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严仁卿

The Pioneering Poet of Nanyang Chinese: The Spirit and Homeland Concern of Qiu Shuyuan's Classical Poems¹

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Abstract Qiu Shuyuan was better known in Singapore as a literary pioneer in late Qing Dynasty. He called himself a 'Singapore Resident' while always regarded himself as a Chinese nationality. As most traditional scholars, he defended the tradition and cared about the state of the country, and actively supported the Hundred Days' Reform. He highly concerned about the situation of his motherland. He helped to develop political consciousness and cultural literacy among the Chinese immigrants through the founding of Chinese press, literature societies and Chinese schools. He was one of the political and cultural movement leaders of the Nanyang Chinese. *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* is his work. His poems contain strong personal feelings and had their propagative and demonstrative influences over the cultural circle of Nanyang Chinese. This article is to examine Qiu's homeland feelings and the refuge of his homeland concern and self-identity.

Key words Qiu Shuyuan; Khoo Seok Wan; Malaysian Chinese Classical Literature; homeland concern; self-identity

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Introduction

At the end of the 19th century, China suffered from internal and external problems, natural and man-made calamities, and a large number of Chinese people sought their livelihood overseas. After the failure of the Opium War, the Qing dynasty signed a treaty with the British in 1860, which allowed the Chinese to immigrate to the British colonies freely. By then more Chinese laborers went to Nanyang to do plantation and mining works. In 1881, Zuo Binglong (左秉隆) was appointed as the first consul of Singapore. At that time, there were more than eighty-six thousand Chinese people in Singapore, accounting for 62 percent of the total population. Qiu Shuyuan's father Qiu Zhengzhong (邱正中) was also a member among the tides of laborers. He first worked as a laborer to accumulate capital, then invested successfully in the rice industry and became one of the few millionaires in Singapore.

Qiu Shuyuan was born in Fujian Haicheng in 1874 and settled in Singapore at 24 years old in 1898, but he regarded himself as a Chinese all his life.¹ He was deeply edified by Chinese traditional culture and he thought, "people who concern about their country, will not be fettered by status and power" ("The Postscript of Gong Ding'an's Poem Collections" 2). He was concerned about the national affairs, promoted cultural activities, provided support and financial to Kang Youwei (康有为) and Hundred Day's Reform, but repeatedly rejected the invitation to be an officer in Fujian and Guangdong province as he refused to be constrained by fame and fortune. Later when he went bankrupt, he still expressed his concerns toward his homeland through newspaper columns and poems. He had been active in

1 Qiu Shuyuan's real name was Weixuan (炜蒹), Shuyuan (菽园) was his alternate name. He was also known as Khoo Seok Wan (邱菽园). According to himself, his ancestry's surname was originally Qiu (丘, a Chinese character without a right radical), it was changed to Qiu (邱, Chinese character with a right radical) to avoid the Confucius taboo in the early Qing Dynasty. After the May 4th Movement, Qiu Shuyuan changed his surname back to the original Qiu (丘), and his self-build tombstone used his "Qiu Shuyuan" (丘菽园). Hence, along with his intention, this article will use the original surname in its discussion, but in the case of reference to other's work, the surname from the original text will be remained.

writing since he was 15 years old, and he was especially good in eight-line poems that he was given the good reputation as the pioneering poet of Nanyang Chinese (“Qiu Shuyuan The Pioneering Poet of Nanyang Chinese” 89). His works include *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* (《丘菽园居士诗集》), *Collected Poems of Xiao Hongsheng* (《啸虹生诗钞》), *Shuyuan’s Superfluous Talk* (《菽园赘谈》), *Study in Five Hundreds Stones Room* (《五百石洞天挥麈》) and others.

Researches are mainly focusing on political and cultural studies about Qiu Shuyuan, but there are not much exploration of his thought through poems. Studies on his poems are gradually being valued after the 80s, such as Zhu Jieqin’s (朱杰勤) *Sin Chew Poet Qiu Shuyuan* (1986), Shi Yilin’s (施懿琳) *Looking at Qiu Shuyuan’s State of Mind in Twilight Years Through Zen Poem and The Diplomatic* (2012), Wang Zhiwei’s (王志伟) *A study of Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry On Historical Themes* (2000), Meng Xingyu’s (蒙星宇) *An Exotic in The Southeast Asia: A Research of Shuyuan Qiu’s Chinese Classical Literature Case* (2005), Chen Xiaoying’s (陈小英) *A Research of Qiu Shuyuan’s Chinese Classical Literature* (2012), Gao Jiaqian’s (高嘉谦) *Qiu Shuyuan and Singapore-Malaysia History of Literature* (2004), and Zhu Chongke’s (朱崇科) *Sprouting of The Native Consciousness or ‘Origin’ context: Homeland Concern In Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry* (2008). These studies discussed Qiu Shuyuan’s achievements in literature generally. However, studies on his poems are relatively less than those on his status in political history and literary history. This article discusses Qiu Shuyuan’s spirit in defending traditional poetry and feelings in homeland concern, through his origin and contents of his poetry, in order to sort out the shift factors in his self-identity.

Able to Develop the South Island with Culture

Qiu Shuyuan’s profound cultural attainments came mainly from his own natural gift, the sophisticated scholar environment he had during his childhood, and his father’s deliberation cultivating him to fame. Before Qiu Shuyuan arrived in Singapore at 8 years old, he had finished reading *Four Books and Five Classics* (四书五经) in a traditional school. He did not give up studies when he settled in Singapore, later then he could recite *The Zhuo Xiu Trilogy* (左绣正传) at the age of 12, and pen the *A Scripture of Eight Strokes* (八笔之文) at 13 years old (“The Explanation of A Private School Tutor” 1). In 1888, the 15-year-old Qiu Shuyuan was back to Haicheng to prepare sitting for the County Exam, which he passed and became a scholar (秀才). After that he learned to Zeng Shiyu (曾士玉) and Zeng Zongyan (太史曾宗彦), who had great influences on his writing and thinking in his life later.

Qiu Shuyuan was endowed by nature with intelligence and he rose to fame

at young age. *The Jade Flute Poem* (《玉笛诗》) he wrote at 15 years old in his hometown was rhythmically, literally and artistically strong, that he obtained his teachers and friends' appreciation, as well as the title Qiu The Jade Flute which had made him famous in his hometown.

When Qiu Shuyuan was in the literary town Haicheng, he wrote *Surviving in The Year of Tiger Gengyin Oucun* (《庚寅偶存》, 1890) at the age of 17. These poems, a total of eighteen poems written by the teenage Qiu Shuyuan were later collected in the 7th volume of *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan* (《丘菽园居士诗集》). His precocious talent in poetic work was appreciated by the chief of Zhangzhou prefecture Hou Caiji (漳州太守侯材冀), who often gave exhortation to his youthful temperament and became a guide for his life ("Foreword of Hou Caiji" 1).

Qiu Shuyuan was the first member of the same generation in his family who passed the imperial examinations at the provincial level and became a *juren* (举人) when he was 21 years old. Both his first and second wives had literary talent as they liked poetry and prose, and they were his friends and inspiration for writing. At 18 years old, Qiu married Wang Mei (王玫), who is the eldest daughter of Wang Zhengzhong (王振宗) of Longxi (a county in Hokkien province, also known as Wang Yuchi Yourong 龙溪王玉墀游戎), who called herself "The Lady of East Gate." According to Qiu Shuyuan's description in *Shuyuan Zhuitan*, Wang Mei liked reading and was talented in poetry writing. Qiu Shuyuan taught her the Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty poetry, and he used her poems as the children's teaching materials for a private school. At the second year of their marriage, Wang died of illness in Gulang Island (鼓浪屿). Her death was a great pain for Qiu, and he expressed his love for her and her untimely decease in his writing ("The Lady of East Gate" 17). Later, he hired artist to draw a portrait of her but was unsuccessful, then he wrote two odes for her with the title *Ti Wangfu Dongmen Nüshi Cangao* (《题亡妇东门女士残稿》, *A Draft of After The Death of The Lady of East Gate*) and seventeen poems to yearn her ("A draft of after the death of the lady of east gate" 8).¹

After the death of Wang Mei, Qiu Shuyuan wallowed in prostitution and alcohol. At the age of twenty, he married Lu Jie (陆结), who was also a literary talented woman. She was with Qiu Shuyuan through the ups and downs of the second half of his life for forty-four years and never left him even when he was poor and sick, hence Qiu Shuyuan respected her. After Qiu Shuyuan's bankruptcy, Lu Jie showed her homemaking accomplishment and gave full support to his hobbies. Lu Jie's considerate characteristics had made Qiu Shuyuan enjoyed in the pleasure of reading and writing at the time when he had financial difficulties in the later period

1 The poems quoted in the following sections of this article are from the above publications.

of his life.

Qiu Shuyuan grew up in the late Qing Dynasty when enemies raided the borders and the national affairs was declining, but it was also a time of the glorious years for young Chinese students. This group of students was traditionally educated, they were proficient in classical works, poetry and prose, and were high in the spirit for reformation. In 1894, Qiu Shuyuan passed the provincial examination and received the title of *juren* (举人), in the same batch with Huang Naishang (黄乃裳), the father-in-law of Lin Wenqing (林文庆). In 1896, Qiu Shuyuan failed the examination in Beijing and then spent some days roaming in Suzhou and Hangzhou. When he went to Hong Kong, he was associated with those who were known as Eight friends in the poems (诗中八友) like Lin Henian (林鹤年) and Pan Feisheng (潘飞声). In times of instability, they became good friends as they were like-minded and sharing similar views. He also witnessed Kang Youwei's essays and he admired Kang's political view in reformation when he was in Shanghai, and this had led to their friendship in days to come.

In the winter of 1901, Qiu Shuyuan became the president of the General Chinese Trade Affairs Association in Singapore (新加坡华商阁 , the predecessor of Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry). At the age of 24, he had begun to have an actual and lofty social status in the Chinese society. Qiu Shuyuan spent the longest period of his life living in Singapore for 52 years except for the 7 years before he was 8 and the 9 years between 15 to 24 years old, but his heart belonged to China all the time. At that time, Singapore was still a British colony, and his status was only a Chinese living in Singapore. Singapore was oriented to the whole world and was the intersection of the eastern and western society, a place where different ideology came together. When Qiu Shuyuan arrived in Singapore, he inherited most of his father's fortune and became a wealthy eminent man in Singapore. He mingled between the eastern and western civilizations, as well as business, political and literary circles. It was rare for someone who have a profound cultural foundation and rich resources in the business world at that period of time.

Advocating learning and studying was Qiu Shuyuan's lifelong philosophy. He was the only *juren* in Singapore and Malaya, when he had settled in Singapore, he became the leader of the Chinese literary circle. He dedicated himself in promoting Chinese literary and traditional cultural to Chinese immigrants in Singapore while running his family business. His hope to promote culture can be seen from the sentence below, "Singapore is separated (from Mainland) by oceans, it was not influenced by royal culture but vulgar habits, it is land of natural wilderness, it is not a town of poetry. However when Lu Ji entered Luoyang city, more works

from literary talent appeared; when Han Yu came to Chaozhou, he nourished the barren surrounding” (“Poetry Commentary in the Room of Five Hundred Stones”). Influenced by strategy of the Huixian Association (会贤社) and Tunan Association (图南社) founded by the consul of the Qing Dynasty in Singapore Zuo Binglong (左秉隆) and Huang Zunxian (黄遵宪), he founded two literature associations named Lize (丽泽) and Lequn (乐群), and at the same time, he managed the Huiyin Association (会吟社) founded by Wang Huiyi (王会议), Tong Meisheng (童梅生) and others. The three associations had different functions: Lize was mainly used for teaching poetry, traditional prose, contemporary writing, ode, essay etc.; Lequn which was expanded a year later was focusing on practical knowledge. Qiu Shuyuan’s earnest effort in promoting poetry writing on the newspapers had a far-reaching impact. In 1924, he founded the Xingzhou Poetry Association (星洲诗檀社), and five years later when he was teaching in Nanhua lecture house (南华讲舍), he apprenticed thirteen female disciples to teach them poetry. Qiu seemed to be very happy as the scenario coincided with Yuanmei’s (袁枚) story of apprenticing thirteen female disciples in the Qianlong times, and he wrote “desiring a magical drawing pen, to rewrite the gathering of the poets at Hulou” (《南华讲舍纪事》, Notes of Nanhua lectures).

Qiu Shuyuan was aware of the importance of national education. Before his bankruptcy, besides sponsoring the local Chinese schools, he also donated a huge sum of money in the founding of the Japan Tokyo Datong High School (日本东京大同高等学校) where he was appointed as the director, and also donated one thousand dollars to Cui Ying School (萃英书院) to aid free schooling. During Emperor Guangxu’s reign (1899), Qiu Shuyuan, Lin Wenqing (林文庆), Chen Hecheng (陈合成), Song Hongxiang (宋鸿祥) and others co-founded Singapore Chinese Girls’ School. The school fund was six thousand dollars at that time, and he donated three thousand dollars alone. The twelve volumes of *Poetry Commentary in the Room of Five Hundred Stones* were also published in the same year. Although he could only merely maintain his living after bankruptcy and became less in power later, he still enthusiastically engaged in culture, education, religion and social welfare undertakings, and continued writing as well as participated in the cultural construction.

In 1910, Qiu Shuyuan asked Kang Youwei to revise his poems when the later arrived Singapore in a trip to the five continents. In May, Kang Youwei selected some of Qiu Shuyuan’s poem and wrote Preface of Qiu Shuyuan’s Poetry (丘菽园所著诗序), lauded Qiu Shuyuan’s enthusiastic spirit in the reform movement and praised his moral as his poem goes “be rich in knowledge although the household is

poor, one gains skillful in poetry due to poverty.” To express appreciation in lines, Qiu Shuyuan specially wrote *Proofreading of My Work form Mr Kang Gengsheng and My Proofreading towards his Masterpiece* (康更生先生检定拙稿复出大作属校), *Four Poems Dedicated to The Revisit of Mr Kang Gengsheng After He Travelled the Five Continents* (康更生先生自五大洲游归, 重晤新坡, 蒙出诗稿全集属校感赋四首), and *A Poem Sent Out to Mr Kang Gengsheng* (犹记一首寄康更生先生). Between 1917 to 1922, Qiu Shuyuan’s four volumes of *Xiao Hongsheng Shi Chao* and three volumes of *Xiaohongsheng Shi Xu Chao* (《啸虹生诗续钞》, Sequel to Collected Poems of Xiao Hongsheng) were combined, most of them are erotic poetry. Kang Youwei not only wrote a foreword in *The Recount of Qiu Shuyuan Poems Collection*, but also funded the printing and publication (*The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan Kulapati* 1).

In Qiu Shuyuan’s later years, he suffered from Polydipsia and Leprosy Disease. He rearranged his own poems and compiled *Shuyuan Shiji Chubian* (《菽园诗集初编》, *Shuyuan’s Collection of Poems, First Edition*), consisted of 696 poems. Those which were in *Xiao Hongsheng Shi Chao* were excluded. Besides recuperating, he read and wrote poetry in a clear mind. In 1940 itself, when he was sixty-seven years old, he wrote 317 poems in just one year. It shows his high enthusiasm for writing and his exuberance for poetry. He compiled the poems he wrote in the year into *Shuyuan Shiji Erbian* (《菽园诗集二编》, *Shuyuan’s Collection of Poems, Second Edition*)

Qiu Shuyuan had a sense of accomplishment for his self-assessment: “this man didn’t let down his youth time, although some business during his young age cannot be continued. Be able to develop the south island with culture, remain poetry to support the national customs. The Skills at old time shocks the remaining people, at the same time competes with thousands of men. Having more leisure time to enjoy meal and rest, and to learn from Lu Fangweng at the later stage when older” (《易老》, *Easily Getting Old*). Qiu Shuyuan was feeling thankful for “living the youth time to the fullest,” although he could not continue some of his career, but what he had done on the saying “Be able to develop the south island with culture, remain poetry to support the national customs” was comparable with the achievements of many other people. Since he was like Feng Tang (冯唐) who was unable to achieve his ambition at old age, he learned Lu You’s (陆游) way of delighting in peace, let bygones be bygones, and being satisfied with the company of poems and wine. This poem of Qiu Shuyuan describing the ancients not only summarized himself very well and said of his lifelong goal, it also expressed his attitude towards life in the future, that he would not be sorrowful nor grudgeful, and it showed his level

of achievement in open-mindedness and living beyond the touch of earth. These poems revealed his thoughts and aspirations, and his courage to face the past and self-criticism. His sincerity, objectiveness, and not belittling himself was exactly the result of his own self-scrutiny.

Body Settled at the South but the Heart is at the North

Qiu Shuyuan grew up in three distinct environments throughout his life. After he was born in Haicheng, he then lived in Macau with his mother the next year until eight years old, later on he moved to Singapore. In 1888, he returned to Haicheng with his father to study, attended examination, underwent marriage, and lived in Beijing for eight years until he went for examination in Beijing at the age of twenty-two in year 1895. During 1896 and 1897, he had been travelling within China, Hong Kong and Singapore due to the decease of his father, then he settled down in Singapore. At that time, Macau was a loan state for the Portuguese, Singapore was a British colony, while China was in the turbulent times of the Qing Dynasty. Qiu Shuyuan settled in Singapore from the age of 24 until his death on December 1, 1941. He lived in Singapore for 52 years of his life. In his childhood, teenage and young adulthood, he learned from the various cultures of the east and the west, which had a great influence on his future thoughts and personality.

The Chinese literati had been inseparable from national politics since ancient times, that one who excels in learning could be an official and the scholars persevered ten years in studies despite hardships, it was all for earning the fame and becoming an official, and to serve for the country and the community. The Chinese traditional education that Qiu Shuyuan had been receiving since young had made him a strong sense of literati's mission. Even though he spent not much time living in China, but he still regarded himself a China civilian. The literati's tradition of Chinese civilization was to concern about China and the people as well as hoped to make a difference to the country, hence the scholars were particularly sensitive to political and national tensions. Qiu Shuyuan followed this ideology to write poetry. At the end of the nineteenth century when China was struggling with internal conflicts and diplomacy, he was like his compatriots in China, worrying about the tensions in the motherland, was discontented with the incompetence of the ruling class, and was ashamed of being oppressed by other powerful countries. On one hand, he actively supported the reform and rescue of the country, on another hand, he did not give up the right to criticise.

In Singapore, Qiu Shuyuan was wealthy, standing at the forefront of the current affairs. He could actually stay away from the war, but he did not forget

his responsibility as a scholar. He used his influence and financial resources in Singapore to make a proactive response to the affairs in China, such as the launch of 578 people joint telegram to the Qing government, donated a fortune to fund Kang Youwei and Tang Caichang's (唐 才 常) royalist activity and military uprising, raised funds from the wealthy businessmen in Singapore for national salvation, as well as published the *Thien Nam Shin Pao* to promote China's reform and spread the reformism thought. His feelings of concern, effort, and humiliation for his motherland were consistent with the patriotic spirit of intellectuals in China at that time.

In 1898 when the Reform Movement (戊 戌 变 法) had failed, Empress Dowager Cixi put Emperor Guangxu under house arrest, abolished the new government and ordered the killing of the reformers. That led to the death of the six men of the reform movement, and the exile of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao (梁 启 超). With the influence of Kang Youwei, Qiu Shuyuan actively supported the reformed royalist. When he heard this news, in a painful mood he wrote the poem "Whirlwind" (〈 骤 风 〉):

Repeated calls of trading shocked the traveler's windows, the flag is waving in the wind.

Yellow leaves fall when the wind blows, clouds at the mountain wish to cross over the river.

Sun sets light dims and the Dragon is on land, sand calms shadow scatters but wild goose hard to meet each other.

Belongs to whom the title of brave warrior, the ruthless of heaven and earth make me struggling myself.¹

This poem expresses an overseas intellectual's sympathy on the China's reformation comrades and the failure of the revolution movement. The beginning of the poem describes the news of the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898 abroad, and the rising tides of the situation makes people who cared about the fate of the motherland tension. Yet, the expected reformation has been hit by failure, great aspiration was difficult to fulfil, and lives were sacrificed heroically. The poet was regretful of the bad timing and the cruelty of the reality, which had led the people of the country into such a terrible tragedy. The sadness and frustration expressed in the poem showed the political tendency of Qiu Shuyuan.

Then China experienced the boxer rebellion (义 和 团) and also The Eight-

1 Qiu noted: in August, written when heard of the coup in Beijing.

nation Alliance (八国联军) incident. Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu took refuge in Xi-An, while the alliance robbed and burned around, the national assets were looted and the people lost their homes. Sensing the domestic chaos, Qiu Shuyuan felt sad in the overseas, so he wrote six poems namely “Six Poems of Thoughts in 1900” (〈庚子感事六首〉), and one of them as follows:

The mighty power invaded the metropolis, homeless at the corner of the sea,

Floating clouds covered the sunrise, hometown stopped the returns.

Soldiers came to the door gate, officers and descendant of the throne scared of being killed.

The braves at the river town, still believed in the rumours for saving country.

Qiu Shuyuan lamented the chaos of the boxer rebellion which led to the occupation of Beijing by the eight allied forces. “Wen Wu” means his hope to back homeland was obstructed. During the national turmoil where the country fell, the people also turned homeless. In the emergency of the arrival enemies, the ruler was unambitious and did not counteract the outsider together with the people. It had led to an intensified internal strife. The boxer rebellion was loose, and the saying “supporting the Qing Dynasty and wiping out the foreign invaders” was just an empty talk. At the turning point of the century, China’s internal consumption and corruption intensified, hence it was unable to compete with the other powerful countries in the world.

Although Qiu Shuyuan was in the South Asia, but his heart was still remembering China, sharing the honour and disgrace with his fellow countryman in China. In “Six Poems of Thoughts in 1900” (〈庚子感事〉), the fifth and sixth poems, Qiu Shuyuan narrated “everyday look at the South East side, calling for North West souls,” “righteous flags desolated, the soul of new dead mixed with grievances,” “there are not many officials left,” to describe the state although himself was staying overseas, but he was still grieving about the loss of the life of many compatriots in China. At that time, Qiu Shuyuan became the president of the Royalist Party branch (保皇党分会) that had been established for almost a year in Singapore. He donated 100,000 yuan to help Kang YouWei, and he expressed his determination to support the new campaign with concrete actions. He hoped that the monarch would return to governance, and the country would unite and become stronger.

After the overthrow of the Manchu regime, Qiu Shuyuan accepted the reality and looked forward to the emergence of a new country government. However, the civil war in China continued, and warlord overrun, he felt sad and anxious when he saw the chaos in the motherland. On May 9 1915, Yuan Shikai (袁世凯), who schemed to be the emperor, signed a treaty with Japan, and this day became the national humiliation day. Qiu Shuyuan wrote: “the heat of the lonely island is making the wave to surge up, causing the mist from mountain to the river,” “rather than going to the altar to look for contend, old veteran as I will also able to join the army” (*Jia Yin Chang Xia Da Feng Xi An the Consul*, 甲寅长夏答冯息盒领事). He proclaimed that although he was in Singapore, he still had the feeling towards the political turmoil in the motherland, and although he was aged, but he was still willing to sacrifice his life to serve the country. As compared with his pride in the past time, his enthusiasm was unabated.

As Qiu Shuyuan was far from China, he had more freedom of speech in the British colony, Singapore. Therefore, his poems were daring to criticize the political situation directly, especially the corruption and incompetence of the rulers. The critical spirit was the distinct ideological of Qiu Shuyuan’s poems. And because of his profound cultural foundation, he also made full use of the ancient allusions and the poetic art with a high degree of integration of metaphorical skills so that the functions of the poetry commentary could be vividly demonstrated. Qiu’s poetry for political criticism were able to comment on current events in a timely and specific manner, and be an allegory of the rulers. Qiu Shuyuan was good in recording the history by using poems, creatively describing the details by using allusions. His poetry was straight to the point, full of personal feelings, impassioned, touching, and it was rare at home country and abroad.

The Downfall and Settlement in Singapore

In 1907, Qiu Shuyuan was declared bankrupt when he failed in his investment, and he was sentenced to poverty. He left the business and politics, was falling from the top, and ended his career. However, he remained the spirit of “body is at south, but the heart belongs to the north,” and he did not stop paying attention to the development of the political situation in his motherland. At that time, he believed that Qing Dynasty had come to the end, and he claimed, “the lost path makes the dog tired,” “the nation is dying” (“Strolling,” 〈野步〉). His efforts without hesitation was unable to bring a bright future to the country, perhaps over disappointed with the situation, adding to having just experienced the great changes in life, Qiu Shuyuan started to see through the worldly affairs. In his poem *A Reply*

to *Xu Yunbo* (《寄酬许允伯》), he revealed “only able to survive in Singapore, solicitude of sadness and happiness bring me closer to Zen Buddhist religion.” We can notice the emergence of his intention to stay in Singapore for the rest of his life and the tendency to receive the Buddhist believes.

From the status of a powerful and influential figure to a normal civilian, and several times of troubles he got in life, the changing of identity did not destroy the spiritual will of Qiu Shuyuan. He could still have fun in everyday life, from a poem he wrote, “Wife untied the books and basking in the sun with a helper, husband did nothing but just sleep. Another day has wasted, alone the tree is blossom with flowers but the guest was self-pitied” (sixth of the “Eight Poems of The Alley,” 〈陋巷杂事诗八首〉之六), we can see that his life was still relaxed. His wife, Madam Lu, was with him through the ups and downs, and they respected and loved each other, just like Zhao Yun (朝云) for Su Dongpo (苏东坡). There is a saying in *Ding Feng Bo* (定风波) by Su Dongpo, goes “always envy the handsome young man on the earth, even the heaven loved him and gave him a beautiful lady. Everyone praised the girl’s song, her smile was gentle, and the song of wind began to make the world cool as a snowflake flew over the hot summer day. You came back from a faraway place, but you looked younger. The smile still looked like the fragrance of Lingnan plum blossoms. I asked you, shouldn’t life in Lingnan be very tough for you? But you answered calmly, for where my peaceful mind belongs, it is my homeland.” Qiu Shuyuan found peace in Singapore while China was in chaos, learned the Buddhist teaching and Zen, hence his spirit lastly found a sense of belonging, and had a feeling that the best days were just that, being able to share the teaching of Buddha and Zen with his wife and needed not to “envy Dongpo has a compassionate wife.”

At this point, we can see that Qiu Shuyuan was not merely remembering his homeland China, but also had a wider world in his heart. He said, “why limit the remaining border only to south and north,” although “surging waves in thousands of miles is unlimited,” but he was still worrying about the country as he wrote “the current political situation is worrying” (“Remembering Yi Shi Fu (Shun Ding) During Travel to Hong Kong,” 〈寄怀易实甫(顺鼎)香江旅次〉). As the Zen study of Qiu Shuyuan grew higher, his thoughts gradually merged into his poems, so the Zen’s thinking in the poem became more and more intense. From the poem, *Chan Yin Ji* (《忏因偈》, *Gatha of Repent Karma*) he wrote at his forty, he narrated “who believe in triple lives are still unable to fill it, repent at human and heaven stage to eliminate the cause and effect” as a self-reflection. Until he wrote the poem, *Understand the Buddha Gatha* (《参佛偈》), at his fifty goes “meditation separates

one from live in front of the niche, I am joining the Buddha in the morning, how could I see the Buddha if I don't know Buddha, I won't talk about this statement in those years," he had been able to calmly face the life and death, the rich and poor due to his reflection for the past. Qiu Shuyuan at this time, had reached the point of quiet and detached.

Since then, Qiu Shuyuan had been investing a lot of time and energy in the creation of poetry and newspaper. On 1st January 1913, *Cheng Nam Jit Poh* (《振南日报》) started publication and Qiu Shuyuan became the director. He had close ties with 12 newspapers in Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Shanghai in all his life. As a founder, distributor, general compilation, editor and other positions, he was a very experienced cultural promoter. His main occupation after bankruptcy was in the Singapore newspaper publication until his old age.¹

In year 1934, Qiu Xinmin (邱新民), a nephew of Qiu visited them from Xiamen. When he returned to Xiamen, Qiu Shuyuan dedicated a poem titled "Send A Friend Home" (《送友人返国》) to him, to encourage him to be a real man, do his best to defend his country and his future. That year, Qiu was in his sixty-one, he wrote a poem to greet himself, goes "Look inside South Mountain, there are a lot of fun before honour is gained, thirty six thousand drinking place, the great hundred years I have passed sixty percent of them" ("Sixty One Self-wish Birthday," <六一自寿>), he was still heavy rely on liquor. His self-greeting poem was even more freestyled one year later:

Three thousand disaster allowed to point out, sixty-two years old appeared illusion.

When mentioned about life-less and world-less, the evidence were me and the solid body.

It's necessary to eat and dress, look and smell as the karma of past life has not yet fulfilled.

Self-laugh wild fox by using Rap song, waiting and follow closely to

1 The relationship of Qiu Shuyuan and the Newspaper and publishers, see Qiu Shuyuan's Newspaper activities, Retrospect and Prospect of Sinology Research (philosophical history) volume 2, page 176-190 (Beijing: Zhonghua Bookstore, 1995). Besides, there are Wang Kang Ding's Qiu Shuyuan and Zhen Nam Jit Poh (1990-1991), Journal of the South Sea Society, volume 45 and 46, page 82-92; Wang Kangding's (1991) Qiu Shuyuan and Sin Chew Jit Poh (Attached to the catalog of poems and poems written by Qiu Shuyuan in Sin Chew Jit Poh in 1929), Xue Cong (Singapore), volume 3, page 239-260; Wang Kangding's (June, 1995) Historical Facts Retraces of Tian Nan Xin Bao, volume 16, page 169-176, Singapore: Asian Culture; Wang Kangding's (1995) Qiu Shuyuan and Hong Kong Hua Zhi Daily, page 56-76. Singapore: Chinese literature and culture in southeast Asia.

counting the dust.(Sixty-two Year Old Birthday)

Compared to the time, Qiu Shuyuan felt that his soul had freed itself from the body at his fifty, he watched his body and created a farewell poem: “The end of a famous man remains gorgeous, the end of person meditate Zen should be brightened. Laugh freely and walk on the cloud, received infinite life and walk freely” (〈乙丑清明节午倦假寐, 忽觉已魂离体, 回视块躯留诗作别, 醒记其语, 因录出之〉, “Ching Ming Festival on year 1925, when taking a nap at noon, suddenly felt like the soul was out of the body, created a poem when look at the body to say goodbye, recalled it after awake, so recorded it down”), it can be seen that he has normal heart on his life, however, for the motherland, he was still unable to let down. When his friends from Fujian told him about the exile in the inland China and the the failure of manipulation of the Minzheng 闽政 (Fukien) government; Japan attacked and occupied the northeast of China, proclaimed Pu Yi as the emperor and set up an illegal ManChu country, sent troops to Rihe, Hebei, built Yin Ru Geng an illegal organization, and pressed forward to Beijing, Qiu was extremely filled with grief and indignation. Verses with such feelings always occurred in his poems such as “Booklet recorded the dream but I was afraid to think of it, feel sad when talking about home country” (“A Poem About The Pain of Exile in The Mainland when The Guest from Min (Fukien) Visited To Singapore,” 〈闽乡新客抵坡相访, 为言内地流亡之痛, 诗以志慨〉), and “Suddenly thought of the east coast wind and sea, I felt Shame for being leisure and do nothing”(“Feeling After Watching The View After A Rain At Residence,” 〈寓斋雨后观物有感〉).

In 1936, Qiu ShuYuan was sick and poor, he lay on bed for three months, knowing his time has come. Hence, other than Lu’s tomb, the sixty-four-year-old’ Qiu Shuyuan had also built his own graveyard, and he wrote himself an inscription poem:

There is no space in the seas and hills to build my abode, how can the buried bones leap across the sword lake.

I could no longer arise even if you beckon 3 times, laying in Singapore enduring long thirst.

Flying flowers realized their butterfly past life, caressing the epigraph thoughts stop and future generations prepare the chariot.

If you don’t believe just look at the tomb grass, yearly they come back with new greenness.

As the motherland turmoil was unlike the stability in Singapore, Qiu Shuyuan had planned to stay in Singapore. He also stressed that his great ambition would not die, and his cultural career could be extended in Singapore. During a serious illness, his friend monk Rui Yu (瑞于和尚) and Li Juncheng (李俊承) had been sending him continuous sympathy, he could therefore feel the affection between friends. Qiu Shuyuan liked to accept new information and were very interested in science. That year he wrote *Jin Youxian Sishou* (〈今游仙四首〉 , *Four Poems of Nowadays Fairyland Excursion*), a description of Mars, man landing on the moon, hot air balloon and microscope, which was a rare type of written work in classical poetry with clever thoughts. Besides, he wrote “Four Chapters of Testimony of Becoming Buddhist” (〈课心自证成偈四章〉) in observance of the things and his body. It was not a coincident that Qiu Shuyuan in his sixty was still good in his eye sight and hearing, full of black hair without a single grey hair, but it was the results of his training. Where he would be buried, was no longer important for him.

On November 27 1941, three days before Qiu Shuyuan passed away, he wrote the last poem of his life:

It's a long journey to send him home, a word of thank you in return is glad enough.

All passengers were speaking in the same dialect, step on the boat and feel like already been at home.

(“A Postscript After Awaken From Dreaming of Sending A Friend Off Home,” 〈梦中送人回国醒后记之〉)

Qiu Shuyuan dreamt of sending a friend off home, perhaps an instinctive projection of his inner desire, that even if he had decided to be buried in the south, but his soul would return to his homeland. “All passengers were speaking in the same dialect, step on the boat and feel like already been at home,” describes his eagerness to return to the homeland, as if there were a bunch of folks possessing the same mood as he had, having a common destination. Once he was on board, they departed with bustling noise. Though he was on his way home, he felt like he had already returned to his hometown. The entire poem runs over with the excitement and pleasure of returning home, it is more likely an inner passion and hope when perusing the feeling. To Qiu Shuyuan who was in his twilight of his life and having a good understanding about the meaning of life and death, death meant return home for him, where his soul belonged was his homeland. At this moment, he was longing to return to his spiritual homeland.

On November 30, 1941, Qiu died in a small pavilion. His funeral was on December 4th.¹ He was buried at the graveyard at the Bukit Brown Cemetery that he built before he died. “Comes at the time that myself have the charm of Yuanming, when the sorrow will think about the mausoleum” (“A research on Qiu Shuyuan” 98), fully describes his character. Qiu Shuyuan’s life has been through a great storm, he was once a businessman, cultural worker, politician, and poet; a line of seven words “Tomb of Intellect Qiu Shuyuan” (处士丘菽园君墓) on the tombstone, summed up his rich and dramatic life.

In 1949, 8 years after Qiu Shuyuan passed away, his daughter Qiu Mingquan (丘鸣权) and his son-in-law took *The Poems of Shuyuan Kulapati* written and edited by the late Qiu Shuyuan as the blueprint, edited and published the *The Poems of Qiu Shuyuan Kulapati*, and make the thoughts and creative essence of Qiu Shuyuan’s life to be passed down to the next generations.

Conclusion

Qiu Shuyuan had undergone great ups and downs in all his life, he was talented, and open-minded. He was greatly concerned about his homeland throughout his life, and he was at the state of “the place where my heart settles is my homeland” in his later years, staying in Singapore for a long time until it became his second home. He lived in “the age of violent cultural and political collisions between the east and the west”², where the the motherland was internally and externally troubled, precarious, while the place he was staying was rich and stable, provided him the environment to become a wealthy businessman and a literary leader, and allowed him to showcase his ability. Earlier on political enthusiasm, then the earnest in the promotion of Chinese culture, he was able to do his best with no regrets and truly archived the attainment of “In success, let others be benefited; in hard time, seek self-development,” perfected himself in poem writing. Whichever way we value him, he was the most outstanding Chinese intellectuals in oversea at that time. He practiced all he learned from his life in “able to develop the south island with culture,” published the newspaper, ran schools, and set up poets society, his acts of inheriting and developing the Chinese traditional culture can be described as pioneering at that time. From the life of Qiu Shuyuan, we saw a late Qing dynasty

1 The National Library of Singapore's exhibition shows the death certificate of Qiu Shuyuan, showing his death date at 10pm on November 30, 1941, with the death registration on December 1. The funeral date taken from Qiu Xinmin's argument.

2 Li Yuanjin in her book, "the impact of East and West culture and three responses of Singapore's intellectual elite: Qiu Shuyuan, Lin Wenqing, Song Wangxiang comparison" one of the main point.

scholar migrant, although in the end he did not return to his homeland, but he found his physical and mental home in poetry production.

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Cultural Enlightenment and Construction of Subjectivity: The Topographical Writings of Hsu Yun-Tsiao

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Abstract Hsu Yun-Tsiao (许云樵, 1905-1981), or Hsu Yu, was born in Jiangshu Province of China. He left for South East Asia in 1931 to involve himself in historical research as well as editorial and education activities. Hsu devoted all his energy to Southeast Asia Studies, and gained great reputation with significant research outcomes, especially in the research area of Southeast Asia studies. This paper looks into Hsu Yun-Tsiao's massive travel genre and topographical writings, examines the literature traits influenced by his living and travelling experiences from his homeland to Southeast Asia as well as his conscious and unconscious sense of history in the text and his life, all of which are in fact a way of identity construction. To a certain extent, travelogues which emphasized on rational narration and transmission of information represented by Hsu, restoring and testifying some collective experiences of Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia after World War II.

Key words Hsu Yun-Tsiao; topographical; travel literature; cultural enlightenment; construction of subjectivity

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Introduction

In recent years, topographical writings in Malaysian Chinese literature has attracted the attention of some scholars. For example, Chen Da Wei's (陈大为 Chan Tah Wei) analysis on Lin Chun Mei's (林春美 Lim Choon Bee) prose and Xin Jin

Shun's (辛金顺 Sen Kim Sun) poems from the topographical perspective (2006); Zhong Yi Wen's (钟怡雯 Choong Yee-Voon) review on Du Zhong Quan's (杜忠全 Toh Teong Chuan) "The Old Penang Series" (2010); Lim Choon Bee and Chen Qing Fei's 陈庆妃 discussion on the rise of contemporary Malaysian Chinese topographical literature in publication supplements etc.¹ Their main concern is on the existence and development of contemporary Malaysian Chinese topographical prose. However, the existence of Malaysian Chinese topographical prose can actually be traced back to years ago, which is the two decades between the outbreak of Malayan Emergency and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. There are a number of famous travelogues during that period of time, including *Tropical View* 热带三友 (1952) by Wu Jin 吴进, *The Impression towards India* 印度印象 (1960) by Lu Bai Ye 鲁白野, *Cross-straits of Senna* 塞纳河两岸, *The Mediterranean Coast* 地中海之滨, *A Corner of Atlantic* 大西洋一角, *Sailing in the Mid of Indian Ocean* 印度洋舟中, *Scenic Mountains and Rivers* 名山胜水 by Shi Sheng Lian 连士升 (Lien Shih Sheng), *Travel Notes of Indonesia* 印尼散记 (1960) by Leo Suryadinata 廖建裕, *Travel Notes of Siam* 暹罗散记 (1960) by Ye Zhong Ling 叶钟玲 (Yeap Chong Leng), *Trip to India* 印度之行 (1955) by Mo Li Guang 莫理光 (Mok Lee Kwang) and etc. These famous topographical writings are different from contemporary Malaysian Chinese topographical literatures in many aspects.

Choong Yee-Voon (2010) thinks that the history of Malaysian Chinese topographical literature is "a kind of 'record' in the early period of time, as its historical value is higher than its literary value," it "first emerged as part of 'geography', rather than human geography that is closely related to life experiences or written works with topographical concept"(147). Taking Wu Jin, Lu Bai Ye and other writers' works as examples, she pointed out that the traits of writing in Malaysian Chinese topographical prose during the early period of time emphasized

1 Research outcomes can be seen in Chan Tah Wei, "Discussion on the Description of Name of Places and Sense of Tastes in Topographical Writings of Lim Choon Bee," *Nanyang Siang Pau. Nanyang Literature and Arts*, 2001.09.10; this article was then included in the discussion of Zhong Ke Si and Toh Teong Chuan, with its length expanded and written as an academic thesis "An Interpretation of Space and the Anchoring of Gustation: The Topographical Writings in Malaysian-Chinese Prose," *Journal of Humanities*, Issue 2 (2004/06); Chan Tah Wei, "Topography of Imagination and Memory: Poems about Homeland of Sen Kim Sun," *Modern Chinese Literature*, Issue 9 (2006/06). Both articles were then included in Chan Tah Wei's *PI of thinking: Writings of Tectonic Plates and Spaces in Malaysian Chinese Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Mentor Publishing, 2006). Choong Yee-Voon, "From Theory to Practice: Topographical Writing in Malaysian Chinese Literature," *Journal of Chinese Literature of National Cheng Kung University*, 29(2010): 148-158. Lim Choon Bee, "The Rise of Literature Supplements and Malaysian Chinese Topography Prose," *Jinan Journal*, 6(2010): 79-86; Chen Qing Fei, "The Rise of Malaysian Chinese Topographical and Cultural Prose in 1990s," *Jinan Journal*, 11(2014): 104-110.

more on knowledge and history. She therefore agreed on these important texts that in between literature and references for its special significance at the pre-history stage of Malaysian Chinese prose (Choong, 2014: 173). However, there are a lot of topographical prose with the same traits emerged before and after the period of World War II and national independence movement. The inner spirit appeals in the prose are yet to be further explored and discussed. In this paper, the focus will be on the works written by a scholar, Hsu Yun-Tsiao 许云樵, which looks into the values and significance that might arise in this kind of topographical travelogues, in a specific historical era and background.

Hsu Yun-Tsiao (1905-1981), whose real name was Yu 钰, also known as Meng Fei 梦飞, and with Xi Yi 希夷 as his alias, was born in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province of China. He studied at Soochow University in Suzhou and University of Shanghai Public School in the 1920s. He then dropped out of school due to poverty, but still managed to study on his own diligently and headed south to Nanyang 南洋 (Southeast Asia) in 1931, having since stayed in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. He first worked as a teacher at Foon Yew High School in Johor, Malaysia, Jingfang Teachers' College for Women in Singapore, Pattani Jong Fa Foundation School and Bangkok Business College in Thailand. After 1938, he worked as an editor for Singapore's *Sin Chew Daily Supplement* 星洲日报副刊 and in the year 1940, he became the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the South Seas Society* 南洋学报, as well as one of the founders of the South Seas Society 南洋学会 (Singapore).¹ After World War II, he was invited by the owner of Nanyang Bookstore, Chen Yu Song 陈育崧 (Tan Yeok Seong) to be the editor of *Journal of the South Sea Society* and the *Malaya Youth*. After leaving Nanyang Bookstore, Hsu Yun-Tsiao worked for a short stint with his friend in a tinplate printing and can manufacturing business. He was soon hired by the newly established Nanyang University as the associate professor of History Department and concurrently served as the director of Southeast Asian Studies Department (Nanyang Studies Department). Hsu committed the rest of his lifetime to the research work of Nanyang and published a number of great works. However, his later life was dreary and distressful. He only managed to be in the spotlight after his death. In 1981, after the news of Hsu Yun-Tsiao's death was published through both Chinese and Western newspapers, his former colleagues

1 The South Seas Society is a cultural association established in response to the movement against the Japanese invasion in the late 1930s, with Yao Nan as the executive director, and Liu Shih Mo, Li Zhang Fu, Guan Chu Pu, Chang Lee Chien, Yu Dafu and Hsu Yun-Tsiao as members of the board of directors (Refer to Choi Kwai Keong "Hsu Yun-Tsiao: A Knowledgeable Historian," in Hou Kok Chung ed., *Inherited and Choices: History and Characters of Chinese Culture in Malaysia*, Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2001, 151-152).

and friends mourned his death with articles about him, while two of Xu Su Wu 许苏吾 (Koh Soh Goh)'s articles stood out among all. The first article is "The Contribution of Hsu Yun-Tsiao to Academic Research: In Commemoration of the Third Anniversary of the Death of Professor Hsu Yun-Tsiao" (1984), and the second one is "Literature and Art Productions by Hsu Yun-Tsiao" (1986). These two articles recorded the academic and literary writings of the late Hsu respectively.¹

Hsu Yun-Tsiao's contribution to Southeast Asian Studies (Nanyang Studies) is uncountable. He wrote a wide range of articles and was well-known for his historical achievement of Nanyang Studies. This is the reason why his achievements in literary arts received less attention from people. In this article, research will be conducted based on the topographical travelogue written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao. Discussion will be mainly on how his travelogues affected by his experiences in both his native land and Nanyang, which provide an insight on the historical awareness behind his writings.

Topography: Paradigm of Hsu Yun-Tsiao's Travelogues

Generally, a travelogue refers to "a type of prose with its main content written based on travel sceneries," which can be further divided into two writing styles: landscapes and humanities.² Hsu Yun-Tsiao's travelogues were written with strong topographical features, which include a table of contents, narrative structure and language style of both traditional and modern topographical writing. A scholar, Ye 叶叶 defined "topographical literature 地志文学" as below:

"Topographical literature" consists of folk poetry, chronicle poetry, poetry

1 For more information about the life and commentary research of Hsu Yun-Tsiao, please refer to Lew Bon Hoi's *Hsu Yun-Tsiao* (Singapore: Ba Fang Wenhua, 2014), who also cooperated with Chou Wen Loong in the compiling of *Collections of Letters by Hsu Yun-Tsiao* (Kajang: New Era College, 2006). Other important research outcomes include: "Hsu Yun-Tsiao: A Knowledgeable Historian" by Choi Kwai Keong (Hou Kok Chung, 2001), also a series of commemoration of Hsu Yun-Tsiao in *Journal of the South Seas Society*, Volume 37, Issue 2. *Collection of Books by Hsu Yun-Tsiao* published by Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, which recorded the compilation of articles written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao.

2 Zheng Ming Li, *Types of Modern Prose*, Taipei: Da'an, 1987/2001, 220-236. In her book, Zheng Ming Li reviewed the traditional Chinese travelogues and noticed the diversity of travelogues. For example, some travelogues were written in a form of combination with memoirs, sketches and so on, in terms of language, both lyrical and rational writing style were used. However, she emphasized that a travelogue must meet the following requirements: they must be based on a real experience, with the author's inspiration and understanding during his/her travel as the aim, and the record of travel experiences as the ultimate purpose. They should be able to present the spiritual activities and so on while travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao are more to writings that "possessed reporting function" (224).

about local customs, names of places, cities etc. It also includes literary works that emphasize on regional folks and historical contents. In another words, it is said to be literary works that use public geographical spaces as the object of writing and have a clear self-consciousness on the purpose of topographical writing. (2013: 97)

In 1929, Hsu Yun-Tsiao published his first travelogue *Gusu* 姑胥, which is about his return to his homeland “Gusu District” from other province. Since then, for fifty-one long years until 1980, he never stopped writing topographical articles. His persistence in writing travelogues was precious in the history of Malaysian Chinese topographical literature, making him and his works an important research subject in tracing the development of this kind of genre. In 1964, books entitled *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia* 欧非胜览 and *A Journey to India* 天竺散记 published by World Book Co. and Youth Book Co. respectively, both compiled massive topographical works written by Hsu. In 1979, *Literary Collection of Xiyi* 希夷室诗文集 was published by the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Nanyang University, Singapore, in which hundreds of classical forms of travel poems were included. More travelogues by Hsu were also published in various magazines and newspapers since 1929. It is worth mentioning that, whether it is in the genre of prose or classical poetry, the topographical features throughout all his travelogue writings have remained unchanged.

Topographical literature in China has a long history. The number of topographical books in each dynasty is uncountable. The study of topography (fang zhi 方志) appeared to be more systematic and comprehensive after the Song Dynasty, and became an important academic activity since then. The content of topographical writing can be highly comprehensive and integrated. Topography in the Song Dynasty basically included the following aspects: territory, evolution, mountains and rivers, constructions, towns, villages, property, taxes, residences, military affairs, public sentiment, customs, people, literary art, famous places, historical sites and so on. The contents of topographical books in modern society are even richer, as they cover chapters regarding the record of geography, history, government and politics, economy, military affairs, education, culture, health, sport, technology, society, religion, dialect, local literature, historical sites, people and appendix etc. Each chapter is then further divided into different categories, such as political issues (including political parties), authorities, administrative agencies, public organizations, social organizations, united fronts, civil affairs, labour affairs, public security and justice etc. (Zhao Xiang Ba, 2004:14-15). All three well-known

travelogues written by Hsu used the Chinese traditional structure of topographical writing in their narration. There is no exception even for travel journals written by Hsu that were published in different magazines and newspapers, although they do not contain tables of contents like in a book, similar frameworks and structures can still be seen from the subheadings in the articles.

Let's take a look at the tables of contents of the three collections of travel prose written by Hsu. Hsu wrote his first travelogue, *Gusu* with his identity as a local. He was born in Suzhou and was requested by the villagers to write a book about this place after he left. To this end, he returned to his homeland and travelled around all the famous places, ancient temples and historical sites, at the same time collected anecdotes about regional history, folklore and celebrities in Suzhou. With a sense of mission, he wrote down the details of his travelling in Suzhou. His table of content is as follows: (1) history, (2) geography, (3) cities and townships, (4) natural resources, (5) defensive walls, (6) landscapes, (7) parks, (8) historical sites, (9) customs, (10) languages, (11) unofficial history, (12) common notes.

A Journey to India describes a trip where Hsu Yun-Hsiao brought his students to India for a cultural tour when he was teaching at Nanyang University. The table of contents of this book is as follows: (1) precious friendship, (2) Madras, a city with everything, (3) a visit to Kanchipuram in misty rain, (4) Pengalo, South India Industrial Center, (5) amazing fountain at Mysore, the city of flowers, (6) Mumbai, an Europeanized Indian city, (7) wandering at historical sites in Aurangabad, (8) Erol, the finest craft of grottoes, (9) Ajanta, cliff climbing to worship the wall painting, (10) New and Old Delhi, a tale of two cities, (11) Taj Mahal, the beauty of marble stones, (12) Bhakhra, the highest dam in the world, (13) Chandigarh, missing city on the map, (14) Poona the Holy Land and Ganga the Holy Water, (15) explore the trail of Buddha at Sarnath, (16) Pataliputra, the homeland of Asoka, (17) a tour to Bodhi Mandapa, (18) a visit to Gádhrakúta at Rajgir, (19) Nalanda Temple, the highest educational institution in India in the seventh century, (20) the steel city of India and Tata Steel, (21) Darjeeling, the snowy peak, (22) Do'gyaling, the political climate in Tibet, (23) International University and Chinese College, (24) Kolkata and QilaBala, and his record of perceptions towards India as appendix.

As for *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia*, he was invited to attend a meeting in Europe and he took it as a chance to travel around. The table of contents is as follows: (1) Day of Flight, (2) Meeting in Paris, (3) Tyre and Atomic Energy Studies, (4) A Visit to the Heart of France, (5) Into the Woods and Look for the Castle, (6) Old Castle in Ruwa City, (7) Visiting Historical Sites at Ruhwa River, (8) Stories Behind the Ancient Castle, (9) The Impression of The City of Flowers, (10) London, the

Cultural Capital, (11) All about London, (12) Hampton, the Grand View Garden in United Kingdom, (13) Amsterdam, a City Built on Water, (14) How Dutch do the Reclamation, (15) Visit and Ponder on the Hometown of Dutch Boy, (16) Rotterdam, the Second Largest Port in world, (17) Hague, a Paradoxical Capital, (18) Milan, the Heart of Economy of Italy, (19) Rome, the World's Capital of Arts, (20) The Idyllic Naples, (21) Pompeii, an Ancient City with Two Thousand Years of History, (22) A Flight to The Country of Desert, (23) Camel-riding on the Quicksand, (24) A Visit to the Pyramids, (25) Sphinx, (26) Islamic Fortress and The Dead City, (27) The Treasures of Cairo, (28) The City of Museums and Mosques, (29) Ancient City and Tomb with Five Thousand Years of History, (30) The Underground Palace, (31) The Beliefs of Ancient Egyptians. This book is filled with a total number of 106 illustrations.

The tables of contents of these travelogues show that the classic features of topographical writing were reflected in the descriptions of travel experiences as well as the thinking patterns of Hsu when he constructed his idea of writing. Therefore, regardless the type of places that he visited, whether it is a country or a city, he must introduce the history, geographical location, landscape and climate, races and languages, important settings, economic and political profiles etc. of all places.

As for the *Literary Collection of Xiyi*, it recorded more than 100 classical poems in different genres, such as folk poetry 竹枝词, chronicle poetry 纪事诗, poetry about local customs, names of places, cities etc.

In volume one, *The Collection of Yan Jiao* 炎徽集, contains “Ten Poems of Nanyang's Famous Fruits” 南洋名果十咏, which consists of ten poems that describe the characteristics of ten tropical fruits, including durian, mango, areca nut, mangosteen, rambutan, banana, pineapple, jackfruit, coconut and papaya. “Poems about the Hot and Deserted Place” 炎荒杂咏 describes the hot climate, geographical environment, local fruits and ethnic characteristics in the Nanyang region. “Twelve Old Folk Poems of Selat” 石叻话旧竹枝词十二首 describes many featured local streets and attractions in Singapore (formerly known as “Selat/Shile 石叻,” the common name of Singapore) such as Chinatown, Club Street, Cross Street, Big Town and Small Town of Singapore, Rochor Canal, the Sun Yat-Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, Dhoby Ghaut, Ponggol and so on. It also includes writings about his travels to other Southeast Asian countries. For volume two, *The collection of Xue Ni* 雪泥集, all 53 poems recorded in it were written almost synchronously with his travel writings in *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia* and *A Journey to India*, a series of vernacular travelogues which recorded the impressions and experiences of travelling around Europe, America, India and Asia Pacific countries. There is one common

feature of these ancient poems, which is that all of them contain a considerable number of footnotes describing the origin of the names of places, or some related historical event, names of personages, special local products or slangs etc.

Basically, the main forms and structures of travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao are based on topographical writing styles.

Cultural Enlightenment: The Writing Purpose of Hsu Yun-Tsiao's Travelogues

Hsu Yun-Tsiao began his topographical writing in late 1920s. His travel experiences were recorded in details, and all this implied his identity changes in different stages. If these were to reflect on his works, they can be categorized into three stages: (1) before leaving for Southeast Asia (1929): taking *Gusu* as his representative work in this stage, it reflects his aspiration for history preservation and the recognition of his identity as a Suzhou people; (2) after leaving for Southeast Asia (1931-1947): taking "A Tour to Riau Island," "A Tour to Bangkok" etc. as a representative, his aspiration for writing these travelogues is on the research of history as well as solely on travel. This also shows Hsu's living experiences with and affection towards Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand; (3) before and after the independence of Singapore and Malaysia (1962-1979): taking *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia* and *A Journey to India* as a representative, this is the period when Singapore and Malaysia fought for independence, as well as the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaya. This is also another important period for the Chinese in Southeast Asia in terms of political and ethnic cultural recognition after the World War II. Just like most Chinese immigrants, Hsu had completed his identity recognition from an overseas Chinese or Chinese immigrant to a local Chinese after he spent half a century living in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Therefore, he tended to contribute to the betterment of the adopted country by researching and preserving its history through his later works. After reviewing the travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao throughout his life, the following points can be summarized as his main objective and purposes of writing. These three objectives are always connected to one another, namely, historical research (preservation of history), dissemination of education and contribute to the betterment of the country or ethnicity.

Historical Research

Hsu Yun-Tsiao dedicated his whole life to the research of history and published a large number of books and academic articles. His representative works include *The History of Pattani*, *History of Nanyang*, *History of Malaya*, *History of Malaya in the Modern Age* and so on. He also worked hard to create an academic platform

in order to promote Southeast Asian Studies /Nanyang Studies. He said that at the time, the research activities “were mainly conducted by the Western or Japanese scholars and experts,” “while we ourselves become the research target of others” (Hsu, 1945/1979: 4) (Preface, “*Collection of East Asian Chinese*” and “*East Asian Chinese and Culture*,” 1947/1979: 5). In many of his articles, he called on the local intellectuals to participate in the research of the Nanyang region actively. The establishment and republication of the *Journal of the South Seas Society* served the purpose of “promoting the ethos of specialized academic research of Nanyang among the people, hence avoiding the problem of plagiarism and complacency” (the Preface of *Channel of Research of the Eastern and Western*, 1946/1979: 32).

In this way, he was very concerned about the history and culture of ethnics in Southeast Asian countries. For example, he published *The History of Pattani* (1946) and described this ancient country that was once prosperous and glorious as “a country that has lost its specialty, its history having been forgotten by the people. Its lands were desolated and the vicissitudes of the country are depressing” (Preface of *The History of Pattani*, 1946/1979: 26). As for the information about ethnic groups, languages, geographical environment and history of the border areas of China, Myanmar, Thailand and India, it was said to be “less well-known among the people” , “people are unable to point out the number of ethnic groups living in these areas correctly” (Preface of *An Ethnography about Ethnics at the boundaries of China, Myanmar, Thailand and Indochina*, 1961/1979: 49-50); and again, the “geological research of Borneo and Sarawak is only half-done so far, what was hidden in the mainland is still an unknown” (Preface of *A Hundred Year History of Sarawak*, 1956/1979: 53).

The enthusiasm for historical research of Hsu Yun-Tsiao is not limited to academic performance only, but also shown in his travelogues. Every character, place, products and other things he mentioned in his articles were examined, while the changes between past and present were described in details and explained with long commentaries. This is where we can see the strong sense of history of the author. For example, the commentary of the poem “The Anecdote of Kuala Lumpur” 吉隆坡掌故 describes how this swampy area had been developed into a lively city by a Chinese, Kapitan Yap Ah Loy and how this place became the capital of the Federation of Malaya (Hsu, 1979: 21-23). This kind of official and unofficial historical information can be found in all his travelogues. It is quite common for readers to think that the stories are boring and lengthy for they cannot understand them from Hsu’s topographical perspective and intention.

Knowledge Dissemination

Other than his strong historical awareness, knowledge dissemination is another intention of Hsu Yun-Tsiao in his writing of historical and topographical articles. Hsu was born in the late Qing Dynasty. He went through the collapse of the old regime and the rise of May Fourth cultural revolution. In an environment where national salvation was going on, Hsu was influenced by concepts promoting the importance of open-mindedness¹ and education. Even after his arrival in Nanyang, he still actively engaged himself in education and cultural activities for the purposes as below: (1) to increase the knowledge of people who had no opportunity to travel overseas, understanding the condition of countries such as Europe, India, United States, Japan, and other countries of Southeast Asia, hence expanding their worldviews; (2) to increase the understanding of local citizens on the origins of local history and culture, as well as the history and culture of neighbouring countries, which are, for Hsu Yun-Tsiao, the Nanyang studies; (3) to ensure the understanding of Chinese culture among Chinese immigrants or their later generations of citizens, at the same time cultivating a sense of national identity; (4) to ensure the understanding of foreigners of the culture and history of Southeast Asia. As such, he also edited *Nanyang Chinese Dictionary of Vulgar Words* (1960) and the *Nanyang Pocketbooks Series* (1959) for the readers' reference.

Taking his poem "Remembrance of Pattani" as an example, he first examined the translation of the names of places in commentary one, then introduced the rise and fall of Pattani in commentaries two to four. While in commentary five, he showed his concern over the fact that the local Chinese were unfamiliar with the Chinese language. "In 1933, I was invited by Mr. Wu Xue Lian to travel there and work as a teacher. I was worried when I realized that most of the local Chinese there were unfamiliar with the Chinese language. I stayed alone for seven years in that country, thinking that my hard work could save the fading Chinese culture. Unfortunately, the pressure imposed by the Siam government prompted me to leave with overwhelming sadness and worries" (Hsu, 1979: 36).

Besides that, we can also see how Hsu gives a detailed account of his travel journey in his travelogues. For example, in terms of transportation, he provided a detailed description on the appearances, structures and models, schedules, fares, meals etc. of every modes of transport that he had taken, including airplanes, trains, coaches, boats, taxis, as well as pack animals such as elephants and camels. In *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia*, the detailed descriptions from the purchase of ticket until

1 One of the important parts in open-mindedness of people is to change the narrow worldview of Chinese by understanding the knowledge of different places other than China.

boarding are very impressive. The descriptions included the model of the aircraft, length of the aircraft, fuel consumption, flying speed, flight altitude, temperature and pressure, length of flight transfer waiting time, situation and procedures during transit, services by flight attendants and so on. Other examples are the descriptions of the travel itinerary and arrangement of schedule. They were written in an extremely detailed way so that people can use them as references: “I write it down for the reference of those who are travelling to London.”(Hsu, 1964a: 68) Moreover, as Hsu made self-guided travels to most of the attractions mentioned in his book, he would also explain the problems and solutions that he encountered during his journey. For example, in his book, Hsu recorded the locations of tourist information centre and places where tourists can purchase a map, useful addresses and contact numbers, ticket fees, opening hours etc., just like those written in modern travel manual or guide.

Betterment of Country

Other than historical research, preservation of history and dissemination of education, Hsu Yun-Tsiao’s topographical writings reflected a strong sense of contribution to the betterment of the country. In his topographical writings, Hsu often shows his great concern for the development of the country and people, especially those who are in the intense relationship such as Eastern versus Western countries, and the colonial versus the colonized. Therefore, a strong sense of urgency caused him to work harder in the preservation of history and dissemination of education. He was hoping that the enlightenment and diffusion of culture could eliminate the misunderstandings and barriers between countries and ethnics. He also hoped that he could contribute to the betterment of the country by understanding and learning of the cultural strengths and weaknesses of other countries and ethnics (the “country/nation” stated here including Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia), as well as contribute to ethnic harmony, development of industry and commerce, thereby improving the economic strength and international status of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Therefore, we can see Hsu’s concerns and worries over the local needs, environmental pollution, and transportation problems in India. We can also see his opinion on the industrial development, financial commerce, libraries, research institutions etc. in India, United States, Japan and other countries.

In the volume 3 *Poem Collection of Xueni*, recorded “Three Things that overwhelmed India: Sandstorm, Beggars and Crows” 天竺三多——风沙乞丐与乌鸦, which referred to the issue of poverty of a country:

An empire covered in yellow dust can be seen in a distance, beggars in the Buddha shelter worshipping the Sangha, hungry crows hovering above the house to announce the arrival of disaster, sacred cow walks freely on the road. (Hsu, 1979: 12)

Again, in the poem entitled “The Empire State Building in New York” 纽约登帝国大厦, he showed his desperation for modernization. He wrote as below:

It was the first time I step into the world’s tallest building, looking at the distant scenery and thinking of my homeland, how can I just think of my homeland without doing anything, I lean on the rail and feel ashamed of worrying. (Hsu, 1979: 31)

It is obvious that Hsu was aware of his usage of topographical genre and purpose as the subject of his travelogues. His travelogues reflected a strong sense of historical preservation, education dissemination and political improvement purpose. His topographical concept can be confirmed from the following text:

My travel notes are different from others’: I focus less on the record of travel details, but more on the footnotes. I see the record of travel details as something personal, and there is no point in making it lengthy; but footnotes are something that others could learn from, so there is a need for me to put some effort on it. Therefore, every time I visit historical sites, I will trace their origins; once I arrived to a modern city, I will describe its characteristics; when I visit a company, I will collect its statistic; when it involves language, I will attach its original text. Even though my observations and understandings of certain things might be narrow, even though they are just something read by the scholar, but the traces and records of the past are similar to a person who is very familiar with the place. (Hsu, 1964b: Preface)

Although the main purpose of Hsu’s topographical writings is on the record of information, he also included his personal opinions and expressions in his book.

For example, the Preface of *A Visit to Afro-Eurasia* reflected a deeper level of personal feeling as Hsu was bedridden during that time. The article starts with his personal travel experience, then one by one he commented on the human touches of the people in the United Kingdom, France, Holland, Italy, Egypt and other countries, as well as some complaints and dissatisfaction of his European trip. In

terms of narrative techniques, as usual, he sticks with the topographical writing style. However, the sensibility in the content of this book is slightly higher than *A Journey to India*. This may be due to the reason that his travel to Europe was different from India where he travelled with a group of people. The main reason of his travel to Europe was to attend a meeting and then travel alone, without having the responsibility as a leader and teacher. He expressed his excitement with a long classical poem “Fly to the Sky” 天外飞航行 at the beginning of his book:

The wheels are rolling, taking me out of this world, in a flash I jetted off powerfully into the sky.

Big birds flying over the top, dragons rolling in the sky, I feel like I am close to the Palace of Gods, again and again I try to touch the stars.

Clouds are falling with the wind, the sky looks like sea without boundary, and the universe is all blue, just like Heaven and Earth have never been divided.

I am travelling in nihility, forget about the world and the people, all secular thoughts and feelings are washed away by themselves, there is neither love nor hate right now.

Rain is seen before it falls onto the ground, spreading all over the sky like jewellery, as if the weavers are weaving, drilling their needles over the jades.

Through the clouds I look down, I can see how deep the sea is, the rivers are like the vein of the leaf, and the mountains look just like anthills.

Looking at the sea horizon, only then I can feel my presence, travel 30 thousand miles in a day and night, it is impossible as said by the elders.

Travel freely beyond the sky, I almost get carried away. To record the extraordinary view of the space, I wrote this poem instead of taking a photo.

(Hsu, 1964a: 7)

Other than that, his perceptual description of sceneries can be seen in “Amsterdam, the City Built on Water” 水都阿姆斯特丹: “Today is a sunny day. Looking down from the plane, the town that looks like a sunken city can be clearly seen. The clouds are like masses of snow or cottons that scattered in the air. The world turned upside down when I was flying over the surface of the sea, the sky is below me. When I was mind-wandering, I saw countless burs appeared in the sky and were shot down at a very high speed. Reflecting the sunlight, they shone a beautiful light. It was breathtaking. Take a closer look, it was actually the rain in the air. And this drizzle disappeared in a flash.” (Hsu, 1964a: 77)

Also, in “Rome, the World’s Capital of Arts” 世界艺术之都——罗马, he was touched by the night view of the city of Rome on the night before his trip ended. Forgetting the grievances he received during the day, he knew that the city of Rome would be his hardest goodbye. Hence, he expressed his feeling of unwillingness to leave through a masterpiece of Roman music:

Naples, no matter how unclean it is during the daytime, all ugliness and badness disappeared as the night fall. Lamps shining the pearly light, scattered on the hill, scattered at the harbor. Just like a charming girl who wearing a glittery evening gown and makes an appearance in the garden. Seeing this, I can’t help but start singing “L’AD DIA A NAPOLI.” (Hsu, 1964a: 124-125)

In terms of archaic text, it reflected the emotional and romantic feelings of Hsu, just like this “Night in Naples” 拿坡里之夜¹ that echoes the content of the vernacular travelogue above:

Thousands of shining stars embellish the houses, chords are played under the moonlight, stop the boat and enjoy the night by sitting at the jetty, singing an unforgettable song named “Santa Lucia.”² (Hsu, 1979: 13)

Another example is “Hot Spring Bathing at Yangming Mountain at the Noon of Autumn” 丁未秋阳明山浴温泉,

Steaming springs and streams are everywhere, fogs rising up like the clouds that protecting the Gods, bathe into the hot spring and warm both body and mind, stay up late at the night and linger with my crutch in my hand. (1979: 41)

Also see “The Scenery of West Lake” 西湖即景,

Mountains are vaguely seen from a distance, sticking to the sky, jackdaws are just like tiny black dots beside the clouds, water crinkled with sunlight, but not

1 Naples is a famous city of Italy, surrounded by mountains and seas. People tends to express through songs their feelings for its breathtaking views (Original footnote attached to the poem).

2 Santa Lucia is the name of a jetty in Naples, which is also the title of a song named “I stopped my boat to wait for you.” I used to sing this song when I was young, and I feel nothing special about it. Now that I was listening to this song in where it was born, it was soul-stirring (Original footnote attached to the poem).

because of the wind, I can hear the sound of panpipes and bassoon from the ferry. (1979: 50)

This is the reason why we cannot simply categorize all of Hsu's travelogues as pure topographical writings. However, it is undeniable that Hsu's travelogues still adhere to the Chinese classical topographical structure as a whole.

Construction of Subjectivity: Inner Intention of Hsu Yun-Tsiao's Travelogues

Hsu Yun-Tsiao is one of the authors of topographical prose during the Cold War and experienced a period of political instability. His purpose of writing is on the emphasis of open-mindedness of people to strengthen their recognition of local identity, and to educate the masses to develop international perspectives by using historical literature. This kind of topographical travelogues had become a trend during that period of time. These fruitful publications did bring certain impacts to society. A historical scholar, Liao Wen Hui (廖文辉 Lew Bon Hui) categorized this kind of works as "historical narrative style" (2014: 166). From the literary point of view, this kind of topographical travelogues represented by Hsu Yun-Tsiao is having an ambiguous position because of their dual attributes of history and literature. Just like what was questioned by Ye Ye during his examination of the traditional evolution of Chinese topographical literature: is it a topographical phenomenon of literature or a literary phenomenon of topography?

Firstly, we look into the strong historical awareness that runs through the topographical travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao. As a historian, Hsu's observations and experiences on peoples and things throughout his travels are having an extremely strong sense of historical consciousness. This was shown in: (1) always associate and compare his experiences in different time and space, especially the past and present status of history, system, economy, education, technology development etc. of his observing object. Different spaces here included the comparison of experience among China and Southeast Asia countries, such as the comparison between his homeland Suzhou, second homeland Bangkok and the place where he settled down, Singapore; it also included the comparison between these spaces and Western countries or other emerging countries and developing countries. (2) Reflect and criticize on the first point, and express his own point of view, including denial and affirmation, resistance / acceptance or adjustment of attitude. Generally, in the process of observing and comparing related objects in a particular space, the traveller will induce different levels of the internal dialogue and dialogues between traveller and object. Hsu Yun-Tsiao, having a strong historical

awareness, was more capable of grasping the subjectivity of mankind in historical activities. With his professional archeological knowledge and evidence awareness, he could understand the object of observation better, or even sum up his experiences to look for solutions to existing problems. So what are the existing problems that Hsu Yun-Tsiao was concerned with?

If “the core of historical awareness is the establishment of subjectivity”(Xu Zhaoren, 1(2010): 110), this may explain what are the existing problems that Hsu Yun-Tsiao was concerned with. As an intellectual with both experiences from his homeland and Nanyang, it is unavoidable for Hsu Yun-Tsiao to be confronted with multiple identities as an individual (including his complicated identity as a native of Suzhou, who then married a Thai woman and lastly became a Singapore citizen). In terms of the recognition of national identity as a group (especially before and after the independence of Malaya/Malaysia), he too faced the anxiety and embarrassment as the colonized.

Construction of Multiple Identities on Individual Level

Hsu’s identity and recognition on the individual level is closely connected with his attachment to Suzhou, Bangkok and Singapore. He revealed his strong sense of sensibility and attachment in many of his travelogues. Hsu Yun-Tsiao left his homeland, Suzhou at the age of 26 and went to Singapore alone. He first served at Foon Yew High School in Johor, Malaysia, and Jingfang Teachers’ College for Women in Singapore. Two years later, he went to Siam and worked as a teacher at Pattani Jong Fa Foundation School, and married his colleague, Ms. Liu Jing Xiang. At that period of time, he collected a large amount of historical material which he, and wrote and translated many books such as *The History of Pattani*, *Biography of Taskin*, *The King of Siam* and so on, which earned him a certain reputation. However, in 1930s, Thai Cultural Restoration as a result of constitutional revolution of the Thai government, caused Hsu Yun-Tsiao to leave Thailand with anger.¹ He then continued to work in the cultural industry in Singapore, and established the

¹ Siam (Thailand) experienced a military revolution in June 1932 and formed a new governing cabinet. They implemented rules that were unfavorable to overseas Chinese, such as revoking the right to business operations of the Chinese in various industries, including rice, tin mining, rubber and so on, forcibly shutdown all the Chinese schools, banned the Chinese-language newspapers, and expelled Chinese who were against Thai culture. All this gave rise to unemployment among the Chinese. This is also the reason why Hsu Yun-Tsiao resigned from Pattani Jong Fa Foundation School and worked as an English teacher at Bangkok Business College. However, in the end, due to the assimilation policy that Plaek Phibunsongkhram imposed on overseas Chinese, Hsu again resigned and returned to Singapore. (For more information, refer to “Chapter 13: The Development of Chinese Society in Siam (Thailand)” by Lee En Han, *History of Southeast Asia Chinese* (Taipei: Wu-Nan, 2003: 377-427); Lew Bon Hui, *Biography of Hsu Yun-Tsiao* (Singapore: Global Publishing, 2014.4: 11), etc.

South Seas Society with Yao Nan 姚楠, Liu Shih Mo 刘士木, Li Chang Fu 李长傅, Guan Chu Pu 关楚璞, Chang Lee Chien 张礼千, Yu Da Fu 郁达夫 etc. They published the *Journal of the South Seas Society* that specialized in Nanyang/Southeast Asia Studies. Finally, historical research had become his lifelong career.

Hsu Yun-Tsiao lived in Thailand from 1933 to 1938. Although it was only 5 years, his feelings for this country were strong and complicated, as he loved and hated it at the same time. He loved that land because of the similarities between Bangkok and Suzhou, as well as his affection towards his Thai wife, relatives and friends; meanwhile his hatred was caused by the failure and frustration that he encountered when it came to his identity and recognition as an overseas Chinese or a Thai. From Hsu Yun-Tsiao's self-description in his text, we can see his feeling of grief and self-pity on his life, as he left his homeland and stayed in Southeast Asia for good. The only thing that cheered him up was the sense of accomplishment that he generated from his historical research and study as it could make him recall and realize who he was and where he was.

Especially the first two years after his arrival in Nanyang, the unfamiliarity that he was experiencing towards the local culture had made him miss Suzhou even more. Therefore, by collecting the bits and pieces of Suzhou, Hsu Yun-Tsiao gained a certain sense of existence. In many of his works, we can still see his pride as a native Suzhou. Especially when he was going through hardships, the recognition of his native identity seemed to give him a certain level of spiritual comfort. This is also the first part of Hsu Yun-Tsiao's recognition and construction activity of his multiple identities.

In his first Thailand travelogue after he left Thailand, "A Tour to Bangkok" 曼谷巡礼 (1940), he described the beauty of Thailand with a lyrical and aesthetic writing style and filled his article with passion and romance, which was rarely seen in his vernacular travel writings. The opening paragraph in Hsu Yun-Tsiao's travelogue probably best reflected his complicated feelings towards Thailand:

A place that is gentle and soft like a girl, that is beautiful like a piece of painting, it is the city of Menam, the jungle of Wat, a place named Krung Thep by the Siamese, a well-known city named Bangkok among the foreigners. Although I hate her intention and betrayal, but it is hard for me to forget the beautiful sceneries and warm temperament of hers. I missed her just like I missed the Xizi Lake in Gusu. Maybe it is because Thailand is the place where my wife and my children were born and grew up, so I am still bonded to it in some way. Although I am now 805 miles away from her in Singapore,

recalling my traces of travel, but my family members and my relatives are still there enjoying the warm temperament in the country. It is kind of an awkward situation for me. Therefore to her, I can't help but having nostalgia, despite my hatred towards her! (Hsu, 1940.8.1, 16)

In his later series of works such as “Bangkok, Suzhou in Southeast Asia” 曼谷—东南亚的苏州, “Travel Experiences of Thailand” 泰游观感录, “The Harvest of My Thailand Trip” 泰国之行的收获, “A Tour to Malaysia and Siam” 马暹纪行 etc., he again compared the streets, interior designs of houses, languages and tone between Bangkok and Suzhou. He also mentioned his interactions with his wife and children, as well as with his relatives, showing his nostalgia for Bangkok, Thailand.

One of his experiences that made him feel frustrated was when his and his wife's status of Thai citizens was not recognized by the local staff (refer to “Samut Prakan Crocodile Farm” 北榄鳄鱼场). Obviously, Hsu Yun-Tsiao's sense of recognition towards his second homeland, Thailand was bounded with a layer of blood relationship compared to Singapore, a country where he lived for the rest of his life. It is this kinship that makes him more concerned with the legal status of himself as well as all the mixed-ethnic of Chinese and Thai, be it political or cultural identity.

With this we can see that even after Hsu left Thailand, he never stopped caring about the local historical and archaeological activities, the development of Chinese newspaper and Chinese education, as well as the influence of political changes regarding Thai Chinese. However, the assimilation policy implemented by Plaek Phibunsongkhram in regard to Chinese education and overseas Chinese made him feel even more aggrieved and indignant. Therefore, his writing of his living experiences in Thailand is not limited to the expression of nostalgia and love, but at the same time examined and verified the historical connections and origins of the Sino-Siamese in the areas of transportation, politics, economy, history and culture through an enormous amount of historical research. Besides that, he took this as a chance to affirm the contribution of overseas Chinese and the superiority of Chinese culture. On the other hand, he criticized the ethnic conflict in Thailand at that time as “narrow nationalism,” and at the same time looked forward to a better relationship between China and Thailand in the future (Hsu, “A Tour to Malaysia and Siam,” 1947: 107).

If we refer to Hsu Yun-Tsiao's travel experiences in Thailand, the frustration and failure that he faced were the exploitation and humiliation as a result of the denial of citizenship, as well as the lack of the rights to education and subsistence

of the Chinese community. At this point of time, the identity of Hsu Yun-Tsiao as a historian was seen as an individual, and at the same time beyond this. The historical awareness brought by this identity of Hsu has been used to solve the existing problems and construction of subjectivity in his travelogues. The poem below shows Hsu's intention to "contribute to the betterment of the country" through historical research activities. For him, Thailand has long been his second homeland, and this reflected another layer of his identity and recognition other than his identity as a native Suzhou.

Reunited after 30 years and we gathered to talk about every little things we have been through. There are only few of our old friends here, with their hair greyed, with their prestige and enlightenment faded. Although revolution is not the responsibility of scholars, but we need it for the betterment of country. Till when shall we live in this aimless life? A life without proper direction is just hopeless! (1979: 23)

National Identity on Group-level

The identity of Hsu Yun-Tsiao as a historian can be seen as an individual, and at the same time beyond this. The historical awareness brought by this identity of Hsu has been used to solve the existing problems and construction subjectivity in his travelogues. Hsu Yun-Tsiao rarely recorded his personal opinions towards Singapore in his topographical prose, in fact he recorded his travel experiences of few attractions of Singapore in many of his archaic poems, and most of them are filled with the feelings of admiration. This is probably because during the period of time from post-war until before and after the independence movement of Malaya/Malaysia, or even after the independence of Singapore in 1965, the ruling party of Singapore had protected the common interests of different ethnic groups when they fought for the citizenship of the Chinese in Singapore. Hsu Yun-Tsiao started his subjectivity construction activities smoothly in this emerging country which consisted of 70% of Chinese population. He did not have to face the frustration and embarrassment caused by the denial of ethnic rights, like what he had been through in Thailand. From his travelogues, we can see that he always compared the local customs and culture of Singapore with countries such as Europe, America, Japan, India and so on, which also showed his concern for the overall development of Singapore and Malaysia. This kind of concern is more likely belongs to group-level of group identity, which refers to Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia and Singaporean

sense of nationalism, in comparison with his feelings towards his homeland, Suzhou and his second hometown, Bangkok.

Other than his five-year stay in Thailand, Hsu Yun-Tsiao spent the rest of his life in Singapore since his arrival in year 1931. Before that, he experienced the private-schooling system and new educational style in the late Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China. He left his homeland and headed to the South Seas when the country was flooded with the thoughts of preserving the local culture and resisting the foreign ideas. He went through the historical and political changes in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, which included the period when the exclusion of Chinese population and the implementation of policy of conciliation in Thailand, the outbreak of war when the people of Singapore and Malaysia were massacred during the fall of Singapore, postwar national independence movements that happened in different part of Southeast Asia, the ruling strategy imposed by the British colonial ruler on the people of Singapore and Malaysia, until the independence of Malaya and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. For more than fifty years of his life that he lived in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, Hsu Yun-Tsiao never stopped worrying about the development of all these countries, as he regarded it as responsibility of an intellectual.

From the topographical travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Hsiao, we can see his concern on the documentation, inheritance, recognition and dissemination of Chinese culture and history. It was just that the process of his identity and recognition changed from being an overseas Chinese of China / Nanyang to a Singaporean Chinese / Southeast Asian Chinese. In the works of historical research by Hsu Yun-Tsiao, we can see changes in his use of words from “Nanyang” to “Southeast Asia” as well as from “overseas Chinese” to “local Chinese.” This also reflected his changing and strengthening of local identity and recognition. In the later period of his life, his publications mainly showed his strong sense of social concern as a Singapore citizen.

As Singapore was relatively poorer in terms of resources (compared to Malaysia which was rich in land and resources), Hsu showed a great concern on the national and political development of Singapore. This was first reflected in the advocacy of contribution of science and industry to a country. After he witnessed the technological development of France and Japan when he visited Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Tokyo Tower respectively, he said “this remarkable success should be attributed to the scientific progress. This is why the dissemination of scientific knowledge is very important” (Hsu, “Tokyo Tower and Paris Eiffel Tower” 东京铁塔与巴黎埃菲尔, *Nanyang Siang Pau*, 1968.2.16, 8). He was even more impressed

by how India's national industry, Tata Group, contributed to the development of industry, agriculture, charity, medical and educational field of India after the independence of the country. He was hoping that a similar situation could happen in Malaysia, which was an emerging country during that time. The Preface of *A Journey to India* states three purposes of writing and significances of his book: (1) visit the ancient attractions; (2) to "know more about modern India, and how they struggled to change their status from a colony to an independent country, how to restore the dying ancient culture, as well as how to harmonize different customs, languages and ethnics in the country so that the people can unite and contribute to the betterment of the country together. Lastly, also to know about the implementation of the five-year plan to save the economy of the country and resolve poverty issue of people"; (3) to enhance his own research on India.

He deeply regretted when he found that the Library of the Congress, New York Public Library and Japan Toyo Bunko lacked a collection of Southeast Asian Studies. Therefore, he volunteered to donate the related books to the authorities (refer to "Library of Congress" 美国国会图书馆, "New York Public Library" 纽约公众图书馆, "A Tour to Toyo Bunko" 东洋文库巡礼). This shows how Hsu Yun-Tsiao established the connection between Singapore and Malaysia with the world through his topographical travelogues. Especially during the period after war, in the 50s and 60s when there was a lack of material supplies, having fair development in education, and also experiencing political tensions, most of the people did not have the opportunity to broaden their mind by travelling overseas. They were still in the stage of exploring this emerging country, as well as the future development and position of their national identity. Topographical travelogues written by Hsu Yun-Tsiao at that period of time were playing the role of enlightenment, providing the people with onsite information of the neighbouring countries and great powers as well as enhancing their knowledge.

Conclusion

As discussed above, Hsu Yun-Tsiao's travelogues were written based on the topographical genre structure, and the relationship of which was inseparable from his involvement in long-term research of literature and history. In terms of narration, Hsu Yun-Tsiao tended to express his sentimental travel experiences through the genre of classical poetry, on the other hand, the main themes of his travelogues were expressed by way of rational narration and critique, with a lesser emphasis on lyricism. Therefore, the travelogues written by Hsu are said to be lacking in aesthetical sense if we define the literary or artistic nature of his works simply from

a specific aesthetic perspective. However, the conscious use of the topographical genre has resulted in restoring and testifying collective experiences in a specific era. It was an era when the people were struggling on free themselves from the colonial ruling and pursuing the right to independence for their country and nation. At that period of time, Hsu's travelogues which emphasized on rational narration and transmission of information met the needs of an emerging country/nation, which were the needs for open-mindedness and innovation. Topographical prose during that period of time was no longer a focus on nostalgia, like what was written by southward scholars from China in the early period. In fact, they focused more on the recognition of local politics and history. By the 1990s or later, Malaysian Chinese topographical prose seemed to recall the theme of nostalgia. Most of the famous works at that time contained the elements of nostalgia and local identity and recognition, which were actually related to the personal experience, place of birth and growth of the author. Therefore, this kind of unique topographical writings represented by Hsu has become an important material in assisting us to sort out and outline the development of Malaysian Chinese topographical literature.

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Sarawak Chinese Literature in Taiwan or Local Sarawak Chinese Literature: A Perspective from Regional Experience towards Rainforest Writing¹

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Abstract In this new century, the ideology of literary history is no longer stringent; as a result, the geographical view of literature should be changed accordingly. When we agree that Sarawak Chinese literature cannot be categorised under Mahua literature, can we then classify all Sarawak Chinese literature into one category? This is the main argument of the paper. This paper consists of three parts. The first part discusses what constitutes Sarawak Chinese literature with enhanced local characteristics, in reference to Bornean features. The second part divides Sarawakian Chinese authors in two groups, namely “Taiwan-based authors” and “local authors” and further examines how regional experience affects their works. It is, however, difficult to distinguish which part is affected by Taiwan’s influence and which part is their self-creation, especially in this era of globalisation. In spite of that, we can narrow the scope of study down to the works of rainforest writing of Sarawakian Chinese writers to gain a more refined study. Therefore, through a comparison between the fictional works of Li Yong Ping 李永平 and Chang Kuei Hsin 张贵兴, who have long since taken up Taiwanese citizenship, and rainforest writing of local authors, the differences and individual complexity between both will then be investigated and deliberated. Finally, the dialogues or contrasts between Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan and local Sarawak Chinese literature will be analysed.

Key words Sarawak Chinese Literature; Taiwan-based Experience; Regional Experience; Rainforest Writing

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Introduction

Within Mahua literature, the term “Sarawak literature” or “Sarawak Chinese literature” can be defined by the geospatial location in its literary works, and also interpreted as a sphere of literary imagination, engendering constant discussion and debate among writers (especially Sarawakian Chinese writers) and critics. Some Sarawakian Chinese writers do not see themselves as Mahua writers but emphasis on the identity of “Sarawakian Chinese.” For instance, Li Yong Ping, who resides in Taiwan, once said, “I have never been close to Malaysia, never write something about Peninsular Malaysia. I write only about the island of Borneo” (Wu & Shi). “I’m angry, I have told the Taiwanese literary field again and again, that I have no comment on ‘Mahua literature’ but Li Yong Ping is not a Mahua author. Malaysia for me is only a strange concept with no personal relationship” (Wu & Shi). Local author Tian Si 田思 also concurred, “Due to some aspects of history, we think the term ‘Sarawak Chinese literature’ more faithfully conveys the unique situation in Sarawak with its own history, geography and culture, which are different from West Malaysia” (Huang). Thus, how do we define “Sarawak Chinese literature”? Or what is “Sarawak Chinese literature”?

The earliest Sarawak Chinese literature appeared in the 1950s, and developed from 1956 to 1962, serving as a testimony of the transition of identity consciousness from overseas Chinese to local citizens among Sarawakian Chinese. After a change in Mainland China’s nationality policy in 1954, Sarawakian Chinese started to consider issues regarding nationality and identity, as shown in the popular poem “Homeland” 祖国 written by Sarawakian Chinese poet, Wu An 吴岸 in 1957, describing a Sarawak-born Chinese young man bidding his mother, who is returning to China, adieu: “Your homeland was once my heaven, you want me to remember again and again, under the soil were our ancestors, I always remember—but mother, so long! My homeland is calling me, she is under my feet, not on the other side, but this breezy, rainy, sunny land! This bleak island swept by raging tides!” (Wu 44) The young man in the poem chooses to stay because his homeland is no longer China but the land under his feet - Sarawak, a final goodbye to the so-called “China Identity” (Pan 89-103).

The foundation of Sarawak Chinese literature was in fact earlier than the

formation of the country of Malaya; Sarawak only joined to be part of Malaysia in 1963. Hence, local Chinese acknowledged Sarawak first and then Malaysia. Similarly, there was first Sarawak literature before it becomes a part of Mahua literature. If political considerations are put aside, Sarawak Chinese literature should be an independent entity. Despite Sarawak being a state in Malaysia, there lies a significant divide in the customs and beliefs, and even political views between East and West Malaysia, two lands geographically separated by the South China Sea. Thus, when Sarawak Chinese literature has developed its “local characteristics,” they then can decline to be subsumed under Mahua literature.

It is to be noted that, when Sarawak Chinese literature began to expand, Sarawakian Chinese writers did not draw close to Mahua literature; instead, they promoted a “Borneo narrative.” This more or less shows the essence and geographical characteristic of Sarawak Chinese literature. This concept of “Borneo narrative” was first introduced by Sarawakian Chinese writer Tian Si during a talk organised by Sibu Zhong Hua Literature Association in December 2002. Being the third largest island in the world, Borneo consists of Malaysian Sarawak and Sabah, Brunei and Indonesian Kalimantan. Tian Si believed that creating a Borneo narrative, with the diverse ethnic groups, cultures, ecology and landscapes on the island, is a strategy to extend and expand the scope and substance of Sarawak Chinese literature, and to enhance its value as local literature. The concept of enhancing its role as “local” literature is worth pondering. It indicates the “local characteristic” of Sarawak Chinese literature cannot be categorised under Mahua literature; instead, its “local characteristic” or so-called “uniqueness” is very much related to the island of Borneo. Ever since Tian Si proposed this “Borneo narrative,” there is enormous support from other Sarawakian Chinese authors such as Si Wen Ting 石问亭, Shen Qin Wang 沈庆旺, Lan Bo 蓝波; Mentor Publishing in Kuala Lumpur even published a collection of books under the “Borneo Series” in support of this idea, with titles for example *Hunting and Fishing in Borneo* 《猎钓婆罗洲》 by Yang Yi Xiong 杨艺雄, *Rainforest in Metamorphosis* 《蜕变的山林》 by Shen Qin Wang, *Searching for Bu Da Fu* 《寻找不达夫》 and *Sarawak Rainforest Recipes* 《砂拉越雨林食谱》 by Lan Bo.

This refusal to be incorporated in Mahua literature does not signify an opposing stance but instead an attitude to search for individual geographical characteristics and unique styles. Cross-examining geographical characteristics and writing styles of the authors, we can see the influence of geographical location or aesthetic styles more clearly. When we agree that Sarawak Chinese literature does not belong to Mahua literature, can we then classify all Sarawak Chinese literature

into one category? This is the main argument of the paper. This paper consists of three parts. The first part discusses what constitutes Sarawak Chinese literature with enhanced local characteristics, in reference to Bornean features. The second part divides Sarawakian Chinese authors in two groups, namely “Taiwan-based authors” and “local authors” and further examines how regional experience affects their works. It is, however, difficult to distinguish which part is affected by Taiwanese influence and which part is their self-creation, especially in this era of globalisation. In spite of that, we can narrow the scope of study down to the works of rainforest writing of Sarawakian Chinese writers to gain a more refined study. Therefore, through a comparison between the fictional works of Li Yong Ping and Chang Kuei Hsin, who have long since taken up Taiwanese citizenship, and rainforest writing of local authors, the differences and individual complexity between both will then be investigated and deliberated. Finally, the dialogues or contrasts between Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan and local Sarawak Chinese literature will be analysed.

Borneo Narratives: The Contrast between Local and Taiwan-Based Writings

In proposing the idea of Borneo narratives, Tian Si lists “mysterious rainforests” as the first feature of local characteristics of Sarawak Chinese literature and argues that the Borneo narrative can be generalized as rainforest literature (Tian, “The Essence of Sarawak Chinese Literature” 22). He also concludes that the Sarawak Chinese literature is not only different from the Chinese literature in China, Taiwan, North America, but also utterly different from that in West Malaysia (Tian, “The Essence of Sarawak Chinese Literature” 31). In addition, Malaysian scholar Chong Yi Wen 钟怡雯, who studied in Taiwan, once expressed that, with rapid urban development in West Malaysia, writers are largely based in cities after the 80s; rainforests have become a common imagination among authors and readers in West Malaysia. But the authors in East Malaysia especially in Sarawak truly write about rainforests (Chong 133). Starting with the mysteriousness of Bornean rainforests, this paper will then compare literary works by local Sarawak Chinese and Taiwan-based authors.

The literary works of local Sarawakian Chinese writers are mostly poetry and prose, based on documenting reality and the content focused on regional characteristics. The main geographical characteristics of Sarawak Chinese literature is no doubt the “rainforest.” Sarawak is located in the northwest of the world’s third largest island, Borneo; with abundant rainfalls, lofty mountains and streams, and a population of only about two million, Sarawak is still largely covered by mysterious rainforests which arouse boundless imagination. The literary works that incorporate

the rainforest in the title include *Rainforests in Metamorphosis* (2007) by Shen Qing Wang, *Sarawak Rainforest Recipes* (2009) by Lan Bo, *Banquet of the Rainforest* 《雨林的盛宴》(2002) by Lim An Song 林岸松, *Rainforest Poetry* 《雨林诗雨》(2012) by Tian Si . These works consist of prose, poetry and even recipes. In comparison to local Sarawak Chinese literature, most of the literary works by Taiwan-based Sarawakian Chinese writers are fiction. The main works include *Herds of Elephants* 《群象》(1998), *Monkey Cup* 《猴杯》(2000), *My South Seas Sleeping Beauty* 《我思念的長眠中的南國公主》(2001) by Chang Kuei Hsin and *The snow falls in clouds: recollections of a Borneo childhood* 《雨雪霏霏：婆羅洲童年記事》(2002), *The End of the River: Volume 1* 《大河盡頭(上卷)》(2007), *The End of the River: Volume 2* 《大河盡頭(下卷)》(2010), *The book of Zhu Ling* 《朱翎書》(2015) by Li Yong Ping. However, Taiwan-based writers do not limit themselves to writing only about Sarawak; they also write about the other parts of the island of Borneo. This shows the real “Borneo narrative.”

The rainforest boasts an abundance of wildlife. Chong Yi Wen pointed out that the biggest problem of rainforest writing is, besides a minority of botanists and professionals, no one really knows what kind of unique species the rainforest can offer (Chong 119). Local Sarawakian Chinese writer Yang Yi Xiong’s prose *Hunting and Fishing in Borneo* recorded his hunting and fishing stories and the legends of wild boar, bison, crocodiles, dolphins, lizards and so on. Yang Yi Xiong is a hunter and fisherman, one of the minority who is knows much about the habits of wild animals. He writes not only his personal experience and what he has heard, but also some additional information about animals, for example “crocodiles”: “Crocodiles are dinosaurs’ cousins; 65 million years ago, dinosaurs and most of the reptiles were extinct as they could not adapt themselves to the harsh climate change during the end of the Mesozoic. Crocodiles survived through this catastrophe; they adapted and withstood environmental change caused by climate change...” (Yang 107) Chang Kuei Hsin in his novel *Herds of Elephants* writes about crocodiles too. He cited the sentences with “crocodiles” in some Chinese classical texts such as *Miscellaneous Records* 《物类相感志》, *A Record of Foreign Matters* 《異物志》, *Records of Diverse Matters* 《博物志》, *Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters* 《说文》, *Compendium of Materia Medical* 《本草綱目》, *The Customs of Cambodia* 《真蜡風土記》, *Guan Tze. Water and Earth* 《管子·水地篇》 and so on to indicate that the crocodile is a variant of the dragon. Moreover, the novel also specifically mentions that the “crocodile” is the “mystification of the dragon. Speciation. Secularisation of the crocodile... Zhongyuan’s 中原 Dragon, is terrifying. Giant crocodile who eats human” (Chang, *Monkey Cup* 30). In contrary to Yang Yi

Xiong's personal experience, the information provided by Chang Kuei Hsin is based on texts spiced with mythical elements.

Apart from referring the "crocodile" as the embodiment of the mythical "dragon," Chang Kuei Hsin also demonises the "rhino." In his novel *Monkey Cup*, a rhino governor, who is reared by human but remains untamed, kills several people, mirroring the monster Nian 年兽, a mythical creature with frightening figure/sound. Also demonised is the reptile "lizard." They are portrayed as an uncontrollable army of carnivores, attracted in droves by the corpse of the rhino governor, refusing to be driven away by people's burning. All this illustrates the wildness of the rainforest. Conversely, in the prose *Hunting and Fishing in Borneo* by Yang Yi Xiong, the lizard has a lovely image: a greedy lizard is fooled by human and eats its fill of stones, happily!

One of the iconic floras in the rainforests is the "pitcher plant." In Tian Si's poem entitled "pitcher plant" (Tian, "Pitcher Plant" 155-156), the pitcher plant is a victim of modernization and pollution; it carries the message of a love for nature and environmental protection. The crystal clear water in the pitcher reflects the blue sky that reminds people the preciousness of nature. In the novel *Monkey Cup* of Chang Kuei Hsin, an infant's corpse floats in the crystal clear digestive juice in the pitcher. The pitcher plant is portrayed as a carnivorous beast, the pitcher representing a 10-month pregnant woman, devouring a new born infant, further intensifying the dramatic flavour of the novel.

Another distinctive feature of the island of Borneo or Sarawak Chinese literature, besides the rainforest, is diverse ethnic groups. There are about 27 different ethnicities in Sarawak. The largest ethnic group is the Iban, comprising 30% of the population; 29% of Chinese; 21% of Malay; and other minorities including Bidayuh, Melanau, Indians, Javanese and inland indigenous tribes. The writers, no matter Taiwan-based or local, depict relationships between various ethnic groups. In contrast to those based in Taiwan, local Sarawak Chinese literature highlights the peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups, such as the prose "long house magician" (Tian, "The Magician in the Longhouse" 21-25) written by Tian Si. The story describes a Chinese magician married to a Dayak girl and lives in the longhouse, having a good relationship with the indigenous. Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan, on the other hand, often expresses the unequal relationship between the ethnicities, such as Chang Kuei Hsin's novel. Indigenous girls mostly admire Chinese men and being more liberal in sexuality, they are taken advantage of easily by Chinese men. Some Chinese men are those in power who persecute simple natives, and even use their power or gains to seduce indigenous girls; this can be

described as a form of colonialism by settlers. Li Yong Ping's novels also contain this clash between ethnic groups but they represent the expansion of European colonialism. White men demand indigenous women (even girls) to dedicate their bodies by using political forces or in the name of religion (sometimes the Bible and sometimes the Koran). The most classic character is the so-called "magician of long house," Baba Ao Si 峇爸澳西 in Li Yong Ping's novels *The End of the River* and *The book of Zhu Ling*. He uses his title and power as the counsel to the Queen and the legal adviser to the Indonesian government to travel all indigenous longhouses, winning children's heart with sweets, giving dolls to underage girls by magic tricks, and eventually taking their virginities. That is the reason why Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan is discussed and viewed as the Nanyang version of *Heart of Darkness* by critics.

When Sarawak Chinese literature is no longer categorised under Mahua literature and when the geographical location shifts to the island of Borneo, the regional characteristics or the so-called "local characteristics" of Sarawak Chinese Literature become clearly visible. Thus, this paper would like to narrow the scope of research down to writings with geographical characteristics of the island of Borneo, in order to compare the differences between "Taiwan-based" authors and "local" authors and develop a new perspective.

Taiwan-Based Sarawak Chinese Literature: A Suspicion of Absence?

Tian Si, who commends local literary works of Sarawak Chinese literature, is dissatisfied with Taiwan-based Chang Kuei Hsin and Li Yong Ping, accusing their Borneo narratives as being "distorted." Citing a description of the Rajang River in Chang Kuei Hsin's novel *Herd of Elephants*, he criticises the description as being pretentious, nauseating, provoking a sense resistance, and he believes that these "outrageous" descriptions are a plenty in *Herd of Elephants* rendering it unreadable. In his opinion, he thinks that the real writing of Borneo has to rely on local authors; they must be the people of the island who "devote boundless love to this piece of land and harbour hope and longing for her future" (Tian, "Borneo Narrative" 36). He argues that art should be processed on the basis of reality.

The first point against Tian Si's remark is that *Herd of Elephants* is a fictional work and fiction is not based on reality. Secondly, we can go back to the paragraphs which Tian Si has cited to determine whether the novel of Chang Kuei Hsin has "defamed" the Rajang River or is "unreasonable" in any way:

Sunny. Dawn. The first ray of the rising sun in the rainforest is just as bright as

a poisonous toad. Farm animals eat and defecate, eat and defecate, their digestive and urinary system are fully functional, healthy and free. The boy, De Zhong 德中 said goodbye to his tribes at the riverside, rowing on the river. Less than two kilometers, two of them took turn to squat and poo on the deck behind. Feces fall into the river, just like infants' arms. Infants' legs. Some gather on the shore, like an infant's corpse. With a paddle in hand, De Zhong steered the boat like a master, as if there was a motor installed at the stern. The boy felt a bit dizzy, he kept washing his face with river water, the more he washed, the more dizzy and filthy he felt, as if he went into the cesspool. 30 meters in front raised a cloud from the river. Buzzed. Buzzed. Buzzed. Something on the river. Fall. Rise. Rise. Fall. Both of them scrunched up their nose by one hand and rowed slowly by another hand. Cloud passed through starboard. Green head red head and black head flies thickly covered driftage that surrounded by a group of big and small fish. (Chang, *Herds of Elephants* 71)

Tian Si's citation ends here. If this single paragraph is extracted to describe the Rajang River, it really is extremely nauseating. But when we continue to read on:

Waves by the sampan startled the flies; they became a more majestic cloud on the river, the revealing driftage was full of a dense layer of orange, yellow and pink maggots. Waves rolling, dark cloud appeared at the east, and the west. A corpse. Butt faced up, with legs and arms, rotten flesh, visible bone, maggot fuzzily made a “大” shape around. Still a broken green jersey on the corpse. Green jersey. Uniform of the Flaming army. (Chang, *Herds of Elephants* 71)

we can finally understand why the water in the Rajang River only makes the boy dirtier the more he washes himself, why the water stinks, why the countless flies. This does not mean that the river is contaminated or this is the norm there; it is explained later in the story that there is a dead body there. The dead body is in line with the plot of the novel, which depicts the frequent infighting of Sarawakian communists who refuse to surrender and hide in the mountains. Even the boy's uncle kills people to protect themselves often. This is a reasonable description of the Rajang River which befits the plot of the story.

Although Tian Si does not cite any paragraph from Li Yong Ping's novels in his criticism of the latter's works, similar to Chang's style, Li's stories can often

be seen as “blasphemous” to Borneo in their descriptions that serve the plots. The Kabuyasi 卡布雅思 River denotes an arena of lust, played out in a story where an underage indigenous girl is presented by her mother to a Western man followed by the soiled girl being accused of seducing a saint and eventually expelled from the tribe. When discussing the issue of “distortion,” Taiwanese-born American scholar, David Der-wei Wang 王德威 has pointed out that, although Li has expressed his willingness to follow the tradition of realist novels of the 19th century, his distinctive and compelling writing style still renders him more of a modernist.

Therefore, it seems the biggest difference between Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan and local Sarawak Chinese literature is in the aesthetic value. Tian Si quotes the discussion of “writing in order to express emotions” and “fabricating emotions for more stylish writing” of Lie Xie’s 刘勰 *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 《文心雕龙》. He commends that those “writing in order to express emotions” convey honest thoughts and feelings arisen from real life, thus demonstrating a higher level of artistic achievement. On the contrary, those who “fabricate emotions for more stylish writing” use ornate language to show off literary skills, producing only a kind of word-games (Tian, “Writing in order to express emotions’ and ‘fabricate emotions for more stylish writing” 18-20). This more or less can be summarised as the view of local Sarawak Chinese writers towards Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese literature. The former is reality-oriented and adheres to the idea of “expressing emotions in order to write.” This view is appropriate if it refers to prose. However, when reading the mainly fictional works in Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese literature, we can quote Jin Sheng Tan’s 金圣叹 commentaries, which are “the meaning lies in the event, and does not lie in the writing” 以文运事 and “the meaning lies in the writing, and does not lie in the event” 因文运事. On the one hand, local Sarawak Chinese literature is similar to *Records of the Grand Historian* 《史記》, which restricts the authors to writing factual events. On the other hand, Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan is regarded as *Water Margin* 《水浒传》, where “I can pen everything I want creatively,” having the artistic license to create fiction. From a purely artistic point of view, the latter has a relatively high level of attainments.

However, the argument of this paper is not about the aesthetic style in Chang Kuei Hsin’s and Li Yong Ping’s fictional works. There is abundant research about this: Chang’s sexualisation writing, classicization and textualisation of the rainforest; Li’s obsession with Chinese characters, sinfulness, confession and repentance; both being among the best of modernist authors. Therefore, I do not want to add to this discussion, nor ponder on Taiwanese elements in their writings on Taiwan. Instead, I

would like to examine Taiwanese elements in their writings on Bornean rainforests. It is done by defining “somewhere” from “elsewhere” because only the “absence” can illustrate the “presence” and we can only define all possibilities of the “presence” by investigating the “absence.”

Taiwanese elements are ever present in Chang Kuei Hsin’s and Li Yong Ping’s novels. A trace of Taiwan first appears in one of Chang Kuei Hsin’s rainforest novel series, *Monkey Cup*. The protagonist in the story is a Sarawakian Chinese male teacher who is charged with the seduction of underage girls in Taiwan. Taiwan is where the protagonist yearns for but where he cannot stay; he has to go back to Sarawak. The memory in Taiwan keeps flashing in his mind when he is back in Sarawak, but this memory is not in linear form. It is presented in the form of “Sarawak — Taiwan — Sarawak.” In addition to the memory in Taiwan, there are also memories of Sarawak before he went to Taiwan. These memories constitute multiple meanings such as past and present, regrets and ideals, homeland and foreign country. When it comes to *My South Seas Sleeping Beauty*, the influence of Taiwan becomes more apparent. The mother of the narrator is a Taiwanese, the father of the narrator studied in Taiwan before and the narrator himself also studies in Taiwan and has a Taiwanese girlfriend. However, the Taiwan in this story and the Taiwan in *Monkey Cup* are different: “Taiwan” has become a reality in contrast to a virtual space, from “absent” to “present.”

For another Taiwan-based Sarawakian Chinese literature writer Li Yong Ping, the influence of Taiwan is shown from the beginning of his rainforest novel series. In *The snow falls in clouds: recollections of a Borneo childhood*, the narrator is a Sarawakian Chinese young man in Taiwan, who tells a Taiwanese girl Zhu Ling about his rainforest stories. In his memory, there are three Taiwanese women living in Sarawak, victimised as comfort women of World War II, receiving men ranging from Japanese Imperial soldiers to Malay upstarts. Li’s second novel in this rainforest series, *The End of the River* continues this style of narration. A Sarawakian Chinese author in Taipei tells the Taiwanese girl Zhu Ling about his teenage years in the rainforest on the island of Borneo. In Li’s recent book, *The Book of Zhu Ling*, however, the Taiwanese girl Zhu Ling becomes the narrator, who tells her adventures when travelling through geographic space to Borneo. However, this is not living but wandering; the narrator ultimately returns to Taiwan. “Taiwan,” as a real “presence,” is never absent in Li Yong Ping’s novels, in contrast to Borneo, which represents the “absence” in his novels. The meaning and gestures of Taiwan and Borneo, for Taiwan-based Sarawakian Chinese authors, are mirrored images reflecting each other. Taiwan is the entity whereas Borneo is merely a shadow.

Finally, let us further explore the contrast between “presence” and “absence.” We notice first that there is no real exchange between local and Taiwan-based Sarawakian Chinese writers; local writers express their opinions on Taiwan-based writers, who do not respond. Taiwan-based writers are absent from such discussion. Furthermore, does the interchangeability of Taiwan and Borneo in Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese literature raise questions of the absence of Taiwan-based writers? Hence, I would explore next the questions: if the Bornean rainforest in Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese literature is only a shadow, how do Li and Chang construct their fictitious cities? If all is fictitious, what does the Bornean rainforest mean to them?

“Local” Regional Experience, “Taiwan-Based” Homeland Imagination

Chang Kuei Hsin and Li Yong Ping established their rainforest legends through three novels. But these works undergo tremendous change in the description of the rainforest. From *Herds of Elephants* to *My South Seas Sleeping Beauty*, Chang’s rainforest changes from the real rainforest to the protagonist’s home; the so-called rainforest is a manmade garden of his Taiwanese’s mother. The mother not only keeps remaining native plants in the garden but also plants myriads of exotic flowers and trees around the house. The artificial garden has also become his father’s playground, where a variety of animals and even two tigers are released for hunting. His father’s Taiwanese friend Lin Yuan (林元) also joins the group and installs scores of indigenous virgin girls there. An artificial rainforest garden, an artificial tribe of indigenous girls, and cultured plants and animals all symbolise nature, but represents a total violation of natural law. Such rainforest is very personal, closed, artificial and contemporary, built on the basis of imagination. Thus, Chang Kuei Hsin can write “his” mythical rainforest freely in his imaginary world.

The transformation of Li Yong Ping is more visible compared to Chang Kuei Hsin, but their transformation is different. If you think that the rainforest in Chang Kuei Hsin’s fiction is inward and closed, then the rainforest described by Li Yong Ping is expanding and outward. In his rainforest novels, from *The Snow Falls in Clouds: Recollections of a Borneo Childhood* to *The End of The River* and then to *The Book of Zhu Ling*, Li Yong Ping’s imagination has reached the Point of “Doing as One Pleases.” From Li Yong Ping’s hometown, Kuching to the rainforest in Borneo, to boating on the river, and walking at the Kabuyasi riverside 卡布雅思河畔, he is entering territories completely unfamiliar to him. Other than that, temporal and spatial restrictions are disregarded in the novel *The Book of Zhu Ling*. Zhu Ling can do whatever she wants; for example, she can just turn into an adult or

stop growing at will. No airplane is needed when she wants to go to the rainforest in Borneo from Taipei; the writer allows her to arrive in the blink of an eye. Disregarding any language barrier, Zhu Ling does not know the Malay language but can understand an indigenous girl's lengthy stories and they become very good friends. Breaking the boundary of yin and yang, dead Baba Au Xi appears as a living corporeal and continues to collect the bodies of virgins on the river, and has a battle with Zhu Ling. Zhu Ling, as the protagonist, can also meet historical figure, James Brooke. Together with James Brooke, she witnesses historical events. This novel is just like the Nanyang version of "The General's Monument" 将军碑 by Taiwanese Writer, Zhang Da Chun 张大春 .

Li Yong Ping completely discards the "real" element in his narration. Perhaps this cannot solely be attributed to his deliberate attempt to create a fantasy: "write and write, unconsciously, I broke into Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki's animation world" (Li, "Preface/ A tribute to Isao Takahata yu Hayao Miyazaki" 15), but a natural development. We can catch a glimpse of his thought the preface in Li Yong Ping's novel *The End of the River: Volume 2*:

The remembrance of the river — this book — started when I just came to teach at a new university in eastern Taiwan and lived in a brand new hostel. One night, I woke up at midnight, sitting under a bright lamp on this huge and desolate campus in the valley, a mood of melancholy descended me, and I started to think of the past. All dogs howling here and there at the moon, an idea suddenly came to my mind, I took a few paper and a pen quickly, calling your name in my heart, calling your spirit solemnly by looking at the quiet, stood-still Amis holy mountain, the black Qilai mountain with a crescent moon , outside the window: Zhu Ling, come back! Please listen to me again, to what happened in Nanyang when I was young. (Li, "Preface for Volume 2/Asking Zhu Ling: What is Fate" 16)

The experience he gained is the experience in Taiwan. The holy Batu Tiban Mountain in Borneo in the novel is in fact the holy Amis Mountain in Taiwan. The writer imagines another mountain at the view of the mountain; hence the binary opposition of "Taipei" and "Borneo" is relaxing and the two become interchangeable. When he encounters a bottleneck in writing, the image of Taiwan appears again:

Later, I bought a house halfway up the mountain in Tamsui, Taipei County by a

most wonderful chance — A Nanyang old wanderer, bought a property for the first time in his life! I couldn't sleep the night when we moved in, sitting alone by the window, staring at the foggy Mount Guanyin that lies across the river like a black mountain ghost, I lost in a daze. Suddenly the fog dissipated, a beam of light burst outside the window. So, I started to write again the first night I moved to Tamsui, our remembrance of the river began again - but this time it is official and no turning back — we set sail. (Li, "Preface for Volume 2/Asking Zhu Ling: What is Fate" 18)

This is a perfect writing of regional experience. As the memory of Borneo slowly fades away and personal feelings become weaker, the writer has to transform the Bornean rainforest writing by any means. Be it a change in perspective, or detachment from reality through recall, or seeking comfort through lingering with the past, or even recreating a lot of fictitious scenes through historical events and reincarnation.

All these attempts are to render a new possibility for his Bornean rainforest — and the possibility to linger and to continue writing. Through this, Li Yong Ping "recreates" Borneo. To "recreate" is not to revert to the original state, but to reinterpret: "The author went backstage and let his heroine experience and learn about the new, strange, beautiful and extremely frightening world with her own senses and mind. Zhu Ling has an independent and a true 'voyage of discovery' on the island of Borneo instead of a guided sightseeing tour"(Li, "Preface/ A tribute to Isao Takahata yu Hayao Miyazaki" 14). In other words, "a guided sightseeing tour" has a predetermined boundary shaped and planned according to someone else's experience and feelings. When he gives up the experience and joins the "journey of discovery," the rainforest on the island of Borneo is no longer recognized passively via his personal interpretation, but actively influences and participates in his writing, eliciting a dialogue. Referring to Tian Si's criticism towards Sarawakian Chinese authors — distortion, albeit one-sided, it certainly is fitting.

Another question: when the rainforest in Borneo no longer exists in the real geographic space and in the real experience of others, but in the imagination of the writers, does it mean that any corners of the world can be imaginary settings for the writers? If so, why do Sarawakian Chinese authors in Taiwan still choose to write about Borneo? This leads us to the dialectical relationship between the regional 鄉土 and Yuan Xiang 原鄉.

"Yuan Xiang" literally means "the original homeland." In contrast to the present homeland, the term "original" implies not only the temporal and spatial

changes in the original homeland, but also the longing imagination of the lost homeland here and now. On the other hand, the term “regional” emphasizes on concrete local experience of a person, having more realist features. Thus, “Yuan Xiang” is a concept that can be constructed and imagined, allowing for emotional commitment and a sense of belonging. “Yuan Xiang” thus goes beyond geography; it represents some origin of life meaning yearned for or the so-called “emotional attachment.” Yuan Xiang implies a person has left the original homeland and there lies a spatial distance. However, it must be pointed out that “Yuan Xiang attachment” is not necessarily opposite to “regional attachment,” nor does it in conflict with the locality consciousness.

Local writers insist on local experience, while those in Taiwan convey the imagination of Yuan Xiang, a kind of Sarawak Chinese literature which grows with imagination — a misplaced “Borneo.” David Wang Der-wei has pointed out that, the crux of Li Yong Ping’s long and longer story is that his homeland imagination has surpassed the simple structure of a regional literature; his stories of root searching need a setting which is larger than Kuching (古晋), Ji Ling (吉陵), and Haidong (海东). (Wang 8) Local writers and Taiwan-based writers represent two circumstances in the writing of Borneo. The local writers, who were born and raised here, are intensely attached towards their motherland, and write about what they see. Conversely, those in Taiwan have less personal experience; even if they had, the majority of them are old memories. Their regional flavour can be seen as imagination, or conveys symbolic meanings: the mysterious rainforest, abyss of desire. In such case, Sarawak Chinese literature in Taiwan becomes primitive, devoid of reason and boundary; no wonder local authors think they are outrageous fabrication or distortion. However, the choice of Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese writers Li Yong Ping and Chang Kuei Hsin to write about Borneo also partially reflects their regional attachment or consciousness.

When Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese writers want to construct a fantasy beyond reality, Borneo becomes their Utopia in their memory: “Walking into the rainforest, as if a baby went back to the mother’s womb, sucking earnestly, worry-free,” (Chang, “Preface/Returning to the Rainforest” 11) “The rainforest is generous-hearted, the unpleasantness and depression in real life are diluted by the rainforest without leaving any trace” (Chang, “Preface/Returning to the Rainforest” 11). About utopia, Foucault said: “They are the places which have a direct or reverse relationship with the real society. They either represent the real society in a perfect way or they reverse the society, but in any case a fictional place is not a real space” (Foucault 403). Utopia as an imaginary place, in fact, reflects “my absence” and

“self-reconstruction.” The imagined rainforest in Borneo is a virtual space that even these Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese authors cannot enter.

Conclusion

As discussed above, the main concern of this paper is the complex development, not the common origin. As an illustration, albeit sharing the same national administration, Malaysia and Sarawak go beyond the often highlighted subordinate relationship owing to their differences in geography and culture. Although Sarawak Chinese literature may refuse to be subsumed under Mahua literature along with literature from other regions in West Malaysia, the stance is not one of diametrical opposition but one that highlights more of the regional characteristics of Sarawak Chinese literature, which encompasses rainforest ecosystems, interaction and exchange within the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society in Sarawak. Adopting this perspective, the paper further explores the difference between local and Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese literature in their portrayal of Borneo flavour. Next, the paper deduces from the works of Taiwan-based Sarawak Chinese writers, Chang Kuei Hsin and Li Yong Ping, who are both inside and outside of Sarawak, that there could be an end to their “Borneo diaspora,” and that “Taiwaneseeness” would be more and more evident in their works, either consciously or subconsciously.

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From A La-tzu Woman to Rain From the Sun: A Discourse on Chinese Malaysian Literature in the Transnational Context and the Construction of its Canon

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Abstract Chinese Malaysian Literature is not only made in Malaysia but there are a number of transnational literary productions which took place in Taiwan, Hong Kong and others places abroad. This research endeavors to discuss Chinese Malaysian Literature in the transnational context and the construction of its canon. By incorporating an actual subject (Li Yongping) and supplementing the research with the framework which combine the model of speech communication and model of transnational communication, this paper aims to make inferences on the evolution of Chinese Malaysian literary canon from its roots, and gradually deduce the basic elements in the process of canonisation. It highlights the phenomena of interaction between the different literary systems which cross-system, cross-boundary, and cross-context were also involved, and the relevant key medium in the encoding and transcoding processes. In the different stage of interaction, we can see that the relation between an addressee and an addresser is not simply a passive one, as both entities are able to mutually interact. By analysing the distribution of Li Yongping's works in a transnational context, these elements in the construction of Malaysian Chinese literary canon in Taiwan can be clarified.

Key words Chinese Malaysian Literature; Transnational; Canon; Li Yongping

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Introduction

When did Malaysian Chinese literature start to take root in Taiwan? As two different cultural systems, how did the Malaysian Chinese literature and Taiwanese literature overcome geographical and cultural boundaries to produce more specific contact and communication? How did the canonisation of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan come into its construction process? A discourse on the construction of canon can provoke deeper thoughts on these questions.

In order to sort out the canonisation process of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan, the main theoretical framework of this paper will be drawing reference from Chang Han-liang's work, which involved the projection of Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication into Paul van Tieghem's model of transnational communication. Li Yongping [李永平], a Malaysian Chinese writer in Taiwan, will be the main case study. As a text always exists in a dynamic state to convey its message to different corners via different media, we can see from the complex perspective of polysystem that the relation between an addresser and an addressee¹ is not a simple one of influence, rather a complex dialogue or even a relation of mutual interference. The receipt of an addresser's message by an addressee is not merely for his (its) own practical needs, but is subjected to influence from various practical conditions such as cultural and political climate. By incorporating an actual subject (Li Yongping) and supplementing the research with relevant theories, we are better able to restore the actual communication phenomenon of a piece of work, and to observe the formation and construction of Malaysian Chinese literary canon abroad from a fresh perspective. During the process of literary communication in a transnational context, the phenomena of cross-system, cross-boundary, and cross-context were also involved, and the relevant key medium (could be a person, an event or an object) in the encoding and transcoding processes within the system serves as the focus of this paper.

The Phenomenon of Cross-cultural Literary Communication

1 An addresser or addressee may refer to a person, an event or an object.

later criticised by American scholars and the new generation of French scholars for constituting only external relations and being unable to manage internal relations (40-41).

ii. Roman Jakobson's Model of Speech Communication

Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication introduced 6 elements of language communication, namely addresser, addressee, context, message, contact and code. As compared to Paul van Tieghem's model of transnational communication,

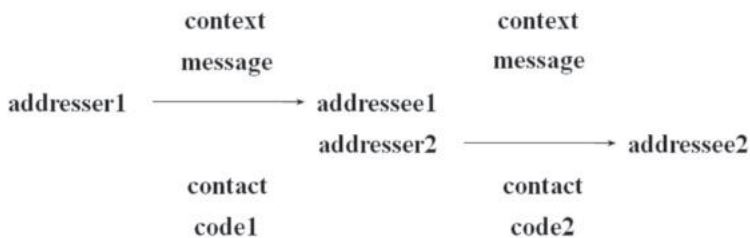


Fig.3: Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication projected into transnational context

Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication was an attempt to manage the internal relations. Since speech serves as the object of literature, Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication can better manage the process between an addresser and an addressee. Such a process includes (1) a message that constitutes literature, (2) a contact between two entities, (3) a code that constructs message, and (4) a context produced by different national and cultural backgrounds. As Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication is hardly able to explain the differences between the communication of literature and other media, following his presentation on the 6 elements of the model of speech communication (addresser, addressee, context, message, contact, code), he immediately pointed out that the diagram (Fig. 2) was unable to reflect the dynamic nature and retroaction of a communication process. He then moved on to explain that a speech may differ from time to time, place to place, and man to man amidst a communication process, thus giving rise to 6 functions that are different, overlapping, and not exclusive at the same time (12).

Despite providing an approach to the construction of internal literary relations, Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication does have its limitations, as an actual communication process of literature or poetics is not always static. Rather, as a communication processes of literature or poetics tends to remain cross-boundary (nation, region, culture, and etc.) for a long period of time, it could be regarded as a long-term dynamic process. As such, Chang Han-liang's model of communication

(Fig. 3) that projects Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication into Paul van Tieghem's transnational context can fully depict the dynamic and changing process between various complex elements in a transnational communication.

Referring to the centre of Fig. 3, we can interpret the transformation of addressee 1 into addresser 2 as the linguistic boundary. The communication of a language system is shown on the left side, whereas another language system is shown on the right side. In fact, such a recurring communication process has transcended the linguistic boundary (5). If we can say that Roman Jakobson had utilised the 6 elements (addresser, addressee, context, message, contact, code) of his model of speech communication to construct an internal system of speech communication, the diagram revised by Chang Han-liang further developed it into a model of transnational speech communication, which has provided a detailed and accurate theoretical model for research on transnational literary communication phenomenon. This theoretical model contributes an approach to the construction of internal literary relations, and even though such internal relations are innate to each national literature, the construction of transnational internal literary relations becomes possible when we duplicate the same mechanism on various national literatures (14).

The Formation and Construction of Canon Abroad, Taking Li Yongping as an Example

The realisation of Malaysian Chinese literature's transnational context in Taiwan began since 1975, when Chi Pang-yuan[齐 邦 媛] and others compiled *An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature: Taiwan: 1949-1974/Vol.2, Short Stories*. In 1972, Chi Pang-yuan was invited to join the National Institute for Compilation and Translation as the Department Head of Humanities, where she hosted the "Taiwan Literature Translation Project." She was the editor-in-chief of the translation project, and other members include Yu Guangzhong[余光中], Wu Xizhen[吴 奚 真], He Xin[何 欣], and John J. Deeney[李 达 三]. The outcome of this project was *An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature* published by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation in 1975. The anthology consists of a volume on poems and essays, and another volume on short stories, where poems, essays, and short stories published in Taiwan between the year 1949 and 1974 were selectively translated. It was distributed by the U.S.'s University of Washington Press, and was also the first anthology of contemporary Chinese (Taiwan) literature in English language. Such communication had in fact surpassed the linguistic boundary, as readers' message was constructed in the English code after translation, but not the one from the original Chinese work. Among the 17

writers who were selected, Li Yongping was the only Malaysian Chinese writer, and the following shows a hundred-word introduction on him that was included in the anthology:

Li Yongping was born in 1947 in Borneo. He was enrolled in the Department of Foreign Languages at National Taiwan University after high school, where he worked as a teaching assistant in the department and as an editor of *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly* following graduation. His short story titled *A La-tzu Woman* [拉子妇] was published in the *University Journal* and was highly regarded. (Pang-yuan 435)

In Chi Pang-yuan's preface of the anthology, none of Li Yongping and *A La-tzu Woman* were mentioned. Yet, from this introductory paragraph, we can see that Li Yongping's "*A La-tzu Woman* was published in the *University Journal* and was highly regarded." Firstly, it clearly states that the story was noticed due to its publication in the *University Journal*. As *A La-tzu Woman* was published in the November 1968 edition of the *University Journal* under Yan Yuanshu's [颜元叔] recommendation, this testified to the influence of an addressee 1 to an addresser 1. Secondly, who was she referring to as the one who "regarded" *A La-tzu Woman* "highly"? Obviously, this person is likely to be Yan Yuanshu who had written *Comments on a La-tzu Woman* and published it on the same edition of the *University Journal*. If this argument is valid, we can once again prove the influence of Yan Yuanshu as an addresser 2.

When *A La-tzu Woman* was chosen for the *Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* compiled by Yin Di [隐地] and *An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature: Taiwan: 1949-1974/Vol.2, Short Stories* compiled by Chi Pang-yuan and others, these occasions symbolised great significance on the development of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan. Being the first selection of "Novels of the Year" ever since the advent of Taiwanese literature, the *Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* had initiated the publishing mode of selection and compilation of "Anthology of the Year." The series was expected to be called off after the 1998's publication of *Selected Novels of the Year Eighty-Seven*, but Chiu Ko Publishing took over the publication and extended the series to date. Besides the selection of "Short Stories of the Year," the publishing house established by Yin Di had also planned for the publications of selection of "Poems of the Year" as well as "Literary Critiques of the Year" in 1983 and 1985 respectively. The former began with the *Selected Poems of the Year Seventy-One (1982)* compiled by Zhang Mo [张

默] and others, while the latter took a start with the *Selected Literary Critiques of the Year Seventy-Three (1984)* with Chen Xinghui as the editor-in-chief. Meanwhile, Chiu Ko published the selection of “Proses of the Year,” and the *Selected Proses of the Year Seventy (1981)* compiled by Lin Xijia [林锡嘉] and others in 1982 was the first in the series.

It turned out that the judgement of the quality of a literary work depended on whether it was shortlisted as a Novel of the Year. Besides reflecting the development and trend of the Taiwanese literature at that time, the content of these novels formed an important segment in the construction of Taiwanese canon. Furthermore, the Taiwanese publishing industry started to become fervent in the publications of anthologies. Besides the above mentioned series, there were others like Avant-garde Publisher’s “Selected Readings of the Year” which was based on a local appeal, Central Daily News’s “Supplement Anthology,” Zhishi Xitong Publisher’s “Selected Science Fictions,” Shi Yi Wen’s “Selection of Chinese Poems,” United Daily News’s “Xiao Shuo Chao/Anthology of United Daily News Award-winning Novels,” and etc. The inclusion of *A La-tzu Woman* into the anthologies of novels of the year was in itself an epoch-making achievement, and could be viewed as the beginning where Malaysian Chinese literature (novel) was officially recognised and anthologised by the local literary circle.

An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature: Taiwan: 1949-1974/ Vol.2, Short Stories (Chi Pang-yuan, et al.) was an important series of anthologies published by the Taiwanese National Institute for Compilation and Translation, and distributed by the U.S.’s University of Washington Press. The Taiwanese National Institute for Compilation and Translation was an organisation under the jurisdiction of Taiwan Ministry of Education, and was responsible for the edition and translation of academic and cultural books, textbooks as well as academic terms. Before Taiwan Ministry of Education allowed private publishers to compile and print textbooks in 1997, the National Institute for Compilation and Translation was the only supplier of Taiwanese primary and secondary schools’ textbooks. After earning recognition from the Taiwanese academic circle and private publishers, the selection of *A La-tzu Woman* as one of the translated stories marked the first occasion whereby Malaysian Chinese novel in Taiwan was enlisted into the domain of Taiwanese literature by an official organisation, before it was subsequently translated and distributed to the Euro-American region as a part of Taiwanese literature. The communication process at this stage was the first time *A La-tzu Woman* had went through transnational communication in a different language. At this stage, a different context too had caused the message and code to undergo qualitative changes amidst the

communication process. The newly-derived code was no longer the previous code 1, code 2, or code 3, but a new code 4 where Fig. 3 continue to expand towards the right side.

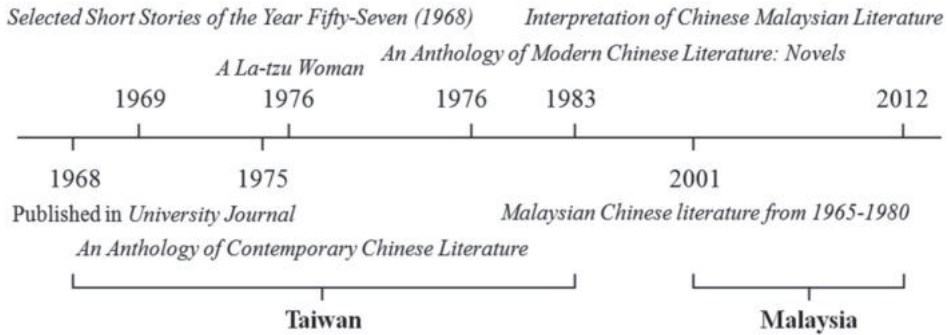


Fig. 4(a): The communication process (1968-2012) and contact of *A La-tzu Woman*

Year	Contact	Region
1968	<i>University Journal</i>	Taiwan
1969	<i>Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)</i>	Taiwan
1975	<i>An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature</i>	Taiwan/U.S.
1976	<i>A La-tzu Woman</i>	Taiwan
1976	<i>An Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature: Novels</i>	Taiwan
1983	<i>An Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature: Novels</i>	Taiwan
2001	<i>Malaysian Chinese literature: Novels from 1965-1980</i>	Malaysia
2009	<i>An Anthology of Post-war Malaysian Sarawakian Chinese Novels from 1946-1970</i>	Malaysia
2012	<i>Interpretation of Chinese Malaysian Literature</i>	Malaysia

Fig. 4(b): The communication process (1968-2012) and contact of *La-tzu Woman*

During the communication process of *A La-tzu Woman*, the contact too had been changing continuously. Ever since its first publication in the Journal of University, the story was selected into important Taiwanese anthologies, translated and distributed to the Euro-American region, and even anthologised for publication. All these happened in Taiwan, till it eventually returned to Malaysia after 33 years in 2001, and was chosen for a local classical literary compendium known as *Malaysian Chinese literature*. After Fang Xiu [方修] compiled *A Compendium of Malaysian Chinese Literature*, *A Compendium of Malaysian Chinese Literature (Post-war)*, and *Selection of Malayan Chinese Literature*, the *Malaysian Chinese literature* was another literary compendium that was systematically planned to include important works of Malaysian Chinese literature during a specific period of time.

A La-tzu Woman was published in page 129-135 of the *Malaysian Chinese literature: Novels from 1965-1980*. The bottom right hand corner of page 135 clearly stated, "Selected from *An Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature: Novels* published in Taiwan," which means the version adapted by *Malaysian Chinese literature: Novels from 1965-1980* was the one from the Chinese version of *An Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature: Novels* compiled by Chi Pang-yuan et al. in 1975 and published in 1976. As such, we can see that a literary communication is not only made up of the process from an addresser 1 to an addressee 1, and Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication cannot be applied to explain such a complicated communication phenomenon. As René Wellek once said, the research method from Fig. 1 to 3 presented a change from extrinsic to intrinsic approach. When we project Roman Jakobson's model of speech communication into a transnational context to observe the case of *A La-tzu Woman*, we can better understand cases like *A La-tzu Woman* that had went through the transnational communication phenomenon of achieving development abroad and returning to home country. Thus, such a case can be viewed as a classical case of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan.

The *Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* was first published in March 1969. It was subsequently published by Cactus Publisher, Jinxue Bookstore, Dajiang Publisher, and Shuping Shumu Publisher, before it was printed and distributed by Er-ya Press since 1981. The second edition was released on September 1984, and under conservative estimation, 5000 copies of this anthology had been printed between 1969 and 1989. On the other hand, *An Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature: Novels* had always been listed as one of the Chinese textbooks for Universities, and between the year 1976 and 1981, it was published in 4 editions by Shuping Shumu, before its publication was taken over by Er-ya Press since 1983. Statistics have shown that this book had already been published in 5 editions by the year 1987. Together with its English version in 1975, it was a conservative estimation that the book was produced in over 10000 copies from 1969 to 1989. If we compare these two numbers with the Taiwanese population at that time¹, we will be looking at a ratio of 1.5:2000, which is a very astonishing figure that can prove the widespread circulation of the two anthologies in Taiwan. *A La-tzu Woman* was selected into this anthology means it had already been included in the teaching materials of Taiwanese Colleges in as early as 1975. Yet, if we review the

1 According to Taiwanese population statistics, Taiwan's population was 13,348,096 people in 1966, 17,968,797 people in 1980, and the figure went over 20 million to reach a total of 20,286,174 people after 1990.

circulation of *A La-tzu Woman* in Malaysia, it was only until 2012 (37 years later) that the story was selected into the *Interpretation of Chinese Malaysian Literature*, a teaching material involving text analysis and interpretation that was designed for the subject of Malaysian Chinese literature in higher education institutions in Malaysia.

The communication process of *A La-tzu Woman*, as clearly illustrated above, forms a classical case whereby the Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan radiates its influence from the centre of Taiwan. On a superficial level, it seems like a communication phenomenon of a single piece of work in overseas territory, but if we probe into the matter deeper, we actually wish to switch our perspective away from current research that are unable to see the wood for the trees, so as to gain a more thorough understanding on the cross-boundary interactions between two different literary systems. When we change the addresser 1 in Fig. 5 from Li Yongping's *A La-tzu Woman* to Malaysian Chinese literature, and the addressee 1 cum addresser 2 from Yan Yuanshu's *Comments on a La-tzu Woman* to Taiwanese literature, we will be able to see that, through various complex means, the influences brought about by addressee 1 cum addresser 2 will indirectly or directly affect the addresser 1 ahead and the addressee after. As presented in Fig. 5, the focus of this research lies on the textual construction and signification process, which is the process where a message is constructed through a code.

Li Yongping's *Rain From the Sun* [日 头 雨] is yet another widely-circulated novel after *A La-tzu Woman*, not to mention that its contact amidst the communication process was the greatest among the earlier Malaysian Chinese literary works in Taiwan, where the most frequent contact happened in Taiwan. After being awarded and selected into *An Anthology of United Daily News Award-winning Short Stories (1979)* and *Xiao Shuo Chao: An Anthology of the 4th United Daily News Award-winning Novels* (Xian, 3-23), *Rain From the Sun* was again chosen for the "Supplement of United Daily News's Compendium on 30 Years Literature: Novel, Vol. VI" after 2 years, and this particular volume was even named directly after *Rain From the Sun*¹, indicating the amount of recognition and attention it had received at that time. Henceforth, *Rain From the Sun* had frequently garnered favour from the Taiwanese academic and literary circles, including being selected into *Ying Wu Gu Li* (Joseph S. M. Lau, 1983), *A Compendium on New Generation Novels: Countryside* (Huang Fan, Lin Yaode, et al., 1989), *An Anthology of Contemporary Taiwanese Novels (1945-1988)* (Guo Feng et al.), *A Tutorial on Modern Taiwanese Literature: Novels* (Mei Jialing, Hao Yuxiang, et al., 2002), *The Canon of Twentieth*

1 Supplement of United Daily News's Compendium on 30 Years Literature: Novel, Vol. VI, *Rain From the Sun*, Taipei: United Daily News, 1981, 39-56.

Century Taiwan Literature (Fiction), the Postwar Period, Vol. II (Xiang Yang, 2006), and *A Revised Edition of Tutorial on Modern Taiwanese Literature (Novels), Vol. I* (Mei Jialing, Hao Yuxiang, et al., 2015).

As Joseph S. M. Lau [刘绍铭], Mei Jialing [梅家玲], Hao Yuxiang [郝誉翔], and Xiang Yang [向阳] were scholars teaching in colleges, their selection criteria in compiling the anthologies can give us a hint on the academics' acceptance of *Rain From the Sun*, whereas editors like Guo Feng [郭枫], Huang Fa [黄凡], and Lin Yaode [林耀德] can reveal the recognition on this novel by the Taiwanese literary circle. The communication phenomenon of *Rain From the Sun* in Taiwan fully explained the enormous assistance Taiwan had provided for Malaysian Chinese literature. Be it active responses from readers and commentators, frequently-held literary awards, diversified publishing platforms or even the flourishing publishing industry, all these were practically unattainable conditions for Malaysian Chinese writers in Taiwan. Hence, Taiwan had offered them very attractive congenital conditions, which is why the Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan can achieve such growth and development.

In 1981, *Rain From the Sun* was translated into English and published in *The Chinese Pen* (Summer, 1981). This magazine that was distributed and sold in the U.S. allowed *Rain From the Sun* to go through transnational communication in a different language for the first time. In 1983, *Rain From the Sun* was once again translated and published in the U.S.'s *The Unbroken Chain: An Anthology of Taiwan Fiction Since 1926*. This stage was a very crucial segment in the communication process of *Rain From the Sun*, as it clearly depicted how a different context can cause the message and code to undergo qualitative changes before a new code was eventually derived.

In July of the same year, *Rain From the Sun* was selected in China's publication known as *A New Selection of Taiwanese Novels* (edited by Bi Shuowang). It was the first time this novel was being introduced to China readers, and its version in simplified Chinese was first presented to cater to the needs of local readers. From the brief author's biography printed on the final pages, we notice that Bi Shuowang, the addressee 2, was aware that the author was a Malayan overseas student. Nonetheless, he went on to include Li Yongping's *Rain From the Sun* in the anthology, showing that he agreed with affiliating *Rain From the Sun* to "Taiwanese novel," and such intention originated from the influence by addressee 1 and addresser 2. During this communication process, each of addressee 1 and addresser 2 was no longer an individual but a community consisting of a combined force contributed by the Taiwanese academic and literary circles. Such an invisible

of the *University Journal*, along with his *Comments on A La-tzu Woman*. In fact, this process highlighted an objective truth, that is, the addresser 1 was inversely influenced by the addressee 1, when the original title of the short story was changed from *An Aboriginal Woman's Blood* to *A La-tzu Woman*. Therefore, we can see that the relation between an addressee and an addresser is not simply a passive one, as both entities are able to mutually interact. For this particular case, this is the first stage of communication.

The Malaysian Chinese writer Li Yongping is the author of *A La-tzu Woman*. The novel plays the role of addresser 1, and the Taiwanese scholar Yan Yuanshu plays the role of addressee 1. This second stage of communication has transcended national and linguistic boundaries, as both addresser 1 and addressee 1 used Chinese as a language medium, but during this transnational communication process, different context could incur qualitative changes in the message and code, which means it was possible for code 1 at the bottom to turn into code 2 at the right side. As *A La-tzu Woman's* code belongs to Li Yongping's personal language system that was derived from the 1960s' Malaysian Chinese literary language system, the fact that Yan Yuanshu read *A La-tzu Woman* and wrote his *Comments on A La-tzu Woman* shows that he, as the addressee 1, had apparently composed a new text which contains a code that no longer belongs to Li Yongping but Yan Yuanshu's personal language system that was derived from the 1960s' Taiwanese literary language system. Under such circumstances, Yan Yuanshu became both the addressee 1 and the addresser 2 in Fig. 5.

In the following section, we will discuss the third stage of communication by considering the example of *A La-tzu Woman* being included into the *Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* compiled by Yin Di in 1969. In his *Foreword to Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* (Di2), Yin Di wrote, "Among the authors of the 11 short stories in this selection, we have never seen only the names of Li Yongping and Li Ang. Strictly speaking, even with their above-standard works, if they are going to gain reputation as promising young talents in the novel circle, they must continue to advance their skills diligently. If they fail to produce more and better works, I am afraid their fate would just be like those geniuses who were blazing meteors at first, but vanished in the blink of an eye." Even without any prior knowledge of the author, Yin Di too had included the story into the *Selected Short Stories of the Year Fifty-Seven (1968)* as he deemed it "above-standard," so how did Yin Di come to his judgement on the "standard" of the story? Perhaps we can find the answer from Yin Di's brief comments written after every story in the selection. In fact, Yin Di's brief comments on *A La-tzu Woman* (Di150) in

members like Zhu Yan [朱炎]¹, Zhang Xiguo [张系国], Chen Ruoxi [陈若曦], and etc.

In the “4th United Daily News Short Story Award’s Final Assessment Meeting Notes” (The editorial department of the United Daily News 5-47), *Rain From the Sun* triggered a much heated debate among the judges, as Chen Ruoxi, Ye Shitao, Zhang Xiguo, Zhu Yan, and others participated in different levels of discussions on this novel. Chen Ruoxi and Zhu Yan had especially high opinions of the novel, thus it was awarded the first prize of the 4th United Daily News Short Story Award. As this novel was the first piece of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan that was offered the highest honour in the novel category of Taiwanese literary awards, such an award carried much significance in the progress of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan. With that being said, this award was not merely an honour, but a representation of acceptance and recognition by the Taiwanese academic, literary circles and industry on *Rain From the Sun*. When the award-winning novels were anthologised and published, Zhu Yan wrote a specific review on this novel that was titled *Thoughts on Rain From the Sun* (The editorial department of the United Daily News 335-343).

The “4th United Daily News Short Story Award’s Final Assessment Meeting Notes” and Zhu Yan’s *Thoughts on Rain From the Sun* both belonged to the second stage of *Rain From the Sun*’s communication process. The latter occupied a very crucial segment in the process, as it played a pivotal role and produced profound impact. This was similar to Yan Yuanshu’s *Comments on a La-tzu Woman*, but Zhu Yan became both the addressee 1 and addresser 2 (Fig. 6) during the communication process at this stage. Apparently, *Thoughts on Rain From the Sun* was a new text composed by Zhu Yan as an addressee 1. This had turned into a code marked by Zhu Yan’s personal language system. Thus, we can see that at this stage of communication, a different context had caused the message and code to undergo qualitative changes, whereby code 1 was transformed into code 2. Zhu Yan’s *Thoughts on Rain From the Sun* allowed Li Yongping’s work to once again being placed into the 1970s’ Taiwanese literary language system after 11 years, and this signified a momentous achievement by the Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan.

As *Rain From the Sun* is a novel full of suspense, it can either become an independent and complete short story, or a novel. In 1986, *Rain From the Sun* was eventually made into a book together with another 11 short stories to form an integral whole, and this book was named *Jiling Chronicles* [吉陵春秋], one of the

1 At that time, Zhu Yan was the director of the Taiwanese Institute of American Culture, Academia Sinica, and a professor at the Department of Foreign Languages, National Taiwan University.

100 Best Chinese Novels of the 20th century selected in 2006.

Conclusion

Tee Kim Tong[张 锦 忠] once said, “The two primary constructive elements of the formation of literary canon are logic and discourse. Selection is a fundamental approach to the formation of canon and also a specific phenomenon of literary canonisation. The following illustrates several means of constructing a canon by applying the principles of selection: (1) anthologies, (2) compendiums, (3) literary awards and composition competitions, (4) textbooks, (5) translation” (153-154). By analysing the distribution of Li Yongping’s novels in a transnational context, these elements in the construction of Malaysian Chinese literary canon in Taiwan can be clarified. Granted, the Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan is ready to fulfill the basic conditions of canon construction. During the distribution process of Li Yongping’s novels, people like Yan Yuanshu and Zhu Yan who were on the positions of addressee 1 and addresser 2 had provide clear answers to the interpretive community that was indispensable to the formation of canon.

Not only that the *Jiling Chronicles* set an important milestone in the progress of Malaysian Chinese literature in Taiwan, it was also a significant piece of classical work in the history of Malaysian Chinese literature. In 1986, the traditional Chinese version of *Jiling Chronicles* was published in Taiwan and honoured with the Prize of Recommendation during the 9th China Times Literary Award. The sudden appearance of this book disrupted the Taiwanese literary circle a little, as Yu Guangzhong made an exception by writing a preface for a novel as a poet, Long Yingtai[龙 应 台] wrote a monograph on it, and Wang Dewei[王 德 威], a Harvard professor and scholar of modern Chinese novel, described it as a “small-scale wonder.” As the book received much recognition and commendation from various great scholars in Taiwan, it was also widely favoured by local readers. In less than a year the book was published, it was already releasing its 5th edition, and this testified to the widespread influence it had caused among the literary circle at that time. Four different versions of *Jiling Chronicles* is currently available, namely the traditional Chinese version published by Taiwan’s Hung-Fan Bookstore, the English version published by the U.S.’s Columbia University in 2003, the Japanese version published by Japan’s Jinbun Shoin in 2010, and the simplified Chinese version published by China’s Shanghai People’s Publishing House. This shows that the book remains a strong presence to date.

The fact that *Jiling Chronicles* has never been published in Malaysia gives rise to a problem that is very much worth pondering. This is certainly beyond a matter

of quality of work. It is understood that the distribution process of *Jiling Chronicles* in Malaysia is rather complicated, because even as the book can be found in Malaysia's bookstores, it is either the Hung-Fan version or the Shanghai People's version imported from Taiwan and China respectively. Undoubtedly, this represents the return of Malaysian Chinese literature to its hometown after achieving certain results in a place that can better nurture its development, and despite the arduous journey, the unyielding and indomitable spirit of Malaysian Chinese in developing their literature was aptly reflected.

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Malaysian Tamil Children Literature: Its Journey and Accomplishments

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Abstract Literature as a common reading material has been accepted as authoritative forms that carve and shape the thinking of children. They are called children literature and treated as an important source of formal writings. Regardless of race, colour, and education, every child is in needs of this form of literature to shape up their thinking that would assist in their development. In a multi-racial nation like Malaysia, it is even important to foster better understanding and acceptance among each and other through such literature. Being a multiracial and multicultural nation, with each racial component having its own cultural traditions and practices, Malaysia faces a greater challenge to come into a term of agreeing of what it ought to be treated as Malaysian tradition in children's literature? To our wonder, among the four main languages trending literature, the Malay, English and Chinese version of children literature almost available with notable significances, but the children literature in Tamil is yet recognized or made known for acceptance for in proper. Without acknowledging the true representation of the genre, we could not be painted off the Malaysian literature in whole. This study is offering an alternative by showing how far the literature for children in Tamil has been developed to be part of the Malaysian children's literary tradition. Its journey and

accomplishments in the past 200 years of the trajectory are revisited to cast the trending nature of Malaysian Children Literature in Tamil.

Key words Children Literature in Tamil; Malaysia Tamil Children Literature, Malaysia Tamil Literature

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Introduction

What is literature? It has been addressed differently from time to time, from one civilization to another. Horace claimed that literature is a word formed by combining *dulce* and *utile* which means the beauty and the benefits, respectively (Hasan). Aristotle termed it as *Katarsis* which means purifying the human soul, leading to the formation of a noble human group (Teeuw), in general. In Malay culture, it is known as *(ke)susastera(an)*, *su* means pure, white and *sastera* means treatise or book. In southern Indian tradition, it is called *ilakkiyam*, a combined term of *ilakku*, path or target and *iyam*, move or way, means the way of life. All definitions lead to one: literature is meant for man to live a beautiful noble life. It could not be said that children literature might have another definition than the given one, and the outcome of the literature is obvious, playing an important role in the development of one's character building and personality development, likewise the children literature.

Then, what does qualify as children literature? F. J. Harvey Darton and Hunt described that material or book written specifically for children and read by children are called children's literature, in specific. Children's literature is a special form of literature produced with special aspects for the readers who fall within 12 years old to enhance their understanding of their surroundings. It found in many forms such as novels, short stories, poetry, drama, folklore, rhyme, adventure and so forth, either in original or translation or custom (Salleh 2). Since all of these are aimed at giving fun rather than devoted to teaching, having storytelling elements or prospects within them became rather important. As a complementary medium in shaping the children, children's literature is trusted for its own roles and responsibilities in flexing and forming a child's personality. In this way, it is expected to assist the

child's mental development in a way or other with unique intervened techniques (Murasu 125). This is the pathway that opted by the Malaysian Tamil Children Literature (MTCL), indeed.

The early-day children literature in Tamil appeared to be honoured through oral poem tradition (Letchumi 68). Oral tradition is universal and common to all languages (Ambiyum 1). While there is no solid evidence supporting the existence of oral Tamil children's literature in oral tradition in the Indian community, efforts to keep children rhymes seemingly existed since the era of classical literature (the *Sangam* Period), says Dhanalakhmy. Malaysian Tamil Children Literature (MTCL) also appeared to be developed orally in the early years. Though, this form of folk literary usually denoted for adults, it also widespread in the interest of the children where the elderly people in family or community entrusted to develop the tradition. Emotion and morality are interwoven story-lines usually shared with interesting story plots. Since Indian families appreciate and maintain the shared-family style, where 4 or 5 families usually live under a roof, the oral literary sharing session became a simple necessity calling for an intriguing gathering on daily basis. It has nevertheless further enhanced the development of children's literature in Tamil, and helped the field to flourish and attain a comparable development in par with other literary genres in Tamil (Ambiyum 2).

The beginning point of Malaysian Tamil Children Literature (MTCL) could not be defined accurately; it is often associated with migration of Indian (MI) communities to Malaya¹, which begun about 200 years ago. Southern Indians migrated to Malaya in large number under the initiation of the British government during the late nineteenth century. The journey of MI begun in the late eighteenth century reached its peak at the last quarter of eighteenth and first quarter of nineteenth century before it settled in the early twentieth century. Around 1786 the Indian workers were brought in to work in the sugarcane plantations. The same is witnessed during the 1870's. The trend of MI changed in 1890's and onwards when the British moved from cultivation of sugarcane to rubber. It was learned that the number of Indian workers was 75,000 in 1891, and it gradually increased year after year before it turns to 621,847 in 1931 (Dhandayudham 14). It turned the MI into the third largest group of people with 11.1% of the total population when Malaysia gained her independence. Of the statistics, 85.2% of the majority are Tamil who speaks fluent Tamil (Dhandayudham 14), were from Southern India.

1 Malaysia is known as Malaya until it gains the present title in 1966, with the formation United States of Malaysia. Before 1966, it is known as Malaya. The term Malaysia is used in general to refer the both periods.

Some by-products of the migrants were transferred to Malaya during the migration could not be understated. Some by-products such as their cultural and religious practices, norms and values, along with their language and literary knowledge are a few of them which have along in oral forms. None of them remained the same since then; they have sustained a significant add-on of local essence and flavour, till to a point showing the finer difference with remarkable characteristics. The MTCL, too, has been nurtured in many ways through the efforts of countless people in numerous forms. All of these have turned the field into a rich source of referential modules for children.

1. Children Literature (CL) in Malaysia

MTL is a brand new world, even new is the MTCL. It is even tender in nature with not many noteworthy works, believe many. Unfortunately, the reality remains otherwise. Just like the English version of CL, the TCL has unique contributions as far as its nature, theme and the message are concerned. For past few decades, there have been systematic approaches deployed by selected veteran scholars that have elevated the MTCL into a well-developed stage of attainment. Motivation and encouragement received from a number of parties, especially the Media personals, some talented writers with relevant contributions have subsequently turned the MCL into a contented one. As this information remained scattered and yet been brought together, it gave no proper channel to verify its significance. The present study is aimed at offering a second opinion that MTCL holds significant contributions with its own flavour that produced within the Malaysian context.

It is rather interesting to note the early day development of the MCTL was plagued with many shortcomings. It received less support and encouragements from the locals. Producing and publishing the literature was shattered for not having promising supports and motivation, monetarily and psychologically. This was due to the fact that Indians migrated from southern India to Malaya, then, as hardened labourers trusted for their physical strength and obedient manner¹ in the early-days. They were none other than fortune seekers with non-recognizable academic achievements. Therefore, they paid no much heed to surplus elements but satisfied with rudimental lifestyle¹ and have no high expectation beyond earning, saving and living a rudimentary life, except for a few. A few qualified themselves through self

1 The Indians who were brought into Malaya from Sri Lanka, on the other hand, were educated and well-trained to fill clerical and low-level white-collar jobs, and they did not contribute to the development of Tamil literature in notable level. It was the southern Indians who gained their education here and encouragement here contributed to the development of MTL in general and MTCL, in specific.

and others' motivations, and embarked on a mission of enriching culture, language, and literature, with their surplus efforts. This is what gave birth to MTL and MTCL that present today. It was not a product of an academy or formally formed body of well-wishers.

This study is aimed to offer a comprehensive outlook of MTCL as inclusive as possible. The genre remained understudied domain that not made known publically to Malaysian CL in general despite its contribution in various ways for more than 200 years. This vacuum is somehow given no promising encouragement to study the genre, what's more in capturing its comprehensiveness. The present paper, hence, aimed at giving details of CL characteristics by taking into accounts of the factors gave impetus for its development, alternatively. This is done by looking at the extended version of data collected from a number of sources such as printed books for children, a collection of articles and poems for children, research materials for children and newspaper publications.

2. Rationale

Literature plays a significant role in any community. As clarified by Aristotle, it is known for playing dual roles. One is serving as a tool that purifies the human soul, and other is leading him towards the formation of a noble group of human. At one hand, it is treated as a mirror of society, to reflect the society by registering the events, its norms and values and so on. By absorbing the earlier, it is treated as rendering knowledge to shape and sharp up the society in return, on the other hand. Virtuous literature products tend to create quality reader in exchange, as such it serves as a responsible tool for creating a responsible society. Having known this, social man learned ways to make-up literature, especially through oral tradition since the early-day. So does the children literature begun to grow in the same manner. The MTCL, however, registered a different development chronology that has been overlooked.

The MTCL has registered a steady growth in the last 50 years to contribute immensely to the development of the children's abilities. There were many writers who have been writing different forms of literary works for the Malaysian Indian children in the past 200 years. Both the quantity and the quality of their productions were yet to be verified, as the sorts of its contents and the genre were not studied in whole, due to unavailability of the non-synchronized efforts in recognising them. Along the way, the purpose of productions was also never clarified or justified, as they were meant for children but were made available on the occasional basis to meet the surprising calls from certain parties from time to time (Murasu). The

literature remains scattered without knowing of its importance since they were divided along many differences in terms of timeframes, purposes, and requirements.

Studies show that the CL meant for children used to in-house numerous flexible forms and styles that suit the needs of that category of people. The needs differ from adults' literature. The CL is expected to cater virtue of moral and teaching of morality to nurture children to become valued assets for the nation, indirectly. Children literature has high potential to transform them become a highly potential human being in a country like Malaysia that emphasizes peace and harmony between multicultural communities. As a MCL in whole, the MTCL should be administered carefully to ensure the roleplay of the genre maximally support the nation's aspiration. The current situation does not support this call.

MTCL appeared to have various self-directed needs that were addressed adequately in the forms and ways liked by the children. One of it is the language application. The CL should employ language that is in tandem with children's development, hence, having a friendly and harmonious relationship between literature and the children became necessary, too. As such, preserving language and enriching them with the culture and values of the society became one of the main role-play of CL (Poovannan 345). In the setting of MTCL, this quality within different genres such as poetry, novels, and short stories and so on is not made known in detail (Murasu). Neither proper study verifying what forms of the genre have gained popularity and why, nor detailed articulation of their natures have been made public till now.

The well-wishers were aware of the existence of a few documents here and there in the field of children literature. Bringing them together is an important task for any move not only to details the nature of the MTCL, but also to acknowledge the version of MTCL that has been established. This study offers an alternative, a comprehensive outlook of the literature. This study is intended to offer a comprehensive work, in the end, to match the works of other languages, namely, English, Malay, Chinese and etc., against its contents, quality, and quantity besides knowing the themes and their pattern. Not to deny is the contribution to enrich the MCL, in whole.

3. Development of Children's Tamil Literature in Malaysia

The MTCL seemingly have reached its almost self-regulated completion stage, if it is seen as whole. Using any approach based on selected method or theory may give us an otherwise understanding. This was mainly due to the imbalance growth and development registered throughout different era. The factors enabled its

development and the significant productions resulted from them, in fact, received greater motivation from various impetus. As such, the development throughout the ages could be traced based on 4 main sub-areas;

- i. The significant development/growth of MTCL
- ii. Significance of MTCL productions in the selected genre
- iii. Contribution of poets and their determinations towards MTCL
- iv. MTCL genre productions that meet the need of the children

Ramaiyah, who studied the early day development of Tamil literature in Malaysia before 1978 claimed that the Malaysia version of literature and production trend has no match to anywhere, yet they transmit originality in every form. The strength is received from prosperous growth enjoyed for more than 3 decades and divided them as follow;

- i. The first stage dates from 1946 to 1956
- ii. The second stage starts from 1956 to 1966 and
- iii. The third stage begins from 1966 to 1976. (Ramaiyah 9)

Even though the MTL is acknowledged for inheriting own characteristics that qualified it to be branded as a version by itself, the chronology of its attainments could not be accepted blindly. The different eras pointed by Ramaiyah may offer a little insight to study the significance of MTCL, since the contributions were not regular and consistent. Therefore, MTCL development must be studied based on the different timeframe to discover its comprehensiveness. The following timeline divisions will be used for this purpose;

- i. Early-Day of Indian Arrival (1786 -1945)
- ii. Era Surrounding the Independence of Malaya (1946-1975)
- iii. Momentum Era (1975-2000)
- iv. Contemporary Era (2000-Now)

3.1 Early-Day of Indian Arrival (1786-1945)

Tamil education and its development took place in Malaya, then, offered significant motivation and impetus to the enrichment enjoyed by the Tamil language and the literature during this era. Tamil literature was seen as enjoyed development, as Tamil education begun to stay afoot. The latter is noted for having a profound impact upon the former, and vice versa. The demand arises in the forms of textbooks cater to the rising number of school going children before and after Malaysia gain her independence. The sharp rise of the number of Tamil schools from 122 schools in 1922 (Ramasubbiah 25) to 140 in 1930's to 888 in 1957 (www.indianmalaysian.com/education) also has raised the demand for the textbooks. At that time, however, the supply has never matched evenly in the form of number and quality. This was

later translated as a demanding call for developing new forms of literature, as well.

Though it is not easy to detail the inclination between Tamil education and literature clearly in this era, we could not deny that the necessity of education and its requirements for raising the needs for various literature products in Malaysia. The poems and stories were produced to meet the schoolchildren literary requirements eventually gave rise the number of literary works produced for them. As such, we could claim that calls for the literary texts to support their demands due to the rise in the number of Tamil schools in this era. It is rather at a slow pace.

3.2 Era Surrounding the Independence of Malaya (1946-1975)

The growth of MTCL and Tamil education in Malaysia has a strong positive correlation in this era. The beginning and the development of the Malaysian Tamil Literature, however, remains blur after 1945. It was better known to be acculturations era of two reminiscent, the localized literature and literature form of Indian Schools of Literary Thoughts. Local scholars of the opinion that prominent signs for the growth were seen later after the nation gain her independence, especially after the Tamil education was formalized. Sabib and Krishnan, however, claim that the absolute version of MTL begun somewhere in the mid of 1940's. In contrasts, Dhandhayutham argued that MTL showed greater individualities by reducing a lot of resemblances with that of Indian School of Literary Thought in the 1980's. Of the two, the later seemed to be promising with existing evidence. The development of Tamil education and the contributions of mass media, social institutions, and individuals and so on that came for rescue became visible in the late of 1970's and the beginning of 1980's in Malaysia. The brand new cadre of writers emerged from there came to rescue the field in the latter 1970's when they managed to pave a progressive path for the production of own MTL and MTCL.

The early day development enjoyed by the TL usually captured using various ways. Ramaiyah of the opinion that the first phase should be noted as the beginning era the Malaysian Tamil literature's trajectory. The first phase of the development should be limited to the early 10 years, from 1946 to 1956, he stressed. However, for the present study we have extended the time period of the current period to 1975 as the literatures published during these duration paid great due in covering social milieu and imperfect living scenario filled with scarcity, poverty, illness and confinement in a state of misery of the Indians in Malaya plantations, argued Krishnan (49). A few focused on writing as the education they have earned slightly hurt their minds in this era. Their writing went along the way of capturing the misery they faced in Malaya. With support from local newspapers and encouragements from selected individuals, a new band of writers *Somasanma*, *Murasu Nedumaran*,

Kavimathithasan, S. Velusamy, Valarmathi, Murugaiyan, M. Seenivasan, Maithi, R. Karthigesu, Anvar, Kayem, Kalaichelvan, K. Krishnan, Tangkak Tamil Panan, Asangani, Sinnaiya, Maithi Sultan, Thinaratchagi, Segaran, A. Subramaniam and others (Ramaiyah 22) merged to nurture the field.

The increase in the application of Tamil language in Malaysia, both the written and spoken, owes much of its due to the uprising of Tamil Education and printing media during the era. As the number of 'little' educated people increased, the number of mass media responded positively to the demand for literary works as well. Newspapers and magazines published during this era, eventually, welcomed writings from the public. Even though the printing business was controlled by Tamil Muslims, better known as *Jawi Peranakan*, they never yielded any obstacles to the literary development in Malaya. The increase in the readers' number and increased space for writings gave significant motivation to the development of Tamil language and literature works (Krishnan 189), in return. Nevertheless, the quality of these literary works remained sub-standard and room for perfections were simply enormous (Krishnan 189). One main reason for the shortcoming was that most of the Tamil literature produced by the locals resembles the genre, style and thematic patterns explored by the scholars from Indian Literary School of Thought. Local literary productions were seen as a by-product without much of localities' essence. The same was witnessed within MTCL.

A new trend has begun to emerge after the end of Second World War. Local writers have had various issues and topics to discuss from then, as the Japanese occupation has left a lot of memories. Among them, the Indian National Army movement and the connection between Subhas Chandra Bosh remained top in the list. The socio-economic milieu with poverty-stricken living condition of locals during the Japanese occupation and the declaration Emergency Period thereafter were among the other topics received serious attention among the writers (Ramaiyah 13)¹. The motivation derived from these factors shown the rise of a group of writers with substantive works marking the beginning point of time to welcome serious yet significant literary works in Malaya in Tamil. They remain as monumental works depicting the characteristics of Malaysian Indians' cultural wealth. The writers ventured to produce literary works for the locals by the locals (Ramaiyah 13).

The development of Tamil literature in Malaya was dull and inactive in the second phase compared to the earlier. There were not many scholarly laden

1 Although there are forms of Tamil literature since 1887, most of the literary works in the form of short stories, novels and poems are the results of the Tamil people who have been educated in Tamil Nadu. When they migrated to Malaya for a business, they were also involved in the writing arena and succeeded in producing literary works (Ramaiyah 13).

intellectual works produced in this era. A limited number of works with restricted scopes showed no clear direction of the CL headway, therefore. Authors working during this era showed no extended passion for generating new or value-added forms of literary exercises aimed at enhancing the MTL. As the league of the writers remained the same, the reflection is seen within the literary forms, as well. Writers such as *Murasu Nedumaran, I. Ulaganathan, I. Ilavalaghu, Kaarakkilaar, Vaaninesan, Saratha, A. Sengkutuvan, K. Velusamy, K. Thirumarasu, S. Vadivel, Tamil Chelvan, Kathirvelan* and *others* (Ramaiyah 23) contributed immensely during this era. Of the list, a few belong to the earlier stage, too.

This era witnessed another significant development in education. The development of primary, secondary and tertiary level Tamil education entered another level with various opportunities to produce the quality literary works in general, and children literature, in specific. In return, their efforts paid off in establishing very own form of Tamil literature. This was, indeed, added with supports of local philanthropists subsequently allowed the MTCL domain reached its near maturity phase and begun its journey towards perfection.

Yet, this era does witness some innovative productions differ in the spectrum of thematic elements touched in compared to the earlier era. The motivation for this development came from an exclusive source belonging to this era, the Tamil Youth Bell Club and their activities. The Club has been organizing nationwide talent stirring programmes among the youngsters in Malaya that aim at promoting the Tamil language and elevate its status. One significant effort is the training for the youths to produced quality short-stories. All these have made the era a special and different from the earlier and the latter, the third stage.

3.3 Momentum Era (1975-2000)

Unlike the earlier two eras, the third stage is considered as a transition era with promising development noted in two ways. One is the development seen the type of literature, and the other is in the number of scholars joined to enrich the domain. Besides of maintaining the continuity of the earlier two stages, the present one inspired and assisted by the development of printed media, the magazines and newspapers. Available vast opportunities welcomed new writers to join hand in enriching the genre; this call was anticipated by the scholars belong to the previous stages. The promising environment turned the CL production saw a twist in Malaysia. It emerged as an extended era with substantial differences giving an exclusive platform for writers to enrich the era with short-stories, developing an eschewed trend. A few scholars belong to the earlier stage and a few of new, namely, *S. Sokkalinmggam, Paavai, S. Muthusamy, S. Subhatthira Devi, P.K.*

Shanmugam, Neelaveni, Veerasingam, Poongavanam, Jeganathan, Anbhu Chelvan, S. Velusamy, Somasanma, Devi, Somasanma, Kannaphiran, and others joined the league to enrich the genre says Ramaiyah (23).

Most of the second generation authors provided opportunities for the third generation authors to participate in the producing the Tamil literary works. These authors have filled the CL of the era with heavy subject matters, specifically for matured children. Though noted for having a lot of similarities with the previous one, the literary works of the era showed a slight difference. They took the era to a maturity level, in term of the thematic selection and the quality, believes (Krishanan 190). During this era, besides the Tamil education, parallel development of mass media joined force in giving impetus for the TL and MCTL growth. The development of the mass media industry and the contributions made towards the MTCL will be discussed shortly.

3.4 Contemporary Era (2000-Now)

The present-day development of MTCL is well advanced, but the quality and quantity are not, compared to earlier eras. Tamil CL is still plagued with the scarcity of creativity and critical thinking. Hence, the achievement could not be claimed to be comprehensive and in parallel to that of achieved by the other languages in Malaysia such as Malay, Chinese, and English. It has been fifteen years since the last proper work produced in its whole for children in Tamil. All we could see in this era are the isolated productions within inconsistent interval produced by veteran writers belong to previous eras. The genre seemed to experience dry spell as the present-day young and profound writers paid no heed to the needs and interested to develop the genre to the next level.

The well-developed mass media industry in Malaysia appeared to be the saviour of MTCL, today. It has developed a new trend, the so-called 'Peer-assisted-Trend'. The magazines, newspapers and the radio station (government controlled) were still protracting their inherited responsibility. With dedicated column and broadcasting hours, these industries still held up the light of hope for its growth. Interestingly, their venture has produced a significant upcoming trend, where the school goers become the contributors for the genre. It let the task now been taken up by the youngsters, children as young as 5 to 15 years old, instead of the veterans producing a highly creative and critically developed piece of write-up. In this way, the mass-media controlling bodies have striven to revive the genre with the help of limited manpower and financial wastage, who serve as the gate-keeper aiming at keeping up the quality of the literary productions of the youngsters met minimal publication standard. The trend which could be termed as 'Peer-assisted-

Trend' received overwhelming support from both, the writers and readers, too. This significant characteristic keeps the genre grow, at least, within its own standard.

4. Media Contribution in the Development of MTCL

In another development, besides Tamil education, the gradually developed Tamil Media has made a significant contribution to the development of MTCL, too. The development of Tamil language and literature in Malaysia seemed to be closely linked to the role of local newspapers and magazines, as well. The authors have had opportunities to publish their works and gain recognition. Sometimes they were traded with encouraging commentaries as ways to correct themselves. The newspapers and magazines became important platforms for accommodating the creative works of local writers in this way. Both mediums have worked in hand to hand in producing inspirational literature in Malaysia. Numerous local newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasting joined the league in promoting the genre, in specific and MTL in general.

4.1 Role of Local Newspapers

Newspaper industry¹ has been the backbone of Tamil language and literacy development in Malaysia. The industry has made noteworthy contributions to uplift the status quo of Tamil language and literature through various initiatives and in a different era. *Tamil Murasu* (July 6, 1935), *Malaya Nanban*, *Kalanjiyam*, *Jananayagam*, *Sanggamani*, and *Nesan Village* are few of which have made significant contributions by offering avenues to nurture the talent of the new writers and allow them to share their thoughts. A well-known Tamil writer, *Ko. Saranggabani* is one of the pioneers who is always remembered in the field of Tamil Literature and its development in Malaysia. Besides, The *Sanggamani*, a newspaper known as union voice, published by the National Union of Plantation Workers, it carries good implications on the working class of the Tamil community and their writings. It encouraged the creation of high-quality creative works from proficient writers who settled within plantations (Krishnan 195).

There are two 'strategic movements' deserve highlights in adding added prosperity to the development of Tamil literature in Malaysia. One is a special class, so-called a story class by the *Tamil Nesan* in the mid of 1960's, and the other is inceptions of Tamil Youth Bell Clubs by Tamil Murasu. Two local figures, *Suba*

1 *Navaneetham*, *Tamiltonan*, *Samudaya Solian*, *Baratha Mithiran*, *Inba Nilaiyam*, *Puthu Yugam*, *Travida Kesari*, *Tamil Murasu*, *Baratha Nesan*, *Janma Earth* and *Tamil Kodi*. In addition, in 1923 a prominent and highly respected newspaper was born in the development of Tamil literature in Malaya, *Tamil Nesan*. This newspaper is one of the oldest newspapers and still in the market until now (Krishnan 193).

Narayanan and *Bairoji Narayanan* took initiatives to provide encouragement and guidance to young writers to produce quality stories (Subramaniam 315) through special classes. The return was promising; it helped to sharp and unleashes the talents of young writers, subsequently gave a new dimension for the development of MTL. This was followed with *Rasanai Vaguppu* or Author Counsellor (Karthigesu 4) that offered room for young writers on the creative writing techniques to produce high-quality creative works. In addition to these, Student Hall of the *Tamil Club Murasu Club* which was established on July 6, 1953, encouraged the publication of their works, subsequently favoured a formation of a new generation creative authors (Ramaiyah 28).

In another development, *Murasu Tamil Bell Club* was formed by *Murasu Newspaper* to boost the encouragement among the youths towards Tamil. The *Tamil Bell Club Murasu*, indeed, succeeded in forming and building a lineage of charismatic and calibre writers in the country. In line with this, the *Murasu Tamil* newspaper issued a badge to writers who succeeded in producing new literary genres. Badge issuance as a token of appreciation and support to the writers to continue to produce good writings remained as good motivation for the new writers. Although it appears to be a coercion, it is seen as a genuine effort to preserve and strengthen the writing culture among young writers. It also served as the catalyst for the establishment of the Tamil Youth Bell Club at state and national level, a hardened cadre of Tamil preserving youths (Dhandayutham 15). Results were seen from the borne of some successful writers in the field like *Somasanma*, *Murasu Nedumaran*, *Kavimathithasan*, *Velusamy*, *Kaverinathan*, *Kaliyap Perumal*, *Kampar Kanimoli*, *Anbananthan*, *Poonmudi*, and *Valarmathi*. All of these figures are noted for their contributions of children's work, as well as attracting children to read and appreciate their quotes (Dhandayutham 15).

In support to heighten the MCTL quality, *Tamil Nesan* and *Tamil Malar*¹ newspapers ventured in a new platform. In 1963, *Tamil Nesan* issued a special magazine for children, *Sirubar Aranggam*. It published children's contributions and nurtured them. *Sirubar Aranggam*'s first magazine was published on February 5, 1964 with the production of poets and writers involved in the production of creative works for children. In 1965, the *Malai Nadu* newspaper also contributed to the development of children's Tamil literature by producing special editions for children covering four pages with a variety of children's Tamil literary genres. Newspapers

1 *Tamil Malar* newspaper operating in Singapore successfully issued a special edition on Sundays for children known as *Sirubar Peravai*. Various literary stories of children of Tamil literature, children's poems and discourses are published in the edition.

like *Tamil Nesan*, *Thina Mani* and *Tamil Osai* have issued special editions for children every Monday. All these noble efforts of the newspapers have directly and indirectly assisted the development of Tamil children's literature in Malaysia.

4.2 Role of Local Magazines

Local Tamil magazines also played a significant role in the development of MTL, and often treated as an important medium in preserving and developing literary ground in this country (Krishnan 202). Magazines were published as volumes and focused on short stories contributions before the Second World War. The scenario seemed to remain same till the 1960's, before numerous magazines mushroomed in the favour of local Tamil readers (Ramaiyah 67)¹. Magazines such as *Makkal Mandram*, *Ethirolu*, *Makkal Murasu*, *Malai Mogini*, *Muthamil*, *Nanban*, *Nara Malaya*, *Narumanam*, *Paavai*, *Senthamil*, *Silambu*, *Arumbu*, *Iilathiyam*, *Pasa Malar*, *Tamil Mani*, *Vetri*, *Annai*, *Aruvi*, *Kumari*, *Koottaravu*, *Mutthamil Ithai*, *Sangga Mulakkam*, *Sengkathir*, *Thamarai*, *Tamil Poongga*, *Malai Arasan*, *Kavalan*, *Nermai Kural*, *Bakthan Village*, *Theechudar*, *Thennaruvi*, *Theeni*, *Thondan*, *Jaya Malaysia*, *Thirumagal* and *Jaya Perhigai* (Krishnan 202) join the rank of the long list. These magazines widened up call for literature with local essence. Among them, the children literature too gained due interest.

The first children magazine in Malaysia was *Manavar Poonga*, which was published in 1956. The editor M. Abdul Latif, who is also an experienced, knowledgeable and talented writer, has successfully presented various works for children. It served as a child-like magazine with captivating writings and entertaining aspects. Variety of stories, discourses, poems and dramas that aimed at providing information and knowledge to children remained an added factor for the attraction. Besides, it offered room for the young to share experiences about their life's success. For these significant contributions, Ramaiyah (67-68)², a popular veteran in the world of Tamil literature in Malaysia, crowns it as the first quality magazine that devoted solely for the children in Malaysia. Magazines with same motivation such as *Manavan*, *Annai*, *Manavar Ulagam* were published, but all

1 In 1960s numerous magazines mushroomed (Ramaiyah 67). Magazines such as *Makkal Mandram*, *Ethirolu*, *Makkal Murasu*, *Malai Mogini*, *Muthamil*, *Nanban*, *Nara Malaya*, *Narumanam*, *Paavai*, *Senthamil*, *Silambu*, *Arumbu*, *Iilathiyam*, *Pasa Malar*, *Tamil Mani*, *Vetri*, *Annai*, *Aruvi*, *Kumari*, *Koottaravu*, *Mutthamil Ithai*, *Sangga Mulakkam*, *Sengkathir*, *Thamarai*, *Tamil Poongga*, *Malai Arasan*, *Kavalan*, *Nermai Kural*, *Bakthan Village*, *Theechudar*, *Thennaruvi*, *Theeni*, *Thondan*, *Jaya Malaysia*, *Thirumagal* and *Jaya Perhigai* are a few of them. In the meantime, in Tamil Nadu, *Paapa Malar*, *Anil*, *Ambulimama*, *Sanggu*, *Kannan* and *Balar Malar* are among the children's magazines that made significant contributions to the development of Tamil children's literature. (Krishnan 202).

2 This magazine short-lived and stopped its production within few years (Ramaiyah 67).

of them have had a short life span of time. Of all, *Thirumagal* was of significant, published for the younger generation in the Tamil schools since 1969. Compact contents with various literary quotes and stories were attractions to readers to stay glued to it. Among the others, it included short stories, essays, Tamil language lessons, Tamil Classical Literature, Malay Language Courses, and a provision to include students' works. Encouragements also are given in the forms of short story and essay writing competitions (Krishnan 207).

In addition to this, there are two children magazines, *Kuyil*, and *Mayil* begun their operations in 1986 and 1992, respectively, published by K. Selvarajoo and Sothinathan, in order. These magazines are still in the market and distributed to children in the Tamil schools in nationwide. Both focus on publishing various children's literary genres of literature. Question and answer section is given priority, as it provides space and experience for children to ask and find the answer (Ramaiyah 67). Both the *Mayil* and *Kuyil* are playing significant roles in preserving Tamil children's literature in present-day Malaysia. In 2010, another magazine, *Chutti Mayil*, was published as a stimulus for children. The pure efforts of *Chutti Mayil* have made history in returning and preserving the children's literary genre in Malaysia.

In the meantime, the child poets took their own initiatives in order to record the products they produced. There were very few books published specifically for children. Interests and celebrations of the local community in buying and reading children's products are limited. Hence, there is a limitation of children's literary genre in Malaysia (Murasu 57). Such a cold attitude has become a barrier to the development of MTCL. Nevertheless, magazines are also considered to be an important platform in cultivating the development MTCL. The works published in these magazines have notable quality (Murasu 60).

4.3 Role of Radio in Children's Tamil Literature Development

MTCL development owes significantly to the broadcasting industry in Malaysia. In the early stages, the development of Tamil children's literature in Malaysia received great assistance and influence from broadcasting contributions from Singapore radio station. An educational radio broadcasting bureau was formed in Kuala Lumpur in the mid of 1960's, prior to the establishment, the Singapore Radio station contributed significantly to uplift the genre (Murasu 184), where it welcomed and aired the excerpt of the poem meant for children from local and abroad poets. Excerpt of the well-known poets such as *A. Valliyappa*, *Thanigai Ulaganathan*, and *Thamilannal* have topped the selection in reviving the children's Tamil literature in Malaysia in the 1960's, says Murasu Nedumaran.

It was in 1966 when the educational radio broadcasting of own began its operation in Peninsular Malaysia. Various Tamil-based literary programmes begun to adorn the special educational segment (Murasu 184) and consequently raised the demand for new and local productions. It favoured spurring its development in Malaysia compared to Singapore for this very reason. About 95% of the poems, stories, discourses and plays written by the locals were given priority in its broadcasting (Murasu 185). The same literature was documented and distributed to schools as mean to enhance its captivity, and appreciate its essence in-depth. As such the children kinds of literature became well-accepted assets.

Along the development, the genre also gave way for the birth of a new cadre of poets, who actively involved in this spectrum. Leading the array of poets is *Murasu Nedumaran* and the rest are namely *Ponmudi*, *Thambhai Muniandy*, *Jawi Subramaniam*, *MA Santhiran*, *Parithi*, *Mathithasan*, *K. Kaliyapperumal*, *Somasanma*, *N. Mageswary*, *R. Dhandayutham*, *Velusamy* and so on. By the mid-1980s, an educational broadcasting program titled *Phadi Palakuvom* received favourable response among the children, which allow the children join hand to recite and enjoy the musical performance assisted by trained adults (Murasu 189)¹. Along the line, programmes like *Sirubar Malar* and *Chellame Selvame* also targeted for the children. The latter still enjoys weekly broadcasting on Saturdays at 2.00pm in *Minnal FM*, RTM. Therefore, the role and contribution of broadcasting media in the development of MTCL is treated as a great leaping stone.

5. Discussion

In the foregoing, a great deal of interest has been taken to display the characteristics of the MTCL in detail. It is learned that the tradition once was brought in as a merely shared version. Later developments encouraged local enthusiasts to produce and develop their own trend. The history of borrowing Indian essences has depleted, but the history self-production emphasizing local Malaysia essences were initiated. The genre has begun to establish well in the soil of Malaysia due to serious motivation and encouragement received from various parties added with the high demand for such self-marked production.

With the firm founding, various themes have explored and high lightened

1 There is a special program for children planned and broadcasted on the radio, so-called Palani Mama (Palani Uncle), for thirty minutes on Saturdays every week. It was conducted by Associate Professor V. M. Palaniyappan from the Faculty of Science, University of Malaya. Since 1962, about 1300 stories have been successfully communicated through this special radio for children. His charming voice with humorous jokes attracted children. He will also ask questions to stimulate the thinking and application of teaching at the end of the story (Murasu 189).

within the genre in more than one form of literature. Yet, all of those themes show a core, where they are related to developing the morality, mental and physical strength of the children from birth with aiming at making him/her become a benevolent person to self and community. We discovered that it is started as early as tender years using lullaby (*thalattu poetry*), one of the most ancient genres within children literature in Tamil that pondered with kindness, caring, sharing and love. This kind of literary works is rich with the arrangement of appreciable rhythm and sound that attract the child and glue to the singing voice, usually the mother. Murasu (283) claims that besides this it helps the parents to keep their children entertained, it also keeps their parent-children relational obligations were thoroughly demonstrated. Since ancient times, mothers and fathers have emphasized the importance of lullaby and exposed their children to various forms of poems with various rhythms that attract and control the emotions and minds of children, he added. It helps them to overcome sad and rejoices them. Meanwhile, the children poetry remains as a bridging gap entity that connects children's minds by distributing a variety of information, teaching, and values.

The poems for children, on the other hand, appeared to be an appropriate and effective medium for channelling useful messages to them. Children may be lost concentration with reading when face with non-readable information. Most of this ease to sing poems was not only entertaining the children with the lines laden with information and messages but also rejoice them. Singing makes those happy, active, and enthusiastic instigate involvement. Fun, cheerfulness, excitement and excitement filled activities as such make them entertained, in whole. This is another significant characteristic of MTCL.

Besides, the study also discovered that discourse or essay and short stories also make up part of the literary heritage of MTCL. Literary productions that rich in moral and teaching elements were aimed at mental, physical and emotional development were found in large quantity. They were used to guide them to achieve the heights of success. Having said this, the writers used the forms of literature to carefully mould the precious source of the nation, the children. While ensuring the children enjoy rights to be entertained, they interwoven message and information need to be shared, very carefully.

“Peer-assist-Trend” is another characteristic of MTCL. As has been shown earlier, this phenomenon has significantly altered the trend of children literature development in Tamil. Literary production was seen from children as young as 5 years old to enrich the genre. The senior and the pioneer children became role-models for the upcoming youngsters with writing enthusiasm. Selected columns

in the available Mass Medias, printed and broadcasting became main port of harbour for these sort of literature of which quality and quantity could not be undermined. As such, the MTCL is progressing well in a specific manner.

Conclusion

This paper has presented an overview of MTCL. It has shown how the literature has been brought in, imitated and developed to reach a status to be termed as its current level. In doing so, contributions made by significant poets were touched and discussed. It also has explained how the genre has been maintained, imitated and developed justly to verify that MTCL has its class but tender in nature and needs for advancement were still many. In this line, this study must be admitted as a precursor; there are still a lot needs to be done.

The Malaysian Tamil Children Literature has its own historical chronology and significances. At one point, it was established as oral literature or people literary, developed and changed with rapid growth enjoyed through various ways and personals. Compared to the earlier stage, in the latter stage and present-day, the genre is found within many forms of publications as well, especially in printed and electronic platforms. Among them, book versions became a common reading material and have been accepted as authoritative forms that carve and shape the thinking of children. All of these still remain tender in nature even after experiencing 200 years of development, indeed.

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Re-discovering the South Seas: Diaspora, Memory and Modernity in the Literary Works of Wong Yoon Wah

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Abstract A Malaya-born Chinese writer, 王润华 [Wong Yoon Wah, 1941--] is internationally recognized as a leading figure in the Chinese literature of Southeast Asia. This paper aims to elucidate how Wong represents “南洋” [the South Seas] by focusing on four interlinked dimensions, i.e. colonial history and decolonization, the Cold War, the Chinese diaspora and the localized identity, and postcolonial modernity. Combining textual analysis and conceptualization with contextualization, this paper intends to re-read Wong’s literary works through the looking glass of postcolonial and diaspora studies. By drawing theoretical discourse from Sinophone studies to Wong’s case, this paper illuminates his blindness and insight as he addresses the cultural identity of Chinese Diaspora. In the conclusion, the paper holds that Wong’s literary works paves the path for rewriting the South Seas in an age of globalization.

Key words Wong Yoon Wah; the South Seas; diaspora; identity; modernity

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Introduction

Wong Yoon Wah has been internationally recognized for his wide range of literary works with related to the South Seas. The South Seas always evokes his strong feelings, which also lies at the very heart of his literary imagination. Then, where is the “South Seas”? According to 李长傅 [Li Changfu], in the broad sense, it includes the Indo-china Peninsula, Malay Peninsula as well as Malay Archipelago starting from Australia and ending at New Zealand; but in the narrow sense, it only refers

to the Malay Peninsula and Malay Archipelago. As 许云樵 [Hsu Yun-Tsiao] points out, the South Seas literally refers to the “Southern Sea of China,” which is actually an ambiguous geographical term for lacking explicit connotation; The Southeast Asia where the ethnic Chinese have resided is called “the South Seas” (Wang Gungwu 12). Obviously the term “South Seas” has a slight implication of Sino-centrism. Then, one may raise the questions: how does Wong represent the South Seas through his literary works? What are his primary concerns when he describes the history, culture and landscape of the South Seas? What is the cultural politics of this representation? I will investigate these questions from the following four dimensions.

Colonial History and De-colonization

From October 1996 to March 1997, Wong took a sabbatical leave— first to the University of Iowa and then to the University of California at Santa Barbara, where he concentrated on his poetry writing. As the result of his intellectual adventure, Wong produced a collection of poems named “热带雨林与殖民地” [*Tropical Rainforest and the Colony*], which is a broad yet critical account of the British colonialism in Malaya. Wong admits that composing these poems has been a dream for decades, and that he regrets not writing this colonial history earlier. He is now realizing this dream:

“For such a long time, no other authors have ever tried to use this kind of subject matter; nonetheless, I’m doing it now. Finally, I’ve found some commemorative films of my own life, even if all of them resemble dim and vague shadows, which still makes me feel comfortable, especially when I recall my life spent in Malaya” (Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 8-9).

The *Rainforest* covers a historical period spanning from 1819, the year that Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781–1826) landed in Singapore, to the 1950s when the Malayan Emergency occurred. In a sense, Wong conceives of this volume as an endeavour to explore the colonial history of Malaya. The main body of this volume addresses the main events of the era, e.g., colonialism and de-colonization, the occupying of Malaya and Singapore by the Japanese, and the Cold War.

In 1819, Raffles, a British public official and Governor-General of Bencoolen, landed in Singapore and soon announced it a free port and a British colony (Turnbull 19-52). As Edward Said (1935–2003) points out, “imperialism” means the practice and theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; “colonialism,” which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. Neither

imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition (Said 5). In terms of Said's definition, Raffles is both a colonizer and an imperialist. After conquering Singapore, the British Empire opened the door to conquer the whole Southeast Asia. Wong's narrative poem “绿色的诱惑：斑兰叶写真记” [Green Lure: A Sketch of Pandan Leaves] describes the historical trajectory of colonization:

Since the British colonizer / started burning the forests / and planting the rubber trees from Brazil / Pandan leaves were killed by Parang / the green, aromatic spirit flew down / it powerfully enchanted / the desires and fancies of all the peoples of the South Seas. (Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 57)

The pandan is an upright, green plant with fan-shaped sprays of long, narrow, blade-like leaves and woody aerial roots. As a tropical plant, the pandan is rare in the wild, but it is widely cultivated and commonly used in Southeast Asian cooking to flavour dishes. In the poem quoted above, the pandan is impressively depicted as a witness to the long colonial history in Malaya, with words such as “burn,” “parang,” and “slay” connoting the violent process of colonization.

Another dimension of Wong's literary imaginary on the South Seas concerns the “ecological imperialism” largely committed by British colonial authorities in Malaya. Perak, a city best known for tin mining, maintained one of the oldest and most profitable industries in Malaya. Dredgers were first introduced in Perak in 1913 and later widely used to extract tin. The British colonizing capitalists operated these tin-dredging machines to extract the tin beneath the soil to then transport it in large quantities to England, thereby contributing to the economic success of Britain.

The British clearly economically exploited colonial Malaya through the tin-dredging industry, inevitably leading to ecological catastrophe for the local environment. Wong describes all these aspects either directly or indirectly in the poems published in the *Rainforest*. “铁船写真集” [The Portrait of Tin Dredger] presents a teenaged “I,” who is astounded to encounter a terrifying scene: a pack of “wild animals” are roaming the plains, unearthing the soil to search for “food” – tin in this case. Their teeth fiercely gnaw at the soil, riddling the earth with large holes. As the narrator grows up, he comes to realize more secrets about these “wild animals”:

“In the secondary students' geography textbook / I saw these animals from England / they were herded by the colonizer / and trampled on the Malay Peninsula / devoured tropical rainforest / rubber plantations, coconut trees, bananas and rice fields / sometimes they bit off the North–South Expressway / swallowed tiny

villages, railway stations / then blew out / huge sands and lakes” (Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 42).

The British settlers and capitalists in colonial Malaya got involved in tin dredging. The brutality of this economic exploitation not only resulted in the poverty, pain and hopelessness of local residents but also greatly endangered the local environment, which may be termed as an alternative “ecological imperialism” (Crosby). Wong’s short poem “荒芜的矿场记” [A Desolate Quarry] echoes his feelings on this exploitation:

After I came out of the soils / an empty lake was left in the earth / black waves
rolling inside it / the lake sadly looked at the sky / only wild orchid flowers and
ferns / helplessly lived / on the sand dunes. (Wong Y. W., *Rubber* 48)

Through the eyes of the first-person narrator (“tin”), the landscape and surroundings seem tinged with melancholy, and the blame primarily lies at the door of the tin-dredging colonizer. Furthermore, Wong’s poems delicately represent the racial repression and class conflict in Malaya, where British colonizers and Chinese capitalists were responsible for this ecological calamity. Tin mining produced gravel and sands that ultimately had adverse ecological effects. Combined with tropical downpours, these conditions resulted in the severe loss of mineral fertilizer. In a consequence, the “pitcher plants” in this desolate land have been forced to change their eating habits: the pitcher starts as a small bud and gradually expands to form a tube-shaped trap; the latter contains a syrupy fluid that the plant produces to drown its prey (e.g., insects). Apparently, this unique carnivorous habit of the pitcher is explicit evidence of ecological imperialism. Wong’s short poem “猪笼草：把美丽的陷阱悬挂在空中” [Pitcher Plant: Hanging a Beautiful Trap in the Sky] brilliantly captures this incredible phenomenon:

Contending with each other to capture the Malay Peninsula / the Portuguese and
Dutch Armies started bombing tropical rainforest / I was awoken by a horrible
nightmare / and threw the truth ‘tender leaves are the food of animals’ / into the
turbulent rivers / Human beings snatch money and land with their hands / my
leaves finally evolved into a killer forever. / By luring lively insects to their death
/ I make nourishment for my own life. (Wong Y.W., *Rainforest* 22)

Wong powerfully exposes the sins of the colonizers by anthropomorphizing the pitcher plant (with the use of “I”). The strange pitcher plant is also a metaphor

for the ill-fated and tenacious Chinese diaspora exiled to the South Seas, living in poverty and surviving hundreds of years of colonialism at the hands of Dutch, the Portuguese, the British and the Japanese.

As Wendy Darby suggests, the representation of the landscape is not only trope but also deeply rooted in politics, ideology and power dynamics, e.g., nationalism, the Industrial Revolution and imperial wars (Darby 6). As far as Wong's poetry is concerned, the landscape of the South Seas is at once a projection of his teenage years and a metaphor for the Chinese diaspora, and it is closely associated with the historical memory of British colonialism. In addition, in the 1990s, eco-criticism, green humanities, and environmental ethics flourished. In this line, through his poetic critique of ecological imperialism, Wong makes a dialogue with nature and calls attention to this specific topic in Southeast Asian literature.

Paradoxically, Wong's attitude towards British colonialism is ambivalent and sometimes contradictory. On the one hand, Wong vigorously denounces British colonial authorities in Malaya, revealing his unyielding longing for de-colonization, as evidenced in the poems quoted above; on the other hand, Wong sometimes commits acts of "Occidentalism" in relation to the colonizer. For instance, the second section of the series poem "Raffles and Tropical Rainforest" condemns the colonial administration in Malaya. However, Wong writes sentimentally in the first section; confronting the environmental problems due to rapid urbanization, Singapore's national totem "鱼尾狮" [Merlion] cannot help but burst into tears. Wong then fondly recollects "'Raffles,'" praising his environmental conservation efforts. Here, the reader may wonder: "who on earth is Raffles?" For general readers, Wikipedia provides a brief yet useful biography on Raffles:

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, FRS (6 July 1781–5 July 1826) was a British statesman, Lieutenant-Governor of British Java (1811–1815) and Governor-General of Bencoolen (1817–1822), best known for his founding of Singapore. He was also heavily involved in the conquest of the Indonesian island of Java from Dutch and French military forces during the Napoleonic Wars and contributed to the expansion of the British Empire. He was also an amateur writer and wrote a book titled *The History of Java* (1817).¹

Raffles played a key role in British colonial expansion, namely, through his deep engagement in the imperial invasion of Southeast Asia, the exploitation of the

1 For more detailed biographical information on Raffles, please see the Wikipedia. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stamford_Raffles> (accessed January 6, 2019).

natural resources of Malaya, and the overthrow of Sultan Hussain of Johor to conquer Java. Most important, he built Singapore as a base from which the British Empire could conquer Southeast Asia. Ironically, the imperial war, economic oppression, shame and pain that Raffles exposed on the peoples of the South Seas, vanishes completely in the first portion of the *Rainforest*. Wong pays tribute to Raffles:

Besides being an honourable, clear-sighted colonizer, [Raffles] was also fond of plants and flowers. Due to his report, a variety of flowers and plants in the rainforest gradually became familiar to the common people. He once hired many painters to portray the flowers and plants of Southeast Asia. [The paintings] are currently stored in the Museum of Singapore. (Wong Y.W., *Rainforest* 35)

In the preface of *Rainforest*, Wong resembles a peacemaker: “those soldiers of the colonial administration deserve my solemn mourning.” To Sir Henry Gurney (1898–1951), a British colonial administrator who died in a violent attack at the hands of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) during the Malayan Emergency, Wong speaks magnanimously from the heart: “I did not forget to install a gravestone for him.” In the notes of the poem “水花与枪弹” [Splash and Bullets], Wong seems to think highly of Mark, an executive officer of the New Village, whom he depicts as a respectable and dedicated guy. Wong’s prose “The Legendary Writers in the Raffles Hotel” expresses high gratitude to this colonizer once again (Wong Y. W., *Leaves* 197-209). On another occasion, Wong praises the colonizers William Farquhar and Raffles for their contributions to the flowering of horticulture in Singapore and Malaya (Wong Y. W., *Durians* 49-50). After hundreds of years of colonization, “Occidentalism”¹ was embedded in the structure of feelings of the colonized, and their ambivalence about the “colonizer” was formed irreversibly. So, we may ask a speculative question: for the Southeast Asian people, is it possible to consider the importance and significance of de-colonization in the Twentieth-first century?

The Malayan Emergency in the Cold War

Most parts of Wong’s *Rainforests* deal with the Malayan Emergency during the Cold War era. The “Cold War” is the specific geopolitical tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, which spread from Europe to Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, thus the entire world was split into two groups.

1 Xiaomei Chen articulates the origins, development and variation of “Occidentalism”, please see her seminal book (Chen).

The Cold War stretches from 1947, the year the “Truman Doctrine” was announced, to 1991 when the USSR collapsed. Recently the studies of Cold War have gained international popularity. In this research area, there are representative works in relation to East and Southeast Asia. ¹According to Liu Hong, the cultural Cold War is actually the “battles for hearts and minds,” promoting political ideology into the feelings of the colonized especially the Third World.

The Cold War is the primary subject of Wong’s heartfelt collection *Rainforests*, but the former has a local variant named the “Malayan Emergency” (1947–1960). This volume fiercely asserts that members of the Chinese diaspora in Malaya are the oppressed, marginalized people. The “Malayan Emergency” refers to the military conflicts between the armed forces of the British Commonwealth and the troops of the CPM from 1948 to 1960. In the wake of the Pacific War (1941–1945), the British army returned to the Malay Peninsula and resumed its colonial dominance. In June 1948, Chin Peng allegedly ordered members of the CPM to kill three European plantation managers. Immediately the Malayan colonial administration declared a state of emergency on 16 June 1948; the CPM was then banned nationwide. To uproot the CPM militarily and economically, the colonial authorities began implementing the New Village scheme for the Chinese community in 1951, but Malays and Indians were excluded from this scheme. Consequently, numerous towns and neighbouring villages were connected with barbed wire, and millions of ethnic Chinese were forced to reside there. Those older than twelve years had to apply for their own identity cards. Guarded day and night by police who enforced the imposed curfew, the “new village” is just like “concentration camp,” and the “new villagers” felt themselves like prisoners. Those who dared to provide the CMP with human resources, information or grains will be severely punishment.²

We now return to Wong’s poetry. Cries of pain clearly reverberate in his heart, as the following details illustrate. “橡实” [Acorn] is an elegiac anecdote describing a silent, stuffy afternoon of a summer: On “my” way home after school, when walking through the rubber trees, “I” heard the sound of “acorn” falling down, and it kept begging with me for homecoming as it fears of breathing in the gunpowder and smoke. “蝙蝠与花朵” [Bats and Flowers] is a portrait of the tense atmosphere of the 1950s. Frightened by the Emergency Declaration, the bats have to change their ecological cycles. “新村印象” [An Impression on New Village] offers some

1 As far as the studies of the Cold War in Southeast Asia, suffice it to see the representative books in the cited works (Xiaoju Wang; Lau; Day and Liem; Foley; Zheng, Liu, and Szonyi; Goscha and Ostermann; Tyner; Tarling).

2 For the research on the New Villages in the British Malaya, see the major books in the Works Cited (Markandan; Carpenter; Ray; Lim & Fong; Hoon).

sorrowful scenes: when an “attap” hears the British army’s order of relocation and smells gunpowder, it suddenly faints, falling to the ground; from a first-person perspective (using “I” and “myself”), the attap wishes it was a Muslim church or a herd of cattle or sheep because it would not have to return to captivity behind the barbed wire at curfew; instead, it would choose to reside in the rainforest. The “morning glory” tries to secretly enter the concentration camp for a visit to the remaining “rubber trees,” but they are slashed to death by the brutal soldiers’ knives. Finally, the white terror culminates a miserable spectacle:

Only the tropical shower / and moonlight / are allowed to freely enter / new
villages surrounded by barbed wire / they neither need to bring IC cards with
them / nor accept the body inspections. (Wong Y.W., *Rainforest* 68)

Despite the adverse surroundings, the Chinese community’s longing for freedom and dignity is unstoppable. For example, the “rambutan” and “durian” trees refuse to abide by the relocation scheme; rather, they decide to live in their homeland along with the mangosteen, guava and wax apple: “the leaves of the abandoned attap / rotted in the wild grass / they are the pages / of years torn by wind and rains” (“ 逼迁以后的家园” [Homeland after Eviction]). “ 集中营的检查站” [A Checkpoint of the Concentration Camp] presents a touching scene; The suffering of the Chinese people in Malaya is displayed largely. A woman who labours on a rubber plantation rushes to work in the early morning, and she is forced to accept body inspection by a police officer. After school, the primary students have to have their textbooks and assignments checked, and the soldiers try to find the grain and medicine specifically prepared for the CPM in the forest. When the evening comes, someone driving a lorry home has to stop the vehicle for a regular check. Wong writes, after ten o’clock every night, the alarm bells are heard everywhere; new villagers close their doors; searchlights shine brightly; insects and owls remain silent, and only the fish are seen jumping, breaking the surface of the river. Nevertheless, a member of the CPM steps forward bravely: “as I opened the door / looking for the moonlight / in the muddy road of the countryside / I found that last night’s barking / and those shadows / turned into white, / anti-colonialist leaflets” (Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 83). As Edward Said claims, “real intellectuals are never more themselves than when, moved by metaphysical passion and disinterested principles of justice and truth, they denounce corruption, defend the weak, defy imperfect or oppressive authority” (Said 6). We can consider Wong to be this kind of intellectual.

In addition to the bitter lives of the ethnic Chinese in the new villages,

Wong's literary works splendidly represents the CPM's military struggle against the Malayan colonial authorities. The short poem “山中岁月” [The Years in Mountains] uses the interior monologue of an anonymous CPM soldier:

As the colonial armies / set out to snatch / the burnt ideals / that we found in
the ruins of Anti-Japanese War / Once again, we had to return to / the tropical
jungles / of Banjaran Titiwangsa / and search for the buried and rusty firearms.
(Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 95)

The British colonial authorities betrayed their alliance with the CPM and defied the people's claim for Malayan independence, consequently, the CPM had to use military force against Malayan colonial administration. The colonial authorities took a variety of measures to halt the revolt. For instance, they implemented the New Village scheme, firebombed the jungles, hired the Dayak to hunt down the CPM in the forest, broadcasted traitors' confessions, and extensively distributed propaganda leaflets to the masses. Surviving years of tenacious struggle, the CPM displayed sophisticated tactics and a strong will meanwhile paying a high price (Chin). Some Chinese youth bravely joined the CPM to fight the British colonial authorities. Wong offers a brief account of the vicissitude of the Malayan Emergence and the survival strategy of the CPM in hard times. One example is “马来亚丛林里的埋伏” [An Ambush in the Malayan Jungles]. A CPM soldier is returning from a rubber forest, walking down the road with a bag of rice on his back; he is unexpectedly ambushed by colonial forces, and “the blood spray looks like the orchid flowers growing on the trunk” (Wong Y. W., *Rainforest* 128). “友情与埋伏” [Friendship and Ambush] tells the stories of Ah Kuang, the District Secretary of the CPM, who is betrayed by a comrade and dies a brave death, which impress the enemy deeply (Wong Y.W., *Rainforest* 100-101). Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) proclaims that “[e]very time a man has contributed to the victory of the dignity of the spirit, every time a man has said no to an attempt to subjugate his fellows; I have felt solidarity with his act” (Fanon 176). The critical imagination presented in Wong's poems clearly echoes Fanon's thought, which also clearly voices Wong's yearnings for freedom, justice and dignity.

The Chinese Diaspora and Localized Identity

The Metaphor of Chinese Diaspora

After earning a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wong sought career move to Singapore, an integral part of the South Seas, where he assumed

his teaching position at Nanyang University (“Nantah”). Many years later, Wong recalled this exciting experience:

At the first night, I slept in Yunnan Garden where the croaking of frogs and the sting of mosquitoes evoked vivid memories of the South Seas of my teenage years, which looked like a canopy covering the whole person. At that time, Nantah’s campus was located on a rubber plantation; the former is called ‘Yunnan Garden’, which invoked my local memory. Hence, it was indeed the inspiration and epiphany that forced me to return to the tropical rainforests. Until now, I’ve been thinking in the rainforest. (Wong Y. W., *Poems 2*)

Originally called “the South Seas,” this place is becoming strange to Wong. As a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization, Singapore’s rubber plantations have disappeared completely. To Wong’s surprise, even Yunnan Garden, where Nanyang University is based, has no rubber trees any more. Wong was so disappointed about his surroundings that he composed a series of poems, later had them published under the title “橡胶树” [*Rubber Trees*]. Previously as a Malaysian citizen, Wong had published three collections of verse, i.e. “生病的太阳” [*The Sick Sun*], “高潮” [*Climax*], and “内外集” [*The Inward and Outward*] came out from the Taiwan publishers. Later, Wong was naturalized to a Singaporean, and created the collection “橡胶树” [*Rubber Trees*], it was published by a local press. Thus, this poem collection should fall under “Chinese Singaporean literature.” Moreover, unlike Wong’s previous collections with somewhat Sino-centrism, this volume has impressed general readers and professional critics with the vivid depictions of “the South Seas.” As he confesses, “the poems collected in fourth volume are wholly distinct. Each piece resembles a beggar’s-tick or Raintree; it sprouts and grows up in tropical sunlight and rains, and is deeply rooted in the soil of the South Seas” (Wong Y. W., *Rubber I*).

In the preface for *Rubber Trees*, Wong mentions the tropical rainforests of the South Seas as “a heaven of wild grass and trees, kingdom of fruits, and origin of myths.” The “South Seas” (literal meaning: the “Southern Ocean”) is a traditional Chinese name for the geographical region south of China, particularly Southeast Asia, which has an implication of cultural Sino-centrism. In past centuries, the diasporic Hokkein, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, and Hainanese migrated to the South Seas to make a living. A descendant of the Chinese diaspora—with ancestral lands based in Tsungfa, Kuang Tung—Wong was born in Ipoh, Perak. The tropical landscape and plants in Wong’s literary works are metaphors of the Chinese

diaspora in the South Seas. For example, his influential essay “沉默的橡胶树” [the Silent Rubber Trees] begins with a touching description:

My grandfather was just like a rubber tree, who was ‘transplanted’ to the earth of Singapore and Malaya by the British colonizers at the same time, and then he was found very suitable to live on the tropical hilly lands. He not only grew downward towards rooted there but also blossomed upward. My father was like the second generation of the rubber tree, he identified himself with the tropical wind and rain because he was born and raised there, a native man rather than the transplanted thing for experimental purposes. (Wong Y. W., *Leaves* 163)

Wong once recalled his child years in Banir, a small village situated between Kampar and Tapah, and its name disappeared on the tourism map published by Miller Freeman Press. Wong offers us with a moving account of this village:

Prior to the Second World War, the British colonial authorities had developed vast rubber plantation gardens. Banir is the portraiture of the colonial Malaya ruled by the British Empire, which illuminates that, in order to maintain its hegemony, the empire also resorts to cultural knowledge and administrative means as well as the military forces. The rubber plantation gardens based in the flattest and best central lands are run and managed by the companies of the British capitalists. The rubber plantation gardens with rivers, lakes, hills and mountains nearby are divided into small unites and sold to the ethnic Chinese. (Wong Y. W., *Returning* 94-95)

Here, the rubber trees are metaphor of the Chinese Diasporas who moved from China in exodus to the South Seas where they witnessed the vicissitude of the local, the regional and the global histories. Wong’s short poem “橡胶树” [Rubber Trees] reads as follows: “The naked rubber trees / each of them is skinny / and has numerous cuts on its body / I know it is anticipating / the rainwater coming back to tropical jungles / that will help it put on green clothes / and wear tiny yellow flowers” (Wong Y. W., *Rubber* 72).

The poet metaphorically depicts the rubber tree, an ordinary plant in the South Seas, to reflect on the fate of the Chinese Diasporas in Malaya. According to historians of Southeast Asia, Chinese people started migrating to the Malay Peninsula in the fourteenth century when the Malay Dynasty (1403–1511) was established. In 1874, the British colonial authorities in Malaya succeeded in

transplanting twelve rubber tree saplings from Sri Lanka to Singapore, then developed a rubber industry on a large scale that would include natural and synthetic rubber. Consequently, the exploitative use of local natural resources greatly contributed to the economic success of British Empire and the further global expansion of colonialism. Due to the prosperity of the rubber plantations, a cheap labour force was needed. Tempted by the prospects of a good life, Chinese people in South China started migrating to Malaya, working as rubber plantation labourers and tin miners (Wong Y. W., *Reflections* 99). The rubber tree referred to in the poem above looks like a skinny man with countless cuts on his body, who is desperately yearning rainwater to come. This image, with its strong visual shock, is reminiscent of the Chinese diaspora as the rubber plantation workers. As such, the landscape is subtly transformed into geographies of class and race with the condemnation of British colonizers. On another occasion, Wong comments on these rubber trees as follows:

Rubber trees not only present the life experience of the Chinese diaspora and other minority communities in the Malay Peninsula but also narrate the numerous crimes that Western capitalists and the British Empire had committed: emigrating overseas, piratical robbery, the slave trade. They also represented the evil business conducted by colonial officials and merchants in the Malay Peninsula, including repression, labour and capital exports. (Wong Y. W., *Reflections* 111)

Wong specifically relates the symbolic connotations of the rubber trees to the British colonial dominance from the late nineteenth century to 1957, thereby providing readers with a critical perspective with which to reflect on the significance of Wong's poems in particular and the issues about diaspora, memory and identity in general.

Among Wong's poems on tropical fruits, "Durian" deserves a critical analysis. The second stanza reads like this:

I'm a hereditary aristocrat in the orchid / during my teenage years, I couldn't play the 'hide-and-peek' game / even after I was a crowned king / I couldn't dress as a commoner and walk in secret, playing games anywhere among the people / Whatever I hide in a bunch of bananas / or in the sanctum of a hotel / the people of my kingdom / can discover my footprints from the air/ Because my prestige and grace / illuminates the whole world, just like the sunshine"

(Wong Y.W., *Rubber* 24)

The people in Southeast Asia consider the durian the “King of Fruits.” According to folktale, the durians grow in the faeces discharged by Zheng He (1371–1433). This folktale suggests that the Chinese Diasporas boast of powerful imperial China as the “Central Kingdom,” which is regarded as a symbol of longing for hegemonic Chinese culture (Wong Y. W., *Durians* 31). The durian is distinctive for its large size, strong odour, and formidable thorn-covered husk. It has an oblong or round shape; the colour of its husk ranges from green to brown; and its flesh falls somewhere between pale yellow and red, depending on the species. Some people love the durian’s sweet fragrance, while others cannot tolerate its stinking odour. As one of the main fruits of the people of the South Seas, the durian is equivalent to the “sunshine” illuminating the earth; hence, the common people cherish this fruit. As the harvest season arrives, people love to buy durians and enjoy eating them in the street. Interestingly, in Chinese language, “durian” has the same pronunciation as the Chinese characters “流 连” [meaning: ceaseless indulgence in pleasures], which implies that some Chinese diaspora love the South Seas so much that they are reluctant to leave this region even if their departure date is nearing. Some allege that the colonizers and some passers-by were unable to tolerate the strong odour of the durian, which implies that they were incapable of embracing the local culture of South Seas — not to mention their lack of loyalty to this place. A common belief is that only those who enjoy the durians would choose to reside in the South Seas permanently and engage themselves with racial integration: “Stranger, do you know? / Once you sincerely kiss me one time / you’re sure to respect me as the king / and discard your homeland / dwell on my earth forever / if you reject my grace / you’ll not have a dream of gold mining / you’ll surely smell the stinking odour of the fin-de-siècle” (Wong Y. W., *Rubber* 26).

Wong’s poem “凤梨” [Pineapple] broaches the same topic about the Chinese diaspora. In first two stanzas, the pineapple “confesses” that he has been leading a diasporic life: although God crowned the pineapple “king” in his adolescence, he presents a harrowing saga:

But, according to a horticulturist’s memoir, / my grandpa was an overthrown
tyrant in the South America / exiled to the Malay Archipelago by Portuguese
sailors / He led a wretched life under a foreign sky / when walking by the
water, someone called me ‘Pineapple King’ / I lowered my head sometimes,
seeing my own reflection had a crown / soon my heart was filled with bitter

memories. (Wong Y. W., *Rubber* 32)

The pineapple's miserable life of exile is an allegory of the Chinese diaspora in the South Seas. Boasting about thousands of years of culture and "noble blood," ethnic Chinese crossed geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries, finally arriving in the South Seas, toiling and moiling in a strange land. Occasionally they remember their transnational adventure in hard times and cannot help but utter a sorrowful sigh.

As always, tropical landscape, plants and fruits such as the rubber trees, durians, and pineapples depicted in the poems above are metaphors for the Chinese diaspora in the South Seas. In other words, the tropical things Wong brings to attention in his verses represent a new imagination for portraying Chinese diaspora in the South Seas.

In search of the Localized Identity

Wong's poetry in relation to the South Seas features the sense of place, the emotional attachment and the orientation of localization, which is reflected powerfully at once in the landscape and history and in the vocabulary that Wong uses specifically for his poem writing. Having spent years in the South Seas, Wong has "the sense of place" or 'topophilia' (all are Yi-Fu Tuan's terms). The strong consciousness of localization evoked in Wong's personal lexicon – including terms such as "罗厘" [lorry], "甘邦" [kampong], "巴冷刀" [berang], "组屋" [HDB flat], "驳火" [crossfire], "胡姬花" [orchid flowers], "亚答屋" [attap], "斑兰" [pandan], "沙笼" [sarong], – always impresses readers, whether professional or amateur. Some of the terms are rooted in Chinese dialects, while others derived from the transliteration of English or the Malay language. All the words regardless of their origins are very distinct from the authoritative "standard Chinese" widely used in mainland China, they represent an alternative "writing strategy" in the postcolonial context, namely, "replacing language" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin) or "linguistic hybridization" (Shih 2007). Once used in daily life or read by the ethnic Chinese of the South Seas, these words can easily evoke people's intimate experiences.

The mark of localization is the birth of "native consciousness" rather than by descriptions of the local landscape, history and language alone. To elucidate this point, we might as well compare Wong with other Chinese writers. From 1910s to 1940s, the South Seas were always absent in the literary works of Chinese sojourner-writers. Occasionally, they depicted the South Seas, but the latter tended to be marginalized, otherized, and exoticized and barely had a voice of their own.

Furthermore, the cultural identity of Chinese sojourner-writers was overwhelmingly linked to China. To reinforce a sense of cultural superiority, these writers grew accustomed to depicting the South Seas as a mysterious, primitive and erotic place. Evidently, for generations, they had been steeped in the binary such as “centre/margin,” “hegemony/minority,” and “civilized/barbarian” binaries (Lim B. C.). The 1960s witnessed the debut of a modernist generation of Chinese writers, including Lin Fang, Nan Zi, Yeng Pway Ngon, Tan Swie Hian, He-Lan Ning. Nevertheless the South Seas were not thoroughly covered in their works. By contrast, Wong has been dedicated to the search for a “local consciousness” since the 1980s, when *Rubber Tress* was published. The ethnic Chinese in Malaya receive attention in this volume, but a cultural nostalgia for China disappears there. Instead of embracing the “myth of consanguinity” (in Rey Chow’s term), Wong regards the South Seas as his homeland without any hesitations. Shu-mei Shih, one of the leading authorities on Sinophone studies argues with scholars of Chinese overseas studies by claiming the significance of the “Against Diaspora” position, which has recently gained currency (Shih, *Sinophone* 25-42). David Der-Wei Wang coins a neologism called “后遗民” [Post-loyalist] to describe an alternative cultural orientation: “The loyalist always suggests a dislocation of time and space, and replacement of regime, whilst the term ‘Post-loyalist’ means much more: it prefers dislocating the already dislocated time and space, and further to reflect on the questionable orthodox” (David Wang 6). As Safran articulates, both diaspora consciousness and the exploitation of the homeland myth is just “a defence mechanism against slights committed by the host country against the minority, but it does not—and is not intended to—lead its members to prepare for the actual departure for the homeland” (Safran 94).

In a sense, the local awareness that Wong pursues in his literary works sounds very much similar to “Against diaspora” and “Post-loyalism.” Wong suggests that the ethnic Chinese should replace Sino-centrism and the myth of consanguinity with a localized identity. Wong’s poems work towards such a direction. Confronting the trend, Wong describes how “all trees migrated overseas one by one,” and the humble “pitcher plant” is compelled to change its eating habits, insisting on living in the barren sands (“猪笼草” [pitcher plant]). The “carpet grass,” a seemingly fragile plant, proudly announces, “among the herbaceous plant family, only I love this land the most”; as the monsoon and deluge approach, the plants “closely embrace every sand on the island / hand by hand, [they] consolidate the foundation and dam / staunchly, calmly, and down-to-earth” (“地毯草” [Carpet Grass]). All the plants described in these poems serve as metaphors for the ethnic Chinese in the South Seas, who are willing to support one another and to stay rooted in this land,

tenaciously and peacefully.

Admittedly, the Chinese writers of the South Seas cannot totally evade the local landscape and customs. Wong is not the first writer to call for localization of Chinese literature of Singapore and Malaysia. In fact, as early as 1927, Chinese writers such as “张金燕” [Zhang Jinyan], “陈炼青” [Chen Lianqing], “曾圣提” [Zheng Shengti], “吴仲青” [Wu Zhongqing] were enthusiastically involved into advocating the “南洋色彩” [Nanyang Colour]. According to 崔贵强 [Chui Kwei-chiang], at the end of Pacific War, the national identity of the ethnic Chinese drastically shifted from China to Malaya (Chui; Cushman & Wang). Meanwhile, the debates on the “侨民文艺” [Chinese Sojourner Literature] versus the “马华文艺独特性” [Uniqueness of Malayan Chinese Literature] occurred in the literary scene in 1947 (Miao 8-20; Wong & Xu 20-28; Yeo 33-38). Based on a meticulous examination of four Chinese newspapers in 1940s-50s Singapore, 王慷鼎 [Wong Hong Teng] concludes that the weakening of Chinese “sojourner awareness” and the strengthening of “national identity” was booming from 1945 to 1959 (Wong H. T. 261-295). Nevertheless, the localized identity of Chinese Singaporean literature did not appear in 1965 immediately, the year that Singapore won independence; it was delayed until the early 1980s when writers including Wong composed such literary works as *Rubber Tress*. According to Wong, his unyielding search for local consciousness can be traced back to the late 1970s when he had first arrived in Singapore

After returning to the South Seas, I encountered the rise of postmodernism and post-colonialism, which have a primary concern on local culture and tempt me to turn to the rubber plantation. *Rubber Trees*, and *Collected Works on Rural Nanyang*, two of my literary works, are the products of my endeavours seeking to embrace tropical jungles. The wild flowers and grass at the equator offer me a new, imaginary space, and a localized language as well as narrative. Finally, I discovered the local characters and voices of Singapore and Malaysia by forging the images of shadow paly, rain trees, durians, rambutans. (Wong Y. W., *Village* 5)

Among the pioneers of Chinese poetry in the 1980s, very few like Wong actively focuses on the local landscape, language, customs and history of the South Seas. In this light, Wong’s literary works including *Rubber Trees* should be a groundbreaking contribution during that historical period.

Reflection on the Postcolonial Modernity

Modernity and globalization has been exerting tremendous impacts on the

world including the South Seas. As a Malaya-born ethnic Chinese, Wong has had nostalgic feelings for rural life in the tropical forest, which is one of his reflections on the postcolonial modernity. In 1978 Wong travelled to a wild forest in the east coast of Malaysia, where he had one-night lodging. But he got entangled with fears and nightmare at that night. As a result, he had to return to the city in a hurry early next morning. From this event, Wong realized that he had been used to city life and would not be able to return to the mysterious nature (Wong Y. W., *Leaves* 139-150). One more example is his mourning over the loss of the rubber trees in modern Singapore. Due to industrialization and urbanization, the rubber plantation gardens in current Singapore have almost vanished. The Yun-Nam Garden at which the Nanyang University (1955-1980) was seated originally had a vast rubber forest, but later the forest disappeared completely. As spoken, the rubber trees are the metaphor of the Chinese Diasporas who had migrated to the South Seas since the late nineteenth century and made tremendous contributions to the success of it. In 1978, Wong drove hundreds of miles to Kuala Kangsar just in search of the ‘rubber trees’. The Kuala Kangsar as the royal town of Perak, Malaysia, is located at the downstream of Kangsar River where it joins the Perak River. Fortunately Wong had an access to the oldest rubber tree in Malaysia:

Standing under this historic rubber tree, once again I can’t help having emotional attachment to it. I also sentimentally think of the fact that all the rubber trees in the Yun-Nam Garden perished already. It once brought civilization and economic prosperity, but it itself came to vanish gradually in the midst of modernization, industrialization and commercialization. (Wong Y. W., *Leaves* 162)

Wong’s literary works always convey his discontent with the postcolonial modernity, developmentalism and globalization as well, which, here, is clearly evidenced by his elegiac feelings on the disappearance of the rubber trees in Singapore. Thus, sighting the oldest rubber tree in Kuala Kangsar, Wong was able to realize his long-cherished dream of ‘the return of the native’, and recalled his teenage years spent on this land.

In February 2012 Wong retired from Yuan-Ze University, Taiwan, and returned to Singapore and Malaysia, working as professor of Chinese literature at the South University College until present day. As he drives on the express way, Wong finds that the swallows and eye-browed thrushes are totally absent from the light posts, instead, the silvery, 24-hour CCTV, Wong calls them the “birds” fed by the Land

Transport Authorities, is in operation. When walking on the Orchard Road, he was disappointed to find, the orchard where the pepper, uncaria gambir and nutmeg had grown, has been replaced by numerous shopping centres such as Ion! Visiting the Gardens by the Bay, what impressed him deeply is not the mortality of human beings but the rapid vanishing of the tropical forests in Singapore. The Gardens are currently filled with the tall trees, flowers and grasses made of metals, unbelievably many people acclaim them as creative arts:

The tropical forests/ were previously situated at the fishing village / unexpectedly occupied by / numerous towering iron trees / tourists look up happily / and see the green plants / bravely climbing up the iron trunk / and crying in the sunlight / and trying to cover the metal's / ugly faces. (Wong Y. W., *Return 4*)

The modernity characterized by the technological advances, urbanization as well as consumerism has not seemingly brought real happiness for the modern man. The Singapore where Wong had lived for decades is now transforming itself from a “place” into a “space,” finally he lost the sense of belonging. A modern home (-land) with a simple but cosy and comfortable atmosphere is unavoidably facing the destiny of permanent disappearing. In this sense, Wong’s literary works may be regarded as the unyielding search for a homely “South Seas.”

As is well known, the globalization is one of the transnational, extreme forms of modernity. The states in the South Seas are unable to escape from the influences of globalization. Wong’s literary works reflect on the negative sides of globalization. For example, when he visited the Singapore’s harbour, he found that the fishing village along with all kinds of birds had vanished, as depicted by the following scene: “Our country’s birds / became the cranes / and stood by the sea orderly / they pecked hungrily / the food in the containers / of the parking boats // our fishing villages and public parks were abandoned gradually / and innovated to piers / to feed up / the birds our country protect / the birds these transnational corporations enjoy” (Wong Y. W., *Return 5*).

Coming across the boundaries of nation-states, the global capitalism is so powerful that the postcolonial Singapore has no choice but to engage with it, which, inevitably leads to the cult of effectiveness, progress and success, last but not least, the rise of the sense of dislocation. That is one of the consequences of modernity. In short, the search for the sense of homeliness comprises of a critical voice in Wong’s literary world, Wong’s poem quoted above provide a succinct yet delicate picture

with regard to postcolonial modernity in the South Seas.

Conclusion: Re-discovering the South Seas

Wong's literary works on the South Seas are highlighted by the issue of cultural politics rather than the aesthetic devices. By evoking collective or historical memories, Wong denounces the British colonial authorities in Malaya along with the Cold War, he expresses his yearnings for de-colonization but with ambivalence and somewhat Occidentalism. When dealing with the landscapes and culture of South Seas, Wong distinguishes himself from other writers by challenging Sino-centrism and the homeland myth; furthermore, he emphasizes the intimate experience and the localized identity. In details, Wong's shift of cultural identity is the result of the local, regional and global changes including the end of British colonialism in Malaya, rise of nation-building campaign in Southeast Asia, Singapore's independence and the pivotal role it has played for decades, and the identity conversion of the ethnic Chinese from sojourners to citizens. Wong's literary works witnesses the spread of modernity and globalization to the South Seas, and the loss of homeliness.

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Double Consciousness in Andrea Levy's *Never Far from Nowhere* and Isidore Okpewho's *Call me by my Rightful Name*

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Abstract In *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) W.B. Du Bois examines the Negro (black) problem of double consciousness. Double consciousness is a psychological condition exhibited by blacks as a result of their interaction with the white race. This concept was originally proper to the social sciences especially psychology, where the psychological conditions of real human beings were analyzed. With Du Bois, double consciousness describes a peculiar condition common among the blacks in America due to their racial orientation. In order to assert their self esteem, blacks in America have to resort to the strategy of double consciousness which according to Cook is the “conscious splitting of the inner self in an attempt to create a character that would be accepted into the mainstream society” (Cook 1). Contrary to Du Bois assertion, this paper sets out to discuss double consciousness as it is represented in two novels: *Never far from Nowhere* and *Call me by my Rightful Name*. *Never far from Nowhere* is concerned with the experience of Jamaican immigrants in London and *Call me by my Rightful Name* with the experience of African American in America. This paper interrogates the phenomenon of double consciousness through the categorization of psychoanalysis of Freud, because double consciousness deals with mind perception. The result of this paper shows that double consciousness is a problem of black man wherever he is in contact with the White race; it is not a peculiar problem to blacks in America as posited by Du Bois.

Key words Double consciousness; colour politics; identification; displacement; Other

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Introduction

In “The Significance of Race, Gender and Class to Identity Formation,” Julia Bock looks at the coming of age process of Olive and Vivien (the major characters in Andrea Levy’s *Never Far from Nowhere*) who “live in an environment that constantly asserts their difference” (Bock1). She examines the challenges the girls go through as a result of their race (black), class (working-class), and gender (female). Her analysis begins from the period of the migration of the Caribbeans who left the island for their “mother country on the MV Empire Windrush as a result of the poor condition of their economy. Rose Charles the mother of the girls and her husband Newton Charles are among these immigrants and the “pigmentocracy” prevalent on the island has not prepared them at all for the serious racial prejudice void of “shade consciousness” that exists in their “mother country,” England. But even though how lighter the shade of one’s dark skin is, is not considered in London, Rose Charles does not come to terms with this new reality and tries to impose her own view on her daughters who were never with her in the “shade conscious” Jamaica.

Bock also unearths the generational conflict found in Levy’s novel, where mother and daughters constantly disagree because they won’t do things the way she wants them to—the way they were done in her days back at Jamaica. She doesn’t allow them stay out at night with their friends, for instance, and does not see any reason why she should accompany Vivien to school on her first day at college.

She further looks at the relationship between sisters—a recurrent theme in Levy’s fiction. Vivien and Olive grow up being alienated from each other because of their different skin colours and the uncomfortable atmosphere set up by their mother at home. Their relationship, “while not specifically affected by lies, is certainly characterized by a lack of communication which contributes to their failure to empathize with each other” (Bock 68). While Vivien suffers inferiority complex as a result of her working-class position and is engrossed with “social climbing,” Olive feels she is the sole bearer of the racial prejudices in London because of her dark skin colour. But instead of these sisters going through these together, they lose touch with each other’s life and are alienated from each other as a result of the gap created by lack of communication.

Bock also considers their relationships with white men as Vivien and Olive’s

strategy of “attaining social advancement through marriage” (Bock 80). We read in her essay that “Olive’s hopes concerning her future with Peter also seem to reflect a desired social mobility” and again that

The fact that Olive realizes that she loves Peter after he has presented her with a car is not related to material wealth as much as to her general desire to escape her frustrating life as a shopkeeper and “black sheep of the family” (6). Peter appears to hold the promise of a brighter future, although Olive’s reliance on him is naïve and certainly contradicts her self-identification as “a strong black woman.” (Bock 86)

By the same token, Eddie is working-class but white, and, therefore, his class seems not to matter to Vivien initially since he is of the desired race. But as she climbs higher on the social ladder into college, she becomes uncomfortable with him around.

What Bock has done is, according to her, to bring to “awareness [...] the multitude of challenges faced by those who, in their formative years and beyond, experience a conflation of racism, sexism, and “classism” (Bock 98).

A job well done, notwithstanding, Bock’s analysis does not touch the area this paper is set to explore, which is the direct effect of racism on the psychic make up of these characters and how they respond to it individually.

Bettina Von Staden, in her “Immigration to London: Hard Facts—Literary Solutions?”, walks into the mind of Rose Charles and exonerates her from her racist attitude because she has been—and still is—a victim of racism herself. Here, we are told that Rose’s maternal responsibility is complicated because she herself has been affected by racism and “to avoid existing with a “contemptuous view” of themselves, [she] tries to convince her family that they are not the ones discriminated against” (Staden 24).

Staden unveils the situation of immigrants’ children who go through the harsh realities of their racist environment on the one hand and that of their parents who would rather be in denial of these realities, on the other hand.

We also see in Maïke Brehends’s “Writing on the Poverty Line: Working-Class Fiction by British Women” the relationship between education and class in Levy’s novel. Here, instances are drawn from Vivien and Carol’s experiences as they are about to enter the sixth form from their working-class families. Vivien is black while Carol is white but the latter’s race does not exonerate her from the realities of her class-conscious society as they are both told to take up typing lessons, which

suggests that they are already seen as potential typists (a working-class job).

The essays examined here have, no doubt, explored very significant themes in Levy's novel, and have even come close to our concern in this study. But because "the work of art is an inexhaustible source of new critical discoveries" (Frye 17), there is still room wide enough for this study to not only continue but to make relevant contribution to the world of literary studies.

Okpewho's *Call me by my Rightful Name* has equally pulled critical weight on itself. Carlo Germeshuys declares it "a novel with an overt political purpose" (Germeshuys 1). The novel, for him, is "a literary manifestation of the Afrocentric discourse, which posits the rediscovery and reclamation of African history and culture as an essential tool for empowering Africans and members of the African Diaspora" (Germeshuys 1-2). What we have here is a view of Okpewho's novel as an argument for the understanding of Africa on its own terms as opposed to the "Western colonialist view of Africa" (Germeshuys 2).

Germeshuys tries to figure out to what extent Okpewho's work "validate[s] the Afrocentrist reclamation of African history and culture" (Germeshuys 2), which is, according to him, the main focus of the novel. He further considers the view of language presented in the text and finds it a language "rooted in the real" and not merely abstract or symbolic as is illustrated by Otis Hampton's involvement in the Yoruba culture in order to become fully aware of the language, being that language and culture are intertwined. He equally relates language with Africa in the text and, for him, Africa serves here as a symbolic enabler of language and "the purpose of the novel is to construct a language through which the diasporic experiences can be articulated" (Germeshuys 5). On the question of language, Germeshuys concludes that *Call me by my Rightful Name* "achieves its aim of making Africa a productive enabler of language and expression for members of its diaspora, but [...] fails to fully engage with and question of the problematic aspects of the culture it celebrates" (Germeshuys 2-3).

We also find in Germeshuys that "Africa functions as a psychological surety for diaspora blacks" in Okpewho's novel. Categorizing the novel generally as a "narrative of return," he sees Okpewho's "use of Africa as a symbolic destination in a narrative of return," and that "the condition for being part of a diaspora is the "inalienable right to wish to return to reclaim connections to a lineage" (Germeshuys 5).

After raising some "unanswered questions" in Okpewho's work—that Okpewho should have presented "[a] truly radical test of vision" (Germeshuys 18) by allowing Otis to fully identify with all the oppressed people he encounters

so that his judgment of the new culture he has encountered, in relation to the one he is already used to, can be fully analysed—, Germeshuys boldly proclaims it an unfinished project.

In his “A Cultural Diplomacy of Difference in the African Novel: a Reading of Isidore Okpewho’s *Call me by my Rightful Name*,” Damlegue Lare announces Okpewho’s novel as having brought “a new understanding of what cultural diplomacy in a 21st century globalised world means” (Lare 322). He examines what is according to him, Okpewho’s call for a transition in cultural politics; from cultural imperialism theory to cultural inclusion theory. His interest is in how Okpewho’s work advocates for “cultural plurality.”

Generally, for Lare, the work is a criticism “against the cultural imperialism imposed by first world nations, and the novel’s title [...] is an apt metaphor appealing to cultural denigration cancellation” (Lare 327). He sees it as a clarion call on blacks to take actions towards taking their “rightful” position in the affairs of the world.

Using the identity theory and critical discourse analysis, Mary Okolie, in her “The Discourse of Imposed Identities in Isidore Okpewho’s *Call me by my Rightful Name* and Richard Wright’s *Native Son*,” plunges into Otis Hampton’s behavior in relation with the social structures around him and sees Otis as a helpless victim of forces higher than him, and who decides to embrace his fate in total compliance. She is interested in how Otis responds to social structures, and social structures here include the white society and his African roots which have imposed themselves on him irredeemably. And she observes that Otis complies with the one that makes the higher demand, for he abandons his white sympathies to answer a call of destiny while the supernatural forces from his African roots keeps pulling him.

This paper seeks to explore double consciousness in Andrea Levy’s *Never far from Nowhere* and Isidore Okpewho’s *Call me by my Rightful Name* with the aid of the psychoanalytic theory. Studies on double consciousness before now have been mostly directed towards the African American situation alone. Including, the situation of the Caribbean immigrants in London deviates from the already popular pattern. Again, these novels have not been studied under the concept of double consciousness. *Never far from Nowhere* and *Call me by Rightful Name* ,have until now been studied together or compared. This study is also an attempt to bring Levy’s *Never far from Nowhere* to lime light, given that it has attracted the least critical response among all her novels since its publication in 1996. There is also an attempt to divert attention from Otis Hampton in Okpewho’s *Call me by my Rightful Name*, on the grounds that almost all the studies carried out on the text so far have

focused on him.

Theoretical Perspective on Double Consciousness

Double consciousness is, according to W.E.B. Du Bois, the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Bois 3). Since its conception by W. E. B. Du Bois in his *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), double consciousness has been understood and argued differently by various scholars. While some are in favour of the concept, the likes of Ernest Allen have criticized its shortcomings, ranging from the fact that Du Bois does not pursue the argument further to the claim that his analysis is a mere “enigmatic [reference], seductive prose largely lacking in analytical fortitude, as well as [...] internal logic” (Allen 9) and empirical verification.

Rutledge Dennis, who sees Du Bois as one of the founding fathers of the sociology of race and ethnicity begins his analysis of Du Bois’s concept by wondering why Du Bois “elevate[s] the idea of double consciousness as one of the major themes in his *Souls of Black Folk* and then, without an apparent second thought, simply abandons the concept” (Dennis 1). He asserts that Du Bois “apparently made no effort to validate and support his assumptions” (Dennis 1) and proposes that critics should move beyond Du Bois’s generalizations to discover whether his concept is “an accurate description of *actual behavior* or [...] merely a supposition of *expected behaviour*” (Dennis 19).

In Dennis, double consciousness is described as “one of the pillars of [Du Bois’s] sociology of race” (Dennis 13), because it is concerned with using the past to both structure and explain the present. He claims to be taking “an even sharper and more critical look at the concept” (Dennis 13) in order to “describe the racial identity dilemma and to assess racial status and power relations between blacks and whites” (Dennis 13). It is against this backdrop that he explains Du Bois’s analysis as revolving around “the idea of what is meant to be a minority group within a majority culture with [...] unique socio-historical experiences and, secondarily, what might be the long lasting consequences of this experience” (Dennis 14).

Dennis tries to link the origin of double consciousness to the psychological theories and literary traditions back to before Du Bois, and then goes ahead to analyse how Du Bois has attempted to strip double consciousness of its nineteenth century psychological and literary contexts in order to concentrate it on the African American situation in relation with European Americans.

Standing on Du Bois’s definition of double consciousness, Booker Cook gives

his own definition as “the conscious splitting of the inner self in an attempt to create a character that would be accepted into mainstream society” (Cook 1). He reveals that Du Bois’s “this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of another” (Du Bois 3) implies that “a stripping of one’s identity has taken place”(Cook 1) and that “replacement information has been internalized by African Americans. This replacement information is the master narrative whites have long presented to the world about blacks, that they are “foul, dark or dirty in purpose, malignant, sinister and wicked” (Takaki qtd. in Cook 1). Cook calls the replacement information “miseducation” (Cook 1), which, having been internalized by blacks, has “resulted in the[ir] loss of African generational heritage, self-identity, and [ultimately] the development of double consciousness” (1).

Cook further calls double consciousness “the state of being cognizant of two experiences that impact life”(Cook 2); and that “[these] experiences are the African characteristics on the one hand , and the American characteristics on the other, with the hope that both will merge to create a union that is better than the experience each provides as a single unit” (Cook 2). His interest is in ways through which blacks can recover from double consciousness and attain “oneness.” On this note, he proposes with Du Bois that a true knowledge of history is a step towards attaining an egalitarian American society and goes ahead to present “historical truth” as the panacea for double consciousness. By this he means a thorough education of the masses (African Americans), so that they can regain and internalize the history of Africa before colonialism.

Marc Black, in his “Fanon and Duboisian Double Consciousness,” finds a connection between Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) and Du Bois’s double consciousness, saying that Fanon’s work shows how double consciousness is also a condition of colonized people, and also strengthens the claim that African Americans are colonized within their own country. He makes a distinction between “unilateral double consciousness” (experienced by the oppressed) and “multilateral double consciousness” (experienced by both the oppressed and the oppressors) and offers the latter as the solution to the problem of racial segregation. By this he means that the colonizers and white Americans need to embrace “the perspectives of the subjugated, marginalized and silenced population,” that is, become aware of what the “marginalized” think of them, so that they can experience “white double consciousness” (Black 399).

Black’s position is on the positive effect of double consciousness if it can be experienced equally by both blacks and whites. He asserts that if “the cultural exchanges were engaged equally by all parties, [...the] harm of unilateral double

consciousness would be prevented [and] then, all parties would be both hosts and guests, sharing the challenges of measuring up to each other's cultures" (400).

Double Consciousness in Literary Studies

In "A Struggle for Peace in the Warring Soul: the Double Consciousness and Psychoanalysis of Passing," Nikita Chaudhri sees Du Bois's idea of double consciousness as "strikingly similar to Freud's idea of the characteristics of the id, ego, and superego" (Chaudhri 1), and uses both to "analyse the relationship between Clare and Irene's dynamic characters in Nella Larsen's *Passing*(2) where we see the struggle of the "New Negro Woman" among "African Americans who migrated to the North following the emancipation of slaves" (Huggins qtd. in Chaudhri 2).

Chaudhri sees in the novel the desire of African American women—represented by Clare and Irene—to pass for whites in order to avoid the challenges they face as a result of their race and gender. She locates Du Bois's double consciousness in Irene "who struggles between acting according to her established consciousness and conflicting subconsciousness, represented by Clare" (Chaudhri 4). In Clare she sees her subconscious desire for "security," "passionate conjugal love," and "risks of passing." But while Clare can easily pass for a white because of her light skin colour, Irene finds it difficult because she is dark-skinned and also wants to maintain the good-wife-and-mother role that is expected of the "New Negro Woman." While wanting to secure her home, Irene is at the same time in dire desire of the kind of freedom Clare enjoys, having set Clare's life as the model for hers.

Chaudhri discovers the complexity of double consciousness in the case of Irene and Clare, for "as Irene's subconscious, Clare is a part of her double consciousness that cause[s] the psychological struggle of women in the Harlem Renaissance" (Chaudhri 13).

In their "From Chaos to Order: Re-reading Du Bois's Double Consciousness in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and *The Bluest Eye*," Chigbu and Uzoma "re-examine the representation of [...] double consciousness in African American literature." They see double consciousness "not merely as a psychological state but more as a socio-historical condition that can be appreciated against the supremacist ideologies that gave rise to it" (Chigbu 85). Instead of just as the "conflicting personality" experienced by African Americans, double consciousness is presented in their paper as "an identity maker that encourages the discovery of the salient qualities of the human spirit" (Hidden Name qtd. in Chigbu and Uzoma 86). And they go ahead to show how "historical retentions at the level of ideology, do not only make literature a place of meaning but a field of emergence meaning" (Chigbu 86).

Their interest is in the supremacist and racist ideologies in the United States which present a “master-slave paradigm” (Chigbu 93) that becomes internalized by African Americans as seen in Morrison’s *Paradise* and *The Bluest Eye*. However, instead of the characters under study merely identifying their conditions and wallowing in self-hatred or self-pity—as is usually the case with victims of double consciousness—they are seen as going through the process of reconstruction of self which transforms them into “bearers of revolutionary energy” (Chigbu 100) and agents of change. The characters are presented as conquerors of their double consciousness who are going through the process of attaining “psychic wholeness.”

Methodology

For a proper understanding of double consciousness, we need to approach it with the conceptual tool of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is “a systematic accounting of the psychic apparatus and a theory of the mind and human psychic development” (Castle 163). Being developed by the Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud, in the twentieth century, psychoanalysis was originally proper to psychology as “a procedure for the analysis and therapy of neurosis” (Abrams and Harpham 290). It was, however, later “expanded [...] to account for many developments and practices in the history of civilization” (Abrams and Harpham 290).

The emphasis of psychoanalysis is that the human mind hardly forgets anything; that childhood incidents and other experiences, especially unpleasant ones, are stored in what Freud calls the “unconscious” mind or the “id.” He developed various models of the human psyche and the particular model in which the id is discussed is called the tripartite model, where we have “the id,” “the ego,” and “the super-ego” (Freud 60). “The irrational, instinctual, unknown, and unconscious part of the psyche” (Bressler 123) is what Freud calls the id, and it contains our “secret desires,” “darkest wishes” and “most intense fears” (Bressler 123). The id wants the immediate satisfaction of what is called in Freud “the pleasure principle,” and it is this pleasure principle that controls it. The ego, on the other hand, is the rational and logical part of the conscious mind, which regulates the uncontrollable desires of the id, in agreement with the reality principle. The super-ego “acts like an internal censor, causing us to make moral judgments in light of social pressures” (Bressler 123). It operates according to the morality principle “[r]epresenting all society’s moral restrictions [and] serving as a filtering agent, suppressing the desires and instincts forbidden by society and thrusting them back into the unconscious” (Bressler 123).

The ego, which works according to the reality principle, and the super-ego,

which represents the morality principle both try to suppress the id (the pleasure principle). But the workings of the id still manifest through dreams, fantasies, slip of tongues, and those actions that are not within the reach of self-control. This is the most popular aspect of Freud's theory that relates to our study. Freud, however, is not the sole developer of psychoanalysis. Many scholars took up from him and developed their own aspects of the theory. While some built on Freud's foundation, others disagreed with him and developed their own principles. Among the exponents of psychoanalysis are Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan, and many others who shall not be discussed here for want of space.

Carl Jung the Swiss philosopher, psychologist, psychiatrist, and physician was Freud's most famous pupil (Bressler 126) who developed his own principles after expressing dissatisfaction with Freud's emphasis on sexual instincts as the sole propeller of "all human behavior, including dream" (Bressler 126). In *his Symbols of Transformation*, Carl Jung "asserts that dreams include mythological images as well as sexual ones" (Jung 126). This assertion led to his banishment from the psychoanalytic community for the following five years, during which he "formulated his own model of the human psyche, which would become his most important contribution to psychology and literary criticism" (Jung 26). He agrees with Freud that the unconscious exists but disagrees with him on the contents of the unconscious. And instead of Freud's id, ego, and super-ego, Jung's model "comprises the personal conscious, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious" (Jung 126).

The personal conscious is the image one is conscious of at any given moment; the personal unconscious is the store house of the experiences of the personal conscious, while the collective unconscious "houses the cumulative knowledge, experiences, and images of the entire human species" (Jung 127). The memories in the collective unconscious exist in form of archetypes which result from "repeated human experiences." It is from this that Northrop Frye developed archetypal criticism.

Jacques Lacan also developed his own psychoanalytic principles. He deviates from Freud's principles at the point where Freud states that the unconscious is chaotic. For Lacan, the unconscious is structured very much like the structure of language. He asserts that "language shapes and ultimately structures our unconscious and conscious minds and thus shapes our self-identity" (Lacan cited in Bressler 129). And like Freud and Jung, Lacan also developed his own model of the human psyche which equally consists of three parts: "the Imaginary," "the Symbolic," and "the Real." The Imaginary order is the realm in which an infant

within his first six months functions and this is the part of the psyche which, just like Freud's id, contains our wishes, fantasies and images. From the Imaginary order through the "mirror stage" (between six and eighteen months) the child sees himself through his mother's image before he progresses into the Symbolic order. The Symbolic order is the point where he opens himself to language and the discourse of the Other, and is allowed to hear from the Other what he recognises as his desire. The Symbolic order is dominated by the father. Finally, we have the order of the Real where the child begins to experience things for himself, and not just by mere imaginary or symbolic representation of them.

Though this brief account of the development of the psychoanalytic theory leaves off the contributions of many other scholars and researchers, it has taken into account the contributions of the major psychoanalysts who laid the foundation of the theory. Having looked at the development of the theory, we are now left with the task of narrowing it down to the particular aspect that suits our study. This will take us back to Freud's tripartite model. And here we are still confronted with the question, what is the relationship between Freud's tripartite model and the analysis of double consciousness? This is how it works.

Double consciousness is, according to W.E.B Du Bois, the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Bois 3). Now, there is a self which looks at itself through the eyes of others. The psyche of this self is made up of the id, the ego, and the super-ego; and the reason for this looking at one's self...is—according to Du Bois's analysis and as shall be seeing in our selected texts—racial prejudice. The id, which is the pleasure principle, represents here the "desires" of total freedom from the racist society which this self would have wanted. And again it represents the "darkest fears" of the impending embarrassment that awaits the self when it comes in contact with racial prejudice. The super-ego represents society—which is in this case racist—that serves as a restriction to the kind of freedom that the id of this self longs for. The ego, finally, is the conscious self which tries to maintain a balance between what the id wants and what the super-ego presents. We shall use selected characters to illustrate this in the paper.

In *Call me by my Rightful Name*, we shall focus on the characters of Mr. Hampton, Otis, and Melba, while in *Never Far from Nowhere*, the characters to be analysed are Rose, Olive, and Vivien. Our interest in these characters is to confirm them sufferers of double consciousness and to reveal the various mechanisms of defense they have each employed as a resistance strategy.

Textual Analysis of *Never Far From Nowhere* and *Call Me By My Rightful Name*

While standing before a white man I had to figure out how to perform each act and how to say each word. I could not help it. I could not grin. In the past I had always said too much, now I found that it was difficult to say anything at all. I could not react as the world in which I lived expected me to; that world was too baffling, too uncertain.—Richard Wright

Double Consciousness in *Call me by my Rightful Name*

In the text, we are presented with a middle-class African American family who seem to have all going well with them in terms of racial prejudice. Mr. Hampton

was always proud enough of his background to believe that he deserved his place in the white man's world. The son of an Augusta sharecropper and grandson of a slave, he learnt early in life to know his place but to also believe in his innate worth (16).

He believes he has worked hard enough and attained a financial and social status that should place him above racial prejudice and make him a bonafide member of the white man's world. The reader also goes along with this belief until we are told of the experience he has had way back in his childhood days, that has shaken the foundation of his knowledge of himself as a black man in the United States. During a music concert participated in by young Hampton and his sister, Ella Pearl, "a young member" of a white "string quintet" walks up to him and compliments him for his wonderful performance. But what follows this compliment becomes the major deciding factor of Mr Hampton's attitude towards the reality of his blackness in his later years. The young member of the white string quintet walks up to Mz Odetta, Hampton's mother, and continues, saying, "I think though that he needs a few lessons in cord control. But of course that's something we white do so much better than you niggers. If you could maybe, scrub some of that black off his skin, he could *conceivably* get closer to being a white man and, *maybe*, do better on his cord control" (17-18). And we are told that young Hampton "never forgot this sobering encounter and the resolve it inspired in him: to be proud of his black self and in his dealings with the white man, to cultivate a style that struck the right balance between firmness and discretion" (18). This incident registers in his unconscious mind and controls his reactions "[a]s he grew older and the realities of race revealed themselves to his maturing mind" (18).

With the knowledge of this childhood experience of Mr. Hampton's, one begins to appreciate his attitude towards racism in his adult life. Mr. Hampton, instead of turning to black Americans against whites, as one would expect, does not

want to have anything to do with blacks. “Whenever he was invited to contribute to a black cause, he did so, but asked that neither he nor his contribution be publicized. He had worked too hard and come too far to be drawn back by anything that might link him to the past” (63). He sort of builds a wall around himself and his family, so that, being a member of the middle class and not a poor working class black, he assumes superiority over his own race, and, at the same time, equally aware that he is not white yet. Because he is aware that whites abhor blacks, he rejects his identity in order to be accepted into the white community. He sees blackness as a past he has overcome and hopes he is now what the whites want him to be. In this attitude lies “the conscious splitting of the inner self in an attempt to create a character that would be accepted into mainstream society” (Cook 1), which is Booker Cook’s explanation of Du Bois’s double consciousness.

It is stated in the text that Mr. Hampton is well-to-do, “being a member of the growing cadre of middle class blacks in Boston [who is] satisfied with the privileges his position conferred on him” (59). This situation obviously is better than that of working class blacks in the United States. But because racial prejudice is no respecter of class, we are told that “[a]lthough he has done well in the white man’s world and would sooner forget his past, every time he comes face to face with a white man who gives him cause, his mind goes back in a flash to that moment so many years ago” (63) when he has the “sobering encounter” that made him resolve to be proud of his black self. But because he is in denial, rather than accepting and confronting his situation, Mr. Hampton tries to repress this memory back into his unconscious. He is not comfortable in his black skin, and would rather be in the company of whites. He is, in fact, wearing a “black skin, white mask,” to borrow Frantz Fanon’s term.

This attitude of Mr. Hampton’s towards his identity is, however, a “struggl[e] with the psychological process of identity formation” (Ibieta and Orvell 158) which results from his being under the constant—though covert—scrutiny of white eyes. He is aware of his blackness but rejects it because white has presented itself as the better option. This is why he is in denial, accepting neither his situation as African American nor the fact that he does not fully belong to the mainstream white culture. There is another instance in the text that helps illustrate this point. When Mr. Hampton suggests that his son, Otis, sees a psychiatrist, the latter asks him, “This Dr Fishbein, is he...black or white?” (49). Though he has lived in the United States all his life, the young man understands that he does not fully belong here. His father, however, who is in denial, tries to cover up and says, “Think about it, son. An African psychiatrist may be good for an African. But, you are not... What I’m trying

to say is, all your life you've grown up...An African American, yes, but still an American" (49). But the truth of Otis's fears surfaces when they get to Dr Fishbein's office. We are told that "Hampton has been obliging white people so long that he answers each question with the appropriate grin" (52). This reminds one of Richard in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, who "had to figure out how to perform each act and how to say each word [...] while standing before a white man" (172). Mr. Hampton eagerly plays the role expected of a black man in the presence of a white man at Dr Fishbein's office. The role of "the frightened trembling Negro, abased before the white overlord" (Fanon 43).

Otis is another character in Okpewho's *Call me by my Rightful Name* through which the argument of double consciousness can be sustained in the text. He is described as a very tall and attractive young man, who is a popular basketball player doing well for his team. He is first encountered in the text at his twenty first birthday party organized by his teammates. And, also, as the only child of a middle-class black American, he seems not to have any worries in terms of class and race. Even his indifferent attitude towards the fight against marginalization by black students at his school also points towards the direction of his being in a comfortable condition. No one would have thought that he is also "hunted by a galaxy of erosive stereotypes, [and in] a state of profound inner insecurity" (Fanon 55).

But then, it is from him we hear that "being raised in a black middle class family, there was some embarrassment about identifying with Africa for all sorts of silly reasons" (215). It is also through him we get to know that "it's quite easy in America to go sleepwalking through life and do not know what you are doing [because] there's always somebody telling you who are and where you are supposed to be or go" (212). With this, it becomes open that Otis equally suffers from double consciousness. He is also a victim of "measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Dubois 3).

The first encounter of racial discrimination that Otis has in the text is when he has a spasm during a basketball game with the team from Princeton. As he loses balance, a Princeton defender tells him, "Got ya, monkey face" (23). Now the emphasis on this abuse is "monkey face." Coming from a white fellow, the name calling touches the part of Otis's heart that he would rather leave unvisited, and because he has this internal inferiority complex that comes with racial stereotyping, "he maneuvers a contact with the abuser, and there is a scuffle"(23).

During the trip to Yoruba land in Africa in search of cure for Otis's spasms, we also witness how the presence of a white person inflicts double consciousness on the blacks around him. While Mr. Hampton, Otis, and Dr. Fishbein are on their

way to the lodge made ready for them by the American embassy in Nigeria in the company of Bigelow, a white American ambassador, the two blacks, Mr. Hampton and Otis, become uncomfortable with Bigelow's presence for some reason. Before long, however, it becomes clear that beneath the seeming atmosphere of friendliness among the passengers in the car lies the great white/black dichotomy which makes blacks always conscious of their actions and always on their guard, since they are aware they are under constant surveillance by white eyes that are always ready to point out symptoms of blackness from their character. Bigelow soon confirms their fears by screaming, when Otis unconsciously drives through the thick bush, "Dr Fishbein, you better talk to your friends. I'm through with this shit. I have no part in their primitive mumbo jumbo stuff. They can go ahead and kill themselves over some old slave history. That's none of my business" (119). With this, the fear that lurks in the heart of the two black men in the car is justified.

Through the above incident, Otis's stand on the conditions of blacks in the United States is also revealed. He confesses that, "if what [he's] seen recently with Bigelow [...] tells him anything, it's that there are aspects of [his] life [he] should never shut his mind to, whatever [his] preoccupations happen to be at any point in time" (170).

Otis, like his father, reacts to double consciousness with the defense mechanism of denial. But his own denial is milder than that of his father. His is tilted more towards indifference until the circumstances surrounding his existence force him to acknowledge the fact of his otherness. Equally significant is the character of Melba, Otis's mother, who has grown up with the harsh realities of being black in the United States and with the knowledge that her parents were murdered in cold blood because they were black and helpless. She, like her husband and son, does not accept Africa, but while Mr. Hampton and Otis's defense mechanisms are each denial, Melba's is more of identification with the oppressor. She has so identified with the whites that she has "notions about Africa [as] land of darkness and the devil" (80). As a matter of fact, when preparations are being made for Otis to be taken to Nigeria to seek solutions to his problem, Melba asks, "What sense does it make to send him over there into pagan country where the devil himself lives with all his angels? You thought about that?" (80)

It is surprising how Melba turns against Africa even though she knows the whites have been the source of her agony all through her life. With Freud's analysis, however, we become aware that this attitude of hers is a defense mechanism of identification with the oppressor. We also find displacement in her behavior for it can be argued that her abhorrence of anything African now is a transfer of the

built up aggression in her, following that she has grown up with the bitterness of the knowledge of the fact that her parents died as a result of their helplessness implicated in the fact of blackness, as Fanon puts it.

Double Consciousness in *Never Far from Nowhere*

In Levy's novel, we meet another set of blacks in a different setting but with the same problem. Here we have Mr. and Mrs. Newton and Rose Charles who have migrated to England from Jamaica where they give birth to their two daughters Olive and Vivien. Newton is not among the focus of our analysis here because he dies shortly after he is introduced in the text. Vivien, the younger daughter, describes each member of the family at the beginning of the text and through her we learn that while she and Rose, her mother, are light skinned, Olive is dark skinned. This is very fundamental to the colour politics that goes on in the text.

Rose is not one of the narrators here, but through Olive and Vivien's narration, she is featured as a middle aged, light-skinned Jamaican woman who lives in London with her two daughters. She is portrayed as a colour conscious individual whose attitude towards colour prejudice is rooted in pigmentocracy—the colour stratification pattern that prevails in Jamaica where she has migrated from. Now the point is: Rose is black (in the racial sense of the word) but is fair-skinned because her mother “married a man who descended from Scottish farmers” (2). She is, therefore, mullato, though “with strong African features” (2). Influenced by the “mythical norm” (Audre Lord qtd in Tatum n.p) of white superiority, she places herself above dark-skinned people; “[chooses] to accept and live within the confines of the white side of double consciousness [. . .]; represents the best of white culture, [and is] constantly struggling to gain acceptance among whites” (Dennis 20). And these she does in quite an extreme manner.

Rose is not only in denial of the fact of her blackness, but also displaces the aggression of racial prejudice on any black she finds around her, while strongly identifying with the oppressor (whites). In other words, her resistance strategy against her condition as a black woman among racist whites in London encompasses three defense mechanisms: denial, displacement and identification. Instances from the text shall help illustrate this point.

From Olive, we read:

My mother didn't believe in black people. Or should I say, she tried to believe that she was not black. Although she knew that she and my dad were not the only people who came over here from Jamaica in the fifties, she liked to think that because they were fair skinned they were the only decent people who

came. The only ones with “a bit of class.” And she believed that the English would recognise this. (7)

One would have expected that Rose would be milder with her hatred for blackness considering that she has a black child, Olive. But the situation gets complicated here because she cannot help her Negrophobic orientation, and does not just know what to do with Olive. She makes life unbearable for Olive at home, calls her “the black ship of the family”(6) and keeps saying that “she’s the devil’s child, the devil’s” (42). The foremost depiction of denial in Rose is that she looks Olive in the face and tells her that she (Olive) is not black. Let us listen again to Olive:

She used to talk to me about what she thought of the black people here, looking me straight in the face, telling me how they were like this and like that—nothing good of course. But she sat looking in my black face telling me. And I thought if anyone looking at us sitting at the table talking had to describe the scene, they’d say, “there are two black women talking.” But my mother thought we weren’t black. (7)

There couldn’t have been a better example of identity crisis. They are black, and the racial consciousness of their white dominated environment does not respect how close to whiteness one’s blackness may be. And this is amazing because unlike African Americans who are not sure of their ancestry or history, Rose is not ignorant of the fact that she is from Jamaica. Jamaicans have a slave history, all right, but she at least has a home outside London; she has a place where she has come from. Because she has got the “formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white” (Fanon 114), it becomes difficult for her to reconcile these facts.

Olive continues:

“I’m black,” I used to say, when I was old enough to but in.

“Don’t be silly, Olive, you’re not coloured.”

“No, Mum, I’m black.”

“No Olive, you’re not black, and that’s enough of this stupidity.”

“Well I’m not white, I have to be something.”

“You’re not white and you’re not black—you’re you.”

And one might want to ask, “What are you?” Young Olive who has been in London

all her life is not confused about the fact of her blackness and she knows that there is no shying away from that fact. But Rose who has grown up in Jamaica has the exact opposite of Olive's attitude. All these hinge upon the fact that whites have presented their colour as the better option—the “mythical norm”—and Rose, having bought this myth hook line and sinker, sees herself through the eyes of the whites.

Even in her relations with people outside her family, Rose does not fail to display this attitude of whiteness, and most times in quite an embarrassing manner. For instance, when Eddie, Vivien's boyfriend, offers her a bottle of Jamaica rum in celebration of Vivien's admission to college because he thinks “everyone from Jamaica liked rum” (230), Rose replies, “Not me, I prefer a nice cup of tea” (230). And this is in spite of the fact that she enjoys rum (of course when there is no white person around). This rejection of rum is an outright rejection of Jamaica because rum and tea are the most famous drinks in the popular culture of Jamaica and England respectively.

We are also told that Rose sends Olive to a school full of white people, “[a]nd no black girls. All white” (24). And this is irrespective of the psychic horror Olive undergoes as a result of being the only black person in the midst of a white antagonistic environment. The reason she gives for this act is that Olive should go to “a ‘respectable’ school with ‘decent girls.’” And for her respectability and decency are synonymous with whiteness.

To round off analysis on Rose, it is pertinent that we consider her response to Olive when she is informed that the latter is pregnant for Peter, her white boyfriend. Initially, Rose tells the young mother-to-be that she is not surprised about the out-of-wedlock pregnancy, then adds, “But you have a good man there Olive—there's not many that would marry you. You see you keep him, you hear me nuh” (66). This shows that she does not expect anything good from a dark-skinned person, and she also feels that a black person should be grateful to a white who “offers” to marry them.

Vivien is another character in Levy's novel who has double consciousness. She is portrayed as a character who has this “inner silence and timidity” (Noda 198) as a result of the inferiority complex she has by the fact of her blackness. Though she is light-skinned like her mother, unlike her mother, however, she is aware that she is black. Where denial comes in in her character is that she does not admit that being black in London is a problem. We are told by Olive that,

Vivien thinks she's escaped, with all her exams and college and middle-class friends. She thinks she'll be accepted in this country now. One of them. She's

pleased with herself—turned her back on everything she knows. My little sister thinks she’s better than me. She looks down her nose at me and thinks I’ve wasted my life. Nothing can shock me now. But Vivien, one day she’ll realize that in England, people like her are never far from nowhere. Never. (273)

With this we see that Vivien’s is a case of “having two antagonistic identities” (Black 395) that are pulling at her. Her response to this psychological pull is to identify with the one that “looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Dubois 3). In other words, she imitates white lifestyle in order to have a sense of belonging. She goes out with white friends and tries as much as she can to blend into the mainstream white culture.

From the beginning of the narrative, it is made known that Vivien has the “mythical norm” of white superiority fundamentally ingrained in her consciousness. While describing herself and Olive, she says, “Somehow looking right on our oval-shaped faces; Olive’s more refined than mine, more symmetrical. BUT I had a light skin—a HIGH colour. In a dim light I could be taken for Italian or Spanish. Olive was darker. Black. The Caribbean legacy” (1). The idea of white superiority conditions her attitude towards the prevalent colour politics and affects her opinion of herself—light-skinned black—and her sister, Olive—dark-skinned black.

Having accepted whiteness as the benchmark, Vivian loses herself in an attempt to find a place in the white community. She is constantly in the company of white folks who, though tolerate her company, subtly point out to her that she is not one of them, because even though she is light-skinned, the history of blackness stands indelible on her face. These supposed friends of Vivien’s constantly make jest of black people, calling them such derogatory names as “wogs” and “coons” right in her presence. And though she is not comfortable with these labels, she remains with them, for her self-worth depends solely on the validation she gets from staying around them. She tells us that while among Carol and her clique, she “smiled, looked horrified or puzzled, whatever was required... [she] did everything like everyone else did. Except that [she] didn’t speak... [she] wanted to stay unseen. Because they all hated wogs. And [she] had nothing to say” (29).

We have described her as one who has “inner silence and timidity” a few paragraphs ago. She is almost always mute in the presence of her friends as she is constantly on her guard, trying to make sure she does not say anything that might offend them. As a matter of fact, she has become friends with Carol out of fear. Here is what she says: “I became her friend for fear that if I didn’t she might become my enemy” (11). And because getting white people’s approval is paramount to her

existence, she not only becomes Carol's friend but also friend to Carol's friends.

According to the natural order of things, a relationship built on fear would be sustained by fear. This is exactly the case with Vivien and Carol's relationship. In their clique, she acts out their definition of her and has no mind of her own at all. For instance, on their visits to the club at the boy's school, Carol makes all the decisions while Vivien accepts them for fear of being seen as stupid. Conversations between them goes thus:

"Table tennis," Carol said. We'll do that, eh, Viv." I nodded. And drama I wanted to say, but couldn't. I couldn't because I knew that if I spoke, whatever I said would be stupid, dumb, meaningless and Ted would look at me and frown and all those boys would laugh and point and Carol would say, "What do you say that for stupid." (13)

She accepts table tennis, even when she does not know how to play it because she is being careful of the white eyes around her. Just like her mother, Rose, Vivien also goes the extra mile to protect her hard earned delicate white identity. She tells lies about who she is and where she comes from, and even denies her family when she does not want to be embarrassed by their presence. When asked by her white boyfriend, Eddie, where she comes from, here is Vivien's response: "I sighed to myself. I wanted to be from somewhere he would be interested in, not just prejudiced against. "Mauritius," I said (136). She fakes an identity just to please a white boyfriend. We also have a similar case when she meets her new flat mate at the art college. When asked where she has come from, Vivien reveals, I was about to say Finsbury Park, but I looked at Victoria's immaculate red-painted fingernails, her tight, well-fitting jeans with a gold belt running through the loops, her soft pink shirt opening low down her breasts, the delicate gold chain round her neck and gold and stud earrings and said "Islington" (246).

One incident that can be seen as quite despicable in human relationship is that of Vivien rejecting her sister, Olive, who is going through psychological breakdown and longs for sisterly affection. Because Vivien has created and is living a lie, she refuses to let Olive in lest it becomes known to her white friends that she is fake. Olive represents all the truth she (Vivien) cannot confront.

The only member of the Newton family who has a different attitude towards the prevailing colour politics is Olive, for the apparent reason that she is dark-skinned. She is portrayed as a defiant young black woman who is convinced that she is the sole bearer of the problem associated with being black in a white dominated

environment. As she tells us: “The world seemed such a big place but with no room in it for me” (211).

Being the only dark-skinned member of her family, her problem as a black person begins from domestic violence to rejection in the larger London society. Her mother hates her for no fault of hers and makes life quite unbearable for her at every given opportunity. Even when it seems she is about to blend into the mainstream white culture as a result of her marriage to Peter, a white working-class young man, it turns out that Peter’s interest in her is exclusively sex related. We shall need a long excerpt from the text to illustrate this point. Olive says:

He still wanted to have sex. “I’m knackered,” I’d say, and he’d say. “Why, what have you been doing?” We didn’t even kiss any more, he’d just get on top of me. I didn’t have to do anything. I just lay there and let him get on with it. Since the baby I could hardly feel him inside me, like he wasn’t touching the sides. He said, “You’ve gone all slack.” But it didn’t stop him wanting to do it nearly every night. I just wished he’d leave me alone, especially when Amy is awake. (103)

Peter eventually abandons her for a white single mother, but not until he has called her “a stupid hysterical black cow” (125), which reveals what he has thought of her all along.

Just as Olive’s colour is different from that of other members of her family, she has a distinct personality as well. She has both a resistant and a self-pitying attitude. Her defiant attitude is expressed earlier in the text when we are told that her mother forces her into a school full of only white people. Olive feels totally out of place and a sense of “unbelongingness” pervades her attitude throughout her stay at the school. And the school, which I see as a microcosm of what blacks go through in a white dominated environment, does not help matters either. The school authorities do not believe that a black person can amount to anything good and do not hesitate to make Olive aware of this. But Olive does not allow these circumstances to define her. She vows to emerge as one of the bests, to mortify her teachers. She says, “I passed, even though I didn’t want to go to the school. I just wanted to show them that I could” (25). And though Olive drops out of school at the end, she does so because she does not want life to dictate to her.

In all, we see that Rose, Vivien, and Olive are all aware of the pre-established roles defined by the white people for them to play out. But while Rose and Vivien are on the white side of double consciousness, Olive is on the black side, for in the

end she makes up her mind to go back to Jamaica to live among her fellow blacks.

Conclusion

Double consciousness is a situation which arises when one is confronted with another individual or group better than one's self, especially from one's perspective. This perspective, however, is being conditioned by the pre-existing stereotypical patterns ingrained in the mental processes of the bearer of this double consciousness, whereby the group he sees himself as inferior to has long presented itself as the better of the two. This bearer of double consciousness, as a result, sees himself the way his supposed superior sees him. He constantly behaves the way that is expected of him and is simultaneously trying to live his own life, which is now seen as the Other.

This is the condition of the black man in the United States, according to W.E.B. Du Bois, and as we have seen, it is a universal problem of the black man wherever he is in contact with the white man. Okpewho's *Call me by my Rightful Name* and Levy's *Never Far from Nowhere* are examples of the very many literary works where this situation is played out by literary personages. In the characters of Mr. Hampton, Otis, Melba, and Rose, Olive, and Vivien respectively in *Call me by my Rightful Name* and *Never Far from Nowhere*, we see how this universal problem of the blacks is played out in two different settings: Boston and London. The mentioned characters are established as bearers of double consciousness, and the various defense mechanisms they employ as resistance strategies are revealed.

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Nirvāna Beckoning: The Sacred, the Profane, and the Sublime in *Kārma Cola*

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Abstract The present study is an exploration of the concept of transcendence in *Karma Cola* by Gita Mehta. It is a deconstructive investigation aimed at delegitimizing and destabilizing the grand narrative of the innate nature of the human self as it operates within the framework of a discourse that generates, operates, disseminates and manages myths about eastern spiritual tradition. The theoretical tool for illustrating the insincerity of the notion of self-actualisation and the consequential *Angst* is, for the present study, existentialism.

Key words *Transcendence; Existentialism; Self; East; West;*

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Introduction

With the advent of colonialism, knowledge and awareness about Indian culture and spiritual legacy started hitting the shores of America and Europe, though partially.

Consequently, the concerned Western psyche started developing images, figures, character types, and story patterns that are universally shared by people across cultures in the Occidental social system. This stereotyping was embedded deep in the “collective unconscious” of the West and involved racial memories of situations, events, and relations that have been part of the Western practice from that point in time. Thereafter, coming under the influence of transcendental philosophy, the teachings of different gurus, lectures on the “*sanatan dharma*” and several books with the message of India, the Westerners started forming the myth that India is “the” answer to their existential crisis as they perceive India as the land of mysticism and spirituality, waiting to be explored to the core. This gave birth to another dream that if they could learn so much about Indian spiritual culture staying in a completely different social context, reaching India would provide them with “instant” *Nirvana*.

They not only manifested themselves in the subconscious material of dreams but were also persistently expressed in the more consciously constructed material of myths and literature. In the process of this formation of a *thematic* about the “magical” India, when a westerner recounts a narrative based on such unconscious memories, the listener’s existential mind is subconsciously stirred, producing a singularly powerful psychological effect because the memories evoke primordial feelings, concerns, and responses that cannot be logically explained. In this regard, the archetype of India in the Occidental mind can be a parallel to the Saussurian concept of *langue*, which is a set of impersonal rules and conventions, ideas and canons; *langue* is transindividual and abstract, hence the guiding force behind all individual reactions generated from a tangential perspective. Saussure’s mention of “all individuals” should be taken to refer to all individuals within a particular community sharing the identical conventions and customs.

The clouded vision or the tangential perspective of the Western psyche is fragmented into innumerable number of *paroles* resulting in the formation of the problematic in this context. According to Althusser the concept of problematic is “to designate the particular unity of a theoretical formation and hence the location to be assigned to this specific difference” (Althusser 32). Although Althusser assigned the term to theoretical formations it is often used to designate ideological ones as well; any complex of beliefs which (whatever their implicit or explicit contradictions) hangs together in a self supporting unity may be referred to as a problematic. The term can be used in a way that makes it appear similar to Foucault’s concept of the *episteme*; in as much as it may be believed that a particular problematic represents what is “thinkable” for those in its grip. The epistemological knowledge emerging out of the myth about mystic India empowers the Western ethics to have a go at

the spiritual legacy of the Orient and assimilate it in their own knowledge system without even considering the nuances of this complex esoteric tradition of Indian origin.

In this regard we should also mention Kuhn, who suggested that particular learned communities rested upon acceptance of “a set of recurrent and quasi-standard illustrations of various theories in their conceptual, observational, and instrumental applications.” These, he proposed, are the community’s *paradigms*, which can be found revealed in its “textbooks, lectures, and laboratory exercises” (Kuhn 43), as well as in the *thematic*. Kuhn’s paradigms are not just the illustrations (the thematic) he mentions but also the assumptions (the problematic) which are to be found behind, and constituted by, these illustrations. In other words, the paradigm of the western world about spiritual India is constituted by a set of beliefs and ideas which both enables and constraints their thought process; a framework or scaffold which can underpin or support further progress but which of necessity includes and also excludes a range of possibilities, increasing the angst of the Occidental existential mind. The necessity for a *paradigm shift* to enable major advances in theory and thought to take place seemed to have something in common with the need for the Westerners to move from mere mythical ideas to experiential and linear unambiguous understanding.

As the vision about India was a smoked one, it emanated infinite possibilities and alternatives aggravating the existential “anguish” and “abandonment” for the Western mind. In this context Saussure stresses that langue is not a function of the individual; it is passively assimilated by the individual and does not require premeditation. Parole on the other hand, he insists, is an “individual act” which is wilful and intellectual. For example, as far as Oriental spiritual practices are concerned, *Tantra* has become a household word in certain circles in the West. But, as is often the case with household words, popularity does not necessarily imply understanding. Similarly, *Tantra* has captured the fascination of a good many Westerners who equated *Tantric* life with existential living, but few of them actually know what it stands for, including some of those who profess to practice, teach, or write about it. Therefore, George Feuerstein aptly points out that, “Many are attracted to Neo-tantrism because it promises sexual excitement or fulfilment while clothing purely genital impulses or neurotic emotional needs in an aura of spirituality (Feuerstein 271).

Their main error is to confuse the spiritual bliss (*ananda, maha-sukha*) of India with ordinary orgasmic pleasure turning the sacred into the profane. These elucidations may conceivably be helpful to people looking for a more fulfilling or

entertaining sex life, but they are in most cases far removed from the true spirit of Indian spiritual legacy and attainment of *Nirvana*. In this sense they are sadly misleading, for instead of awakening a person's impulse to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, they tend to foster narcissism, self-deception, and false hopes which further accentuate the existential dilemma. The present study seeks to investigate the study of *Nirvāṇa*¹ (self-actualization) as it is dealt with in Gita Mehta's *Kārma Cola*; deconstructing one of the most orthodox Occidental thesis about the Orient. It also seeks to ascertain Existentialism as a convincing tool for interrogating the preferences that instruct the common knowledge systems within the area.

Myth and Demythologization

Levi-Strauss observes that, "Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message" (Strauss 109), it is "depoliticized speech" (Strauss 142). Therefore, a myth is an imaginative extension of the lived experience of a specific socio-cultural section within a certain spacio-temporality. For Bultman, the purpose of myths is to shroud the truth that they intend to express through linguistic signification. He argues that the significance of a myth lies in its expression of a human reality rather than something beyond it. However, Heidegger's influence was so heavy on Bultman, that he starts studying the practice of myths from an existential point of view; he says, "Myth should not be interpreted cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better, still existentially" (Bultman 10).

When mythological understandings within the framework of a society are seriously re-considered in order to recognize the deeper layers of socio-cultural-political significance that lead to their formation, demythologization certainly becomes a deconstructive process. "Myths perform an ideological FUNCTION while ideologies function by means of myths" (Hawthorne 222). It is through this continuous action within the functions of the society that myths tend to go even deeper by means of what can be called the method of "Ideological Sedimentation."² As Lugowski points out myths engage, "a view of the world as a form of timeless, static existence" (Lugowski 42). This also reminds us of Barthe's claim of myth as a

1 Also called *Nibbāna*, the word actually means "blowing out." It denotes the state of the complete erasure (blowing out) of one's ego that covers or hides one's true self, shorn of all illusions and misapprehensions, thus, revealing the true nature of reality. It is therefore, the state where one achieves self-actualisation (the actuality of one's self without the ego).

2 The word sediment comes from the root "sedere" which means "to settle or sit." In this instance the phrase is used to refer to the discursive process of ideas, concepts and conventions that settle within the psyche and thus, function as ideological precepts that inform the formation and maintenance of knowledge systems that are unchallenged within the body-politic of a culture.

sort of general sense or “what goes without saying” (Barthes 11). Myth, for Barthes, thus carries out a conforming role whereby a culture conceptualizes itself and the world around becomes undeviating and predetermined, and any departure from the norm is considered illegitimate and unnatural. Hayden White thus mentions that, “Myth is a form of discourse” (White 2000). Disassembling the rhetorical structure of the perception of myth and inquiring the postulation of a subject point of view, that is deduced out of inclinations and privileged belief that characterize subjective experience about a rigid object, is the fundamental concern of demythologization.

Existentialism and Nirvāṇa

Critics differ widely regarding the meaning of existentialism. Some point out that in its basic form existentialism is a rational approach and critique to the understanding of absurdity, a sense of meaninglessness. It thus, necessitates a consequent search for purposelessness. There is an underlying anxiety about the ways of the world and the tactics one employs to negotiate one’s place in it. This sense of weariness is aptly described by Buber as “shuddering at the alienation between the I and the world” (Buber).

One of the most virulent critics of human affairs, Nietzsche, points out, in a sombre note that in its basic form humanity is marked with melancholy or *Angst*. While man sees into life he also sees into anguish (Nietzsche 269). This general gloom emanates from a crucial split between the self and the material world. As the individual subject perceives the physical objective world he also participates in it. He gradually becomes *it*. It, thus, tends towards an “openness to [...] suffering of life and is accomplished through a clearing away of concealment and obscurities....” (Heidegger 167).

Angst, for the existentialist is the most profound reality. It, however, is not unsolvable. For the existentialist *angst* is a form of disorder. Since men feel this disorder very deeply, there ought to be, arguably, a structure of order within the individual. *Angst*, therefore, is a by-product of the conflict between internal order and the superficial forms which have been imposed upon it (Fowler 81).

There is a mystical tradition, especially of the Orient, which states that the individualized “Being” is the all-encompassing consciousness, the *Umgreifende*. In that line of thinking if one contemplates on Sartre a surprising element comes out. Sartre once famously opined “existence precedes essence” (quoted in Fowler 82). Now, this could mean firstly that being or existence is *essentially* meaningless and human experience renders meaning to it. Secondly, it points out to a more deterministic view of life, where meaning for each of us is definite and lying

dormant unless it unfolds as the individual's fate. In either case the individual's attempt is "to overcome the [...] fissure in favour of a complete oneness of subject and object through the disappearance of objectivity and the extinction of the ego" (Cooper 82). This leads to what we may refer to as the search of the sublime, the most fundamental nature of life. It, thus, becomes the quest for self-actualisation or *Nirvāna*. Here, the boundaries between the self and its environment are broken down and a pattern of harmony emerges. The persistent problem, however, is that the relationship between the subject (individual) and the object (the physical world) is that of an apparent signifier-signified one. The signifiers that create the world around us are a "complex of cerebralized structures which impede communication and give only limited control over the empirical world" (Fowler 81). The mind of man is convoluted and cornered with(in) this mesh of "[...]groundlessness, futility and grey opacity" (Fowler 81). This experience is the *neant*. A thorough understanding of it can lead one to transcend it eventually. The process as Marcel aptly puts it is achievable through "secondary reflection"; an approach characterized by "wonder and astonishment" (quoted in Macquarrie 110).

This sense of wonder is especially appealing to the West. In a vicious attack on the western man's incessant quest of material excess Ferry points out "Its impressive train of stars and spangles, its culture of servility in face of the powerful, and its immoderate love of money tend to present daydreams as a model for life" (Ferry 14). The quest is based on the notion of self-gratification through a "transcendental signified" (Derrida 65), a vision where pleasure and success create something apart from the individual self, something outside it, something out there waiting to be possessed and enjoyed.

When the possession is unachievable or when it is unsatisfactory then in its desperation the mind creates a Utopia, "a beyond." The Utopia necessarily entails flight; escape. Naturally, the flight is from the materially exhausting to the spiritually exalting; an exact opposite; in this case, from the West to the East; from a metaphorical sunset to a new sunrise. The object is to dissolve suffering without investing much in understanding it.

It is with such intentions that toward the end of the nineteenth century the West accepted the East as its newfound spiritual spa and India as the destination offering the best and the most advanced treatments to inner issues. Numerous exoduses happened over the course of several decades into India from the West, not with intentions previously known to the native; that of pillage and plunder; but of seeking retreat in the indigenous science of Yoga and Ayurveda. It created a spectacle of surrealist cacophony starting with the stars of the West, the Beatles, prostrating at

the feet of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi. After that it was open season. The west being overrun by counter-culture groups, entire villages transforming into orgasmic wonderlands by hippies, free sex running haywire over vast spaces of land and mind and so on. Though unconventional this was not unnatural. The flight of the eagle, thrown off its own perch, had taken it to an arcadia that lay on eastern shores. There it sought the freedom it long desired but never deserved, for it was enmeshed in the “myth of success.” The predicament was that it had in the same vein mythologized *Nirvāṇa* as some “thing” “out-there-beyond-the-Indian Ocean”; a discourse in time.

On the formulation of discourse Foucault states, “[w]henver one can describe, between a number of statements [...] a regularity [...] we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*...” (Foucault 38). These discursive formations create “disciplines and institutions which, in turn, sustain and distribute those discourses” (Lentricchia and McLaughlin 57). Sustainance of a discourse necessitates regularisation of the same. In studying the formation of a discourse on the myth of *Nirvāṇa* one has to deal with underlying concepts that segregate individual subject positions and define what can be said about it. It originated as an *a priori* philosophical position: that the Orient could grant *Nirvāṇa* as a readymade cure. This philosophical assumption became common sense as a metanarrative and thus incontrovertible. This inclination towards generalization and formation of psychological metanarratives is referred to by Edward Said¹ as the “specialist argument” (Said 13-14) which “can work quite effectively to block the larger and [...] the more intellectually serious perspective” (Said 13-14). According to Said metanarratives work as mass hallucinogens that dominate the collective unconscious through the politics of representation. The object which is an “Other” of the subject is devoid of the agency to represent itself by the dominant subject. The object is thus, characterize as a monolithic unit of reality, an illustration perceived by the subject. Said points out that these representations of the Other transform, in course of time, into knowledge systems that condition perception and infiltrate culture at large. In this study we would like to submit is that the discourse of *Nirvāṇa* emanates from a supposed “otherness” of Eastern cultures (especially Indian) as intrinsically *mystical, mythological, magical*. The West presupposes that such mystical cultures offer *Nirvāṇa* readily. Until such an ideology is demythologized, *Nirvāṇa* in its actuality cannot be attained. Said writes, “So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping

1 Edward. W. Said, born in 1935, was a Palestinian-American cultural and literary theorist. He propounded the theory of and coined the term “Orientalism” in his 1978 book *Orientalism*. His book has since become a landmark in the area-corpus of postcolonial studies and the experience of marginality.

have intensified the [...] imaginative demonology of “the mysterious Orient” (Said 26).

The Text and the Analysis

The text in question, *Karma Cola*, is an intensive look into the paradigm of *Nirvāna* as it plays out in the western mind and the eastern landscape. “*Karma Cola* enfolds the cultural transition that was taking place in India due to the influx of beatniks and hippies in the late 1960s” (Singh, 243). The author presents a journalistic account of how spiritual seeking can turn noisy with odd ramifications. There is lacking, in the text, a particular authorial voice. There are scenes which the author presents before the reader like a documentary. The scenes or incidents are, however, connected with a thread of thematic commonality, one which has been mentioned in sections above and will be investigated in sections hence.

The West was marked with a deep sense of material excess and vulnerability. It was ruled by the absence of a purpose within oneself. There was, for all intents and purposes, a profound hankering after some “thing” that will answer the ultimate question: is there something beyond the profanity of this mundane existence, something that was not marred by the sins of man? There was a desire to break free from the constraints of the 1950s orthodoxy and to create a more inclusive and tolerant landscape” (Singh, 243). For our analysis we have taken sections or scenes arbitrarily but they are, nonetheless woven around similar lines of thematic problems, as is the text in general.

In interrogating such questions we come across, in the text, a Brazilian who remarks “Come tonight. Moon is full. Kārma is right for looking at jewels” (Mehta 3). The banality of the statement nakedly exposes the misunderstanding of all the basic concepts of Eastern mystical traditions for example Karma. Therefore, “Spirituality as a commodity is much discussed and debated in the book” (Singh, 244). It leads the author to ironically remark, “[p]eople were taking their gurus where they could find them” (Mehta 3). There is desperation in the voice of the Brazilian, a lack of foundation at the core of one’s self. In desperation, one sought refuge; in this case; in make-belief gurus. Sartre stated once, “Nothingness is coiled in the heart of Being” (Howells 1992). The Brazilian is an embodiment of all that is wrong in the viral quest for transcendence. The individual detached from his immediate world, becomes crudely aware of the reified fragments of signification we mentioned earlier. The individual’s identity feels ungrounded. Stripped off of one’s identity the individual begs for purpose of one’s *being*. The rising anxiety in the individual mind, in a way, forced one into imitative fantasies, into a different

narrative of self-understanding, and into the quest for the “encompassing.” A little further in we come across an American who remarks, “The fact is I didn’t really come here to get here. I sort of drifted here to get away from there” (Mehta 64).

The irony of drifting like a leaf in autumn breeze raises certain crucial points to ponder on. Evidently, the American would have drifted along with the counter-culture movement taking over the West. “Influenced by the Beat movement and “low cultures” this youth movement rejected the established norms and criticised middle class values, championed sexual emancipation and promoted drugs such as marijuana and LSD to explore alternate states of consciousness” (Singh, 243). Also, the opposition of “there” and “here” is distinct. It is a getting away, an escape, a flight. Speaking existentially, the expedition of *Nirvāṇa* (what is) “must begin from the subjective” (Sartre 348), and that is where the trouble is. In the text the author (primarily situated in the position of a third person observer and narrator) narrates a letter she receives from a young American woman who had gone through a traumatic experience of drug peddling and sexual abuse. The letter concludes: “[...] I realized I should never have trusted Gurus who wore Adidas running shoes” (Mehta 9-10). This is a classic example of the “specialist argument.” The American girl falls for the discourse transcendence and applies it uncritically. Her argument is that true gurus should *not* wear Addidas running shoes. This means that she has, in her mind, the image of what a true guru might look like. It, thus, follows an aesthetic of narration and of creating the “otherness” of the Other. It subsequently marks the discursive characteristics, as images.

Althusser points out that an ideological position “*hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject” (Althusser 162). This means that subjective-conscience or the self of an individual is a result of ideas that operate at the level of culture and accepted facts. The operator of a phone-line is asked by the member of an American party, “Hello, India, my party is saying you have the Big Zero” (Mehta 6). The American party’s enthusiasm about India having the Big Zero or Śūnyatā—which is another way of referring to *Nirvāṇa*—is primarily an Oriental myth; that is to say that the very act of moving toward a tangible goal for “holism” is also an encrustation of the anxiety that comes about at not being able to reach it. The western seeker as the subject distances oneself as he “thinks on the thought-of,” thereby creating an axiom of a conflict between the self and its Other, between the individual and nature, between the “here” and the “beyond.” Therefore we may posit that, if myth formation begins with the individual, demythologization begins at the exact same place. As Foucault points out, “a matter of depriving the subject [...] of its role as the originator, and of analyzing the subject

as a variable and complex function of discourse” (Foucault 158). The “I” is “not something given but comes to exist as that which is addressed by and relates to others” (Derrida 33). Therefore, as Sartre points out, knowledge of the “self” as a subject entails “responsibility [...] for all men” (Sartre 350). What the “self” is becomes clear shunned of all myths and misappropriations, as based in the subjective experience of the individual. Demythologization is thus an existential process.

In the text the devotees at Svāmī Muktananda’s camp, stuffed into tents (most of them having spent luxurious lives) “sat in meditation and expectation” (Mehta 14) of gaining *Nirvāna*. The seekers rejoiced with pleasure “when the image of the teacher appeared [...] straining to pull the energy off the screen and into themselves” (Mehta 14). The dominant experience of the West was also the universal one i.e. the myth of self-actualisation was subconsciously premeditated for its participants. The “mysterious Orient,” its divinity had gripped the West “[...] who had just hit town, restless to start the long journey to the heart of spiritual India” (Mehta 15). Modernity itself (re)produces tradition (Ivekovic 79). The heaviness of the Orientalist discourse is inferred from the statement of an enthusiastic Western traveller when he says, “It’s how I always dreamed India would be” (Mehta 16). From a prejudiced viewpoint, this statement exhibits the exact opposite of what subjectivity necessitates i.e. “man is responsible for what he is” (Sartre 349) which further signifies that as a conscious and thinking subject one is able to look beyond the opaque screen of spiritual tradition that one either inherits inadvertently or espouses because it is quite opportune and accessible. The conscious effort to know “what is” and ensuing disenchantment of the Occidental explorer into Eastern lands stems from the very act of trying to re-cognize what is already apparently comprehended through conventional image of the unfathomable Other. The persistent problematic in the quest was of course, as the existentialist points out, the unanswered issue of the subject. An American says that the advice of a guru like figure (an old man with a beard)—“Be careful how you laugh. You become what you laugh at” (Mehta 20)—scared him. He is speculative that his laughter is a tool of transformation; that within act of laughter was access to the *beyond*. Furthermore the American is (mis)guided by the idea that his self was not his and that he had not *become*. This split from what one thought one was initiates the existential angst that perpetuates itself through discursive formations of “actualising the self” i.e. “making *It* what it was.”

In eastern spiritual traditions, especially in India there was a profound practice where a question asks itself and the answer replies itself. Like when the Westerner asked the most vital question, “Who am I,” the answers were vague in the least like

“What is the question.” Real masters, however, asked in reply “Who is asking the question.” Those from the West was obviously baffled because they could not realize that until they let go of their internal structures of perspectives, spirituality, as they sought, would remain off limits. At one juncture Gita Mehta aptly opines, “There is that difference between being kicked in the teeth and reading a description of being kicked in the teeth. Some call it existential” (Mehta 36). They supposed that sitting for extended periods in the lotus position would get them through with this intricacy of accessibility; another case of what we would call their “tangential perspective”¹. The existential concerns of the West were so immediate that they thought remedies to such problems would also be immediate. In such adversity and with such a limited foresight they rushed to India expecting to attain *Nirvāṇa*. The primary problem for the American, the European and others was their dependence on logic. Discovery of the “self” was, for them an enterprise in ratiocination. The “beyond,” however, lay *beyond reason*. Thus, one from the Occident sank into the abyss of discovering the true “self.” “The bad-tempered old gents who lived in the jungles of India several thousand years ago and came up with the *Upanishads* were well aware of the dangers of trying to take on what you aren’t up to handling” (Mehta 35).

Of course the search for endless freedom transmuted itself in the search for immortality. *Nirvāṇa*, thus became synonymous with unending life. In the text, in spite of the demise of one of the followers, others continue to believe that the *guru* had the power to drive away death. It was a gross myth which, it might be said had its roots in Abrahamic traditions, with its lure of life in heaven after one’s demise. The sages of the East, however, pointed out that what is constant under all circumstances can effectively be said to be immortal. Since that cannot be claimed of the physical body, there ought to be something that is. That they referred to as the cosmic “Self,” *Brahman* or *Ātman*². The sages embark on a venture to augment their skills required to achieve this understanding. Six different methods were developed for this purpose, and they are called *Yoga*³. *Yoga* profess that in order to reach *Ātman* one has to tear apart the superficial layers of body and mind, the mind must

1 The phrase is used here to refer to the skewed perspective of the Occident about Oriental traditions which is devoid of the total picture, because of the preconceptions, predetermination that inform their concepts about Eastern (especially Indian) spiritual practices.

2 Literally meaning “breath” the word refers to the quintessence of an individual’s being. In Eastern metaphysics it denotes the real self of a being which is the same as the supreme self or *Brahman*.

3 *Yoga* literally means “to join, to add or to unite.” It refers to the practice whereby one is united with one’s *Ātman*, which is the supreme being or *Brahman* itself. The individual who through *Yoga* achieves liberation is thus called a *Yogi*, and not someone who can just perform certain types of physical exercises.

be calm, without duality and unwavering. It is the state for perceiving the *Brahman*. Those who sought this state called *Nirvāna* did not realize this. Driven by angst the mind of the westerner wavered looking for pain-killers and ending up with multiple aphrodisiacs to soothe their heartaches. They wanted to reach “the promised land” but took vehicles which went afar from their intended destination. The Westerner did not understand, for good measure, that the “[...] the Oriental ability to see in a plethora of contradictions a literally mind-blowing affirmation” (Mehta.35). Consequently, the Western mind conceptualized grave ideas like immortality and infinity with respect to a corporeal way of life. This chaotic situation was further aggravated when the phony gurus misled them on their journey towards self discovery and contributed in forming a skewed perception of eternity and *Brahman*. They burnt up the process of their own self-actualisation in order to exalt their consumption of Indian spiritual mystery. Here one might quote Descartes who said “Conquer yourself rather than the world,” meaning one can act without resorting to hope. What was problematic was “[t]o go from the monomania of the West to the multomania of the East” (Mehta 35).

An American meteorologist, while answering a fellow American student’s question says: “Don’t live in the shadow of the death, young man,” he warned. “Let us say there is nuclear holocaust. What will it do? I shall tell you what it will do. It will cleanse the world.” Don’t you understand? We are going towards a post-nuclear, post-Armageddon Golden Age!” (Mehta 17) The American student, baffled and confused because the scientist had confounded peace for annihilation. It was because nothingness was misconstrued as nihilism. The student’s existential question was not answered. In the text the World Conference on the Future of Mankind is organized at *Vijñāna Bhawan*. Globalisation and free markets took over the existing culture as a combination of various religious systems and the *Kārma* concept the Hippies popularized. The up-market hoteliers pursued divergent interests while the Hippies soaked in drugs and sexual depravity. The World Conference was just one of many platforms made use of for *selling* India to the world as was in the brochure of the Pacific Area Travel Association. The venue gave them a seal of authenticity and “establishment seriousness.” At a retreat of Svāmī Mukṭānanda, a few kilometres away, everyone was busy in the seminar on awakening the *Kuṇḍalinī*¹. His devotees included an entourage of respectable

1 *Kuṇḍalinī* literally means “coiled” implying the essential energy in human beings that is believed to be “coiled” i.e. “dormant” until awakening takes place. The term was made popular for the Western audience by Sir John Woodroffe who termed it as “Serpent Power” (see Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power*, 1974). Such representations undermined the symbolism of Indian metaphysics and represented such terms in a negative or an exotic light for the Western seeker.

foreigners, eager to receive Svāmī's Śakti- the transmission of energy from the guru to the devotees. It presents before us the picture of consumption and mass appropriation. The "otherness" was not considered inaccessible anymore, but at the same time it had not turned out to be comprehensible. In his essay *Consuming India*, Graham Haggan, portrays India as a promising piece of exhibitionism and consumerism. India found itself as a consumable entity. "[...] India acquired another willing convert to the philosophy of meaningfully meaningless" (Mehta 17). Mehta points out with exactitude that "Our only acceptable coin seems to be piety, or our reputation for it, and we are spending it with the same reckless hilarity as those who pay in reason" (Mehta 19). The seekers were lost in thinking that India was "the" answer to their question. It led them to the phony *gurus* who further led them to a world of darkness and a point of no return.

We come by an episode where a young boy argues that the *guru* of that āśrama was his real father. He is baptized as a *Buddha*. The so-called seekers lack knowledge as to what it means to be a Buddha. Knowledge can be had through books but the tradition, culture and nurture of the East cannot be internalized through black and white. Said says, "The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation [...] (Said 21) that are based on absorbed mythical traditions. Thus the author says that western spiritual enthusiasts "[...] can hear with their hearts. There are no words to stand in between them and God's pure energy. They can be one with him." "Did you feel God's aura? Did you get a hit off the energy? they demanded" (Mehta 30).

The man who came to seek *Nirvāṇa* wanted to have it in parts, as were comfortable with his ideas of the East. The condition, however, that he wanted to experience was an entirety. The realm of experience is subjective in the same way abandonment is, that "we ourselves decide our being" (Sartre 357). At the metaphysical level abandonment implies a "silence of hidden Transcendence, as it emanates into experience and overcomes fragmentation, isolation and encrustation" (Fowler 81). The banality of seeking existential profoundness is demythologized when one begins to see that, "[t]he seduction lay in the chaos. They thought they were simple. We thought they were neon. They thought we were profound. We knew we were provincial. Everybody thought everybody else was ridiculously exotic and everybody got it wrong" (Mehta 5). The point, however, is that the individual was the sum total of the discourse that forms the subjective. Ivekovic writes that "the subject is born into a sense and meaning *already given*, into a scene" (Ivekovic 34). It was nearly impossible for the seeker from the West to understand the "way to be" in the East, because it was counterintuitive for them.

This unusual propensity is demythologized by Mehta when she points out that “Anjuna beach had become to the Indians what the burning *ghats* of Banaras to the foreigners, mostly a place to watch others lose their dignity” (Mehta175). Hirsch, while referring to the formation of metanarratives says that, “[...] to assume that *any* cultural environment is homogeneous, even on the very abstract level at which literary histories conducted, is to make an assumption about human communities which experience contradicts” (Hirsch 252). That, however, is what spiritual myths about the East that were created and maintained within a desperate culture, unsure of itself did. Flux and change are rendered improbable in this frame of reference in which the rigidity of a mythic discourse generates outlook. Within the existential outlook self-interrogation is an intertextual enterprise. It is “an ethic of action and self-commitment” (Sartre 360). The self of the individual is where the search for “the truth” rests. The frustrated ego, however, cannot assume the answer within itself and thus seeks something beyond itself. An encounter with Eastern philosophy of self-realisation was troublesome to say the least as, “[a] valid interpretation is one that represents an authentic realisation of meaning through one’s own perspective, or through that of one’s time and culture. That practical aim of perspectivism can be expressed in positive terms as an attempt to replace the meaningless criterion of correctness with the presumably meaningful criterion of authenticity” (Hirsch 255). In the text when a Western student is asked by the guru to meditate over his dual sexuality he moves towards homosexuality. Nuns are targeted as part of the so-called *tantric* process of salvation through sex. The gurus appreciate their self-restraint but ridicule them by saying that they were cowards as they retreated from sex without realizing how it felt like. Allured by such provocative arguments, some nuns gave into the *āśramas* where they get first-hand experience of sleeping with men. Christian men break the ultimate taboo by sleeping with a nun. They remained oblivious of the crisis that brought them to their “promised” land. “The Westerner,” thus finds “the dialectics of history less fascinating than the endless opportunities of narcissism provided by the wisdom of the East” (Mehta102). “The white clients believe that the guru has remedy to their panacea whereas the neo-sanyasis at the ashram, in order to enjoy the reputation of being the “thinking man’s guru” readily offer a variety of spiritual stimulants to their disciples” (Singh, 245). Also, since “[...] what is commonly circulated by it is not “truth” but representations” (Said 21) the existential flux remains intact because of the external viewpoint from which the Westerner tries to locate the method to “know the self.” The process of dismantling and challenging such representations, manoeuvring as community ideology, can be called demythologization. It can be interpreted, thus, that the ethics of self-

commitment that existentialism propagates depends on the realisation that one's self is not deterministic and is devoid of ideology that creates perspective. This problematic is mentioned by Hirsch when he says, "The problem is certainly a grave one. If all interpretation is constituted by the interpreter's own cultural categories, how can we possibly understand meanings that are constituted by different cultural categories?" (Hirsch 256). This is precisely the problem for the western seeker. When faced with the question of transcendence he fails to understand *Nirvāṇa* as lived-out in the East. Cultural subjectivity, however, is acquired from an innate prospective able to endorse an infinite amount of acculturated systems of categorization. The mythical discourse on *Nirvāṇa* proceeds from the capacity of all individuals to imagine himself/herself other than he/she is, to comprehend in himself/herself an "Other" human, cultural and existential possibility. The existential position thus, is, that "[t]he Other is indispensable to my existence, and equally so to any knowledge I can have of myself" (Sartre 361). Meaning does not have an existence beyond the categories through which it is created. "Every act of interpretation involves, therefore, at least two perspectives, that of the author and that of the interpreter" (Hirsch 257). For someone arriving in India, the act of interpreting *Nirvāṇa* involved an understanding of "inter-subjectivity" (Sartre 361). Sartre wants to establish that there subsists a human "universality of *condition*" (Sartre 362), and that this universal condition informs seeking of self-knowledge. Mehta clearly states that "[a] sanyasi in India is half way to being a saint, a man who has renounced the world to seek the truth, a renunciation that is social as well as physical. His vows are not significantly different from those who join monasteries in the West- dedication to poverty, chastity and if the sanyasi is a teacher, obedience" (Mehta103). The discourse of myth-formation enables representations to prosper, and Said correctly opines that, "[...] never has there been such a thing as a pure, or unconditional, Orient [...]" (Said 23).

One who seeks *Nirvāṇa* cannot do so from the viewpoint of magic. In that scenario the excursion to the East will become fruitless. The purpose of knowledge has two shades as elucidated in the text: the Orient that is representative of the land from where *Nirvāṇa* calls, and *Nirvāṇa* itself, which is contiguous apparently with the Orient. The text maintains the tautology of the far-flung subject gazing upon the enchanting object. A German mother becomes emotional while stating: "My daughter is called Rani [...] the night she was born in Goa my friend and his lady had a daughter in Los Angeles and they called her Rani. We have such close Kārma" (Mehta 100). The vision of the seeker is skewed by an assortment of myths that further aggravate the perilous condition. There was indifference in the attitude

of the *gurus* towards the believers. The matriarch of an āśrama said, “These people want toys. They are fascinated by sex and violence. So *Bhagwan* gives them games and riddles” (Mehta 38). The seekers had to live a grimy life of drifters or return to their native lands and submit themselves to treatment in mental asylums after their traumatic experience in their eastern quest for fulfilment. The perspective of the subjective-consciousness and the demythologized quest for *Nirvāna* are indistinguishable. Such a human textuality can be regarded *as* world and self, *as* the depiction of a world in relation to a self at work with other selves and engendering this representation. However, this can also be seen *in* the world and self, all mixed up in an “intertextuality” (Spivak 495-96). The text enquires the roles the concepts of discourse and demythologization play with regard to the seeker and the seeking.

Conclusion

Kārma Cola examines of the existential problem of the “self” and the discourse of *Nirvāna*. It is laden with myths formed by deterministic ideas. At one point in the text the Swiss remarks that the Germans were terrifying because they went to the Himālayas and strived to be superman. Evidently it is allusion to a kind of psychotic fear of the seekers. Therefore, before accusing the corruption of the gurus, they should blame their own existential escapism. Goldberg rightly mentions that, “The ideas and practices that shape the human soul are not like spicy dish that can be altered in the kitchen with impunity. If we are careless in our adaptation, the nuanced principles of Vedanta can easily get contaminated, and the practices of Yoga can lose their efficacy (Goldberg, 24).

On one occasion when a *guru* attempted to train the seekers the idea of free love and asked them to come out off their dormant desires, they interpreted the words literally and a young girl hurried to him at one night asking him, “Take me lover! I’m yours” (Mehta 149). One *guru* goes so far as to manoeuvre the concepts given by Carl Jung and Freud thus: “There is no sin but self-loathing. The self is God. If you loathe your body, you loathe yourself. Go towards your body, go toward your desire, and then go past them. The death of desire is the birth of Atman” (Mehta 149).

The seeker from the West who wanted to fulfil his sexual fantasies read it accordingly. It happened because of their unawareness of the ethos that informs the ethic of self-doubt. What Gita Mehta presents in her journalistic study is not a post-colonial struggle between the Orient and the Occident. Neither is it an expression of the dichotomy between the esoteric East and the consumerist West. Rather, it is a study of a transaction between two halves of the globe. It is an analysis of

the transformation of India's culture along the lines of the West; the effort of the émigrés who arrive in India with their seeking and the disappointment they feel at not making it. "The Indian guru is presented as harbouring sexual proclivities, but on the whole the gurus as well as the disciples are held responsible as both in their pursuit of escapism not only indulge in corrupt practices but also destroy themselves (Singh 246).

This study addresses all of the above as well as the strife that exists between old and new points of view. In order to arrive at a synthesis, regularized knowledge systems that remain unchallenged need to be demythologized a new frontier of existential outlook needs to emerge. *Nirvāṇa* and its seeking is situated within the socio-political fabric of determination, signification and perception. Any and all effort to pursue such a course of inquiry needs a thorough understanding of the preconceptions that inform such quests and what it means to be existential.

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Archibald Forder's "Going Native" and the Arabs

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Abstract This paper rediscovers Archibald Forder as a forgotten American Orientalist, who is surprisingly left out of account by postcolonial critics. Forder's travel books record his life, travel experiences, and missionary works in Trans-Jordan between the years 1891 and 1920. This paper illuminates how Forder's depictions of the Arabs and "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. While Said (1978) iterates the Western negative representations of the Orient, Bhabha (1994) theorizes the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer. In building on Said's monolithic discourse, this paper argues that Forder's postcolonial discourse oscillates between positive and negative portrayals of the Arabs. Similarly, in reframing Bhabha's theory of the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer, this paper explains how a colonizer goes native. In so doing, this essay analyzes Forder's ambivalence and "going native" in terms of his adoption of Arabic food manners, and transliterations of specific Arabic words that focus on his identification with Bedouin dress and specific social practices in *With the Arabs in Tent and Town*; *Ventures among the Arabs in Desert, Tent, and Town*; and *In Brigands' Hands and Turkish Prisons 1914-1918*.

Key words "Going Native"; Ambivalence; the Arabs; Bedouin Costume

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Introduction

Archibald Forder (1863-1920) is an American Orientalist, who is still forgotten for inexplicable reasons. His travel accounts of his experiences in the Middle East, especially in Jordan, from 1891 to 1920, are *sine qua non* for Orientalists, historians, folklorists, and anthropologists, among others, since they depict the local customs, beliefs, and myths of the Arabs, especially Jordanians. There is an urgent need to rediscover this forgotten American traveler who has sojourned in the Middle East for a long period of time. During his missionary work and sojourns in Kerak, Moab, Jerusalem, and the great peninsula of Arabia, he has undergone several risky adventures during which he has disguised as a Bedouin. Therefore, he has to employ certain strategies that enable him to go native in order to escape attention, danger, among others. Although he despises and assumes an ambivalent position towards the Arabs, he tries to learn Arabic and to imitate local ways of dress, food, travel, and habitation. It is important to find out whether his "going Bedouin," so to speak, demonstrates a defense mechanism, a real fascination with Bedouins' outlook and lifestyle, or a mere desire for assimilation or harmonizing with it.

It is surprising how this traveler has been left out of account by postcolonial critics such as Edward Said (1978, 1993), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Rana Kabbani (1994). He is even ignored by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs' *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (2007), Alfred Bendixen and Judith Hamera's *The Cambridge Companion to American Travel Writing* (2009), and Brian Yothers' *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing, 1790-1876*. It does

not suffice that only two sources acknowledge his significance. *The Cambridge Chronicle* depicts him as follows:

Archibald Forder, for thirteen years a missionary among the Arabs, will speak, tomorrow evening, in the North Avenue Baptist church. Mr. Forder is a remarkable man and has passed through thrilling experiences. His work is regarded as one of the most noteworthy in the annals of modern missions. He will appear in Arab costume. (15 Apr. 1905, 4)

The above excerpt unveils the significance of Forder as an American traveller, whose travel books contribute to the discourse of disguised Western travellers and their missionary works in Islamic lands. It celebrates his heroic missionary and notable evangelizing efforts during consecutive treacherous travels across the Great Peninsula of Arabia. Similarly, Mathews describes Forder as a courageous Christian hero for his heroic adventures in the Middle East:

He was dressed as an Arab, with a long scarf wrapped about his head and on the top the black rope of twisted goats' hair that the Arab puts on when he becomes a man. [...] The father [...] was going out from Jerusalem for hundreds of miles into the sun and the thirst of the desert, to the land of the fiercest Arabs—Moslems whose religion tells them that they must kill the infidel Christians. It was difficult to tear himself from his wife and his children and go out to face death in the desert. But he had come out here to carry to the Arab the story of Jesus Christ, who Himself had died on a Cross outside this very city. (261)

In particular, this paper illuminates how Forder's depictions of the Arabs and "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. While Said (1978) iterates the Western negative representations of the Orient, Bhabha (1994) theorizes the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer. In building on Said's monolithic discourse, this paper argues that Forder's postcolonial discourse oscillates between positive and negative portrayals of the Arabs. Similarly, in reframing Bhabha's theory of the colonized's mimicry of the colonizer, this paper explains how a colonizer goes native. In so doing, this essay analyzes Forder's ambivalence and "going native" in terms of his adoption of Arabic food manners, and transliterations of specific Arabic words that focus on his identification with Bedouin dress and specific social practices in *With the Arabs in Tent and Town*

(Henceforth: *With the Arabs*); *Ventures among the Arabs in Desert, Tent, and Town* (Henceforth: *Ventures*); and *In Brigands' Hands and Turkish Prisons 1914-1918* (Henceforth: *In Brigands' Hands*).

As a point of departure, it is not insignificant to direct readers' attention to Forder's life and works. Archibald Forder (1863- c. 1920) was an American missionary, traveler, writer, and photographer. At the age of eight, he joined a crowded meeting in Salisbury, where Robert Moffat talked about his travels in Africa. Since then he had been obsessed with travelling to foreign lands. In 1888 he read in a magazine about missionary work in Kerak beyond the River Jordan—in Moab among the Arabs—where a young married man was needed. Forder and his wife journeyed to the Arabian Desert on Thursday September 3, 1891. Upon reaching Jaffa, the port of Southern Palestine, they were welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby, the founders of the missionary work in Kerak. Forder and his wife went on a four-day journey by camel to Kerak through the city of Jerusalem on September 30, 1891. After his wife's death on May 7, 1892, Forder continued his work there till 1896. He then left and travelled through America to secure support for an attempt to penetrate Central Arabia with the first effort to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ there. On December 13, 1900, he made his fourth evangelizing journey into the heart of the Arabian Desert to reach some parts of the regions beyond Moab and Edom. From the December of 1900 to the March of 1901, Forder travelled trying to disseminate Gospel literature and preach in Bedouin tents and Arab towns across north-central Arabia. Leaving behind his second wife and three children in Jerusalem, Forder set off his journey towards the town of the Jowf, the most important and largest town in Northern Arabia.

Forder's travel books record his life, travel experiences, and missionary works in Trans-Jordan between the years 1891 and 1920. *With the Arabs* records his first travel and missionary work, life, and experiences in Moab and Edom, and the first missionary journey into Arabia from the north. This epistolary book depicts the manners and customs of the East. *Ventures* is an enlarged version of *With the Arabs*. It records Forder's life story for thirteen years amongst the Ishmaelites of Moab, Edom, and the great peninsula of Arabia. It recounts his largely unsuccessful attempts to enter Arabia for missionary work. Forder (1905) notes that this book is a "simple record of ventures just as they occurred, a transcript of personal experiences and beliefs. It is sent forth to what I believe is a sympathetic public" (Forder v). *In Brigands' Hands* tells the author's adventures and life imprisonment experiences in

Turkish prisons in Damascus during the years of the First World War.¹

Ambivalent Depictions of the Arabs

Forder's accounts of travel display his ambivalent attitudes towards the Arabs. He depicts them as exotic, violent, aggressive, restless, primitive, and uncivilized. They are renowned for their lawlessness in the sense that lack of law means lack of regulations that control their behaviours and social practices. Because their lawlessness accounts for their restlessness and insecurity, they in fact do not trust anybody especially uninvited foreigners. They are always in great need of various weapons (such as long curved daggers, long spears, revolvers, rifles, and pistols) in order to defend and protect themselves. These weapons indicate the great danger they go through and the harsh environment against which they should struggle. It is thus no surprise to say that they live in a state of what might be phrased social anarchy, resulting in their tendency to rob, plunder, and even murder as Forder iterates in his three books under discussion. What shocks him is the fact that murder becomes so natural and mechanic in the sense that the Arabs can kill easily and for no significant reasons. This makes his adventures so risky. For instance, he is attacked by a man, armed with a long spear and a revolver. That man says: "God has given me my opportunity; now I will kill you and throw your body into a pit, and no one will know where you are or what has come of you" (*Ventures* 90, *With the Arabs* 182). Forder's depiction of this man in this way shows his mercilessness, violence, and above all primitiveness.

Another aspect of Arabs' primitiveness is their medical superstitions. Forder offers a very gloomy picture of the medical practices in Kerak. The two predominately medical ways of curing are fire and blood taking. Consider how he describes them in the following passage:

They could not understand why, for a bad headache, they should have medicine given them to drink. Fire, and blood taking, with a few dangerous drugs, are the remedies for everything among the Arabs. To wash a wound and allow it air or drainage was madness, even sin, on my part; they would plaster it with filth and exclude air, and thus, instead of improving matters, make them far worse. (*Ventures*, 78; *With the Arabs* 226)

In the lines quoted above, Forder criticizes these treatments as cruel, dangerous,

¹ *Petra: Perea: Phoenicia* is an illustrated book on Petra and other Jordanian districts. Because this fourth book offers merely historical information on those districts without referring to the local colours of the Arabs, this study excludes it.

violent, primitive, and ineffective. Further, Forder's implicit point is how Arab patients are very ignorant and gullible for they trust old men and women who profess these uncivilized, primitive medical ways. Another instance of uncivilized treatment is not less significant. Forder is shocked by the cruel way of removing a man's tooth. He says: "I saw a man being held down by four or five others. One was leaning over him and doing something to the fellow's mouth. I was told the man stretched on the floor had the toothache and had come to the blacksmith to have it taken out using the pinchers, which get hold of several teeth and part of his tongue" (*Ventures* 32-3). This treatment is inhumane and uncivilized. As a civilized person, Forder describes himself as the saving alternative to the cruel Arabs. After he uses his forceps, the sick, who recovers, throws it and exclaims, "O sun, take the tooth of a donkey and give me the tooth of a gazelle" (*Ventures* 33-4). This exclamation is of significance on metaphorical and mythical levels. Metaphorically, the man whose tooth is removed dehumanizes himself. Mythically, this Arab unknowingly thinks that the sun is a god, who can answer his prayer. This belief echoes worshipping sun which was very popular in the East.

These depictions are in tune with post-colonial assessments of Western negative stereotypes of the Orient as the savage, primitive, uncivilized, irrational, and violent other. Western civilization perceives itself as the more civilized. Westerners tend to imagine that they are completely different from people in other cultures. Forder's emphatic and explicit belief in the preeminence of Europe and the Europeans as the centre of civilization places more emphasis on European superiority and condescension, and European patronizing attitude towards the Arabs. In supporting this, Said (1978: 7) argues that the notion of 'otherness' is "a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans [...] the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." Said (1978: 96) further mentions that the Orient was often considered as 'primitive' or 'backward', 'unchanging' and 'timeless' in contrast to the 'modern', 'developing', and 'civilised' West. In this sense, Said (1993 xii) emphasizes that the West thinks: "'they' [the Orientals] were not like 'us', and for that reason deserved to be ruled." Like Said, Kabbani (1994 5-6) suggests that the Orient is perceived as the "Other." She emphasizes that the imperialist justified his ruling of the Orient because he saw its people as "violent, and incapable of self-government." Westerners consider themselves as the superior part of the human race and therefore dominated the Orient in the sometimes self-deluding guise of civilizing and enlightening the so-called primitives. Said (1978 xvi) emphasizes that the imperial mission, according to Western imperialism, was and is "to enlighten,

civilize, bring order” to the so-called primitives. Like Said, Kabbani (1994 5-6) suggests that Western narratives of the Orient portray the colonizer not as “exploiter, but as enlightener. He was not seeking mere profit, but was fulfilling his duty to his Maker and his sovereign, whilst aiding those less fortunate to rise toward his lofty level. This was the white man’s burden, that reputable colonial malaise, that sanctioned the subjugating of entire continents.”

However, it can be said that Forder’s depictions of the Arabs are unstable in the sense that they are a medley of both positive and negative stereotypes. This sense of instability is what makes Forder different from other Orientalists. Forder, in spite of his gloomy depictions of the Arabs, celebrates a bright side of the Arabs. He is fascinated by other quintessential features which might classify them as “the Noble Savages.”¹ To begin with, Forder depicts their hospitality as one of the most outstanding traits of the Arabs. They are willing to offer the travelers and their guests the best of what they have such as bread, dates, eggs, meat, tea, milk, and coffee. For example, the universal drink of entertainment is coffee, which bears social import. Forder admires the favourite way of expressing the hospitality of an Arab host by saying: “the coffee is always on the fire” (*In Brigands’ Hands* 107). This statement indicates the endlessness and timelessness of their hospitality. Coffee, which plays a major role in Arabic culture, is a symbol of hospitality and safe sojourn. It is the first thing the Arabs offer to their guests. Similarly, Forder is impressed by their warm reception and their food. He elaborates on the way the Arabs receive him in Kerak. A Keraki welcomes him, puts plenty of rugs for him to lie on, and then tells his wife to make a big fire in order to warm and dry him. Next he brings him a fowl, some salt, onions, baked bread, and coffee with sugar and milk.

Interestingly, although Forder admires the hospitality of the Arabs, he expresses their uncivilized nature which he sets against Western civilization. While celebrating their hospitality, he considers Western civilization as the standard from which the others cannot detach themselves. In other words, the colonized other is shaped through the colonizer. For instance, he implicitly attributes the hospitality of the host mentioned above to being exposed to “a little of European ways and manners” (*Ventures* 40-1; *With the Arabs* 41). Similarly, although he is fascinated by the social import of the coffee explained above, he foregrounds that the coffee-pot, in which the Arabs make coffee, is the only civilized thing they possess (*Ventures* 56; *With the Arabs* 73). Interestingly, he classifies the Arabs as uncivilized, who have deviated from the Western standard. Forder justifies the Arabs’ abstinence

1 For more details on this concept, see Ter Ellingson’s *The Myth of the Noble Savage*.

from intoxicating drink as "a proof that civilization, with its curses as well as its blessings, has not yet reached that people" (*In Brigands' Hands* 108-9). Said (1978: 1-2) puts it simply: "[T]he Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." He iterates (1978: 3): "It also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self." In following Said, Carrier (1996 2) emphasizes: "'The Orient', then, is an example of what Kenneth Burke calls contextual or dialectical definition: 'To tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else. This idea of locating, or placing, is implicit in our very word for definition itself.'"

By the same token, Forder is preoccupied with other Arabian things. He is fascinated by the Keraki boys' ability to speak English. In Kerak, he meets many lads who can speak English. However, because of this knowledge of English, Forder emphasizes that they become quite civilized and well-behaved. In the same vein, Forder foregrounds that the Arabs are very lovely, friendly, and sympathetic. They respect and love his wife. Over the death of Forder's wife in 1892, the Arabs become broken-hearted and show him great kindness in those days of darkness and sorrow. Many sheiks participate in the funeral and thus shed tears when they have buried her. After the burial those same men address Forder, "You must not think of leaving our country now. Having buried your dead in our midst, you have become a son of the land; we are now brothers, so do not go away" (*Ventures* 44-5). Such positive depictions of the Arabs might pave the way for his "going native" process.

"Going Native"

As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998: 115) point out, "going native" deals with "partaking of native rituals and the adoption and even enjoyment of the practice of local customs such as food." This process of "going native" is not only notable in Forder's partaking of native attire but also in Forder's curious (yet ambivalent) sharing of native food and adopting native eating manners. It is worth examining Forder's repeated references to consuming, cooking, and preparing Arabic food. His depictions of Arabic food and drink disclose his ambivalent attitude that oscillates between aversion and admiration of Arabic food. During his sojourn in the village of Kaf, a town in Arabia, Forder is provided supper which is "served up in a large iron pot" (*Ventures* 181; *With the Arabs* 123). With no least knowledge of the served food, Forder finds it tastily pleasing: "I ate my share, not knowing what it was, and even now have no notion of what I supped. All I know is, that it was very hot, slimy, greasy, and tasty, the latter making it appetizing" (*Ventures* 182; *With the*

Arabs 123). One might suggest that Forder's depiction of Arabic food is "constructed around an ambivalence" (to use Bhabha's phrase (1994: 86)) which has made him an ambivalent and confused traveller notably demonstrated by his confused attitude towards the appearance and appetisingness of Arabic food. Forder's disgust of having the food is overwhelmed by its overt tastefulness. He has to suppress his disgusted feeling (evoked by describing it as "slimy and greasy") towards the food to find it paradoxically appetising and appealing.

Forder does not hesitate to imitate, share, or even enjoy food that is "unknown" to him partly to save himself from starving. His willingness to consume and enjoy "unknown" food is imbued with fear and insecurity. In addition, he imitates the traditional habit by sitting down on the ground while eating as he mentions, "I sat down by the large round bowl, and, being hungry, ate and enjoyed an unknown mixture, conveying it to my mouth with my fingers in place of spoon or fork, things evidently unknown in those parts. Having seen the others partake of the same food, I knew there was no harm in the dish" (*Ventures* 192; *With the Arabs* 132). Eating with one's hands might be considered ill-mannered and primitive from a Western perspective. This manner of eating (in Forder's eyes) is considered uncivilized. However, he renounces Western table manners and adopts Arabic ones such as eating food with hands rather than with cutlery like spoons and forks with which he expresses great satisfaction. He displays his ability to accommodate his new life among the Arabs as he gradually "got accustomed to the rough-and-ready life and could eat almost anything they set before me provided I did not see it prepared" (*Ventures* 50). However, he uncovers willingness to accept and adjust to "the rough-and-ready life" of the Arabs and consume their food provided he does not see it while being prepared. This entails the underlying ambivalence and slippiness found in Forder's going native that is caught between aversion and admiration. The fact that his consumption of Arabic food is conditioned by assuring the others are eating the same food reveals a troubled attitude towards the Other's trustfulness and honesty. While Said (1978) iterates the idea of fixing, repeating, and borrowing stereotypes throughout history, Bhabha (1994) contends that though the stereotype is perceived to be fixed, as in Said's *Orientalism*, it is not as fixed as Said has argued but it is 'ambivalent', embodying fear and desire. This is evident in Forder's mimicry of certain codes connected with food and eating manners which sometimes brings about mockery of the imitated culture. Forder's mimicry of specific social and cultural practices represents a partial copy that mocks its own source. This mimicry brings out mockery of the imitated culture and the imitators' self-realization as unable to replicate the colonizers. In this sense, Robert Young

(1990: 147) argues,

The mimic man, insofar as he is not entirely like the colonizer [...] constitutes only a partial representation of him: far from being reassured, the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself. Thus the familiar, transported to distant parts, becomes uncannily transformed, the imitation subverts the identity of that which is being represented, and the relation of power, if not altogether reversed, certainly begins to vacillate [...] The surveilling eye is suddenly confronted with a returning gaze of otherness and finds that its mastery, its sameness, is undone.

Forder is sometimes compelled to go native. Consider what Forder says:

On one occasion I had only received a tiny share, not enough to nearly satisfy me, so remembering I had in my saddle-bag the remains of what was given me in Orman, sixteen days before, I took it out, intending to eat it. It was musty and as hard as a stone. Knowing the dislike the Arab has of seeing bread thrown away, I determined to soak it and give it to my camel to eat. I did this, thinking no one had seen me. Next morning, bread was made and divided out as usual, but none was given to me. I did not ask for any; that would be contrary to custom [...] Some of the men saw me soak the musty remains and give it to my camel, and they thought me wasteful. (*Ventures* 202; *With the Arabs* 140)

This excerpt shows that Forder's living experiences among the Arabs contribute to his awareness and respect for specific social practices and religious beliefs. Forder is aware that the Arabs dislike throwing off bread, so he avoids being viewed as extravagant and recklessly wasteful Christian. This adoption of Arabic religious values ironically turns into a form of mockery when his conduct is misguided and poorly conceived by his native companions who refuse to give him any bread the next day because of his wastefulness inferred from giving that piece of bread to his animal. This incident points out how going native includes an element of mockery. Further, Forder's respect for Arabic religious beliefs highlights the mockery that underlies his going native and ambivalence. In addition, his mimicry as a defense mechanism uncovers the vulnerability of his situation in a perilous environment. To put it simply, his avoidance of wasting bread means sparing himself from possible harm or danger. This action allows him to go native in order to be accepted. For the

Arabs, bread is associated with holiness and sacredness and the act of throwing it away is not only treated as a sign of indulgence or wastefulness but significantly as extremely anti-religious. Moreover, on some occasions, Forder seems to well perceive the luxurious and superior quality of bread for the Arabs. During his stay in Jowf, constant attention is given by Forder to learning about kinds of local food including many varieties of dates, fruits, crops of grain, and bread. Forder states, “Bread is a luxury and is only eaten by the head men of the place, and that not every day” (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). This representation of bread as “a luxury” asserts the extent to which bread is valued and respected by the Arabs.

Forder goes native for protective purposes and for avoidance of observation. During his travel, accompanied by a group of Bedouins, across the desert in Jowf, he awakens one day morning to the need of drinking some water. He is not allowed to drink after being seen rinsing his face with a very little amount of water. In describing this as “another unforgivable mistake,” he says:

[O]n picking up my kettle to put into my saddle-bag, I found it still had a drop of water in it, not more than a teacupful. Here was a chance for a wash, so filling my hand I rinsed my face and hands, glad to be able to remove the top layer of dust and dirt. I thought no one had seen me, but alas, eyes were on me, and on asking for a drink later on I was told, “If you use water for washing, you cannot have it for drinking” (*Ventures* 204; *With the Arabs* 142).

The Arabs consider water an extremely valuable liquid and treat it with great attention and caution for religious reasons and for its “scarcity [...] in the desert” (*Ventures*, 138). Forder furthermore explains that “much of the fighting among the Bedouin and Arabs [...] is caused by quarrelling over water” (*Ventures* 200; *With the Arabs* 139). His failed attempt to secretly use water for rinsing off his face demonstrates his misunderstanding which reveals a lack of curiosity around local customs.

At this stage, it is important to turn to Forder’s transliterations of specific Arabic words that echo his negotiation and exploration of Bedouin costume. The first stage of his learning Arabic starts with this Arabic question, *ma hatha?* (English: What is that?), and it proceeds to learning “names of many things” in order to be able to discourse with the Arabs. Forder attempts to learn and read Arabic often with the boys he teaches at school, and he asserts that he “get[s] on very well with the talking but [does not] seem to make much progress with the written language” (*Ventures* 50; *With the Arabs* 54). He uses two translation

strategies: transliteration and definition. Forder's use of these two techniques together indicates not lack of English equivalents, but his admiration of the Arabic language as he repeatedly says (*Ventures* 32, 50, 106). Furthermore, transliterating two Arabic words that designate dress, among other Arabic words, is an example of linguistic defamiliarization whose function is to direct English-language readers to the signification of those Arabic words. For instance, he transliterates 'abbas,' and defines it as cloaks, made by men (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). The Arabic word, 'abba, (plural: 'abee) means a cloak that an Arab uses to cover his whole body and which is loosen around his chest. In the same vein, he transliterates "mereer," and defines it as the double rope that a Bedouin dons on his head (*Ventures* 208; *With the Arabs* 140). The Arabic words, mereer and 'abba, signify manhood, social eminence, honour, and esteem. Forder himself admires not only the way these parts of dress are made, but also their social signification. Forder, nevertheless, shows that an Arabic dress is a token of commitment, humanity, and kindness. He, for instance, admires how an Arab friend uses his dress ('abba,' pipe, big boots and headdress) as a pledge of his return. This Arab has protected Forder and his sister from about forty men (*Ventures* 42, 43; *With the Arabs*, 43). Similarly, while it is raining, a man, who afterwards proves a true friend, takes off his large " 'abba," or cloak, and puts it over him to keep him dry (*Ventures* 40). Interestingly, Forder focuses on 'abba and mereer because they are gender-oriented. They are made and worn by men. This patriarchy of dress is foregrounded due to the gender of the traveller and the patriarchy of the Bedouin society as depicted in the collective consciousness of the West.

To recap, 'abba and mereer bear a social import in the sense that a prominent person, like a sheik of his tribe, has to wear it. This is the role Forder attempts to play when he goes back home. Forder craves authority, and, thus, adopts the social role of a Bedouin sheik. In his original environment, he considers himself a sheik, who must be obeyed and respected. He becomes the sheik in charge of everything, and the sheik whom other members of the society should obey. He asks a clergyman to allow him to wear his Bedouin costume because it will cover all outward shortcomings on his part. It is in his own natural (Western) environment that Forder's clerical (Western) dress acts as a symbol of reluctance and rejection of Western social codes of dress in the sense that his mimicry of Bedouin dress is not only a resemblance but also a threat to the full presence of his Western dress. For instance, when in Chicago, Forder is reluctant to wear Episcopal robes which cast doubts on his Church connection (*In Brigands' Hands* 173, 74). Similarly, when in Toronto, Forder is asked to don his Bedouin dress while telling his audience about

Bedouins and their life-style. Instead, one might suggest that Forder's mimicry of Bedouin dress can be seen as a means of persuasion. In so doing, he makes an explicit connection between Bedouins and pure Christianity: "it was Biblical; it was the dress of the people of Bible lands" (*In Brigands' Hands* 185).

However, it can be argued that Forder's Bedouin dress reveals his ambiguous stance towards the Arabs. In donning like an Arab, Forder is almost, but not quite, an Arab, to use Bhabha's sense. He points out that his Bedouin dress identifies him with the Arabs in that it makes him indiscernible among many Arabs because he is "almost the same." Consider how he describes a situation:

The word "soldiers" came from many lips, and hardly had they been uttered when six Turkish cavalry in charge of an officer rode up in front of the long black tent. They dismounted, tied their horses to the tent ropes or stakes, and came into the tent. "Where is that traveller you have here?" they asked in sharp tones, and for a moment received no reply from my astonished arid frightened friends, and as I was dressed in native costume I was not discernible among the many. I rose and went toward the surly officer, telling him that I was the one he was requiring for, and asked him what he wanted. He told me that he had been sent to arrest me and take me to the Turkish governor in a place about thirty miles distant. (*Ventures*, 144)

Those lines quoted above can be interpreted in two contradictory ways. They reveal Forder's adaptation as a Bedouin – an adaptation that causes the Turkish soldiers' inability to recognize him. However, he intends to describe himself different from the "frightened" Arabs in that he fearlessly unveils his identity to the soldiers. This behaviour can be interpreted as an act of implicit disavowal of Bedouins.

However, Forder foregrounds an Oriental attitude towards his Western costume. For instance, in Kerak Forder describes some Arabs' responses to his Western dress as follows: "we reached about 5 P.M., very tired, but could not get free of the women and children for some time. Directly you are in the tents they swarm round you, and some would feel my dress and boots, and some my face, I suppose to see if I was flesh and blood like themselves" (*Ventures* 57; *With the Arabs* 74). This way of portraying such a strange response to Forder's native costume might emphasize Bhabha's notion that the Other is an "erratic, eccentric, accidental" one who cannot aspire to have full human presence (Bhabha 1994: 80). Furthermore, it can be said that for Arabs, to be real (or fully present), is to be mocked; to be not real (or partially present), is to be authentic. When Forder wears

his Western costume (as an act of keeping his own original identity), he becomes the source of Arabs' mockery, interest, and curiosity. Elsewhere, when Forder wears Bedouin 'abba and mereer (as his photographs show), he is considered a Bedouin-like friend (*Ventures*, Title 85; *With the Arabs*, frontispiece).

Forder demonstrates some familiarity and understanding of certain Arabic expressions which are related in one way or another to Bedouin social manners and codes. Forder uses those expressions as a postcolonial strategy which reveals his adaptation and integration into Bedouin culture. Forder transliterates what is called in Arabic *al-basmallah* in two ways: *Bismallah/Bismillah* (English: In the Name of Allah). *Bismallah* is an Arabic phrase commonly used as a concise form of the full Arabic *al-Basmalah* phrase: *Bisim Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*. It is narrated that the Prophet said it is one of Allah's Names, between this name and Allah's Greatest Name is between the whiteness of the eye and its blackness. Every Quranic *surah* (chapter) must begin with it. Its recitation protects from Satan and proves the way for success (Ibn Kathir 26-33). According to Forder, two Bedouins use it in two different situations. When Johar invites Forder to a meal, he says "Bismillah," then starts eating (*Ventures* 220; *With the Arabs* 156). It is a tradition in Islam to recite it before it because this prevents Satan from sharing what you eat. Similarly, Nimr, another Bedouin, uses it before he starts choosing a stone from the bag. In so doing, he wishes not to choose the charcoal marked stone in order not to be killed (*In Brigands' Hands* 261). It is this phrase that Forder adopts at the beginning of *Ventures*: "With a 'Bismallah' 'In the name of God' led off, hoping that before daybreak we would be housed in the old city, only twenty-five or thirty miles ahead" (*Ventures* 1). In using this expression, Forder wishes success for his journey and his book as well.

Forder reveals his attitude towards the Arabic naming system which does not conform to the English system. One important way of naming persons is *filius nomina* (Arabic: *kunya*). It is common in Arab societies to informally address a person by the name of his eldest son or daughter, preceded by the Arabic word, *Abu*, meaning father, if the person is a man, or preceded by *Umm*, meaning mother, if the person is a woman. This is a social sign of paying homage, respect, honour, heredity, and fertility. The first reference to such an incident is found in Forder's *Ventures*, which includes a photo of Mrs. Forder, a Scotchwoman, who has lived in the Orient for many years, and who is able to speak Arabic fluently. Therefore, she is much beloved by the Arabs, who change her name to "Umm Jerius" (English: mother of George), in honor of her first child whose name is George (*Ventures*

107).¹ For the Arabs, she has been given a new and full presence, and a new identity for she is identified with them by adapting and adopting their language, dress, and mores. In *Ventures* and *In Brigands' Hands*, Forder accepts this custom of Arabic naming, when he is given the name of "Aboo Jerius," meaning father of George. It is honorable and respectful for the father to be affiliated with the name of oldest son (*In Brigands' Hands* 126). Based on the portrayal of Mrs. Forder's successful adoption of the Arabs' life, language, dress, and mores, Forder is seen a replica of Mrs. Forder. However, there is a disavowal of this identification with the Arabs and the full presence of Forder by an Arab and Mrs. Forder by Forder himself. Mrs. Forder is identified as a Scottish woman, and Forder as an English man (*In Brigands' Hands* 107, 151).

It is reasonable to suggest that this *kunya*, given to Forder by the Arabs, and which he does not deny, is a defense mechanism, which he uses for protective purposes. On many occasions, Forder is identified as a friend or a brother of the Arabs whenever he is addressed as Aboo Jerius. When he is caught by thieves, a man shouts, "Don't be afraid, Aboo Jerius, we are your friends and will not harm you," and then turning to the crowd and cried at the top of his voice, "Leave him; it is Aboo Jerius, our friend; I will kill anyone that harms him let him alone [...] he is our friend, and has been for years; we will do him no harm" (*In Brigands' Hands*, 134). Another man, on another occasion, says, "Aboo Jerius, your friends are our friends; go and tell them that no harm will come to them; they need not fear [...] Aboo Jerius is our brother, and has been our friend for years; nothing shall harm you; lie down and sleep" (*In Brigands' Hands*, 135). These examples show that Forder has been transformed to and identified with the Arabs. Thus, he enjoys security, safety, and protection.

Conclusion

In summary, it is argued that Forder's depictions of the Arabs and his "going native" process are in tune with an inherent ambivalence and contradiction of the colonial discourse. His accounts of travel display his ambivalent attitudes towards the Arabs. His depictions of the Arabs are unstable in the sense that they are a medley of both positive and negative stereotypes. This sense of instability is what makes him different from other Orientalists. He depicts them as exotic, violent, aggressive, restless, primitive, and uncivilized. They are renowned for their lawlessness in the sense that lack of law means lack of regulations that control their behaviours

1 There is a mistranslation and mistransliteration of the Arabic name. The correct transliteration is *jurais*, which means a type of plants with white flowers or it is a diminutive form of *jaras*, which means a ring.

and social practices. In spite of his gloomy depictions of the Arabs, he celebrates a bright side of the Arabs. He is fascinated by other quintessential features which might classify them as "the Noble Savages." Further, he goes native by imitating specific social codes, including speaking, dressing, and eating. His "going native" charts the transformation of a White colonizer into a figure potentially disturbing and dangerous who bears partial or virtual similarity to his Arab model. This process of "going native" is not solely prompted by his mere fascination but also by his attentiveness to the perilous environment of his living. His partaking of Arabic food and drink is an act of mimicking the Arabs for the purpose of protection and defense. In addition, his transliterations of specific Arabic words echo his negotiation and exploration of Bedouin costume. Similarly, he demonstrates some familiarity and understanding of certain Arabic expressions which are related in one way or another to Bedouin social manners and codes. These instances of "going native" show how Forder has been transformed to and identified with the Arabs.

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Changes to Literary Ethics of Tanka Poets on the Korean Peninsula during the Japanese Colonial Era

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Abstract This paper focuses on ethical changes among Tanka(短歌) poets in Joseon literary circles on the Korean peninsula during the Japanese colonial era. Joseon Japanese poetical literary circles lasted some 40 years from the beginning of the 1900s until Japan's defeat, changing across periods. The main characteristic of these circles was the emergence of local Joseon forms of Tanka between late 1920s to the 1930, at the height of the Joseon literary circles. This was the period when the exploration of Joseon was carried out by the Tanka poets, with multiple publications of Tanka magazines issuing collections of Joseon-related Tanka. However, in the 1930s, the number of Joseon Japanese poetical circles shrank, and Tanka became identified with national literature in the lead-up to the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. These events influenced both the flow of the Joseon literary circles and the creative beliefs in individual Tanka poets. Based on these observations, this paper focuses on Ryo Michihisa, a leading Tanka poet in Joseon literary circles. The analysis of Tanka reveals a wavering of individual ethical and creative beliefs towards the war that manifested between local aesthetics in Joseon literary circles and national literature.

Key words Colonial Japan literature; Tanka poets; Joseon literary circles; ethical beliefs; local aesthetics

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Introduction

The Japanese-Language literature of colonial Korea can be classified into that of Joseon natives and that of Japanese residents in Joseon. The Korean academic community has severely criticized the Japanese-language literature of the native people of Joseon as being pro-Japanese in terms of authors’ stance on nationalism and the nation-state. The 1940s, which were rife with pro-Japanese literature, have been labeled “the shameful dark ages of Joseon literature” (Chul Baek 399), and remained unmentioned for approximately twenty years after the liberation of Korea. In the 1960s, systematic research into pro-Japanese literature began with the publication of Jongkuk Im’s *Pro-Japanese Literature*¹. Although since the year 2000 the Korean literary world has re-evaluated the Japanese-language literature of Joseon natives as dual-language literature, ethical criticism of pro-Japanese literature and its exponents from a nationalist perspective is still a major feature in criticism of Korea’s colonial literature.

Another area within the Japanese-Language literature in colonial Korea was the writing of Japanese residents in Joseon, the academic analysis of which began in earnest in 2000. A lack of earlier scholarly research on this group indicates that the Japanese residents in Joseon residing in the Korean peninsula across the Japanese colonial era had been overlooked as diasporic individuals. However, recent studies have shed light on various media across different individuals throughout this process. It was found that “traditional Japanese poetry forms such as Haiku(俳句), Tanka(短歌) and Senryu(川柳) were mainstream flows in literature” (Inkyung Um 273). Among these forms, the genre of Tanka (31 syllables Japanese short poetry) has been the focus of various research interests as a large volume of poetry had been uncovered. These include works on the flows and characteristics

1 Jongkuk Im, *Pro-Japanese Literature*. Seoul: Pyeong hwa Publication, 1966.

that are specific to the era. However, a wholly ignored area of discussion has been the creative attitude and literary worldview of the Tanka poets, who were the main creators of Tanka by Japanese residents in Joseon. In pro-Japanese literature, often found in the Japanese literature by Joseon writers as identified in Korean literary circles, the issue of ethics within creativity is not restricted to Joseon residents. Some of the leading Tanka poets, who attempted to express the uniqueness of Joseon and its local culture through their activities on the Korean peninsula, made headway into the national canon during the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. The key questions relate to the provenance of the changes in the creative attitude for Japanese Tanka poets in Joseon and how these poets' pro-war Tanka should be evaluated.

The current paper evaluates the trends of Tanka poetry in the Japanese colonial era within the Japanese literature by Japanese residents in Joseon and attempts to identify the route by which the Joseon literary circles reached the canon of national literature. This study also focuses on the question of how the issue of literary ethics can be applied to the Tanka poets who represented the Joseon literary circles and identifies the trends of change in the creative attitudes of Japanese residents in Joseon who were active in the Korean peninsula during the colonial era. By identifying these literary expressions and ethical issues of the Japanese residents in Joseon, this paper attempts to construct a novel overview of literary activities of Japanese-language writers active on the Korean peninsula.

From the 1920s to Mid-1930s: Trends in Joseon Literary Circles in the Korean Peninsula and the Pursuit for the Local Culture of Joseon

Military rule, which became the governing system of choice of the Japanese Governor-General of Korea after Japan's forced annexation of the country in 1910, was heavily criticized for triggering the March First Independence Movement in 1919. At that time, Japanese residents in Joseon often proposed the 'cultureless Joseon' theory, claiming that there was no unique traditional culture in Joseon. However, the March First Independence Movement, inspired by the principle of national self-determination of communities around the world, exerted a tremendous influence on Korean politics, society, and culture, leading to the Japanese Governor-General of Korea's claim to advocate the recognition of Korean culture after the 1920s.¹

It is difficult to assess the specific aspects, broad effects, and limits of this cultural politics, but in regard to literary activities, it is notable that a plethora

1 See Byeongho Jung, 28

of newspapers and magazines were published and distributed in this period. In this social and cultural atmosphere, specialized magazines in the diverse fields of traditional Japanese-language poetry such as Tanka, Haiku, and Senryu were founded, and numerous works were created and enjoyed a welcoming reception. Traditional Japanese-language poets in Korea had been involved in creating such work since the early 20th century. Later in the 1920s, they came to clearly realize their responsibility for studying and understanding Joseon culture. Evidence of this understanding can be found in Korea's premier Tanka magazine, *Shinjin* (眞人).

Launched in 1923 *Shinjin* began publishing in the mid-twenties special issues such as “*A Review of Local Literary Circles*” (1926.1), “*A Study of Joseon Folk Songs*” (1927.1), and “*The Nature of Joseon*” (1929.7), in order to promote literary circles on the Korean Peninsula. Through these special issues, *Shinjin* actively sought a leading role and position in Joseon literary circles by studying the ancient songs and literature of Joseon in collaboration with Joseon literary scholars:

There should be deep and great folk songs especially in a place like Joseon.... It would be better to have more magazines of distinct local color. It is therefore great to have *Shinjin* on the Joseon peninsula. (Tatsuo Nagata 9,10)

People who live in such an environment are born with the arts inside them... The artistic effects (of Joseon) that we can see are completely different from those of China. Also, the land, which has a long history, has created a distinctive form from the inside of unrecognized folk arts. (Noritaka Asakawa 48)

A review of articles published in these special issues of *Shinjin* reveals that the magazine's focus on traditional Joseon folk songs was an attempt to discover the local characteristics of Joseon. *Shinjin* also discussed the artistic value of Joseon folk songs and folk art. It firmly rejected the discriminatory perception that Joseon culture was merely a carbon copy of Chinese culture, which was the core content of the ‘cultureless Joseon’ theory established prior to the 1910s. *Shinjin* emphasized the fact that unique literature can be born in its own native environment and culture. It is clear that Japanese writers of poetry in Joseon attempted to discover the unique cultural particularities of Joseon based on its distinctive cultural climate and folklore. In addition, as indicated in a plethora of examples, Tanka works that fully internalized Joseon culture emerged.

I am unskilled at throwing sticks for a game of yut, but I finally won.

I threw the sticks with a shout but it was risky one. Gae was there, not geol.

(Morio Ichiyama 1928.4, 6)

As a car stopped in front of a *Jumak*, the smell of fermented *kimchi* wafted out.

There is an eomeoni reading a letter while swaying her body. It is as if she is keeping a rhythm. (Morio Ichiyama 1928.5, 6)

These Tanka works dealt with the Joseon cultural climate and contained Korean words that only existed in Joseon, such as “Yut(Korean traditional game),” “Jumak(酒 幕)(Korean traditional bar),” “Eomeoni(鮮 女)(mother),” “Kimchi(Korean traditional food),” and “Geol(杰)/Gae(開)(different outcomes of a game of Yut).” These demonstrate Shinjin poets’ attempts to realize directly the native stories of Joseon through Tanka works. During the mid-1930s, large-scale anthologies that illustrated the particularities of and attachment to Joseon in Tanka began to be published.

The mid-1930s saw the publication of the largest-scale works, *Tanka anthology about the Joseon local color* (朝鮮風土歌集) and *Tanka anthology of Joseon* (歌集 朝鮮), which were both major oeuvres expressing a love for Joseon and its uniqueness in Tanka. *Tanka anthology about the Joseon local color* is a particularly important historical data source that shows the production of large volumes of Tanka as the Joseon literary circles focused on the local color of Joseon.

Published by *Shinjin* in 1934, *Tanka anthology about the Joseon local color* exclusively selected Tanka on the themes of nature and the scenic spots and places of Joseon. Befitting its title as the largest book of songs in the Korean peninsula, it carries 533 themes and some 3,000 Tankas, divided into sections on the themes of wind and land, plants, animals, and the provinces, as well as a “miscellaneous” chapter and an appendix. The wind and land section, made up of 123 themes of Tanka, is composed of poems on local subjects across all of Joseon, and thus differs from other books of songs in the same era. “The comment of Joseon’s local color words(朝鮮地方色語解註)” section in the appendix features explanations on the subjects local to Joseon that appear frequently in Tanka and of the pronouns found in Korean, which helps to transfer the understanding of the local color of Joseon in a lively manner. Planned and published under the subject of local colors of Joseon, *Tanka anthology about the Joseon local color* is a quintessential book of songs reflecting the characteristics of foreign literary groups that peaked in 1930s.

The Japanese Tanka poets in Joseon actively responded to the local discourse in other Japanese colonies such as Taiwan and Manchuria between 1920 and 1930s,

and chose local Joseon aesthetics as the literary method and subject. In other words, Japanese Tanka poets in Joseon during this era were a force that led the depiction of uniqueness and aesthetic impressions internalized in the Joseon culture. Particularly, the Japanese Tanka poets in Joseon surrounding *Shinjin* were attracted by the locality and culture of Joseon in the 1920s and 1930s and focused their literary efforts on determining and localizing the local essence of Joseon.

From the Late 1930s to 1945: Tanka as National Literature

The attitude and logic of Tanka poets in Joseon, who spearheaded the expression of the local Joseon culture through Tanka since 1920, changed significantly after the 1930s as the country moved towards war. As the war intensified in the 1940s, magazine publication was threatened due to the shortage of paper and other basic goods. Thus, despite competition and conflict, the government permitted the publication of only one representative magazine for each genre.

In 1941, all literary magazines published on the Korean peninsula were discontinued, and a consolidation of magazines by genre took place. After the complete consolidation of magazines, the Association of Joseon Haiku Writers first published its organ *Korean washing stick*(水砧) in July 1941. After the genre of Tanka was assimilated into the genre of poetry(詩歌), and the National Poetry Federation and magazine *The national poetry*(國民詩歌) were founded. Thus *The national poetry* was the only poetry magazine published on the Korean Peninsula at the end of the period of Japanese rule.

Aside from its publishing of the monthly *The national poetry*, the national Poetry Publishing Office also intermittently published poetry works, and three such works are confirmed. First is *The anthology of national poetry* (國民詩歌集), a March 1942 special edition, and this is the first poetry work by the National Poetry Federation for the purpose of offering “thanks” and “condolences” to the “dear soldiers of the army and navy, shining under their bright achievements.” The second is *The whole interpret of one hundred patriotic Tankas by one hundred poets*(愛國百人一首全釋) by Akira Sueda, published in March 1943. True to the goals of the Japanese Literature Patriotic Association, it consists of a simple annotated text to distribute the is *One hundred patriotic Tankas by one hundred poets*(愛國百人一首), widely distributed and memorized across Japan, which constituted a truly appropriate attempt for raising the spirits during the Greater East Asia War. Third is the November 1943 edition of the National Poetry Publishing Office, which appears to be its last work, titled *The anthology of national poetry*. This is a problematic resource that reveals the final form and path of Japanese poetry in the

Korean peninsula nearing the end of the Japanese colonial era.¹ The final trends of Japanese poetry literature enjoyed in the Korean peninsula can be examined through the six existing editions of *National Poetry* between 1941 and 1942, as well as the three short works explained above that were published by the National Poetry Publishing Office. As the Japanese war was extremely quick in its progression, the poetry works are primarily focused on the status of war, leading to the introduction of a theory of poetry based on national literature. The poetry and critiques during this era largely emphasized the status of war and the home front with the rationale of “patriotism” for Japan. As seen above, the majority of Tanka poems found throughout this era were either reports of wartime events or home front-focused and seemingly in support of the war at home. One other characteristic of the wartime Tanka is the effect of a warring Japan engaging in overseas conquests being linked to justified action backed by a long history since the era of the gods. The Tanka poets preceded writers of other genres in their aim to express the local culture of Joseon through the love, support, and understanding of Joseon. Yet they appeared to be freeriding on national literature that justified the history of the marching Japanese army with the intensifying of war. During this period, Japanese residents in Joseon and Joseon literary scholars all reverted to national poetry, and joined the path of national literature, or Pro-Japanese Literature.

By this time, the presence of Joseon literary circles had largely disappeared. However, even during the April 1943 introduction of the Joseon Literature Scholars Patriotic Association, the last literary association of its type, Tanka, Haiku and Senryu were three of the six areas of focus, along with literature, critique and poetry. The inclusion of these three forms indicates that the Japanese traditional poetry of Tanka, Haiku and Senryu made up half of Joseon literature. As such, nearing the end of the Japanese colonial era, Tanka established itself as a pillar of literature, and played a role in wartime propaganda.

As soon as they started to fight, they destroyed the US fleets in Pearl Harbor and were gone. (Ichio Imura 11)

Crack units advanced to the US mainland 8300 kilometers to the east, to South Africa 1200 kilometers to the west, to Australia 9200 kilometers south. (Nobuko Saiganji 76)

1 Inkyung Um, “*National Poetry: The Final Chapter of Japanese Poetry on the Korean Peninsula*,” *Border Crossings: The Journal of Japanese-Language Literature Studies* 3 (June 2016).

As this was not a situation to behave casually, the *mompe*-clad troops were diligent. (Ryo Michihisa 1941, 68)

When Jinmu Tenno crossed the sea for a conquest, there was no place for Aki and Kibi.

Though it was the era of the gods and there were forces of gods, they did not mean to cross the sea at once. (Ryo Michihisa 1941, 51)

As shown in the above example, the majority of Tanka found throughout this era were either apparent reports of contemporary wartime events, or homefront-focused poems that appeared to support the war indirectly at home. One other characteristic of the wartime Tanka as the effect of Japan warring overseas and engaging in overseas conquests being linked to as a justified action backed by the longtime history since the era of the gods. The Tanka poets, who have sought to express the local color of Joseon through the love, support and understanding of Joseon that preceded other genres, appear as if they are freeriding on national literature that justifies the history of the marching Japanese army with the intensifying of war. During this period, Japanese residents in Joseon and Joseon literary scholars all revert to National Poetry and join each other on the path of national literature or Pro-Japanese Literature.

At that point, the presence of Joseon literary circles largely disappeared. However, even during the introduction of the Joseon Literature Scholars Patriotic Association, which was the last literary association of its type, in April 1943, Tanka, Haiku and Senryu made up the other sections totaling 6 along with literature, critique and poetry. This indicates that the Japanese traditional poetry of Tanka, Haiku and Senryu have made up half of Joseon literature. As such, nearing the end of the Japanese colonial era, Tanka established itself as a pillar of literature, and plays the role of wartime propaganda.

Trends of Change in Literary Ethics for Tanka Poets

Among these trends of Joseon literary circles and crowds of Tanka poets, leading Tanka poets began to appear. Individuals with influence over Joseon literary circles included Morio Ichiyama(市山盛雄), Chihiro Momose(百瀬千尋), Akira Sueda(末田晃), and Ryo Michihisa(道久良). They were well-respected throughout the Joseon literary circles. They had either returned to Japan by the 1930s, had left no works that notably embraced the local color of Joseon, or had few surviving works from the 1940s, making it difficult to observe the trends in

Tanka creation on the Korean peninsula. However, Michihisa was active throughout the 1920s to the 40s, radically expressing the muddle, or the corruption, of literary ethics throughout the literary circles. Michihisa had been active on *Shinjin*, the Tanka publication, since the 1920s. Even after the major activities of *Shinjin* had moved to Japan in the 1930s, he was responsible for collecting the Tanka of Joseon and later independently founded *The Morning* (朝), a professional Tanka magazine, on his own. Moreover, in 1941, he was selected to be the publisher and editor of National Poetry, at the head of the branch of the Joseon Literary Scholars Patriotic Association in 1943, and the director for the overall organization. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider Michihisa as the quintessential Tanka poet on the Korean peninsula. An analysis of his work would enable understanding of the ethical changes of literary scholars whose attraction towards Joseon was shaken by war in the late Japanese colonial era.

Michihisa embraced Joseon from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s and helped Ichiyama Morio to lead the Joseon literary circles. In the 1920s, Michihisa continued to produce a series of commentaries on Joseon historical and unearthed relics, and published the essay “*Tanka of Joseon*” three times over a long period, in which he said “As *Shinjin* is a Joseon-inspired magazine, studying Joseon historical relics is highly valuable” (Ryo Michihisa, 1927:31).

I have one question. Still I have the question. Is it really possible to recite the poetry of Joseon in our language? I ask this question. Is it possible for the poetry of Joseon that I mentioned here to exist in reality? If I can recite Joseon poetry, it would seem that one possibility of the birth of poetry of Joseon can only come from a place where one loves the soil of Joseon and its people. (Ryo Michihisa, 1929, *Shinjin* vol.7, ed.1 :65)

When we sincerely love Joseon and are determined to die in Joseon, I think the taste of Joseon that the works contain will be sensed more vividly. (Ryo Michihisa 1937, *Shinjin* vol.15, ed.2 :33)

Over some ten years, Michihisa sincerely pondered whether the ‘true song of Joseon’ was possible in Japanese and emphasized his love for Joseon. This creative worldview of Michihisa continued throughout the 1930s. Evidence of this worldview is demonstrated in his statement of how the “true song of Joseon being “the Tanka of someone who loves Joseon and who is ready to bury their bones in Joseon”(Ryo Michihisa, 1937: 33), and his themes from the nature and culture of Joseon throughout his time at *Shinjin*. Particularly, the expression of being ‘ready to bury

their bones in Joseon' speaks to the extent of his love and passion for Joseon. He also edited a book of songs titled *Joseon* in 1937. The foreword of this book contains Michihisa's words that "the song of Joseon must be born from the nature of Joseon and an endless love for humankind. Care not for living overseas. The true path of our lives is left herein" (Ryo Michihisa, 1937: 33). The individuals that embraced the colonial Joseon with love and affection without any political viewpoint not only included Michihisa, but also Ichiyama Morio, "the pioneer of Joseon literary circles" (Gyotai Hosoi 12). A poet who fell in love with the people and the land of the peninsula, Ichiyama looked to Joseon as a second home. His book *Korea Hometown* (韓郷), and his Tanka herein were critiqued as follows "as he loves Joseon as his second home and cares for it, his choice of subjects are very familiar, and spots the truly sensitive situations that cannot be seen in a casual traveler" (*Shinjin*: 1931:79). However, with Ichiyama returning to Japan in early 1930s, Michihisa led the Tanka poems that were founded on a love for Joseon. Examples of Michihisa's Tanka that demonstrate his love for Joseon are shown below.

Somewhere in your daughter's face, light with hope, I feel a new Joseon coming.

The autumn sky is light and clear, this peace that I feel naturally in the mountains.
(Ryo Michihisa 1929, 124, 125)

In the garden, the tower of Silla, this tower is smooth like the lighting of the autumn.

While nothing is spectacular, this organized look, it makes us stay.
(Ryo Michihisa 1937, 52)

Loving the depth, akin to that is natural to the white vases of Joseon.
(Ryo Michihisa 1936, 34)

Various Tanka were left by Michihisa, what is notable among them is his loving gaze on such subjects as the people, nature, towers, and vases of Joseon. Moreover, the Tanka that depict the simplicity and deep beauty of the vases and the old tower of Silla symbolized his Tanka worldview of Joseon. These Tanka from Michihisa were in stark contrast to the opinions of a Joseon lacking in culture that were widespread among the Japanese people. Michihisa embraced the cultures and traditions unique to Joseon and expressed his thoughts towards them.

However, with the outbreak Sino-Japanese War, Michihisa's Tanka worldview

shifted dramatically. He had no choice but to respond to the times, as at the start of the Pacific War, he was placed on the executive board of the Tanka division of the Joseon Literary Scholars Patriotism Association. The books of songs published before *National Poetry* in September 1941 from the late 1930s, including, *The Modern Joseon Tanka Collection*(現代朝鮮短歌集) and *The Holy War*(聖戰) were published entirely by Michihisa himself. The Tanka in this book depict Michihisa's emotions towards war, along with the progression of the war.

The Japanese flag that hangs, which I view in a day that will mark a glorious page in the Japanese history.

The holy war of constructing the new East Asia, we now enter this age.

(Ryo Michihisa 1938, 21,29)

As shown above, *The Holy War* contains Tanka that almost uniformly praise war. These war Tanka were in stark contrast to Michihisa's works from less than a year before, where he published a book called *Joseon*, recognizing the unique culture of Joseon and literary of its cultures and land. Moreover, the Tanka are composed of words that directly portray the war, such as "Imperial Army," "fighter jets," "enemy base," "battle," "all-out attack," "by death," and "destruction," which show the reality of Tanka utilized for war propaganda and as national literature. The shameless beautification of war through words such as "glorious" and "holy" in Michihisa's Tanka reveals a leading example behind the change in the creative attitude of a Japanese literary scholar in Joseon. In this vein, the forced intervention of political logic onto the literary ethics of respecting the uniqueness of Joseon and respect for the local color of Joseon honed by one individual Tanka poet destroyed such ethics; Michihisa succumbed to admitting that he was a tool in Japan's war efforts. Michihisa's Tanka worldview was narrowed to the subject of war with the publication of *The Holy War*. Moreover, he included the following Tanka in *The Anthology of National Poetry*, which he was responsible for editing and publishing:

In the might and beauty of His Highness's army defeating the Southwestern Pacific, there are the citizens.

We are citizens in a country of perpetual history, ruled by a confident emperor.

(Ryo Michihisa 1942, 40)

As shown in the poem above, Michihisa's Tanka works after the 1940s do not depict

the local characteristics of Joseon that he sought in the Joseon literary circles. This disappearance of local color was not limited to the aggressive diction contained in the aforementioned Tanka. Now, Michihisa's Tanka no longer reflected that "literary of the Joseon Tanka is to love the land and the people of Joseon" (Ryo Michihisa, 1929: 65). Particularly, the singling out of "citizens" in his Tanka reveal that Michihisa's Tanka worldview degenerated into national literature. In other words, his love for Joseon was deformed into a love that only gained meaning when Joseon was swallowed by Japan as "citizens" using Japanese in the "nation" of Japan. Moreover, Michihisa placed these words of warning for those familiar with war Tanka at the end of the Japanese colonial era, in his editing commentary of 1943 *The anthology of Joseon poetry* (朝鮮詩歌集).

Literature must undoubtedly strive for victory. However, in the midst of this fierce battle, it can never be forgiven to take a thingism or undoubting attitude. Now, fair judgments would be delivered to simple innovators or free-riders. Our last goal is to follow the single route of the nation of the emperor. I hereby reject all free-riding, simple works from now on. (Ryo Michihisa, 1943: 101)

In this way, Michihisa strongly appealed against the superficial war Tanka that gained popularity through the state of war. Moreover, in his emphasis that everything else is meaningless other than literature focused on war, it is possible to identify a deformed belief of Tanka creation, where the local color that was originally the true form of Tanka is now abandoned in favor of the "single route of the nation of the emperor (天皇)" in the 1940s. Ryo Michihisa can be seen as a quintessential literary scholar whose attitude has changed towards Joseon, which he had originally viewed as the subject of creative ethics.

Conclusion

The focus of this paper is the Tanka poets and Tanka among Japanese residents in Joseon during the Japanese colonial era, an area largely excluded from scholarly discussions of war literature and ethics. First, the Joseon literary circles were diachronically reviewed to identify changing trends in the attitudes of literary creativity and content, from the 1920s to Japan's defeat. The results indicated that the main issue between the 1920s to mid-1930s, in which Joseon literary circles were in a period of stability and at their height, was the local culture of Joseon during this period. The Tanka poets brandished their internal love for Joseon, expressing these thoughts through Tanka. This behavior contradicts with the early

Japanese colonial rule where the culture of Joseon was oppressed and destroyed, and drew interest from literary circles in Japan. Moreover, essays and critiques focusing on the local color, uniqueness and specificity of Japan were largely produced during this period. However, entering the late 1930s, this independent creativity shown by Joseon literary circles transformed into national literature.

Ryo Michihisa, in particular, sang Tanka that were surprisingly in line with the war, almost making readers doubt the fact that he had once led the Joseon literary circles in terms of the subject of local culture in the 1930s. The usage of war vocabulary and aggressive expressions within Tanka depict a change in Michihisa's creative tendencies. However, a more important point is his reference in his Tanka to the people of Japan as citizens of the Imperial, denoting a change in his perception towards Japan. These changes indicate that the issue of creative attitude and ethics, such as wartime collaboration and national literature during the colonial era, were not issues confined to Japanese literary scholars in Japan or Joseon writers on the Korean peninsula.

Just as Joseon scholars had approached pro-Japanese literature from a literary ethics perspective, Japan also placed the responsibilities of war on the literary scholars after the war. As the literary scholars led the collaboration and beautification of war, abusing their literary status, the blame led the literary scholars to engage in self-criticism. Just as discussions on the responsibilities and classifications of pro-Japanese literature continue in Korea today, it is similarly difficult to simply process the issue of the responsibilities of war and literary ethics for literary scholars. Michihisa, for example, had been the managing editor of the Tanka section of *The Anthology of National Poetry*, which is possibly the last known Japanese-language poetry in the Korean peninsula. In *The anthology of national poetry*, displaying the theme of student soldiers as the present state of war, the face of war poetry is clear, riddled with national literature and pro-Japanese sentiment. However, although the majority of the essay deals with the agreement with war and beautification of warriors, there are many Joseon-inspired subjects. Even the fact that it was titled *The Anthology of National Poetry* indicates that Joseon could not be entirely abandoned.

Therefore, the discussion on the ethical attitude of writers, created by the merging of the subjects of literature and ethics along with the Japanese colonial era, requires further clarification through the analysis of other resources. The present study recommends an investigation of the contention between local Joseon culture and national literature as well as the contradiction in the internal logic characteristic of literature in the late Japanese colonial era in genres other than Tanka.

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