would say, 'I'm like an old tree that can't be moved to another place.' She makes Hua promise that next April the two of them would go back to Goose Village to sweep the graves of Lin's parents. Despite complaining, she enjoys her life in the city. (*W*, 300)

No matter where she is, Shuyu keeps her parents-in-law in her mind. She cannot speak of home without thinking of them. In Ha Jin's view, filial piety is a virtue that people should retain and cultivate, even if times and living arrangements change. In the example of Lin Kong, he accepts his marriage to Shuyu to comply with his parents' wishes. Despite not returning home often

after his marriage, he always misses his parents in his heart. After the death of his parents, it is rare for him to go home, but once he does, he visits his parents' graves to worship. Influenced by her own parents' example, Hua in turn cares for them, living with her mother in the city after she becomes financially capable.

Shuyu's dedication to caring for and educating her daughter is illustrated by her breastfeeding Hua until the age of four, believing that mother's milk keeps a baby healthy. After Lin's mother and father die, Shuyu raises Hua alone while her husband keeps a mistress in Muji City. She is dutiful as a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, but her husband has another woman outside the marriage and does no more than send money to the family. Still, Hua never speaks badly of her father, either explicitly or implicitly, which shows that Shuyu has taught her well.

Shuyu's personal identity is subsumed beneath her abundant social identities. She lives her whole life for others without any thought or consideration for herself. She has no ego. Her parents decide her marriage for her, and following her abandonment by Lin she still performs the duty of taking care of her parents-in-law and raising her daughter alone with love. In the face of her husband's divorce request again and again, she agrees against her will in order to placate him, preferring to maintain the integrity of the family. On his final request, she agrees to divorce in court, but only to ensure her daughter future – an urban hukou and a job arranged by her husband's work unit. The image of Shuyu created by Ha Jin is quite different from many female characters in western works. Characters such as Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, Jane Austen's Emma, or Gustave Flaubert's Emma Bovary each possess a strong sense of self-consciousness, but Shuyu does not. Ha Jin confronts his Western readership – the novel being written in English – with a portrait of fidelity and filial piety. As Pan Wang claims in Analysis of the Implication of 'Waiting' in the Novel *Waiting*, 'Shuyu is the representative of traditional Chinese women bound by old morals. … Shu Yu's being stubborn in waiting explains traditional Chinese marriage values[65] which embody in her. This strong traditional moral force gives Shuyu a sense of security, but also consumes her vitality.'[66] Here, readers would sympathise with Shuyu's suffering, and feel angry and sorry for her not resisting, which gradually increases with the story pushing forward. At the novel's conclusion Lin, made

[65] For wives, it means take care of husbands and children and take all housework rather than working in society.

[66] Pan Wang, 浅析小说《等待》中的"等待"蕴含 "Analysis of the Implication of 'Waiting' in the Novel *Waiting*", *Journal of Heilongjiang College of Education（黑龙江教育学院学报)*, no. 4 (2017): 97-99.

anxious by his married life with Manna, reveals himself to Shuyu, telling her to wait for him to return to his original family. Shuyu responds to this outrageous request by stating: 'I will always wait for you.' Moreover, Shuyu promises to take care of Lin's and Manna's twins following Manna's death. Shuyu's tolerance and generosity distinguishes her character at least insofar as the strength of her moral code, and her actions shape the relative valuation of the novel's characters. As one of the most tragic female characters to be left 'waiting' in relative powerlessness, Shuyu ironically and finally gains happiness. This inversion of novelistic expectation is a clever ploy by Ha Jin, illustrating how different social systems and notions of cultural and interpersonal propriety can bear surprising consequences to readers conditioned by different kinds of narrative expectations.

Shuyu's character provides Ha Jin with the opportunity to express a critical view of Chinese society at that time, especially with regard to gender inequality and gender role expectations, manifested in Shuyu's waiting for so long and relatively powerlessness. Three reasons might be given for this. Firstly, during the period of the Cultural Revolution China's cultural and educational undertakings had stagnated, and female education was badly affected. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the people's government organises a systematic educational drive to eliminate illiteracy in order to raise the cultural level of the whole nation. Remarkable results are achieved, and the number of illiterate women is greatly reduced. 'Driven by a series of policy measures, China launched three literacy campaigns in 1952, 1956 and 1958, where 16 million women were able to gain literacy.'[67] These educational activities stopped during the Cultural Revolution and resume only after the reform and opening up. In the novel, Shuyu's illiteracy is marked by her not knowing how to take care of Lin's books, so that a dozen of them are damaged by mildew. Ha Jin's second point of critique centres on the persistence of feudal ethics on people's thinking, especially in rural China. Shuyu's foot binding and her arranged marriage to Lin Kong are remnants of this premodern order. In this context arranged marriages might be seen as the quintessential marker of waiting. Thirdly, as a vulnerable group in society, women are neglected in the absence of social services and systems of support, formal or otherwise. In the 18 years since her marriage to Lin Kong, Shuyu has been left largely alone in taking care of her sick parents-in-law, bringing up their daughter and taking care of the family farm work. This is well known in Goose Village, but no

[67] Xiuhua Jiang, *The Progress and Achievement of Chinese Women's Education in 70 Years of New China* (09/30/2019). https://m.thepaper.cn/baijiahao_4772173

government agency or social group is willing or able to step forward to offer any help to Shuyu or the family. Her husband, whose role is to care for and support her, does nothing more than send her money. Instead, he emotionally abandons her and creates a new life with another woman, adding to the injustice she has suffered.

On the other hand, Shuyu's personal will is strengthened by her ordeals, marking her out as different from the novel's other protagonists. As the narrative progresses Shuyu is supported by social forces in the form of civic organisations, which might function as the Lacanian Other in terms of her identity formation. Two institutions are crucial in their support of Shuyu in the novel: the legal system in the form of the courthouse, and the army hospital in Muji City, in which Lin Kong's working unit is located. The court does not approve the divorce petition for this couple out of concern for Shuyu's welfare up until the final time when Shuyu makes it clear that she agrees to divorce. Since Lin is a soldier in CPP, their marriage is protected by both the state and the law. Lin insists on separating from Shuyu, as he, a soldier, could only file for divorce after the couple has been separated for 18 years. Ha Jin arranges the plot in this way to project the Chinese social culture at that time through the characters and the events befalling them. Whether in rural or urban areas, this narrative of legal protection provides some measure of equality and autonomy for women, and functions to awaken Shuyu's inner identity. This social support for and protection of vulnerable groups provides a means by which Ha Jin is able to introduce Chinese social values to western readers. He develops characters with distinct Chinese characteristics that arouse the sympathy of western readers, mediating their identities and experiences across a significant cultural divide. The story materials come from real life experience at that time while merging with exaggeration – the kind of waiting is an extreme example, especially for female characters. Jumping out of the background set for this novel, Ha Jin discusses the female's fate as part of humanity, which has been widely attracting people's eyes worldwide. 'What Ha Jin writes in *Waiting* is human nature. It is a reflection on the common destiny of mankind which crosses the so-called East and West.'[68] He uses his writing to mediate both Chinese and American readers and bridge China and the west with the topic of general interest.

[68] Shaochuan Jiang, 哈金的《等待》：人性的透视与现实的重量 "Ha Jin's *Waiting*: The Perspective of Human Nature and the Weight of Reality", *Literature Education (文学教育)*, no. 8 (2018): 4-8.

The Crazed

In his novel *The Crazed*, Ha Jin examines differing structures of personal consciousness in Chinese and American society through the portrayal of the protagonist Jian Wan. 'Narrativising the story of the self and sharing with the reader the private spaces of the heart and mind that have been concealed from Communism's watchful gaze, the author draws on his experience of post-Mao's China and offers a historical reflection on the conditions of life in the period.'[69] Any historical perspective on formative events will change over time, yet here the author's own experience as a student during the Tiananmen Square demonstrations and then as an academic, shapes the novel's treatment of the Cultural Revolution with a degree of authenticity.

In the following analysis, Jian Wan is taken to be the main object of self-construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, both through the perceptions of Professor Yang and himself. Jian Wan regards Professor Yang as his idol, and in fact Professor Yang becomes a projection of his ideal self. Jian Wan finds Yang's erratic behaviour difficult to believe, with its effect amounting to a denial and questioning of his ideal self. At the same time, Jian Wan constructs his actual self in real life. Ha Jin's infuses Jian Wan's self with western elements, with the influence of American culture especially evident. This is partly a reflection of the writer's experience, repurposed in Jian Wan's own experience which exposed him to Western culture, the residues of which are readily apparent. In the process, Jian Wan encounters different people, deals with different events, doubts and affirms himself, and finally chooses a life path that is completely different from the one with which the story begins.

Ha Jin has shaped the character Jian Wan as representative of Chinese scholars at the time of the novel's setting. The social realities of the 1980s and the terrible histories experienced by many intellectuals often arouse official suspicious concerning their work. However, few people like the protagonist dares to give up their original identity and plan another unknown life path. Ha Jin refracts his dilemma as a scholar through the character of Jian Wan. Before the Tiananmen Massacre, Ha Jin was studying for his doctorate in the United States and planned

[69] Walter S. H. Lim, *Narratives of Diaspora Representations of Asia in Chinese American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 136-137.

to return to China to work in academia after graduation. His dismay at the Chinese government's response to the event is the principal reason he remains in the U.S. Ha Jin reconceptualises his own identity as a writer rather than as a scholar, although later he is to continue in an academic career. 'The new immigrant writers are nourished by the traditional Chinese culture and benefited from the modern western literature. … They break the national boundaries and the closed space of national discourse, focusing on their search for self, discovery and realisation in the foreign world, and express their exploration of Chinese and Western culture and pursuit of the meaning of life with wonderful words.'[70] As a representative of new immigrant writers, Ha Jin invests the emotion and effort in creating this character, which reflects the deeply personal as well as more broadly social dimensions of the novel and its relationship with the author's own life.

In order to investigate these dimensions, I will use Manuel Castells' interpretation of identity as the theoretical framework of my analysis. Castells' three divisions of identity correspond to the three stages of Jian Wan's self-development. Castells concludes that 'the tripartite structure of legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity is grounded in the principle that the social construction of identity always takes place in a context marked by power relationships. Identity structures may originate from dominant institutions, becoming identities only when and if social actors internalise them and construct their meaning around the process of this internalisation.' (*TPI*, 7-8) In addition to this, Giddens adds that 'identities are also sources of meaning for the actors themselves and constructed.'[71] To be more specific, Castells describes the individual identity construction in the process. 'As for an individual, identities' plurality is a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action, the relative weight of which influences people's behaviour in ways dependent upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organisations.' (*TPI*, 6-7) Due to the processes of self-construction and individuation in identity formation, the building of the self becomes more meaningful, which is the strength of this theory when it is used to interpret the protagonist of Ha Jin's novel.

[70] Ting Ouyang, 美国华人新移民文学的意义、局限与进阶路向 "The Significance, Limitation and Progression of Chinese American New Immigrant Literature". *Seeking Truth (求是学刊)*, no. 5 (2019): 149-157.
[71] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Pr, 1991), 21.

Jian Wan is a post-graduate student in Shanning University, majoring in literature. Influenced by his supervisor Professor Yang (who was also his future father-in-law), he wishes to emulate his mentor and succeed in an academia. At the outset of the novel Jian Wan is preparing for a PhD exam at Beijing University as part of his plan to pursue an academic career after graduation, with his notion of self tied up in this seemingly secure career narrative. 'According to the difference between the form and origin of identity, identity is divided into legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity. Of these, legitimising identity refers to the identity defined by the dominant social system.' (*TPI*, 8) As for Jian Wan, his legitimising identity is to become a scholar as his supervisor. His heart is set on studying, and he wants to continue the path that everyone thinks fit for him. He projects an ideal self onto Mr. Yang. He wants to be a professor and a scholar like him. To live up to this ideal self, he has worked hard all year. However, his purpose in life is dealt a blow because his role model has had a stroke, and has become a raving, shapeless patient who could not take care of himself. With Professor Yang's collapse, Jian Wan's world of self gradually collapses too, which recycles between deconstruction and reconstruction.

The deconstruction of Jian Wan's identity can be divided into physiological and psychological parts. Looking after Professor Yang turnes Jian Wan's temper sour, arousing his resistance identity. 'Resistance identity is the identity generated by actors who are in positions/conditions that are devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination, in response to which they build trenches of resistance and survival based on principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society.' (*TPI*, 8) Professor Yang suffers a diminishment of his position but this transfers to Jian Wan who has been planning his life on the model of Professor Yang's. This change of condition precipitates this internal change. Yang's remarks about the dark side of academia during his illness leads Jian Wan to rethink his future plan and accelerate the process of his identity transition.

Jian Wan has always been a bookish man, but after taking care of his sick teacher, even his roommates think he is a powder keg that only needs a spark to explode. Jian snaps at Little Owl's behaviour in the canteen, telling him to shut up. This bears political implications as 'Little Owl is known as a madman who has been a lecturer in the Chemistry Department three decades before. In the late 1950s he is branded a rightist, arrested, and sent away to a prison camp near Siberia. He plays the idiot for more than twenty years, which helps him outlive most of the convicts. But somehow this faked insanity has grown into his true nature. He often laughs

or weeps randomly, with the more attention paid to him, the more excited he would get. The dining hall is his favourite place for giving speeches.'[72] Little Owl's face reminds Jian of Professor Yang, who has been torturing him recently in his own fit of madness. 'He (Little Owl) chooses to forgo intellect and preserve the body and obtain a level of physical comfort at the price of intellectual deprivation or imperviousness. This strategy of survival at all costs is widespread.' (*DAFHJN*, 103) Since he is surrounded by people in the canteen, Jian has to eat his breakfast squatting under a tree, and Little Owl takes an egg away from him. To improve his mood and continue to study in the afternoon, he goes to see an art exhibition, but he is not in the mood to appreciate it at all. 'This kind of artwork used to touch him easily, but now it has lost its impact because he has begun to look at things with doubtful eyes.' (*TC*, 97) Professor Yang's crazy words make Jian Wan mad at him for the first time, upon which Jian starts trying to coax him like a child, instead of taking his words seriously.

Jian Wan first wants to give up pursuing a PhD in China and apply for a doctorate in the United States to continue his academic career. From the beginning of the novel, Jian is preparing for the entrance exams for a PhD in literature at Beijing University, something Professor Yang wants him to do. However, he has advised Jian Wan to apply for a PhD in the US and funded his taking TOEFL. Professor Yang has been to UC Berkeley, and he thinks the academic environment there is better. 'Here (in Shanning University) to become a departmental chair is the principle of a pinnacle of a professor's career. But scholars abroad are more detached and don't have to be involved in politics directly, so they can take up long-term research projects, which are much more valuable and more significant.' (*TC*, 105) According to Professor Yang's conversation with Professor Song – a colleague in the Literature Department and Professor Yang's principal rival – he is very disappointed that Jian Wan does not get the TOEFL score required and could not get the scholarship to study for his PhD at the University of Wisconsin. Moreover, Jian is unsettled because he sees no point in studying Chinese poetry abroad. Yet his resolve to study overseas persists and he reconsiders applying for a doctorate in the United States. He wants to return to China as an overseas doctor, not a native one.

Before long, however, Jian Wan abandons his academic career and decides to become a government official, having profound doubts about his plans to get a PhD and pursue an

[72] Jin Ha, *The Crazed* (New York: Pantheon Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 2002), 89-90. Hereafter cited as *TC,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

academic career. In his letter to Meimei (Jian Wan's fiancée, who is Professor Yang's only daughter), he mentions that:

> 'Recently I have been going through a crisis. I can no longer see any point in earning a PhD. I love you, Meimei. Rationally, I am supposed to take the exams, so that I can join you in Beijing and we can build our nest there. Yet deep down, I cannot help but question the meaning of such an endeavour. By "meaning" I mean how this effort is significant to mu existence as a human being. I know the capital can offer me better living conditions and more opportunities, but I cannot see any meaning in the material benefits. To be honest, I don't care much about creature comforts.
>
> At the bottom of my crisis lies this question: What is the good of becoming a scholar who serves as no more than a clerk in the workshop of the revolution? I cannot answer this question, which your father thrust on me. At times he is delirious, but at last he speaks from his heart.' (*TC*, 163-164)

The reason why he changes his mind is that he thinks some words from Professor Yang – who is his ideal self – are right. When Professor Song comes to visit Professor Yang, he tells him that the department has submitted his name for a full professorship, but Yang shows no interest in it. He does not want to be a 'clerk in the workshop of the revolution' anymore, and he hopes Jian would seek out another pathway. Jian thinks a lot after Professor Song's departure resounds with Jian, giving him opportunity to think carefully about his career options and the newswires by which he would judge his life. 'I am still preoccupied with what Mr. Yang has said about me a moment before. Unhappy as I am about his reproach, I have to admit that he does have a point. The more I think about some professors and lecturers at Shanning University, the more they resemble clerks and technicians. Even if someday, I become a scholar as erudite as my teacher, I would have to remain in the clerical ranks. Then why should I bother so much about it at all?' (*TC*, 156)

Jian Wan has always considered himself to be pursuing an academic path as opposed to a politician one. He observes the change in Professor Yang's attitudes following his stroke, which begins to resemble the kinds of statements in line with officialdom, a sign perhaps of Yang's pursuit of power. One example is Yang's desire to become a red guard and his admiration for the great leader, Chairman Mao, despite himself being a victim of the Cultural Revolution. This kind of sentiment is not in keeping with his academic status, and Jian begins to tire of him.

> Why does he suddenly talk like a political parrot? He has lost his sense of poetic judgement and again reveals his sycophantic nature. Many people want the power to rule others; Mr. Yang is no exception. The fact that he is a scholar must have made him even more eager to become an important official, so that he might utilise his learning, put his ideas into practice, and participate in policy making to realise his ambition and ideal; otherwise, all his knowledge would serve no purpose and would just rot away in his head. To some degree, he must still have a feudalistic mind-set. (*TC*, 126)

Jian also reacts negatively when he learns that Professor Yang's other postgraduate students, Banping and Weiya, are considering careers in the civil service. He believes that a scholar should not have a desire for power, which is not in line with their identity. Therefore, he has no interest in being a civil servant, which is the turn away from culture and towards politics, and even has aversion to it.

Jian Wan changes his project of self-fashioning three times throughout the novel. The first instance is because of his blind faith in the words of his idol and his lack of judgment. Professor Yang advises him to reconsider his academic career path, advice to which he adheres. At one point Jian is lost in his thinking in the sickroom and is interrupted by Professor Yang who asks what he is doing.

> 'I——I've been preparing for the exams,' I answer him, though I haven't opened a textbook lately.
>
> 'What exams?' he asks.
>
> 'For the PhD program.'
>
> 'You should learn how to grow millet instead.'
>
> 'Why?'
>
> 'The more you know, the crazier you'll go, like me. Intellect makes life insufferable. It's better to be an ordinary man working honestly with your hands.' (*TC*, 193)

Professor Yang's 'craziness' is ignored by all but Jian Wan, who realises that Mr. Yang is at various points in and out of his senses. There is some truth to what Yang says when he is sober, and Jian picks up what he says when he is confused. His respect for Professor Yang remains the same, but he has decided not to blindly follow Yang's plans for his future. At the same time, the idea of challenging legitimising identity sprouts, and his identity begins to transform from legitimising to resistance identity.

The second instance of change is motivated by Jian Wan not really knowing who he is. His ability to grasp classical poetry and his academic sensitivity shows that he is fit to be a scholar in the university, an assessment shared by his teachers and classmates. Professor Yang states clearly that he does not want Jian to become a clerk like him, meaning that he does not want Jian to continue his academic research at Shanning University. He hopes that Jian could study abroad instead and be influenced by a western academic atmosphere, and even to stay there to pursue a research career. Jian Wan misinterprets his teacher's words and states that he is sick of academia. This is not entirely accurate though: instead, of detesting the profession Jian hates people in academia like his teacher, whom he no longer wishes to emulate. 'I am sick of him, sick of his chicanery, sick of his nonsense, sick of these ignoramuses, sick of academia, sick of the hospital! I am sick of everything! I won't live this kind of life! I mean my teacher's.' (*TC*, 202) Jian's sense of an ideal self has been completely shattered. Not only does Professor Yang subvert Jian's ideal career image, but his messy personal life and the incompatibility between his words and deeds left Jian feeling exhausted. Jian reminds himself: 'At all costs you mustn't die a death like his!' (*TC*, 262) So far, Jian Wan finishes the establishment of his resistance identity, which is produced when the subject fights to survive after being devalued by the dominator. As for Jian, Professor Yang is the dominator on his way to ideal future career in academia. He is used to follow Yang's instructions to make decisions. However, it is Yang that tears his dream up. This time, he shows his anger with resistance.

The third instance of change is that Jian Wan is unable to follow his path to self-achievement in becoming a civil servant. His biggest tactical mistake is to ignore the influence of external factors, the representative character of which is Ying Peng, the Party secretary of his academic department. Jian tells him of his decision to pursue a role in the civil service, upon which news Secretary Peng alters the policy to a condition that non-Party members could not be recommended for the civil service. Jian is not a Party member. Ying Peng not only declines Jian a favour but takes away the possibility of his academic retention after graduation. Ying Peng's actions seek revenge upon the now-deceased Professor Yang for not helping her nephew obtain a scholarship for a Canadian university, but now redirected to Jian, his favourite student. By virtue of forgoing the doctoral entrance examination at Beijing University, Jian is unable to live with Meimei in Beijing, the result of which is that Meimei breaks up with him and finds a new suitor – Vice Principal Huang's Son. In his confusion, Jian joins a demonstration at Tiananmen Square on the urging of his roommate Mantao and witnesses scenes of students marching and being shot at by security forces. When Jian finally returns to school, he is wanted

by the police. Ying Peng turns him in for fear that he might interfere with Meimei's new romance. Jian burns his student ID, obtains a crew cut, and no longer uses his own name. This radical divestment of his previous life marks the shift to his project identity, 'a mode of identity which emerges in those who have been stimulated in terms of their resistance identity and want to establish a new social position.' (*TPI*, 8) He is forced to rebel and embark on a quest for a new self and to find his subjectivity, an unknown path and a mystery the with which the author leaves the reader.

Castells refers to Touraine's idea concerning the production of subjects: 'It establishes individuals with their own personal histories within the sphere of project identity, that give meaning to the whole realm of experiences in an individual life.'[73] 'These subjectivities produce collective social actors through which individuals reach holistic meaning in their experience.'[74] Castells further explains that 'the construction of identity here is a project of building a different life, perhaps on the basis of an oppressed identity, but expanding toward the transformation of society as the prolongation and consequence of this project of identity.' (*TPI*, 10) Jian Wan, to some extent, shoulders the duty to seek the transformation of wider social structures shaping the lives of scholars. Jian Wan is a figure of hope for overturning the status quo of Chinese society's treatment of intellectuals after the Tiananmen Massacre, but success or failure is left to the readers' imagination.

As Castells argues, 'identities are stronger sources of meaning than roles because of the process of self-construction and individuation that they involve. Meaning here is the symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of her or his action.' (*TPI*, 7) Roles are preferred by society and taken on and shaped by individuals. Jian Wan's decision to choose another vocation illustrates his individuality playing a central role in building identity. His actions, such as burning his ID and abandoning his name, shows that he is going to build a new identity that will aspire to redefine his position in society. The decision is sudden due to his precarious circumstances: he is compelled to find his way by virtue of other people's behaviour rather than a process of self-determination.

[73] Alain Touraine, "La formation du sujet", ed. Dubet François and Wieviorka Michel, trans. Manuel Castells (1995a): 29-30.
[74] Alain Touraine, *Critique de la modernite* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 32.

War Trash

Ha Jin's novel *War Trash* develops a narrative in which the protagonist, Yu Yuan, navigates a path between the major political forces of the revolutionary period in China and the Korean War to follow. Yu Yuan is compelled to negotiate his place in a prisoner of war camp (1951) run by Chinese Nationalists with the support of the United States, where his superior Commissar Pei takes note of his aptitudes and attempts to use them to his own purposes. This shadow game of maintaining personal integrity in the pragmatic business of surviving the war and its aftermath traces out Yu Yuan's search for identity. I will adapt the Mirror Stage and notions of transference drawn from Jacques Lacan to analyse Yu Yuan's narrative: evaluating how the individual becomes detached from the group and then finds his identity. Lacan defines the Mirror Stage as a phase 'occurs roughly between the ages of six and eighteen months. That is the stage of human development when the subject is in love with the image of themselves and their own bodies and which precedes the love of others.'[75] For Lacan, 'the ego emerges at the moment of alienation and fascination with one's own image.' (*JL-2*, 24-25) He explains alienation as 'an inevitable consequence of the formation of the ego and a necessary first step towards subjectivity, which is the infant's (mis)-recognition of itself in the other during the mirror stage.' (*JL-2*, 71) When the baby appears in the mirror with another person, it mistakes the other for the object it wants to be. After a process of re-recognition, it discovers its mistake and gets rid of this person and becomes its true self. As for transference, from Lacan, 'it is usually represented as an affect. When the subject has a soft spot for the individual concerned, the analyst in this instance, there is positive transference.'[76] If A has transference to B, A can be analyst of B. 'Behind the transference is the affirmation of the link between the desire of the analyst and the desire of the patient (the individual).' (*TFFCP*, 254) There is a vacancy in the patient's mind prepared for the analyst to occupy, so that the patient's desire could be triggered. Through that, the image of the patient becomes clearer to the analyst.

[75] Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 24. Hereafter cited as *JL-2,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[76] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 123-124. Hereafter cited as *TFFCP,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

When he is captured during service in the Korean War, Yu Yuan finds himself at the centre of a game between three factions in the American prison camp: the Communists represented by mainland China and North Korea, the Nationalists represented by Taiwan, and the American army. As he is not a party member and speaks fluent English, each side has a strong motivation to win him over. Although they have left the tragedy and smoke of the battlefield behind, this struggle brings great pain to all parties, especially Yu Yuan and his Communist partners.

> Before the Communists come to power in 1949, Yu Yuan is a sophomore at the Huangpu Academy[77], majoring in political education. … The cadets at the Huangpu has been disgusted with the corruption of the Nationalists, so they readily surrender to the People's Liberation Army when the Communists arrive. The new government disbands their academy and turns it into a part of the Southwestern University of Military and Political Sciences. We are encouraged to continue our studies and prepare ourselves to serve the new China.[78]

After a period of transformation, an opportunity arises for Yu Yuan. 'At graduation the next fall, I am assigned to the 180th Division of the People's Liberation Army, a unit noted for its battle achievements in the war against the Japanese invaders and in the civil war.' (*WT*, 7) Three weeks before the Spring Festival of 1951, he and his comrades receive orders to move to Hebei, then to Manchuria to enter Korea and participate in the Korean War. His unit is quickly broken up for lack of equipment. After three months of guerrilla life, Yuan is wounded in the thigh and captured by the American army. Soon after his leg has been cured, Yuan is taken to Koje Island by the U.S. army. There, he is assigned to Third Company of the First Battalion in Compound 72 where all the POWs are Chinese, and the Nationalists are in control of the camp. Once in custody the U.S. military lose interest in the lives and allegiances of the POWs. Each compound contains both Communists and Nationalists, and the occasional figure such as Yuan who maintains a measure of independence from the political divisions consuming his compatriots. On his first evening in the camp, Yuan is asked to sign up to go to Taiwan. As he wishes to return to mainland China to be reunited with his mother and fiancée, Yuan sides with the Communists. Detected his hesitation, Wang Yong, the Nationalist in charge of Third Company sends him to a small tent in Compound 72 housed the Fifth Platoon, where inmates

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[77] As Ha Jin explained in the book, the school, at that time based in Chengdu, the capital of Szechuan Province, had played a vital part in the Nationalist regime. Chiang Kai-shek had once been its principal, and many of his generals had graduated from it. In some ways, the role of Huangpu in Nationalist army was like that of West Point in the American military.

[78] Jin Ha, *War Trash* (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 2004), 6. Hereafter cited as *WT,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

who want repatriation are held. One of his former comrades Chang Ming tells Yuan that Commissar Pei, the commissar of their division in the People's Liberation Army, is also present in the camp.

During Yu Yuan's self-formation, Commissar Pei is a complete image who stands by his side in the mirror. To explain mirror stage theory, Lacan refers to 'the psychological development of the human infant – that is, the self-awareness of a six- to eighteen-month-old baby when he or she looks in a mirror. When the baby looks in a mirror, he or she realises that he or she is both a self (broken body) and another whole being.' (*JL-1*, 25) When it comes to Yu Yuan, at the very beginning, he is hopeful about the Communist Party and wants to commit his allegiance. 'I have witnessed how my country has been ruined by the Nationalists, while the Communists have brought order and hope to the land. I want to abide by its principles, because I believe in socialism, which I feel is the only way to save China.' (*WT*, 122) He is naturally drawn to Pei Shan because he is the representative of the Party in the military prison. Step by step, Yu Yuan learns what Pei really is – that all he does on the island is to regain the trust of the Party when he returns to the mainland China. Although he does not betray the Party, he has been a POW after all, so he is eager to prove his loyalty to the Party through practical actions and win back the trust of the Party. Commissar Pei's presence makes Yuan more aware of himself: despite being treated like a demigod by the other Communist POWs, Yuan understands Pei to be duplicitous and self-serving. His confidence in Pei is shattered which prompts a new phase of identity formation, which is, in the mirror stage, the separation of the self and the subject. Lacan elaborates that 'the mirror stage marks the emergence of a split subject – that is, someone who becomes a person who has both an internal and an external self. It also causes the subject to gradually separate from itself. The complete image will affect the development of the human subject in the future. He (Lacan) calls this transformation "alienation".'[79] Commissar Pei tells Yuan that he is not an ordinary prisoner, and the Party needs him to communicate with the Americans. However, Yuan is refused permission to join the United Communist Association due to many comrades' expressions of discontent. He has to make self-examination in public. When Yuan and the other comrades are on Cheju Island, they receive an order from Commissar Pei that they would raise the national flag on October 1[80] to show their spirit and resolve. In fact, Commissar Pei manipulates this event to attract

[79] Lionel Bailly, *Lacan: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 90.
[80] It is Chinese National Day.

attention from his superiors and negotiators at Panmunjom. 'He fears that his captivity has tarnished his image in the Party's eyes and is anxious to receive instructions and assurance from his superiors.' (*WT*, 237) In contrast to Pei's exploitation of his comrades' faith and solidarity, Yuan's assistance to others is sincere. He comes across a helpless young man Shanming in Compound 6 on Cheju Island and teaches him to read and write and use the abacus. 'Many years later he (Shanming) writes me (Yu Yuan) a beautiful letter, saying he has become the accountant in his home village, where no one but he could use the abacus. He thanks me for having taught him so well and is proud to inform me that he still doesn't smoke. (It is Yu Yuan who stops him when he first smokes.) His handwriting is clean and handsome.' (*WT*, 216) It is Yuan's support that helps him make a living and live a healthy life. Yu Yuan is genuinely helping others without expecting anything in return, which is in contrast to Commissar Pei's using people for his own purposes.

Commissar Pei seeks to remind the Party of his leadership by initiating the flag-raising campaign – that is, to raise the Chinese flag within the American prison compound – which leads to insurrection and punishment, and ultimately to sixty-three deaths, most of whom are in the Seventh Battalion. To their surprise, Commissar Pei sends congratulations toward evening.

> In addition to congratulating us on 'the glorious victory,' the message declares that all the comrades who have sacrificed their lives that day are to be referred to as Hero Fighters, that every man in the Seventh Battalion has earned a second-class merit citation, that every member on the shock team is awarded a citation of the special class, and that one every wounded comrade in both compounds is conferred a first-class citation. Pei also calls on them to salute the men of the Seventh Battalion and to learn from the example of their mettle. (*WT*, 242)

In Yuan's opinion, these awards seem to be a hoax because it is too easy for Commissar Pei to hand out awards. 'Indeed, a senior officer like Pei is entitled to issue only a limited number of awards and only occasionally. Why has he acted as though all the citations have been in his pockets and he is at liberty to hand out as many as he likes? Accompanying each major citation – the first or the special class – one should also receive a raise in both rank and salary, but this requirement has never been mentioned.' (*WT*, 242) The so-called awards are just empty checks to appease people. What is worse, Commissar Pei appoints Yu Yuan to go to Pusan to reregister in place of Chang Ming.

> One day in late February, Colonel Kelly informs us that four of our officers must go to Pusan to get reregistered. Among them are Hao Chaolin and Chang Ming. We all think they would be interrogated again, and that probably the Americans mean to put them away before the repatriation begins. (*WT*, 278)

Having received the order, Yuan is both angry and scared. He does not understand why he should accept the danger in place of Ming. This lets him to speculate that Commissar Pei only wants to save his own men – the Party members – as the repatriation is approaching.

> Has he gotten enough use out of me? Is he ready to discard me now? What does Ming think of this decision? Has he been involved in making it? I wonder if he too means to do me in, just to protect himself. (*WT*, 279)

Yuan's safety is not a consideration in Commissar Pei's decision-making process. Even if reregistering goes to plan, there is a good chance Yuan would be caught as an impostor and find himself in substantial trouble. When this indeed comes to pass, Yuan chooses to go to Taiwan to save himself. He is assigned to Enclosure 3 of Camp 13, where he meets Wang Yong again, who is the Nationalist in charge of Third Company. After a few twists and turns, Yu Yuan is able to protect himself. Before leaving North Korea, he meets Hao Chaolin. He is a Communist, and he goes to reregister with Yu Yuan in Busan.

> 'Yuan, I (Hao Chaolin) shall always stand by you. It is the Party that sends you to Pusan, and you won't be blamed for the consequences.' He looks tearful, apparently moved by the memory of our prison life.
>
> I am touched too. I say, 'Will you testify that it was only under duress that I stayed with the pro-Nationalist?'
>
> 'I shall do that, of course.'
>
> 'No, I mean I landed among them because I was used to take Chang Ming's place.'
>
> He lowers his eyes, then lifts them to face me. 'You make a great sacrifice, Yuan. Nobody will blame you.'
>
> 'In that case, I will come home.' (*WT*, 334)

After hearing his explanation, Yuan temporarily puts aside his reservations and chooses to return to mainland China. Yuan's struggles leading up to his final repatriation are caused or exacerbated by Pei Shan, who gives little thought for the troubles his actions cause for others. Yu Yuan, by contrast, offers genuine help to those in need. For example, he helps another prisoner Wanren see through Captain Larson's plot and protects all of them. Captain Larson takes advantage of Wanren's being unable to read English and uses canned beef as bait to cajole him into signing a document which assures the US military that they would not be held

responsible if they do anything outrageous to the POWs. Yuan is skeptical about the document. They immediately confront Captain Larson. In the end, with Yuan's help, Wanren is able to destroy the signed documents and avoid a disaster.

The relationship between Yu Yuan and Commissar Pei can be framed as one of transference, where the patient and analyst change places. Yu Yuan has been interpreting and analysing Pei Shan's behaviour, trying to reveal his true mind. Transference is, for Lacan, 'what must be attained in someone so they may become an analyst.'[81] At first, Yu Yuan pays attention to Commissar Pei in order to gain his trust and move closer to the machinations of the Party. As time went by, he gradually realises that Pei Shan is not as brave and noble as his followers have imagined. On the contrary, he is selfish and fearful. Prior to the flag-raising event, several traitors inform the American soldiers that prisoners in Compound 7 have prepared 'weapons' which are then confiscated, affecting the smooth progress of the insurgency. 'As they wonder about what to do, Commissar Pei issues the final instruction that reveals his desperation: "Go ahead and raise the flags tomorrow. Whoever disobeys this order will be dealt with as a deserter from battle".' (*WT*, 236) Up to that point Yuan is certain that he overvalues what Commissar Pei had done, which is out of fear and weakness.

> He (Commissar Pei) seems to have lost his composure and patience and could no longer wait. He wants to be considered by our negotiators at Panmunjom without further delay. There is another element in his anxiety which isn't easy to discern, namely that like a regular prisoner here, he too is at sea about what to do. The POWs all look up to him, depending on his directives and believing he is their backbone; what they don't know is that he needs a lot of backing himself. In other words, Commissar Pei must have been anxious to get instructions and assurance from his superiors. … He must have feared his captivity has tarnished his image in the Party's eyes and sees the need for a battle to change the Party's opinion of him. In every way, a timely battle is an advantageous move for him personally. (*WT*, 237)

Yuan also reveals Commissar Pei's desire – self-interest comes first. Everything he does is for himself. He thinks only of himself at the critical moment instead of anyone else, who are just his helpers or steppingstones.

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[81] Jacques Lacan, *Transference: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (London: Polity Press, 2015), 104. Hereafter cited as *TTSJL,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

The second half of the novel turns to Pei Shan's exploitation of Yu Yuan for his own advancement, reveals a selfishness best described by the Chinese idiom '*xie mo sha lv*'.[82] Lacan explains how the analyst should be situated relative both to his or her own desire and to that of the patient: 'The analyst must be able to … occupy the place that is his, defined as the place he must offer up as vacant to the patient's desire for the latter to be realised.' (*TTSJL*, 105) As the analyst, Yu Yuan takes the position which allows his patient Commissar Pei's desire to be realised. This takes the form of Pei Shan's sending Yu Yuan in place of Chang Ming to reregister. This time Yu Yuan would be the only one affected by the outcome of the mission, unlike Commissar Pei's previous arrangements, in which Yu Yuan participates as a private soldier. Before this operation, Yu Yuan has served as an assistant in Pei Shan's arrangements, helping to promote the smooth progress of the mission. Yu Yuan becomes the central figure of this action, around whom the whole event unfolds. He assumes the position Commissar Pei has always reserved for him, which is the key for his desire to be achieved or realised. While everyone is worried about the four comrades who have to reregister in Busan, Commissar Pei orders Yu Yuan to replace Chang Ming at reregistration. One plausible reason he is ordered to take Ming's place is that 'Ming's listed name is Feng Wen and his Feng Yan – they share the same family name.' (*WT*, 279) However, there are two alternate, more compelling reasons. Firstly, he is not a Party member and is thus dispensable as though he is a regular soldier. Secondly, Ming's value to Commissar Pei is in his role when they return to China: in the event that they are required to clear their names in the actions they commit during the war, fellow inmates' testimony would exonerate one's role and activities in the camp, thus avoiding the Party's suspicions. As a Party member and a closer acquaintance, Ming seems to be more trustworthy and valuable to Pei Shan. Despite Yuan having saved his life earlier in the narrative, Pei Shan chooses to value Ming's life over Yu Yuan's on the principle that 'the less you deal with the enemy individually, the safer your future is likely to be.' (*WT*, 283)

Yu Yuan's motivations contrast with those of Pei Shan: the former acts for reasons other than his self-promotion. His desire to elicit Pei Shan (the patient)'s own desire inevitably reveals Pei Shan's character. Yu Yuan (now in the role of the analyst) does not serve his own ego. Rather his desire is depersonalised, emptied out, a desire for revealing discourse, a desire to

[82] When the donkey has finished its work, take it down from the millstone and kill it. It means that get rid of somebody as soon as he/she has done his/her job.

occupy the vacant place (hence the atopia of desire) that will elicit the patient's own desire.[83] Yu Yuan keeps an eye on Commissar Pei because he wants to analyse his true intentions, especially as they are closely related to him. Through Yuan's narration, we can see that Pei Shan still has an absolute say in the lives of the POWs even after they has returned to the mainland. He is still expected to help them restore and maintain the awards and citations annulled by the Communist Party when they are in Changtu Town, Liaoning Province. 'He promises to have the citations validated, though by now he must have known his superiors would never acknowledge them.' (*WT*, 342) His desire to lead remained strong and undiminished, even in a situation where it is already apparent that he would no longer be retained in a privileged position. In the end, Pei Shan receives the same arrangement as the others.

> In other words, he and we have all been chessmen on the Party's board, though Pei has created his own board and placed his men on it as if his game has been identical with the Party's. In fact, he too has been a mere pawn, not much different from any of us. He too is war trash. (*WT*, 345)

Pei Shan and Yu Yuan's divergent endings demonstrate the separation of Yuan's subject from himself and the awakening of his self-consciousness. 'Lacan implies that the mirror stage represents the genesis of the self and self-consciousness in the human mind.'[84] Yu Yuan has a new life as a middle school teacher in Chinese, geography, and English.

> I (Yu Yuan) like the job, which I hold until I retired six years ago. I fall in love with a colleague of mine… We get married a few months later. We have two children, a boy and a girl; both of them have graduated from college. My son manages to come to the States and get a master's degree in civil engineering from Georgia Tech. I even have two American grandchildren, and I love them dearly and wish I could stay with them longer. (*WT*, 347)

He becomes a very different person from Pei Shan. Finally, his desire for a complete family is realised. 'Yu (Yuan)'s desire to settle down with a family is a neutral, rational, natural one, as opposed to the ideologically determined choices of his fellow prisoners.'[85] Everything he does is to be with his family, including intending to go back to China and keep his mother and

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[83] Derek Hook, "Transference: the seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII", *Psychodynamic Practice* 23, no. 2 (2017): 213-215.

[84] Richard A. Lynch, "The Alienating Mirror: Toward a Hegelian Critique of Lacan on Ego-Formation", *Human Studies* 31, no. 2 (2008): 209-221.

[85] A. J. Yumi Lee, "Cold War Erasures and the Asian American Immigrant Family in Ha Jin's *War Trash*", *Verge (Minneapolis, Minn.)* 5, no. 2, (2019): 114-131.

fiancée's companies at the beginning, and go to the US to stay with his son and grandchildren in the end. However, as a soldier at that time, he has to choose from the Communists and the Nationalists to survive. This explains why he chooses to go to mainland China in most cases while once he chooses to go to Taiwan at the screening[86].

The novel explores how characters seek to manipulate events out of self-interest and self-preservation. Yu Yuan, the protagonist, lives his life with the attitude of not offending either side, thus standing partially outside of this economy albeit affected deeply by its operations via the actions of Pei Shan. During his imprisonment on Koje Island, he is assigned to Third Company of the First Battalion in Compound 72, of which the pro-Nationalists are in charge. One of their representatives is Wang Yong. Facing his proposal to sign up to go to Taiwan, Yuan is reluctant, failing to make a clear statement, and is thus considered for repatriation and holds in Fifth Platoon, during which time he helps Father Woodworth translate hymns into Chinese for which he receives an English *Bible*. It transpires that Father Woodworth is a soldier in the American military who advises Yuan to defect to the pro-Nationalists. Yuan disagrees but does not fight back with words in person. Although he is forced to agree to go to Taiwan, he temporarily changes his mind, seeking to return to mainland China during the screening process. 'Following this military organisation, a political union called the United Communist Association is formed.' (*WT*, 119) Yu Yuan applies for membership but when it is revealed that he has sought spiritual comfort from the *Bible*, he finds he could not give it up, demonstrating that he values life and knows how to protect himself. Ha Jin gives this character emotional and ethical depth in his negotiations of Communist, Nationalist, and American cultural forces. Yu Yuan's thought process differs from the prevailing perception of how people should choose between national interests and their own lives. Where many would not hesitate to choose to sacrifice their lives for the sake of national interests, Yuan values his own life and puts survival first. Also, in his independence he knows how to protect himself from blindly depending on any party. Yu Yuan absorbs values he learns from exposure to Western thinking, namely, to depend on one's self rather than anyone else, and place one's own affairs at the heart of one's decision-making processes. This character has never lived in a Western country, and his attitudes are complicated by feelings for his nation, homeland, and family. This mediation between modes of obligation and allegiance, on one hand, and the pursuit of

[86] At 'the screening', every POW had to declare formally where he would like to go, the Koreans to North Korea or South Korea and the Chinese to mainland China or Taiwan.

individual agency, on the other, reflects the shared influences of China and the West upon the author.

Both leaders of the Communists and the pro-Nationalists want Yu Yuan to join them.

> Several of Yuan's comrades have been transferred to the company where Commissar Pei is currently located, because the Communists have regained power in the Third Battalion of Compound 86. Ming might go there soon, and the Communist leaders have offered the First Battalion of my (Yu Yuan's) regiment to exchange a pro-Nationalist for me so that I could join my comrades in Compound 86, but Wang Yong wouldn't let me go. (*WT*, 78)

Yuan knows that his communication skills in English makes him a desirable asset to both the Communists and pro-Nationalists. What he does not understand is why he is of use for Wang Yong. This question is answered when the pro-Nationalists tries to win him over a second time. He is taken to a dinner with Wang Yong and seven men who are all going to depart for the Free World. They want Yu Yuan to go with them so that they could benefit from his linguistic expertise in the future.

> 'You (Yu Yuan) graduate from the Huangpu, and beyond question Generalissimo Chiang will promote you to a high position soon after you get to Taiwan. But who are we? Just a bunch of peasants and clods. None of us even finish elementary school. … Without an able man among us, no one here will get anywhere, and again we'll be dumped to the bottom of society.' (*WT*, 97)

Both Pei Shan and Wang Yong see the value of Yu Yuan to advance their own interests. Although they are the representatives of the POW Communists and the pro-Nationalists respectively, their personal interests stand above the collective in their minds. Ha Jin here satirises and exposes the egoistic elements in the party. It is the presence of such leaders that leads to the entire team being in jail.

Individual interests are insignificant in the face of collective ones, but Ha Jin uses the protagonist to highlight its importance. From beginning to end, Yu Yuan makes important decisions based on his own interests, for his own survival. For example, 'Yu (Yuan) wishes to return home to communist mainland China for personal, familial reasons rather than ideological

ones.'[87] He always longs for being with his family as personal desire. This runs counter to the prevailing trend of thinking in Chinese society at that time that 'national interests are above all else.' The narrative goes to great lengths to make Yu Yuan's argument for self-interest convincing, devising a better ending for Yu Yuan than for any character who relied on either the Communists or the Nationalists. Also, he creates Pei Shan to prove that it is not selfish to know how to protect yourself. Because Commissar Pei, who seems to represent the Party to protect everyone, is truly selfish. In comparison Yu Yuan is a kind and conscientious person, with Pei proving to be indispensable in paving the way for Yu Yuan's exploration of his identity.

Yu Yuan can be seen as the product of the fusion of Chinese and American cultures, which makes him unique in the novel. He is deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture, paying due attention to principles of filial piety, even though he knows that he would be exploited by Commissar Pei. While aware that Taiwan would provide better material conditions and a superior living environment, Yu Yuan still wants to return to mainland China to accompany his mother. At the same time, he has a strong sense of self, placing his own interests first under any circumstance. At that time, it is generally regarded in Chinese society that egoism emerges in the period in which the European bourgeois emerges, producing an individualism characteristic of thought in western capitalist society. To publicise this view would have received public criticism, as the prevailing trend of thought in Chinese society is to 'sacrifice oneself for others' and 'devote oneself to others without selfish consideration.' The concept of Yu Yuan's character and identity is generated by the author's projection of his own experience of American life and his understanding of American culture onto the character. Yu Yuan not only reflects certain characteristics of Chinese people at that time, but also differs from most Chinese people in other ways. Yu Yuan's negotiation of loyalty, filial devotion, and independent thought is intelligible to Western readers, the target audience of Ha Jin's novel despite its deep investments in events of Chinese history. Moreover, Yu Yuan, created by a transnational migrant writer, treats people from different cultural backgrounds around him objectively. 'Yu Yuan's observations (of Americans and Chinese) come from a transnational perspective. Although there is antagonism between the enemy and ourselves in the POW camp, his judgment of people is not predestined by nationality or political stance, but returns to the understanding of "people".'[88] He makes friends with kind American Dr. Greene. As for the

[87] Jodi Kim, "Settler Modernity's Spatial Exceptions: The US POW Camp, Metapolitical Authority, and Ha Jin's *War Trash*", *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2017): 569-587.
[88] Qionghui Zhang, 哈金的战争书写：以《战废品》为例 "Ha Jin's War Writing: Take *War Trash* as an

other Chinese, he tries his best to help them in their time of need, such as Shanming and Chang Ming, and never joins hands with those who are cruel and heartless, such as Wang Yong.

In this novel, the writer shows the influence of western society in the world by invoking geopolitical factors. The Korean war plays a pivotal role in furthering American soft power and culture into East Asia, just as the US Army has done in Japan following World War II. Under such circumstance, cultural fear is destined to manifest in soldiers, causing confusion over their own national identity and personal identity. This could be seen in Yu Yuan's ambivalence about returning to mainland China, moving to the United States or choosing to live in a third country. However, unlike the total westernisation of South Korea and Japan, the Chinese characters created by Ha Jin demonstrate a kind of cultural push and pull – inevitably influenced by it while pushing it back.

As with Jian Wan, Ha Jin also reflects his own dilemma through Yu Yuan. Both of their difficulties are caused by English, but each dilemma is different. Yu Yuan's fluency in English put him at the centre of many battles among the three parties, while Ha Jin's mastery and use of English has caused his works to attract significant attention in the academic world, including debate over which country could lay claim to him as a writer. It is Ha Jin who endows Yu Yuan with a language facility similar to him. Ha Jin comes to the United States to pursue a doctoral degree in literature and stays to build a career teaching creative writing at Boston University. Yu Yuan speaks fluent English, which allows him to communicate with the U.S. military as a representative, his linguistic talents adding to his narrative dilemma.

In Lacanian terms it is reasonable to explain why Yu Yuan made the final decision to go back to mainland China. Commissar Pei plays a vital role in Yu Yuan's identity building. In addition to missing his mother and fiancée, becoming a communist like Commissar Pei is also one of the reasons why he decides to return to mainland China, despite Pei's treachery. He is seen by his soldiers as a commanding, decision-making military leader who cares about his comrades, and this is the kind of person Yu Yuan wants to be. His existence gives Yu Yuan the opportunity to figure out his inner subject. To be more like him, Yu Yuan starts to observe and analyse Commissar Pei, paying more attention on him than others. However, he gradually realises that Pei Shan is selfish and calculating. This induces a change in his way of exploring

Example", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2011): 65-70.

identity, where he begins to live entirely his own way. Although Yu Yuan finally returns to mainland China, this is his own decision, ultimately independent from the words and actions of others.

Conclusion

Ha Jin's fame as a Chinese writer in American literary circles can be explained firstly because he is able to reconcile Chinese and western cultures in his characters. As Chinese who have never been abroad, characters such as Jian Wan and Yu Yuan are influenced by both Chinese and western cultures. The historical parameters of these narratives, spanning the 1950s to the 1980s, preclude direct contact with American culture, let alone any deep understanding of it. However, these novels are intelligible and acceptable to both Chinese and foreign readers, as can be seen from its popularity in China and the United States. At the same time, they are able to bring new cultural experience to both sides. Secondly, instead of pandering to readers with predictable plotlines and characterisations, Ha Jin tries to give them new experiences that they have not had before. For example, the story of Shao Bin is very like a typical American hero story: an insignificant person dares to expose social injustice to achieve changes in system, but the fate of Shao Bin is not as happy as western readers might expect from such a narrative premise. Across these four novels Ha Jin develops characters with different modes of identity and different ways of negotiating with the collective, including struggle, compromise, and reconciliation. Shao Bin dares to fight against the corrupt officials and system with his own strength and tries to make changes. On the verge of victory, he believes the leader's lies and gives up fighting. Shuyu Liu, a traditional Chinese rural woman, works hard to live her life with the encouragement of the community. Her changed husband finally returns to her side; she regains the full family. At the same time, she also slowly discovers the missing self under the encouragement of the collective. After compromise and struggle, Jian Wan decides to break the status quo and seeks a new life. Yu Yuan, who has always followed his heart, does not lose himself in the pursuit of his identity and finally achieves a better outcome than others. The author trusts his readers in accepting his ethnic writing. Chinese readers are familiar with the themes of four novels. For Western readers, he chooses character and thematic patterns that are familiar to them to lead them into plots, but the ending of characters and the development of plots have broken readers' expectation. In this way, he wins the favor of Chinese and Western readers and achieves popularity in Western literary world as a cultural minor writer. The

relationship between individual and collective that Ha Jin focuses on is shared by both the Chinese and Western cultural spheres. Although he writes in English about China, he has a cosmopolitan vision, realising his value as a Chinese American novelist.

Chapter Three

Romance between the West and the East: The Thread Nicholas Jose Used to Bridge China and the West

From the mid-1980s China's Reform and Opening up policy enabled several thousand mainland Chinese students who aspired to learn about Western language and culture to study in Australia. This has been accompanied by a major immigration program where, according to statistics, the number of Australian citizens born in Mainland China and Hong Kong increased sixfold between 1981 and 2001. 'While the Australian political system has a commitment to multiculturalism, and people have generally embraced its principles, ideological resistance is still manifest in small and large ways. Despite policy improvements the inclusivity in public images of tolerant and diverse Australians masks residual tensions.'[89] Take *Birds of Passage* which is a novel by Brian Casto as an example. 'It is a seminal work of Asian-Australian cultural relations, situated at the fault line between Orientalist inscription and Western institutional power.'[90] The protagonist O'Young is an Australian-born Chinese. His identity as an orphan and refugee decides his subordinate position in Australian society, but he defies the categories imposed on him by white authority. As Graham Huggan points out in his study 'Australian Literature Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism,' 'O'Young's survival in late twentieth-century Australia depends on his capacity to elude definition, to displace the dominant ideologies of White Australia that seek to impose upon him their ground rules, their naturalised ways of seeing and thinking.'[91]

While the history of Chinese migration and settlement in Australia is a long one, dating back at least to the goldrushes of the 1850s, the influx of migration from Mainland China in recent decades has presented challenges of acceptance of different cultural backgrounds, despite the

[89] Lyn Jacobs, "About Face: Asian-Australians at Home", *Australian Literary Studies* 20, no. 3 (2002): 201-214. Hereafter cited as AFAAH, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[90] Graham Huggan, "Looking West to the East: Some Thoughts on the Asianisation of Australian Literature", in *The Making of a Pluralist Australia*, eds. Werner Senn and Giovanna Capone (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992), 219-228.
[91] Graham Huggan, *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 135.

outsized contributions made by members of this community in literature, finance, science, and technology. However, 'in a diversely peopled nation and a world of mass migrations and social flux, fixed identities and even consensually 'imagined communities' become increasingly problematic.' (AFAAH, 202) Nicholas Jose observes, in *Chinese Whispers*, that 'in as much as Australia's identity has been formed through a dialectic (often silent) with what is perceived and feared as non-Australian, the relationship with the Chinese world reflects some of the not always articulated tendencies of Australian society and culture.'[92] Tolerance of course differs from acceptance, and is often the tone accompanying the long initial phase of integration into a national conglomeration. Drawing on his extensive experience in China and seeking to break stereotyped impressions and social stigma, Nicholas Jose introduces *his* China to the West, especially to Australia, in opposition to the existing order shaped in part by misunderstanding and bias. Jose brings ideas of social acceptance into the lives of his readers, using representations of utopia to challenge existing ideology and attitudes. In this way, Jose not only informs Australian readers about a China he knows well, but also encourages understanding and partnership between China and Australia. As Ien Ang articulates, 'we should aim for acceptance through difference, inclusion by virtue of otherness.'[93] This is consistent with Australia's long-standing policy of social diversity and inclusion.

The analysis of Nicholas Jose's four novels in this chapter will draw on Karl Mannheim's interpretation of utopia and ideology. If we accept a definition of Ideology as a sum of fixed ideas accepted by most people, then to retain ideology requires a confirmation of the existing order. Utopia, however, transcends the social situation. 'It (Utopia) orients the conduct towards elements which the situation, in so far as it is realised at the time, does not contain.'[94] In Mannheim's words, 'utopias are different from ideologies in so far as they succeed through counteractivity, transforming an existing historical reality into a reality more in accord with their own conceptions.' (*IU*, 177) The appearance of utopia signals the breaking of an existing order and its presiding ideas. For Nicholas Jose it means introducing China to Australians in a way which is easier for them to accept and to change enduring stereotypes of China and Chinese people. Jose is sympathetic to China and its representation, but he is careful not to be (or be

[92] Nicholas Jose, *Chinese Whispers* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1995), 44-57.
[93] Ien Ang, "The Curse of the Smile: Ambivalence and the 'Asian' Woman in Australian Multiculturalism", *Feminist Review* 52, no. 1 (1996): 36-49.
[94] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 177. Hereafter cited as *IU*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

seen as) a propagandist for China, or indeed for Australia. He plays an important part in globalising this literary connection between the two nations.

The role of utopia as a counterforce to ideology is worth considering in Jose's case in particular. First, as an intellectual, Jose belongs to a rising class which regularly seeks to raise the possibility of utopia against a compromised existing order. As Mannheim says, 'different forms of active utopias appear in historical succession in connection with certain definite social strata struggling for ascendancy.' (*IU*, 187) They have the right to discursive coherency due to their social status. 'The key to the intelligibility of utopias is the structural situation of that social stratum which at any given time espouses them.' (*IU*, 187) Second, 'every age allows to arise (in differently located social groups) those ideas and values in which are contained in condensed form the unrealised and the unfulfilled tendencies which represent the needs of each age.' (*IU*, 179) It is inappropriate to hold stereotype towards other cultures in this era of which friendly exchanges and constant collisions between different civilisations as mainstream. Such stereotypes demand dissolution, and Jose is willing to be a pioneer in this effort. As Mannheim explained, 'the existing order gives birth to utopias which in turn break the bonds of the existing order, leaving it free to develop in the direction of the next order of existence.' (*IU*, 176)

Nicholas Jose's narratives introduce Chinese themes and topics to Australian readers by combining the familiar with the exotic. In *Avenue of Eternal Peace* (1989), the protagonist Wally is an Australian who navigates China but knows nothing about it on his arrival at the opening of the novel. Even readers whose knowledge of Chinese culture is very limited are instantly drawn closer to the plot, which lays a foundation for a more sustained illustration and examination of China. Jose combines history with imagination to bring an elusive and mysterious China to western readers, but one which has interesting coincidences with the West. In *The Rose Crossing* (1994), he sets the story in the mid-to-late 17th century, the end of the Ming Dynasty, which was a dramatic period of history in both China and Europe. Jose studied this history when a student at Oxford University. In 1649 England's King Charles I was executed, ending his reign. 'Almost at the same time, in 1644, the last Emperor of the Ming dynasty hanged himself and the Qing dynasty began to rule, an interesting coincidence put to use in Jose's novel.'[95] A cross-cultural romantic narrative arises between a Ming prince and an

[95] Yao Li, 尼古拉斯·周思：中澳文化交流的使者 "Nicholas Jose: Ambassador of Cultural Exchange between China and Australia" (2013). http:// www.chinawriter.com.cn.

English girl, with the latter part of the novel playing out the transnational implications of the story. Jose exports China's culture to western readers through *The Red Thread* (2000), deploying the Buddhist notion of reincarnation to narrate a love story between a Chinese heritage restorer Shen Fu, an Australian painter Ruth, and a Chinese singer Han, whose emotional troubles in a previous life return to complicate the erotic triad. In *Original Face* (2007), Jose brings readers to a contemporary reality of migration via a mysterious story set in Sydney, leading to a portrait of the lives of Chinese Australians.

Given that Nicholas Jose writes from the standpoint of western readers, we should not assume characters' views align with the writer's views. They navigate the reality of Australian culture and society having known nothing about it before arrival. This is captured in several examples, including Wally's negative initial reaction to China. He arrives in Beijing during Spring Festival: a time of tradition for Chinese people where firecrackers are lit to celebrate the coming of the lunar new year. The blare of celebration rouses him from his sleep after a night of drinking, making him think he is on a battlefield in his dream. This experience rings true for a foreigner who suddenly enters a country and its culture. The author's purpose of constructing this plot is to help the readers to understand culture better as well as the way the culture works together with and is illustrated through characters.

Much of the existing research on Nicholas Jose's writing about China focuses on the analysis of how China is represented, Jose's transnational writing from the perspective of semiotics, and the orientalist discourse when describing China and depicting Chinese characters. However, these studies tend to consider Nicholas Jose's novels as misreadings of Chinese culture, especially where classical Chinese literature is concerned. Jinliang Zhang presses a particularly critical charge: 'Jose's novels do not escape the pattern of Fictionalising Asia[96] – the mystification and one-sided treatment of the Orient, and Western culture's sense of superiority facing Eastern culture – which has distorted the Oriental image and Oriental culture in the

[96] Fictionalising Asia refers to a new trend in Australian literature that has emerged since the late 1970s, in which some Australian writers actively explored Asian subjects and consciously drew on Asian culture and ideas. In the form of literature, it reflects the conflicts and integration between Asia and Australia in the historical process of two-way communication, which are opening up to Asia and moving towards Asia. See Delys Bird, "New Narrations: Contemporary Fiction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Webby (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language and Education Press, 2003), 202.

works of writers.'[97] Fewer studies recognise Jose's efforts to introduce a more complex and nuanced image of China to the West – and principally Australia – let alone notice that he uses literary themes and genres familiar to Western readers to help them better understand China and its culture. For example, in 'Nicholas Jose's Transcultural Writing in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*', Baolin Yang claims that 'to Jose, cultural translation integrates the author's understanding of the source culture and expression of it in the same process. In so doing Jose shapes his knowledge of a foreign culture through his own language and directly presents it to members of his own culture.'[98] However, Yang believes that the orientalist discourse in *Avenue of Eternal Peace* limits the novel in its postcolonial force. These orientalist elements are seen to derive principally from the Australian character Wally, who describes his life in China. Yet Wally's reaction is authentic, and genuinely constrained when he first comes to China and sees activities such as firecrackers, Qigong, and Chinese social conventions based on interpersonal connections, all of which induce various levels of culture shock. Social life in China at that time may have held more nuance than Jose depicts through the eyes of his Australian protagonist, but to judge his description as not objective at all elides the subtleties evident elsewhere in the narrative. Other critics have discerned the range of knowledge Jose brings to his novels. In 'Fictionalising China in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*', Baolin Yang considers Jose's four novels with China themes: 'These novels cover a wide range of Chinese history, culture, philosophy, religion, society, politics, geography, folklore and other aspects, reflecting Jose's comprehensive and in-depth insight into China and its culture.'[99] Whilst Yang's focus is on one of these novels – *Avenue of Eternal Peace*, I aim to explore how Jose not only develops these elements concerning China for his Western readers but also how he facilitates their understanding and acceptance of China.

In this chapter I will analyse Nicholas Jose's four novels – *Avenue of Eternal Peace*, *The Rose Crossing*, *The Red Thread,* and *Original Face* – to show how he expresses and develops a complex attitude towards China through the portrayal of Chinese characters. A significant

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[97] Jinliang Zhang, 神秘化、扭曲与误现——解读《红线》中的中国文化 "Mystification, Distortion and Misrepresentation – An Interpretation of Chinese Culture in *The Red Thread*", *Contemporary Foreign Literature (当代外国文学)*, no. 2, (2005): 116-121.

[98] Labao Wang, Lili Zhang, 尼古拉斯·周思小说《长安街》中的"跨文化书写" "Nicholas Jose's Transcultural Writing in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*", *Contemporary Foreign Literature (当代外国文学)* 37, no. 3 (2016): 92-100. Hereafter cited as NJTWAEP, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

[99] Baolin Yang, 论《长安街》的中国想象 "Fictionalising China in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*", J*ournal of Chongqing Technology and Business University (Social and Science Edition) [重庆工商大学学报(社会科学版)]* 33, no. 5 (2016): 124-128.

reason for choosing these four novels for analysis is that their main characters are Chinese. The stories take place in both mainland China such as in cities like Beijing and Shanghai, and overseas like Sydney in Australia and on an uncharted island in the Indian Ocean. These narrative decisions locate Chinese characters, as citizens of the world, within a discourse of global culture. The novels provide detailed records of daily life in China at that time, which demonstrates that Jose is deeply influenced by the forms of Chinese culture he experienced when living in China. Jose's deep historical connection with China begins with his great-grandfather George Herbert Jose (1868-1956), who travelled to China from Sydney with his wife in 1891 to preach. They worked and lived in Shaoxing, Ningbo and Taizhou in Zhejiang Province for nearly 10 years. George was not only a missionary priest, but also a photographic artist who spoke Chinese and recognised Chinese characters. Much of Jose's novel *Avenue of Eternal Peace* was based on his great-grandfather's diary and letters. Jose's grandfather, Ivan Bede Jose, was born in 1893 in China and spent his childhood in various locations in the Yangtze River Delta. This familial history had a major impact on Jose, turning his interest, passion, vision and writing to China. Jose sets his narratives within specific contexts, but they reach across cultural divides in a gesture towards a more globally aware literature. The creation of these characters is the result of the author's fusion of his western cultural background and the influence of Chinese culture, which arouses a new vision of looking into China – from the west. It also enriches and deepens the image of China in the world.

Avenue of Eternal Peace

In his novel *Avenue of Eternal Peace* Nicholas Jose develops a fictional profile of contemporary Chinese culture and society through the portrayal of the character Lin Ying (Eagle) in two significant ways. First, Eagle is an average Beijing youth, a typical representation of unprivileged youth in Chinese society at that time. Second, he has close relationship with the Australian protagonist which becomes illustrative of cultural exchange and collision between China and Australia. Jose presents the Australian protagonist Wally as an example of an overseas expat attempting to understand Chinese culture. As a professor in pharmacy, he maintains a lasting friendship with Lin Ying, who in contrast is not highly educated. Wally begins from a position of not understanding Chinese modes of expression, lifestyle, and traditional culture, but in time comes to accept and become familiar with Chinese

way of doing things. He helps tend Eagle's leg injury using his personal connections, showing how one Australian grows to understand and accept Chinese culture.

Wally's interaction with the Lin family illustrates the collision between Western and Chinese cultures. Before coming to China, he knows nothing about China except traditional Chinese medicine. Once in China for the first time, he mainly communicates with Lin Ying (Eagle) and Mother Lin (Eagle's mother), both of whom have little education and live at the bottom rung of Chinese society at that time. Wally's initial understanding of Chinese culture derives from them. Wally meets Eagle at a Qigong demonstration (a system of movement similar to tai chi), who acts as his intermediary and explains the theory of the discipline to him. Qigong, a traditional Chinese method of keeping fit, is new and fresh to Westerners represented by Wally. 'Qigong is mysterious to Westerners, including Australians. The depiction of Qigong, a mysterious traditional Chinese culture, in the novel will satisfy Western readers' expectation.'[100] It is because of Wally's curiosity about Qigong that Eagle is able to be his first guide in China, and the two gradually become familiar with each other. Eagle is Wally's first friend in China, and they spend lots of time together later. Their obvious differences lead both to spend time decoding the information they receive from each other. Jose develops this point in two ways in the novel. One highlights Eagle and his mother's poor grasp of the boundaries of conversation. They invite Wally to have supper at her home on April Fool's Day. Mother Lin asks Wally if he is used to Beijing food. Wally mentions that he liked dumplings. She then asks Eagle to remind Wally not to eat dumplings outside, because the dumplings in the restaurants in western Beijing are rumored to contain human flesh. Mother Lin adds that in the Song dynasty, the emperor was fed with babies cooked and served in dumplings. During these conversations Wally repeatedly expresses disinterest and changes the subject, illustrating how foreign China is to someone like Wally. He disapproves of presenting negative parts of national culture to people, especially to those of another cultural background.

The other way in which this cultural collision occurs is that Wally thinks Mother Lin and Eagle are overenthusiastic about him. After dinner at Eagle's place, Wally insists on going back to his dormitory for an early and important meeting the next morning. Mother Lin insists that Wally stays the night due to the rain. Mother Lin sleeps on the sofa, while Wally and Eagle

[100] Baolin Yang, "近北"之行——当代澳大利亚旅亚小说研究 "Closing up on the Near North – Asia Novels in Contemporary Australian Literature", Doctoral Thesis of Soochow University (苏州大学博士学位论文) (2011): 101.

share the bed. In return, Wally asks Mother Lin out, and she suggests that they see the Peking Opera.

> Eagle scoffs but comes along for the ride. Mother Lin wears her best jacket and slacks, and mother and son catch the bus to the theatre where Wally is waiting as planned. Mother Lin is content with faint praise for the performance but considers it not to be as good as formerly. Wally is uninterested in the opera due to his not understanding it at all. Wally's head was ringing from the cacophonous, kinaesthetic sensation of percussion. Eagle mistranslates the opera's title as 'The King of Bah Says Goodbye to His Cucumber', and Wally attempts to improvise his understanding of the plot, still sorting out the pieces at interval.[101]

The actual name of this Peking Opera's is of course 'Farewell My Concubine.' This comic scenario of mistranslation depicts how a foreigner might see China for the first time. Eagle and his mother are curious about Wally, and Wally is curious about Chinese medicine. The use of kinaesthetic imagery contradicts the protagonist's mood. He is indifferent with the exotic opera though it is lively, bustling and of rich connotation.

Nicholas Jose introduces a variation on the traditional father-son relationship to western readers by virtue of Eagle's family affection. Eagle is close to his mother and although his father prefers the eldest son, Eagle always treats his father well and respects him, eventually gaining his father's approval. When his father suffers a stroke, Eagle takes good care of him, while Sunshine, the eldest son, only visits occasionally. His father squeezes Sunshine's hand, calling him 'Good son, good son,' as Sunshine fusses over his invalid father – only to disappear. No sooner does the patient's condition stabilise, and with it the little household's routine, a second, lesser stroke hits. It is clear that time is running out for Old Lin (Eagle's father), who is dying ill at ease with himself. One day as he lies in bed, he quite violently catches hold of Eagle's wrist and for the first time utters the words he previously reserved for Sunshine: 'Good son, good son.' (*AEP*, 60) His broken speech captures a Damascene change of heart: 'You are my worthy son. You care for your father and mother. You don't think of yourself. You have strength and spirit. I entrust you with the duty of looking after your mother when I am gone. Your brother looks after himself.' (*AEP*, 60-61) Before dying, Old Lin finally recognises Eagle

[101] Nicholas Jose, *Avenue of Eternal Peace* (New York: Dutton, 1991), 129-130. Hereafter cited as *AEP,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

as a steadfast and family-oriented son. He feels that he should let Eagle shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the family.

> These words could be seen as less commendation than imperative, a solemn command transferring status from first son to second son. Old Lin is able to overcome his resentment at Eagle's success and the disappointment at his failure, and young Eagle is filled with extraordinary joy to be given the approval denied all his twenty-two years. Such is the burden, offered as a blessing, the dying man places on the boy. Afterwards Eagle wonders whether his father intended to say more but he is dead within three days. Eagle and his mother sit alone in the room waiting for Sunshine, who would be late turning up to organise the funeral. (*AEP*, 61)

Western readers might be reminded of Jacob and Esau in the Old Testament, while this scenario is a common depiction of a father-son relationship since ancient China: Jose deftly shows the cultural parallels that make it easier for western readers to understand. Chinese emperors prefer elder sons than younger ones, while empresses prefer the younger sons. For example, the third Qing emperor Kangxi favoured his first son Yinzhi Aisin-Gioro so much that he taught him riding horses and archery himself, even taking him to the battlefield to allow him to make his mark at a young age. However, Yinzhi was jealous that the second son Yinreng Aisin-Gioro was Kangxi's crown prince, and after Yinreng was deposed, Yinzhi asked his father to kill him. Yinzhi was imprisoned all his life due to his cold bloodiness to his brothers and his bad temper. Jose's familiarity with Chinese history provides him with the opportunity to create this complex father-son relationship between Eagle, Sunshine, and their father.

Eagle's decisions and the barriers he confronts provide insight into Jose's exploration of Chinese culture as a foreigner in the 1980s. Jose first arrived in Beijing in 1983 and when he wrote *Avenue of Eternal Peace* (1989) he was still near the beginning of his exploration of China. It is perhaps understandable that fictionalising his direct experience and observations would intersect with cultural stereotypes. Rather than a strict limitation, this may open ways of exploring character. By way of comparison the character of Bob Harris (Bill Murray) in the film *Lost in Translation* is buffeted by unfamiliar cultural practices and interpersonal interactions, ranging from the rapid-fire swapping of business cards (Bob mutters that this is 'very Japanese') to the mismatch in height with others in a crowded lift, to the intense crowds in the Tokyo subway system. The recourse to stereotype is a reflection of Bob's unfamiliarity with Japanese culture and particularly with Tokyo's intensity. Similarly, Jose demonstrates how Chinese culture might present itself to an outsider, and how, with a degree of cultural

insight, readers might be assisted in understanding and accepting cultural nuances, such as in the progress of Eagle's career and romantic life.

Eagle has a history of mishandling relationships with superiors and teammates. After being sidelined by a basketball injury, he is keen to get back into the team. He goes to the coach first and shows contrition for his swaggering entrance to the office of the Party Secretary of the Sports Institute.

> But the coach encourages him: the same man who has sacked him from the team greets him like a prodigal son and he hopes Eagle would return to fill a vacancy in the squad. No problem, no problem, insists the coach, rubbing Eagle's bad ankle. The carton of duty-free cigarettes that Eagle has got from the foreigner is zipped inside the coach's carry-bag. But it is not the coach's decision. Eagle would need to speak to the Party Secretary. She is a slim middle-aged woman who wears red chiffon scarves with her Japanese running shoes. (*AEP*, 123-124)

However, Eagle uses the wrong method when chatting. He adopts a clownish certainty of success and makes the fatal mistake of trying to charm her. He has no cigarettes left. The Party Secretary kicks the ball away and refuses to let Eagle back into the team. 'The responsibility for releasing you lies with your work unit. We have nothing to do with that. Haven't you spoken with them?' (*AEP*, 179-180) Eagle returns to the coach hoping his friendship network would see him return to the team. Eagle succeeds by virtue of his own efforts and ability and becomes a star player but does not know how to hide brightness and cultivate obscurity. He earns the resentment of his teammates, and together they teach him a lesson, completely ruining his basketball aspirations.

Eagle is indecisive and bad at dealing with people. When he plans to return to the basketball squad, he also considers how to obtain a release from his current job, which had been won with Chief Hou.

> He is an old friend of Old Lin's who helps Eagle get the system job. He finds various reasons not to let Eagle go, such as the fact that civil servants cannot resign themselves, which would cause trouble. Eagle is essential to the office, says Hou, preparing to embroider the palpable lie. (*AEP*, 181)

Eagle is reluctant to stay and is driven by his aspirations: he knows clearly that if he does not leave his occupation and join the basketball team again, he would forego his chance of wooing his love interest, the ex-model Pearl, and would never be in a position to move into a new flat.

He delays his decision on his return to his work unit, but then decides to quit his job as a civil servant and rejoin the basketball squad, in order to realise his dreams of a wife and a flat. This rejection of the 'iron rice bowl' in favour of a far riskier and uncertain career path is a daring proposition, and one marked by the historical moment the novel addresses. In contemporary China young people are far more likely to take the civil servant exam or postgraduate student exam rather than work directly after graduation, in order to enhance future job security.

Eagle's romantic predicament is complicated by his first love interest, his childhood friend Lotus, with whom he is blocked from having a relationship. The two grow up in the same neighborhood in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and experience a lot together. 'Although not directly affected by the Cultural Revolution, most ordinary children of the time grow up in an atmosphere of violent mistrustfulness and are often ignorant and unskilled.' (*AEP*, 126) Eagle's mother dislikes Lotus, thinking she is no better than a peasant and is largely ignorant of what they are going through together. As time passes, they drift apart with Lotus marrying a worker and moving to the west side of town, giving birth to a son and working odd jobs at a dumpling shop. Their affection endures these major dislocations: from time to time, the two would trick their families into dating, and when Eagle is in a bad mood, he wants to see Lotus.

Eagle's relationship with Pearl is much more transactional, having met when Eagle has a part-time job as a model. They have reached an agreement – if Eagle could buy a furnished flat, Pearl would marry him. With the help of two more cartons of cigarettes, he has also reached an agreement with the coach. Eagle starts training with the squad and easily proves himself good enough to be in line for the national team. The coach then clears the matter with the Party Secretary of the Sports Institute, and with Eagle's work unit, and only Eagle's ability stands between himself and his goal. 'With the flat squarely in view, Mother Lin could set her heart at ease – fortunately, since her heart gives trouble.' (*AEP*, 180) However, Eagle pushes too hard and too fast. When Pearl comes to visit him, he shows off uncontrollably, causing his teammates to roll their eyes. In his most extraordinary performance in a match between two city districts, in a subtle, unconscious maneuver Eagle's own teammates bonded together to block their own best player. He suffers an acute injury, where his kneecap is smashed, and his leg fractures below the knee. 'Eagle is suspended from the squad without compensation; and according to their agreement, Pearl has no choice but to call off the engagement.' (*AEP*, 181) Eagle loses his job and could not afford to buy a house, so marriage with Pearl is out of the

question. 'Falling in love is like doing business. The first factor to consider in marriage is not whether the two people love each other, but whether they match in physical appearance, economic base, family background and social status.' (NJTWAEP, 95) For a long time, one of prerequisites for a happy marriage in China is *men dang hu dui*[102] – marry a well-matched person. Jose introduces this popular belief in China to Western readers through the romantic stories on Eagle.

Having grown familiar with the Chinese way of doing things, Wally applies what he has learned and helps with Eagle's hospitalisation after deteriorating when confined to his home with serious knee and leg injuries. Wally accepts Mother Lin's invitation to visit.

> He (Eagle) has rested, he has eaten the good food his mother slaved to prepare, he has taken the expensive medicines his brother had bought. But the situation is hopeless. The Sports Institute denies him its superior medical attention. Pearl takes the accident as a well-timed omen. And now Eagle's strength is draining out of him. More than once he discusses with his mother the idea of calling the Doctor, but he always dismisses it as something not right, as if he should bear his fate alone. It is his mother who acted, since her duty is to use any connection that might help her beloved son. Wally is thankful she has done so. He would help if it laid in his power. (*AEP*, 266)

Wally advises Eagle to consider surgery, but Eagle replies that doctors say he does not need further treatment and he could not afford it.

> The operation – the reshaping of the knee, the resetting of the bones, the process of cartilage healing – is long, complicated, and expensive. In China medical treatment of such high quality is in short supply and access is a privilege. The underpaid medical profession is compensated, to an extent, by its power over the distribution of the privilege. Wally has been in China long enough now to have a crude understanding of how the system works. Immediately an appointment should be made with Mrs. Gu, and through her a meeting requested with Director Kang. (*AEP*, 266)

At this time Wally has met with Professor Hsu Chien Lung, knowing that Director Kang plagiarises his academic work. He has something on Director Kang, so he would listen to him.

[102] It means that the social and economic status of both men and women's families are comparable, and marriage is suitable.

‘He (Wally) rubs Eagle’s shoulder warmly and shakes Mother Lin’s hands, giving his word that he would return. So it is that two days later a car sent from the College arrives at the entrance to the narrow *hutong* and Eagle is laid carefully on the back seat.’ (*AEP*, 267) Jose fictionalises the plot in terms of his experience in China which would read as reliable for Chinese readers. Although this comprises perhaps awkward or obstructive background commentary for Western readers, Jose seeks to reflect conditions of social phenomena at that time in his use of literary techniques. This is how he achieves the narrative voice.

Wally’s earnest efforts to help Eagle prove their friendship and Wally’s acceptance of Chinese social arrangements. This is a good example of a bridge allowing Westerners to better understand Chinese culture and proves a fruitful start for Jose’s ongoing writing focused on developing an understanding of contemporary China. Although Wally does not find the Chinese medicine treatment he wanted, it paves the way for Jose to write about the Australian artist Rose who also goes to China to seek Chinese medical treatment for cancer in *The Red Thread*. Moreover, Jose suggests that Chinese culture might offer solutions to the problems of Western culture. In an interview with Lili Zhang, Jose explains his understanding of the relationship between Chinese and Western civilisations through the characters’ recognition of Chinese medicine.

> ‘The intention of my (Nicholas Jose’s) creation is to say that Eastern civilisation can cure the diseases of Western civilisation, and that “balance”, “harmony” and “patience” in Chinese culture are important. Traditional Chinese medicine has concentrated a lot of wisdom. After so many years of research, it must have its miraculous curative effect. ... It turns out that the civilisations of China and the West complement each other and coexist harmoniously. Traditional Chinese medicine, which 25 years ago[103] was unfamiliar to Australians, is now widely accepted. History bears witness to this development, and I’m just a little ahead of my time.’[104]

In recent decades Australians have moved from unfamiliarity to general acceptance of traditional Chinese medicine. Taking this as an example, Jose thinks that similar processes of

[103] The interview was conducted in 2015. *Avenue of Eternal Peace* was firstly published in 1989.
[104] Lili Zhang, 跨国文化与跨文化交流——澳大利亚小说家尼古拉斯·周斯访谈录 “Transnational Writing and Cross-Cultural Communication – An Interview with Australian Novelist Nicholas Jose”, *The World Literature Criticism (世界文学评论)*, no. 2 (2015): 1-7. Hereafter cited as TWCCC, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

familiarity and acceptance might apply to Chinese culture in a wider context. He works towards this goal in the next three novels about China.

The Rose Crossing

The Rose Crossing was published in 1994, after Nicholas Jose had returned to Australia from his teaching stint in China. His experiences in China motivate him to write the novel: his visiting Quanzhou, Fujian Province, and hearing about the crossbreeding of the Chinese rose and the European rose in a story told by one of his friends. In Quanzhou he saw the interplay between members of the different nations of the eastern hemisphere and the cultures they created when he went sightseeing at the temple and museum. The port city had become a great driving force for progress and a centre of creativity through history: Chinese travellers set out from this port with cutting-edge sailing technology, such as Zheng He who captained seven voyages to the West during the Ming Dynasty. Centuries earlier the well-known traveller Marco Polo had visited. Arab merchants came to do business, and some settled here. From a global perspective, Quanzhou witnessed the long history of east and west's trade and exchange, contributing to modernity in specific aspects. Jose decides to create a cross-cultural story combining history and imagination. The reason why he chooses the crossbreeding rose as a symbol is that he is inspired by a related story. A new kind of rose was discovered on an island in the Indian Ocean in 1789. Its colour, shape, and fragrance combined the characteristics of both European and Chinese roses, but how the hybrid rose arrived at that far-off island remained a mystery. 'Chinese roses (Rosa chinensis) were imported to Europe and North America in the 1790s and early 1800s as part of a general enthusiasm for Oriental products and decorative arts, including teas, porcelain, silks, and carpets.'[105] Following this, modern roses appear. Jose completes the story and develops it into one concerning communication and integration among people, specifically the impact of the integration of Chinese and western cultures. There are other stories featuring interactivity between East and West that predate the popular imagination, most prominently featuring things taken to be western in origin but that are sometimes far from being so. 'Paper money is one of the more obvious examples: Paper currency was first developed as "jiaozi" in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in the 11th century

[105] Peter E. Kukielski, *Rosa: The History of the Rose* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021), 190.

during the Northern Song Dynasty of China.'[106] 'The Mongols adopted the Jin and Song practice of issuing paper money, and the earliest European account of paper money is the detailed description given by Marco Polo, who claimed to have served at the court of the Yuan dynasty rulers.'[107] 'Napoleon issued paper money in the early 1800s.'[108]

Through the perspective of the English scientist Edward Popple, Jose describes the process of a European's acceptance of Chinese culture through his sanction of the love between his daughter (Rosamund) and a Chinese man (Zhu Taizao, a prince of the late Ming Dynasty). At the beginning of the story, Jose deploys the theme that the father has overly strong and taboo feelings for his daughter. This is relatively familiar to western readers as the incest taboo theme has appeared throughout Western literary history, such as Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19 and the most famous incest taboo of them all, namely the Oedipus narrative dramatised by Sophocles and tied directly to matters of Fate and the politics of statehood. By bringing this theme to the fore, Jose provides his Western readers with an interpretive conduit by which to better understand and accept Chinese culture, just as Edward succeeds in doing. The reasons why Edward could accept his daughter's love for another man is that he both acknowledges Chinese culture under his daughter's guidance and sees himself in the place of his daughter's suitor, Zhu Taizao, at least for a time. I will use Kathleen Woodward's interpretation of the second mirror stage to analyse Edward Popple's emotional and identity shifts in his attempts to rationalise his acceptance of Chinese culture, providing the means to understand Nicholas Jose's intention to introduce China and its culture to the west, especially to Australia.

In Chapter 2 Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the first mirror stage is used to analyse Ha Jin's novel *War Trash*. Lacan theorises that the infant from six to eighteen months starts to shape its identity when first seeing its image in the mirror. Woodward summarises Lacan's idea as 'the infant realises his image as a whole and unity until others show up in the mirror, causing the rise of his ego and the emergence of subjectivity, creating pleasurable anticipation of wholeness in the future as well as alienation in the present.'[109] When discussing the first mirror stage,

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[106] Daniel R. Headrick, *Technology: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 85.
[107] William N. Goetzmann, K. Geert Rouwenhorst, *The Origins of Value: The Financial Innovations that Created Modern Capital Markets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 94.
[108] Ross Anderson, *Security Engineering: A Guide to Building Dependable Distributed Systems* (Indianapolis, Indiana: John Wiley and Sons, 2020), 245.
[109] Kathleen M. Woodward, *Aging and Its Discontents: Freud and Other Fictions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 67. Hereafter cited as *AAID*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

Lacan paves the way for the advancement of the second mirror stage: 'In the first mirror stage, the process of the gradual enrichment and completeness of the self is the process of acceptance of the image and opinions of others in the mirror, while the subject denies this identification rather than embracing it when it comes to the second mirror stage. We can hypothesise the mirror stage of old age (the second mirror stage) as the inverse of the mirror stage of infancy proposed by Lacan.'[110]

The second mirror stage emerges in people's late middle age and beyond. Jacques Lacan calls this stage 'méconnaissance.' (*EAS*, 7) Méconnaissance demolishes the misrecognition formed in the first mirror stage and introduces unimaginable changes. Woodward compares the subject in different stages to highlight his/her features in the second mirror stage: 'In the mirror stage of infancy, the infant enters the imaginary in the mirror; while in the mirror stage of old age, the subject denies this identification rather than embracing it.' (*AAID*, 67) He/She enters the social realm reserved for 'senior citizens' in the western world. Woodward suggests that 'the experience in the second mirror stage may be "part of the process of accommodating death in the aging body," where the narcissism of the psyche leads to aggression toward, and thus leads to a rejection of the unrecognisable visage in the mirror.' (*AAID*, 69-71) This stage enacts a violent rejection of the processes of recognition, alienating effects of identification with an image to evade ageing and death. The mirror western culture holds up to the elderly contains the feared image of death. As Woodward explains, 'In the mirror stage of old age, the narcissistic impulse directs itself against the mirror image as it is embodied literally and figuratively in the faces and bodies – the images – of old people.' (*AAID*, 68) Lacan's emphasis on the strict structural relationship between narcissism and aggressivity is useful in understanding western culture's dominant representations of aging. In his essay 'Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis' he states: 'This narcissistic moment in the subject us to be found in all the genetic phases of the individual…This conception allows us to understand the aggressivity involved…with each of the great phases that the libidinal transformations determine in human life, the crucial functions of which has been demonstrated by analysis: weaning, the Oedipal stages, puberty, maturity, or motherhood, even the climacteric.' (*EAS*, 27) However, Woodward does not want people in western cultures to respond to the process of aging with variations of unwillingness and hostility; instead, she presents questions in order to advise other

[110] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror stage as Formative of the Function of the I", in *Ecrits: A Selection* (London: Routledge, 2020), 1-7. Hereafter cited as *EAS*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

ways to respond: 'Can we invent in our culture new means of old age so that we need not fight this battle with ourselves and others? Can we imagine mirrors which reflect other images of old age back to us?' (*AAID*, 70) To accept is followed by to change. The self's becoming the other at some stage not only balances us and the others but also fleshes out one's image, leading to an integrity of identity. The subject makes a big transition in the ability to realise the wholeness of identity instead of being blocked in the process of recognition.

At the beginning of *The Rose Crossing* Edward is aware that he harbours unusual feelings for his daughter. He is busy doing research in his study, and suddenly he wishes to go to Rosamund's bedroom to see her. Her rose lips and rose cheeks are pure and true, which reminds him of his jade stone of Tartary with a rose carved on it. He has considered the stone a fabulous creation. Is she his creation? He develops strong feelings for Rosamund, arousing him until she wakes up and finds him at the bedside. Afraid of doing something that will hurt Rosamund, Edward accepts an overseas assignment set up by the Scientist Society: 'He would board ship for the Easter Indies in search of novelties, because in those novelties lay a slender hope to free himself.'[111] To his astonishment, he discovers Rosamund stowed away in a trunk. He allows Ros to dress up on the ship, but he cannot hide his possessive feelings for her. One of the crew members even asks him if he has any connection with Ros. When they discover a deserted island, Edward volunteers to stay on the island to search for gold, and he asks the captain to leave Ros with him. Unbeknownst to them, a Chinese contingent is camped on the other side of the island. In due course Ros meets a young Chinese man – Zhu Taizao, who belongs to the rump of Ming resistance following the Manchu inauguration of the Qing Dynasty. Taizou is the Ming heir, the Prince of Yong. Ros wishes to see Taizao again and suggests to her father that they take the initiative to visit the Chinese encampment. Edward expresses concern that Ros's affections are not all his own. At one point Rosamund suffers a serious stomachache and Edward becomes anxious and guilty.

> Is he condemning Rosamund to that? The woman, and he the man who keeps her as his princess to intensify her female power. Must he become as husband to her, taking that risk, to bring into being the life that otherwise would turn inwards? Her blocked, swollen condition a form of hysterical pregnancy, demanding the real thing which he alone could provide, breeding his seed on his own seed. (*TRC*, 168-169)

[111] Nicholas Jose, *The Rose Crossing* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1995), 31. Hereafter cited as *TRC,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

The plot similarity to Shakespeare's *Tempest* provides Edward an affinity with Prospero, another figure coming to terms with a later-life crisis. Edward's self-affirmation, or narcissism allows this thought to grow and spread in his mind which inevitably becomes apparent to Rosamund, who detects his jealousy in his attempts to constrain her movements. Following a big quarrel, it is Ros's unsolicited concession that leads to a thaw between them. 'The unified moi – the subject of narcissism or the ideal ego – gives a person a sense of self-cohesion. Any unravelling of the strands that went into weaving that identity as a conviction of being causes a de-being. That is, a sense of fragmenting and thus a metaphorical death of the seemingly cohesive self.'[112] From Edward's point of view, it is Rosamund who acts as the other that unravels the strand and causes his change of the self. The opinion from the other (Ros) indicates a need to change his self and break the cohesion of his subjectivity, to which he is resistant. 'In old age, with one's position reversed before the mirror, the ego finds it more difficult to maintain its defenses. The Lacanian ambivalence that has been felt all one's life before mirrors – the constant checking and comparing – is exacerbated to an almost intolerable point.' (*AAID*, 68) This could explain the quarrel that breaks out between Rosamund and Edward. The next man to appear in the mirror (Zhu Taizao) represents a threat to Edward and leads to his aggression.

Rosamund and Taizao fall in love at first sight despite speaking different languages and not understanding each other. Not long after they are together, Ros becomes pregnant. Edward does not know about any of this until he comes across her daughter and Taizao lying naked together. After taking Ros back to their place on the other side of the island, he asks Ros to have an abortion. Ros disagrees, saying he wants to have a baby with her himself. 'I am your child. Your logic is that you would breed on me yourself, on one child breed another rarer still.' (*TRC*, 236) Another quarrel ensues but is mitigated by Rosamund's maturity and perspective. Edward's daughter takes the place of the other in the mirror, winning his trust and helping him to admit changes in his lived self, and laying a foundation for him to accept the Chinese. On the one hand, Edward loves Ros, but he denies that he wants to control her; on the other hand, he needs to maintain a good relationship with the Chinese, especially Lou Lu, to keep cultivating the crossing rose (the Chinese yellow rose and the European rose). Therefore, he takes Ros's advice to 'unite with the Chinese to discover common purpose.' (*TRC*, 240) He

[112] Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (London and Chicago: Croom Helm and the University of Illinois Press, 1986), 37.

decides to accomplish the other mission besides planting roses – trying his best to help Rosamund and her dynasty, because her child with Taizao would be considered the hope for the restoration of the Ming Dynasty. Ros guides her father to accept Chinese culture. In a reciprocal gesture, Edward's permission for Ros to marry Taizao is out of his love for her. Also, to some extent, he sees himself as Taizao, which is another reason why he could accept their affection. 'In *méconnaissance*, the self in the mirror becomes the Other – one with whom the self cannot identify.'[113] 'Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be.'[114] His psychological blockage is partially removed, not only unblocking his capacity, but also opening himself up and breaking the barrier between himself and the Chinese. Out of his love for Ros, Edward feels that his and Taizao's images are interchangeable. 'He (Edward) is his daughter's guardian and would do all he could to help her to her dynasty. He would not ignore his duty to join his cause with theirs.' (*TRC*, 255) Here, Edward protects his daughter from the standpoint of a lover, not a father, standing in for what should be Taizao's responsibility. This empathy also promotes his acceptance and understanding of Chinese culture, causing an overlapping of identities – both representative of western people and companion of Chinese.

The novel's narrative mode bears striking analogies to allegory. At the centre of the narrative stands a rose, its cultivation symbolising the cultural exchange between China and the West. When Edward sees the yellow Chinese rose for the first time, he could not forget it and pondered at length on how to obtain it. Having received the consent of Lou Lu (Prince Taizao's eunuch), he starts to breed hybrids of European roses and yellow Chinese roses. In Lou Lu's words, the Chinese rose could be considered as rosa chinensis.

> It's a common flower, everywhere, profuse, short-lived, having no special symbolic value, no duration, one bloom replacing another the year round. Growing wild, or for planned gardens, or in rocks, with educated people placing no store on it. An ordinary, vulgar flower, held in contempt, always available, needing to be sold during its short prime, like a girl. Its fruit having medicinal uses. Its hips making useful tea. (*TRC*, 161)

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[113] Leni Marshall, "Through (with) the Looking Glass: Revisiting Lacan and Woodward in 'Méconnaissance,' the Mirror Stage of Old Age", *Feminist Formations* 24, no. 2 (2012): 52-76. Hereafter cited as TLG, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[114] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 10.

He reports that the flower stands for young love in China, but Edward does not think the Chinese rose is really a rose.

> It is a small bloom with double, tightly packed rows of scalloped petals, a tiny bunch of screwed-up muslin, as Popple pries open the whorl to inspect the reproductive organs within. It has no fragrance, and a color of no rose flower he has ever seen. Bright yellow. It is, to Popple's expert eye, the most remarkable rose specimen; a rose, and yet not; could not be. (*TRC*, 161)

The yellow Chinese rose could also be peony.

> Lou Lu chuckles. The resultant progeny would be a rare treasure. He thinks of Empress Wu who orders the flowers to bloom. All obeyed save the peony rose. This time roses would follow the imperial command too. It must be tried. It must be done. What better omen could there be the cause, what better evidence of the superior being? (*TRC*, 176)

The novel is set in 1644. Edward's scientific endeavours are supported by the Scientific Society, itself supported by the British Royal Family. Zhu Taizao is considered to be the emperor-in-exile, awaiting the opportunity to recover the Ming Dynasty. This is the clue as to why the flower reminds Lou Lu of the legend of the peony. The author endows the Chinese rose with multiple identities to intensify its mysterious colour. It is a symbol of the cultural exchange between China and the West, and it acts like a bond connecting both. When Edward decides to support Ros, he is in the rose garden with the crossing roses. It is the rose that fortified him to make his decision. The crossing rose is black, signifying the great difficulties it has gone through in order to blossom, and the worthiness of the experiments and labours leading to this success.

The process of communication between two cultures is not always smooth, with collisions and conflicts occurring from time to time. As the representative of western and Chinese cultures respectively, Edward and Lou Lu's first debate concerned the rose. Lou Lu calls rosa chinensis 'Chinese rose', while Edward insists that it is not a true rose because there is no similarity between it and the European rose species with which he is familiar. This misunderstanding is caused by a different understanding of things in the process of cultural communication between the two sides. Thanks to a shared passion for roses, they decide to work together to nurture the crossing rose, with Edward in charge. If we consider Rosamund as the other in the mirror who promotes cultural exchange between the west and China, Lou Lu represents the counterpart. Initially both demonstrate bad intentions for each other. Edward uses the term 'Tartary' to

describe objects from China, while Lou Lu calls the language he used to communicate with Edward 'pig Latin' and Rosamund 'pig girl'. These hierarchies are dependent upon a cultural/political center from which all other levels radiate. Having learned that Taizao gets Ros pregnant, Edward plans to poison the Chinese out of anger, but he does not follow through with the plan. Lou Lu in turn plans to leave the island with the pregnant Ros, leaving Edward behind. Before he leaves, he orders Captain Huang to take someone to dig up the gold buried in the rose garden (thinking the reason why Popple treasures the crossing rose is that there is gold buried under the roses). One of the crossing roses is destroyed, but the other survive. Edward loses his mind completely and faints. The unspoiled crossing rose is in bloom at last, but it is a black rose.

The blooming of the black rose represents the cultural exchange between China and the West having achieved results, but from the perspective of the writer, this result is not satisfactory. The group makes their way back to mainland China, where the Zayton officials who have supported them defected to the Qing government, resulting in Taizao being arrested as soon as he landed. He dies while crossing the Yellow River plain. Ros and their daughter – the hope of the Ming Dynasty – are taken to the Forbidden City and never able to leave. Their daughter has a child with the Kangxi Emperor. In imperial China, emperors' marriages were mostly engineered for political purposes, such as maintaining and strengthening bonds with other ethnic groups. In the case of Qing emperors' concubines, in addition to the Manchurian nobility, there were also noble women of the Han and the Mongol ethnicity, for the purpose of maintaining ethnic ties. According to traditional Chinese culture, Jose arranges Taizao and Rosamund's daughter to marry the Kangxi Emperor, which means that the Westerners and Western culture she represents are valued in China at that time. The path Jose has laid out for the daughter shows that, first, exchange between Chinese and Western cultures, with the child of the Qing emperor and Taizao and Ros's daughter as the result, will continue, and second, China symbolically welcomes the West into its political structures. The Qing emperor who is the true ruler and representative of China of the time is willing to accept Western culture and maintain and consolidate relations with the West. Although the narrative does not end well with Edward, he achieves an integrity of identity via cultural exchange during the second mirror stage with the unexpected changes confronting the Chinese, especially Taizao and Lou Lu. 'People experience themselves in relationship to others; through *méconnaissance*, each person becomes the Other. With that vision, then, an individual might be able to experience himself as so wholly Other that he actually manages to experience himself in relationship to himself –

the social self-reflected to the lived self, mediated only by a mirror.' (TLG, 67) The novel uses a double layering parallel narrative method, which shows the process of Chinese and Western cultural communication through the description of the changes in the feelings of the father and daughter. The open ending leaves room for the readers' imagination and indicates that the process of communication will continue, foreshadowing the writing of subsequent works. The writer signals his appreciation of Chinese culture and people in the novel by allocating full humanity to the Chinese characters. They are not decorative but instead are important characters in the book. 'I (Nicholas Jose) want to convey a theme through this novel – we have always thought that the West and the East are separate, but in fact they have always been connected, and the crossing rose is a symbol of this connection.' (TWCCC, 3) Jose depicts a larger cross-cultural world picture for the readers with a mechanism to understand the whole history of the story from the perspective of both east and west.

The Red Thread

> 'In paying tribute to Shen Fu's work (*Six Chapters of a Floating Life*), I also want to pay tribute to other works that have crossed the boundaries of time and space. I want to pay my respects to Chinese writers, like Shen Fu. They infect us with their works from one world to another. I am especially grateful to the Chinese literary tradition and its continuing influence in the contemporary world.'
>
> ——Nicholas Jose

The narrative of *The Red Thread* is based on the Qing Dynasty memoir *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, by Shen Fu (1763-1825). The memoir concerns the life of the author and his wife (Chen Yun), an ordinary life but one full of interest, combining art with daily chores. However, their ideal was finally shattered due to the oppressive nature of feudal ethics and suffering induced by poverty. Only four of the six scheduled chapters survived for posterity: the finals two went missing when the book was firstly published. These missing chapters provide Jose with a great opportunity to reimagine the story, leading him to write his own love story about Shen Fu and Chen Yun set in the contemporary world, reincarnated as the characters Shen Fuling and Ruth (an Australian artist who lives in Shanghai). In *Six Chapters*, Shen Fu depicts a close relationship between Chen Yun and her best friend Hanyuan in one

chapter. Jose took note of it and expanded the length of narration in *The Red Thread*, placing Shen Fuling, Ruth, and Han (Hanyuan's reincarnation) into an open relationship.

The reason why *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* plays a significant role in Chinese literary history and culture is that it is a true record of the author's life, especially concerning love, which marks a significant breakthrough in subject matter and an innovation in style of the ancient Chinese romance novel genre at that time. Compared with other ancient Chinese novels prevailing in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty, for example, *cai zi jia ren*[115], the description of love in *Six Chapters* is authentic instead of exaggerated and pretentious. Characters in this book are three-dimensional and full of vitality, breaking the shackles of typecast personalities which were popular in ancient Chinese literary circle at that time. Take Chen Yun as a representation. When writing about her appearance, Shen Fu not only 'praises her charm, noting her slender figure, her refined shoulders and a rather long neck, her arched eyebrows and the look of quick intelligence and soft refinement in her eyes.'[116] Shen Fu also mentions 'the defect of her two front teeth which were slightly inclined forward – considered not to be a mark of good omen.' (*SCFL*, 7) The author avoids cliches such as *chen yu luo yan* and *bi yue xiu hua*[117]; instead, he honestly describes the shortcomings in Yun's appearance, which does not hurt her image, but on the contrary makes it more authentic and desirable. When writing about Yun's hobby, the author mentions her love of literature, and poetry in particular. One of her poems contained the two lines:

> Touched by autumn, one's figure grows slender,
> Soaked in frost, the chrysanthemum blooms full. (*SCFL*, 5)

Unlike the talented women commonly described in other novels who could think quickly and be raised efficiently into fictional representation, Yun finds that all her manuscripts consisted of unfinished poems mainly of couplets and three or four lines. Lin Yutang, who translated *Six Chapters* into English, once commented that Yun is one of the loveliest women in Chinese literature. It is his English translation version that offers western readers access to this classic

[115] *Cai zi jia ren* novel is a type of ancient Chinese novel popular in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty. It depicts the love and marriage of young men and women, usually the love story between a young scholar and a beautiful girl. Characters in such novels are single and typified.
[116] Fu Shen, *Fu sheng liu ji=Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, trans. Yutang Lin (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1999), 7. Hereafter cited as *SCFL,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[117] *Chen yu luo yan* and *bi yue xiu hua* are two Chinese idioms which are often used together to describe women's appearance. The former idiom means that when fish see her, they sink to the bottom, and when geese see her, they fall from the sky. The latter one means that she can make the moon hide and the flowers shy. Both of them are used to describe women with beautiful looks.

Chinese love story, the description of love in which is considered as one of the best in Chinese literature.

Jose constructs a love story between Shen Fuling, Ruth and Han in *The Red Thread*, mentioning multiple times in the novel that they are reincarnations of Shen Fu, Chen Yun and Hanyuan respectively in *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*. Shen is a young, American-educated antique appraiser in Shanghai's biggest auction house who meets Ruth at her art exhibition at Double Seven Festival, on the date of Chinese Valentine's Day[118]. Ruth is an Australian artist who has been battling illness for some time. When she goes to see a doctor in Sydney, she is recommended to seek help from a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine in Chinatown. Having watched her mother fall ill, decline in hospital and ultimately pass away, she is resistant to receiving treatment in Sydney, flying directly to Shanghai, where Chinese medicine has its roots. During her exhibition, Ruth reads out the original words Shen Fu writes in *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* and reveals that she can see pictures in her mind which overlap with the description in *Six Chapters*. The pair meets Han in a bar. She is considered to be the best singer in Shanghai. Han's grandmother was the most famous White Russian singer in old Shanghai, from whom she inherits her voice and appearance. Ruth comments to Han that 'She is irresistible!' Both of them are deeply attracted by Han.

> Shen is delighted with Han. Ruth is enchanted too. She looks at Shen and catches the dazzle in his eyes. He is not holding her back. No, he is encouraging her to let herself go. She is momentarily perplexed by their behaviour. But she doesn't stop to question what is happening, or to ask why they are drinking champagne on the thirty-first floor of a luxury hotel in the middle of the night. It is all just part of Han's game.[119]

It is no coincidence that Jose chooses to write a love story based on a book written in 1808 and firstly published in 1877. During that period the Western world was engaged in the Romantic period and its legacy, where literature of this period often focused on emotion and imagination. 'Although Chinese romantic literary works can be traced back to a large number of myths and legends handed down from ancient times, "romanticism" was only translated and introduced to China from Western literature in the early twentieth century.'[120] Jose sees the affinities between the romance Shen Fu recorded in *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* and Romanticism in

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[118] It is on the 7th of the seventh lunar month.
[119] Nicholas Jose, *The Red Thread: A Love Story* (San Francisco, Calif: Chronicle Books, 2000), 114. Hereafter cited as *TRT,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[120] Shouxiang Cai, *Zhong guo lang man zhu yi wen xue shi=History of Chinese Romantic Literature* (Wuhan: Wuhan Publishing House, 1999), 1, 10.

the west, arising at the time of composition. Jose assists his western readers who share the same cultural background with him to understand aspects of the Chinese tradition and its relatively unfamiliar texts. I will analyse this novel with Ruth as the main objective, using theories of bisexuality and their presence in feminist theory to support my analysis of the triangular relationship between two female characters (Ruth and Han) and one male character (Shen Fuling) in *The Red Thread*. This will demonstrate how Nicholas Jose presents and adapts classical ancient Chinese works to the west.

The analysis of this novel to follow will focus on how Jose builds a bridge between China and the west by deploying the triangulation of bisexuality as a structural model. Having already published two novels about China, Jose develops his strategy of cross-cultural writing and the exposure of Chinese texts to the west. However, the ancient text Jose chooses in this instance provides a style and subject matter very different to the expectations of western readers. In order to clarify the theme, Jose amplifies the description of the relationship among the protagonist Shen Fu, his wife Chen Yun and the other woman Hanyuan in the original book and places them in an open relationship in *The Red Thread*, concentrating on gender representation. With this ambiguous model at least partially familiar to western readers, the classic Chinese romantic novel and Chinese culture might become more accessible to western readers. Jose also draws a distinction between his and ancient Chinese way of depicting such relationship. He reconciles the difference between Chineseness and westerness hidden behind characters to guarantee that it is easier for readers to accept the difference instead of deluding it.

Given its flexibility and polysemy, the word 'bisexual' is especially helpful in producing a theoretical framework for the relationship depicted in *The Red Thread*. For Fred Klein 'bisexuality can refer to a series of acts, and/or a behaviour. To be behaviourally bisexual is to be sexually active with men and women, regardless of sexual identity.'[121] 'Bisexuality, as a term used to describe sexual acts and desires, was first utilised in the late 19th century.'[122] 'It was not until the 20th century that scientists moved towards using the term bisexual to refer to individuals experiencing sexual attraction to men and women.'[123] For the purposes of this

[121] Fred Klein, *The bisexual option* (Westminster, MD: Arbor House, 1978), 278.
[122] Amber Ault, "Ambiguous Identity in An Unambiguous Sex/Gender Structure: The Case of Bisexual Women", *Sociological Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1996a): 449-463.
[123] Steven Angelides, "Historicising (Bi)Sexuality: A Rejoinder for Gay/Lesbian Studies, Feminism, and Queer Theory", *Journal of Homosexuality* 52, no. 1/2 (2006): 125-158.

analysis the focus will fall on the bisexual relationship led by Ruth (female) with Han (female) and Shen Fuling (male), rather than centring on the subject's sexual identity. Among the controversial debates concerning bisexuality, I choose its viewpoint from feminist theory. The bisexual triangle only works if we see it from a female perspective of Ruth.

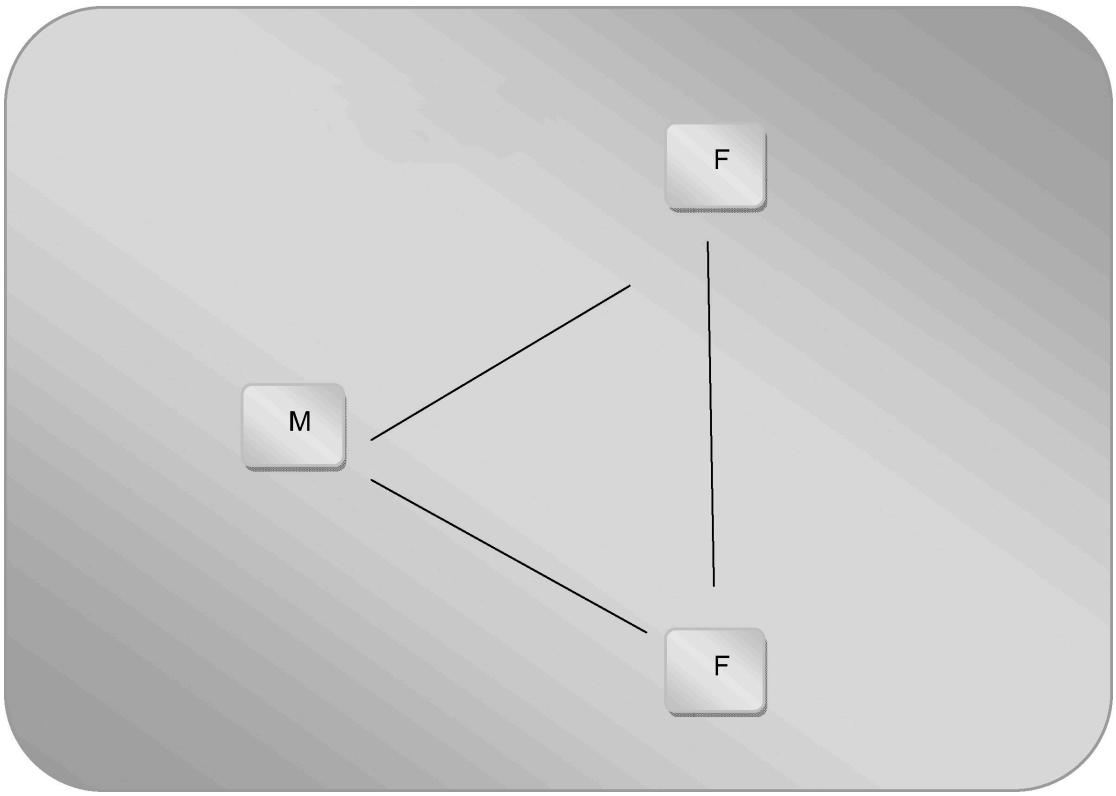

Figure 1. Erotic triangle.

'Marjorie Garber's study of bisexuality *Vice Versa* (1995) completes this picture by focusing on the ubiquitous presence of bisexual triangles, in life as well as in the visual and narrative arts. According to her, the constant element in the picture of desire is its triangularity, with the third element as desire's necessary vehicle.'[124] When it comes to the situation in *The Red Thread*, the third element refers to Han. 'With triangularity gone, desire dies and even the most passionate love becomes feeble and boring.' (*BQTICC*, 159) In its complexity it reminds us of the three-body problem in physics: two interacting objects can continue to move regularly, but once a third object is added, the motion among them becomes very complicated and difficult to calculate. However, it is Ruth who granted the permission of entry and departure of the third

[124] Jonathan Alexander, Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio, *Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Connections and Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2012), 159. Hereafter cited as *BQTICC,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

element. After meeting Han, Ruth invited her to live with them (in Shen's apartment). Shen, as Ruth predicted, was surprised and happy. With Han joining, their life became more colorful. All of them enjoyed this period of time, particularly Ruth.

> She (Ruth) could not say why this prospect made her so excited. The idea of Han coming to stay appealed to her. It seems to make her relationship with Shen more special still. Although she and Shen want to be like a married couple, Han's presence would make them different from most married couples, giving something quite particular to their relationship. Ruth knows Shen would be happier than he could say. 'Three is better than two in so many ways,' says Ruth in a worldly tone. 'You (Han) and I can do things while Shen's at work.' (*TRT*, 128)
>
> Ruth has never been so happy in her life. She does not know what to do with all her feelings. Han prods her, magnetises her, reaches into her, as if she has stolen her soul. She sees no reason why it should ever stop.
> … (at Red Rose, where Han works) They sit together, causing people to gossip about them, which only makes them feel bolder and more confident. (*TRT*, 130)

Facing her obsession and fanaticism for Han, Ruth is at a loss. She does not understand why she has such strong feelings for Han, because they have just met each other several days earlier. Jose provides the explanation that their passion comprises a continuation of their relationship from a previous life (as Yun and Hanyuan).

The first chapter of *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, 'Wedded Bliss', has Shen Fu record his wife Chen Yun's deep feeling for Hanyuan, a sing-song girl's daughter. Zhang Xianhan, one of Shen Fu's friends, knows Hanyuan's mother well. She could write poems and has produced four hit songs in Suzhou. Yun and Hanyuan hit it off, and Yun intends to arrange for Hanyuan to be Shen's concubine. Shen does not understand why his wife's motivations, but Yun insists.

> 'Now I have found a girl who has both beauty and charm,' Yun says to me. 'I have already asked Hanyuan to come and see us tomorrow, and I'll arrange it for you.' I am taken by surprise.
> 'You know we are not a wealthy family. We can't afford to keep a girl like that, and we are so happily married. Why do you want to find somebody else?'
> 'But I love her,' says Yun smilingly. 'You just leave it to me.' (*SCFL*, 77)

Hanyuan agrees, and from that time Yun keeps talking about Hanyuan. 'Eventually Hanyuan is married by force to some influential person, and their arrangement dissipates, by virtue of which Yun dies of grief.' (*SCFL*, 79)

In *The Red Thread* Ruth makes a significant effort to maintain the relationship between the three of them, and especially her relationship with Han. Even though she is very ill at this time and has no money for further treatment, she does not let Shen and Han know. She goes behind Shen's back and pawns an antique bowl as a consultation fee. 'It (her illness) scares her into mindfulness, and she feels vulnerable for the sake of Shen and Han. She does not want anything to go wrong for them. For this reason, she decides to see the doctor again.' (*TRT*, 131) As before, she does not follow doctor's advice. 'The doctor's advice is unchanged. Once again, she chooses to ignore it. She resists all medication, all medical intervention. But she has been warned.' (*TRT*, 132) She tries to keep the relationship among the three stable and balanced. When they visit the Putuo Mountain to play, Ruth sometimes sleeps with Han (for fear of her loneliness) and sometimes with Shen (since the male body provides her with more heat). There are two reasons why Ruth is sensitive to her relationship with Han. One is that Han does not make Ruth feel safe in words and actions like Shen does. Han enters society at an early age and has gained rich experience, cultivating her ability in dealing with people producing a strong self-orientation. She is used to consider everything from her own standpoint, regardless of others. Han does not take Ruth seriously when she confides in her, thinking Ruth is speaking on the spur of the moment.

> There is a catch in her throat when she speaks. Her voice is heavy. 'I'm happy when you're near me,' Ruth says. 'I can't explain it. I don't want you to leave me. Never.'
>
> Han laughs in her face. 'Your life and mine are two different things,' she says crossly. She fumbles for a cigarillo and bunches her shoulders against the breeze as she lights it. She breathes some in Ruth's face and laughs again. 'You're too serious,' she says. 'This is just good times.'
>
> 'What is this feeling between us?'
> 'What about you and Shen?'
> 'Oh, Shen! He's my boyfriend. But you give him the greatest joy.'
> 'Men can't help themselves,' says Han. 'You're not jealous, are you?'

> ‘It’s you,’ says Ruth, groping for the words. ‘You set off a reaction. The energy you release binds us together. I can’t explain it except that it doesn’t come from this world. It comes from a passion that we have already experienced somewhere else.’
> ‘So you really buy all that?’
> ‘Just stay with me. With us.’
> ‘I’m my own person. I decide. You’re nothing to me,’ Han says.
> ‘You can’t explain it either,’ says Ruth.
> Han steps near and closes Ruth’s eyes with her palm. The tie between them comes from beyond the limits of both their powers of comprehension. She kisses Ruth’s forehead and Ruth puts her arms around Han and clings to her. Then, as they sink onto the stone step at the water’s edge, they could hear the commotion at the restaurant growing louder. (*TRT*, 147-148)

The second reason for Ruth’s sensitivity is that Han does not believe in reincarnation, vows or any ceremonial or spiritual process, and she has little interest in *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, precisely opposite to the investments of Ruth and Shen. ‘Shen always carries the book (*Six Chapters*) with him, preferring to wait and read it in a leisurely fashion and taking time to decipher its obscure references and oblique hints. Ruth instead is impatient, urgently wanting to know each plot development. She is uncomfortable about letting the story go in midstream. Han, on the other hand, is quite indifferent to the book and her friends’ interest in it and is even a little resentful.’ (*TRT*, 137-138) Shen once gives Ruth a jade bracelet, which she treasures so much that she refuses to allow Han to try it on. When she asks Han to promise never to leave her, Han smiles and asks in turn what Ruth would give her. Ruth shows the jade bracelet, but Han throws back her head and laughs derisively: ‘You’d give me your most precious possession. I couldn’t take that!’ (*TRT*, 142) This is a significant departure from the narrative of *Six Chapters*, where Hanyuan accepts the bracelet and agrees to live with Yun and Shen Fu.

Having suffered so much, Ruth destroys the bisexual triangle by excluding Han from the relationship. New paradigms introduced by Marjorie Garber and other theorists acknowledge that ‘when the third person is eliminated desire dies, and with it goes the joie de vivre and amusement of love, but the triangle appears as a necessary ludic structure in a culture’s emotional ecology. It is in itself erotic. In the case of an FFM triangle, the zero-sum game[125]

[125] Zero-sum game is a concept of game theory, opposite to non-zero-sum game. It is a non-cooperative game. It refers to the parties involved in the game. Under strict competition, the gains of one party must mean the losses of the other party, and the sum of the gains and losses of the parties in the game will always be ‘zero’,

of killing the lesbian player often reveals a self-destructive tendency to kill the lesbian within – to assuage one's own anxieties about the power of women's erotic love for one another.' (*BQTICC*, 161) In ending the relation with Han Ruth kills her feelings for female erotic connection represented by Han. The process is neither easy nor pleasant, and Jose's romantic narration adds a strong sense of mystery to the story. Han disappears the next day when they visit Putuo Mountain. Ruth intends to find her but comes down with a sudden headache and dark spots all over her body and is unable to get out of bed. '"It will pass," she says, but she recognises the symptoms. With all her will she must try to stay attached to the body that no longer wants to be her home.' (*TRT*, 153) Old Weng (the owner of the copy of *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* in this novel) reminds Shen that Ruth's situation resembles that of Yun and urges him to fetch a doctor. Old Weng explains domestic scholars' research on the nature of Yun's obsession with Hanyuan, which is still controversial. Yun is able to see something she did not have but which she desires intensely. Shen feels that if he finds the remaining two chapters, he would find the answer. Before he leaves, he asks Han to visit Ruth in hospital, but what he finds is Han's simple wedding scene. With the help of Old Weng, guardian of *Six Chapters*, he finds the two missing chapters. Weng not only protects the mystery in the book but shows mercy to faithful believers and offers sincere advice.

In the two restored chapters (fictional creations of Jose), Hanyuan is beaten and reviled after marrying the wealthy businessman. She regrets her choices and misses her happy time with Yun and Shen Fu. Shocked to learn of Yun's death, she sneaks out from the wealthy businessman in the middle of the night to visit Yun's grave. Seeing this, Shen sighs, knowing they would end up the same way in real life. 'He has no sympathy for Han, having enjoyed her, but never feeling deeply for her, and now he does not want her to survive unscathed. His resentment is a surprise even to himself, but while the book is his guide, and it holds a slim possibility of hope. He does not yet give up on Han.' (*TRT*, 184) As Ruth is tormented by the thought of Han, Han comes to see her in the hospital and takes her to the apartment where they three have lived, before disappearing again. From this point on Ruth decides to let Han go. Ruth and Shen return to Shanghai and to the nightclub at which Han used to work, meeting her one final time. When the two missing chapters are sold for a high price of 2 million RMB Shen runs to tell Ruth excitedly, but she is nowhere to be found, choosing seclusion in the mountains. At the end of the novel, Ruth does not die but sends a postcard to her father expressing that she

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so there is no possibility of cooperation between the two parties.

wants to write the seventh chapter, centred on her experience, and send it to Shen, who never receives it. The depressing take-home lesson seems to be that 'happy endings inevitably restore monogamy and monosexuality; bisexual happiness does not exist.' (*BQTICC*, 161)

At the end of the story, Jose leaves readers with two unconstrained women and a man trapped in love.

> We have hung on as long as we could, each of us, tenaciously, with all our human longing. We have returned to the world to complete our story. Now is the time for us to be released at last. The current of feeling between us that joins us to the pulse of life itself has survived all the cycles of our restless roaming. Now is the time to cut the thread. (*TRT*, 251)

However, he is unable to get over his feelings for Ruth and struggles to differentiate dream from reality. Compared with his sorrow, Ruth sets herself free in nature, and Han becomes free with fortune and power. 'She marries an American movie tycoon and moves to Hollywood. The man dies happy, of a heart attack six months after the wedding and leaves Han the China franchise for all the titles his production company owns. Han returns to live in Shanghai, now a rich and fortunate woman.' (*TRT*, 254) Each woman occupies a centre of gravity within the relationship. Ruth is in charge of the relationship and is the bisexual linchpin. It is she who holds the discourse in the bisexual triangle, deciding its structure and mechanism. Compared with Ruth at the apex of this structure, Han is the decisive factor in the power dynamic of their love triangle. It would become unstable or even collapse if she withdrew because Han weighs more emotionally. This is a romantic and realistic love story – modulating between freedom and passion. Jose tells a love story adapted from Chinese classical literature into one that both eastern and western readers can accept and empathise with, enlightening Chinese readers as well as western readers. Again, with their familiar narrative techniques, he introduces Chinese classics to the West, leading western readers further into Chinese culture.

The reason why Jose amplifies the open relation between Ruth, Shen Fu and Han and develops a structure of bisexuality in each of them is that he tries to eliminate the barriers of Chinese and Western cultures with content that is shared by both. While bisexuality makes its appearance known in British Romanticism, it is hardly mentioned in Chinese modern and contemporary literary works and is also a topic that is rarely discussed in current Chinese society. Its appearance in a memoir of the late Qing Dynasty becomes all the more remarkable for this. Jose not only deploys narrative technique familiar to western readers, but also

structures the novel around well-known content. 'The author expresses his cultural aspirations of communicating between China and the West in *The Red Thread*, which provides readers with a vision of a harmonious and free new world of literature.'[126] By introducing this Qing era autobiography to the west Jose builds a bridge between Chinese and Western literature and society, both classical and contemporary.

In a departure from Jose's previous works, *The Red Thread* is inspired by an historical text, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*. Jose not only quotes the original text but recreates two lost chapters in the course of composing his own novel. This manifests in three ways: character, genre, and plot. Jose expresses or implies multiple times that Ruth, Shen Fuling and Han are the reincarnations of Yun, Shen Fu and Hanyuan in *Six Chapters*, although the characters' personalities are not completely consistent, especially evident in Han who, compared with Ruth and Shen's steadiness, does not believe in reincarnation. In *Six Chapters*, Yun and Hanyuan are true to each other, and Hanyuan is willingly to marry Shen Fu as a concubine. However, Han is just playing with Ruth and Shen. Ruth is sincere to Han, but this good faith is not reciprocated. Second, as *Six Chapters* is Shen Fu's real record of life, it is a realistic work as far as memoirs go. *The Red Thread* is fiction in the romance style. At the end of the novel, Ruth is plagued by illness and chooses to live in seclusion in the mountains. 'She moves further into those clouded peaks and misty valleys where time and the world dissolve and ultimately disappears.' (*TRT*, 252) Living in such an environment at the end of her life is very much in line with her identity as an artist and gives the novel a heightened romantic tone. There are echoes here of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* (1924), (among other western texts), for example in the love triangle between Clavdia, Castorp and Peeperkorn. Castorp remains at the end, with both others gone. Third, in the final two chapters of *Six Chapters* (written by Jose), Yun is reborn in Hanyuan's prayers and the deep thoughts of Shen Fu. She returns from the dead due to Hanyuan's devotion and Shen Fu's love. After living happily with Shen Fu for several years, they visit the Yellow Corktree Temple in Tianzhou, where Hanyuan becomes a Buddhist nun and prays daily for Yun. Yun and Hanyuan meet there, with Hanyuan returning to her spiritual world that night. Judging from the existing chapters, Shen Fu's last two chapters would concern his real life, abiding with the memory of his wife.

[126] Lili Zhang, 论澳洲小说家对《浮生六记》的文化误读 "Cultural Misunderstanding and Literary Variation: From *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* to *The Red Thread*", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 4 (2018): 39-46.

Original Face

Original Face is the fourth and final novel in Jose's series focusing on China, closely connected with the other books and bringing the series full circle. The idea for *The Red Thread* emerged after Jose had read *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, with the novel's content deeply influenced by this classic Chinese autobiography. Similarly, the title *Original Face* is drawn from a story in *Zen Koan*[127], namely 'Ben lai mian mu' (Original Face). Being aware of the 'original face' is a very important part of the process of enlightenment and becoming a Buddha. 'Original face' is the whole spirit of Huineng Zen[128] and means 'Buddha nature' – a clean state of mind[129] – which paves the way for the identity of subject and object. 'In the history of the development of Chinese Zen Buddhism, it is almost inseparable from "original face" whether it is to educate someone through beating with sticks or scolding, or to understand the *koan*.'[130] This crucial Zen idea inspires Jose's novel, influencing the narratives of characters like Nova Jewell, Zhou Huang and Daozi. The original face as an index carries different meanings for different characters. The period setting of the novel echoes the first book in the series, namely *The Avenue of Eternal Peace*. The stories described in these two books took place in a period of time after the June 4th massacre at Tiananmen Square. Jose's Chinese writing series starts in this period and ends in this period, finally forming a complete closed loop in time.

The novel recounts the murder of a Chinese male in Sydney. His freshly skinned body with the head removed is found at Pleasant Vale Recycling and Waste Depot. The story unfolds with the purpose of solving the murder, and the dead man becomes the thread that connects all the

[127] *Zen Koan* is a book about Zen Buddhism. The book tells that Zen is a Buddhist sect that best embodies the Sinicisation of Buddhism. The Zen *koan* is the blood of Zen, the main document of Chinese Zen, and one of the main contents of Zen culture. See Steven Heine, Dale S. Wright, *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12.
[128] Huineng is the sixth ancestor of Zen Buddhism. 'Original face' was first mentioned by him in the form of a question. He asked Huiming (the Buddhist monk who asked him for the Dharma) to work hard to see what he really was. If someone had a thorough understanding, he/she would be able to see the nature clearly and realise the way and become a Buddha. Jose wrote in the acknowledgements that he adapted words concerning Zen *koan* from *The Original Face: An Anthology of Rinzai Zen*. Rinzai is the Japanese line of the Chinese Linji school, which was founded during the Tang Dynasty by Linji Yixuan, and Linji Yixuan's thought was first influenced by Huineng.
[129] Liuzu Huineng. *Liuzu da shi fa bao tan jing= The Platform Sutra: the Zen Teaching of Hui-neng*, trans. Red Pine (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2006), 136.
[130] Jisheng Chen, *Chan zong gong an=Zen Koan* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Company, 2018), 72.

characters and the plots. At first, Pleasant Vale police believe that he is Zhou Huang, aged 24, from Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China. 'He comes originally to study English as an overseas student, then he switches to a course in horticulture. He is quiet and keeps to himself. Vegetarian.'[131] Then he obtains permanent residency. He remains missing throughout much of the story, and all information about him is provided via other people until the second half of the novel.

When Zhou Huang's parents come from China to identify the body, they believe it is not their son. Having compared X-rays taken in China and the Pleasant Vale corpse, the police find that they do not match, that it is a misidentification. It transpires that the dead man is another Chinese male Mengzi (Zhou Huang's fiancée's boyfriend). The reason for this misidentification is that Mengzi illegally enters Australia using Zhou Huang's passport but replaces Zhou's photo with his own. Both of them are referred to as Zhou Huang in public in Sydney, forming a Jeckyll and Hyde dyad, where Zhou Huang is the good counterpart to Mengzi's representation of evil. Mengzi has inside access to staff in the Immigration Department and uses the Rockdale office to obtain new passports for people who come in Sydney. He is also a member of the Chinese Democracy League, a gangster association headed by the Tiananmen refugee Ah Mo. When Ah Mo discovers what Mengzi has perpetrated behind his back, Mengzi blames Zhou Huang for his own crimes. At this point Ah Mo figures out the truth and kills Mengzi together with his man Daozi.

The narrative purports to uncover the mystery of Zhou Huang's identity, to discover his original face. This term carries different meanings in the novel, including that of the true self inside as well as a monk's name. The implication of 'original face' changes three times in the process and provides a method by which to piece together Zhou's identity in the final stage of the novel. At first 'original face' indicates the face of skinned dead Chinese man, judged by the police from the papers to be Zhou Huang, and thus his face is revealed to readers. Historically skinning was a form of torture practiced both in China and the West[132]. It was a regular torture in ancient

[131] Nicholas Jose, *Original Face* (Artarmon, NSW: Giramondo, 2005), 74. Hereafter cited as *OF,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

[132] In China, this punishment firstly appeared in the Three Kingdoms Period. It continued into the Qing Dynasty and became one of the top ten tortures of the Qing Dynasty. In the West, it was recorded in Greek mythology as *The finding of the aulos*. Marsyas, the legendary musician and inventor of the *aulos*, challenged Apollo in a musical contest, stipulating that the loser would be at the mercy of the winner. Apollo beat him. He tied Marsyas to a pine tree and skinned him alive.

China, but it was not common a practice in the West. Skinning someone's face hides his/her identity, but this act also displays the original face without skin at the same time. Secondly the exploration of the original face of the dead man Zhou Huang is the exploration of Zhou Huang's identity. The whole story arc follows the police's investigation into Zhou Huang's murder. As the investigation goes deeper, the truth emerges that the dead Chinese man is in fact Mengzi instead of Zhou Huang. Mengzi changes the photo on Zhou Huang's passport, enters Australia and then lives in Sydney using the name 'Zhou Huang'. Finally, discovering the real Zhou Huang becomes the main task of exploring the original face, replacing the flawed information gathered in the first phase of the narrative. The narrative method of creating two very similar characters with different standpoints is commonly seen in western classics, such as Dracula and Abraham Van Helsing in Bram Stoker's novel, and Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Moriarty in Arthur Conan Doyle's narratives. These mirrored pairs produce an uncanny sensation for the reader, the discomfort due to a sense of familiarity as well as the potential for confusion in the moral economy. When these characters face each other, the evil one always takes action first to eliminate the other and remain unique. The commonplace that 'Good will triumph over evil' often govern how writers plot for those characters. Jose used characterisations familiar to western readers to create the real Zhou Huang and a fake one (Mengzi), arousing their interest and helping them figure out Zhou Huang's identity. I will use Lacan's interpretation of other/Other and projection to analyse how the identity of Zhou Huang gradually becomes complete, the contributions of Australian characters and other Chinese characters in this process, and how Jose produces a bridge of communication between China and Australia.

Original Face is Jose's first novel to focus on Chinese people in Australia. Most of these figures are refugees from the Tiananmen disaster. Among them, some work at the bottom of the social ladder in Sydney, such as taxi drivers, massagists, and fish market workers. Others are excellent international students. However, some of these characters join organised crime syndicates to chase wealth and higher social status. The novel attempts to bring people's vision to the reality of migrant life, guiding readers to pay attention to the living conditions of Chinese people who came to Australia in a certain period, and exposing several social problems in Australian society at the same time, such as loopholes in immigration policy, gang activity, and collusion between the government and businessmen. Based on the introduction of Chinese culture in his previous works, Jose introduces Zen Buddhism, especially the Zen *koan*, to Western readers in this novel, furthering the treatment of China and Chinese culture in the West,

especially in Australia.[133] It refreshes readers' knowledge concerning Zen Buddhism, which may lead them to interpret characters' behaviour by virtue of their new insight. It is not only Chinese characters who benefit from Buddhism, but Australians are redeemed and converted to Buddhism through their understanding of Zen Buddhism. Nova Jewell, an Australian Buddhist, quits her well-paid job and founds Bong Bong Buddhist Centre. Here, a Chinese overseas student Zhou Huang shows his gift in interpreting Zen. He becomes a monk and receives the Buddhist name Original Face. The murderer Daozi corresponds with a Buddhist master in prison, also called Original Face, obtains salvation and help, and begins to practice Buddhism. Jose's admiration for Chinese culture reaches its peak at this point. 'There is a lot of room for writers to broaden people's horizons, point out the misunderstandings in people's reading and communication, and promote mutual understanding and communication. Writers can serve as interpreters, translators, and cultural mediators, and this is how I define myself.' (TWCCC, 7) The potential benefits of this novel include that more Australians may become interested in Chinese Buddhist culture, improve their knowledge, and eliminate misunderstandings and misperceptions.

'The big Other (*Autre*/the Other) designates radical alterity, an otherness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification.'[134] Its influence on the shaping of the subject is subtle, because it must be a locus in which speech is constituted. The effect of social circumstances is only apparent outside that period. As for Zhou Huang's situation, the big Other indicates his experience which led to the status of refugees in general. His refugee identity and later being accepted to live in Australia is a product of that particular period after the Tiananmen event. All Chinese characters living in Sydney in the book are newcomers who survived the Tiananmen massacre due to the federal government's strong support for Chinese refugees at that time.[135] Regardless of the status of their lives in Australia, they were initially forced to leave their homes, go into exile, and

[133] It is popular in Australia that the Zen Buddhism's origin was in Japan. We could see it from Jose's quoting the anthology of Rinzai Zen to explain original face. In fact, Zen Buddhism was translated into Japan from China instead of stemming from there.

[134] Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 136. Hereafter cited as *AIDLP,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

[135] The 23rd Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke took a major public stand after the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and massacre. Despite having spent years trying to get closer relations with China, Hawke gave a tearful address on national television describing the massacre in graphic detail, and unilaterally offered asylum to over 42,000 Chinese students who were living in Australia at the time, many of whom had publicly supported the Tiananmen protesters. Hawke did so without even consulting his Cabinet, stating later that he felt he simply had to act. See Jason Fang, Alan Weedon, "More than 40,000 Chinese were offered asylum in Australia exactly 31 years ago. Here are their stories", Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2020).

assimilate into a diaspora. The significance of Zhou Huang's narrative is to record global events which drove him to Australia and left pronounced traces of the trauma of the times. It would stay with him for a long time. It is also the big Other that later places him in danger. In addition to the big Other, the role the little other (*autre*/the other) playing on the exploration of Zhou Huang's identity cannot be ignored. 'Lacan places the other at the centre of the Borromean knot[136], at the place where the three orders (real, symbolic and imaginary) all intersect.' (*AIDLP*, 129) The effect the other has on the subject could be considered from those three aspects. Much of what the readers learn about Zhou Huang comes from the realistic description of other characters since his whereabouts are unknown for much of the narrative. His identity is shaped by his pursuit for his original face.

In the meantime, the importance of projection becomes increasingly evident. The integrity of Zhou Huang's identity is achieved via projecting his ego to three different others and one of them being ended. 'In its classic sense, projection is considered a defence mechanism; it helps to protect the individual from a perceived threat and to reduce intolerable anxiety and conflict.'[137] We can say that the projection of Zhou Huang's internal anxiety is caused by his reluctance to move abroad and his fear of an unknown future, externalising his self-defense. 'Defenses reduce the impact of a threatening internal or external experience by moving it from the conscious realm to the unconscious realm.'[138] The subject Zhou Huang unwittingly finishes projecting part of his desire to one of the others, Mengzi, which contributes to the exploration of his identity. 'The little other is the other who is not really other, but a reflection and projection of the ego (which is why the symbol *a* can represent the little other and the ego interchangeably).' (*AIDLP*, 135) 'Projection is a defence mechanism in which an internal desire/thought/feeling is displaced and located outside the subject, in another subject.' (*AIDLP*, 154) For example, Zhou Huang may consider Mengzi as his replacement because Mengzi was Guo Lihua's boyfriend. Zhou Huang and Lihua are childhood friends. He likes her since they are children, but she just regards him as her brother. Lihua is duplicitous by leading Zhou Huang to believe she is interested in him despite her boyfriend Mengzi. Later Jose to some extent develops this plot by designating Mengzi to become the fake 'Zhou Huang' by using his

[136] The 'Borromean knot' is a linkage of three 'string rings' in such a way that no two rings intersect. The structure of the knot is such that the cutting of any one ring will liberate all of the others.
[137] Jan Grant, Crawley Jim, *Transference and Projection: Mirrors to the Self* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), 18. Hereafter cited as *TP,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[138] Samuel Juni, "Conceptualising Defense Mechanism from Drive Theory and Objective Relations Perspectives", *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, no. 57 (1997): 149-166.

name to live in Australia. Zhou Huang's desire for Lihua is projected onto Mengzi and then it is expanded to include illegal behaviours. Mengzi sets up the subject and nearly has him killed. His potential death represents the evil part of Zhou Huang being killed and disappearing from view. The author makes the projection evident to readers by creating the real and fake Zhou Huang. Zhou Huang's identity has been built up through two steps: first, the role others play, and second, the projection of his desire to Mengzi and its being terminated. In this way, Jose resolves the misunderstanding and ambiguity to Zhou Huang from both readers and other characters.

Original Face might seem to belong to the genre of detective fiction, but Jose enriches its meaning via the resolution of searching for Zhou Huang's identity. I will try to use my analysis of some contents in the book to illuminate meaningful and useful features within a complex and highly detailed plot. Jose does not intend to write a traditional detective novel; instead, he seeks to enlighten readers to resolve cross-cultural communication.

Three people contribute to the completion of Zhou Huang's identity as the other/*autre*: Lewis Lin, Guo Lihua and Nova Jewell. Each of them plays the role from imaginary, real and symbolic perspectives respectively. Lewis is a taxi driver who lives with his older brother's family and their father at Concord West. Going above and beyond the police investigation, he embarks on a private investigation into Zhou Huang's murder because he witnesses the black BMW which dumps the corpse. He connects the dots concerning Zhou Huang through a number of plausible associations and senses what he thinks is the right direction to solve the murder. He believes that he is obliged to find out the truth. If Zhou Huang is the thread that connected all the characters, Lewis is the thread that connects all the clues concerning Zhou Huang. One of his passengers to Haymarket was Zhou Huang's fiancée Guo Lihua. On his way back, he notices the black BMW he once sees and follows it. It turns out that the driver works for his old friend Ah Mo, and he sees Guo Lihua with them as well. He knows that Ah Mo might be involved in illegal activities, so he takes the opportunity to invite Ah Mo to dinner and reconnect with him, trying to find out more. He learns that Zhou Huang is an honest and conscientious person who rarely comes into contact with others except at school. Because he is interested in biology, he has a part-time job in Kangaloon National Park, where he meets Jerome Hampton, who draws some Buddhas with Zhou Huang's image. The figure Jerome paints is Zhou Huang, but he declares that he does not know him. He mentions that one of his paintings had won an award and was exhibited in the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Lewis

visits and sees the award-winning *Bong Bong Buddha*, modeled after Zhou Huang. According to other visitors, Jerome Hampton is a rich and famous painter. Following the tour, Lewis gathers his thoughts in the car, finds Bong Bong on the map, and sets out for the Bong Bong Buddhist Centre. He meets the abbess and chats with her. While flipping through a magazine the abbess has given him, he notices a man wearing a Buddhist robe who looks a lot like Zhou Huang. He is indeed still alive and has become a monk here. Lewis's own findings even enlighten the police. His reasoning and inferences help correct the course of the investigation and also opens the mode of understanding Zhou Huang for readers and other characters.

The information about Zhou Huang provided by Guo Lihua is reliable because she is the only Chinese refugee in Australia who knows Zhou Huang. From her perspective, Zhou Huang is kind, thoughtful and reliable. The first official connection between Guo Lihua and Zhou Huang is made through the black and white photograph found in Zhou Huang's diary by police officers Shelley and Ginger. They learn that the woman's name is Guo Lihua. Zhou Huang receives permanent residency as a refugee and then becomes an Australian citizen. He invites Guo Lihua to come to Australia, however they do not get married as planned, so she is warned by the Immigration Department a few days prior that she has 22 hours to leave the country. She and Zhou Huang grow up together. Zhou Huang has a crush on her since childhood, but Lihua has no feelings for him. Zhou Huang joins other young people at Tiananmen Square. After the death of Zhou Huang's older brother in the Tiananmen massacre, his parents takes Lihua's advice and spends all their money to get Huang a visa to Australia. They help Lihua to reunite with him later. Before they leave, they take the photo by a bridge at West Lake where they used to walk. Lihua has a boyfriend named Mengzi. However, Mengzi is not a trustworthy person as Linhua intuits but does not fully recognise.

> She is so careless, so naive. So alone. She thinks of Garlic Shoot (the nick name she gives Zhou Huang). Huangzi. If she had married him and got her residency, there would be nothing to fear. She thinks of Mengzi. He is too impatient, stirring her feelings in those late-night calls from China, speaking with such urgency, ordering her to help him. And his desperate desire to be reunited with her, his Lihua, far away across the south sea. How could she resist? (*OF*, 197)

With Lihua's help, Mengzi enters Australia using Zhou Huang's passport with his own photo on it. The passport is sent to him by Guo Lihua, so his name is Zhou Huang on his driver's license and medical insurance card. Mengzi uses Lihua to come to Australia, coercing her to stay with him despite his lack of affection for her. He appears to be working for Ah Mo but

wants to make a fortune for himself. So, he secretly contacts the Immigration Department and uses the Rockdale office to help Chinese nationals illegally enter the country. He commits these acts under the name of Zhou Huang, so the police believe that Zhou Huang might have been secretly passing on information to immigration authorities. It is Mengzi who reports all the Chinese people who illegally enter Australia including Guo Lihua to the Immigration Department. He uses Zhou Huang's name and acts in front of Ah Mo, trying to get rid of Zhou Huang by Ah Mo's hand. He is the fake Zhou Huang, an evil version. From Lihua's confession to Lewis, the skinned dead body is known to be Mengzi. Ah Mo and Daozi kill him together. The real Zhou Huang is living in Bong Bong Buddhist Centre. As a Chinese female character created by Jose, Guo Lihua is different from the others, such as female intellectual Jin Juan in *Avenue of Eternal Peace*. 'The Chinese women in Jose's works are not only endowed with knowledge and power, but also shoulder the responsibility of inheriting national culture.'[139] Although Jose does not put such heavy burden on her, she plays a decisive role in solving the murder and confirming that Zhou Huang is still alive, which contributes to the integrity of his identity.

Nova Jewell gives symbolic meaning to Zhou Huang's identity via linking him to Buddhism, especially the principle of original face. She is the founder of the Bong Bong Buddhist Centre. She used to be an employee in Jerome Hampton's family company, so they know each other for a long time. Jerome introduces Zhou Huang to their meditation group. Nova was excited by the newcomer's potential, and although Zhou Huang appears to accompany Jerome, he has his own ideas. Nova is keenly aware of Zhou Huang's talent in Buddhism, as well as Jerome's dangerous thoughts about him. She decides to help Zhou Huang.

> Sometimes it is necessary to slay the Buddha in order to release the Buddha. As time goes on Nova comes to feel that her friend Jerome's attachment to Zhou is holding the young man back. There is resistance in the excuses Jerome finds when he and Zhou do not to come to the session. They are sick with a cold…Zhou is needed for this or that…there is a picture to finish…Childish games! Nova sees the hangdog look in Jerome's eyes. She knows he could be predatory.

[139] Lili Ma, 澳大利亚文学中的中国女性文化身份 "Female Cultural Identity in Australian Literature", *Contemporary Foreign Literature (当代外国文学)*, no. 2 (2007): 112-118.

> Nova is determined to break the attachment, for everyone's good. So, one day she takes Zhou Huang aside and lets him know that he could come to her, by himself, if ever he needs refuge. (*OF*, 209-210)

This is the first time Nova has helped Zhou Huang and brought him closer to Buddhism through helping him to distance himself from worldly distractions, so that he could realise his talent in Buddhism and put it to good use. Zhou Huang accepts her offer. One night, he comes to Nova and says he wants to stay.

> He comes with no belongings and begs that his presence be kept secret. Jerome is not involved in the decision. The young man says he wants to become a monk. When she explains what is involved, he replies that no amount of rigour would deter him. He is ready to abandon a world he hardly knows. He is leaving his life behind. (*OF*, 261)

Having enlightened Zhou Huang, Nova prepares Zhou Huang to take over the temple and provides him some training. On the one hand, she finds the Buddhist Centre she founds a suitable successor. On the other hand, Zhou Huang would better promote Buddhism in Australia with both his talent and his identity as a Chinese who lives in Australia.

> Nova recognises in Zhou the essence of the transmission from East to West and back again that gives her life its meaning. It is a matter of some urgency to her. She is growing old and there is no other master to call on. She would devise a teaching of her own, no matter how unorthodox. In an ultimate Zen act, she would create a new lineage from her to him. (*OF*, 262)
>
> He understands that, once free of the ignorance and craving that gives birth to him, his original face is enlightened nature itself: the Buddha nature shares with all sentient beings. … As he rises now from the third prostration, she speaks his new name to the Centre for the first time. She names him Original Face. (*OF*, 264)

Zhou Huang liberates himself from chaos in his former life and becomes a monk. Nova Jewell meets Zhou Huang by accident, and they two bond more because of Buddhist faith. She helps Zhou Huang to get rid of Jerome, offer him shelter and guide him to know more about himself. 'The Australians in Jose's novel (*Original Face*) are portrayed in positive light.'[140] In Nova's words, the author gives the readers not only the ending of Zhou Huang, but also plentiful

[140] Baolin Yang, Jie Liu, 评《原脸》中的东方主义话语再现 "On the Representation of Orientalist Discourse in *Original Face*", *Movie Literature (电影文学)* 24 (2009): 95-96.

information about Buddhism. Some Zen sayings contain rich and profound life philosophy, which could both alert people and help people to achieve spiritual relief.

The integrity of Zhou Huang's identity has been finalised with Mengzi murder – the fake Zhou Huang is eliminated. His physical death indicates that the inner anxiety Zhou Huang projects on him is now resolved. 'Projection is a psychological process that involves the attribution of unacceptable thoughts, feelings, traits or behaviors to others that are characteristic of oneself.'[141] The images of Zhou Huang and Mengzi are opposite from the very beginning. Zhou Huang adores Guo Lihua with his heart and soul, but Mengzi wins her and becomes her boyfriend. However, Mengzi is only interested in Lihua's body. Compared with Zhou Huang, he is so selfish that he uses Lihua more than he loves her. In order to immigrate, he encourages Lihua to become engaged to Zhou Huang so that she could help him to go to Australia. After arriving in Australia, he uses Zhou Huang's name for illegal activity and tries to make Zhou Huang take the fall. The contrast between the two men becomes extremely obvious to Lihua. In the end, Mengzi is killed, and Zhou Huang is given a new lease of life as a Buddhist monk. Good will triumphs over evil. Jose leads Western readers to a new path of understanding Buddhist enlightenment and transcendence through Zhou Huang's fate. Jose also breaks with the conventions of the love story. Zhou Huang does not 'win' Guo Lihua in the end but relinquishes all opportunity to become a monk instead.

Jose uses characters' words to reveal some of the ugly realities in Australian society at the time when they were investigating the murder. The nature of Asian organised crime is manifested in the Chinese Democracy League in Australia led by Ah Mo. On the face of it, this organisation aims to help Chinese people who newly arrived in Australia. In fact, Ah Mo is in the illegal immigration business.

> 'I run a Chinese community support group for migrants. People from China who want to come here. We fix them up with housing and schooling and employment and other things. Help them get going on their dreams.' (*OF*, 154)
>
> …

[141] Joseph Sandler, *Projection, Identification, Projective Identification*, ed. Joseph Sandler (London: Taylor and Francis, 2018), 52.
Arthur. J Clark, *Defense Mechanisms in the Counselling Process* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 1998), 76.

> ‘If the Communist Party hadn’t corrupted the Revolution we would be there by now. That’s why I’m continuing the revolution here in the south. I’m bringing my own people here so they can continue the victorious struggle of the Chinese people.’ (*OF,* 155)

The organisation uses violence to solve problems, such as illegal immigration, and even to kill people. ‘Ah Mo’s network provides a complete backdoor migration service still cheaper than the half-million dollars required up front by the Australian government for business migrants.’ (*OF*, 280-281) Moreover, there is collusion between government and businessmen in the novel, embodied in the character of the immigration officer who occasionally intercedes with the police named Ronnie Silverton. In the process of communicating with the Pleasant Vale police, he takes on a negative attitude and does not provide any valuable information, which makes the police very dissatisfied. Once the police receive a new clue, they take action.

> ‘The important thing,’ says Ginger (one of Pleasant Vale officers who are in charge of this case), ‘is to get to Jerome Hampton (a very rich Australian businessman) before Ronnie Silverton hears anything about this. He’ll want that privilege for himself. Ronnie loves mixing it with the rich and famous.’ (*OF*, 227)

Jose’s inclusion of these aspects of social deformation offers a link between his work and Ha Jin’s novel *In the Pond*. Both relate to the corruption of society at the time, and the impact on the lives of characters. Shao Bin is a victim of the corrupt system in his work unit, and his sad end is the result of a small man’s struggle against the system. Jose’s practice of including Chinese figures reflects the reality of Australian society at the time. Both authors attempt to be critical through related themes aim at elaborating misunderstanding and understanding in an intercultural way. The contours of guilt and innocence are much fuzzier than simple genre conventions often allow, so Jose is using narrative to pressurise these stereotypes.

Jose uses a combination of episodic narration and flashback. He intersperses the stories of the characters across chapters, giving each chapter a disconnected feel from the next, at least initially. As the story progresses, there is an intersection/a character among the various groups of characters who connected them. Flashback is a device to delay judgement, inducing the reader to pay attention to characters’ actions rather than prejudging them. Take Nova Jewell as an example: Jose describes how she founds Bong Bong Buddhist Centre first, and then introduces her to readers, including the backstory of her quitting her former job to concentrate on Buddhism. Jose draws on the Buddhist concept of reincarnation to narrate. There is no effect without a cause, and people explore the cause from the result. It also reflects the migrant

experience and even the trauma of Tiananmen Square. In this novel, Chinese characters move to Australia as refugees. Jose starts his description from their current life and then refers back to what had happened to them in China.

Conclusion

Nicholas Jose builds a bridge connecting the West and China in a process of cultural communication. He chooses representative Chinese elements, such as traditional father-son relationships, the *cai zi jia ren* novel, and Zen Buddhism, in order to clear a path for Western readers to become immersed in the idea of Chinese culture. He mainly uses techniques which are familiar to Western readers to patiently express aspects of Chinese culture. For example, the relationships between Chinese and Australian characters are often very harmonious. He also places both Chinese and Australian characters into bisexual relations. Although his series of Chinese novels were not published consecutively, their connections are readily identifiable. Chinese medicine is a popular topic in both *Avenue of Eternal Peace* and *The Red Thread*. Jose mentions the rose crossing between China and the West in *The Rose Crossing* and *Original Face*. The efforts Jose makes to break long-lasting stereotypes in Australia towards China are worthy and memorable. Derogatory remarks about Asians are relatively common experiences in Australia. 'Often such views, remarks and actions need to grow increasingly extreme to contain the repressed anxiety.' (*TP*, 23) Through his works, Westerners are able to understand and accept China with which they may have had no prior contact. These elements may be novel or obscure but will be relatively easy for readers to understand and accept by virtue of Jose's choice to create from the perspective of Western readers. Some barriers to cultural exchange may be overcome. Nicholas Jose provides his views as a western writer on the comprehension of Chinese modernity, aiding the eclipse of Chinese prejudice and stereotype in the West.

Chapter Four

Combining Creation with Criticism: Ouyang Yu's Writing about China and Australia in a Transnational World

Each of the four writers considered in this thesis – Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu– have been treated longitudinally, demonstrating that the China-related themes in their works have undergone change over time and have become increasingly critical. Yang Lian explores his identity in his poems, experiencing confusion, crisis, and harmonisation. For a poet who has been on the move for many years, China is his root, the source of the cultural identity for which he has been searching. Judging from the content of his works and their time of publication, his poems describe the emotional bond with his motherland in the 1980s and 1990s, mainly after he was criticised by the Chinese government because of the publication of his long poem *Norlang* in 1983. He became a poet in exile because of his home country, but he is still deeply attached to the land from which he fled. The stories of Chinese people in Ha Jin's novels are set in the 1960s to 1970s. This is the time he really lived through. Each of his works shows characteristics of the specific period and reflects the social reality at that time. The subject matter is appealing to Western readers, but such a realistic storyline may have him appear to be stigmatising China for domestic readers. The purpose of Nicholas Jose's writing about China is to provide a richer context for contemporary Chinese culture to western readers, especially in Australia, and trying to break stereotypes. His works save for *The Rose Crossing* are set from 1989 to around 2000, when the novels were published. The works analysed in this thesis introduce western characters, mainly Australian, in Jose's novels. However, whether they are protagonists or not, they play an important role in promoting and supporting the introduction of China. Chinese characters in the novel comprise the main body of the narrative. The temporal setting of Ouyang Yu's novels is very close to the present. In his works, Australia and China are roughly equal in weight, and his assessment of both is equally critical. Wenche Ommundsen once commented that 'Ouyang, it would seem, has the unique gift of offending home and host nations equally, but readers, depending on their own national affiliation, will be selective in how they choose to take offence.'[142] By the time of Ouyang Yu's novels being

[142] Wenche Ommundsen, "Transnational (Il)literacies: Reading the 'New Chinese Literature in Australia' in

created, the image of China has gradually moved from the contents of the authors' memories to the present state in which the book was written, and maintaining a relentlessly critical tone. Ha Jin, together with Nicholas Jose aims to present a realistic picture of China to Western readers. However, the contents and methods chosen by both authors are quite different due to their different audiences. The themes expressed by Ha Jin mostly revolve around the representative characteristics of that time. He produces stories in a realistic way, including the author' s own experiences, historical fact, and fiction; Jose on the other hand mainly introduces Chinese culture. His narration is both romantic and realistic.

As the last poet/writer I choose to analyse in the thesis, Ouyang Yu has close connection with the three former poet/authors. As a poet he shares a similar confusion in identity with Yang Lian. The search for identity is a perennial theme in their poetry. Although Ouyang's poetry is not my main source of analysis, it is inseparable from his novels. Even Ouyang himself mentions his poetry multiple times in the course of writing his novels. As a novelist, he and Ha Jin have followed similar pathways of immigration, but their specific experiences are different. Both earned their doctorates abroad and chose to stay there, entering academia and literary circles. Ha Jin realises both with great effort, while Ouyang Yu's achievements in the Chinese and Western literary worlds do not translate to academia. Ouyang himself says that it is his failure to get a job at an Australian university that prompts him to pursue a literary career. 'I (Ouyang Yu) succeeded in getting the PhD degree once in three and a half years. In the following job-hunting process, I applied for more than ten times, but failed to get into the university. Finally, in a fit of anger, I no longer went to the dead end, but simply carried on the creation and took the most difficult road.'[143] It is this experience of hitting a brick wall that keeps him critical in his writing, especially when it comes to placing his own dual Chinese-Australian identity dilemma upon his characters. Nicholas Jose comments on *The English Class* that Ouyang has brought his readers unprecedented experience of understanding China: '*The English Class* gives us a vividly remembered China that has changed beyond recognition and a protagonist whose life is equally full of twists and turns. But more than that it's a book of language, creatively used, explored, challenged. How do we make sense of things, how we live, how do we express ourselves, in this untruly, unreliable, irrepressible medium? Ouyang Yu

China", *Antipodes* 25, no. 1 (2011): 83-89.

[143] Yujing Liang, Ouyang, Yu. 关于反学院、"愤怒"与双语——欧阳昱访谈 "On Anti-College, 'Anger' and Bilingualism – Interview with Ouyang Yu", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2012): 28-33. Hereafter cited as OACAB, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

asks those questions like no one else, and the experience is surprising, exhilarating and moving.'[144]

In this chapter, I will mainly focus on Ouyang Yu's four novels which deal with writing about China in English: *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* (2002), *The English Class* (2010), *Loose: A Wild History* (2011) and *Diary of a Naked Official* (2014). The first three are called *The Huangzhou Trilogy* (because Ouyang Yu was born in Huangzhou, Hubei Province) which attract some scholarly analysis. Most of these articles concentrated on his narrative methods (trauma), creative style (post-modern and avant-garde) and identity crisis (double identity and cultural identity) and used interpretations such as that of the 'other' as well as cultural hegemony in Orientalism to support their argument. Few take all his English novels as the object of analysis to explain how he makes contributions to a more comprehensive image of modern China, reflecting both modern Australian and Chinese cultural backgrounds in his novels as a fusion of two cultures.

To take one example, in '"Exile's Return" – On Home-Resentment in Ouyang Yu's *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*', the writers state that 'In *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, Chinese-Australian writer Ouyang Yu betrays a dangerous resentment against his homeland. Catering to the mainstream population of the author's adopted culture, the book speaks of China and its people in all the abusive extremities of Orientalism.'[145] The comments from Yongjiu Ding in 'Ouyang Yu's Representation of Chinese Australian in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*' are more objective: 'Ouyang Yu's particular position as sandwiched between two countries and two nations makes him excluded by the mainstream of Australian culture and unable to return completely to Chinese national culture. The position results in a serious identity crisis. In order to build the identity of Chinese-Australians, Ouyang Yu, on the one hand, has to rediscover the Chineseness and Australianness in them and enhance them to cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, he does his best to break the stereotypes and reconstruct the characteristics that have been neglected and erased by Orientalist discourses in Australian society.'[146] From my perspective,

[144] The comment is printed on the cover of *The English Class* (2010).
[145] Labao Wang, Hongmei Zhao, "流亡者归来"——评欧阳昱小说《东坡叙事》中的反家园意识 "'Exile's Return – On Home-Resentment in Ouyang Yu's *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*", *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Language (解放军外国语学院学报)*, no. 6 (2005): 78-82.
[146] Yongjiu Ding, "Ouyang Yu's Representation of Chinese Australians in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*", *Cultural Studies and Literary Theory (中外文化与文论)*, no. 2 (2008): 76-89. Hereafter cited as OYRCATESC, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

firstly, what Ouyang Yu wants to reflect in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* is the living situation of Chinese Australians in Chinese and Australian society rather than discussing the living situation of all people to a larger extent. Secondly, Ouyang Yu applies stereotypes to characters based on his life experience travelling between China and Australia. Some of the stereotypes are inaccurate, while the others are not. 'Stereotype accuracy may be a crucial component of enhancing sensitivity to diversity and cultural awareness. If different groups are to get along with one another, they need to understand that not all groups hold the same beliefs, values, and assumptions as their own group. They need to become aware of the existence and meaning of cultural differences. From our perspective, this means enhancing the accuracy of individuals' beliefs about social groups (i.e., their stereotypes).'[147] Ouyang introduces these (in)accurate stereotypes to readers in establishing his standpoint, helping them better understand the current challenges faced by Chinese Australians. Chinese characters in the novel try to break the stereotypes instead of the writer himself. In 'The Confusion of Bilingualism: On the Dilemma of Migration in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*', Beibei Chen claims that 'Through Jing's language acquisition and immigration experience, the novel shows the contradictions and embarrassments faced by immigrant groups living in two languages and cultures.'[148] I further explain how and why Jing Ying figures out his dilemma by focusing on the ideal instead of the present.

Ouyang seems to take pleasure in shocking his readers, often producing a sarcastic kind of comedy, as well having a serious purpose in suggesting how Chinese perceptions about Australia as a land of opportunity are fundamentally misguided. He emphasises the importance of expressing oneself, intentionally inserting a lot of his own feelings and commentary while writing, which has seen his writing classified as metafiction.[149] I will analyse how he as another cultural minority writer expresses his real thoughts on mainstream culture (some of them

[147] Lee J Jussim, Clark R McCauley, Yueh-Ting Lee, "Why Study Stereotype Accuracy and Inaccuracy?" in *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*, ed. Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995), 19.
[148] Beibei Chen, 双语的错乱——论欧阳昱小说《英语班》的移民困境 "The Confusion of Bilingualism: On the Dilemma of Migration in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2017): 52-57. Hereafter cited as TCB, with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[149] Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion. In other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is Simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction'. See Mark Currie, *Metafiction* (Oxon [England: Routledge, 2013), 43.

negative) and how he might be taken seriously through a combination of projecting his experience with fictional plots, and trying to figure out why he receives very different reviews in Australia and China keeping in mind the distinction between characters and author. Compared with W.G.Sebald's usage of photography, his techniques have been associated with metafiction among other characteristics of postmodern prose. This move away from naive realism emphasises the artifice of his writing, which Ouyang puts to effect in his critique of arguments around Orientalism but then taking this further into a China-Australia relation in a globalist, post-WTO order.

The difference between Ouyang Yu and Ha Jin's writing about China arises because of their different experiences in foreign countries and the different purposes of their writing. Compared with Ha Jin, Ouyang Yu's entry into Australian academia was not smooth and ultimately failed. He lost at sunrise but gained at sunset. Ouyang's professional dilemma in Australia cultivates his strategy of including critical commentary both on China and Australia, which marks him out as someone who moves between cultures without feeling bonded to either of them. This, coupled with the fact that he writes for no one but himself, gives his novels a unique perspective to reflect both Chinese and Australian cultures. Although they were born at the same time (Ouyang Yu: 1955 and Ha Jin: 1956) and they left China for a PhD abroad at the same time (Ouyang Yu: 1991 and Ha Jin: 1989), they focused on different periods of contemporary Chinese history (Ouyang Yu: 1990s and after and Ha Jin: 1960s-1980s). The reason may be rooted in the fact that Ouyang Yu knows more about contemporary China because he has kept travelling between China and Australia after receiving his doctorate, while Ha Jin seldom does so after he decides to stay in the US due to the events of June 4th in 1989 in Tiananmen Square. Ha Jin, together with Nicholas Jose aims to present a realistic picture of China to Western readers. However, the contents and methods chosen by both of them are quite different due to different audiences. The themes expressed by Ha Jin mostly revolve around the representative characteristics of that time. He also uses comic absurdity to great effect, especially in *In the Pond*. His criticism of bureaucracy draws inevitable comparisons with Kafka, such as in *The Metamorphosis*. Ha Jin presents stories in a realistic way, which include the author's own experience, historical fact and fiction; Jose, on the other hand, mainly introduces Chinese culture. His narration is a combination of romantic stories and reality.

For Ouyang Yu, the novelist is the form, and the poet is the content. It could be confirmed from the following three aspects. First, he is strict in his language usage, which is a characteristic of

poets. Ouyang once said, 'Because I'm a poet, I care about language and its creativity. Many of today's novels are difficult to read. The key is that the language is not fresh but merely a mouthpiece for the story. The story is finished, and the language also reaches to the end, leaving no lingering taste.'[150] What is more, identity confusion in transcultural backgrounds is commonly seen in novels. As a poet, Ouyang Yu, like Yang Lian, always shows his vacillation between the two cultural identities of China and Australia in poems. When he deals with novels, he puts three male protagonists respectively in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, *The English Class* and *Loose: A Wild History* into such a dilemma. They suffer from cultural conflicts due to being marginalised by Australian mainstream culture, which shows the helplessness of those caught in cross-cultural situations. Finally, the writer aims to express his subjective feelings by creating novels. When asked to elaborate on the autobiographical element in his works, Ouyang explained that 'All of my work comes from my own personal experiences, my own emotions or from people that I know or stories that I hear. If I do take on different characters that are not me, they are based on real stories and real people. … The different characters I use are based on real people, but I try to put myself in their position.'[151] He does not bother to use his Chinese cultural background to write works that satisfy the curiosity of Western readers; instead, he expresses what he truly wants to according to his own taste. Ouyang Yu puts his philosophy into action by diverting his personal experiences to the characters in the novel. He is both the author and the narrator.

The Eastern Slope Chronicle

The background of *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* is the 1990s, when China and the West were in rapidly evolving communication. A large number of Chinese students chose Western countries for further study and research, such as the US, UK, and Australia. They came to these open countries with a yearning for freedom but overindulged in the dregs of spiritual and cultural life and lost themselves for a period of time in sex and gambling. In this novel, the protagonist Dao Zhuang also writes a novel, with Wu Liao as the protagonist. He is an overseas

[150] Yu Ouyang, 《独夜舟》创作谈 "A Creative Talk on the Writing of a Novel, *Duyezhou* (*A Lonely Night Boat*)", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 3 (2015): 11-14.
[151] Yu Ouyang, *Bias: Offensively Chinese/Australian: A Collection of Essays on China and Australia* (Melbourne, Vic: Otherland Publishing, 2007), 245. Hereafter cited as *BOCA,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

Chinese postgraduate student in Australia who used to be a good boy. After living in Australia for some time, he has to wash dishes for money to pay gambling debts. He even leaves semen on the cover of a book named *A History of Australia*, which has been lent by his supervisor. On the other hand, since the reform and opening up, the development strategy of market economy[152] suitable for China's national conditions is quite effective through learning from the development mode of Western market economy, but it is followed by the appearance of money worship. When Dao Zhuang asks his old friend Marx (an editor of local newspaper in his hometown) to help him with interviewing a descendant of the famous Tang Dynasty poet Su Shi, Marx and their other friends rapidly develop a money-making plan related to the topic, which made Zhuang speechless.

> This is exactly the opposite to what I have hoped for. I have wanted to find a bit more about Eastern Slope Su and have intended to suggest to Marx to put an advertisement in the paper to locate people with real stories to tell that are not available in official literary history. But the interest now has converged on one thing only: money, and once started there is no stopping it. I think to myself, God, what am I going to do about it?[153]

The author reflects that the Chinese people at that time over-amplified the influence of material and spiritual culture introduced from the West. There is a popular saying at that time that the moon is rounder in foreign countries. In this part, I will use the interpretation of stereotype (in)accuracy from Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee to explain how Chinese characters find their way out physically and spiritually through breaking the stereotype of both Chinese and the western world with Ouyang Yu's subjectivity. For example, it would seem too easy to blame the West for overseas Chinese student Wu Liao's addiction to gambling even if he picked up this habit from living in Australia. The Australian education in gambling begins in early youth, such as the example of horse racing and especially the Melbourne Cup. Gambling, to some extent, is not only legal but also a cultural tradition. It is worth mentioning that there is also a very long tradition of gambling in China. Even during the Maoist era

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[152] Market economy in China refers to the economic form of allocating social resources through the market. Simply put, a market is a place or point of contact for the exchange of goods or services. Market entities participate in market economic activities as buyers and sellers, in which there is not only the relationship between buyers and sellers, but also the relationship between buyers and between sellers. There are two sectors in the system without considering the government: one is the public (consumers), the other is the business (manufacturers). The interrelationship between the two sectors can explain the general principle of market supply and demand. See Jianzhuang Zheng, *Microeconomics* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2010), 88.

[153] Yu Ouyang, *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* (Rose Bay, N.S.W: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2002), 125. Hereafter cited as *ESC,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

gambling was common in rural areas, and it appears throughout Chinese literature, for example in Lu Xun's *True Story of Ah Q* (1921) and in Chen Zhongshi's *White Deer Plain* (1993). However, gambling is banned in mainland China. It is understandable that the Chinese characters were suddenly tempted by freedom and did not control desire well or deal properly with its aftermath to reduce the stigma.

Ouyang Yu also criticises notions of Chinese purity via describing Chinese characters' worshiping the golden calf and immersion in gambling. With the reform and opening up, China's economy continues to recover, and people are increasingly eager for wealth. Although the Chinese market economy is influenced by Western capitalist markets, it would be premature to attribute people's pursuit of wealth all to imported Western ideas. Rather it is part of human nature. Besides, the emergence of more legitimate businessmen could even boost the country's economy. Gambling has always (illegally) existed in China even if it is repressed. The Chinese have a tradition of playing mahjong, but not everyone is addicted to it. Personal habit should not be regarded as representation of the group. The work of stereotypes is to cast generalised images of a group, where there lies some truth, but which does not define all members of the group.

'Stereotypes are beliefs about groups.'[154] However, it is the collective recognition that may lead people to ignore individual differences. 'Stereotypes are never true of every group member. Thus, using a stereotype, regardless of its accuracy, is potentially inaccurate and unfair.'[155] Walter Lippmann (1965) was acutely aware of the negative side of stereotypes. With stereotype accuracy, according to Margaret Mead, 'the general characteristics that make up stereotypes are incomplete, but partially accurate, descriptions of different cultural groups.'[156] This makes it important to distinguish accurate and inaccurate stereotype. 'Research on accuracy and validity should not be neglected, and that stereotype and prejudice are not synonymous terms.'[157] 'If stereotypes follow from correspondent inferences from role behaviour to personal

[154] Richard D. Ashmore, Frances K. Del Boca, "Conceptual Approaches to Stereotypes and Stereotyping", in *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behaviour*, ed. David L. Hamilton (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1981), 1-35.
[155] Charles Stangor, "Content and Application Inaccuracy in Social Stereotyping", in *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*, ed. Yueh-Ting Lee, Lee J. Jussim, and Clark R. McCauley (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995), 287.
[156] Margaret Mead, "The Cross-Cultural Approach to the Study of Personality", in *Psychology of Personality*, ed. James Leslie McCary (New York: New York Grove Press, 1956), 201-252.
[157] Marlene Mackie, "Arriving at 'Truth' by Definition: The Case of Stereotype Inaccuracy", *Social Problems*, no. 20 (1973): 431-447.

attributes, they invariably have a degree of accuracy at the group level.'[158] It is assumed that the target[159] person's individuating attributes and behaviour as well as the perceiver's cognitive expectancies and assumptions (e.g., stereotype-based expectancies) contribute to a perceiver's judgement. 'In addition, the perceiver's beliefs and expectancies exert an influence on the target person's behaviour.'[160] Ouyang Yu is a keen observer of Australia from China's point of view, and vice versa, from one culture to criticise another culture. Based on his own experience, he provides Chinese and Australian characters, as perceivers, with the means to evaluate the target groups which are full of his subjective conceptions. He applies stereotypes to his writing, in create both Australian and Chinese characters in his novel.

Interestingly, both the Chinese characters and the Australian characters in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* are negative, such as Chinese protagonist Dao Zhuang who disrespects women and Australian supervisor Professor Dredge who only uses international students for research without feeling. Birds of a feather flock together. People around them share the same or more shortcomings. 'He (Ouyang Yu) may be regarded as a cultural critic who disregards cultural borders.' (OYRCATESC, 82) The novelist writes deliberately in this way for two reasons. Firstly, he is critical of the living environment in Australia and the West generally and installs this view in Dao Zhuang and Wu Liao respectively due to his unpleasant experience in Australia. Secondly, readers could think about the realistic problems reflected in the work more deeply when faced with negative images. Chinese people know very little about Australia at that time. The textbooks are limited to Australian geography instead of history. Ouyang Yu let Western readers, especially Australians, know their country's place in the minds of the Chinese, even though they spend a lot of money to cultivate their image in Asia.

> This revelation comes as no surprise to me (Dao Zhuang). While Australia is busy spending millions of dollars promoting its image in China and Asia, the Chinese remain cold to it all and do not seem to give a damn about what is going on in the image-making industry. My preliminary research into a few publications confirms

[158] Amanda B. Diekman, Alice H Eagly, Patrick Kulesa, "Accuracy and Bias in Stereotypes about the Social and Political Attitudes of Women and Men", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, no. 38 (2002): 268-282.
[159] Here, perceiver means the person who perceives and makes judgements, and target means the person who is being perceived and judged. See Judith A. Hall, Marianne Schmid Mast, Tessa V. West, *The Social Psychology of Perceiving Others Accurately*, ed. Judith A. Hall, Marianne Schmid Mast, Tessa V. West (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 27.
[160] Victor Ottati, Yueh-Ting Lee, "Accuracy: A Neglected Component of Stereotype Research", in *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*, ed. Yueh-Ting Lee, Lee J. Jussim, and Clark R. McCauley (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995), 43.

> that Australia is anything but an existence in the Chinese mind. And the very fact that I am looking for Australian images in China makes mockery of my effort simply because of vanity. (*ESC*, 121)

This insight might reflect poorly on both nations: Australia trying to be more important than it really is, and Chinese people neglecting part of their own history, which has been entwined with Australia's for over 150 years (the gold rushes for example). Another example extracted from the novel is that some historical facts are ignored in order to show Australia's non-dominant position in the minds of the Chinese at that time.

> If China is a specialist subject in Australia, Australia is even more so in China; only the most wayward specialists would study it as a career move. It is the same with the national Chinese newspapers. The country featured most prominently is the United States of America, and other countries to follow are among the eight powers that have invaded China at the turn of this century, namely, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and Italy. Australia wasn't simply there (*ESC*, 294).

In fact, British Australia, as part of the British Forces in the Eight-Nation Alliance Forces, participated in the invasion of China in 1900, such as the shelling of the Dagu port in Tianjin. During the same time, Australia became an independent country.

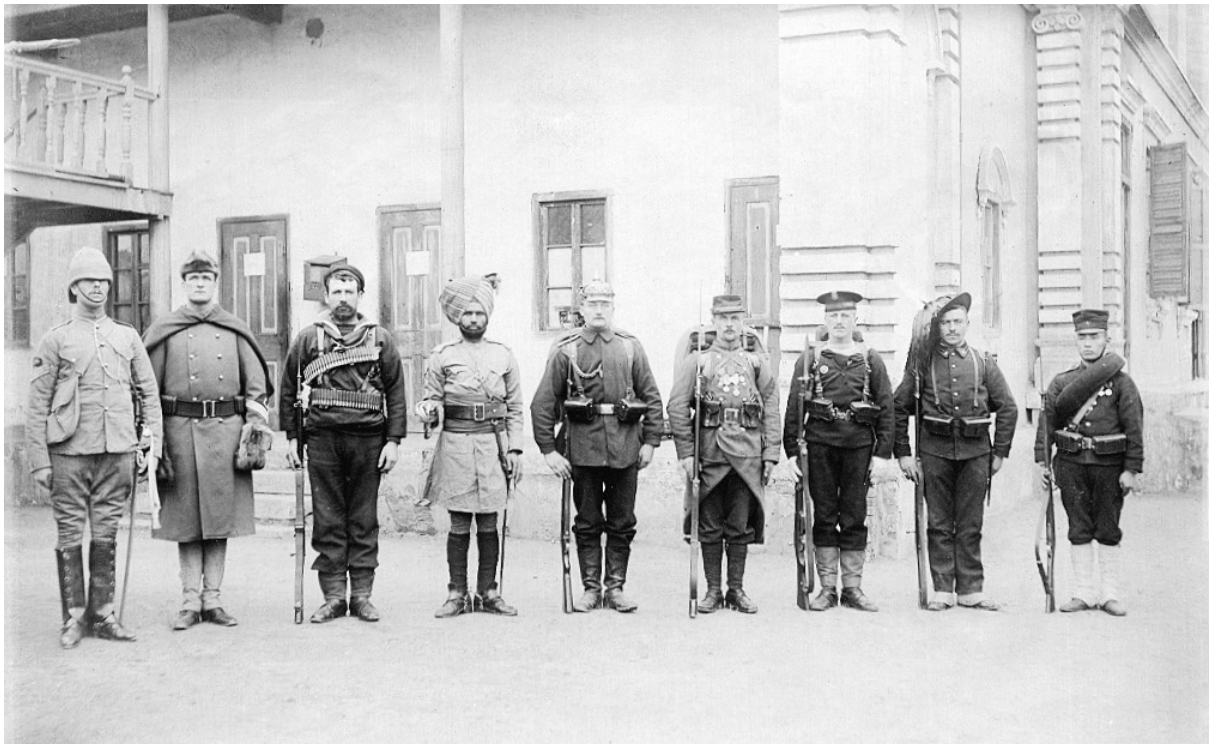

Figure 2. Troops of the Eight Nations Alliance 1900 in Tianjin. From left to right: UK, USA, British Australia, India (during the British Empire), Germany (during the German Empire), France, Austria, Italy, and Japan.

Ouyang even uses the Chinese characters' words to show that Australia and Eastern Slope (Dao Zhuang's hometown, a county in Hubei Province) are equal in status in the eyes of them in the novel.

> (Marx, Dao Zhuang's friend, editor of Eastern Slope Weekly, says) Although Australia is a relatively unknown country in China it is probably as unknown as Eastern Slope. So, if we do something about this by linking Australia with Eastern Slope, we can at least make the two places known, if not to a wider leadership, at least to people in Eastern Slope. (*ESC*, 123)

Ouyang wants to introduce Australia to Chinese readers and convey his experience of real Australian life. For readers, both ethnic cohorts become stigmatised groups to each other due to the author's arrangements of the plots. Jones raises the notion that 'the attitude toward a member of one of stigmatised groups depends on the observer's construction of how the stigmatised person comes to be different from others: by accident, ignorance, culpable error, or choice.'[161] The characters mentioned above (Dao Zhuang and Professor Dredge) are surely bad examples of two groups of people. It taps into a long history in literature of having 'bad' characters, such as Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, Lu Xun's Ah Q, and misers in both Chinese and Western literature. For example, Shakespeare's Shylock and Jingzi Wu's Jiansheng Yan. There should have been solutions which could assist readers in avoiding such misunderstanding. 'To understand evaluation and action in relation to group differences, we will have to expand our conception of stereotypes to include beliefs about the origins of these differences.'[162] Apparently, they are not what Ouyang wants to further explain in his novel.

The narrative of the novel consists of stories about three Chinese characters which appear irregularly: Dao Zhuang, Wu Liao and Wang Fu Fei (Shane Warne). It is obvious that Western stereotypes of Chinese people at that time could be seen in them, for example a scholar who was a male chauvinist, hired prostitutes, sexually harassed students, and lied. Lippmann

[161] Edward E Jones, *Social Stigma: The Psychology of Marked Relationships* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1984), 106.
[162] Clark R. McCauley, Lee J. Jussim, Yueh-Ting Lee, "Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences", in *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*, ed. Yueh-Ting Lee, Lee J. Jussim, and Clark R. McCauley (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995), 304.

stresses that 'stereotypic representations of social groups are both incomplete and biased. Moreover, he emphasises that stereotypes are insensitive to individual variability within social groups and persist even in the face of contradictory evidence.'[163] There is reason to believe that Ouyang heard discussions in Australia about the private lives of Chinese and other Asian scholars, which would partially explain the origin of Dao Zhuang. The protagonist Dao Zhuang comes to Australia before Tiananmen Square Massacre, later becoming an Australian citizen using his refugee identity. He works on translating his Chinese novel written during Massacre into English, and he is also doing research for an Australia-based company. He helps his wife settle down in Melbourne and obtain Permanent Residency. However, they get divorced soon because of long-standing irreconcilable conflict. Having waited for so many years and having spent all his money, Dao Zhuang is furious about his wife's leaving him and trying to find a new husband.

> If I raise a pig, I would now have been able to enjoy the meat after butchering it… With uncontrollable rage, I hit her across the mouth and put an end to her madness and my misery. (*ESC*, 18)

When he is tired of living in Australia, he receives a teaching offer in Red Cliff University at his hometown Eastern Slope, Hubei Province, where he used to work before going abroad. He accepts it and returns to long-lost Eastern Slope. He stays in a hotel. His sister is at home looking after their sick father, so there is no room for him. Dao Zhuang is unsatisfied that his sister introduces him to a divorced woman. Tao (his sister) explains that women are in hot demand in China, and men are highly valued for their economic strength. Although not true, Dao asserts that he is unemployed in Australia and on benefits, which seems to be a deliberate attempt to talk back to his sister.

> 'Well, I am not (in a secure financial position before they can make up their mind to go overseas with him). And I shall just tell them that I am on Social Secure benefits and am quite well off.'
>
> …
>
> 'So what? Even when I am here in Eastern Slope, I still get paid on a weekly basis and the amount is more than you can imagine. Girls should be glad to hear that and come all my way. My position would be secure enough for anyone.' (*ESC*, 104)

The words are full of sarcasm. His sister, recognising the irony in his tone, shoots back that the girls, on the contrary, would take taxis and run away in droves when they see him. It is also

[163] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press, 1965), 52.

clear that Dao has a strong lack of respect for women from his practice of hiring prostitutes. One night in the hotel, Dao Zhuang receives a call from a prostitute and agrees to be served. He speaks to the prostitute, a Shanghainese, in English before she leaves. She understands and responds in English, saying that she majors in English when she is in college. It reminds Dao of a beautiful Shanghai girl who once asks him questions during a lecture at one Shanghai university.

> So what? When they need cash badly, women would always do this, wouldn't they? She seems to have sensed what is going through my mind for she says, 'It is not always true.'
>
> 'What is not always true?' Surprised, I ask.
>
> 'That women have a tendency to be depraved.'
>
> 'Well, I don't really give it a damn about that, you know, but if I want you to come back, I shall call you.' With that, I dismiss her or probably it is her who dismisses me for she is already out of the door, with the 500-yuan note safely tucked away in her bag before I could finish what I have to say. (*ESC*, 78)

Apparently, he is prejudiced against women. After his first lecture at Red Cliff University, he gets to know a female student Minnie who is interested in what he is talking about. When they are walking after class, he takes the girl's hand, expecting her to take it back immediately, but it does not happen. Feeling a little cold, he attaches the other hand. Eventually, the girl refuses further contact.

Shane Warne is a poet. To help him publish manuscripts from Australia, Dao Zhuang visits Jin Dali, an old friend who works as an editor at a publishing house. He lies to Jin that Warne is dead and fabricates a tragic story to increase the likelihood that his poems would be published. These plots are echoes of the Ern Malley hoax.[164] But this time, the hoax created by Ouyang may happen on Chinese editor.

Ouyang Yu acknowledges his Australian identity mainly in that he speaks for Australia while satirising it. Although he jokes about Aussie accent and westerners' being unable to squat, he speaks up for Australia when the police suspect that he is sent by capitalist countries to destroy

[164] It is the Australia's most famous literary hoax. In 1940s, to hoax a modernist journal Angry Penguins, James McAuley and Harold Stewart used the name Ethel to send poems left by her brother Ern Malley (who died in a war) to editor Max Harris. They cut some bad poems up, mixed them up and sent them out. Harris and other editors could not identify genuine from false; instead, they were enraptured by the poems and called Malley genius. The hoax was revealed soon.

socialism. Dao Zhuang has an intimate relationship with a female bartender in karaoke. A staff spots it and calls the police because he thinks that Dao rapes the girl. The police become suspicious of his real identity when they see his Australian passport. Dao defends himself as an Australian citizen.

> Do you see anything in me that is remotely capable of subversion at all? How could I possibly do that on my own? And why would I do that as an Australian, one of the most harmless peoples in the world? Besides, what would I get in return for that? This, you mean? To be beaten and shut up in a cell? Oh, God, no, you've got to be joking! I would never give Australia up for this kind of thing. The only reason why we ever wanted to stay in Australia is we love it very much and we don't want to come back to China. Not to this. Simple as that. (*ESC*, 334-335)

It can be seen that when he heard the outside world's untrue remarks about Australia, he would stand up for it. Although this goes against Ouyang Yu's consistent claim that he is 'neither Australian nor Chinese', it is a true reflection of his heart as a Chinese Australian with a strong Australian cultural background.

In the novel, Ouyang Yu satirises Chinese people at that time because they are curious about the topic of 'sex' but reluctant to talk about politics. After Dao Zhuang returns to teach at Red Cliff University, his first lecture focuses on sex, which causes a stir among the students.

> As far as I (Dao Zhuang) know, most Chinese who go to Australia go for two things, money, and sex. Those who stay temporarily will want to learn more about this aspect of Australian culture as soon as possible simply because it is not freely available in China, So, they frequently X-shops, see table-dancings and go to Kings Cross (a red-light district in Sydney) and do all sorts of things that they would normally not even dare to think of back at home. (*ESC*, 179)

The gift he secretly brings from Australia to his friends from childhood is a packet of pornographic magazines, which are robbed by three of them. These are considered 'immoral' and banned from circulation in China at the time. Dao Zhuang has studied French in Shanghai before moving to Australia. At the time, he is having an affair with Ru Shi (Rose), a female classmate of his. This is very common in their class. One of his friend Marx asks to interview Dao. He tells him to talk freely if he does not mention politics and sex, but Dao feels compelled to mention them. Resistibly, he feels that he would be a victim of Chinese curiosity about the West, so he asks Marx to come back with questions prepared. During their time together, Marx repeatedly reminds him not to talk about politics and keeps the subject private. This is in

keeping with Ouyang's tendency to explore themes of 'sex', but it also reflects, to some extent, the characteristics of the Chinese people at the time. They avoid politics because of the influence of the Tiananmen Massacre, and they are increasingly curious about pornography because of the government's resistance to it. Until now, this is where some Chinese abroad are easy to lose themselves in addition to gambling.

Ouyang Yu channels his life experience after arriving in Australia into the three Chinese male characters in the novel. His life in both Australia and China after graduation is partially assigned to Dao Zhuang. Dao, the same as Ouyang Yu, chooses to become an Australian citizen and travels between China and Australia as a scholar. His personal experience in Australia is generally unpleasant, so his comments on the living environment there and more broadly in the West are critical. There are two pieces of evidence. One is what Ouyang once says about studying Australian literature. 'To have a PhD in Australian literature in Australia is to go from heaven to hell. It is impossible to find a job in the college.' (OACAB, 28) Dao Zhuang makes similar remarks in the novel.

> You could become a restaurateur, find some work in a factory, or become a public servant if your English is good, and you live in the country long enough. Those of you who major in English, American or even Australian literature have harder luck than the rest of them put together for you will find that you would be the least wanted in Australia. (*ESC*, 182)

Also, both of them agree on ignoring readers when writing, which reflect in Dao Zhuang's talk with Minnie.

> (Minnie, one of the students who listen to Dao's lecture asks) 'Don't you have a reader in your mind when you composed, I mean, made up those stories? And if you do, what nationalities are they?'
>
> (Dao Zhuang) 'Good question again! I have never thought of it, as a matter of fact. I am the sort of person who doesn't really care about the readers. Why would I? But then again, you are a reader, aren't you, because you have heard my story? So, I do have readers except you never know where they are until you meet one.' (*ESC*, 192)

As for his life as an overseas Chinese student, Ouyang arranges Wu Liao to shoulder this experience. Wang Fu Fei's way of living is the alternative which Ouyang Yu chooses. If Dao Zhuang is the representative of scholar Ouyang Yu, Wu Liao represents his identity as a poet. This method of description also appears in Thomas Bernhard's novel *Wittgenstein's Nephew*.

Ouyang and Bernhard share the sarcastic rejection of their home nations' attention and contempt for the literary industry (including academia for Ouyang).

> I'm now being honoured by the Austrians, I think, by my fellow countrymen, who up to now have done nothing but kick me, and, what's more, by the award of the Grillparzer Prize. I really think I have reached some peak of achievement. … That the Austrians, having preciously scorned or ignored me, should be giving me their highest award struck me as a kind of overdue compensation. It is not without a certain pride that I emerge from the clothing store into the Kohlmarkt, wearing my new suit, and walk over to the Academy of Sciences.[165]

Between the lines, the author is critical about his motherland Austria through expressing his deep dissatisfaction via the protagonist's mouth. The characteristics of metafiction are more obvious in the second half of the novel. Dao Zhuang speaks about the plots in his novel, where the protagonist is also named Dao Zhuang. After that, Ouyang Yu has Dao Zhuang speak in the third person. The author Dao Zhuang uses his extramarital affair with Ru Shi (Rose) in Shanghai to describe Dao Zhuang in his novel as having a physical relationship with a student Antoinette and compares how much they feel about making love. All these cause difficulty for readers to distinguish between Dao Zhuang's novel and this one. A hallmark of metafiction is to blur the distinctions between levels of fictiveness. Here, it is the toggle between Dao's own life and the character Ouyang names Dao in his writing. This is how metafictional characters are situated. Other authors who include versions of themselves in their texts including Jorge Luis Borges, Paul Auster, among others. They seek to produce unique effects like Chinese box or Russian babushka doll in this way as a consequence. As for Ouyang Yu, he challenges the authority of existing recognition of both Chinese and Australian cultures by structuring his own understanding. This could inspire an emotion in his Chinese and Western audiences to persuasive ends thanks to his strong Chinese and Australian cultural background, but the accuracy should be further considered by them because most of his conclusions are subjective. 'Different cultural and ethnic groups often have very different norms of nonverbal communication-norms that may often be upsetting to, or misinterpreted by, people from outside culture. Knowing about other cultures (developing an accurate stereotype) can help reduce intergroup friction and smooth the way for more positive interactions.'[166] However, Ouyang

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[165] Thomas Bernhard, *Wittgenstein's Nephew: A Friendship*. (New York: Vintage International, 2009), 65.
[166] Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, Yueh-Ting Lee, "Why Study Stereotype Accuracy and Inaccuracy?" in *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*, ed. Yueh-Ting Lee, Lee J. Jussim, and Clark R. McCauley (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1995), 19-20.

tells his life experience in both Australia and China through the characters' mouths and obfuscates some facts, which could turn readers understanding to the opposite direction.

The English Class

The story in *The English Class* (2010) takes place in the late 1970s, first in China and then in Australia. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution reached its end. Chinese economic and cultural development began to take off. The White Australia Policy had been abolished. A large number of Chinese immigrants were coming to Australia. The protagonist Jing Ying is created in the context of this era. He is a truck driver at a shipyard in White Sand, Hubei Province. 'As a well-educated youth in the country who survives Cultural Revolution, Jing wants to go to school instead of planting rice and wheat all day long, so he aims at taking part in university entrance examination after its being reintroduced (in 1977).'[167] He spends almost all his time learning English on his own as he receives the best grades in English in middle school. His efforts then pay off when he is accepted by East Lake University in Wuhan. In the English class, Jing meets Dr Wagner, English teacher from Melbourne, Australia, and his partner Deirdre. He has an affair with Deirdre. They get married and move to Melbourne. Jing goes from being a Chinese citizen to an Australian citizen Gene. Again, Ouyang Yu satirises both Chinese and Australian cultural stereotypes by virtue of what happen to Jing and the people around him.

Jing is stuck in a dilemma of self-ignorance. He is an ordinary person. Although he has skills, such as English and truck driving, they are not good enough to let him stand out. However, he is ambitious, and always has no way to get along with people around him. He uses to drive for Commissioner Song, who is the head of Education Commission. He comments that Jing is arrogant. 'Each time I (Song) play chess with him; he would say "I'll beat you". He does not know his place, and his learning English may have contributed to his arrogance.' (*EC*, 95) Even his university entrance interview representative Mr Fu does not know why he decides to accept him after a long deliberation for sure, but he has made his decision by instinct. 'Jing's results

[167] Yu Ouyang, *The English Class* (Yarraville, [Vic: Transit Lounge Publishing, 2010), 11. Hereafter cited as *EC,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

in English and everything else, except poetry, are average. He trusts his instincts, his gut feelings.' (*EC*, 131-132)

It is his self-ignorance that throws him into a difficult situation of desire. When he is in China, he feels bored about living in a small place and longs for the outside world. That is when he has the idea of worshipping foreign things. When he is in Australia, he keeps expressing how much he misses his country and even has mental problems as a result. He insists on travelling back to China alone to track traces of his family's life in Yunnan Province. He does not return to join his family in Australia until Christmas Eve. His struggle reflects in three parts of the novel. In Part I 'A Little Aristocrat,' Jing lives in the pursuit of an ideal life. He once daydreams about marrying a foreign girl and living abroad, and he tries to use English as his way out – a narrative development realised in Part II, 'Living Under English.' At this stage, he lives in reality, but he cheates on his English teacher's partner. Ironically, this leads to his daydream of an ideal life to come true in Part III, 'The Price of Freedom.' At this time, he begins to miss the benefits of living in China. Had it not been for his wife's efforts to stop him, he might have returned to China and started the next cycle. What you cannot get is the best. As Eileen Chang writes in *Red Rose and White Rose*, 'perhaps every man has had two such women, at least two. Married the red rose, over time, the red changes to a touch of mosquito blood on the wall, but the white is still the bright moonlight in front of the bed; married the white rose, the white is a grain of rice sticky on the clothes, but the red is a vermilion mole on the heart.'[168] Endless desire could seduce people into a cycle from which they were unable to escape. These observations/proverbs also indicate how desire loses its allure when fulfilled, and unrequited desire retains the 'perfect image' with which it develops. I will use the interpretation of relationship between desire and happiness from Shigehiro Oishi, Erin Westgate, Jane Tucker and Asuka Komiya to explain why and how Jing Ying focused on the ideal instead of the present.

> Jing is no longer there. In his ashes you arise, feeling as inadequate as ever, in search of something dreamable and unrealisable.
>
> All you have managed to achieve is Jinglish. (*EC*, 394)

Ouyang Yu provides readers some hints here in a poetic way when they search for Jing's life via the novel. He also claims that 'the purpose of the character Jing is to explore the

[168] Eileen Chang, *Hong meigui yu bai meigui=Red Rose and White Rose* (Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi chumbanshe, 1944), 327.

contradictions and embarrassments of living under the English culture and language environment through revealing the life of such a person who is being torn by two cultures and languages.' (OACAB, 32) Although Jing Ying's nationality has changed, Jing's persona remained the same. His identity has not been enriched by the changes in life scenarios.

'Desire is defined as wants that are linked to motivation, pleasure and reward.'[169] It plays a role in achieving happiness. 'According to Aristotle, happiness is not a fleeting feeling but consists of a series of activities in accordance with one's virtues, ultimately culminating in a fulfilling life.'[170] Desire is inseparable from the eagerness to happiness. 'The satisfaction of desires leads to happiness when the desires are based on intrinsic motivations, but not on extrinsic motivations.'[171] However, many people have been struggling to satisfy their desires but have never felt happy. 'It is because the satisfaction of desires leads to happiness when people are satisfied with and attending to the things they actually have and nothing more.'[172] This matches the Buddhist approach to happiness – 'not getting what we want but wanting what we've already got.' (*PD*, 299) 'In clarifying the link between desires and happiness, it is important to distinguish between desires-as-cravings and desires-for-ideals, as the underlying mechanisms between the two are very different. Cravings, or low-level physical or acquired desires, invite people to step aboard a nonstop hedonic treadmill, in which any boost in happiness is both temporary and fleeting. On the other hand, ideals (although not without their own pitfalls) are more likely to have the potential to lead to positive changes in an individual's life.' (*PD*, 302) Desires-as-cravings are easier to achieve, but people would pay more attention to the upcoming one instead of the happiness fulfilled along with their being achieved since it shows up one by one. As for desires-for-ideals, whether it can be realised is not the most important thing, but supporting people and even becoming the hope of life is its value.

In three parts of the novel, the protagonist Jing keeps chasing after continuous desires-as-cravings in a similar mode: being stimulated by some people, he realises that he could not achieve his own value in the current environment, so he chooses to leave and start living in a

[169] Wilhelm Hofmann, Loran F. Nordgren, *The Psychology of Desire*, ed. Wilhelm Hofmann and Loran F. Nordgren (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2015), 286. Hereafter cited as *PD,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[170] J.A.K. Thomson, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 19.
[171] Richard M. Ryan, L Deci. Edward, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being", *The American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68-78.
[172] J. Ian Norris, Jeff T. Larsen, "Wanting More than You Have and Its Consequences for Well-Being", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, no. 12 (2011): 877-885.

new place. At first, Jing longs for the outside world because life in Yellow Town is boring. He chooses to change his fate through the college entrance examination. He starts with English, the subject that he uses to be best at. He treats English as his way out.

> Even though the English he has learnt at middle school is little more than slogans like 'Learn from Workers, Peasants and Soldiers' or 'Long Live Chairman Mao', Jing finds the language provides him with a way out, a 'virtual reality' if you like, although that term would have to wait a couple of decades to arrive on the Chinese horizon. (*EC*, 52)

Having listened to his plan, his father encourages him, 'English would be the way out,' Father said. 'It is almost like an "Esperanto."' (*EC*, 52) He continues to work as a truck driver while revising for exams. When he is seconded as Commissioner Song's driver, he tries to get on well with Song, because he hopes to get to know the Vice Chancellor of a university through Commissioner Song who could help him choose a satisfactory university after passing the college entrance examination. But the professor is cold to him, which stings Jing deeply and makes him see clearly where he stands in the hearts of powerful people. It does not influence Jing's ambition.

> But he (Jing) is better than that, infinitely better. He knows this because his instinct tells him that he would one day go beyond this little place surrounded by beautiful trees and pretty waters, and he would get to a place these people had never heard of. He is not content with being called Master Jing, master of a vehicle; he wants to be his own master. He wants to get rid of this keep and go away, into the distance, the future where he would be highly regarded with respect and admiration, not contempt and dismissiveness. He believes that he is someone capable of doing that and more. His kind of life at present is only temporary. Soon, he would take flight and go. (*EC*, 91)

Having made great efforts, he receives the offer from East Lake University and starts his campus life in Wuhan majoring in English.

Later, his feelings towards China change from love to hate, so he chooses to leave China to live in Australia. At the very beginning of his college life, he finds it hilarious that learning English means going abroad in the future, because the more English he learns, the more profound he finds Chinese is. He does not have a complete grasp of Chinese literature, so why bother with Western literature? With time passing by, Jing dislikes people in the real world and

lists the things he finds annoying about the people around him. He thinks the characters in novels, especially western ones are so good that he likes to be fictional.

> I don't like real people. I prefer them fictional. Jude, for example, or Tess, or Jean Valjean, or Gatsby. Real people are intolerable, … Sometimes, I prefer to be a fictional character myself, not living in this world, but in a book, like a piece of text that can be shifted from one book to another, copied, translated, discussed, inserted etc. I don't know. I have yet to find myself. (*EC*, 249)

In the process of breeding this idea, what the political instructor Mr. Miao has done irritated Jing. At that time, the ideological and political control of students is very strict. Miao talks with the students regularly and asks them to mention what they feel is unusual recently, in fact, let them reveal each other's ideological trends and prevent them from being infiltrated by capitalist ideas. Especially the students in English class because they take classes given by a foreign teacher, although Bill Wagner is asked not to say anything about politics in class. One time they are chatting in Jing's dorm room, Deirdre suddenly shows up looking for Jing. She hands one of his roommates a note for Jing, which is confiscated by Miao. Jing asks Miao to return it to him, but Miao refuses, and a fierce argument breaks out between them. From that moment, Jing's complaints about his home country are growing. 'I hate China. I'll die early if I continue to stay here.' (*EC*, 291) He decides to live with Deirdre in Melbourne, Australia.

Having lived in Melbourne for a while, Jing finds that life here is not the same as he imagines. He is not used to food here and could not stand his pushy wife Deirdre. Jing needs to use a wheelchair in his daily life and take medications. It looks like that he suffers Alzheimer, although he is in his middle age. He does head writing (writing in his mind), so sometimes he would mumble something unrelated to what he was doing. When he acts like a kid, Deirdre would slap him. A new desire-as-craving enters his mind. He wants to go to the Burma Road both in Myanmar and Yunnan Province, China where his father and brother used to serve in the military. At first, Deirdre strongly objects. 'You don't have a home to go back to, Gene (Jing's name in Australia). This is your home, our home. You said you'd never go back to China again. Your parents are no more. Your brother is no more. You hate the Chinese. What is there for you to see? Who is there for you to meet?' (*EC*, 308) Seeing Jing so insistent, Deirdre agrees to his return to China, but asks him to agree to a few conditions: keep taking the medicine, letting her know that he is safe in each place, and recording what he sees on his way to the Burma Road. In this way, Jing is able to live with Deirdre's firmly in Australia after returning from China.

Compared with his cravings, his desire-for-ideal deeply roots in his mind through the whole story, which is searching for his roots and figuring out who he is. The writer reveals in the middle of the novel that Jing is not born to his mother. He is born in Kunming to foreign parents, and it is his father that brings him to his family. Ouyang Yu gives some clues about his complexion at the beginning of the novel.

> He has a white face. It tans easily in summer but goes back to its creaminess in winter. Because of his whiteness, his colleagues in truck team have seen the likes of him in the past: kids sent by their powerful parents to stay in the team as a jumping board to launch them somewhere else when opportunities arise. No one stays long enough to strike roots. But he doesn't have powerful parents. (*EC*, 12)

Jing's different identity with Chinese around him makes some of his behaviors easier to understand by readers, such as aiming too high, worshipping foreign things and extra strong curiosity. While working as a truck driver at the factory, Jing once goes to the funeral of a colleague Master Zhang's grandmother. Jing wonders why everyone is not sad at all, eating and drinking, chatting happily. The coffin is left at the corner. To make sure Master Zhang's grandmother being dead or pretending to be asleep, he opens the coffin secretly. After being found out, the air freezes instantly, and everyone behaves like they have been hit the pause button. Master Zhang is the first to react and steps forward to stop him, but Jing drops the red envelope[173] into it. He pretends to help Master Zhang put the lid on, reaches in with his right hand, takes out the red envelope and gives it to him. He insists on heading for Yunnan Province because he wants to go back to where he was born to find traces of his born parents. He is haunted by the fact that his birth mother never looks for him. 'Once he arrives there, he throws all the medications to Curled/Curling Dragon River because he thinks the air here is meditation itself.' (*EC*, 315) Every time he goes to a city, the author arranges for his father's voice as a Kuomindang official to appear in his head telling his experiences on the battlefield in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (in 1944) in the first person. He eventually returns to Australia with stories in his head and buries the ideal back in his heart. It appears as a blessing for him since it would bring him hope each time he reminds it, but it is a curse because Jing could never approach happiness via this desire. His feelings about his motherland change from hatred to hate the China within him. His father Jing senior and Deirdre are his supporters in

[173] 'The passing away of Master Zhang's grandmother was considered as Bai Xishi, which is White Happy Event. If someone dies in their eighties, it is certainly an event to celebrate. People get together to eat, drink, exchange honeyed words and prepare red pocket for the dead's family.' (*EC*, 79)

both China and Australia. Despite Jing and Deirdre constantly fighting and making up, Deirdre embraces and takes care of him out of love all the time. Ouyang Yu's profile is somehow reflected in Jing's desire dilemma. He works hard at everything but there are unsatisfactory results waiting for him.

To help Western readers understand the Chinese elements introduced in the book, Ouyang Yu uses a combination of pinyin and English expressions when referring to the content. 'For example, *youquan buyong, guoqi zuofei*, use your power while you have it.' (*EC*, 11) '*Laba yixiang, huangjin wanliang*, when a truck honks, it brings in truckloads of gold.' (*EC*, 79) The author also sets up a character Dr. Bill Wagner that connects China and the West, especially China and Australia. He has to obey many rules when teaching in China, but he enjoys the respect he has never received before in Australia. He is willing to stay here. At the same time, he wants to introduce the West to his students. His current students are learning English literature from a hundred years ago, and he is surprised that they are still learning it.

> This is early 80s and why do they want him to teach something nearly a hundred years old, supposedly revolutionary and proletarian, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Middlemarch and Torrents of Spring*? That is absurd. (*EC*, 241)

He brings a lot of works by Australian writers consisting of Christina Stead, Xavier Herbert, David Malouf and Patrick White and wants to introduce them to the students. The contract explicitly states that he could not talk about politics, and he does not want to talk about the bourgeoisie.

> He does not have any intention of inculcating his students with bourgeois ideas; he himself does not even know what these ideas are. Nor would the kind of English that he teaches corrupt them so that they become monsters instead of more refined human beings. (*EC*, 241)

He wants these students, who are passionate and serious about English and respectful of their teachers, to learn more about the Western world.

What is worth mentioning is that the relationship between author, narrator and characters in this novel becomes clearer compared with *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* because Ouyang Yu lets Jing Ying speak in both the first and third person and adds many chapters of the author's mental journey when creating, especially in Part II. There are 42 chapters in this part, and 18 of them are reflection from the writer. Ouyang Yu projects his love of poetry onto the protagonist Jing. He is always found with romantic poetry from Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats,

Shelley and Byron. He never goes out for a walk after dinner without a collection of poems in his hand. When his classmates are preparing for final exams for other subjects, he is still reading poems. He even asks his politics teacher if he could write the test paper in the form of poetry, but the teacher refuses. Moreover, the author guides the reader to be the character in the book and participate in the plot. One summer day, Jing and several classmates relocate to life in the suburbs instead of the dormitory because they could not stand the hot weather. Since the university forbade students to stay out late at night, they agree not to say anything about it. But the author says that there is one person who sees it all. 'While this is going on, there is a sixth person at the scene, invisible to them all, hiding in a thick growth of chrysanthemums, and he is to report the whole incident to the school shortly afterwards.' (*EC*, 261) However, the sixth person does not exist in the novel. The author wants the reader to be the invisible character, which is indicated in Chapter 32 (It is one of the author's reflections.) in Part II. 'There is no sixth person. That sixth person is you as you are invisible to them all, hiding behind a great wall of many solid years, treating them as actors in a film.' (*EC*, 262) Ouyang Yu brings readers closer to the characters by inviting them to participate in the story's development. In this way, he encourages readers to personalise their own interpretation.

Loose: A Wild History

Loose: A Wild History was written in 2001. Most of the events recorded in the book are based on Ouyang Yu's diaries in 1999 and 2000, mostly in China and partly in Australia, for example, Falun Gong, the Tiananmen Square self-immolation incident, and the 2008 Olympic Games being awarded to Beijing. These events not only have the significance of that time, but also have special meaning to the author, because his brother Ouyang Ming was a famed Falun Gong practitioner and was tortured to death. Ouyang Yu uses storytelling to keep track of his changing diaspora identity. During the time he was back working in China, Ouyang went from being lost to exploring. There are studies looking at the effects of traumatic memories on the writer, but few focus on the changing of his identity during this process. I will use Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff's interpretation of diaspora identity, especially the relation between life story telling and identity to analyse this process, trying to figure out his feelings for Australia and China when he needs to travel between them.

'Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands.'[174] Identity, as Brinkerhoff says, 'is at the very core of diaspora and its influence in home- and hostland.'[175] It (Identity) 'transforms (migrants) from the physical reality of dispersal into the psychosocial reality of diaspora.'[176] Vertovec complements Brinkerhoff's explanation that 'the manifestation of a particular diaspora identity can evolve from a defensive perspective or a hopeful and progressive one. Diaspora consciousness is constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion, and positively by identification with a historical heritage … or with contemporary world cultural or political forces.'[177] To further illustrate how diaspora identity derives from host and home countries, Brinkerhoff gives two examples from opposite angles. 'Some circumstances may lead a diasporan to maintain some allegiance to the homeland for "emotional support and identity resources." Other circumstances might lead one to further embrace the hostland identity, for example, when thoughts of the homeland create psychic pain, as when the homeland is cast as a failed state and/or repatriation is impossible.' (*DDITE*, 34) Therefore, diaspora identity is the product of life experience in both homeland and hostland, which would be cultivated in a process.

'Life stories play a significant role in the formation of identity. Thus, storytelling and sharing is one approach to crafting identity (and cross-categorical identities).' (*DDITE*, 39) Brinkerhoff elaborates the contribution from both life stories and storytelling to identity's construction, which could be supported by Navarro and Griffin's understanding of stories and storytelling. From Navarro, 'stories "create recognition of common experiences that shape identity and link people's futures," leading to shared understandings.'[178] From Griffin, 'storytelling is a process of sensemaking, where individuals independently and collectively link and construct a meaningful logic among seemingly random, sometimes disparate occurrences and

[174] Gabriel Sheffer, "A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics", in *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 1-15.
[175] Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31. Hereafter cited as *DDITE,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[176] Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse", *Diaspora* 10, no. 2 (2001): 189-218.
[177] Steven Vertovec, "Three Meanings of 'Diaspora,' Exemplified among South Asian Religions", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6, no. 3 (1997): 277-299.
[178] Sharon Navarro, "Border Narratives: The Politics of Identity and Mobilisation", *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no. 3 (2003): 129-139. Hereafter cited as BNTPIM*,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

experiences.'[179] Identity construction through storytelling is also a trial-and-error process, because the author needs to adjust the narrative according to the demands of readers from different cultural backgrounds.

> When people tell life stories, they do so according to models of intelligibility specific to the culture. Stories or 'accounts' are always produced and told under particular social conditions and constraints … These models are consonant with the conventions that stabilise the given organisation of society … By contrast, stories that fail to conform to the models leave themselves open to questions, challenges, or resistance from any given society. (BNTPIM, 129)

In this sense, from Brinkerhoff, 'diasporas do not construct a fixed identity. Rather, they continuously negotiate their identity, both in interaction with the host society, and among themselves.' (*DDITE*, 40) In this sense Ouyang Yu is an apt case study to test diaspora identity theory.

Being a diasporan (writer) causes Ouyang Yu to fluctuate between China (homeland) and Australia (hostland) with complicated feelings, which is especially obvious through his storytelling when he travels between both countries. He holds negative attitude towards China and Australia. Sometimes he criticises the Western world represented by Australia from the standpoint of a Chinese, and sometimes he expresses his dissatisfaction with China as an Australian.

> My diary remains blank for the whole week, the third week of July 2001. What's the point of getting up to face an empty day? I no longer care whether I am employed or unemployed. I am perhaps totally free, from the oppression of both China and Australia. As I said to Mohan over dinner yesterday evening, you don't know how bad Australia can be. It is as bad as China! Some of my artist friends are still street artists, daily doing portraits.[180]

However, in this book, Ouyang Yu shows his cool thinking side instead of always being angry – he steps outside of a sense of loss and explores his diaspora identity, seeing the essence through the appearance. He admits the respective advantages of China and Australia. Australia is environmentally livable, and he misses his home there after returning to China. China is

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[179] Larry Griffin, "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology", *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 5 (1993): 1094-1133.

[180] Yu Ouyang, *Loose: A Wild History* (Kent Town, S. Aust: Wakefield Press, 2011), 159. Hereafter cited as *LAWH,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

becoming stronger and would be better in the future. Having witnessed his friends and families' experience, he feels that life is not easy, but they are trying to make ends meet. Moreover, he appears that he cares about his readers, which is rarely seen in his other works.

> In a way, this I (Ouyang Yu) is not trying to isolate himself from his readers this time; on the contrary, he is trying to endear himself to his readers by appealing to their deepest sense of who they are and why they live at all and why their life is such a sequence of unorganised details full of junk-mail emails, bills, wrong numbers, bits and pieces of scrap paper, rolls of toilet paper used and flushed and things, related and unrelated, not even managing to have their life recorded and heard, and why they have to be told that the real reality is always less important than the imagined realities by pretentious people who are stuck in their binary oppositions forever valuing the written word over orality, the West over the East, the ancient over the contemporary in the East, the mind over the heart, the machine over the flesh, A-Z over Z-A or M-A and Z-M, sex over love, success over failure, life over death, until they themselves die and the rest of the world moves on. (*LAWH*, 257)

Although the author often feels lost between the two cultures, his feelings for his family, especially the deep pain of love for his brother, are real. Ouyang Yu and Yang Lian are similar in their dependence on families. For Yang Lian, the search for his identity has been difficult, but his family, especially his father and wife, have always provided him with warmth and hope, encouraging him to keep going. The family is the harbour and the softest part of the poet's heart.

Facing homeland and hostland cultures, Ouyang Yu firstly thinks over how Chinese and Westerners treats each other.

> By now, China has thoroughly accepted the West. I want whatever you have. If you are strong, I also want to be strong. And I shall also keep my characteristics. The old China is disappearing as the freeway is cutting through the mountains and the fields. (*LAWH*, 199)

When he returns to China after many years, he is amazed by the changes in China. However, the Western perception of China at that time is still confined to stereotype.

> … along with what impression I get from reading today's Age and what prompts me to think with this card in front of me makes me wonder what the West really knows about China. It seems they know next to nothing. And all they get to see is the sort of books like Shanghai Baby produced by sexy young Chinese women that sell their

> ideology of freedom and democracy, that is, freedom of selling the Chinese women's fuckholes for the Western men to fuck with and to perpetuate the Western daydream about an easy Oriental plaything. (*LAWH*, 267)

Second, Ouyang tries to resolve a deception on a massive scale as a Chinese-Australian. He concludes that both Chinese and Australians are being 'too post'. From his perspective, people should have fully understood and considered all possible consequences before taking action, rather than acting on it and regretting or repenting later. As for Chinese, they should not depend on being rescued via finding a shelter in the paradise which they used to call the West.

> So many Chinese when asked why they came here (Australia) ten years ago answered, 'to learn English'. They are not telling lies, but they are not saying the truth, either. Like me, they are coming here in the belief that the West would somehow solve all their problems, financial, sexual, political, cultural, and personal. At the end of ten years, they are disillusioned. But it is too late. Too post! Post communism. Arising out of a deception on an international scale in the world arena. (*LAWH*, 408)

Most of the dream chasers suffer physical or psychological trauma, and even die. Even if their partner helps them realise, they would never see it again. As for Australians, it is because what white men do to First Nations people.

> When the white men first set foot in this country, they drove the Aborigines away and they exterminated them in Tasmania. Two hundred years later, post massacre, post extermination, post ethnic cleansing, they now feel guilty they want to do something to help the Aborigines. But it's too late. Too post! Post destruction. What was done can never be undone. (*LAWH*, 408)

He then returns to the attitude of Westerners, especially Australians, towards the Chinese. He points out that, 'they accuse Chinese of being devious, inscrutable, cunning, whereas in fact they are the devious, indirect, inscrutable, and cunning ones. That's the only way we should look at them because that's the only way we have been treated by them.' (*LAWH*, 408-409) He suggests Chinese 'being pre to against them.' (*LAWH*, 409) which means preparing in advance. It also works for getting rid of the deceptions above – think ahead, foretell the situations and be well prepared. However, this is nothing but idealisation because it all happens. Even though he finds the solution, what has happened cannot be reversed. Ouyang Yu's two-sided thinking is based on both his identification with the home and host country cultures and his personal experience. 'Diaspora (hybrid) identity results from a mix of characteristics from the homeland, the hostland, and lived experience.' (*DDITE*, 33) His reflection on the positions of the Chinese and Australians is also strong evidence. 'Diaspora identities are constantly produced and

reproduced, which are not fixed end. They are "a negotiated result rather than a reflection of an objective or described reality." Cultural beliefs and practices, the fodder for identity, are tools for adaptation. They help individuals make sense of their reality; they provide psychosocial comfort; and they yield "interactional experiences that have emotional meaning."' (*DDITE*, 33) We can see Ouyang's acceptance of the cultures of both countries. He has a talent of moving between two cultures. His capacity of cultural code-switching makes him one moment the representative of Chinese the other moment that of Australian. He is good at reflection, and he finds a reasonable solution, but he cannot solve the problem which is a matter of history. That's the reason why he would be angrier with the answer at hand.

Ouyang Yu is no longer angry or insane at the mention of his brother Ouyang Ming. When Yu is back in his hometown Huangzhou, Hubei Province, Ming has to stay in bed for most of the time and be cared for. This loyal Falun Gong practitioner is forced to attend a study class by the government and promise never to practice Falun Gong again. He resolutely refuses, and finally jumps directly from the classroom on the second floor, breaking his knees on both legs. Yu is worried about him. They lie in bed together at night, talking about Falun Gong. Ming has been trying to persuade Yu to read Gong literature. Yu does not understand the logic of Gong, but he takes risks bringing some relevant reading materials from Australia for his big brother. Indulging his brother is Yu's way of showing his love for him. When Yu goes back to Melbourne, he sees a piece of news online reading that Ming has been arrested again. He could not reach him. After a while, he receives an email from Ming's wife, 'Ming is detained again by the public security bureau on the 17th of this month on account of disturbing public order and he is again put in No.1 Detention Centre because he has participated in *chuanlian* establishing ties and distributing illegal propaganda products. ... At the moment Ming is behaving in a very bad manner. They say he has had a quarrel with the director of the public security bureau and refused to confess his crime. I don't know what will happen in the future, but the situation is very worrying.' (*LAWH*, 313) Ming is so deeply obsessed in Falun Da Fa that he refuses Yu's assistance to bail him out to Australia. Detention center is like Ming's second home. He loses his university lectureship, his title of associate professor, his salary and his marriage. The next news Yu learns about his brother is that he is dead. 'He is tortured to death for his persistence in practicing Falun Gong.' (*LAWH*, 415) With his emotional sustenance gone, Ouyang Yu has a reason to continue his anger. When talking about her writing *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, Jung Chang says, 'When I write this book, I am angry,

but not resentful. Resentment corrupts the soul, but anger refreshes.'[181] Ouyang Yu agrees on this point with her. It is being angry that triggers him to keep writing.

In this book, Ouyang Yu continues the post-modern writing style, which is mainly reflected in format and content. To start with the format, the sections within each chapter are arranged in no order. Some sections are arranged in numerical order, while others would be added decimal points at will. This is Ouyang Yu's ongoing unique creative habit. In *The English Class*, there are many chapters missing in each part. The author does this deliberately because it does not affect the continuity of chapters. For example, there is no Chapter 8 in Part I. There are also meaningless combinations of words and sentences.

> Memories. Details. Interruptions. Living presence and lived past. People. Peoples. Poetry. Additions and omissions. Emissions as well. Deliberate or unconscious. Readers, always loveable and hateful readers. Hateful, lovely readers. Whenever I think of them, my writing stops. They are my devils. They kill me. Honesty. No imagination. Absolutely none. As soon as a writer starts staying, or rather prattling, 'imagination', I grow suspicious as if I saw a transparent trick being played or displayed. Raw. Rawness. As raw as an unwashed dick. Refusing to be polished. Being polished is a woman's idea. It is a bourgeois idea. A middle-class idea. Disgusting idea. Believing in the infinite perishability. For better or worse. Everything will go when the sun drops behind the hills. No big names. No small names. Equality. Absolute equality. The living will never know. The true story. (*LAWH,* 111)

> Is this fiction? Nonfiction? Poetryfiction? Poetrynonfiction? Fictionpoetry? Nonfictionpoetry? Fictional biography? Biographical nonfiction? Autobiographical poetry? Autobiographical biography? Fictional nonfiction? Nonfictional fiction? Fiction cloning? Nonfiction cloning? Fictionalnonfictionalpoetryautobiographicalbiographycloning cloningcloning? What is categorisation? Why do we need it? Are some people destined to be stuck in their categories they are condemned to for life? Do some people never go beyond what they have been taught and trained and marketed for? (*LAWH*, 311)

[181] Jung Chang, *Hong – San dai nv ren de gu shi=Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*, trans. Pu Zhang (Hohhot: Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House, 1997), 513.

As for the content, this book combines fiction with non-fiction. Although the protagonist is Ouyang Yu himself, the author admits that the book contains fictions.

> You see that is only an idea to fictionalise this account. Later on, I decide to remove the imaginary sign from this book. It's not worth the effort. As I say, I don't want to pretend. (*LAWH*, 25)

Later, the writer makes it clear that the content of the book has fictional parts.

> Family history is something I am most reluctant to tell, I mean sell. Unlike other people who are successful in marketing this and selling a name out of it, I don't regard it as a commodity. I like to talk about it, to know, to find out more, but writing about it would touch many sore places and I would rather fictionalise it and give it a whole new look. (*LAWH*, 179)

It is paradoxical with his saying 'all I have written above is true and correct in every detail,' (*LAWH*, 49) which confuses readers. When explaining how he balances truth and fiction in this book, Ouyang Yu says: 'I call this book "documentary novel" when I use it to apply for grant. Just like "documentary", in which the true and false mix with each other.' (OACAB, 32) He leaves the right to readers – everyone can have their own judgement about whether the plots are true or not. Ouyang Yu continues the creative pattern of metafiction. In the last section of this book 'The Third Man,' the writer created a character 'I' to speak for himself 'O'. 'As a matter of fact, I am O's creation. His cloned sheep Oly or Owen or, simply, O. He creates me to write about him, lest his memory soon goes under as so many ordinary people's have.' (*LAWH*, 309) This is a feature of narration shared with Samuel Beckett – whose characters say almost the same thing at various points in his novels, especially *The Unnamable*. Ouyang also uses 'I' to explain the reason why he wants this character to do this book for 'O' (himself). He even arranges for 'I' to conduct a phone interview with himself on behalf of Dao Zhuang (protagonist in *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*). In addition to diaries, the book includes letters, emails, poetry, and literary criticism. '*Loose: A Wild History* is a good trial with various stories mixed together.'[182] All kinds of written materials are mixed through the postmodern collage technique without a clear plot structure. W.G.Sebald and Guy Davenport could help locate him in this field with the use of photography and collage.

[182] Yujing Liang, 欧阳昱英文创作述评 "A Review of Ouyang Yu's English Creation", *Literatures in Chinese (华文文学)*, no. 2 (2012): 20-27.

Diary of a Naked Official

Diary of a Naked Official (2014) is about the life of a corrupt official in the 1990s. According to Ouyang Yu, he finds a flash drive on a tram in Melbourne which contains the contents of the diary. He presents it as it is with a bit of editing here and there. The official (who is also the protagonist of this novel) is a deputy director of a publishing house in mainland China. He and his wife have a daughter. The family's life is happy until he abuses his power to offer and accept bribes and completely let go of his desire for sex. He purchases Australian permanent residency for his wife and daughter and sends them there with all their property. When he receives the notice from the government that he is to be investigated, he has already dealt with the evidence of his crime but leaves this confession diary. This is a novel full of irony. The author satirises the corruption of Chinese officialdom at that time, the immersion in sensual pleasures of officials and their worship of foreign things. For example, they treat Australia as the last clean earth which they should escape from China to.

> Where else but Australia, which lots of people have come back from and reported as the last jingtu in the world, jingtu, literally, clean earth, being Sukhavati, Pure Land or Paradise of the West?[183]

> At best, the West is an inevitable place, a political and economic haven, to escape to from China and, at worst, it is an excuse for whatever that can't be done over here. (*DNO*, 68)

Although most of female characters in this novel are still isolated individuals, mainly prostitutes, there are women who are respected and valued by the protagonist. He is obsessed with his favorite sex partner, J Ro. He calls her 'my Japan Rose.' (*DNO*, 66) Before he is arrested, the only letter he writes is to her. Although there is no love between him and his wife, he always tries his best to set her life in order. I will use Hanna Segal's interpretation of projective identification to analyse the self-object relation between the protagonist and female characters, trying to figure out the role which female characters played in the development of protagonist's self.

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[183] Yu Ouyang, *Diary of a Naked Official* (Yarraville, [Vic: Transit Lounge Publishing, 2014), 12. Hereafter cited as *DNO,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

As Hanna Segal describes, 'in projective identification, parts of the self and internal objects are split off and projected into the external object, which then becomes possessed by, controlled and identified with the projected parts.'[184] After that, the external object(s) become the representation of the self which has been projected.

> Therefore, projective identification has manifold aims – it may be directed towards the ideal object to avoid separation, or it may be directed towards the bad object to gain control of the source of danger. (*IWMK*, 27-28)

The subject will prevent his/her good parts from disappearing, but he/she will gradually distance himself/herself from bad parts. The different outcomes from projection of different aspects help to improve the self in the procedure.

The protagonist projects his good parts – love and responsibility – to his favourite sex partner J Ro and his wife to avoid separation. 'Good parts may be projected to avoid separation or to keep them safe from bad things inside or to improve the external object through a kind of primitive projective reparation.' (*IWMK*, 27-28) He socialises with all kinds of women, but she is the only one that he says love to. 'I (the protagonist) love no other woman to that degree.' (*DNO*, 66) He is so obsessed with her that he mentions her frequently in this book. Unfortunately, J Ro is killed in a car accident, a car the protagonist buys for her with her insistence, but he does not forget her because of her death. When he is aware that he would be arrested and interrogated, he leaves a letter for J Ro, in which he shares secrets he just wants her to know. As for his wife, her marriage with the protagonist exists in name only. After his corruption is exposed, the first thing he does is to settle his wife and daughter – sending them to Australia. His assets are all in his wife's name, which could cover for the future life of her and their daughter. It is the only conscience he has left.

Those prostitutes appear throughout the novel are the projection of protagonist's desire for sex. He believes that a society and everyone who lives in it cannot be separated from sex.

> Ours (Our society) is no doubt a sex-soaked or saturated society in which one remains restless till one is fulfilled, or, to put it more bluntly, till one is emptied, emptying being fulfilling, the same thing. There is no desire to read any books unless they are

[184] Hanna Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*. (London: Hogarth, 1973), 27-28. Hereafter cited as *IWMK,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.

> sex related. And if love does not lead to sex, it is love wasted. All one wishes, when one is not occupied, is for his member to be wrapped up in a mouth or a second mouth, repeating the act of ejaculation, or dumping, again and again. (*DNO*, 46)

His mind is full of sex. Once a girl reaches out to him, saying that she wants to get her work published. Her mother brings gifts to the protagonist's office to ask for his help.

> I notice she (mother of the girl who wants to publish) is wearing a low-cut dress that reveals much of her breast, the dress black, with enticing lace. … although I must say her skin was fairer than most of my female colleagues. … When I finish and she rises to go, we shake hands and it is in that moment I feel her hand lingers a tad longer in my grasp, reluctant, it seems, to let go. (*DNO*, 31)

Most of the female characters are isolated and marginalised in society. For example, a prostitute tells him her story when they finish. Having found her pregnant, her boyfriend stops loving her anymore. Later, she gets an abortion as her boyfriend wishes. Since the operation costs her too much, she has to make money while she is still not fully recovered. After hearing her experience, the protagonist's first reaction is not having sympathy for her; instead, he wants her to leave as soon as possible. 'I do not want to have more contact with her, because I am concerned that my seed might germinate in her, her body seemingly with a wealthy mine for growth.' (*DNO*, 21) The only thing in his mind about women is sex, and he has no respect for them. He even compares his work in publishing house with the service provided by prostitute.

> A publishing house, unlike a prostitute, can refuse to provide the service even when the clients want to pay although it is similar to a prostitute in that it offers products attractive enough to induce people to buy. (*DNO*, 35)

Sexual desire forms the negative part of the protagonist's character, which he aims to avoid. 'Various parts of the self may be projected, with various aims: bad parts of the self may be projected in order to get rid of them as well as to attack and destroy the object.' (*IWMK*, 27-28) It reflects in his deleting all the traces concerning the prostitutes, including messages in his mobile phone. The protagonist projects his sex desire to these females. Therefore, his stripping away of evidence means that he eliminates the object to get rid of bad parts projected from his own psyche. In this way, he waves goodbye to his previous life and becomes what the title says – a naked official.

In this book, 'naked' means both penniless and blank. Before the protagonist receives a notice from the authority saying that he is under *shuanggui*[185], double regulations, he buys permanent residence status for his wife and daughter in Australia and sends them there with all his property. 'I am as naked as the room I occupy, anything worth much already gone or sold.' (*DNO*, 87) The next thing he has to do is erasing all evidence of his corruption, even traces of his life, leaving his file blank. 'One needs to live naked offline and virtually anonymous online.' (*DNO*, 94)

> Nothing more to say except that I have burnt all the photographs, deleted more from my computer and trashed the lot in the bin. If they fig the ashes, they won't recognise anything. It's my 9.11, for sure, but if they turn up as they say they will, in the shunaggui notice they have issued me, telling me to pack up and go to live in a special place to wait for 'further notice', I shall be prepared, as naked as ever, my bank accounts remaining zero and all the flesh ever associated with me gone, including the text messages in my mobile phone. Hang on, I must also delete all the phone numbers, including my wife's in Australia. When they ask, I shall have a naked memory as weak, in which nothing is retained, as naked as 9.11. (*DNO*, 107)

This is part of his diary entry on 11th September, so he would associate it with 9/11. He methodically arranges everything before he is put in jail, especially deleting any evidence that could have been used against him or incriminating him. His attempt to erase all traces of his life is to, on the one hand, evade authority in a perverse strategy. On the other hand, he casts off his identity of this phase of life in this 'world' to become pure again as a new-born. However, he is not on the list of salvation chosen by God, and his 'self-cleansing' does not conform to the Buddhist idea of salvation. Christ exiles himself into the desert for 40 days and nights. Sakyamuni disavows his life to take up itinerant lifestyle of meditation. It is striking to find crossover between plots in this novel and theology. Self-redemption must go through a process, which is the opposite of making a provisional decision as what the protagonist has done. He should pay for what he has done.

[185] *Shuanggui* is a measure of the Communist Party of China in conducting internal party investigation and restriction of personal freedom of Communist Party members before they are investigated by prosecutors. It is a kind of isolation examination, the main purpose of which is to prevent the investigated person from stalling for time, evading investigation, or even colluding in confessions or fleeing. *Shuanggui* is often used to crack down on corrupt members of the Communist Party. Officials detained in *shuanggui* are often taken from their homes, offices, or their freedom restricted when they attend meetings.

In Christianity, 'Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9).'[186] Even if someone has committed a large number of evil things, he/she owns a chance of redemption.

> That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
>
> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Roman 10: 9-10 *TBAKJV*, 200)

There is a similar saying in Buddhism – *Fangxia tudao, lidi chengfo.*[187] As long as you lay down the butcher's knife, you will become a Buddha. It is the Buddhist exhortation to turn people from evil to good. Once the evildoer realises his/her crime and resolves to correct it, he/she can quickly become a good person. Some people therefore abuse the religious recognition of the good side of human beings, believing that they can be saved though they used to be evil, which has been reflected in salvation novels, such as James Hogg's *The Private Memories and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. It is easy to be redeemed by saying you are sorry in interrogation because they are sure that they have been already on salvation list since they were born. What they have done would be erased after they confess. However, the protagonist in *Diary of a Naked Official* neglects one condition – only those who sincerely repent could be saved, which is not his case. Firstly, he has no remorse before his arrest. The reason why he deletes all traces of his life is that he does not want to leave any incriminating evidence. Second, he does not realise what he has done is wrong. In his letter to J Ro, he writes that, 'Who wants to go to heaven while hell is available and for all the worst kind of things one couldn't enjoy on earth?' (*DNO*, 94) He is clear that his mind is full of evil thoughts. Only in the face of his emotional support (J Ro), he tells the truth, and at the same time reveals what he really is. He does not deserve to be redeemed, so do characters like Dr. Fu Manchu in *Tales of Chinatown* and the evil Chinese characters in Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights*. They operate within a clear moral economy where evil doing leads to punishment, not last-minute contrition and redemption.

Ouyang Yu's reference to Pure Land here is suggestive. Both the Pure Land in Christianity and Buddhism (the Pure Land of Amitābha) is in the west. When the protagonist mentions the west, he means the western world, which is also his paradise. In this novel, Ouyang sets an example

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[186] Robert P. Carroll, Stephen Prickett, *The Bible Authorised King James Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1009. Hereafter cited as *TBAKJV,* with page numbers cited parenthetically.
[187] Boxing Zhang, *Zhuzi yu lei ji lüe=Zhuzi's Language Category Summary* (Shanghai: The Commercial Publishing, 1936), 76.

of being too post communism via the protagonist, who believes that the West could help solve all his problems. He is unsatisfied with life in China.

> I (The protagonist) suspect that even the bottled mineral water is poisonous, not to say the air we are breathing in on a daily basis. (*DNO*, 26)

To figure this out, he blindly considers the west, especially Australia as utopia/paradise, which could change his living atmosphere.

> Australia, a country where, I heard, the poor are fat and the rich are thin, and shops are not open on Sundays, much better than China where people go out and east past midnight. Mere pigs. (*DNO*, 26)

That is why he finally sends his wife and daughter to Australia to seek asylum. However, this is all in his imagination, because he has not been to Australia, let alone lived there. Ironically, people from the land of hope in his mind agree on corruption with him.

> Three days, bribing has becoming so rampant that an Australian businessman Sam knows said to me over dinner the other day that he'd play the Chinese game any way we wanted. By that he means that he'd be willing to bribe his way to successful business deals. (*DNO*, 34)

Sam always keeps his company when they are in nightclubs. The friendship between the two of them makes him more convinced that he could fit into Australian society. He is better suited to live there. As most of the male characters in Ouyang Yu's previous writing, the protagonist shows little respect to female characters. He prefers a loose relation with women. He wants to let them be 'free' and do not want to be responsible for them. His excuses for being like this is that 'It is easier to love and leave, loving transiently and leaving permanently, in a way that makes every woman a new woman regardless of how many men they have previously gone through or the other way round, been gone through.' (*DNO*, 24) He even blames those women he has relations with for his corruption.

> Power leads to opportunities for making money and money leads to women who generate a need for more money that he has to make by abusing his power. … I don't need a womb to perpetuate my name; I only need a vagina to prolong my pleasures, but it has to be varied enough to survive the boredom. Back to sex. (*DNO*, 67)

At this point, a thoroughly negative character image is clearly presented to the readers. It is in vain no matter how much he tries to clean himself up.

Diary of a Naked Official is another example of metafiction in the works from Ouyang Yu. He introduces how he creates this novel at the beginning. He finds the diary of a corrupt official

in a USB on one Melbourne tram. The purpose of his presenting this diary is that he wants to 'warn the readers against any potential corruption.' (*DNO*, 8)

> I present this in the hope that my readers will be discerning enough to fend themselves off any corrupting influences from a civilisation known for its past capabilities of evil and present diversion into weird and irrepressible, coupled with its resistance to moral and moralising influences from the West. Because there's no indication of the years given, I would presume that the late 20th century or the early years of the 21st although I could be wrong. (*DNO*, 8)

Except for this, Ouyang uses the other post-modern techniques when writing this book, such as collage poetry, plots from other novels, emails, and conversations. This is not only the continuation of Ouyang writing style, but also the clue which connects the four novels analysed in this chapter.

The postmodern style in the four novels under discussion mainly manifests in the use of postmodern collage technique and characteristics of metafiction. On the one hand, Ouyang Yu collages written materials without a clear plot structure, such as diaries, letters, emails, conversations, poetry, plots from other novels, and literary criticism. On the other hand, the writer would skip some chapters, which makes readers feel that contents in the novel have been collaged. Ouyang refers to different hallmarks of metafiction in four novels. In *The Easter Slope Chronicle*, the author blurs the distinctions between levels of fictiveness. The protagonist is named Dao Zhuang. He writes a book, and the main character is also Dao Zhuang. It is easy for readers to be confused about which Dao is under discussion. In *The English Class*, he uses 18 out of 42 chapters to write his own reflection. Some of them are his feelings when creating this novel. In *Loose: A Wild History*, he arranges a character 'I' to speak for himself 'O'. He also uses 'I' to explain why he wants this character to do this book for 'O' (himself). In *Diary of a Naked Official*, he explains the procedure of writing this novel. He is being genuine with readers through providing such a detailed 'narration manual' to confess the process of creation and traces of his operation.

Conclusion

Among all the evaluations of Ouyang Yu in both Chinese and Australia scholarship, I believe that critical appraisal is the most accurate kind. Ouyang is able to be critical with two cultures

because he has the capacity of cultural code-switching with strong Chinese and Australian cultural backgrounds, which has been demonstrated in his novels. In *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*, he pointed out that not only Australians have stereotypes towards Chinese, but also Chinese have for Australians. To make his narration more persuasive, he imbues the characters with his own real experiences, as well as those of some international students and Australians. Nevertheless, he has the talent of irritating both Chinese and Australian audiences due to his boldness in his wording. Moreover, in his works, most of the male characters have too strong self-esteem and are male chauvinists, while most of the female ones are isolated and marginalised, so he would inevitably be criticised and receive negative evaluations. Although Ouyang warns that 'the old stereotypes die hard, persisting well into the present in the popular and high culture,'[188] he never stops being critical with his pen. In *The English Class*, he discusses the relationship between desire and happiness with readers. The protagonist's name Jing Ying has the similar pronunciation as 'elite' in Chinese, but he is an ordinary person who aims high all his life. He is always happy and unsatisfied. This is also the true state of most modern people, a dilemma which they are deeply involved in but do not want to break. As for Ouyang Yu himself, it is a different story – he tries to figure out solutions via being in Chinese and Australian shoes. All efforts will pay off. In *Loose: A Wild History*, he publishes his answer, which is 'pre.' By this, he means that people should be fully prepared and consider the possible consequences before they act instead of regretting when it is too late. However, as a descendant, he has no way to remind his ancestors, which makes him angrier. Yes, being angry is another commonly seen tag created for Ouyang Yu. He admits that he uses to be the one who should have been pre because he wishes that Australia could help him solve the problems which China could not do at that time. It turns out to be unrealistic illusions about the West before he comes to Australia.

> I have had great hopes in Australia. Like many who come before or around the time when I come, I regard Australia as a land of opportunity. However, that opportunity seems to exist for Australians and people from other countries of the British Commonwealth and not the likes of me. Even though I have sworn my allegiance, Australians sees in me an un-Australian.
>
> ——Ouyang Yu (2002)[189]

[188] Steve Brock, "Ouyang Yu Sheds Light on Representations of Chinese in Australian Fiction", *Antipodes* 23, no. 1 (2009): 103-104.
[189] Huang Zhong, Wenche Ommundsen, "No-Man's Land: Migration, Masculinity, and Ouyang Yu's *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*", *Antipodes* 29, no. 2 (2015): 439-451.

Later, he creates a Chinese character in *Diary of a Naked Official* who considers the West especially Australia as the Pure Land. It is disillusioning for readers but not for the protagonist himself, because tragically he never has a chance to enter Australia. It is a short novel, but the author's reference to Pure Land and the protagonist's self-cleansing through erasure of his evil doing connect Christianity with Buddhism, with the clue in offering redemption to even the lowest. In this way, Ouyang Yu relates the representative religion of the West to that of the East in his book, which proves his capacity of cultural code-switching once again. He has said more than once that he does not write to please any audiences, but to write what he wants to write. The fact is that he keeps helping readers to understand his writing better. He holds a serious attitude towards his writing. It may be his postmodern style of writing that hindered many readers from exploring the reasons for his being angry and critical. Ouyang Yu is a writer/poet that deserves more time from readers in seeking for his intelligence and tenacity in bridging the West and the East.

Conclusion

The case studies of Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu amply illustrate the ways in which modernisation and social change in China have influenced contemporary poetry and fiction by Chinese emigré authors and by Western authors knowledgeable about China. Since the Reform and Opening Up process began in 1978, China has carried out a comprehensive program of modernisation, showing rapid developments in science and technology, education, culture, and medical care, among other fields. Rapid economic development from the 1990s opens a path to increased transnational communication. This period also marks a peak period for China to import and export talent. Due to these policies Chinese citizens are able to study abroad and foreigners are given increased opportunity to visit China and participate in a system of academic, cultural, and social exchange. Each of the four authors at the centre of this study experienced this heightened mobility. Yang Lian began to go abroad frequently for academic exchange in 1988. Ha Jin received his PhD degree in the United States in 1992. Nicholas Jose worked in China from 1986 to 1990. Ouyang Yu arrived in Australia for PhD study in 1991.

However, different political reasons mean that these four writers are unwilling or unable to settle in China and follow a creative career. Each of them touches on the Tiananmen Square Massacre in their works. Yang Lian was forced to leave China in the late 1980s because his long poem *Norlang* was criticised. When the Tiananmen Incident took place, he and Ha Jin were both abroad. Ha Jin therefore became disillusioned with the situation of intellectuals in China and decided to settle in the United States, although his PhD thesis was initially targeted at Chinese academia. He has rarely returned China since then and has used his fiction as a vehicle to explore this difficult terrain, projecting his feelings for the Movement onto Jian Wan in *The Crazed*. Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu were both in China when the Incident occurred. Jose arranges for Wally to witness the student uprising at the end of *Avenue of Eternal Peace*. Ouyang Yu's older brother Ming joined the Movement and committed suicide because he would not admit that he was 'wrong,' memorialised in *Loose: A Wild History*. In Yu's words, 'What has now become obvious is that those Chinese intellectuals who came to Australia in or around the June 4th Incident in 1989 with great hopes for freedom and democracy have found

them but, ironically, have had little use for them. Like sunshine and clean air, two great qualities of Australian life most admired by Chinese nationals, freedom and democracy, much as they are found lacking in contemporary China, will not get them a job or food here in the land of plenty.' (*BOCA*, 162) Ouyang Yu has refrained from stating whether or not he considers himself as one of these intellectuals. It is certain that he repeatedly hit a wall when trying to enter academia in Australia, finally embarking on a creative career contrary to his original intention.

The analysis of Yang Lian's exploration of identity in Chapter 1 is framed by Stuart Hall's interpretation of identity theory, with a focus on the relationship between the subject and the other/Other. In addition to the relationship between the subject and the other/Other, Jacques Lacan's psychological interpretation of the Mirror Stage, transference and projection are also used to support the analysis of a character's identity formation: Shuyu Liu in Ha Jin's *Waiting* and Yu Yuan in Ha Jin's *War Trash* in Chapter 2, and Zhou Huang in Nicholas Jose's *Original Face* in Chapter 3. Based on the first mirror stage, Kathleen Woodward interprets the second mirror stage – what Lacan calls 'méconnaissance' – as a phase of psychological development arising in late middle age and beyond. This concept informs the analysis of Edward Popple's emotional and identity shifts in Nicholas Jose's *The Rose Crossing* in Chapter 3. Another contribution to identity theory from the perspective of sociology is Manuel Castells' three divisions of identity, categorised as legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity. Castells' theory frames the analysis of identity-building in the character of Shao Bin in Ha Jin's *In the Pond* and Jian Wan in Ha Jin's *The Crazed* in Chapter 2. More specific interpretations of identity theory serve as supplementary analytic tools in the discussion of several novels. For example in Chapter 4, Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff's interpretation of diaspora identity, especially the relation between life-story telling and identity is used to evaluate Ouyang Yu's feelings for both Australia and China in *Loose: A Wild History*; the interpretation of stereotyped (in)accuracy adapted from the work of Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee is used to analyse how Chinese characters find their way physically and mentally by breaking stereotypes in Ouyang Yu's *The Eastern Slope Chronicle*; and Hanna Segal's interpretation of projective identification is used to analyse the self-object relation between the protagonist and female characters in Ouyang Yu's *Diary of a Naked Official*. Marjorie Garber's interpretation of bisexuality, its presence in feminist theory and the structure of the bisexual triangular relationship is used to analyse the love triangle among Ruth, Shen Fuling and Han in Nicholas Jose's *The Red Thread* in Chapter 3. This thesis has sought to investigate characters'

psychology when analysing how they construct their identities. This has been guided by the work of Shigehiro Oishi, Erin Westgate, Jane Tucker and Asuka Komiya, particularly interpretations of the relationship between desire and happiness. This has aided the account of Jing Ying's focus on the ideal instead of real life in Ouyang Yu's *The English Class*, to take one example.

The four writers depict and critically evaluate the process of China's modernisation from the 1970s to the 2000s based on their own experiences. As a transcultural migrant poet, Yang Lian explores his identity from confusion to crisis and ultimately harmonisation. Ha Jin projects both Chinese and Western cultural influences upon his characters. Nicholas Jose introduces aspects of Chinese cultural development to Western readers in a way which helps them better understand the lived experiences of Chinese urban dwellers. Ouyang Yu is critical of both China and Australia due to his older brother having been taken from him in China and his lack of success in Australian academia. The theme of identity construction imbues the poems and novels of these writers. Identity construction through storytelling is a trial-and-error process because the author needs to adjust the narrative according to the perceived demands of readers from different cultural backgrounds. This can tell us about the mixed reception of their novels – not only due to their positive or negative depictions of China, Australia, or the US, but also due to the complex ways in which other members of the diaspora, and those outside this diaspora, respond to their depictions.

The study of identity in Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu bears significance in locating the mediation of China and the West within the broader discourse of transnational literature. This focus helps situate these writers in important global discussions of literature, but it also provides a method by which to navigate a discourse that itself often struggles for clear definition: 'Transnational literature has emerged in recent decades as a kind of catch-all term for literature with some kind of global scope that defies categorisation with regard to its national origins and has been born out of the convergence of specific historical developments over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.' [190] The period in which transnational literature arose coincides with a time when economic and cultural ties between countries are gradually strengthening under the influence of globalisation. Given their regional

[190] Paul Jay, *Transnational Literature: The Basics* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2021), 22. Hereafter cited as *TLTB*, with page numbers cited parenthetically.

affinities and global prominence, China, Europe, America, and Australia each contribute to economic and cultural globalisation to varying substantial degrees. 'The forces of economic and cultural globalisation have been so central to the creation, circulation, and study of transnational literature that it is tempting think of them as the same thing, to understand the category "transnational literature" as signalling the globalisation of literature.' (*TLTB*, 36) Ha Jin and Ouyang Yu gain insights into American and Australian culture by virtue of having studied in those nations. Yang Lian and Nicholas Jose deepen their knowledge of European and Chinese culture by living and working in other countries beyond their birth nations. It is these writers' exposure to other cultures that prompts them to find an inner balance between two cultures, expressed in their works concerning China. These works embody an important dimension of literature's globalisation, reflecting a process of intellectual, cultural, and often corporeal back-and-forth between China and the West, contributing to transnational literary studies as emergent from, a response to, and an analysis of globalisation.

In sum, Yang Lian, Ha Jin, Nicholas Jose and Ouyang Yu evaluate identity through their creative travel from the west to the east: they each live in the west, and they write about China. The ideas these writers canvas in their work combine deep knowledge of western literary traditions and cultures, as well as a sensitivity to and privileged access to Chinese tradition. To take one example, characters as representations of identity inform and illuminate an understanding of intercultural traffic and definition between the 'West' and China. When traditional modes of Chinese characterisation are brought into relation with hegemonic Western norms, there is no sign of implicit or explicit contradiction; instead, the writers adapt Western norms while adhering to Chinese modes. Nicholas Jose deploys characters especially in *The Red Thread* as allegory for gauging the state of play between 'West' and China. Indeed, there are significant gulfs between traditional 'Western' and Chinese models of fictional personhood. For example, the ideology of 'self' and of the 'individual' is so instrumental to Western models of personhood, statehood, and citizenship that it could legitimately be understood to be the major flag the West has planted in the social sciences. However, China has always had a much weaker reliance on this concept, which has permitted it to elaborate other models of social participation that fly in the face of individualism and 'inborn rights', such as familial, bureaucratic, and other contexts. This has been reflected by the protagonists in Ha Jin's novels – particularly Shuyu Liu in *Waiting* and Shao Bin in *In the Pond*. The engagement of overseas Chinese writers with their home culture and tradition offers valuable opportunity to their

readers, and especially their western readers. There are many writers who live overseas all their lives but strongly identify as writers of their 'home' country. Gertrude Stein is one example, living in France all her adult life but considered – by herself as well as critics – as nothing other than an American writer. The persistent engagement with Chinese tradition by émigré writers is consistent with the core of Chinese modernisation, which is itself based on an openness to cultural change and economic development as well as a privileged access to aspects of Chinese tradition.

These final observations conclude this thesis, but there is ample scope for ongoing research centred on other overseas Chinese writers and film makers and their views about China, such as Xiaolu Guo – a Chinese-British novelist and film maker, and Yiyun Li – a Chinese writer in the United States. Both figures were born in the 1970s, almost a generation later than the group of writers evaluated in this thesis. Having come of age during the opening up of China's economy and culture, these writers offer potential insights into the development of more recent phases of Chinese modernity, from different perspectives of age, gender, and cultural context, calibrating with a different phase of transnational discourse in literature.

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