

Tibet Beyond Black and White:
Racial Formations and Transnational Collusions

Christina Michelle Kleisath

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington
2012

Reading Committee:

Stevan Harrell, Chair

David Allen

Jonathan Warren

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
Department of Anthropology

University of Washington

Abstract

Tibet Beyond Black and White:
Racial Formations and Transnational Collusions

Christina Michelle Kleisath

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Stevan Harrell, Professor of Anthropology
Department of Anthropology

This doctoral project utilizes tools shaped by feminist theorists, critical race theorists, and anthropologists to trace the transnational circuits of power and privilege at work in relationships that form in and around Tibet. With a key focus on race and whiteness, this project investigates the history and current manifestations of white racial formations as they relate to Tibet from three interconnected ideological contexts: the United States, The People's Republic of China, and Tibet in exile. In exploring the issue of whiteness in Tibet, I endeavor to expand conversations about Tibet beyond the figurative "black and white" framework of Tibetan versus Han Chinese. I also hope to complicate the issue of whiteness beyond the "Black and White" binary that often constricts discussions of race. This dissertation is formed around a simple argument: that *whiteness matters in Tibet*, and that to understand how it matters, we must pay careful attention to sociohistorical racial projects from a variety of diverse contexts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: Introduction	1
A Ritual to Read to Each Other	1
The U.S. as Empire	8
Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy	10
A Theory of Racial Formation	11
2: Methodology and Methods	18
Racism and Anthropology	18
Methodology of the Oppressed	21
The Methodology Exemplified	28
Paula Moya's Realist Identity	31
White Realist Identity	35
Field Methods	36
1. Interviews	36
2. Surveys	39
3. Participant Observation	40
Critical Discourse Analysis	42
3: Stop Saying Western, Start Saying White	45
Transforming the Dominant Vocabulary of Tibet Studies	45
What is White?	46
Why Don't We Talk about Whiteness in Scholarship on Tibet?	49
The Curious Case of the Word "Western"	51
Literature Analysis	53
Who is "Seen" as Western?	53
Uneven Racialization	56
Erasure: Part One	61
Erasure: Part Two	65
Closing Thoughts	67
4: Whiteness and "The Tibet Question": A Case Study	70
Angry Snow Lions and Naïve Dragons	72
The Third Party in Contemporary Tibet	79
Pro-Tibet or Anti-Chinese?	82
Challenging the "Western" Variable in The Tibet Question	84
Closing Thoughts	90
5: Whiteness in China Studies	93
Tibet as "Internal" or Non-Existent	93
China Studies and Orientalism	94
Surviving Orientalism	96
The Politics of White Skin in China Studies	102
Critical Han Studies and Post-Race Orientalism	108

Closing Thoughts	115
6: Whiteness and Racial Formation in the Context of P.R. China	117
Transnational Collusions: a Textbook Case	118
Race and China in Chinese History	123
Dikötter and His Critics	128
Who was Kung Fu Fighting?	131
Race and China's Fifty Six Minority Ethnicities/Nationalities	134
Transnational Collusions Revisited	145
7: Manifestations of White Supremacy in China and Tibet	148
Racialized Images of Non-Asian People of Color	149
Racialized Images of White People	154
White Supremacy and Han Dominance	163
8: Whiteness and Racial Formation in the Context of Tibet	172
Historical and Present Day Tibetan Critiques of White Supremacy	174
The Meaning of རྩེ་རྒྱལ་བ།	180
The Strategic Embrace of White Supremacy	185
Advocating or Taking Advantage?	188
9: Conclusion	196
List of Works Cited	199

1: Introduction

A Ritual to Read to Each Other

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood
storming out to play through the broken dyke.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider—
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give—yes or no, or maybe—
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

William Stafford

This dissertation project begins with a stream of memories: moments which asserted themselves as clear signals that a fragile sequence had been broken. The elephants had wandered, and a breaking line had discouraged some of us into sleep. *An e-mail, a paycheck, a doctor's visit, a story, and a question.*

The e-mail arrived in March of 2009. It was from a young white American woman preparing for a Masters in Health Sciences program in international health, looking for an organization in which she could complete a required 3-6 month internship. She wrote to me in regards to the four years (2003-2007) I had spent working with Tibetan women in མེ་ལིང་།¹ (Ziling) in the Tibetan region of Amdo, (西宁市, 青海省, 中国²) to form Shem, a non-governmental women's organization whose mission is to "Empower Tibetan women through small scale development."

Her e-mail queried:

Do you have any thoughts on whether there might be any possibility for me to work with Shem? I'm sure it would be an amazing learning experience for me and hopefully I would be able to make some valuable contributions to the communities and work at Shem (email to author, March 12, 2009).

At first glance, the e-mail appeared quite benign, a simple request for information that I might normally reply to without much thought. When I received the request, I had been working on a PhD in Anthropology at the University of Washington—6,025 miles away from Shem women's group—for two years, and I was in no position to answer any request regarding the organization's needs for interns. I drafted a response: "Dear Friend, you must be mistaken, for I no longer work in Ziling, please redirect your request to the Shem Staff in Tibet", but before I could hit

¹Zi-ling Using Turrell Wylie's transliteration system for Tibetan (1959).

² Xining, Qinghai, People's Republic of China

the send button, I remembered all of the foreign donors, aid workers, government representatives and Samaritans who had come through ཟླ་ལིང་། during my stay there.

They often wanted to hear about Shem and often requested a private dinner with me, exclusive of my Tibetan colleagues. I remembered one U.S. donor's comment that he wouldn't trust our organization if it didn't have a "Westerner" like me behind it, and my American colleague's assertion that an NGO without a "Westerner" at its helm was doomed to failure. I deleted my draft, and the young woman's query sat unanswered. Perhaps this particular e-mail was merely a case of misinformation, or the result of an outdated organizational website. Regardless, the e-mail was part of a larger communication pattern that I could not ignore: Why was my power and knowledge constantly overestimated while that of my Tibetan colleagues constantly under-acknowledged and underestimated? What made me, and not my Tibetan colleagues, an "expert" on development in Tibet?

The longer this e-mail sat in my inbox, the more it disturbed me. Lhamotso and Lhamo, the Tibetan women with whom I co-founded the organization, had been leading the organization for some time. They had worked at the organization since its inception, overseeing more than 60 development projects, hiring new staff, and managing the sizeable annual budget for more than three years. I had made significant contributions to the organization at its founding, but by almost any standard of measurement, the executive director Lhamotso was the expert on the organization. She and the other Shem directors were much better positioned to answer questions about the organization's needs for volunteers. Nevertheless, I continued to receive e-mails calling on my expertise on a monthly basis.

While working as Shem’s co-founder and director from 2005-2007, I had become comfortable with the “expert status” conferred to me on a number of topics that I was now qualified to speak on, to, and about; topics ranging from Tibetan women’s rights to development policy in the Third World. My status as an “expert” on the workings of Shem made some sense to me when I was in ཟླ་ལིང་།. After all, I had co-founded the organization, and was working there on a daily basis. This understanding of myself was shored up by affirmations on all sides. Local people and expatriates congratulated me on my work, looked up to me, and asked for my advice. I woke up most mornings with a feeling of deep satisfaction. I was doing “good work”, which was widely appreciated. My knowledge and efforts were taken seriously, and I was fighting for a just cause. What was there to question?

Shortly after I arrived back home to the United States, disquieting memories began to assert themselves into my rosy recollections of my years in ཟླ་ལིང་།. I woke up one night during my first year in graduate school remembering a knock on the door of my apartment in ཟླ་ལིང་།. It was Tom³, one of my Tibetan students. Teaching at Qinghai Normal University was my official job. “Tom” was given his English name on a small strip of paper within the first week of arriving at our program. He was working on a degree at the University where I taught, and acting as the unofficial treasurer for our English Training Program. He had brought over my salary for six months: 41,250 RMB, the equivalent of 5,000 U.S. dollars at that time. He placed the money on my living room table, stacking each pile of 1,000 RMB into an elegant

³ This is a pseudonym.

crisscrossed design that soon engulfed the surface of the table. He asked me to double check the amount. He stood beside me as I counted, and I nervously wondered what he must think of my exorbitant salary. What would his family think if they saw the 41 piles of thousands of RMB stacked up on my living room table? Would they approve? Feel shocked? I tried to find something to do with myself as he confirmed the amount, and I went into the kitchen for hot tea. He said he didn't want any. He asked me to sign a small sheet of paper acknowledging my receipt of salary. He smiled, and left.

Another memory came to me one day while walking past Hall health, the student medical clinic at the University of Washington, where I was doing my graduate work. I remembered being sick in ཟླ་ལྷོད། Stabbing pain in my stomach. I called my Chinese language tutor, and asked if she had time. Could she come to the hospital with me? My Chinese was not good enough to navigate the system. Together, we waited on blue plastic chairs, and wound through line after line of coughing, miserable people. Doctors examined me, and handed a lab sample to my tutor, who took it upstairs for analysis. "An infection", she translated for me. "You will need to take injections". I paid for my medicine at the lab, and she carried five large glass bottles of antibiotics into the taxicab that I called to the sidewalk. Sick people stood in a line at the bus stop behind us. When we arrived at the small clinic near my apartment, she explained my illness to the pharmacist there, and he began the IV for my five hour-long session of injections. That evening, my tutor needed to join her family for dinner. It had been almost six hours since I had called her for help. She held my hand warmly, smiled, and left.

After returning to the United States, I begin to look at such memories in a new light. Was there something I had missed in the warm smiles of my student and tutor? What would I see in Tom's eyes if he could hear the way that liberal Seattleites congratulated me on "roughing it" for so many years out in Tibet? How might my tutor feel if she heard that her student, the same one who couldn't go to the doctor alone, had been called a "China studies expert"? Would they be surprised? Disturbed? Or would they warmly congratulate me with a familiar smile? I wasn't sure how to understand what was happening in terms of my own privilege and power, or how to respond to it.

The more that I opened to the discomfoting side of such memories, the more alert I became to the strange situations that I was now encountering in the U.S. Like the elder white woman at the Marin county fundraiser who wanted desperately to hear more about the suffering of Tibetans under Chinese Communist party rule. When I shared with her the hope, strength, and perseverance of the Tibetans with whom I had worked, and the compassion and insight of some of the Han Chinese I had met, she turned the conversation again and again to the suffering Tibetans. It was such a simple story. What was it that made her close her ears to a more complex alternative?

Then there was the Tibetan elder in Seattle, who I introduced to my friend Drolma⁴. Drolma had arrived in Seattle only a week before from Tibet, where she had lived her entire life. After meeting Drolma, The Tibetan elder turned directly to me and asked what the education system was like in Tibet. Taken aback, I told her

⁴ Pseudonym

that Drolma was in a better position to answer her question. Even after hearing from Drolma, she wanted to hear my opinion. What was it that made this Tibetan elder turn to me, a young white woman who had spent only a handful of years in Tibet, to ask questions about the school system there? What made her discount Drolma's expertise on the matter?

An e-mail, a paycheck, a doctor's visit, a story, and a question. This dissertation project is the result of an exploration into the systemic nature of such moments, moments which could be easily found in the lives of any number of the thousands of white people like me with a deep relationship to the place called Tibet. Such moments illuminate the social structures and cultural representations that shape the geography of individual lives.

The phrase "black and white" in the title of this dissertation refers to both figurative and racialized meanings. In exploring the issue of whiteness in Tibet, I endeavor to expand conversations about Tibet beyond the figurative "black and white" framework of Tibetan versus Han Chinese that is commonly employed. In exploring the issue of whiteness in Tibet, I also hope to complicate the issue of whiteness beyond the "Black and white"⁵ binary that often constricts discussions of race.

This doctoral project utilizes tools shaped by feminist theorists, critical race theorists, and anthropologists to trace the transnational circuits of power and privilege at work in relationships that form in and around Tibet. It is my assertion

⁵ The capitalization used here conforms with standard usage for these terms as politicized racial identities, with "Black" appearing in capitals and "white" appearing in lowercase. For more in-depth discussion of the history of the term "white" as a racial identity which appears in the lowercase, please see chapter three.

that race, in its varied formations, shapes the landscape of transnational social geographies, and is also fundamental in delimiting the key landmark industries of transnational development, English teaching, tourism, and academic research that populate these geographies. This project aspires to illuminate the racial formations behind these industries, exploring the genesis and maintenance of relationships between Tibetan and white people from a perspective that focuses critically on whiteness in the context of various national paradigms.

This dissertation is formed around a simple argument: that *whiteness matters in Tibet*, and that to understand how it matters, we must pay careful attention to sociohistorical racial projects from a variety of diverse contexts. In this dissertation, I will investigate the history and current manifestations of racial formations of whiteness as they relate to Tibet from three interconnected ideological contexts: the United States, The People's Republic of China, and Tibet in exile.

The U.S. as Empire

Because two of the vantage points from which I am investigating are commonly accepted as nation-states, and the third—despite being often discounted—has an administration (Central Tibetan Administration) formed around the organizing principles of a nation-state, it is important from the outset that I clarify the framework upon which my theorizing of racial formations is based. In the matter of the United States, I follow Moon Kie-Jung's assertion that "the polity to which the U.S. state has always laid claim in fact, if not in rhetoric, is an empire"

(Jung 2011:3). Jung lays out the ideological difference between the concepts of nation-state and empire-state, underlining the fact that the notion of a nation-state implies a population of citizens which is politically uniform, while an empire-state is hierarchically differentiated, entailing the usurpation of political sovereignty of formerly autonomous territories and the people who live in them. In this dissertation, I follow Jung in constructing my analytical angle not from the vantage point of the state, but from that of the ruled. This means that theoretically I do not envision the United States as a functional or free democracy, but rather as an empire-state which has imposed “equal citizenship” on indigenous peoples as a colonial method of assimilation and control.

Because this project focuses whiteness in the context of complex transnational racial formations, however, the concept of empire-state used here must be grounded in an analysis that extends beyond the colonial paradigm for race. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, I shall conceive of the United States not only as an empire state, but also, in Jung’s words, as “a principal agent, or set of agents, in the field of white supremacy”(11). White supremacy within this framework is not a simple or fixed entity, but rather, an ideology which “comprises a web of crisscrossing discursive and practical ties” that privilege white people on a systemic level (10)⁶.

⁶ Critical Race Theorists and activists use the term “white supremacy” to describe the individual and structural practices associated with whiteness. This definition of white supremacy is as follows: “White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white people and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege” (CWS 1995). This bold terminology is designed to directly counter current practices of silence and invisibility around white privilege.

Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy

To outline this ideology and its impact on Tibetan-white relationships, I will continuously call upon the three-part framework offered by Andrea Smith in her piece “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy”. Here, Smith briefly lays out three interconnected racial logics which work together to support the current forms of white supremacy in the U.S.

According to Smith, the logic of slavery/capitalism renders Black people as “inherently slaveable—as nothing more than property” (Smith 2006:67)” although the forms of slavery may change, from a formal system to the current prison industrial complex, the underlying logic is consistent, and anchors the system of capitalism. According to Smith, while capitalism in the United States ultimately commodifies all workers, it operates on the logic of racial hierarchy, wherein white and Black are placed on opposite sides of the spectrum in terms of worth.

Jung’s concept of empire state complements the second pillar of Smith’s framework, that of genocide/colonialism. In Smith’s words, this logic requires indigenous people to “disappear” so as to justify non-indigenous people’s rightful claim over the land in the act of colonialism. This pillar also enables cultural extraction and appropriation, because non-Indian peoples can more easily imagine themselves as rightful inheritors of indigenous spiritual and cultural practices when the original creators of such practices have conveniently “vanished” (68).

The final pillar of white supremacy discussed by Smith is Orientalism/War. Here, she uses the definition of Orientalism outlined by Edward Said, as a logic

through which “the West”⁷ defines itself as a superior civilization by constructing itself as the opposite of an exotic and inferior “Orient”. In the logic of this framework, the people of “the Orient” are not seen as property, and they are not “disappeared” as in the other two pillars. Instead, they are seen as permanent foreign threats to empire, which justifies a state of constant war.

In asking us to consider three core logics of Slavery/Capitalism, Genocide/Colonialism, and Orientalism/War in the U.S., Smith’s framework allows for a rich analysis of the dominant ideologies of a white supremacist empire state. Importantly, unlike the work of many critical race scholars, Smith’s analysis acknowledges the heteropatriarchal nature of such ideologies, which often shape the three racist pillars of white supremacy in the form of gendered subordination. In order to understand the complex web of factors that shape relationships between Tibetan and white people, all three pillars of white supremacy, and their heteropatriarchal character, must be considered. In other words, we must consider race beyond Black and white⁸.

A Theory of Racial Formation

Because race lies at the center of this dissertation project, it is important to clarify the definition of race that I will be using to shape my analysis. I will build on

⁷ Understood here as white-dominant countries.

⁸ The use of a heteropatriarchal white supremacist empire state framework within this dissertation means that the arguments contained here may not register with those those committed to the ideology of realpolitik, or who may have difficulty seeing the United states as a polity organized by colonial logic. I state this plainly in the hopes of clarifying the imagined audience that I intend to cater to. This imagined audience is one for which native claims to sovereignty within the U.S. make sense. Because this is a study of white people in Tibet, I will not cover in detail the history of the three pillars of white supremacy in the U.S. Rather, I will assume that my audience is curious about, if not sympathetic to, the notion of the U.S. as a heteropatriarchal white supremacist empire state.

the framework put forth by Michael Omi and Howard Winant in *Racial Formation in the United States*. Their theory of racial formation is one which:

Emphasizes the social nature of race, the absence of any essential racial characteristics, the historical flexibility of racial meanings and categories, the conflictual character of race at both the “micro-“ and “macro-social” levels, and the irreducible political aspect of racial dynamics (1994:4).

A racial formation perspective resists epiphenomenalism, and the idea that race can be reduced to an issue of ethnicity, class or nation. Rather than seeing ethnicity, class, and nation as central to the logic of race, Omi and Winant propose these as paradigms through which race is often understood, paradigms which cannot sufficiently explain the complex workings of race when it is considered as central. They spend the first three chapters of their book examining the ways in which the discussion of race in the United States has been framed within these three paradigms, and offer substantial critiques of each.

The ethnicity-based paradigm is one that suggests race as a social category. This paradigm proposes that race is but one among many determinants of group identity. Ethnicity within this paradigm is understood as “the result of a group formation process based on culture and descent” (15). According to Omi and Winant, because the key currents of ethnicity theory have been based in the framework of European (white) ethnicity, these currents “could not appreciate the extent to which racial inequality differed from ethnic inequality”(16). Because of this, the ethnicity-based theory has the tendency to overlook and de-emphasize the unique structural barriers faced by racial minorities in the U.S., and has thus been accused of

encouraging the practice of victim blaming⁹. Omi and Winant outline two problems with the ethnicity approach to race which they name the “bootstraps model” and “they all look alike”. The bootstraps model, they argue, mediates an ethnic group’s success in becoming incorporated into majority society through “norms” that are internal to the group. Hence, if a particular ethnic group does not do well in the larger society, this has to do with this group’s “values”. In addition to framing assimilation as success, this model ignores “all the concrete sociopolitical dynamics within which racial phenomena operate in the U.S.”(21).

The second problem that Omi and Winant discuss is “They all look alike” wherein “blacks” are posed as one ethnic group despite the varying cultural differences that exist among black people. In this model, “blacks” are often compared with groups like “the Irish” or “Mexican Americans”. They point to the racist implications of this model, in which: “whites are seen as variegated in terms of group identities, but blacks ‘all look alike’”(22).

The class-based theory explains race principally in reference to economic processes, and the creation and use of material resources. According to Omi and Winant, because the market relations, stratification, and class conflict approaches contained within class-based theory are all preoccupied with economic interests and processes, they overlook the power of race in social, economic, and political relations. In their section on “class conflict theory”, Omi and Winant challenge

⁹ For more on these critiques, Omi and Winant suggest: Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: harper and Row, 1972); Stanley Lieberson, *A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants Since 1880* (Bekeley: University of California press, 1980); and Alexander Saxton, “Nathan Glazer, Daniel Moynihan, and the cult of ethnicity,” *Amerasia Journal*, vol4, no. 2 (1977); William P. Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* rev. ed. (New York; Vintage, 1976).

Marxist views which regard class divisions as “the fundamental source of exploitation in society”(29). They reveal the varying dimensions of this approach as lacking in their framing of racial dynamics:

As the segmentation theorists have recognized, capitalist interests in profit-maximization and (very importantly) in control of production processes have at times been furthered by “balkanization” of the labor force, at other times by its homogenization. Yet there is little in either the segmentation or the split labor market analyses which comprehends class formation in broad enough terms to suggest a theory of racial dynamics. Race remains an exogenous element to both conceptions.

Hence, although class conflict theory offers valuable approaches to the discussion of power distribution within different contexts, because it consistently frames race as an aspect of class struggle, it provides very limited inquiry into “the sources and contours of racial dynamics”(35).

The nation-based theory of race, as exemplified by the black-nationalism of the 1960s, explains race as a product of colonialism. In distinct contrast to the ethnicity or class paradigms, this approach does not focus on race as a part of a more fundamental aspect of the social order such as class or ethnicity, but instead “emphasizes the relationships among different elements of racial oppression— inequality, political disenfranchisement, territorial and institutional segregation, [and] cultural domination”(37). In this paradigm, national categories are often substituted for racial ones, with lines of distinction being drawn between oppressor and oppressed nations according to racial categories. Hence, there exists a Pan-Africanist emphasis on the unity of all Africans on the continent and within the diaspora. The nation-based paradigm, although useful in its global approach and in its use of a framework *based* on race, is challenged by Omi and Winant as

geographically and historically limited in its analysis of the structure of U.S. race relations. In their words:

While the nation-based account fails to demonstrate the existence of racial minority or colonized 'nations' internal to the U.S. and structurally separated from the majority society, some applications of this paradigm do facilitate comprehensiveness in the study of racial dynamics"(47).

Hence, although this paradigm's sustained focus on race is at times useful, it is incomplete because of its failure to specify exactly what is "national" about racial oppression in the U.S.

After their comprehensive exploration of the means by which race either disappears, or becomes essentialized within the dominant organizing paradigms of ethnicity, class, and nation, Omi and Winant offer their theory of racial formation in the U.S. This theory rests on the following definition of race, which will be used as an anchor in this dissertation:

Race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called 'phenotypes'), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process [italics in original] (55).

Crucial to this definition of race is the process by which different types of human bodies come to acquire and/or lose meaning. Omi and Winant define this process as a racial formation: "the sociohistoric process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed"(55). In considering Tibet "beyond black and white," this dissertation aims to explore the process of white racial formation in the context of Tibet. Following Omi and Winant, it will explore white racial formation as a "process of historically situated *projects* in which human bodies and social

structures are represented and organized” (56), following that, it aims to link white racial formation in the context of Tibet “to the evolution of hegemony, the way in which societ[ies] [are] organized and ruled”(56).

Because I follow Omi and Winant in viewing race not only as a viable and important ontological tool from which to understand a variety of social phenomena, but also as “a matter of both *social structure* and *cultural representation*,” (56) I strive throughout this dissertation to maintain a balance between these two analytical dimensions, while borrowing from both. It seems important then to clarify here that while I acknowledge the value of nation-based theories of race, and I often employ the tools that authors of these theoretical approaches have developed, I agree with Omi, Winant, and a host of other critical race theorists, that they are limited.

Examples of the nation-based theory of race are also provided in the next chapter, as part of what Chela Sandoval has called “revolutionary forms of consciousness in opposition”. Among the theorists mentioned thus far –Jung, Smith, Omi, Winant, and Sandoval— exists a broad theme which will also anchor this dissertation: an acknowledgement of the value and importance of colonialism-focused theories of race, along with a commitment to expanding and complicating them. I have chosen to use the work of these theorists as a guide precisely because, in my opinion, all of them have skillfully and adeptly navigated the space between race as a fixed *essence*, and a mere *illusion*. With “Tibet beyond black and white,” I endeavor to apply such a middle-way approach to an area where—to the best of my knowledge—meaningful dialogue about race does not currently exist. It is my

sincere wish that such an approach can provide a productive context from which to explore the disquieting memories that open this chapter. In thinking through the complex racial projects which have colluded to shape the everyday experiences exemplified by *an e-mail, a paycheck, a doctor's visit, a story, and a question*, I hope to appeal to a remote important region in those who read this offering and provide some clear signals that we can use to navigate when we find ourselves in the dark.

2: Methodology and Methods

A critical feminist approach to race is central to this project. To understand how such an approach interacts with anthropology, it is useful to know what is being responded to and pushed against. In this regard, William Willis' description of anthropology is a useful starting point: "to a considerable extent, anthropology has been the social science that studies dominated colored peoples—and their ancestors—living outside the boundaries of modern white societies" (Willis 1972:123).

In this chapter, I will first look at the anthropology that Willis outlines above, and explore how anthropologists have engaged with the topic of race and racism, then I will outline a critical feminist approach to the study of race, focusing on Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* as a central theoretical text. Next I will explore my own positionality in relation to this methodology, drawing on the work of critical race theorist Paula Moya to lay out a "white realist" approach to the feminist *Methodology of the Oppressed* which I feel is best suited to my project.

Racism and Anthropology

In her review of the history of anthropology as it has related to racism and antiracism, Leith Mullings lays bare anthropology's contradictory heritage around the subject of race. She notes that anthropology is the birthplace of scientific racism, and also home to a significant antiracist tradition, especially after World War II. On the whole, however, Mullings laments that despite the field's incredible potential to interrogate structural racism and unmask the process through which difference is

transformed into inequality, the contribution of anthropologists to the study of racism has been “modest” at best (Mullings 2005:669). She notes that the majority of anthropologists rarely use the term “racism,” and tend to approach the topic of racism obliquely (679). She gives several possible reasons for this hesitation. While a sizable number of physical anthropologists continue to use “biological race” in their work, she focuses her discussion on cultural anthropologists, most of whom reject the notion. After naming race as socially constructed, most of these cultural anthropologists have proceeded to ignore racism (670). Mullings traces this trend to two sources: the weaknesses of Boasian liberalism, and the continued marginalization of people of color/women in our field¹⁰.

The work of Franz Boas and his followers provided the foundation for a powerful mode of antiracist thinking in anthropology, but Mullings and several other anthropologists (Baker 1998, Visweswaran 1998, Willis 1972) argue that Boasian approaches to race misunderstood racism as stemming from ignorance, rather than playing a fundamental role in maintaining an unequal social structure. As such, the focus of much of the work stemming from Boas’ legacy is more on educating whites about “other” races and cultures, and not on historical and structural forces behind racism. As authors such as (Michael K. Brown et al. 2003) have shown, these forces must be reckoned with before equity can become a reality.

¹⁰ Marginalization here is defined not only by numbers, but also by tenure, salary, and division of academic labor. The work of Ralina Joseph is useful here in understanding the ways that white women continue to be marginalized on a structural level in comparison to white men, even when their numbers grow in some disciplines. Joseph also explores the relationship between growing numbers of white women in academia, and the continued marginalization of Women of Color. Although white women have been, and continue to be marginalized when compared with white men, they have also experienced the greatest gains from equal opportunity programs like Affirmative Action. Hence, white women’s marginalization within the academy is best considered within the context of white privilege (Joseph 2009).

A second explanation for the lack of discussion on racism in anthropology can be found in the continued marginalization of the work of people of color and women in anthropology. Much of the work done by social scientists that explicitly focuses on structural inequality has been undertaken by women and men of color and white women, who have been consistently marginalized by the academy. Hence, the work of social theorists in the early part of the twenty first century such as Ella Cara Deloria, Ellen Irene Diggs, Zora Neale Hurston, W.E.B. DuBois, St. Clair Drake, and Matilda Coxe Stevenson which links racism to structures of power, has remained on the margins of the anthropological canon (Lieberman 1997:547). As Louise Lamphere notes, anthropology still suffers from a “disciplinary amnesia” about these important contributions (Lamphere 2004:130) .

Mullings suggests that the new forms of racism that have emerged in response to revolutionary social movements that grew after World War II—forms of racism which “seek to make the social appear natural and ruthless inequality appear as common sense”(679)—are practiced by anthropologists today. In fact, as Harrison (1995) and Visweswaran (1998) have shown, the dominant “colorblind” approach to race, which thwarts in-depth analysis of racism, can trace some origins back to the field of anthropology.

Still, anthropology is host to an incredibly powerful set of tools for analyzing and understanding social structures, and their policies, practices, and procedures. If anthropology is to make the significant contribution to the study of racism that it is uniquely poised to make, then anthropologists must face our history and take a good look at ourselves. We must trace the connection between anthropology’s history and

the fact that anthropology continues to be one of the least racially integrated social science disciplines (Mullings 2005:685). As Louise Lamphere reminds us in her presidential address at the 100th meeting of the American anthropological association, when we take a look at who anthropologists are today, both in our core curriculum and in our departments, we continue to see a field dominated by white men (2004). Given this history, and present reality, what methodology can be engaged by anthropologists interested in generating an alternative future?

Methodology of the Oppressed

To answer this question, I will explore Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* as a text which not only centers the voices of Black, Latina, Native, Third World, Feminist, and Queer theorists, but also brings these into conversation with dominant white theorists to bridge the "theoretical apartheid" that Sandoval has encountered in academia.

In this text, Sandoval interweaves, reworks, and extends the major arguments made over the past half century by social theorists around issues of oppression and struggles for social justice. This complex and nuanced work hinges on three different uses of the term *differential*, a concept central to Sandoval's argument. The different uses of this term are highlighted in the table below, which attempts to outline some of the main ideas expressed in this book. Her complex methodology, which I will attempt to unpack, is encapsulated in the following description:

The oppressed have only one true mode of revolutionary activity, the ability to perceive and decode dominant-order sign systems in order to move

among them with certain literacy, thus ensuring their survival, and one true mode of revolutionary consciousness, which is the ability of consciousness to differentially move through the being of meaning, and *toward* a possible and utopian world of desire, social and psychic life, *Amor en Aztlán*, differential consciousness (Sandoval 2000:182).

<p>Oppositional consciousness: Theory and Method</p>	<p>Methodology of the Oppressed: a technology for decolonizing the imagination. [constructs and enables I, II, and III; produces II]</p>	<p>Hermeneutics of love</p>
<p>I: Differential social movement</p>	<p>II: Differential movement of consciousness through perceptual domains</p>	<p>III: Differential consciousness</p>
<p>Forms of consciousness in opposition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equal Rights form 2. Revolutionary form 3. Supremacist form 4. Separatist form 5. Differential – which is expressed through the technologies described in column 2. It transforms all other forms into a tactical weaponry as opposed to strict ideologies </p>	<p>Vectors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Semiotics 2. Deconstruction 3. Meta-ideologizing 4. Democratics locating, gathering, driving, and orienting the first three to bring about egalitarian social relations and Love (column 3) 5. Differential movement a polyform on which other technologies depend for operation; </p>	<p>“Our deepest knowledges” “The soul” Each vector of the technology of the oppressed is inhabited by differential consciousness</p>

The first *differential* that Sandoval presents refers to differential social movement, which she poses as the fifth and most important form of oppositional consciousness

enacted in resistance movements. To understand how this differential works, we must first understand the other four ideological forms. These include: equal rights, revolutionary, supremacist, and separatist forms of oppositional consciousness (56).

The equal rights form of consciousness-in-opposition, as exemplified by the early work of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) or the early civil rights work of Dr. Martin Luther King, poses that the differences that have been used to oppress are merely superficial. With the understanding that all humans are created equally, this form pushes for equal representation under the law, integration, and assimilation.

The revolutionary form of consciousness-in-opposition, as exemplified by the American Indian Movement, the Black Panther Party, and Marxist and Socialist feminisms, takes an opposing tactic. Instead of focusing on sameness, this ideology legitimizes and intensifies a group's differences, asserting that the only way society can legitimate this difference is through a profound and fundamental restructuring.

Under supremacism, exemplified by forms of radical feminism and a variety of racial and ethnic nationalisms, the oppressed go beyond legitimizing their differences and assert that these differences make them superior to the dominant group. As such, supremacist practitioners seek to provide more effective leadership through their higher ethical and moral vision.

Under the separatist ideological form, exemplified by Aztlán and the Amazon Nation, the subordinated do not desire to integrate into or revolutionize the society, but instead to separate from it in order to protect and nurture their difference.

According to Sandoval, these four ideological forms of consciousness-in-opposition are often seen as bounded and mutually opposed to one another. Due to this, disagreements over which ideological form to use has led to internal breakdowns within social movements, sometimes causing them to fracture and disintegrate. At other times, strict adherence to one of these ideologies has led to a new hegemonic order that merely reproduces the kind of authoritarianism that was originally being struggled against. This is why the fifth form, the differential form, is crucial, for it transforms the first four forms from strict ideologies into tactics. Acting like a clutch in a car, the differential form of social movement allows people to move between ideologies in relationship to the forms that power takes:

The differential mode of social movement and consciousness depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self consciously choosing and adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations, a survival skill well known to oppressed peoples. Differential consciousness requires grace, flexibility, and strength: enough strength to confidently commit to a well defined structure of identity for one hour, day, week, month, year; enough flexibility to self consciously transform that identity according to the requisites of another oppositional ideological tactic if readings of power's formation require it; enough grace to recognize alliance with other committed to egalitarian social relations and race, gender, sex, class, and social justice, when these other readings of power call for alternative oppositional stands (Sandoval 2000:60).

Sandoval asserts that this form of oppositional consciousness has been practiced by U.S. feminists of color soon after WWII, and indeed it represents the first "postmodern" resistance movement.

For each of her three descriptions of the *differential*, Sandoval places the work of US Third World feminists of color in conversation with a widely circulated

white theorist, highlighting the unacknowledged connections between bodies of theory, and the possibilities that open up when these connections are recognized.

In the first section of her book, she focuses on Frederic Jameson's canonical essay on *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Jameson 1984). In her reworking of this famous text, she points out the major strength of Jameson's work—namely its articulation of a postmodern consciousness that he calls “pastiche”. This is a consciousness which undermines the ability of all people, including those previously placed at the top of a power hierarchy, to achieve orientation in the world. This pastiche consciousness stands in contrast to a modern consciousness, which articulates the world according to clear power hierarchies.

She then goes on to describe Jameson's major flaw—his inability to see how the “pastiche” consciousness he describes is intimately connected to the lives and strategies of marginalized peoples. Because he does not make this connection, and indeed does not see the strategies of survival that have been developed and engaged by marginalized peoples, Jameson's text ends on a hopeless note.

In recognizing the differential consciousness that has been used by U.S. third world feminists for years before Jameson's “discovery,” we can see how those more familiar with the disorientation of oppression, and hence more adept at moving through oppressive ideologies, have not only survived, but thrived and found ways to remain anchored in hope.

This brings us to the *how* of differential movement, which is the second of three versions of *differential* that Sandoval explains. The first differential, that is, differential social movement, is expressed through a series of five technologies

which Sandoval names the Methodology of the Oppressed. These are the technologies which construct and enable differential social movement, they include the language and terminologies which allow one to decolonize the imagination, and move through perceptual domains. They consist of three primary technologies of 1) semiotics: the ability to see the construction of signs, 2) deconstruction: the ability to take apart signs, and 3) meta-ideologizing: the reconstruction of signs for revolutionary¹¹ purposes.

In this section of her book, Sandoval reviews the work of another famous white theorist whose writing is widely associated with these technologies: Roland Barthes (Barthes 1957). She summarizes Barthes' explanation of semiotics as a practice of recognizing the erasure of the original relationship between signifier and signified into a single sign in the creation of ideology. She then moves onto a description of the work of Frantz Fanon, who, with his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1951) was engaging in the very "meta-ideologizing" that Barthes described six years before Barthes published *Mythologies*.

The very title of Fanon's book does political work by transforming racialized division of Black/white to suggest something else. It demands equality in terms that are oppositional (Black=White, Skin=Masks). But Fanon's work goes beyond Barthes' *Mythologies* in its employment of the 4th technology of differential consciousness, the technology of democratics. The technology of democratics locates, gathers, drives and orients the first three technologies to bring about egalitarian social relations—to equalize power between humans. Barthes' major fault, then, like that

¹¹ Revolutionary here refers to large-scale social changes, not to the revolutionary form of consciousness in opposition.

of Jameson, is that he does not see the connection between his work and the methodology of the oppressed, that is, the work already being done by marginalized and third world peoples. Because he misses this, he does not write about democracies, which is clearly present in the meta-ideologizing work of Fanon.

The fifth and final technology of the methodology of the oppressed is the differential movement of consciousness; the ability of the mind and the imagination to move through perceptual domains. This technology is a “polyform on which the other technologies depend for operation” (83). Being of a different order than the (earlier) differential social movement, this technology is a differential enactment of consciousness. Hence differential here is “the ability of consciousness to differentially move through the being of meaning” (182).

The third and final use of the term differential also refers to differential consciousness, but this time Sandoval refers to differential consciousness as the directory which drives and at the same time inhabits the technologies of the other two forms of differentials—this differential is defined as a hermeneutics of love. It is love not in the conventional sense, but as a political commitment, as a third space that only exists in relationship between people, love as the space where we are moving toward, the “possible and utopian world of desire, social and psychic life, *Amor en Aztlán*” (182). For Gloria Anzaldúa, this love is known as the workings of “the soul” and for Audre Lorde, it is the mobile erotic as the place of “our deepest knowledges” (Sandoval 2000:6).

According to Sandoval, the everyday experience of romantic love can bring forth the experience of differential consciousness necessary to “haunt all we think

and know” (140), which is necessary in the practice of semiotics, deconstruction, and meta-ideologizing. This differential consciousness is also what allows a practitioner to see that the ideological forms of equal rights, revolution, supremacy, and separatism are created (not natural), and thus she can move between and among them in order to bring about equity between humans. The third form of differential, differential consciousness, is also the “possible and utopian world of desire, social and psychic life” that we are moving toward.

The Methodology Exemplified

With these three forms of differential in mind, I can now explore examples of the technologies of the methodology of the oppressed in the work of U.S. Third World/ Women of Color theorists. I will explore each of the five vectors within this methodology.

First let us consider semiotics as exemplified by Gloria Anzaldúa’s description of *La facultad* (Anzaldúa 1987). *La facultad*, as described by Anzaldúa, is a sensory ability developed by people who inhabit more than one reality, in which one is able to “see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities”(Anzaldúa 1987:60). *La facultad* is an instant sensing that happens “without conscious reasoning”(60). It enables a practitioner of the methodology of the oppressed to sense and see signs in ways that belie their “natural” construction. Hence for example, a person who identifies as Queer and female may more easily “see” femininity as constructed by virtue of her marginal relationship to it.

Once seen, these signs can be deconstructed, thus enacting the second vector of the methodology of the oppressed. This vector is exemplified by the Outsider/Within positionality described by Patricia Hill Collins (Collins 1986). This creative relationship to marginality, which Collins describes as being employed by Black feminists in academia, also comes from the experience of living on the border, a location from which, one can look “from both the outside in and in from the inside out” understanding both (bell hooks as quoted in Collins, 15). According to Collins, it is from this marginal position that Black feminists have learned to take apart meanings, value that which is devalued, and see the “gaps” in social movements which failed to address the interlocking nature of oppression, such as the (androcentric/heteronormative) black nationalist movement, and the (racist/heteronormative) white feminist movement.

Upon seeing and deconstructing dominant meanings, practitioners may choose to re-assemble these meanings in ways that are constructive for them. This third vector, meta-ideologizing, is exemplified by Gayatri Spivak’s notion of “strategic essentialism” which allows for the “strategic use of a positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak 1993:3). In using this vector, for example, the same Queer person above may temporarily identify with the category of “woman” in order to create solidarity and move closer to a political aim. This conscious re-working of the hegemonic term “woman” allows for the re-presentation of the original sign “woman” in a politically strategic way.

That which allows for the possibility of strategic essentialism as a politically feasible practice is the differential vector exemplified by Maria Lugones in her

description of “world traveling” (Lugones 1996). This vector allows one see the world through another’s eyes, and travel into that other person’s worldview; to experience oneself as constructed by another person’s view. The “world” that Lugones refers to here can be the world as constructed by dominant or and non-dominant groups in a society. The person who occupies a non-dominant position, according to Lugones, often develops the ability to slide in an out of these “worlds”, for example, to see herself genderqueer one minute, and woman the next.

And in Alice Walker’s womanism we can find an example of a democratizing, moral vector which drives the movement of the differential vector (Walker 2003:xi). Black feminists, according to Walker, are womanist when they share the common political agenda of “black women’s self-definition and self-determination”(J. M Martin 1993). Fundamental to womanism, therefore, is the moral commitment to black women’s liberation. This vector can also be seen in Andrea Smith’s *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy*, where Smith speaks about the frameworks which prevent cross-racial organizing from her particular position in, and commitment to, Indigenous struggles. Such a commitment drives the practitioner as she moves through the different methodologies of the oppressed and different types of social movement, powered by differential consciousness.

In the final section of her text, Sandoval discusses the work of white feminist theorist Donna Haraway, whose well-known *Manifesto for Cyborgs* (Haraway 1985) has been popular among social theorists. In this manifesto, Haraway asserts that we must work against essentialist binaries by embodying ambiguity in the form of a cyborg. As opposed to delineating the world into categories of male and female,

nature and machine, we must work to actively create ourselves as a fusion of these binaries.

Unlike Jameson and Barthes, Haraway is very aware of the contributions of U.S. Third World women of color feminists, indeed, the work of Chicana feminist Cherríe Moraga is central to Haraway's argument. Sandoval is careful to point out a different weakness in Haraway's work, however, and it is a weakness that white feminist theorists committed to practicing a methodology of the oppressed must pay careful attention to. Inadvertently, by naming the category of "women of color" as a "cyborg identity", Haraway elides¹² the work of U.S. Third World feminists, turning their approaches methods and skills into examples of her cyborg feminism (Sandoval 172).

Haraway has since amended her theory in response to critiques, and I find both her mistake¹³ and her responsiveness to critique of paramount importance in my own work—for it elucidates valuable information about the need for identity work by white scholars who align themselves with the methodology of the oppressed. I will focus on this identity work below.

Paula Moya's Realist Identity

Two tensions exist in methodology of the oppressed that must be explored before I can take up its tenets in my own work: Sandoval's "un-interrogated" attribution of differential consciousness to participants in U.S. Third World

¹² To suppress or alter, to leave out of consideration. In this case, I use "elide" to mean taking up another's work in a way that undercuts the stated goals of that work.

¹³ The word "mistake" here is used with the understanding that the impact of Haraway's work was different than her stated intention. Her stated intention was to honor the work of Women of Color Theorists, and her impact was to elide that work. In this case, it is useful to describe Haraway's action as a "mistake".

feminism (Tapia 2001:740), and the problem of white dominance which Sandoval points to, but does not provide a remedy for. These are problems addressed by feminist theorist Paula Moya, whose work I will discuss here.

In “Postmodernism, Realism and the Politics of Identity” Paula Moya lays out what she calls “a realist theory of identity”, which is useful in responding to the tension that exists in Sandoval’s work between U.S. Third World feminist identity and the methodology of the oppressed. If the methodology of the oppressed comes out of U.S. Third World women’s feminist theory, then by definition are all those who may be labeled as “U.S. Third World women” practitioners of this methodology? And how can those who do not identify as U.S. Third World women relate to this methodology?

Moya addresses these questions by talking about identity, and proposing realist identity as an alternative to the postmodernism/essentialism binary that identity is so often trapped within. Here, she directly challenges the post-modern approach taken by Haraway in her early version of *Manifesto for Cyborgs*, arguing that postmodern feminists like Haraway “reinscribe, albeit unintentionally, a kind of universalizing sameness (we are all marginal now!) that their celebration of ‘difference’ had tried so hard to avoid” (Moya 1997:126). She argues that white postmodern feminists like Judith Butler, Joan Scott, and Donna Haraway, despite their “good intentions,” craft arguments which completely deny the social facts of race, class, gender and sexuality, and end up empowering a kind of white defensiveness which insists on discounting the experiences and identities of People of Color.

At the same time, Moya acknowledges the critiques that feminists like Haraway make of essentialism, and agrees that it is not useful to reduce people to social determinants. The realist theory of identity that she lays out poses an important alternative to the postmodernist/essentialist binary. I will discuss this approach here.

Moya begins with the idea of “epistemic privilege” which she defines as “special advantage with respect to possessing or authoring knowledge about how fundamental aspects of our society (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) operate to sustain matrices of power”(136). The key to claiming epistemic privilege, she argues, lies not in the simple fact that a person occupies a particular social location, but from an acknowledgement that they have experience via their positionality, which *can* provide information about power hierarchies. Experience, in this essay “refers to the fact of personally observing, encountering, or undergoing a particular event or situation” (136).

The first dimension of Moya’s realist theory of identity is that different social facts, such as a person’s gender, race, class, and sexuality are causally relevant for the experiences she will have. These experiences will influence the formation of her cultural identity. Although people in the same social location may have similar experiences, they will not necessarily interpret these experiences in the same way, and therefore may come to different conclusions about these experiences. Therefore,

there is a cognitive component to identity which allows for the possibility of error and of accuracy¹⁴ in interpreting experience.

Here, Moya is countering the dominant notion that experience, and individual interpretation of experience is paramount, or essential. She argues that people can have interpretations of their experience which are less historically accurate. Therefore some identities can “more adequately account for the social facts constituting an individual’s social location”(138) and are epistemically more valuable than other identities a person might claim. One could say that on a deep ontological level, Moya’s theory is deeply critical of post-modern approaches to race.

Here, she describes how her own original identity in college as a “Spanish” girl required her to ignore certain salient facts of her social location, like her Mexican heritage, her “Indian blood”, and the racially significant way that white women in her Yale dormitory avoided her. She argues, therefore, that this identity was distorted. The Chicana identity that she eventually took on accounted for both her heritage and her experiences, and gave her a political awareness that allowed her to more easily recognize her disadvantaged position in a society that indeed was organized hierarchically according to class, race, gender, and sexuality.

This leads to Moya’s next claim, which is that “our ability to understand fundamental aspects of our world will depend on our ability to acknowledge and understand the social, political economic, and epistemic consequences of our own social location”(139). This means that if we can agree that we do indeed live in a

¹⁴ For more on Moya’s use of the concepts “error,” and “accuracy,” please see (Moya 1997).

social world that is organized hierarchically, then we can see how an identity that takes that hierarchy into account is more valuable than one that does not.

Finally, Moya asserts that oppositional struggle is “fundamental to our ability to understand the world more accurately”. This means that we should value the critical vision of oppressed groups who take on epistemologically valuable identities because their well-being and survival is often dependent on their ability to dismantle dominant ideologies and institutions. Moya’s proposition here is useful, because she lays out a theory that allows for the epistemic privileging of an oppressed groups’ vision over the vision of a dominant group, without essentializing all of the members in that oppressed group, or asserting that they share the same interpretation of their identity.

White Realist Identity

The anthropology literature [...] can hardly be regarded as a science, because it reflects the deep psychological problems of its superstars rather than an honest effort to learn something” (Deloria 1999:123).

Using Moya’s realist theory of identity, we can more clearly see some effective ways that white anthropologists could approach our own racial positionality. White scholars interested in taking on the methodology of the oppressed must acknowledge that building an epistemologically valuable racial identity for ourselves will take time, patience, and humility. As we build, we must remember that we have been conditioned against the practices of the methodology of the oppressed when it comes to issues of race. It is my assertion that people in dominant groups (white people, cisgendered men and women, straight people, able-

bodied people) indeed *can* develop and practice the methodologies of the oppressed: develop *la facultad*, experience outsider/within, practice strategic essentialism, world travel, and adhere to womanist values. Indeed the re-orientation required by a white realist identity often places white antiracists in ideologically marginal positions, where the world that they see no longer matches up with the dominant viewpoint that they have been socialized into. However, it is paramount that white realists do not confuse this ideological marginality with the institutional marginality generated by centuries of white supremacy that is lived by people of color. This means that our practices will look different than those of people of color. This is where humility is paramount. We have to acknowledge that in matters of race, we will make mistakes¹⁵ constantly. This is a painful process, and we must be ready for it.

Field Methods

In the following section, I will discuss the data collection techniques that I employed in order to generate a complex understanding of the gendered racial formations that I explore in this dissertation. Field methods include interviews, surveys, and participant observation.

1. Interviews

The majority of interviews were conducted by me with Tibetan and white interviewees, with members of each group already having several years of

¹⁵ By “mistake” here I point to the awkward position of finding oneself acting counter to one’s own professed values and commitments. Any person who inhabits an identity that is dominant, and who professes commitment to transform this identity using the methodology of the oppressed will constantly find themselves in this position.

experience relating to members of the other group. I also interviewed a significant number of people who identify as Asian American (none of whom were Tibetan) and non-Asian people of color who were living and working in Tibet and China about their thoughts on, and experiences with race and gender. The following table provides a breakdown of interviews according to work area¹⁶, race, and gender of interviewees:

¹⁶ By “work area” I mean the primary area in which this person was working at the time of the interviews. Although many interviews were conducted in the place that matched the work area, several were also conducted in the United States with people who had lived and worked in their work area for several years.

Area	Race and Gender ¹⁷	Number
China	Chinese women	3
	Chinese men	1
	Asian American women	5
	Asian American men	4
	Non-Asian women of color	2
	Non-Asian men of color	1
	white women	4
	white men	9
Tibet	Tibetan women	20
	Tibetan men	8
	Asian American women	2
	Asian American men	2
	Non Asian women of color	0
	Non Asian men of color	2
	white women	11
	white men	12
India	Tibetan women	2
	Tibetan men	6
	Asian American women	1
	Asian American men	0
	Non Asian women of color	0
	Non Asian men of color	0
	white women	3
	white men	2
Total Number		101

Interviewees ranged in age from 21 to 82, with the median age being 30. The

majority of above interviews were conducted by me in urban centers with people

¹⁷ None of the 101 Interviewees identified themselves as transgender at the time of the interview, and so the categories of “woman” and “man” listed here can be assumed to describe people conforming with cis-gendered normativity at the time of the interview. Among these people, 9% of interviewees identified themselves as “Queer” “Lesbian” “Gay” or “Bisexual” at the time of the interview. This does not mean that the remaining 91% of interviewees identify as “straight,” just that they did not identify themselves as otherwise at the time of the interview.

who had years of experience in a state-sanctioned formal school system. Two Tibetan researchers also traveled without me to Tibetan villages for this project and interviewed a total of 23 women and men who were educated outside of the state’s formal schooling system (in monasteries) or who left the formal schooling system at an early age. Therefore, the ethnographic work of the Tibetan researchers gathered valuable data about the attitudes of Tibetan villagers towards foreigners and whiteness, and also revealed ideas that may not have otherwise been expressed in front of me as a white interviewer:

Area	Race and Gender¹⁸	Number
Tibet	Tibetan women	6
	Tibetan men	17

2. Surveys

A series of 269 surveys in Tibetan and Chinese were also conducted among Tibetan university students from all areas of the plateau who had little or no contact with people from outside of Tibetan areas. The surveys within Amdo were given blindly, with the majority of participants never seeing me, but being able to reasonably guess that the researcher was “ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་

ལོ་” or foreigner¹⁹. Survey respondents ranged in age from 19-36, with the median age being 22. Although the majority of respondents were from Qinghai province (76%), all areas of the Tibetan plateau were represented, with Gansu making up 4%,

¹⁸ Data about sexuality and gender identity was not gathered at the time of the interview.

¹⁹ The complex uses of the word “foreigner” in Tibetan are discussed in Chapter 6.

Sichuan 8%, Xizang (Tibet Autonomous Region) 8%, and Yunnan 4%. Of the respondents, 51% identified as female, and 49% as male. I also administered surveys in Tibetan to 19 Tibetan-English translation students in Dharamsala, India.

3. Participant Observation

To understand how macro-level institutional structures relate to the micro level interactions that make up the everyday patterns of transnational relationships, I conducted participant observation at a variety of meetings, seminars, colloquia, fundraisers, and courses related to or focused on Tibet. I attended events in the Northwest and Northeast of the United States, the South of Canada, Northern India, and Eastern and Southwestern Tibet. In addition to recording spoken dialogue for use with Critical Discourse Analysis, at meetings, I cataloged behaviors using a stopwatch to observe who talked, for how much time, and about which topics. I also recorded who got cut off, and who didn't. This data helped me understand how power is expressed in transnational spaces in terms of authority, visibility, and voice. Courses and meetings include, but are not limited to the following:

Meeting name	Organization	Location	Date
Gender Studies Workshop ²⁰	The Bridge Fund, Trace Foundation	Xining, Qinghai, China	March 2004

²⁰ Although I attended this workshop before beginning graduate school, the notes from this experience have helped inform my current research project.

Service Learning Conference on Evaluation Strategies and Program Assessment ²¹	The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia	Hong Kong, China	May 21-24, 2006
Annual Meeting	American Anthropological Association	San Francisco, CA, USA	November 2008
A non-residential Racially/Culturally Diverse Insight Meditation Retreat	Nalanda West	Seattle, WA, USA	Nov 14-16, 2008
Seeds of Compassion Gathering	Seeds of Compassion, the University of Washington,	Seattle, WA, USA	April 11-15, 2008
Staging the Beijing Olympics: Visions, Tensions, Dreams	Centre for Chinese Research,	University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada	May 12, 2008
Annual Meeting	American Anthropological Association	Philadelphia, PA , USA	November 2009
Tibetan Social Business & Sustainable Entrepreneurship Symposium	Machik and the University of Virginia,	University of Virginia, VA, USA	April 11th, 2010
Women Meditators: Preserving a Yogini Tradition Within Tibet	Addictive Behaviors Research Center Department of Psychology	University of Washington, WA, USA	June 1, 2010
The 12th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies.	International Association of Tibet Studies	University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada	August 15th - 21st 2010.
Teachings by Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo	Tushita Meditation center	Dharamsala, HP, India	July 28-29, 2011
Introduction to Buddhism	Tushita Meditation center	Dharamsala, HP, India	August 5-11. 2011

²¹ Same as above

Rethinking the Himalaya: The Indo-Tibetan Interface and Beyond.	The association for Nepalese and Himalayan Studies, Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs	Macalester College, Minnesota, USA	October 28-30, 2011
Annual Meeting	American Anthropological Association	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	November 2011

Critical Discourse Analysis

Very few anthropological writings [...] maintain a critical language, and even fewer carry within themselves a critique of (their) language. A subversion of the colonizer's ability to represent colonized cultures ... can only radically challenge the established power relations when it carries with it a tightly critical relation with the colonizer's most confident characteristic discourses (Trinh 1989:71).

In my dissertation project, as I seek to understand how historically grounded racial formations influence the form and function of transnational relationships on the Tibetan Plateau, I engage Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a tool which allows for the practice of the semiotic, deconstructionist, and meta-ideologizing vectors of the methodology of the oppressed. Jan Blommaert describes CDA as follows:

It should be an analysis of power *effects*, of the outcome of power, of what power *does* to people, groups, and societies, and of *how* this impact comes about. The deepest effect of power everywhere is *inequality*, as power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes. An analysis of such effects is also an analysis of the conditions for power-of what it takes to organize power regimes in societies. The focus will be on how language is an ingredient of power processes resulting in, and sustained by, forms of inequality, and how discourse can be or become a justifiable object of analysis, crucial to an understanding of wider aspects of power relations" (Blommaert 2004:2).

In accordance with this description, I will critically focus on language as a key indicator of under-examined power structures in my fields of investigation. The semiotic and deconstructivist vectors of the methodology of the oppressed will aid me in recognizing the racial formation of whiteness in ways that diverge from dominant discourse in the field of Tibetology, and in Tibetan communities within and outside of Tibet. Following CDA, this analysis seeks not only to describe such formations, but also to understand the social and historical conditions that gave rise to them.

In the chapters that follow, I will lay out the principal organizing argument for this project: an urge for an ideological and linguistic transformation regarding issues of race and whiteness in the context of Tibet. Critical Discourse Analysis forms the main organizing method for this argument. Informed by data from literature reviews, surveys, interviews, archival analysis, and participant observation, my method will be to trace historical patterns that regulate power in everyday discourse. In other words, to trace the historical roots of certain racial projects, and then understand how such projects are reproduced in communication.

The ideas informing this project were generated over a nine-year period, from the time that I moved to ཟླ་ལྷོ་རྒྱུ་ in 2003 to the current period (2012). Official data gathering began in the summer of 2008, when I commenced ethnographic interviews, surveys, and participant observation with the approval of University of Washington's Human Subjects Division. The chapters that follow were shaped by data gathered from 124 semi-structured ethnographic interviews, 314 surveys, and more than 200 hundred hours of participant observation at international

conferences, seminars, and colloquia related to Tibet. I gathered this ethnographic data in English, Tibetan and Chinese in Eastern Tibet, Northern India, Eastern China, the Pacific Northwest of the United States, and Southern Canada with the help of a number of Tibetan, white, Chinese, and Asian American scholars.

3: Stop Saying Western, Start Saying White

Transforming the Dominant Vocabulary of Tibet Studies

It is difficult to talk, read or write in English about Tibet without running into white people²². At international conferences, our names dominate the lists of panel presenters and organizers. In the work of Tibetan and Chinese scholars, our writings and theories materialize on reference lists. The International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS) provides an excellent example of this phenomenon. As one of the largest and most well-known scholarly organizations in the world that focuses on Tibet, the scholarship presented at its seminars, which convene every four years, has profound and wide-reaching effects within and outside of Tibetan areas. White people are consistently the largest racial group present at these seminars; among the three hundred and sixty nine presenters listed in the preliminary schedule²³ for the 2010 IATS seminar, approximately 66% are white²⁴.

²² For the purposes of this chapter, I follow conventions established by critical race and white privilege theorists in employing the word “white”, (with a lower case w) and not the terms “Caucasian,” “Western,” or “European” to describe the racial category that I wish to highlight. For readers unfamiliar with the history of various racial terms, I will briefly explain the reasoning behind such a decision. Critical race theorists do not use the word Caucasian because of its etymology. Caucasian is a scientific term, coined in the eighteenth century by the eugenicist Johann Friedrich Blumenbauch. Blumenbauch measured the skulls of different people from around the world in order to create a system of racial classification wherein the “most beautiful and racially superior” people were those believed to have come from the Caucasus Mountains in what is now Chechnya, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaizhan, and parts of Russia Ossetia and Ingushetia, people who the practice of colonialism had established as “white” (Kendall 2006, 44). The term “Caucasian” combines the notion of “whiteness” with the scientific endeavor to prove white supremacy on a biological level. Therefore, it is not used. Although the terms “Western” and “European” are also often preferred in place of the word “white”, it is my contention that critical race theorists should use them only sparingly. Because these terms are essentially geographic in nature, they cannot accurately capture racial representation.

²³ The preliminary list of presenters includes an important notice on its first page, stating, “Due to visa, passport and funding complications many accepted participants from the PRC (People’s Republic of China) and India have not yet been placed on the schedule below. Please be advised, this schedule is subject to change”. It goes without saying that the visa, passport and funding complications mentioned here

The list of presenters at the 2011 meeting on the *Indo-Tibetan Interface and Beyond*, convened by the Association for Nepalese and Himalayan Studies, provides another excellent example. Of the approximately ninety-one panelists scheduled to present, 64% are white²⁵. The same pattern plays out in written work on Tibet. One need not look further than the list of contributors to any number of major English-language anthologies or journals on the topic of Tibet to see this pattern of white participation in Tibetology reflected, and even amplified. Paradoxically, despite the ubiquity of white people in English language scholarship on Tibet, when scholars of any racial background talk about Tibet, we most usually do not talk about race, and we most certainly do not talk about white people. This article will analyze Tibet-focused scholarship through a critical race lens to explain why this may be the case, and argue for a revitalized vocabulary and framework for English language scholarship on Tibet.

What is White?

For the purposes of this chapter, I will use the definition of whiteness offered by critical race and whiteness theorists. This definition complements the definition

disproportionately affect non-white conference participants, and often curtail their ability to participate in the seminar. For those who can participate but are not included on the preliminary schedule, dis-inclusion certainly has an impact on their participation in the seminar. For more on the racialized nature of citizenship and the colonial roots of the modern nation state, please see Wendy Brown's "Finding the man in the state" in (Sharma 2006).

²⁴ This percentage was derived from a race-based analysis of the preliminary schedule of presenters, cross referenced with data from participant observation at the conference. Because presenters are not asked to state their racial identities in the preliminary schedule or during the panel presentations, online images were used in coordination with participant observation to determine who among the presenters, in the majority of cases, would pass as, or be labeled by others, as white. Whiteness as defined by this analysis is not based on individuals' subjective racial identities, but rather on the racial meanings that others would ascribe to them based on their appearance.

²⁵ See note #2 above.

of race discussed in chapter one in that it understands race as a social construct with structural consequences that shape the institutions of white-dominant²⁶ societies, and have historically-rooted global consequences (Moreton-Robinson, Casey, and Nicoll 2008). In “Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness,” Ruth Frankenberg lays out an eight-point definition of the Whiteness:

1. Whiteness is a location of structural advantage in societies structured in racial dominance.
2. Whiteness is a “standpoint,” a location from which to see selves, others, and national and global orders.
3. Whiteness is a site of elaboration of a range of cultural practices and identities, often unmarked and unnamed, or named as national or “normative” rather than specifically racial.
4. Whiteness is often renamed or displaced within ethnic or class namings.
5. Inclusion within the category “white” is often a matter of contestation, and in different times and places some kinds of whiteness are boundary markers of the category itself.
6. Whiteness as a site of privilege is not absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage or subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect or modify it.
7. Whiteness is a product of history, and is a relational category. Like other racial locations, it has no inherent but only socially constructed meanings. As such, whiteness’s meanings are complexly layered and variable locally and translocally; also, whiteness's meanings may appear simultaneously malleable and intractable.
8. The relationality and socially constructed character of whiteness does not, it must be emphasized, mean that this and other racial locations are unreal in their material and discursive effects (Frankenberg 2001:76).

The complex and nuanced definition of whiteness that Frankenberg outlines here reflects her work on whiteness for more than a decade, beginning with her foundational book *White Women, Race Matters* (1993). As the field of Whiteness Studies has matured since the early 1990s, the definition of whiteness has been

²⁶ In support of this chapter’s principle argument, I purposely use the descriptor “white-dominant” over the more common and popular “Western”. “Western,” however, is still commonly used by some critical race and whiteness theorists.

explored and expanded upon by a number of scholars, many of whom have documented the salient features of this racial category, such as invisibility and normativity (Eduardo Bonilla-Silva 2001; E. Bonilla-Silva 2006; Farough 2006; Feagin 1995; Kendall 2006; Rothenberg 2004). The works of George Lipsitz and Peggy McIntosh, which speak to the structural and systemic dimensions of white privilege, have been vital in the field (Lipsitz 1998; McIntosh 1992), and although Whiteness Studies as an academic field emerged in the early 1990s, the work builds upon ideas expressed by W.E.B. DuBois in nearly 100 years earlier (Du Bois: 2008 [1903]). Despite an early focus on the United States within Whiteness Studies, the field has become transnational, with scholars from a number of nations reflecting on whiteness within and across different national contexts (Petrilli 2007; Twine and Warren 2000; Levine-Rasky 2002; Ware 1992) As the editors of *Transnational Whiteness Matters* argue, “Whiteness is a transnational process of racialization which exceeds containment within fixed boundaries of identity and nation, reinscribing social hierarchies through national imaginaries and their transgression” (Moreton-Robinson, Casey, and Nicoll 2008:x).

In exploring whiteness in the context of Tibet studies, this chapter aims to contribute to the growing number of critical race studies which investigate “how whiteness is constituted both discursively and performatively in different localized spaces to effect specific functions,” (Steyn and Conway 2010:285). As the work of Tibet scholars from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds over the past several decades has made clear, Tibet is a central ground upon which countless

stakeholders²⁷ continue to struggle over issues of power, representation, and identity. If a significant portion of these stakeholders are invariably white, why isn't anyone bringing up the issue?

Why Don't We Talk about Whiteness in Scholarship on Tibet?

One answer to this complex question is that white people, who produce a substantial amount of the existing English-language scholarship on Tibet, do not usually talk about whiteness, at least not in our professional presentations and published works. As Frankenberg and others have made clear, whiteness stands in white-dominant societies today as a racial category that goes “unmarked and unmade”(Frankenberg 1993:9). As Paula Rothenberg explains, whiteness is normalized, and what is white appears in dominant narratives as what “is”, as “normal”, or as “human”. She elaborates:

Whites are everywhere in representation. Yet precisely because of this and their placing as the norm they seem not to be represented to themselves *as* whites but as people who are variously gendered, classed, sexualized and abled (Rothenberg 2004:11).

The invisibility of whiteness results in what Dalton calls “race obliviousness” (Rothenberg 2004:17), a condition that causes most whites (and some non-whites) to feel that whiteness itself is unremarkable, because it is always everywhere. Race obliviousness results in an unwritten rule that whiteness cannot and should not be discussed. When whiteness is marked in everyday conversations, it often results in

²⁷ By “stakeholders,” I mean those who affect or can be affected by power over a region through direct control of economic policy, distribution of resources, or ideological influence. This means that among Tibet’s stakeholders I include communities in Tibetan areas, officials in the Tibetan and Chinese government, directors of international aid organizations working in Tibetan areas, and scholars whose work focuses on the region.

awkwardness or accusations of “reverse racism”. In *Black looks: Race and Representation*, bell hooks describes such a reaction among liberal whites when confronted with the fact of their whiteness:

Often their rage erupts because they believe that all ways of looking that highlight difference subvert the liberal belief in a universal subjectivity (we are all just people) that they think will make racism disappear. They have a deep emotional investment in the myth of ‘sameness’, even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness as a sign informing who they are and how they think (1992, 167).

Toni Morrison highlights the same pattern, asserting, “The habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference” (Morrison 1992:10). The incredible faith that many people have in the effectiveness of a ‘colorblind society’ points to the normalization of Whiteness. When we consider the pervasiveness of colorblind ideology (Shanklin 1998) and its concomitant assertion that talking about race is rude at best, we begin to understand the silence around the issue.

By analyzing a taken for granted discursive absence of attention to race and racialization, this chapter intends to counter the dominance of what Jane Hill calls “Folk Theories” of race within Tibet studies, especially when it comes to the issue of whiteness. Folk theories, according to Hill, are common understandings of the world based on “a kind of inattention that makes contradictory evidence invisible” (Hill 2008:5). When folk theories are used to address the issue of Whiteness within Tibet studies, they require that whiteness not be discussed publicly, and they handle critical evidence of white privilege with erasure. By asking scholars of Tibet to start saying “white”, I hope to take the first steps toward what promises to be a long and complex journey toward critical race consciousness within the field of Tibet studies.

The Curious Case of the Word “Western”

It is the third tier of Frankenberg’s definition of whiteness, that of whiteness going unmarked, that I wish to focus on here in relation to the ubiquitous term “Western”. I will begin by sharing an illustrative example that I encountered during fieldwork.

In the summer of 2011, I attended a two-day teaching in Dharamsala, India by a published author, teacher, and well-known white Buddhist nun. She gave a fantastic talk on meditation titled “Calm Abiding and the Four Immeasurables”²⁸. Toward the end of her teaching, she mentioned the importance of “Treating all beings even handedly, and not feeling any particular affection for family or animosity toward those who are different from us.” When I had walked into the teaching on the first day, I noticed that more than 90% of the two-hundred-plus attendees were white. This seemed strange to me, because we were in a Tibetan settlement in India²⁹. I was glad that she had brought up the issue of discrimination, because it gave me an opportunity to ask for her reflections. During the question-answer session, I thanked her for broaching the topic of equanimity, and wondered if she had any thoughts on the fact the majority of students there were “Western”.

²⁸ Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, “Calm Abiding and the Four Immeasurables” Teaching given at Tushita Meditation Centre in Dharamsala, India, on July 28th-29th, 2011.

²⁹ If English-based teaching can be used to explain the dominant numbers of white people in the audience, then it begs the question why English-based teaching should remain—more than half a century after British colonialism had ended in India—such a popular and prevalent medium for talks on Buddhism in this Tibetan settlement.

Knowing that engagement of the more accurate term “white” would be considered rude, and possibly offensive³⁰, I purposely chose to use the broader term “Western”.

Unlike white, the word “Western” does not directly reference race or racial appearance, but instead refers to a general geographic area, and a cultural legacy. According to Webster’s dictionary, “Western” as an adjective means: “stemming from the Greco-Roman traditions; of or relating to the noncommunist countries of Europe and America” (Merriam-Webster, Inc 2003:1422). When we consider that the Greco-Roman traditions predate the onset of the race concept by more than 2,000 years³¹, that the legacies of Greco roman traditions have transformed over time, spread throughout the world and are now a central part of many non-white people’s lives, and that since their inception, many non-communist European and American states have been home to racially diverse populations, we can come to the logical conclusion that the term “Western” is not racially marked. However, the teachers’ response offered an important contradiction to this logic. She paused, looked around, and said “There are also some non-Westerners here, I can see!” As she spoke, she smiled and pointed at a brown-skinned man wearing slacks and a cotton T-shirt³².

This story is worth telling in the context of this chapter because the white nun’s assertion that she could “see” Westerners highlights the *actual* use of the term, which, opposed to the logical or official definition, refers indirectly to whiteness. As I present further evidence of this pattern, I will discuss several

³⁰ One example at my attempts at differential movement as a methodology.

³¹ For more information on the inception of the race concept, please see (Prashad 2001) and (Hill 2008).

³² Who, for all she knew, was from the United States.

reasons why I believe we should use the term “Western” more sparingly, and begin using the term “white” more often.

Literature Analysis

For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to analyze four popular pieces of writing on development and religion in Tibet which exemplify the patterns that exist around whiteness in Tibet studies as a discipline. These include an article written by June Teufel Dreyer in the *Journal of Contemporary China*, a collaborative article written by Goldstein, Jiao, Beall and Tsering in the *Asian Survey* journal, an article by Janet Gyatso in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, and John Powers’ book *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. In addition to appearing among the top ten listings in scholarly search engines queries on “development,” “religion,” and “Tibet,”³³ these four pieces of writing are widely cited by scholars representing a broad range of perspectives, from within the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Central Tibetan Administration in India (CTA), and the United States. They also represent varying approaches to Tibet-focused scholarship, both literary and ethnographic in nature.

Who is “Seen” as Western?

³³ The Teufel Dreyer and Goldstein et. al. articles appear consistently in the top ten among searches for “Tibet” and “development” in Google scholar.

One important reason to reconsider current usage of the term “Western” is the way that it quietly and unwittingly normalizes white men³⁴ as Western. This practice can be found in both popular books on Tibet that are intended for the general public, and in scholarly articles about Tibet that are intended for academics and policy makers. First, we can consider the illustrative way that the word is used in June Teufel Dreyer’s “Economic Development in Tibet under the People’s Republic of China,” a thoroughly researched and extensive description of economic development in Tibet over the past half century. In it, Dreyer seeks to describe a trend of subsidy-based development in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the PRC, and illustrate an unequal distribution of the benefits of development programs between Han Chinese and Tibetans. Although this article focuses on Han Chinese and Tibetan relations, it also includes references to “Westerners” (415), “hardy adventurers from the West”(412), and “Western scientists,”(415), all of whom are white men³⁵.

The same pattern can be found in John Powers’ *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. This popular and widely read book sets out to explain the basic philosophical and historical underpinnings of Tibetan Buddhism to an English-speaking audience unfamiliar with Tibetan culture. In it, the “Western scholars” that

³⁴ I use the term “men” here, and throughout the paper, to refer to cis-gendered, non-trans, gender-conforming men.

³⁵ Teufel Dreyer implicates white men on page 415 in the assertion that the ancestors of these “Westerners” slaughtered thousands of buffalo for amusement. White men are again implicated on page 412 in the statement that Tibet’s “unique culture and seeming isolation lured a number of hardy adventurers from the West”. The “Western scientist” on page 415 is George B. Schaller.

he references (71, 158, 178, 213, 253)³⁶ are exclusively white men and women, and predominantly white men.

In Janet Gyatso's widely-read article "Healing Burns with Fire: the Facilitations of Experience in Tibetan Buddhism," she explores Tibetan notions of experience as they are portrayed in writings from the Mahamudra, Dzogchen and the Anuttara class of Tantras, and contrasts Tibetan understandings of experience with "Western" understandings of the term. The "Westerners" she references (114, 128, 129)³⁷ are white men.

Finally, we can see the pattern in Goldstein, Jiao, Beall, and Tsering's impressive report on "Development and Change in Rural Tibet," which offers a nuanced perspective on development in the Tibet Autonomous Region through a multi-year study of households in thirteen rural Tibetan villages. This complex ethnographic work acknowledges the problems with state policies on land tenure, family planning, development, and migrant labor, while at the same time describing improvements to livelihood and standards of living since decollectivization³⁸. Although they use the term sparingly, Goldstein et al. do not escape the habits displayed by previous authors, and we find that their phrase "Many in the West" refers to white male authors³⁹.

³⁶ Including Melvyn Goldstein, David Snellgrove, John Avedon, Matthew Kapstein, Barbara Aziz, and Sir Charles Bell.

³⁷ Including Robert Sharf, William James, Paul Griffiths, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Henri Bergson.

³⁸ Decollectivization, according to Goldstein et. al, refers to a broad change in land policy policy that was instituted beginning in 1981 in the TAR [Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China], which "saw the division of virtually all commune land [previously organized according to PRC communist policy] among member households on a per capita basis" (Melvyn C. Goldstein et al. 2003:764).

³⁹ Including Pierre-Antoine Donnet, and Gabriel Lafitte.

Uneven Racialization

When we take a look at linguistic patterns for the non-white racial and ethnic groups who appear in scholarly work on Tibet, another important racial configuration is revealed: the uneven racialization of non-white people as compared to white people. For example, a quick search for the terms “white,” “Tibetan,” “Han” and “Indian” in Teufel Dreyer, Gyatso, Goldstein et. al. and Powers’ work reveals telling results. The term “white” as a racial category either does not appear (Gyatso, Goldstein et. al.) Other terms that are sometimes used to signify white racial or ethnic identity, such as “Caucasian” or “European” do not appear. This search stands in marked contrast to a search for the terms “Tibetan,” “Indian,” and “Han Chinese,” which number in the hundreds, and appear throughout the pieces in direct reference to racial/ethnic identity⁴⁰. In one striking example, Teufel Dreyer describes the Han Chinese that appear in a *Tibetan Review* cartoon as “thousands of termite-like Han” emerging from the mouth of the newly constructed Tibetan railway in the shape of a dragon (423)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Although some may argue that the word “Tibetan” is not a racial term, I would assert that at the current historical moment, it can and often does function as such. In ethnographic interviews conducted in 2010-2011 with Tibetans in China and India, when I asked people what their “race” is in Tibetan རིགས་རྒྱུད། (rigs rgyud) Chinese 种族 (Zhong zu) and English (race), they answered “བོད་རིགས་” (mirigs) for both race and ethnicity. This becomes all the more interesting when you consider that the current 民族 (minzu) or “མི་རིགས་” (mirigs) ethnic minority system used in the People’s Republic of China to denote the fifty six ethnic groups or “nationalities,” was developed in collaboration with the well known linguist H. R. Davies, whose language based ethnic taxonomy was used as a model for the 民族 (minzu) system created by the PRC government (Thomas Mullaney 2011). HR Davies was deeply invested in the project of British Empire, and also in the eugenicist theories of the time. This means that eugenics based thinking influenced the 民族 (minzu) system in the People’s Republic of China, whose meaning has influenced slowly eclipsed former meanings of the Tibetan word མི་རིགས་ (mirigs). I use the term racial/ethnic to denote this connection and confluence between the terms.

⁴¹ Notably, the majority of references to the word “Chinese” describe violence, military action, and notions of racial superiority (Powers, 212; Gyatso, 116; Teufel Dreyer, 412, 413, 416, 423).

Because these works focus on Tibetan livelihood, culture, and religion as it unfolds in the context of China and India, it may seem natural that they should concentrate on Tibetan, Han Chinese, and Indian racial/ethnic groups. Confronted with the search results presented above, some may be tempted to conclude that white people simply do not play a very prominent role in these scholarly inquiries, and it is therefore fitting that they should not appear. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Following a pattern apparent in the majority of academic works on Tibet, whites appear in the paper, but are not described as such. Whites do not appear in this article in the racialized manner that Tibetans, Indians and Han Chinese do, but instead, appear surreptitiously as “reporters,” (Teufel Dreyer, 416)⁴² ““Buddhologists and anthropologists” (Gyatso, 113)⁴³, “modern scholars” (Powers, 57, 140)⁴⁴, “experts” (Teufel Dreyer 420)⁴⁵, “Theorists” (Gyatso 131)⁴⁶ “prominent human rights activists” (Teufel Dreyer 425)⁴⁷, “anti-idealist philosophers” (Gyatso, 140)⁴⁸ and individuals (Teufel Dreyer, 414)⁴⁹ (Goldstein, et al., 774)⁵⁰. With few notable exceptions⁵¹, this stands in marked contrast to racially/ethnically marked

⁴² Christopher Wren.

⁴³ Robert Sharf and Bernard Faure.

⁴⁴ Erich Frauwallner and Guiseppe Tucci.

⁴⁵ Barry Sautman.

⁴⁶ Robert Forman.

⁴⁷ Robert Barnett.

⁴⁸ John Dewey.

⁴⁹ Charles Bell.

⁵⁰ Melvyn Goldstein.

⁵¹ Powers’ book includes eleven references to “scholars” who are Tibetan without explicitly marking them as such. A close look reveals that in all eleven instances, the unmarked “scholars” appear in the past tense, a rhetorical method that circumscribes the contributions of unmarked “scholars” who are Tibetan to the past. In addition, in all eleven instances, these “scholars” are contextualized as Tibetan by the sentences immediately preceding the word. For example, “Gonchok Gyelpo’s son, the “Great Sakyapa” (Sa chen) Gunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), played an important role in systematizing Sakya teachings. An accomplished scholar with a comprehensive knowledge of Buddhist learning, he brought together sutra and tantra practices [...]”(437). White scholars who appear in the book are not similarly constricted by time and geographic location. In two instances, Powers aligns whiteness with modernity by referring to white

“Indian commentators” (Gyatso 134)⁵² “Han” (Teufel Dreyer, 424)⁵³ “Indian scholars” (Powers 33, 148, 151,⁵⁴ “Tibetan authors” (Gyatso, 138)⁵⁵ “Tibetan commentators” (Gyatso 139)⁵⁶ “Tibetan researchers” (Goldstein, et al. 760)⁵⁷ and “Tibetan Historians” (Powers 156)⁵⁸. It is of notable consequence that the overwhelming majority of the above references refer to White men, and not White women, highlighting the androcentric nature of Tibetology as a whole⁵⁹.

Because of Goldstein et al.’s reliance on ethnographic fieldwork, the uneven racialization in their work presents a particular set of methodological problems that are worth analyzing. In Goldstein et al.’s piece, the practice of uneven racialization takes on a different form—one that is embedded in the white/Tibetan collaboration that produced the article. The white authors fail to acknowledge and discuss the profound impact that their own racial and ethnic identities have on the collection

scholars as “modern scholars”. The pattern exemplified by Powers illuminates another aspect of white privilege, the habit of relegating the admirable qualities of non-white groups to the past. This pattern is especially evident within “Western” Buddhist circles, and is worthy of its own separate investigation. For more about the rhetorical functions of the “noble savage” trope, see Andrea Smith (Smith 2005; Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2006).

⁵² Author not listed.

⁵³ Wang Lixiong.

⁵⁴ Atisa, Santaraksita, Jnanendra.

⁵⁵ See Kvaerne, Per. 1975. “On the Concept of Sahaja in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature.” *Temenos* 11:88-135.

⁵⁶ The “Tibetan commentators” marked on page 134 of Gyatso become “commentators” four lines down from their first appearance. See *Yon tan rin po che mdzod las/ 'Bras bu'i theg pa'i rgya cher 'grel nram mkhyen shing rta*. In *O*, vol. 2, pp. 1-879.

⁵⁷ As discussed in this chapter, it is unclear who among the four authors this comment is meant to refer to.

⁵⁸ Historians not listed.

⁵⁹ Some of the terms here refer to white men involved in colonial-era activities, and thus some may be tempted to attribute the dominant presence of men in these pieces to the broad institutionalized sexism of that era. I would contest such an assertion, however, on the grounds that the majority of references cited here point to scholarship completed within the past three decades. A systematic pattern of historically grounded privileging of white male scholarship within Tibet studies can be confirmed with a quick scan of the names populating the bibliographies of current research articles on Tibet. The role of “Tibet expert” has historically been, and continues to be, male-dominated. One notable exception to this pattern appears when one searches through scholarly literature on Gender, Women, and Tibet, in which case, expertise becomes the domain of white women.

and analysis of data. Such a practice cloaks their methodology in mystery, and thus confuses their findings.

Such intrigue begins with the statement “Thirteen farming villages [...] were selected based on the authors’ knowledge of rural Tibet and discussions with other Tibetan researchers⁶⁰” (760). In this statement, the racial and ethnic identity of the Tibetan authors is highlighted, while that of the white authors is hidden, couched furtively in the reference to “the authors’ knowledge of rural Tibet”. When we look closely, we can see that a reference to “the authors” may include both the white and Tibetan authors. But the reference to “other Tibetan researchers” highlights only the participation of Tibetan researchers in this study. The revelation of such cloaked language is not meant to question the white authors’ knowledge of rural Tibet, which no doubt is impressive. It is, however, to question the methodological implications of such uneven racialization. If the collaboration between Goldstein, Jiao, Beall, and Tsering is valuable for its diversity, then what are we losing when we fail to talk about the frameworks and points of view that *all* of the researchers, including the white researchers, bring to the project?

This confusing practice of de-emphasizing and mystifying the participation of the white authors continues throughout the paper, where the passive voice is used to describe how the researchers collected information. Readers learn that “Households were queried” (762), elderly “were interviewed” (762) and statistical results were “found” (764), but it is never clear who is doing this work. In one important example Goldstein et al. state:

⁶⁰ This practice reflects an overall trend in social science to use the passive voice to convey objectivity. For more on this discourse, power, and the use of passive voice, please see (van Dijk 1996).

Traditional anthropological interview methods were used along with focus groups, participant observation, and informal discussions. In addition, two surveys were conducted: a detailed socioeconomic survey of each household and a separate reproductive survey with all women 18 years and older (761).

While traditional anthropological interview methods are used by people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, one would be hard-pressed to argue that a Tibetan villager would feel the same way, or give the same responses, when faced with a white interviewer versus a Tibetan interviewer. Race and ethnicity matter in rural Tibet just as much as they do in any other part of the world, and villagers can certainly be expected to respond differently to Goldstein and Beall than they would to Jiao or Tsering. Goldstein et al.'s lack of clarity as to how they collected information throws their data into question. For example, imagine how differently a Tibetan woman might respond to a white man asking about the taboo topic of reproduction, as compared to a Tibetan woman asking the same questions. Unfortunately, Goldstein et al.'s collaboration does not include a Tibetan woman among the authors.

Although many readers may automatically assume that the Tibetan researchers conducted most of the interviews and surveys, Goldstein's recounting of an interchange that he witnessed between a village mother and a party secretary (774) disrupts this assumption, making it clear that he did participate in the data collection, and leaving readers bewildered as to the roles that different authors played in creating this impressive work. This thorough work would be vastly improved by a clear description of study methodology as it pertains to race.

Erasure: Part One

In addition to uneven racialization, erasure is a linguistic pattern that is common in the texts explored here. In *Regimes of Language*, Judith Irvine and Susan Gal describe the linguistic process of erasure, a device that aids in explaining and understanding patterns that exist in Tibet Studies around whiteness. Erasure, in their words,

Is the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or a language may be imagined as homogenous, its internal variation disregarded. Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements that do not fit its interpretative structure—that cannot be seen to fit—must be either ignored or transformed.” (Kroskity 2000:38)

I argue that erasure happens on two levels in the field of Tibet studies, detectable in the strategic use of the word “Western”, and in the invisibility that characterizes white racial identity. In the first instance of erasure, the word “Western” encourages listeners to imagine “the West” as a homogenous entity epitomized by white hetero-masculinity. When the above authors use the word “Western” to describe someone, they consistently describe a white man⁶¹. This practice, which is widespread within even the most incisively critical Tibet studies literature, creates a totalizing vision of the West that ignores its racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. When all “Westerners” are tacitly assumed to be white men, the ideas, opinions, experiences, and

⁶¹ Whiteness as discussed here is not based on subjective racial identity, but rather on racial meaning that circulates based on appearance. The assertion that “white men” are being referenced here can thus be understood to mean people who would consistently be identified as “white” and as “male” in both the United States and in Tibet.

scholarship of People of Color and Indigenous People in the West, especially women, are marginalized.

The negative impact of such erasure becomes clear when we consider how closely aligned the experiences of Indigenous People and People of Color in “the West” might be with Tibetan communities. Teufel Dreyer unwittingly exemplifies this negative impact when she describes how the PLA soldiers’ practice of killing animals on the Tibetan plateau for amusement, profit and target, practice “reminded Westerners uncomfortably of their own ancestors, who slaughtered buffalo for similar reasons” (415). The “Western ancestors” being recalled here are implicitly white men, and not likely members of various plains Indians tribes, some of whose resistance to reckless treatment of the natural environment by whites continues to this day. In addition, Teufel Dreyer’s recollection of white history here is incomplete. While some white people in frontier areas may have slaughtered buffalo for entertainment, it is important to acknowledge that some did it as a calculated strategy of genocide against the native American communities who depended on the buffalo for survival (Decker 2004).

Challenging the homogenizing effect of the word “Western” may lead us to consider valuable questions that are not possible under the totalizing effect of linguistic erasure. For example, what would members and organizers of the Lakota-led “Crying Earth Rise Up⁶²” think if they hear of the PLA practices? What valuable insights and strategies for survival might they have to share?

⁶² <http://www.bringbacktheway.com/default.htm> accessed on May 3rd, 2012.

If white scholars of Tibet took the voices of Indigenous people and People of Color in today's "Western"⁶³ countries more seriously, then it would be with considerably less ease that such scholars put aside the tremendous influence of white culture⁶⁴ around the globe today. A challenge to linguistic erasure would provide an opportunity to investigate the contradictions that often remain unexplored in the work of white Tibetologists. Here again Teufel Dreyer's work provides an excellent example, for although she strains to focus on Han Chinese threats to Tibetan livelihood, culture, and well-being, a quote from first party secretary Zhou Yongkang in her article points to a more complex picture. She recalls that Zhou "accused the [PRC] government of wasting money by insisting that Tibetan be taught in schools ('the whole world is learning English. Why bother?')" (423). Although Zhou's comment is featured here to exemplify the threat of Han Chinese dominance to Tibetan culture, its meaning shifts when considered within the context of global white supremacy and cultural imperialism. Suddenly, we are pushed to consider the role that English, the language that Indigenous scholars call "white" (Deloria 1999) may be playing in threats to Tibetan language.

Another, very pragmatic reason to curtail use of the term "Western" is its expansive and vague nature. In addition to generating ideological erasure of non-white people, the term references a geographical area so broad that accurate critique of its referent is made virtually impossible⁶⁵. This brings us to the second

⁶³ The alternative term that I would suggest is "white-dominant countries."

⁶⁴ See Frankenburg, 2001, for a complex definition of white culture.

⁶⁵ It could be argued here that "white" is a similarly vague and overly broad term. In asking Tibet studies scholars to begin saying "white", I am not suggesting that whiteness is simple or all encompassing. I realize that white people are just as varied and complex as other racial groups. Just as I realize the profound cultural and identity differences that may exist between Tibetan people born and raised in China, South

form of erasure that constitutes whiteness within Tibet studies—the invisibility of white racial identity and subsequent erasure of white privilege. To understand the significance of such erasure, we have only to imagine what would happen if every time scholars of Tibet tried talking about Tibet, Tibetans, or Tibetan culture, they instead used the descriptive adjective “East”. This would certainly make sense, given that east is the logical and linguistic counterpoint to “West”. Under this rule, it would no longer be possible to discuss Tibetan religion, Tibetan culture, Tibetan history, or Tibetan people. Instead, all discussions and scholarly inquiries would be confined to the topics of Eastern religion, culture and history. Of course, these terms are too broad to say anything meaningful about Tibet, and so an incredible amount of valuable scholarship and insights into the particularities of Tibetanness would be lost. As important as it is to distinguish between particularities that we find in Tibetan, Chinese and Indian history, isn’t it also important to distinguish between the particularities found in “the West”? As this paper’s title suggests, I believe that a temporary boycott of the word “Western” would be useful in challenging the linguistic erasure that it currently produces. However, I am not suggesting complete renunciation of the word. Rather, I suggest that we begin using the term “Western” more accurately, which means more sparingly.

India, or the United States, I also recognize the important differences between white people born in different locales like Germany, the United States, or South Africa. Therefore, although a shift from “western” to “white” would move toward greater linguistic accuracy, it would also call attention to the need for further explorations into the into the particularities and commonalities of varying expressions of whiteness. It must not be forgotten, however, that what ties white people around the globe together is, unfortunately, the age-old project of colonialism. Without it, whiteness would not exist, and would not continue as a social category with ties to wealth, power, and influence around the world.

Erasure: Part Two

In academic work on Tibet, white people often appear surreptitiously under the label “Western.” It is more common, however, that white people are not marked at all. The problematic nature of this pattern is revealed when we look at the roles that unmarked whites play in the works analyzed above. As individuals, experts, and scientists, white ideas and opinions are often presented as scholarly evidence of claims that the authors share. The 1924 writings of Charles Bell, for example, are used to disprove Chinese claims that China brought useful vegetables and crops into Tibetan areas (Teufel Dreyer, 414). Alexander Studholme’s study of the Karandavyuha Sutra is offered as the most detailed examination of a powerful Tibetan Buddhist mantra (Powers, 27). New York Times reporter Christopher Wren’s opinion that the Tibetan population was “beginning to emerge from the brink of starvation” is the only source cited as evidence of Teufel Dreyer’s claim that economic standards had improved in Tibet by 1983 (416). Bernard Faure’s authority helps correct mistaken assumptions about what Buddhists do (Gyatso, 116). The writings of George Schaller and Dylan Ripley serve as evidence of decreased plant and animal life on the Tibetan Plateau (Teufel Dreyer, 415), Barry Sautman opines laconically on the political achievements of Hu Jintao (Teufel Dreyer, 420), and Robbie Barnett comments on tacit assumptions that he believes the Chinese have about the Tibetan economy (Teufel Dreyer, 425). These opinions are interesting and useful, but they become problematic when removed from their context. Removing ideas from their context has the effect of increasing the power of these opinions, meaning a “Tibetan researcher” (Goldstein, et al. 760) or a “Han

scholar” (Teufel Dreyer, 424) will be judged differently by readers than a racially unmarked “Author” (Goldstein, et al. 760), or an “expert” (Teufel Dreyer, 420).

When we consider the large number of works written about Tibet which assert the need for “objective”(Goldstein 1994) and “impartial”(Powers 2004) scholarship from parties less “emotionally invested” in the issue of Tibet (Goldstein 1999), we begin to see just how valuable the erasure of white racial identity may be for white scholars, and how challenging the racialization of non-white scholars may be for them. Removing racial and ethnic markers from such terms as “scholar” and “expert” has the effect of neutralizing them, making them appear less biased than the racialized Han Chinese, Tibetans, and Indians who appear in Tibet studies scholarship. Indeed, we can see that although the pattern of uneven racialization dominates throughout the works explored here, there are certain notable cases in which scholars who are not white appear without racial markers. For example, in Teufel Dreyer’s paper we find “a group of scholars and officials gather[ing] [in Lhasa] to address the gap in living standards between Tibet and the interior”(421)⁶⁶. And in Gyatso’s paper, a group of unmarked “Scholars” including one who is Tibetan, “now think that Dzogchen represents a set of innovative Tibetan appropriations of practices that were entering Tibet from a variety of sources” (130)⁶⁷. As a result of the dominant dialectic in Tibet studies of “emotional” Tibetans versus “biased” Han Chinese, choosing not to mark these Tibetan and Han scholars has the effect of amplifying their authority, and cloaking them in a veil of “objectivity”. This

⁶⁶ The group of scholars referred to here were a part of Lhasa televisions’ weekly report.

⁶⁷ The scholars referenced here include Tibetan scholar Samten Karmay, and white scholars David Germano and David Jackson.

rhetorical move is notable in that it occurs most often when non-white scholars make assertions that support the authors' arguments.

The effects of such a distancing practice are thoroughly discussed in Edward Said's famous text *Orientalism* (Said 1978), yet such practices continue. In the next chapter of this dissertation, I will explore the notion of white objectivity within Tibetology in depth by focusing on what Melvyn Goldstein has called "The Tibet Question".

Closing Thoughts

Crucial to an analysis of Goldstein et al., Teufel Dreyer, Gyatso, and Powers' writing is the acknowledgement that the lead authors of all are white. For any white academic, it would be ill advised to assume that one's own racial positionality does not affect her research and how it is framed. As a litany of authors from Edward Said to Amy Mountcastle and onward have argued, positionality matters, and to pretend it does not is ignorant and dangerous. I am disturbed by the high number of white Tibet studies scholars who have urged me to limit my own work to Han-Tibetan relations, suggesting that white people "are very minor players in the whole scheme of racial biases playing out over there in Inner Asia."⁶⁸ While I admire the importance of research on inter racial/ethnic and class tensions within Tibet, I do not believe that a discussion of whiteness precludes such discussions. Indeed, a discussion of whiteness would deeply enrich the scholarship that has already been produced on such complex topics. The body of work that constitutes critical race

⁶⁸ Personal e-mail communication with a prominent white male scholar of Tibet Studies, November of 2011.

and whiteness studies provides ample evidence of this value. Foregrounding whiteness would cast a spotlight on the development, research, teaching, and proselytizing that white people are doing in Asia, and push us to ask about the role of such activities in the empire-building aspects of globalization. It would bring disturbing questions to the forefront: why do white people want the information they are collecting? Whose interests are being served?

In addition, because I am white, I find the suggestion that I conveniently ignore this fact to be physically impossible. As soon as I am in the picture, thinking, writing, and asking questions, so is my whiteness. A scholar cannot separate herself from her scholarship, and is ill advised to try. As Edward Said eloquently states:

If it is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his [sic] own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his [sic] actuality: that he [sic] comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or an American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a part of the earth with a definite history of involvement in the Orient almost since the time of Homer (Said 1978:11).

I would add to Said's explanation that the particular view of the world that a considerable number of European or American scholars bring to our work is a white view of the world, and that we need to begin acknowledging that this fact has consequences. I suggest that we begin talking about whiteness, and what it means to be white. Such a commitment demands attention to nuance, for whiteness is neither simple nor or all encompassing. I am not suggesting that white people should stop working on scholarship about Tibet, nor am I suggesting that we have

nothing valuable to offer. On the contrary, I hope to underline the fact that our scholarship will be strengthened, and its value greatly increased, by an acknowledgment of the weight that white positionality brings to bear on the issue. Although the normalization of whiteness in scholarship in English on Tibet may cause many white scholars to feel uncomfortable speaking about the topic, it is to everyone's benefit that we push past this discomfort. We need to stop hiding behind slippery terms like "Western" and start speaking openly about what everyone can see right in front of their faces, our whiteness.

4: Whiteness and “The Tibet Question”: A Case Study

In the last chapter, I used Critical Discourse Analysis to outline the dominant linguistic patterns that constitute whiteness in Tibet Studies, and put forward an argument for a revitalized vocabulary and framework for English language scholarship on Tibet. In this chapter, I will explore the implications of one of these patterns—white claims to objectivity—through a case study of the intellectual paradigm known as “The Tibet Question”. I will begin with the set of questions that Amy Mountcastle outlines in her essay on “The Question of Tibet and the Politics of the ‘Real’”:

The importance of the matter of defining The Tibet Question should not be underestimated. Implicated in this debate are questions of who has the right to define the question and the terms of the debate and why. Who is granting that right? Who is speaking for whom? These are political questions with moral/ethical dimension that are of no small consequence, especially to Tibetans” (Mountcastle 2006:89).

Following Mountcastle’s prompting, I will explore the contours of what has been deemed “The Tibet Question”, and in doing so lay out some of the political, moral, and ethical implications of this paradigm and its framing in relation to the racial project of whiteness.

In his case study “Change, Conflict and Continuity”, which appears in the edited volume *Resistance and Reform in Tibet* by Akiner and Barnett, Melvyn Goldstein provides a clear definition of “The Tibet Question,” along with an outline of the framework in which he asserts this question must be considered:

Objective assessment of the situation in Tibet since 1950 has become entangled in the politics of the “Tibet Question”, that is, in the political status

of Tibet vis-à-vis China. *Strong feelings* about whether Tibet was independent or part of China in the past, and whether it should now have the right to self determination, have produced diametrically contradictory versions of modern history from Beijing and Tibetan exiles in Dharamsala (and their supporters in the United States and Europe). Events have typically been portrayed as all black or all white, as horrendous oppression or magnificent progress. This, of course, is not surprising, given the stakes involved. What is more surprising, however, is the dearth of objective and impartial *academic* accounts of social, political, and economic changes in Tibet during the forty years since 1950 (Melvyn Goldstein 1994:76).

Goldstein's simple assertion here reveals three core aspects of The Tibet Question:

1) that it is a political question concerning the two emotionally invested and categorically opposed 'sides' of Tibet and China, (with a parenthetical third western factor); 2) that it is a question which can and should be approached from an impartial, neutral, and "objective" stance, and 3) that academics like Goldstein are the proper people to address this question with authority.

A quick glance through some of the most widely cited and circulated literature on Tibet in the English language reveals Goldstein to have been incredibly successful in achieving such authority on the matter of The Tibet Question. Rarely does one find an account written in English about Tibetan-Chinese relations that does not cite his work⁶⁹. As Charlene Makley duly notes:

Melvyn Goldstein now dominates the representation of modern Tibetan history. He has published at least six historical studies of Tibet since 1989, drawing on his unparalleled access (for a foreigner) to primary data in Tibet. All those books, including the co-authored ones like [*On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet*], bear the stamp of Goldstein's distinctive positivist and *realpolitik* historiographic method (Makley 2009:127).

⁶⁹ For some examples, see (Kapstein 2006; Blondeau 2008; Makley 2007; Adams 1996; Melvyn Goldstein 1998; Mountcastle 2006; Melvyn Goldstein 1994)

In English language literature on Tibet, the work of Melvyn Goldstein is indeed difficult to avoid. And on the specific matter of “The Tibet Question” which he himself has defined, several authors point to his policy book *The Snow Lion and the Dragon* (Melvyn C. Goldstein 1999). For example, in the introduction to his book on *The Tibetans* Matthew Kapstein urges: “Melvyn C Goldstein’s fine essay, ‘The Snow Lion and the Dragon,’ may be recommended [...] as providing an accessible, but nuanced, introduction to recent events” (Kapstein 2006:xiii). Brantly Womack echoes this advice, citing *The Snow Lion and the Dragon* in the footnote to his statement that:

The ‘Tibet Question’, as the long-running contradiction between Tibetan autonomy and Chinese sovereignty is often called by Western diplomats and scholars, has seen a series of asymmetric stalemates, resolutions, and renewed conflicts” (Womack 2007:444).

Knowing the incredible amount of influence that Goldstein, and his *Snow Lion and the Dragon* have had on “The Tibet Question”, in the next section I will use an analysis of his work to flesh out core aspects of The Tibet Question.

Angry Snow Lions and Naïve Dragons

In his compact and accessible book, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, Goldstein provides an overview of the history of Tibetan and Chinese relations from the 7th century up through the early 1990s. Including full translations of several original documents from exchanges between the Tibetan exile government and the Chinese government, he strives to provide a balanced account that is critical of both sides.

Despite his commitment to objectivity, and his sincere attempts to offer an impartial account of events, I argue here that Goldstein frames Tibetan-Chinese

relations in such a way as to place the burden of blame for a protracted stalemate between the Beijing government and the Tibetan exile government firmly (although subtly) on the shoulders of Tibetans.

He accomplishes this first by consistently framing both Tibetans and Chinese as overly emotional and thus irrational, with a more heavily weighted focus on the blinding “pride” of the former. For example, he refers to both Tibetans and Chinese as “simplistic and naïve”(72), and Tibetans as overly “proud” (72), and too “emotional” to view diplomatic talks in an intellectualized “realpolitik” fashion (70, 74). Tibetans are “overly aggressive”, “angry” and frustrated, waging “attacks” instead of making political maneuvers (73). Although anger may indeed have been expressed by both Chinese and Tibetan negotiators, Goldstein’s consistent framing of these groups as *emotional*, especially Tibetans, is worthy of notice.

Certainly, his framing does something other than objectively describe the events surrounding Tibetan-Chinese negotiations. Despite its claims to neutrality, it sets up very clear racialized and gendered power differentials. The consistent framing of Tibetans and Chinese as emotional echoes the practices described in Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) which privilege the white “western” male scholar to speak for and about his Asian subjects. Within the context of his book, Goldstein is presented to readers as a knowledgeable expert. He has the authority not only to speak about Asia, but also for the people in it. Neither Goldstein’s race nor his gender are acknowledged. Instead, he is positioned as an impartial academic, one speaking truth—an expert. As Said points out, this erasure of one’s own position of power is characteristic of Orientalist discourse:

The determining impingement on most knowledge produced in the contemporary west (and here I speak mainly about the United States) is that it be nonpolitical, that is scholarly academic, impartial, above partisan or small-minded doctrinal belief. One can have no quarrel with such an ambition in theory, perhaps, but in practice the reality is much more problematic (10:1978).

The practice of this ambition to convey the truth is problematic precisely because of what is conveyed by Goldstein's writing—not truth but representation. This is a representation imbued with power, one which constitutes and reconstitutes binaries such as "West/ East" "male/female" and "modern/ primitive". These binaries, disguised as truth in academic discourse, are also "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient" (Said 3:1978).

Wendy Brown's "Finding the Man in the State" is also useful in understanding the veiled discourses of power contained within *The Tibet Question*. In this essay, Brown explains a system of masculinist power which is embedded in and disseminated through state discourses. Although this power structure is shaped in a way that benefits individual men, Brown encourages us to see it as a complex system of hierarchies which entrap all social actors:

Multiple dimensions of socially constructed masculinity have historically shaped the multiple modes of power circulating through the domain called the state—this is what it means to talk about masculinist power rather than the power of men (193:1995).

Thus, masculinist power is a complex system which is imbedded in every aspect of the social. This power is naturalized and invisible. One of the ways that masculinist power works is that it normalizes the voices of men. Such normalization is evident in Goldstein's book, where, by failing to address his own positionality, emotional engagement with or commitment to his subject of study, he presents himself as an

impartial, and therefore reliable expert about the overly emotional Tibetan and Chinese subjects who he is describing. According to Brown: “The powerful are in this way discursively normalized, naturalized, while the dominated appear as mutants, disabled” (188:1995). Thus, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon* can be read not only as Orientalist in its reification of the male/female, West/East binaries, but also masculinist in its normalization of Goldstein’s voice as opposed to the marginalized, emotional, feminine Tibetans to whom he refers. In an incisive critique of Goldstein’s work *On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet*, Charlene Makley attests to this pattern, noting that the unfortunate and unintended effect of Goldstein’s modernist take is that it “individualizes, pathologizes, and dehumanizes Tibetans’ shock, grief and anger at the physical and *cultural* violence of C.C.P.” (Makley 2009:130).

When placed beside the more complex, nuanced presentation of the same set of events that Tashi Rabgey and Tseten Wangchuk offer in “Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Post-Mao Era” (2004) Goldstein’s strong bias becomes all the more evident.

Rabgey and Wangchuk’s work, which discusses Tibetan-Chinese negotiations from the post-Mao period up to the early 2000s, with an extensive section on future dynamics of engagement, takes up the same time period that the second half of Goldstein’s book is dedicated to. Through in-depth analysis of a number of events that were left out of Goldstein’s work, and a respectful framing of the actions taken by both Tibetan and Chinese negotiators, this piece presents a far more hopeful picture, one that I argue is rooted in the hermeneutics of love.

At times, the different framing of Rabgey and Goldstein of the same set of events is striking. For example, in their policy paper, Rabgey and Wangchuk note that Beijing was caught off-guard in the summer of 1979 when a fact-finding delegation representing Dharamsala was greeted by “ecstatic crowds numbering in the thousands and expressing devotion to the Dalai Lama”(4). Beijing had expected hostile crowds, and had instructed local Tibetans to “restrain themselves from physically attacking the exiles”(4) when they arrived.

In Goldstein’s account, these ecstatic crowds transform into “Thousands upon thousands of Lhasans” who “mobbed the delegation” “cried and prostrated”, and “fought” to touch the Dalai Lama’s brother, “shouting” “nationalistic slogans” such as “Han go home”(62).

Describing a second round of talks between the Tibetan exile government and the Chinese government, Rabgey comments that “the mood [in Beijing] had become considerably less hospitable”(8) whereas Goldstein opines that “it was, of course, futile from the start” (73). Describing the events surrounding the recognition of the tenth Panchen Lama, Rabgey states:

Chinese distrust of the Dalai Lama reached new heights in 1995, when he preemptively recognized Gedun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of the tenth Panchen Lama. From Beijing’s point of view, this attempt to exclude the Chinese authorities from the succession was an aggressive political act that signaled the Dalai Lama’s disregard for the principles of dialogue and reconciliation (17).

In his “future prospects” Goldstein dedicates several pages to this same series of events, focusing on the Dalai Lama and his overarching “pride”:

From China’s perspective, once again, at a critical time, the Dalai Lama had thumbed his nose at Beijing, sending a clear signal that when it got down to fishing or cutting bait, he still preferred cutting bait (108).

Goldstein here reveals a certain amount of cultural insensitivity, choosing the metaphor of “fishing or cutting bait” to describe his assessment of the Dalai Lama’s purportedly “proud” (108) actions despite the fact that most Tibetans, as a general rule, do not fish. He does not stop here, but goes on to further demean Tibetans and the Dalai Lama:

Such is the nature of The Tibet Question. Even when both sides have a common interest in preventing a disaster, emotion and issues of “face”—political pride—easily derail them and *marginalize reason*. The Dalai Lama knows intellectually that he needs more friends and supporters in Beijing not Washington or New York City, but he finds it emotionally difficult to take appropriate actions to achieve that end (110; emphasis mine).

Here, Goldstein makes the audacious move of actually describing how the Dalai Lama feels about certain political decisions he has made. In addition to consistently remarking on Tibetans’ “overblown pride”, and their inability to think logically as a result of out-of-control emotions, Goldstein also expends a considerable amount of energy in his book emphasizing that the Tibetan account of what has happened to them is an *interpretation* which stems from *anger*:

Tibetans were still very angry about the loss of their country and the personal and collective (ethnic) suffering they had experienced since 1959 under direct Chinese rule. *Like some minority groups in the United States, they view past oppression as part of present reality and direct their resentment at today’s Han Chinese*” (84, emphasis mine).

This interesting move, comparing *angry* and resentful Tibetans with *angry* and resentful “minority groups” in the U.S., reveals not only Goldstein’s unintentional bias, but also his own unacknowledged positionality. As a white male Tibetologist,

Goldstein apparently holds the dominant view that “minorities” in the U.S. have irrationally refused to let go of past wrongs, which they project onto the present⁷⁰. The sentiment he expresses in the above quote is repeated in his statement that Tibetans “see the glass as half empty rather than half full”(85), and that Beijing’s accelerated development program for Tibet “fueled the Tibetans’ *feeling of* powerlessness and abuse at the hands of the dominant Han”(85 emphasis mine). He continues his comparison between Tibetans and U.S. “minorities” on page 87, where he compares the Watts race riots and the “exploding anger” of Native Americans at Wounded Knee with the Tibetan uprising of 1959.

These comparisons go a long way toward explaining his clear, albeit unintentional, bias against Tibetans. On the flip side of his comparison of Tibetans with People of Color in the U.S. is a comparison between the dominant groups of U.S. whites and Han Chinese. As a member of a dominant racial group in the U.S who does not address or explore his own racial positionality vis-a-vis the “angry” Black and American Indian subjects he describes, I assert the possibility that Goldstein carries an unexplored tension with racial minorities in the U.S. into his thinking about Tibetans, thus reducing them to “emotional, angry, naïve, irrational and proud” caricatures that echo dominant negative portrayals of U.S. People of Color⁷¹

Although an understanding of Goldstein’s work is arguably crucial to answering Mountcastle’s queries about The Tibet Question, it is also useful to

⁷⁰ See page 70 of Goldstein’s *Snow Lion and the Dragon* for a discussion of Tibetans as overly emotional and thus irrational.

⁷¹ See (Hooks 1989; Hooks 1990; Michael K. Brown et al. 2003; Dávila 2008) for in-depth discussions of these patterns of assumption

understand how this question has been framed by other Tibet Studies scholars, which I will do in the next section.

The Third Party in Contemporary Tibet

In the introduction to June Teufel Dreyer and Barry Sautman's *Contemporary Tibet: politics, development, and society in a disputed region*, the editors lay out a now familiar framework for The Tibet Question:

There have been intermittent expectations of formal negotiations between the principal parties to The Tibet Question, but their zero-sum view of Tibet's political status, harsh recriminations, and mutual suspicion have been persistent obstacles(2006:3).

The "two parties" are outlined neatly here, made into homogenous entities which are suspicious and recriminating. The editors, like Goldstein, make reference to a third party, a group of "scholars" who influence debates about The Tibet Question. Clearly, Teufel Dreyer and Sautman place themselves among this group of "scholars", for immediately after discussing the trend of scholars influencing The Tibet Question, they add "the present volume is a contribution to that trend"(3). If we look at who is featured in the volume, we can get a good idea about who sets the terms of the discussion amongst "scholars". The editors are white, and although included contributions are from more racially diverse scholars, white men make up the majority of contributors.

In their introduction, the editors unintentionally reinforce the view that The Tibet Question hinges on a binary: "the debate about Tibet is often framed in binaries, but varied views do exist within the two camps on key issues"(4). Although

they are attempting here to allow for more heterogeneity, their re-inscription of two “camps” undercuts this goal. Although The Tibet Question most certainly involves both Tibetan and Chinese people, it also involves white people who, as demonstrated in this chapter, often take the role of arbiters⁷². The emphasis on camps has the effect of rendering invisible this third group—the “scholars” who are a majority white, writing in the terms which they have dictated.

This mysterious “third party” materializes in various parts of the introduction. For example, when there is a need to verify or refute an argument being made by one of the “camps”. In the case of population:

Exile leaders contend that the Tibetan population was 6 million in 1950 and the same half a century later, because the PRC government killed at least 1.2 million Tibetans through war, imprisonment, execution or famine. The figure is cited in western media, but has been challenged by demographers, and a prominent British writer, who, while leader of the UK Tibet support group, examined and found useless the documents on which the figure was based (6).

In the excerpt, we see a distinction between the same parenthesized westerners who Goldstein referred to in his definition of The Tibet Question, and the objective “scholars” who can offer an authoritative account of The Tibet Question. The first group, represented here by “the media” are framed as biased, having been pulled into the Tibetan “camp” and having presented their inaccurate claims as reality. Distinct from this group are the scholars—the “demographers”, and “prominent writers” who objectively search out the “truth” and reveal the bias of one of the camps. In this case, the “prominent British writer” is Patrick French, and the book referred to is *Tibet Tibet* (French 2003) the demographer is Yan Hao, a Chinese

⁷² Especially in the realm of scholarship and public opinion, if not direct political participation.

scholar who, in writing the cited article for the Institute of Economic Research, State Department of Planning Commission, Beijing, represents a party with clear political interests(Hao 2000).

The inclusion of Yan’s work here represents a possibly perplexing move on the part of the editors. As a representative of the Beijing government, wouldn’t Yan’s work normally be placed within the China “camp” that they have described? Does this inclusion challenge the patterns that I have identified thus far? The simple answer is no. Rather, it highlights one of the features of The Tibet Question—a question whose terms are dictated by white Tibetologists, often using a positivist framework. According to the unstated norms followed by those who write on “The Tibet Question”, these Tibetologists have the power to decide what information will be counted as “fact”, and what will be evidenced as “bias”. This allows them to pick and chose pieces of information from the two “camps” that they have described and use them to support the “impartial” arguments that they wish to make. A survey of publications, tenure, and course syllabi reveals that on the issue of The Tibet Question, white academics command the bulk of the institutional power necessary to decide who is and is not considered a “scholar,” and how that person’s work will be used in the context of the larger argument⁷³.

This brings us to the authors of the volume itself, and the inclusion in this volume of several women and men from non-white racial backgrounds. This inclusion is significant because it exemplifies a practice that has become popular in academia in an era of neoliberal multiculturalism and post-race orientalism when it

⁷³ See, for example, (Lopez 2008)

is no longer acceptable to have an all white and male group of contributors to an edition on an Asian country⁷⁴. In order to lend academic legitimacy to their volumes, white Tibetologists must now make attempts to include the voices of the people they are writing about. But inclusion means just that, *inclusion* in a debate whose terms are dictated by white masculinist notions of knowledge formation. Because practices of “inclusion” and “tolerance” do not challenge structural power relations, they are fundamentally different than collaboration. “Inclusion” is appropriately used to describe situations in which members of the dominant group remain in control of shaping the discourse. It is thus important to distinguish between practices of “inclusion” and “collaboration”, recognize the role that structural power relations play in each, and pay attention to the differing intellectual products that they generate.

Pro-Tibet or Anti-Chinese?

In the text *History as Propoganda*, which carries the telling subtitle of *Tibetan Exiles Versus the People’s Republic of China*, U.S. trained white Australian author John Powers offers yet another history of Tibetan-Chinese relations, with a focus on the modern era after 1949. Here, Powers follows many of the same patterns already noted above, he divides Tibetans and Chinese into “camps” (see subtitle, and page xi), posits himself as an objective observer (x), and presents a particularly demeaning and patronizing version of the “emotions” argument, which is worth quoting in full:

⁷⁴ See Hong (2008) for more on the practice of Neoliberal Multiculturalism.

[A] conclusion I reached during this study is that Tibetan and Chinese writers are operating within *a particular psychological context* in which certain assumptions guide their inquiry and predetermine their conclusions. Moreover, given their respective—and incommensurable—biases, there is little possibility that they will significantly deviate from the party lines of their communities (Powers 2004:xi)⁷⁵.

He goes on to describe these “shared imaginings” of Tibetan and Chinese authors as “absurd,” “highly implausible” “humorous in an unintended way” and finally “fraught by internal contradictions and inconsistencies”(xi). He further entrenches the homogeneity of each camp: “as readers will see, the respective narratives tend to be highly consistent, and so there is no need to survey every writer from the two groups on every point”(xi) and then makes attempts to “reconstruct the mentalities of the two communities” (xi) from his position as a impartial scholar presenting raw, balanced data: “while I have my own biases and presuppositions, I have tried to present the two positions in a balanced way and to let the authors speak in their own words”(xii).

While Powers and the other authors I have reviewed tend to reserve the bulk of their demeaning comments for Tibetan exiles,⁷⁶ they do not refrain from infantilizing and demeaning, the Chinese “camp”⁷⁷. As Sucheng Chan shows in *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Class* (Chan 2008), these are all

⁷⁵ Powers does not limit his argument here to the specific organizations of the PRC and CTA governments. Rather, his analysis extends beyond these institutional contexts and into the Tibetan and Chinese communities more generally.

⁷⁶ Powers states that the “most emotionally charged rhetoric is found in Tibetan History” (x).

⁷⁷ See, for example, Goldstein’s statement that Chinese are “simplistic and naïve”(1999:72), or Powers’ assertion on this page about the “particular psychological context” of Chinese and Tibetan “writers” (xi). Powers’ decision not to include modifiers for his term “writers” has the effect of simultaneously homogenizing and demeaning all writers who are Chinese and/ or Tibetan and labeling them “Biased”(xi). As discussed in Chapter 3, June Teufel Dreyer chooses the words “thousands of termite-like Han” (Teufel Dreyer 2003:423) in her description of Chinese who appear in a cartoon in an exile Tibetan newspaper. For more on this particular form of anti-Chinese imagery, see Daniel Vukovich’s “China and Orientalism (2012: 63).

familiar practices of Anti-Chinese racism that have a long history in the U.S. and other white-dominant countries.

Hence, although Goldstein may unintentionally align himself more closely with the Chinese perspective, as discussed above, I assert that the eagerness with which he also demeans the Chinese has its roots in the practices outlined by Chan and Vukovich.

When it is engaged by white westerners, the anti-Chinese ire that is commonly found among supporters of Free Tibet initiatives does not necessarily represent a supportive “pro-tibet” stance. On the contrary, I argue that the (parenthesized) pro-Tibet movement in the U.S. provides white people in the U.S. with an environment in which they can and do often express unrestrained anti-Chinese racism. The more explicit anti-Chinese sentiment of the “biased” (parenthesized) pro-Tibet movement in the U.S., I would argue, is echoed in some of the arguments of more decidedly pro-Tibet white western scholars⁷⁸. A small group of academics have tried to challenge the circumscribed logic of The Tibet Question, and turn the lens back onto “the west” and its perceptions. I will review some of these arguments in the next section.

Challenging the “Western” Variable in The Tibet Question

Although they have not contested the linguistic patterns concerning whiteness and “the West” discussed in chapter two, several Tibet-focused academics

⁷⁸ For example, see the work of June Teufel Dreyer and Robert Barnett, discussed in more detail in chapter three of this dissertation. See also Daniel Vukovich’s exploration of Anti-Chinese Racism within Pro-Tibet Rhetoric in his book *Orientalism in China* (2012).

have produced engaging scholarship which challenges the problematic patterns exemplified by The Tibet Question. Such scholarship offers a promising foundation for the kinds of conversations that this dissertation aims to inspire, conversations which focus on how whiteness matters in the context of Tibet. In this section, I will explore the critical work offered by Amy Mountcastle, Dibyesh Anand, and Donald Lopez, and in their attempts to challenge “Western⁷⁹” paradigms for Tibet.

Mountcastle

In her essay on “The Politics of the Real,” Amy Mountcastle explores the contours of the “objective” scholarly western third party presented above: “scholarly work is presumed to be the valid arbiter in a controversy where truth is protean and elusive” (2006:87). Here, she reveals the political agenda behind such claims to impartiality, asserting that “scholars” have only added to the tension surrounding The Tibet Question as they have attempted to define it. The “facts” that these scholars present, she emphasizes, may (intentionally or unintentionally) serve a political agenda that posits itself as academic and objective (88). She continues:

To assume that particular kinds of academic discourse stand apart from other representations of The Tibet Question, and that these are therefore more apt to convey, in some essential sense, “the real issue” of Tibet is to reify and support a particular view of the world, one that privileges certain values over others and upholds a particular constellation of power, privilege, and domination that structures knowledge and reality. Academic discourse, rather than standing apart from representational politics, is constitutive of it—and to no incidental degree—a fact that many scholars, especially since Edward Said’s seminal works, have recognized (88).

⁷⁹ In an attempt to counter the linguistic patterns explored in chapter two of this dissertation, I will put the words “west” and “western” in quotation marks throughout this chapter. Such marks are intended to signify a challenge to the dominant use of the term.

Mountcastle goes on to describe a tension between what she calls “realist” and “popular” claims to truth. She underlines the fact that realist approaches to truth tend to give preference to state logics. “Popular” claims, in this case exemplified by human rights discourse, are often framed by “realist” ideologies as idealistic, extraneous, irrelevant, or *unrealistic*. Rather than presenting an account that is somehow more accurate, as realist claims to truth purport to do, Mountcastle asserts that realist ideologies have the effect of subordinating popular versions of social and political reality and thus represent an attempt to control political discourse (98). She criticizes the “realist” *realpolitik* approach and its out-of-hand dismissal of the human rights-based strategies that have been central to the exiled Tibetan government for more than a decade. Rather than confirm the “popular” approach as somehow superior, she asserts that it must be considered outside of the dichotomy offered by “realist” claims to objectivity, as but one strategy available to a constrained Tibetan government.

Anand

How has Tibet been constructed in “the West”? Using a postcolonial lens, Dibyesh Anand explores representational practice of Tibet within “the West.” Concentrating on what he calls *poetics*, he explores how Tibet has been represented, and made invisible in contemporary international relations. He lays bare the ethnocentrism of International Relations (IR), and proposes a critical postcolonial approach to the international. In the later part of his book, he studies the *politics* of

representation regimes in the matter of Tibet, and explores how such discursive patterns have impacted the Tibetan community in exile.

Expanding on Goldstein's *realpolitik* definition of "The Tibet Question," Anand defines the term as more than "the conflict over the political status of Tibet vis-à-vis China" (Goldstein, 1994:17). Rather, he suggests the term as "an examination of the very categories of "Tibet" and "Tibetans" which refers to Tibet as an issue in world politics (Anand 2006:133). Through a postcolonial critique targeted first more broadly at International Relations, Anand points to several of the same patterns that I have outlined regarding The Tibet Question. For example, he discusses IR as a field whose limits are prescribed by "Westerners":

Even when various "global" voices and dialogue are sought and promoted (as in Rosenau 1993) the Third World is either ignored or *spoken for by some Westerner* [sic], revealing the will to universalize within IRs insular thinking" (Anand 2008:133 emphasis in original).

As Anand interrogates the particular forms that such insular thinking has taken within IR, he outlines the ways in which Tibet as the discursive other has been presented through tropes of inferiority. For example, the discursive other is described as a mob or horde (see Goldstein above), or as prone to unruliness, inspired by emotion, or given to passion (see Goldstein, Powers, Sautman, and Teufel Dreyer above) (Anand, 14). He explores in detail several derogatory strategies of representing the "West's" "Other" that remain central today, albeit often in more acceptable "liberal marketable terms" (36).

In the second part of his book, he explores identity discourses that circulate within the Tibetan diaspora. He underlines the ways in which these have been

affected by the poetics of representation, in both political and cultural spheres, and explores new possible ways of theorizing Tibetanness with an emphasis on postcolonial symbolic geography and cultural identity discourses (88). Throughout his exploration, he emphasizes the importance of structural power relations. Therefore, while he acknowledges that representational practices of “the other” are universally found among different groups of people, meaning that Tibetans may exoticize “the West” as much as “Westerners” exoticize Tibet⁸⁰, “the impact [of such representational practices] differs according to the existing power relations” (18):

While Western [sic] exoticization has a defining productive impact on Tibetan identity discourse, the same cannot be said of Tibetan exoticization of the West [sic]. This reflects the asymmetry in their power relations (18).

In making this argument, Anand directly complicates Tsering Shakya’s assertion that “The majority of Tibetans living either in exile or in Tibet are not conscious of the Western[sic] discourse on Tibet” (Shakya 2001:186). Anand presents compelling evidence that the power asymmetry described above is especially relevant within the context of the Tibetan diaspora, where the most basic of needs: shelter, food, and clothing, are often met through direct interaction with state entities that reify the dominant discursive and imaginative patterns of IR. The question of asymmetry is also of paramount importance in the political framing of Tibet for both the Tibetan and Chinese governments. In Anand’s essay in the collection *Contemporary Tibet*, he underscores “the West’s” role in such politicized discursive constructions of Tibet:

⁸⁰ See chapter 7 for examples.

Sovereignty, viewed as exclusive national jurisdiction, is an aspect of modernity: indeed, the West supplies the very categories and vocabulary that The Tibet Question parties employ in the discourse of sovereignty, even though an absolute understanding of sovereignty and independence was alien to both Chinese and Tibetans before the twentieth century and even though both peoples identify themselves as politically and culturally non-Western [sic] (Anand 2006:9).

Hence, historically all cultures and civilizations have generated and disseminated their own representational practices concerning “the Other,” on the level of both individual and nation. However, according to Anand, the project of modern European imperialism provided the structural capacity to convert such representations into *truth* on a systematic and mass scale (19). The claim to objectivity is one tool of such systemic *truthmaking*.

Lopez

Perhaps the most well-known of all scholars to challenge “Western” conceptions of Tibet is Donald Lopez, with his book *Prisoners of Shangri-La* (1998). This book is invaluable in the context of this dissertation project because it actively takes up the challenge offered by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, and applies an intensive discursive analysis to the fantastical literature surrounding Tibet, with a particular focus on the “flights of fancy and imagination” surrounding the myth of Shangri-La (12). As Tsering Shakya notes in his review of the book, it presents “a welcome departure from the usual approach to Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in western academic studies”(Shakya 2001:184), focused not on the positivist project of constructing a “real” Tibet in opposition to Orientalist narratives, but instead to “to draw[ing] attention to how images of Tibet, and particularly Tibetan Buddhism,

have been constructed in Western [sic] culture” (Shakya 184). Highlighting the ways in which the scholarly and the popular converge, Lopez explores how knowledges about Tibet have taken form, and hardened into the walls of a “prison” in which he claims “Tibetan Lamas in exile and their students are at once the inmates and the guards”(13). His work concentrates not on claims to truth or objectivity in the matter of The Tibet Question, but rather, on a habit which he asserts is compulsive among Tibet’s supporters in “the West”: the need to invoke the romantic myth of Shangri-La in their defense of Tibet. He fears, “the continued idealization of Tibet—its history and its religion—may ultimately harm the cause of Tibetan independence” (11). I will come back to Lopez’s important arguments in the final part of chapter 8 of this dissertation.

Closing Thoughts

Returning to Goldstein’s comparison of the Tibetan uprising of 1959 with the Watts riots and Wounded Knee, it is important to note that Tashi Rabgey and Tseten Wangchuk’s work extends no such comparison. Indeed, *Sino Tibetan Relations in the Post Mao Era* presents a far less *dramatic* account of Tibetan Chinese negotiations that have taken place over the past half-century. It is not my intention here, however, to prove that Rabgey’s and Wangchuk’s account is “more accurate” than Goldstein’s, since that would simply return my own stance to a positivist one. I do assert, however, that Rabgey and Wangchuk’s account employs the technologies of Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed*. This is evident not only in the hopeful

tone evident in Sino-Tibetan relations, but also in Rabgey's other writings. For example, in her review of *Tibet through Dissident Chinese Eyes*, Rabgey states that, this book "will very likely be remembered as capturing an important moment in the long road to peace between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples" (Rabgey 1999:188). The choice to portray the Tibetan-Chinese relations using the phrase "long road to peace," is notable. The deconstructionist arguments put forward by Mountcastle, Anand, and Lopez can aid readers in subjecting scholarly claims of objectivity to critical scrutiny, often revealing them as patronizing accounts notable for their absence of hope. Here I am intentionally breaking with one of the cardinal rules of social science to suggest that an analysis self consciously driven by hope is preferable over one which claims objectivity. I assert that such a break is in accordance with the methodology of the oppressed outlined by Sandoval. An understanding of the *poetics* of the Tibet Question can serve as a useful guide to those works which are driven by such alternative methodologies.

Departing markedly from the positivist stance that Goldstein takes⁸¹, wherein scholars attempt to hide their bias behind claims to "objectivity", the work of practitioners of the Methodology of the Oppressed is gathered, driven, and oriented around a strong commitment to egalitarian social relations—to equalizing power between humans. It is my hope that an honest discussion about the role of whiteness in "The Tibet Question" and in the matter of Tibet more generally can lay the groundwork needed for work of scholars like Rabgey, Anand, and Mountcastle to

⁸¹ Especially in his earlier work.

be taken more seriously within the field, and for more scholars to take up such engaged methodologies in their work.

5: Whiteness in China Studies

Tibet as “Internal” or Non-Existent

After living in an eastern Tibetan area for four years, I came to the University of Washington to begin my PhD in anthropology. I planned to focus my work broadly on the Tibetan area where I had lived. I chose this school over others namely because of the funding that was available to me here, a recruitment fellowship in China Studies from the Jackson School of International Studies. I eagerly accepted this funding, along with a Foreign Languages and Area Studies fellowship in Chinese during my first term. Although I had planned to study Tibet, I soon found myself firmly rooted in the field of China studies, where Tibet, for the most part, did not exist. It was not until my fourth year, when I met with scholars at the Tibetan Library of Works and Archives in Dharamsala, that I discovered the extent of the Tibetan collection housed in the University of Washington libraries, and began to realize that I was attending a University central to the founding of Tibetology within the United States.

The erasure of Tibet within the field of International Relations (IR) and Area Studies is a pattern discussed in depth in the work of Dibyesh Anand. He underlines the fact that Tibet within the rubric of IR is most often erased, or if it does appear, it is mostly considered as an issue internal to China or in terms of its role in Sino-Western relations (Anand 2008:xv). In addition, he asserts that the kind of self-reflexivity demanded by postcolonial scholars is absent from IR, even as a close linkage between IR and policy makers continues today, especially in the U.S. (6).

The powerful influence of IR, and the paradigms it dictates, cannot be underestimated within the U.S. academy. Due to this influence, the subject of “Tibet” can only be studied outside of the field of “China Studies” in a handful of universities⁸², and even in these, geopolitical inquiries are often deferred in favor of scholarship that focuses on religion. As such, I assert that a study of whiteness in the context of Tibet would be incomplete without an exploration of whiteness within China Studies—the dominant academic paradigm that shapes the terms with which discussions of Tibet must contend. In this section, I will examine whiteness in China Studies on two levels, in responses to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, and as whiteness has been discussed directly by China Studies scholars.

China Studies and Orientalism

Since its first publication in 1978, *Orientalism*, the most famous work of Edward Said, has been the subject of a host of critiques as well as praise. For example, although it offers a trenchant critique of the ways that “the East” has been feminized” by “the West, [sic]” it includes no substantial feminist analysis to support this critique, and at times, it is blatantly androcentric in its framing⁸³. In addition, like some of the postcolonial scholars who follow him, Said infrequently discusses whiteness or race directly in his analysis, although both concepts remain central to the formation of what he broadly calls “the West [sic]”. Despite these critiques, *Orientalism* remains an incisive analysis of knowledge formation and power, many

⁸² University of Virginia, University of Indiana, Columbia University, and Case Western being at the forefront of these.

⁸³ See (Yeğenoğlu 1998).

of whose core arguments remains relevant to this day, and many of which are invaluable for discussions of race. In this section, I will take up the key assertions made by Said, and put them in conversation with the analyses of two white scholars who have published work on both *Orientalism* and whiteness in China in the contemporary period: Tom Mullaney and Louisa Schein.

In the years since Said made his groundbreaking argument in *Orientalism* in 1978, a number of white Sinologists have challenged his assertions. I am interested in the work of Mullaney and Schein because it exemplifies larger patterns that can be found in the field of China studies as a whole; patterns which often find their way into discussions about Tibet. Both Mullaney and Schein have worked explicitly on the topic of race in modern China—focusing on whiteness as a key concept, and both have engaged with Said’s *Orientalism* in important ways. Here, I will investigate their arguments, and what these can tell us about whiteness in China Studies as a discipline.

According to Edward Said, since the time of Homer, “the West”—namely, the areas currently known as Britain, France and the US—have been consumed by a discourse which he names “Orientalism.” This discourse constructs and interacts with “the Orient” from within certain power structures. Although “Orientalism” is not monolithic, but multifaceted, Orientalist works have been characterized by an oppressive relationship to “the Orient” wherein “the West” has granted itself to speak for and about “Orientals” and thus shape their future without consulting them. In 1978, Said aimed to analyze and catalogue this immensely powerful rhetorical imagination and its various effects.

Said asserts that “Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension of modern political intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (Said 1978:12). In this section, I will take up this key assertion made by Said, and put it in conversation with the work of China studies scholars.

Surviving Orientalism

In “Saidian Orientalism and East Asian Studies, or ‘Can Orientalism Survive?’” Tom Mullaney clearly outlines some of the main arguments that have been made against Said, weaving in his own critiques, which he claims point to the “limitations of Said’s theoretical framework” (Mullaney 2001:56). Here, he frames two main critiques of Said’s work. The first is that Said’s theory of Orientalism is predicated on an East/West binary which is so generalizable that it can be applied to “practically any historical or temporal terrain where binaries are to be found”(56). Secondly, Mullaney argues that Said’s critique is weakened by the fact that it overlooks the “East” side of Orientalist production, and therefore has a silencing power over people who live in the actual “Orient”. He offers several examples of eastern scholars who have put forward theories of Occidentalism to explain the eastern relationship with the West, and also gives examples of what he calls “internal orientalism,” historical moments in which Eastern nation states have dominated those within their borders. Finally, he asserts that he will “turn Saidian Orientalism on its head by taking the Western variable out of the equation altogether”(68). He

follows this claim with examples of “non-Western historical case studies” wherein one East Asian nation has dominated another (i.e. Japan and China).

I assert here that the criticisms made in this article and those it references: Fox (1992), Schein (2000), and Hershatter (1993), depart markedly from the ways in which feminist and critical race theorists have understood, applied, and built on Said’s arguments, and are therefore often incongruent with the strategies of the *Methodology of the Oppressed*, and with the productive cultivation of white realist identities⁸⁴. In my analysis of these critiques, I argue that common declarations by white Sinologist scholars of Said’s work as “dead,” “overarching” or “inaccurate” reveal something important about white subjectivity and power in the field of China Studies.

One first important pattern to consider is that in Mullaney’s overview of *Orientalism*, he passes over an element of Said’s argument which is considered crucial by many of the Feminist/critical race theorists who have built on Said’s work⁸⁵. In his synopsis, Mullaney focuses on the “East-West binary” that is central to Orientalism as Said describes it. Although Mullaney’s focus here is warranted, the East West binary is not the only aspect of Orientalism that Said argues must be taken into account. Said states clearly that:

For a European or American studying the orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of *his* [sic] actuality: that he [sic] comes up against the orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or American is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient”(11).

⁸⁴ See chapter two

⁸⁵ See, for example, (Smith 2006)

This powerful assertion means that any “Western” person studying “the East” must consider their own positionality, and how they fit into the historical legacy that has created the hegemonic ideology that is Orientalism. Mullaney and Schein draw very different lessons from Said than scholars committed to understanding power on a structural and ideological level have. Because of this, I would argue that they are not able to take in the full force of Said’s critique, and its implications. Due to positivistic framings of their work on Said, they end up asking unproductive questions like:

Can Saidian Orientalism make the transition to a socio-historic environment in which material and historical factors do not correspond to those in Said’s chosen geographical area of study? (Mullaney 2001:59).

Said states in his introduction that he will not tackle such questions, for *Orientalism* is a book about a “Western[sic]” ideology: “Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension of modern political intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (Said 1978:12) .

In posing his question, Mullaney asks Said’s work to do work outside of its explicitly stated focus on *discourse* over any reality which discourse purports to describe. Ironically, Said offers an a priori counter argument to Mullaney’s assertions: “the things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original”(Said, 21).

Because scholars who follow Mullaney’s logic miss what I take as Said’s key point, they end up making power-evasive arguments about a practice of “Occidentalism” in the East. It is not only white scholars who take such a stance. Mullaney sites the work of Xiaomei Chen, whose book *Occidentalism* he claims

provides proof of “a politically and culturally motivated image of the [West as] Other” (Mullaney 2001:65). In reality, Chen’s book is more nuanced than Mullaney presents. Chen in fact argues that Occidentalism is not the complimentary equal of Orientalism, for:

Orientalism, in Said’s account, is a strategy of Western [sic] world domination, whereas, as the rest of this study seeks to show, Chinese Occidentalism is primarily a discourse that has been evoked by various and competing groups within Chinese society for a variety of different ends (Chen 1995:5).

Chen does, however, echo Mullaney’s claims that *Orientalism* strips Asian subjects of their agency. She states “Said’s claims do not provide for even the possibility of an anti-official discourse within “Oriental” societies” (Chen 1995:9). But Said makes it clear in his introduction that although people in “the Orient” have responded to Orientalism in a variety of ways, he will not take up these responses in his text, because his book is at its heart about outlining an ideology. Chen makes a logical leap in declaring that Said’s decision not to *focus* on Asian responses to Orientalism leaves no room for such a project.

The fact that Chen partially shares Mullaney’s critiques illustrates the reality that discounting of Said’s work happens across racial lines. Chen and other Chinese scholars are indeed set up to benefit from the promotion of such ideas in the current climate of China Studies departments in the U.S., where critiques of Said are more often published than those who agree with and build on his arguments⁸⁶. However, the benefits that Asian scholars reap will never be as great in this system as they are

⁸⁶ For example, a search for the term “Orientalism” in *The China Quarterly* reveals 23 results, the majority of which deal are critiques, or focus on concepts of “Occidentalism” in the manner that Chen describes. *The China Information Journal* returns 12 results, the majority of which again focus on critique, Occidentalism, or Chinese responses to Orientalism. For more on this pattern, and specifically on the work of Chen, see (Daniel Vukovich 2012).

for white men, for whom the current China Studies structure is designed to benefit⁸⁷.

Said foresees such a problem in the first edition of his book, and cautions against it:

Above all, I hope to have shown my reader that the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism. No former “Oriental” will be comforted by the thought that having been an Oriental himself [sic] he [sic] is likely—too likely—to study new “Orientals”—or “Occidentals”—of his [sic] own making. If the knowledge of Orientalism has any meaning, it is in being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, anytime. Now perhaps more than ever (328).

The argument put forth by white and Chinese China Studies scholars that there is something practiced in the East that is akin to Orientalism called “Occidentalism”⁸⁸ sounds remarkably familiar to the popular claim that white people make of “reverse racism” from People of Color in the United States⁸⁹. This class of argument is power-evasive because it effectively erases the institutional historical power relations that back up individual prejudices to make them systemic, i.e racist, and the racist, colonial histories which back up Orientalism to make it Orientalism.

This is not to discount the fact that white people in China encounter racial prejudice. As I have personally experienced, Chinese people can indeed treat white people as different, and it is not uncommon to experience biased, and even violent treatment based on meanings that different people ascribe to white racial appearance (especially as a white *woman*). But the point that many China Studies

⁸⁷ For more on this claim, please see (Barlow 1993). Claims of a continued practice of the very Orientalism that Said described in his 1978 book, an Orientalism which frames the East as “a career” for Western, read: white, men (ix;1978) are certainly founded, especially when one considers the racial breakdown in area studies/international studies departments. The China Studies program at the University of Washington, for example, is host to seven white and only four Asian full professors, and ten white and two Asian associate professors, the majority of whom are male (<http://jsis.washington.edu/china/faculty.shtml>). This racial breakdown is not unique to the University of Washington, and reveals China Studies as a discipline in which white men remain dominant.

⁸⁸ In the way that Mullaney, not Chen uses the term.

⁸⁹ See chapter two.

scholars who write about race in China have not yet considered is that this different treatment does not have the same institutional and historical force behind it that white supremacy, and Orientalism have against non-white people on a global scale.

It is my assertion that white scholars of Asia, despite having engaged repeatedly with Said's work, still have not grappled with one of his fundamental points: that we must come to terms with our own power in making the East a career. That we must come to terms with what it means to be "Western". Instead of taking on Said's challenge, a great deal of energy within China Studies has been spent attempting to counter Said's arguments. Daniel Vukovich confirms this assertion in *China and Orientalism*:

The critique of orientalism has [...] met with great resistance within the China field, and almost invariably takes the form of either flat out dismissal or an uncomprehending caricature of Said's project that renders it an "exaggerated" critique of ethnocentric bias"(2012:13).

Absent of an engaged exploration of one of Said's key arguments, scholars may find themselves making awkward claims like the one Mullaney forwards in his paper that Orientalism, which Said defines as a "Western" ideology, can happen independent of the "West".

As much as the claims that scholars like Mullaney make in their work may depart from claims made by U.S. Third World/Women of Color Feminist and Critical Race Theorists, their work must be taken seriously to the extent that it represents a popular and well-published viewpoint held by many China Studies scholars.

Returning to Mullaney, it is important to note that he mostly uses the non-reflexive work of white scholars as his evidence that Orientalism can happen independent of

“the West”. The oversight here is striking⁹⁰, for he is essentially using Orientalist scholarship to prove that Orientalist scholarship can happen independent of “the West”. In addition, I argue that because Orientalist scholarship is at its core about “the West” and its relationship with the East, scholars in white dominant countries need to understand that when power hierarchies play themselves out in Asia, it is inaccurate to label these Orientalist. Destructive, cruel, artful, or violent, yes. But not Orientalist.

The Politics of White Skin in China Studies

As discussed in Mullaney’s work⁹¹, Louisa Schein has also written her own popular essay on *Orientalism* which seeks to challenge the argument put forth by Said⁹² in proving the existence of “internal Orientalism” in China (Schein 1997). Although this is a provocative essay and worthy of analysis, I will not focus on it here, as it exemplifies many of the same patterns already revealed by Mullaney. Instead, I will focus on an earlier piece of writing by Schein about race—and whiteness—in modern China.

In her essay on “The Consumption of Color and the Politics of White Skin in Post Mao China,” Schein traces what she asserts is a shift in the politics of difference

⁹⁰ I contend that Mullaney’s argument would have been much stronger if he has used source materials from Chinese scholars writing in Chinese.

⁹¹ See pages 62, 72, 73.

⁹² I characterize her argument as a challenge in response to her statement: “This [Orientalisms] totalizing bifurcation of the globe into the categories of representer-represented obscures, as critics have begun to argue, the historical multiplicity of axes of domination, many of which, despite being non-European, were decidedly colonial and others of which were more broadly imperializing. Furthermore it excludes the “west” as a potential object of essentialist representation, as Carrier (1992) has noted, stopping short at the conclusion that the “East” is mute and is therefore inherently incapable of othering”((Schein 1997:72).

in China, which can be seen most clearly in practices of “commoditization and enmeshment in the global economy”(Schein 1994). According to Schein, the image of the white woman is less politically charged as she becomes more familiar. Her “otherness” is eroded through familiarity. Because “the white woman sells” she is represented in a sexual way on a range of products available for consumption, from calendars to descriptions of China’s legal system (146). Her otherness is also eroded because Asian women are increasingly eroticized in a similar manner, and used to “sell” in the same way. Both Asian and “Western [sic]”⁹³ women are displayed in a sexual way to sell commodities.

Second, with globalization has come an “imagined cosmopolitanism” where Chinese people, in their encounters with media and advertising, imagine themselves as consumers, and their “oppositional Chinese identity” diminishes. Third, the “folk woman” is also being consumed by Chinese people who are nostalgic, and in some cases Chinese men seek to have literal control over, or “posses” folk women. Schein’s second project here is a “rethinking of the Chinese landscape in terms of internal difference and in terms of the weakening of the boundary with the outside”(156). At the end of her article, she cites Appadurai (1993) and says that “a reorganization of global space through *postnational* linkages which supplant or rival territorial nation states” is taking place (157).

Although Schein’s essay presents some interesting ideas about race in modern China, she falls into many of the Orientalist patterns that Said presciently warns against. Although she places herself in her work, unfortunately, the story she

⁹³ The substitution of the word “western” for “white” in an essay about whiteness is an important pattern that is linked to the linguistic patterns discussed in Chapter 3 around whiteness in Tibetology.

tells begins when she lands in China, as a white woman. With no investigation into the historical machinations that shaped her journey to “the East”, or her ability to “make the East a career”, her analysis is missing important information. She asserts that “the white woman represents a figure of alterity in China” and asks “for what or whom does she [the white woman] constitute the Other?” (143). But to assume that a white person can be “the Other⁹⁴” because she is treated differently is again to flatten power hierarchies. Because the historical power hierarchies described by Vijay Prashad⁹⁵ continue to shape the world we live in today, the white “other” in China is not the same as the Person of Color “Other” in the United States⁹⁶.

Schein begins by asking what whiteness means in the Chinese imaginary, but she does not ask the essential first question for feminist and critical race theorists, what is whiteness in the *White* imaginary⁹⁷? She then goes on to quote Fanon to describe the feelings that Asian men may have towards white women. However, because of an ahistorical analysis, and a lack of knowledge about the three pillars of white supremacy, she misses the possibility that a Black man from Martinique would necessarily have a very different relationship to white women than an Asian man from China given the different historical racial formations that have coalesced around these sets of relationships. Because she does not tell the first part of this

⁹⁴ “This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’. Whereas the Other corresponds to the focus of desire or power [...] in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power” (Tiffin, Ashcroft, and Griffiths 2009:156).

⁹⁵ See chapter five

⁹⁶ Implicit in Schein’s question is the assumption that a white woman in China can be “the Other,” which I believe Spivak’s definition and use of “the Other” would challenge.

⁹⁷ I assert that this is problematic because Schein’s work is often listed, referenced, and referred to as “feminist”.

story, her work is not as powerful as it could be. Her article confirms one of the basic arguments made by Daniel Vukovich regarding Orientalism in China studies:

Within China studies “The basic Saidian question is elided: Who gets to write the Other, and how? The response to Said and post colonialism was from the very beginning one of incomprehension” (2012:15)

In addition eliding a discussion of her own racial perspective and its potential impacts, Schein also renders white a “neutral” category, arguing that Shanghai women who receive plastic surgery to make themselves appear more white are being “de-racialized” (148). In several parts of her essay, she confuses the term “Westerner” with the term “white,” a common mistake, and highly problematic in an essay that sets out to discuss the meanings of whiteness as it travels around the globe. This slippage is clear in the following quote:

“In the 1980s, more than ten thousand people altered themselves at a single Shanghai hospital [creating epicanthic folds, widening eyes, and raising noses] The Westerner [sic] was resituated, with fleshy reality, within the Chinese body” (148).

She continues to propose that this practice could be seen as a series of “abject capitulations to white aesthetics of physical beauty” or it could also be taken as “evidence of the kind of creolizing artifice that Mercer (1990) described for the relaxing and dying of black hair—a set of practices that refused impermeability of race categories”(148). I argue that Schein’s assertion that plastic surgery on the part of Shanghai women to reshape their faces in a distinctly “Caucasian” manner is a practice of “refus[ing] the impermeability of race categories” is harmful. If anything, such a practice *reaffirms* the intractability of race in this instance, and its connection

to beauty standards, which is why one must be physically altered to attain a certain *white* beauty standard.

Through these explorations of Mullaney and Schein's work, I hope to point out that to understand race and China, academic scholars, and *especially* white academic scholars, must begin our story much earlier than most usually do. White China Studies scholars must place ourselves in our analysis, as Said has suggested. In Said's conclusion, he asks, "What of some alternative to Orientalism? Is this book an argument only *against* something, and not *for* something positive?" (Said 1978:325). He answers this question with the assertion that his project in this book has been "to describe a particular system of ideas, not by any means to displace this system with a new one" (325). Despite this, he applauds efforts by some scholars to employ methodological self-consciousness⁹⁸. He offers:

If Orientalism has historically been too smug, too insulated, too positivistically confident in its ways and its premises, then one way of opening oneself to what one studies in or about the Orient is reflexively to submit one's method to critical scrutiny (327).

Said's assertion is relevant to the new relationship with critique that many U.S. Third World/Women of Color Feminist and Critical Race scholars propose⁹⁹. This is a relationship which does not seek to defend against assertions like the ones that Said makes—that knowledge is power, and that all scholarship on the Orient is inherently political—but use these assertions as a starting point for a critical evaluation of one's own positionality. As Said contends:

No one can escape dealing with, if not the East/West division, then the North/South one, the have/have not one, the imperialist/anti-imperialist

⁹⁸ Clifford Geertz, and Maxime Rodinon and Jacques Berque. Though he later excoriates Geertz.

⁹⁹ See chapter two

one, the white/colored one. We cannot get around them by pretending they do not exist; on the contrary, contemporary Orientalism teaches us a great deal about the intellectual dishonesty of dissembling on that score, the result of which is to intensify the divisions and make them both vicious and permanent”(327).

When white scholars of China refuse to take up Said’s request, can we honestly expect to be taken seriously by anyone other than each other? The assertion of Asian American scholar Sucheng Chan in the text *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture* suggests not: “What difference does research make when the sources used are impregnated with age old bizarre assumptions¹⁰⁰ that impugn the dignity of the subject the author was writing about?”(Chan 2008:18). Shortly after asking this question, she reminds us of the dangers of remaining ignorant:

Anti-Chinese images are so deeply ingrained in the American popular as well as scholarly imaginations that they continue to lie dormant, lurking just beneath the surface, and can instantaneously reappear when forces in the larger society create conditions conducive to their resurrection (20).

Understanding this danger, and the ridiculousness of research conducted with “age-old bizarre assumptions as its foundation,” it is especially unfortunate to discover that white scholars who have refused Said’s challenge are not only taken seriously, but constitute the dominant voice in discussions of Asia within the fields of Anthropology and China Studies. Among the many factors which contribute to the viability of such ignorance is a phenomenon which I call “post-race Orientalism” which I will explore in the next section.

¹⁰⁰ For example, assuming that it is fruitful to analyze “whiteness” in China without addressing larger social and historical contexts which created the concept of whiteness, or assuming Orientalism, which is fundamentally a western ideology, can happen independent of the West, even as it is being observed and catalogued by observers located in white dominant countries.

Critical Han Studies and Post-Race Orientalism

In February of 2012, a new book was released to the academic public titled *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority* edited by Thomas Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche. This critical collection offers a series of intriguing explorations into Han identity, which its editors pose as “the largest ethnonational group in that country [China] but also one of the largest categories of human identity in world history” (Mullaney et al. 2012:11). The glowing reviews from critical race scholars which embellish the abstract for this volume prepare readers to confront an incisively political exploration of racial identity within the context of the People’s Republic of China:

“This deeply historical, multidisciplinary volume consistently and fruitfully employs insights from critical race and whiteness studies in a new arena. In doing so it illuminates brightly how and when ideas about race and ethnicity change in the service of shifting configurations of power.”

--David Roediger, author of *How Race Survived U.S. History*

“A great book. By examining the social construction of hierarchy in China, *Critical Han Studies* sheds light on broad issues of cultural dominance and in-group favoritism.”

--Richard Delgado, author of *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*

In the book’s introduction, Thomas Mullaney says “there are certain concepts and methodological approaches that have been developed as part of the study of whiteness that encourage scholars of China to view the Han category in radically new ways” (2). He also proclaims that the volume represents “the first step toward the creation of a new area of analysis, one provisionally titled ‘Critical Han Studies’”(3). Unfortunately, this interesting book is plagued by the same irony that

characterized Mullaney's earlier article on Orientalism¹⁰¹. Despite its promise to create a new sub-discipline with Critical Race Theory, a read through the book reveals that its four white male editors have not engaged meaningfully with the tools of Critical Race Theory¹⁰². They do not discuss their own white male subjectivity¹⁰³, nor do they consider the orientalist implications of a book that critiques Han dominance without also tackling white supremacy. This is not to say that Han Supremacy should not be discussed. In fact, as Tashi Rabgey mentions in her review of *Tibet through Dissident Chinese Eyes*, this is an extremely important and valuable project. However, if such a project is to be taken on by white intellectuals, then it will be far more effective when done so from a position in which the white editors have thought about, discussed, and addressed their own position in a dominant racial group.

I argue that if white scholars are to take on frames of critical analysis such as CRT, they must be self reflexive and consider how their own positionality¹⁰⁴ not only matters, but is in fact central to the scholarship they produce, the theory they use, and the questions they ask. I argue this for two reasons. Critical Race Theory, like

¹⁰¹ Saidian Orientalism and East Asian Studies, or "Can Orientalism Survive?"

¹⁰² See, for example, the introduction to the volume, in which Mullaney's discussion of how "the Han" has been discussed in academia almost exclusively references white men (with the exception of Emily Honig, who is a white woman, on page 6). It is not until he begins describing contributors to the present volume, on page 7, that he refers to a scholar who is not white. Evidence that the editors have not engaged meaningfully with the tools of critical race theory can also be found in the linguistic terms that are used to signal race throughout the contributors' pieces. For example the term "Eurasian" is used in Emma Teng's analysis without a critical discussion of this term's origins in the eugenics project. It is my contention that if the authors had engaged Critical Race Theory meaningfully, it would be reflected in the language and self-reflexivity of the contributors' essays.

¹⁰³ For example, see page 9, where Mullaney refers to himself as "a person of mixed western European heritage" rather than referring to himself as white. Although both descriptions obviously have merit, the first at best can only constitute an oblique reference to whiteness, which is contradictory in a volume that aspires to engage the insights of whiteness studies.

¹⁰⁴ Positionality is a term central to feminist epistemology. It is the idea that academic knowledge is always produced by actors occupying specific social locations. For more on positionality see Haraway (1998), Sandoval (2000).

much of the feminist and anticolonialist literature it is in conversation with, is a decidedly activist approach to knowledge. It is a discipline whose adherents openly claim a stake in the work that they produce. Ironically, as Richard Delgado (the same person who glowingly reviewed *Critical Han Studies*) states, “unlike some academic disciplines, Critical Race Theory contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it.”(3; 2001). Hence to attempt to use this body of theory in a detached, impartial, or objective manner is to undercut the very foundations of the theory itself. In addition, I argue for a critical reflexivity because I believe its lack may signal participation in the post civil rights era form of racial management that Jodi Melamed has called “Neoliberal Multiculturalism”:

In contrast to white supremacy, the liberal race paradigm recognizes racial inequality as a problem, and it secures a liberal symbolic framework for race reform centered in abstract equality, market individualism, and inclusive civic nationalism. Antiracism becomes a nationally recognized social value, and for the first time, gets absorbed into U.S. governmentality” (Melamed 2006, 2).

Hong argues that this new form of racial management:

Allows for, and indeed requires, the nominal valorization of black feminism as a way to deflect charges of racism and misogyny, which does not preclude and in many instances facilitates the exclusion and extinguishing of black feminists (103; 2008).

The practice of neoliberal multiculturalism uses antiracist ideas and theories to secure white privilege and further ‘liberal’ white supremacy in the academy. Such a situation is possible when diversity is valued only on a superficial level, without requiring academics, and especially academics who find themselves in the dominant position of being white, male, and/or straight, to work through the uncomfortable transformations in thought and habit that true diversity would require. Instead of

completing this work, diversity is declared “already achieved”, and the people who point out the continued racist practices which create hostile working environments are written off as “too sensitive” or “reverse racist”.

Hence what Delgado defines as microaggression, the “stunning small encounter with racism, usually unnoticed by members of the majority race” (2001; 151) becomes normalized. The normalization of microaggression towards members of minority groups is reflected not only in small numbers of tenured faculty of color, but also in reduced institutional support for Critical Race, Feminist, and Queer scholarship even as some universities ramp up their diversity programs¹⁰⁵. To push against this trend requires constant vigilance and questioning, notably on the part of dominant scholars who are often oblivious to just such a system. When stripped of its political dimensions, its critical reflexivity, Critical Race Theory can easily become yet another manifestation of neoliberal multiculturalism.

One additional reason to ask that white scholars think about and discuss their own racial positionality before discussing the position of another dominant group is effectiveness. Without self-reflexivity, incisive critiques of Han supremacy may appear as little more than hypocritical finger-pointing. In one important sentence within the introduction to his new volume, Mullaney provides the following commentary on a quote by Barbara Flagg:

‘Whiteness attains opacity, becomes apparent to the white mind, only in relation to, and contrast with, the ‘color’ of non-whites.’
Such concepts resonate powerfully with the practice of Han identity, one that enjoys a powerful and hegemonic neutrality all its own (3).

¹⁰⁵ See Hong, 2008 for documentation of this phenomenon.

This commentary reveals an important pattern within Mullaney's "critical Han Studies" and Sinology as a whole. Doubtless a large part of the reason for a hesitance to discuss White subjectivity comes from the inextricable linkage of whiteness to the horrific projects of colonialism and imperialism, which many white people would prefer to consider over, at least in the case of "Western" countries. It is important to note, however, that far less discomfort is expressed when the issue of Han Chinese dominance, hegemony, and empire is up for discussion. In the work of some white Sinologists and Tibetologists, critique of Han hegemony is ubiquitous. If such work represents a true commitment to participatory democracy, as is often espoused¹⁰⁶ then critiques must apply equally to all groups that have worked to thwart the democratic process, with white people in North America and Europe prominently featured. As opposed to representing a commitment to egalitarian values, as such analysis would purport to do, I argue that a critique of racial hegemony focused solely on Han China can constitute a particular form of colorblindness that is appropriately termed, "post-race orientalism", a new formation of Orientalism which uses colorblind logic to assert colonial claims to white "Western" superiority.

According to Charles Gallagher (2003), post-race is a mindset which allows people to imagine that the U.S. is a true meritocracy, where skin color has no bearing on socio-economic success. In Gallagher's words, a colorblind, post-race discourse:

Removes from personal thought and public discussion any taint or suggestion of white supremacy or white guilt while legitimating the existing social, political, and economic arrangements which privilege whites (1:2003).

¹⁰⁶ See (D. Vukovich 2009)

A post-race Orientalism, then, is one in which the moral superiority of white-dominant countries is reaffirmed using a rhetoric of democracy, freedom, civil rights, and multiculturalism to assert the superiority of white dominant countries over China.

In the case of *Critical Han Studies*, Critical Race Theory itself becomes the pin on which post-race orientalism turns. It becomes the “proof” that the white-dominant United States is more “liberal” than the Han-dominant People’s Republic of China. This volume, including its glowing reviews from the founding fathers¹⁰⁷ of Critical Race Theory, stands as a warning signal proclaiming the urgent need for critical race theorists to take Robert Chang’s assertion seriously: “One problem with Critical Race Theory is that while it has made the powerful claim that race matters, it has yet to show that different races matter differently” (Chang: 1999, 46). When critical race scholars like Delgado and Roediger¹⁰⁸ do not present clearly enough in their work the ways that race matters differently, the ways that race matters in the context of orientalism, then they end up promoting post-race orientalist scholarship as Critical Race Theory.

Post race orientalism shares some features with a parallel phenomena outlined recently by Daniel Vukovich in his book *China and Orientalism* (2012). Here, Vukovich addresses and catalogs what he calls “Sinological orientalism”, a practice which sanctions the ignorance of “first world, Western [sic] intellectuals” and allows the Mao period of communist China to be consistently characterized as

¹⁰⁷ No reviews from female or transgender critical race theorists are offered in Mullaney’s collection.

¹⁰⁸ I am not the first to point out contradictions in the work of David Roediger on race and whiteness. In “Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness” (2001) Ruth Frankenburg dedicates a book chapter to a respectful, extensive analysis of contradictions inherent in his early work on Blackness.

nothing more complex than “a nightmare” (56). Focusing on recent scholarly and popular work about the Mao era that circulates in “Western” [read: white dominant] countries, Vukovich outlines several key features of this particular form of Orientalism. In what he deems as “the first book-length English language critique of modern Sinology or China studies broadly understood” (xiii), he highlights the ways in which China’s economy and political system has been framed as becoming the same as “the West [sic]” and is therefore often presented as a lesser or incomplete version of “Western [sic]” economy and civil society. He argues that demeaning and belittling portrayals of China are sanctioned when the focus of critique is purported to be China’s political system:

Post Mao Sinologists can work with such vulgar and uninterrogated notions of the Chinese Other precisely because their object of critique is not the Chinese people in general (whom they nonetheless often disparage by implication) but the Chinese state, or the Chinese polity and Chinese Marxism (2012; 36).

Importantly, he is careful to point out that the practice of Sinological Orientalism is not limited to those who are “Western” [read: white]. In fact, while he features white male scholars such as Hardt and Negri, Agamben, and Zizek as popular purveyors of Sinological Orientalism, he argues that many key producers and disseminators of this form of discourse are Chinese:

The demonization of the Mao era is a general, if underexplored feature of China studies and intellectual-political culture around the world-not least among liberal Chinese intellectuals (47).

His assertion here is that within the paradigm of “becoming the same” both “Western [sic]” and liberal Chinese intellectuals have something to gain from oversimplifying and demonizing the Mao era. Although he does not include an in-

depth discussion of race in his analysis, Vukovich's book represents an important foundational text in the exploration of Orientalism as it applies to China, and is therefore invaluable within the context of this dissertation.

Closing Thoughts

In closing, we can turn to the invaluable assertion made by Tashi Rabgey, in her review of a collection of dissident Chinese writings on the issue of Tibet:

The Sino-Tibetan conflict is, at heart, not about corruption or ideology, but rather about race and ethnicity. Even in this collection of dissident writing, few are willing to name Chinese chauvinism for what it is—a practice in racial discrimination. One is more likely to find oblique references, as in the statement, “We must also change our manner toward the Tibetans and treat them as equals” (pg 33) Similarly, Fang Lizhi's remark that he happens to have had a close Tibetan colleague recalls the comment that African Americans have long had to endure in this country: “I am not a racist. I have a Black friend” Indeed, Wei Jingsheng's experience regarding his Tibetan fiancé intimates that the view of Tibetans as “half human, half beast” (pg. 85) does not lie far below the surface of social politesse (188 emphasis mine).

Rabgey's statement underlines the fact that especially when it comes to the matter of Tibet, an exploration of Han Chinese chauvinism is a crucial topic and one which certainly engages with and sometimes mirrors practices of white supremacy within the context of the United States. Such an exploration would of course be valuable if examined from a variety of different racial positionalities, including white positionality, and Han Chinese positionality. However, crucial to such an exploration is the self-reflexivity demanded by, and characteristic of, postcolonial, feminist, and critical race theory. The same self reflexivity which Anand notes is decidedly

missing from IR, and which Daniel Vukovich notes is missing from China Studies, “the crucial questions of *how* “we” see contemporary China have so far gone begging within the China field [...and there is an] absence of discussion about epistemology and ideology in the forming of knowledge” (2009:5).

Hence, for China studies scholars interested in exploring questions of whiteness, orientalism, and Han dominance, the current paradigm offered by IR, Area Studies, and Sinology leaves much to be desired. I would argue that in the practice of self-reflexivity, white Sinologists interested in issues of race and ethnicity in China would benefit immensely from turning our attention first towards race in China Studies departments. A failure to do so greatly increases the likelihood of generating scholarship that is post-race Orientalist.

6: Whiteness and Racial Formation in the Context of P.R. China

“The Sino-Tibetan conflict is, at heart, not about corruption or ideology, but rather about race and ethnicity” (Tashi Rabgey 1999:188)

If, as Rabgey asserts, the Sino-Tibetan conflict is at its heart about race and ethnicity, then it is valuable to have a sociohistorical understanding of the concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” within various contexts where this conflict is being articulated. Such an understanding provides a strong foundation from which the racial project of whiteness can be explored in the context of Tibet. In the introduction to this dissertation, the sociohistorical meanings and uses of the race concept were explored from within the context of the United States via Omi and Winant’s *Racial Formation in the United States*. The racial project of whiteness within the academic fields of Tibetology and Sinology were then explored within the context of the U.S. In the following two chapters, the sociohistorical and current meanings of 种族, popularly translated as “race” and 民族, popularly translated as “ethnicity” will be explored as they have been articulated within the context of the People’s Republic of China. In chapter 8, whiteness will be explored from within the context of eastern Tibet and Tibet in exile. In all these explorations, I strive to challenge the dominant framework within IR and Area Studies that circumscribes the ideologies of nation states within their political borders. To highlight the transnational character of racial formations, I begin my exploration of “racial formation in China” in a Chinese language classroom in the United States, where

dominant U.S. racial projects and dominant P.R.C racial projects collude to produce new racial subjectivities.

Transnational Collusions: a Textbook Case

During my first year of Chinese language study at the University of Washington, I found myself startled after completing a homework assignment to translate the main text of a workbook lesson from Chinese into English. It was lesson nineteen of the book *Oh, China!* a Chinese language textbook designed specifically with Chinese American learners in mind. Here is the translation:

Lesson 19
America's Overseas Chinese
(美国的华侨)

The majority of early Chinese immigrants to America are Cantonese. Most of them gathered in big cities along the coast. In New York on the east coast and San Francisco on the west coast are two big centers where overseas Chinese have gathered. Constructing the railroad, and running restaurants and laundromats were all businesses that overseas Chinese usually engaged in. Although they had been in America for 90 years, they still spoke Cantonese among one another, and it appears that America's big ethnic/racial melting pot (美国这个民族的大熔炉) didn't have much effect on early Chinese immigrants.

This situation changed clearly after 1949, Chinese immigrants to America were no longer coolies working in laundromats and restaurants, many of them were highly educated scientists, engineers, and intellectuals. This batch of Chinese immigrants were not gathered together in Chinatowns, but scattered around every corner of America, working in every trade and profession, they slowly dissolved into American society.

*Because the language of Chinese immigrants is different, and their skin color and daily habits are also different, they encountered discrimination everywhere. This situation changed because of the 1960s black people's civil rights movement, so the black people's civil rights movement contributed greatly to raising the social status of American overseas Chinese. **In this civil rights movement, American overseas Chinese (华侨美国人) certainly did not participate actively, but they enjoy the benefits of this achievement.** So the*

black leader of the 1960s civil rights movement, Martin Luther King, who sacrificed his life, is worthy of commemoration (Chou, Link, and Wang 1997, emphasis mine).

Was I reading this correctly? Did a textbook designed specifically with Chinese Americans in mind really say that the Chinese American community had *not participated actively* in the civil rights activism that had countered systemic discrimination and raised their social status in the United States? I thought back to the Asian American Studies courses that I had taken as an undergraduate, remembered the work of the third world liberation front and the Asian American Political Alliance within the UC system, the voter registration drives and busboy strikes in New York and San Francisco. I thought of the first Asian American studies reader, and the work of the Asian Media collective to challenge racist imagery. How could it be that all of this had gone unacknowledged by the three authors of *Oh, China!*? I looked again at the passage, and paused at the title “美国的华侨”. I wondered why they had chosen to use the term 华侨 (hua qiao) which the book translates as “overseas Chinese¹⁰⁹,” instead of the term “美籍华人¹¹⁰” or “Chinese American” which I had heard some Chinese American friends in PR China using to describe themselves. From their descriptions of China town, the railroad, and coolie work, it was clear that the authors of *Oh China!* were talking about the same group of people who had struggled the terms “Asian American” and “Chinese American” into existence. So why was “America’s overseas Chinese” the term of choice?

¹⁰⁹ Stevan Harrell offers the translation “Emigrant Chinese in America”.

¹¹⁰ Stevan Harrell offers to translation “Ethnic Chinese with American Citizenship”.

Background information about the text's authors reveals that two of the three authors "Chih-p'ing Chou" and "Xuedong Wang" are a part of what their text describes as a "new batch" of better educated immigrants from Taiwan and China, they are Chinese intellectuals who came to the United States for graduate study in Sinology. Although their short text attributes the sea change in the Chinese American community to the date of 1949, Asian American studies would name another crucial date as 1965, and the passing of the immigrant rights act, which reversed nearly 100 years of anti-Chinese immigration legislation that had begun with the Chinese exclusion act of 1882¹¹¹. The immigrant rights act of 1965 had actually codified into law a preference for highly educated immigrants with special skills. I looked again at the term "溶入" a verb which my textbook defined as "dissolve in." My dictionary also offers "integrate into" as a possible meaning. I looked at the third author, white Sinologist Perry Link. I wondered why I didn't find an Asian Americanist among the text's authors, and how such an inclusion might have changed the text. I wondered about this "dissolving" that the text mentions. What does it mean? I realized that the assumptions present in this text were not new to me, I had come across many of them in PR China, where complete ignorance about the Asian American movement in the United States is common, and denial of Asian American identity sometimes seems compulsory. In fact, a quick glance at the Chinese consulate's website confirms that the word "overseas Chinese" is a dominant and preferred adjective whose limits are not clearly described.

¹¹¹ The highlighting of 1949 emphasizes the China-centric nature of the discourse employed by the textbook as it speaks about U.S. history.

When I enrolled in Chinese 111, I was the only student in the class who was not Chinese American. I remember the look on my study partner's face when she told me she was dropping out after one semester. "I just suck at Chinese," she said, but something felt strange. I wondered if the pedagogical approach to the course, one which seemed heavily influenced by the racial ideology of "overseas Chinese" that I had encountered in the PRC, had anything to do with the ever-shrinking numbers of students. In *Oh, China!* we read passage after passage about confused Chinese American students who hated to go to Chinese school on the weekends, and who didn't see the value in speaking Chinese. Little or nothing was said about the context in the U.S. in which such aversions might arise, an explicitly anti-Asian context which pushes Chinese Americans to assimilate and "dissolve into" the dominant culture. Because I had come across similar silences in PR China, I began to wonder how racial formation in PR China might interact with and influence racial formations in white-dominant countries, particularly those that form around the Orientalism/war pillar of white supremacy. At conferences, presentations, and in class, I began to ask questions. I was quickly rebuffed. "Race is not the appropriate term to use," I was told, "In China, they have a different system for thinking about those kinds of issues."

This chapter will form around a common misconception that I have encountered while attempting to begin a nuanced transnational dialogue about whiteness in the context of Tibet and China: that racial formations in the PRC occur in isolation. It is my hope that a discussion of this common misconception can open

space for a complex and nuanced dialogue about transnational racial formations as they concern PR China and Tibet, and perhaps shed light on some of the tensions that exist in the *Oh, China!* text which opens this chapter.

Although It may seem obvious that the racial formations which currently exist in PR China are the result of complex interweavings of global racial formations that have formed over hundreds of years, folk understandings¹¹² of race in China circumscribe understandings of race to those that happen within the borders of a nation-state, and often erase the complex and interwoven histories that gave rise to such meanings. For example, while conducting fieldwork at international academic conferences, I have repeatedly been confronted with warnings from Sinologists and Tibetologists alike that “race” is an “American concept” and that “a project about race in China is inaccurate at best, and ethnocentric at worst.” More than once, my choice to engage the word “race” has been challenged by the idea that “ethnicity,” the popular translation of the official Chinese word “民族”, takes precedence over race within the People’s Republic of China. Such warnings rely on a folk understanding of race rather than a critical theoretical definition of the term. As explained in previous chapters, this dissertation engages the definition of race offered by critical race theorists. This means that race in PR China, as in any other place, is considered within the context of complex and nuanced historical patterns that have shaped the way that groups of people have responded to difference.

As the *Oh, China!* excerpt demonstrates, race is not a concept bounded by the borders of a particular nation state or by the rhetorical and ideological leanings of a

¹¹² See chapter 3 for Hill’s definition of folk theories.

particular government. Rather, it is a global phenomenon, with important and connections to the global project of white supremacy. Although this project pays careful attention to the ways that state-sanctioned ideologies about race have shaped racial formations, it is not bounded by such ideologies. With this in mind, I will explore the historical underpinnings of state-sanctioned concepts of 种族 (zhongzu) and 民族 (minzu) within the People's Republic of China, in a review of the impressive work of Frank Dikötter, Emma Teng, Vijay Prashad, and Yasuko Takezawa on race in China from the 4th century BC to the present era.

Race and China in Chinese History

In his often-cited work *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, Frank Dikötter outlines the ways that outsiders were discussed by Chinese elite long before sustained contact with what he calls “Western culture”. These frameworks for thinking about “difference” he argues, shaped a context which would make Chinese thinkers receptive to the scientific racism of 20th century Europe. According to Dikötter, Confucian thought established the idea that those who did not follow “Chinese ways” were “barbarian”. Confucian classics such as the *Chunqiu* (481 BC) emphasized the need to assimilate and “transform” “barbarian” outsiders to Chinese culture, and the *Zuozhuan* (4th century BC) contains an allegation that “if he [sic] is not of our race, he [sic] is sure to have a different mind (非我族类其心必异 fei wo

zulei, qi xin bi yi)”¹¹³ (Dikötter 1992:3). In addition to this “proto-xenophobic” sentiment, there existed skin-color bias that was regulated by class and social status. From before 221 BC onwards, negative associations were attributed to the dark skin of laborers, who were once deemed “black headed people¹¹⁴” (11). Such sentiments may have contributed to the disparaging view of the black Africans that Chinese eventually came into contact with.

As early as the twelfth century, elite Chinese writers were dividing non-Chinese into categories that were ranked according to their level of “civilization”. ‘Familiar barbarians’ (shufan) who were “tame and submissive” were considered to be of a higher order than the “savage and resisting” ‘strange barbarians’ (shengfan)¹¹⁵(9). Black slaves brought over from Africa and kept by elites in Canton during the 12th century fell into this second category (Dikötter 1992:9). Although, in Dikötter’s words, white westerners in appearance were “as weird as Africans”(13), they remained distinguished by social status from blacks, who were considered, and often forced to become, “slaves” (14).

Although Dikötter argues that “the association of “black” with “slave” existed long before [white] Westerners established themselves at the frontiers of the [Chinese] empire” (17), it appears from Dikötter’s own analysis that the existence of black African slaves in China in the 12th century was only possible

¹¹³ Stevan Harrell points out that there is no masculine pronoun involved in the original sentence, and suggests the alternate translation ““Those who are not of our kind are bound to have different thoughts.”

¹¹⁴ Harrell suggests that this may refer to hair, and not skin color.

¹¹⁵ Stevan Harrell offers the following critique of the translation which appears in Dikötter’s book: “To translate sheng and shu as raw and cooked is either rank Orientalism or just complete ignorance of the semantic range of these words. Would you say that a shuren means a “cooked person”? Of course not; it’s an acquaintance, someone you are familiar with. If not cooked, then why not ‘ripe,’ which is also a translation of shu?”

because of the growth of the African slave trade during that period. Therefore, although rich Cantonese elite were keeping black slaves long before the Portuguese landed in Macao during the second half of the 16th century, the slave trade that Chinese were participating in was dominated by white Europeans. Hence, although, as Dikötter argues, blackness had always been a *symbolic* expression for slavery in China, black Africans only *became* slaves in China as a result of a system of slave trade dominated by white Europeans (Prashad 2001).

During the 19th century, especially with the onset of the opium wars (1839-42), increased contact with white “Westerners” generated volumes of material detailing the horrid appearance, terrible smell, and strange bodily habits of “white devils”. There was also a discussion of “black devils” which continued to depict them as slaves, and white devils as rulers (38). Dikötter calls this discourse of race a “process of defensive stereotyping” (35). Increased contact also led to a complex interchange whereby racial discourses in both Europe and China affected each other. The etiology of the term “yellow” offers an interesting example of this complexity. According to Dikötter and Takezawa “yellow” as a racial term did not exist until the late 17th century, when Jesuit missionaries began writing about the symbolic importance of the color in China. The term was picked up by white Europeans, and appeared for the first time in reference to race in Francois Bernier’s 1688 book that detailed the “four races of the world” (Dikötter 1992: 55). The term became popular in white-dominant countries, and came back into China with Christian missionaries, and was eventually used by writers like Li Hongzhang in 1895 to hold up the idea of racial unity between China and Japan (57).

At the turn of the 20th century, according to Yasuko Takezawa, Chinese intellectuals responded to the intense anti-Asian racism exemplified by the U.S.' 1882 Chinese exclusion act by building up a self awareness of the "yellow race" that could counter the ruthless power of the "white race" that had so violently dominated American Indians and Black races. To illustrate the threat posed by white supremacy and domination, Chinese scholars claimed that "four hundred million people of the yellow race have all become slaves of the white race" (Takezawa 2005:23). Calls for "yellow solidarity" on the China side were issued at the same time that the concept of "yellow peril" was being used to justify anti-Asian racism in the U.S.

During the late Qing and early republican period in China, at the same time that some scholars were theorizing ways to counter the "white race," others were formulating a union of "white" and "yellow" races against other "inferior" racial groups. In Emma Teng's "Eurasian hybridity in Chinese utopian visions: from one world to a society based on beauty and beyond", she reveals how idealized visions of mixed race "Eurasians", which persist to this day, first surfaced in the late 19th century, in the writings of famous reformers like Kang Youwei (1858-1927). Kang, who was heavily influenced by the ideas of eugenics and social Darwinism, which were introduced to China in the 1880s, argued in his writings that the "white and yellow" were superior to the "black and brown races", and formulated a plan for racial improvement which came to a radical conclusion, the gradual "elimination of the darker races (even by sterilization, if necessary) and the eventual amalgamation (tongzhong) of the yellow and white races" (Teng 2006:138). Yi Nai, a later

reformer, echoed these sentiments in his 1898 essay “China should take its weakness for strength” where he dismissed “the blacks of Africa and the reds of America [...] as ‘base and ignoble races’ with whom intermarriage is unfeasible” (Teng 2006:146).

According to Dikötter, after the fall of the Qing Emperor in 1911, studies in scientific racism became even more popular among Chinese scholars. For example, Chen Yucang, the director of the medical college of Tongji University, used cranial weight to justify his idea of Chinese superiority: “if we compare the cranial weights of different people, the civilized are somewhat heavier than the savages, and the Chinese brain is a bit heavier than the European brain” (Dikötter 1994:408). In this example, the scientific racism that was being used to prove white superiority in white dominant countries was used by Chen to prove Chinese superiority to whites. Similar analyses made their way into lower levels of Chinese education, appearing in a middle school textbook published in 1920 as the declaration that “among the world’s races, there are strong and weak constitutions, there are black and white skins, there is hard and soft hair, there are superior and inferior cultures” (408). More caustic assertions concerning race also appeared in primary school textbooks of this period, with one book asserting “the yellow and white races are relatively strong and intelligent. Because the other races are feeble and stupid, they are being exterminated by the white race” (Dikötter 1994: 408).

Although some of the negative sentiment in these statements was directed at “white races”, the “black races” were often the target of the most negative associations. Not all portrayals of blacks from this time were negative, however. As

Xilao Li contends, it was during this same period, in the 1920s and 30s that the work of popular black American writers like Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Paul Laurence Dunbar began to appear in Chinese literary journals and newspapers. Chinese readers such as Zhang Shaozhen wrote about how moving Dunbar's work was, and commended him for "giv[ing] voice to the weak, attacking all forms of inequalities, racial, social and political" (X Li 2007:388). And Marc Gallichio documents a range of solidarity-building exchanges that happened during this same period between Chinese elites and intellectuals and U.S. Black nationalists (Gallichio 2000). Despite such contradictions, one fact is tremendously clear: as Frank Dikötter argues, by the end of the republican period, many people in China had come to identify strongly with the term "race" or 种族 (Zhong zu).

Dikötter and His Critics

Before discussing the sociohistorical context of 民族 (minzu) in China, I would like to make an important argument regarding the study of Race in China. I find Frank Dikötter's work immensely useful for this project, and I thoroughly agree with his assertion that "the polyphony and adaptability of racial narratives in different historical circumstances should be recognized if their enduring appeal is to be understood" (Dikötter 1994:406). However, just as the social theorizing of Jameson, and Barthes¹¹⁶ suffers because of their ignorance of the work of U.S. third world feminists, so the work of China studies scholars—including Dikötter—on race

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 2

is missing the epistemological tool of self reflexivity and positionality, a tool that would be especially useful in considering current manifestations of white supremacy.

Feminist theorists have long been asserting that in producing research, “it is vital to account for the social positioning of the social agent” (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002:315) With this in mind, I go to the preface of Dikötter’s book, where he lays out his driving idea that racial discourse has thrived in societies outside Europe. He opines:

It is generally assumed that racial prejudice can only be a ‘white’ phenomenon under which other people, lumped together under the heading ‘colored’ have to suffer. The narrow focus of such historical research, which may partly be explained by a sense of guilt in post-colonial Western [sic] societies and by a still dominant feeling of eurocentrism, has distorted our comprehension of racial problems in non-Western [sic] countries (Dikötter 1992:vii).

Here he lays out an idea that he will defend rigorously as other white male scholars comment on and respond to his work: that it is “euro-centric” and “guilt-driven” for white scholars to insist on the primacy of white colonial forms of racism. It must be noted at the outset that although he does not say so explicitly, Dikötter is speaking to a group of people who have not worked through the complex emotions associated with a realist perspective on racial identity¹¹⁷, that is to say—he is speaking to white people invested in colorblind logic. This is problematic because by speaking to only those who feel “guilt” for racism and not those who may have worked through more complex emotions about the topic, he eclipses the scholarship completed by

¹¹⁷ I refer here to Paula Moya’s notion of realist identity as described in chapter 2

postcolonial, critical race, feminist scholars in the white dominant countries known as “the West”.

I agree with Dikötter’s caution against essentializing racism as a purely “Western [sic]” concept¹¹⁸, a logic easily used to foreclose discussions about the very real and violent racist practices taking place in China today. However, I contend that there is indeed something valuable to consider in the suggestions of Dikötter’s critics. To suggest that current forms of racism in China are the influenced by the hegemonic power of euroamerican imperialism, as Arif Dirlik does in his review of Dikötter's book (Dirlik 1993), is not the same as "reducing racial identities outside the West [sic] to a counter-discourse, or a "derivation" of a "more authentic" form of white racism", reducing Chinese to "colored victims"”(Dikötter 1994:409) as Dikötter asserts. It is my contention that Dikötter over-simplifies the arguments of his critics, and does not fully account for the implications of what he deems their "Western [sic] impact-Chinese response" approach.

Although white anthropologist Charles Stafford’s apparent assertion that “‘race’ is not a ‘Chinese’ concept, hence ‘racism’ can only occur in ‘the West [sic]’” (Dikötter 1994:405) is certainly overly reductionist, his assertion that “to translate these (terms) as race is to impose a Western [sic] reading on what are supposed to be Chinese cultural constructs”(405) is worthy of a deeper look. Indeed, “Western”

¹¹⁸ At this point some readers may wonder how it is possible to insist, as Said does, that Orientalism is a “Western [sic]” stance while maintaining at the same time that racism should not be essentialized as a purely “Western [sic]” concept. I assert this is possible because Orientalism is actually a particular manifestation of racism that comes out of history of white-dominant nations. That is, orientalism is a specific form of racism directed at Asia and the Middle East by white-dominant countries, and tied to the formation of modern nation-states. Although racism is a more broadly applicable term, and, as Dikötter argues, should not be essentialized as purely a “Western [sic]” concept, it is always crucial to consider the ways that current forms of racism are tied to colonialism, and imperialism, (and therefore whiteness) and the formation of the modern nation state.

readings of race and China deserve consideration, for such purportedly 'objective' readings have a history of their own, as exemplified by Said in *Orientalism*, and explored in the previous chapter under the heading of post-race orientalism. I propose that there is a middle ground between the assertion by Stafford that racism can only occur in "the West", and the implication by Dikötter that work by scholars like Kang Youwei is proof of a uniquely Chinese racism. The work of Vijay Prashad, which I will explore next, offers some insight into such a middle way.

Who was Kung Fu Fighting?

In his book *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting*, Vijay Prashad discusses how the arrival of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama in the Indian Ocean in 1498 marked the beginning of a new era of Asian-African relations, and the onset of the race concept and its attendant ideology of racism. De Gama's arrival marked the beginning of an ideology that radically altered the social relations in those waters, transforming existing xenophobia into what we now know as racism. It was the first time that this particular formation of hegemonic power was to travel in Asia by water. Although slavery had existed before de Gama's time on almost every continent, never before was it defined by a dehumanization of an entire group of women and men based on physical difference, and never before was it the foundation of an entire economic system, as it became with the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Although Prashad locates the birth of race within the European colonial encounter, he is careful not to do as Dikötter fears and relegate the race concept to

the “white” world. Like Dikötter, he discusses various forms of xenophobia which made countries like China receptive to the notion of “race” that was to arrive by water. He is also attends to the virulent ways in which racism was taken up and practiced by non-Europeans:

Racism was born in the crucible of imperialism, but it is not the sole property of those who see themselves as white: others, people of color, adopted the idea of race, erroneously wed it to earlier ethnocentric or xenophobic traditions, and wielded it against politically weaker forces of else those who they deemed to be foreigners (Prashad 2001:20).

Much of Prashad’s essential argument is in line with that of Dikötter, whose work he references throughout his book. However, he does take issue with some of Dikötter’s interpretations, stating in a footnote that Dikötter’s framing of the writing’s of Ma Huan (from Zheng He’s expedition) presents a case of “mistaking the evidence”:

There is little hint that [Ma] uses terms like *black* in anything more than a descriptive sense, and his comparison of the people of Ceylon to ‘brute beasts’ should not be read as denigration of their humanity, but as comment on their cultural mores as compared to the Imperial Court (9).

While the work of both Dikötter and Prashad emphasizes the need for complex and nuanced analysis of the race concept, Prashad’s larger project is to emphasize the continued effects of European colonialism and imperialism, while the overall goal of Dikötter’s work is to confirm that racism is as much an Asian phenomenon as it is a white European one. One other important difference in the work of these two authors is that Prashad is self-reflexive, that is, he places himself in his work, whereas Dikötter does not.

Dikötter's maintenance of an "objective" and distanced stance from his project is evident in the curious claim that he makes on page forty three of his book, that "European perceptions of race...are clearly beyond the considerations of this study" (Dikötter 1992:43). Similar to Mullaney's claim that he can "take the western variable out of the equation all together," I assert that Dikötter's claim is impossible when he himself is a white European. Returning to the feminist and critical race assertion that a researcher's assumptions inevitably affect what she sees and concludes, it becomes clear that far from being "beyond the considerations" of Dikötter's study, "European perceptions of race" form its very foundation. The work of myriad scholars, including Said, has debunked the myth of "objective scholarship" and revealed this myth to be a practice linked to colonialism and imperialism. At the same time, feminist writers such as Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich have built elaborate epistemological frameworks that lend claims to objectivity an air of ridiculousness.

Although Dikötter's work on race in China is thorough and insightful, I argue that it could be even more impactful if supported by a feminist/critical race/postcolonial epistemology that takes into account his own white male subjectivity and the structural and historical impacts of that subjectivity. From the vantage point of a methodology of the oppressed, he could find a more complex stance between the extremes of objectivity and essentialism, away from the "they are doing it too" stance that his current scholarship conveys, and towards a question of "how are we doing this together?" From this vantage point, he could re-approach the Chinese cultural contexts that Charles Stafford points to. Such a positional

renegotiation might open a space for new questions regarding race in China. When considered *not* as a copycat phenomenon, but as a complex system for negotiating difference which has emerged in concert with, and which continues to shape, the centuries-old project of global project of white supremacy, the question of “race” in China expands beyond national and ideological borders.

Race and China’s Fifty Six Minority Ethnicities/Nationalities

In the prior section of this chapter the work of Dikötter’s, Prashad, Teng, and Takezawa were immensely useful in disproving the mistaken assumption that the Chinese concept of race has developed in isolation from other global racial meanings. However, much of their analyses focused on the term 种族, and on descriptions of race as a phenomenon that happens between China and members of other entities currently known as nation-states. In the next section, I will focus on China’s 民族 system, which is used both internally and externally to convey racial meaning¹¹⁹. A range of English language work has been produced, mostly, but not exclusively by white Sinologists, concerning the implications of the PRC’s 民族 system, its role in maintaining state power, and the effect that it has had on people’s perceptions of themselves (Melissa Brown 1996; Gladney 2004; Haiyang 1997; Han 1999; Harrell 1995; Heberer 1989; Mullaney 2011; Schein 2000). Such scholars have described “民族” as a Chinese word that “has been used by widely different communities of practice to translate no fewer than four politically charged concepts: race, nation,

¹¹⁹ See, for example, the term “美国这个民族的大熔炉” or “The big melting pot of this American minzu [nation]” in the Chinese language textbook passage that opens this chapter.

nationality (natsia), and ethnic group” (Mullaney 2011:14). The first charged translation which begs explanation is “nationality,” a term which appears politically infused to many travelers within China who do not understand its roots in the communist ideology of Joseph Stalin. Communist authorities in China use the term “nationality” or natsia to denote a key component of the capitalist stage of production, and to describe a group with four essential ingredients: common territory, common language, common economic mode of production, and common psychology, or culture. Hence “nationality” continues to act as the preferred translation of the word 民族(minzu) offered by Chinese communist leaders. Chinese ethnologists, on the other hand, have translated the word not as nationality, but as “ethnicity” “(as evidenced by their choice of “minzuxue,” or “the study of minzu,” as the standard translation of the disciplinary title ‘ethnology’)”(Mullaney, 16). The word 民族 has also been translated as “race” by some (Sleeboom and Sleeboom-Faulkner 2004:32) . In addition, Emily Yeh has found uses of the term that can be rightly translated and understood as “indigenous” (Yeh 2007:84). Although 民族 are generally understood to pertain only to China, the appearance of 民族 in the *Oh, China!* textbook as a term used to describe the US as a “melting pot” nation¹²⁰ points to a complex picture, wherein the term comes to mean ethnicity and/or race in a more general sense, an ethnicity that is not bounded by China’s 56 民族 system. Almaz Han points to a similar contradiction in his extensive exploration of the term 民族, pointing out that “Minzu can be both sovereign and subordinate” (Han

¹²⁰ 美国这个民族的大熔炉

1999:50). The term is used to describe American as an “ethnicity” as in 美利坚民族 (meilijianminzu) and it is used to describe 少数民族 (shaoshuminzu) within China (Han 1999: 50).

Almaz Han’s definition of 民族 centers on the term 族 (zu) or lineage, which he calls the “linguistic, discursive, and sociopolitical backbone” of the term (Han 1999:39). The importance of zu expands the meaning of 民族 beyond a more simplistic legal understanding of “nation,” at the same time, 族 “connotes all the necessary real or putative ingredients of a racial ideology as manifested in the idea of blood and lineage”(40). Han¹²¹ discusses the violent ways that the Chinese state has imposed 民族 identity upon China’s minorities, a process which he calls *minzification*: “a process by which China’s internal Others are being remolded and incorporated into the dominant state and society...under the ideological structural rubric of minzu” (Han 1999:28, 30). He also discusses the ways in which the term is specifically racialized within the context of China, used to identify and mark *minority* status. According to Han, “Minzu=minority minzu. And the Han, as far as domestically speaking, are not a minzu”(45).

Stevan Harrell has highlighted the ways in which the categories created by the Ethnic Classification Project have shaped the identities of the people on whom such categories have been imposed, arguing that in the case of the Prmi, although this 民族 identity originally did not conform with the ethnic identities of the people who were deemed “Prmi”, “forty years or more after original identification, people

¹²¹ Han (韩) is the surname of Almaz Han. It should not be confused with the term “Han” (汉) which is used to describe the dominant racial and ethnic group within China.

have become strongly invested in the categories originally imposed on them from outside”(Harrell 1996:278–9). In the introduction to *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, Harrell discusses the 民族 system in the context of a civilizing project enacted by both the Chinese state and by “Western [sic]” missionaries against China’s ethnic minorities (Harrell 1995:9).

There exists a small amount of English language scholarship on the Chinese designation for Tibetans within the 民族 system, “藏族” (zangzu). In her work, Janet Upton focuses on elite Tibetan intellectuals within Tibet as agents who actively assign meaning to their designation as 藏族. Hence, although the Han-centric term is imposed by the state, according to Upton, Tibetan elite shape this identity by selecting certain aspects of their culture to emphasize (Upton 1996).

Though many of the authors who have explored the workings of 民族 have mentioned its connection to white supremacist imperialist projects, this information often remains as a footnote, left unexplored in favor of a focus on 民族 as a “decidedly a PRC phenomenon”(Han 1999:31). This dissertation seeks not to contest the assertion of 民族 as a PRC phenomenon, but rather to complicate this assertion by exploring how the eugenicist roots of 民族 may complicate current understandings of the term. Such a consideration may allow for a reevaluation of some of the more incisive academic work on 民族. For example, Almaz Han describes 民族 in the following way:

After its birth as an outward-oriented Sino-nationalist discourse against imperialist oppression (by the West [sic]) and ‘barbarian’ alien rule (by the Manchu), minzu and related narratives have conveniently, and perhaps

inevitably, transformed into an imperialistic, hegemonic discourse bearing down over China's real and imagined internal Others (29).

Here, Han describes 民族 as a discourse which began as nationalist, and decidedly anti-imperialist, but I would argue that a deeper consideration of the connection of 民族 to white imperial history necessarily complicates such an assertion. How can a Chinese discourse which is "intimately linked to the [white] idea of race" (Han 1999: 33) be essentially nationalist in origin?

In answering such a challenging question, Mullaney's recent book *Coming to Terms with the Nation* is immensely useful. This work lends clarity to the Ethnic Classification Project of 1954-56 that produced China's 56 民族 system, and importantly for this dissertation, it thoroughly challenges the subtle allusion that PR China's official racial and ethnic system was generated in isolation from other global racial projects. For the purposes of this project, I will focus on the key point of Mullaney's work, and the heart of his argument, that the basis from which plans for the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project was drawn came from the unpublished work of a white British military officer named Henry Rudolf Davies:

It was his 1909 work, championed and only partly modified by republican era Chinese social scientists, that became the foundation of Chinese ethnological studies of the southwest, the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project and, indeed, the present day classification of ethnic groups in Yunnan. In the ongoing story of colonial anthropological practice in Africa, South Asia, North America, Taiwan, and so forth, we must now include southwest China (45).

In his book, Mullaney explores the complex relationship that China's ethnologists have had with Davies' work, one characterized by reliance and disavowal. Despite a denial on the part of many Chinese social scientists, Mullaney proves through

Careful and detailed archival documentation, the strength of the connection between Davies' taxonomy, and the system eventually used by the Ethnic Classification Project, which was only slightly modified from Davies' original sketch. Mullaney acknowledges in his work that "minzu" as a concept was filtered through a series of Marxist screens, plus fieldwork, before it came to dominate the practice of 民族 classification in China. Although the Ethnic Classification Project began in Yunnan, Mullaney provides ample evidence to support his claim that:

It [the Ethnic Classification Project] stands at the center of practically all questions of ethnicity in contemporary China, being itself part of the history of each of the minzu categories to which it gave shape and, in some cases, existence"(2011:4).

Hence, although the Ethnic Classification Project was clearly not constitutive of 民族 identities that were eventually categorized as "藏族" (Tibetan), it did shape the dominant framework into which "藏族" as a Sino-centric term for describing Tibetan identity was forged, and thus, it is extremely relevant in understanding racial formation in Tibet. In the service of exploring the transnational character of racial formations in China, I will focus here on a point that Mullaney does not explore in detail in his book: the colonial and eugenicist context from which Davies drew his taxonomy, and from which the very term "民族" arose.

The taxonomy that H.R. Davies produced is best considered not as the product of an individual, but of a specific cultural context in which ethnic taxonomy was a valuable skill. Knowing that Davies' taxonomy was a key influential factor in the generation of the current minzu system now used in the People's Republic of

China, the relevant question for my project, becomes: In what context does a white British officer take up such a classification project?

Research reveals the context of Britain of the late 1800s to be one heavily weighted with preoccupation over population control through policies guided by eugenic rationale. In 1865, the same year that H.R. Davies was born, Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, published his first article on the topic of eugenics, titled “Hereditary Talent and Character”. By the 1880s, when H.R. Davies was just finishing school at Eton, the scientific study of eugenics was a definite topic of discussion in books and articles (MacKenzie 1976:503). The Eugenics Education society was founded in 1907, and Edward Lyttelton, headmaster of Davies’ alma mater from 1905-1916, counted himself among its members. It is important here to clarify two distinct but connected foci of British Eugenics, that which focused within Britain, and that which was used in British colonies abroad.

Unlike the United States, where racial purity was the core focus of eugenicist thinking, within Great Britain it was a preoccupation with class that drove much of the logic behind this body of work. As Daniel Kevles remarks, “British eugenics was marked by a hostility decidedly more of class than of race” (Kevles 1985:76). Kevles remarks that a preoccupation with quality of white racial stock, and the concurrent push for policies of population control within Britain was heavily influenced by Britain’s desire to compete with Germany and France, whose “imperial competitive abilities” posed a threat to British Empire. Hence, the eugenics movement within

Britain can best be seen as a tool that was used to combat “national deterioration” through population control¹²².

In Britain’s colonies, eugenicist thinking was used to suppress dissent and entrench British power. In India, where H.R. Davies was posted before going to China, surveying and classifying missions were a core strategy of British domination and control of local people (Brown 2001:348). This was increasingly the case after the native uprisings of 1857 in India, after which a series of policies were enacted to transform local economies and guarantee British control of valuable commodities. Taxonomy that used language as a racial identifier was an important tool of the British colonial project. For example, the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 used local dialect as one of the indexes that rendered salt and grain trading tribes into “criminal tribes” and required them to register themselves and their families with the police. Before this act could be put into practice, the tribes needed to be settled and provided with a means of livelihood by the government (Radhakrishna 2001:29). The settlement of trading groups ensured a complete monopoly of the salt trade by the British. Such settlement projects were only possible using the tools of ethnic and linguistic taxonomy to track and categorize group members. Hence, taxonomy became an invaluable tool of control necessary to the work of British colonists and eugenicists alike. Mullaney emphasizes this connection between ethnic taxonomy and colonial practice in his book:

Whereas conventional accounts of China’s ethnic classification are quick to point out its political and methodological affinities with that of the Soviet Union, here we find much stronger ties to British colonial practice—

¹²² See Omi and Winant’s discussion of race as class in chapter one for a discussion of the nuanced ways that racial projects are often discussed and understood through the lens of class.

particularly in its reliance on a mode of ethnic categorization derived from historical linguistics and, most importantly, its direct genealogical connection to the scholarship of H.R. Davies (Thomas Mullaney 2011:65–68)

To understand the eventual adoption of Davies' ethnic taxonomy by Chinese social scientists and officials, we must look to the wider context in Asia which, at the turn of the century, was increasingly receptive to eugenicist thought coming from the United States and Britain¹²³. At the same time that Davies was learning to create ethnic taxonomies as an officer in British India, eugenics theory was spreading to Japan and China via elite intellectuals. According to Yuehtsen Chung:

With the threat of Western imperialism, Social Darwinism seemed to impose a national imperative for Japanese and Chinese intellectuals to import eugenics to East Asia as a cure for racial degeneration, and as a passport to enter the civilized world (Chung 2002:6).

Chung is careful to note, however, that the popularity of eugenics first in Japan and then in China should not be simplified as simply a nationalist response to “Western” (read: white) incursions. Like Britain, those in power in Japan and China were preoccupied both with strengthening their populations in a time of international competition, and with gaining new tools for use in expanding their own imperial power. The term “民族” for example, came to China from Japan, where scholars such as Okaasa Jiro were experimenting with a variety of neologisms to connote “eugenics” or the “science of superior birth”(Chow 1995:152). In Japan, Fukuzawa Yukichi introduced the tenets of eugenics in the *Jiji Shogen* (comment on current affairs) when he referenced Francis Galton's popular book *Hereditary Genius* (Chung,

¹²³ As indicated in the earlier part of this chapter in the discussion of Kang Youwei and others.

13). As previously discussed, by the late 19th and early 20th century, influential Chinese scholars such as Kang Youwei and Yi Nai were arguing the scientific superiority of the “white and yellow” races over all others (Teng 2006). Adding to this intellectual atmosphere was the fact that leaders of the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project, including vice director Lin Yaohua, received their education in elite white dominant universities such as Harvard, at a time when the eugenics paradigm dominated the social sciences (Jones 1992).

When we consider the white colonial context of British India where officer Davies was exposed to linguistic taxonomy as a tool for population control and the receptiveness to eugenicist thinking among the elite Chinese intellectuals who used his work as a building block for their own, it is difficult to see the Ethnic Classification Project, and the 56 minzu system, as apart from its white colonial and eugenicist roots.

With this knowledge in mind, we can confirm “race” as a viable lens from which to understand and explore both “种族” (zhong zu) and “民族” (minzu) within PR China. This is not to say that the English term “race” is analogous to 种族 or 民族, nor is it to say that the two terms are akin to each other. I make this distinction to highlight the nuanced approach necessary for a project which considers race on a transnational level. As demonstrated above, the meaning and usage of these terms has varied in a range of sociohistorical contexts. It is to assert, however, that these terms can and should be considered not as exclusively “Chinese,” but rather as the result of a set of complex transnational racial projects which *include* the white supremacist projects of colonialism and imperialism as essential elements.

It is through this exploration that I hope to disprove the folk understandings of race which foreclose discussions of whiteness in China and Tibet based on the notion that “their system for race is different”. During my fieldwork at academic meetings, I have witnessed these same limited understandings of race lead to accusations that a project which explores whiteness in China and Tibet is by its very nature ‘ethnocentric’¹²⁴. Such narrow accusations can only come from ignorance of the transnational collusions which have forged the systems of racial formation that exist in the U.S., Tibet, and PR China today.

Along a similar vein, ignorance of the transnational character of racial formation in China may also lead scholars to limit their explorations of “race” in China to discussions of anti-black racism¹²⁵, a task which tends towards post-race orientalism when it is only undertaken without a self-reflexive approach. Scholars should also be cautioned against approaching “race” in China in the same Han-centric fashion that official PRC government material often encourages¹²⁶.

If, as Rabgey asserts, the Sino-Tibetan conflict is at its heart about race and ethnicity, and white supremacy as a racial project is interpolated into the concepts of 种族 (zhongzu) and 民族 (minzu) in the context of the PRC, then we can begin to see what could be gained by discussing whiteness in the context of Tibet.

¹²⁴ Implied in this statement is the idea that because I am white, my own study of whiteness must be ethnocentric. I have yet to encounter a similar accusation against “native” Han Chinese or Tibetan scholars who wish to explore Chinese or Tibetan identity.

¹²⁵ See, for example, the special issue “Focus on Race and Racism in China” of *The China Quarterly* from 1994, in which all articles focus on anti-black and Anti-African racism in china, and all are written by white men who do not discuss their own positionality.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Xu Jieshun’s essay in *Critical Han Studies* (2012).

Transnational Collusions Revisited

To achieve a meaningful understanding of the textbook story that opens this chapter, we can look to a handful of documents created by offices of the Chinese government that elucidate the transnational aspect of racial formations in China and the U.S. First, we can ponder instruction number five on the Chinese consulate website's instruction manual for visa applications. It states: "Chinese-American child born in U.S. applying for Chinese visa, please read 在美国出生具有中国血统儿童赴华签证须知¹²⁷." When I first came upon this instruction in 2008, I was struck by its assumption that a Chinese American child born in the U.S. will be able to read and write Chinese fluently. What, we may ask, is one to do if they identify as Chinese American, but cannot read the instructions that are given only in Chinese? The assumption here interestingly assumes seamlessness between racial identity and linguistic ability, harking back to the linguistic approach to race taken by Davies in his Yunnan taxonomy. No answer was given on the website, but interviews with Chinese Americans in Beijing reveal an unfortunate reality: a dominant lack of understanding within China for the Chinese-American and Asian-American experience—an experience which is deeply affected by the United States' one language policy in public schools. This lack of understanding created great difficulties for the Chinese Americans living and working in China whom I interviewed. Feelings around Chinese language ability provide a good example of this problem. Many of the interviewees described a double bind they faced in

¹²⁷ Translation: if you have Chinese blood but your born in America and you want to apply for a Chinese visa, please read this. This entry was found when the website was accessed in 2010. In 2012, this had been updated on the Chinese consulate website to include instructions in English.

China—being accused by people in China of speaking accented English when their accents were the same as white Americans, while at the same time being misunderstood and blamed for not speaking fluent Chinese. Interviewees described the sense of disbelief they encountered when they attempted to identify as “American”, and many had experienced outright discrimination when attempting to secure lucrative English teaching jobs.

Such a bind is exemplified by the story of one Chinese-American interviewee who worked for the U.S. Consulate in Beijing. He recounted how excited he was when he moved to China for the first time, where he would be surrounded by people who looked like him, and where he believed he would no longer encounter anti-Asian racism. He was provided a special apartment in the U.S. government workers’ compound, and he quickly noticed that the Chinese guards would always ask for his identification before allowing entry, while they would freely allow entrance to any person who was white. He thought the situation would improve with time, but it didn’t. After several months, and countless interactions with the same guards on a variety of occasions, he was still asked for identification before being allowed entry into his own apartment complex. The day before our interview, I had visited him at his home without being asked to show identification.

In addition to disproving the common misconception that racial formation in the P.R.C. occurs in isolation from the racial formations that were forged in connection with white colonialism, a second goal of this chapter is to propose that such misconceptions are held just as strongly within China as they are in the United

States. Although the historical record may prove “race” to be a salient ideology in China, folk understandings of race dominate as much in China as they do in the U.S. But I contend here that without any official effort to acknowledge and discuss *critical* histories of race within China, the strength of age-old white supremacist ideologies, including the erasure of Asian American identity coming from within China, is equally strong as that coming from within the United States. Such erasure has very real effects on those who identify as Asian American, and on recent Asian immigrants to the United States¹²⁸. Importantly, it also has an effect on the issue of Tibet, as I will discuss in the following two chapters.

¹²⁸ Its effects can be felt and heard among the growing numbers of Chinese students at the UW, for example (Foreign Enrollment Skyrockets for UW n.d.).

7: Manifestations of White Supremacy in China and Tibet

“Tibetans follow Chinese, Chinese follow Americans¹²⁹” (interview, Feb 2010)

This comment by a Tibetan NGO worker in Amdo summed up nicely one of the important current patterns that is revealed when we actually begin to consider white supremacy on a transnational level. In the context of this assertion, we can consider question five of the PRC government’s 2010 census questionnaire, which underlines the limits placed on discussions of race which extend beyond the standard 民族 system. This question asks respondents to fill in their “minzu,” and requests that foreigners who have naturalized as Chinese citizens to simply fill in “naturalized”

外国人加入中国籍, 其民族和我国的某一民族相同的, 就填某一民族; 没有相同民族的, 按外国人加入中国籍填写, 简填 “入籍”

Translation:

Foreigners who have become Chinese nationals, if your minzu is the same as any minzu of our country, just write that minzu. If not the same as any [Chinese] minzu, fill in “foreigner who has acquired Chinese citizenship,” and simply use the abbreviation “naturalized”。

This census question reveals that the PRC government is not collecting information on “race” that falls outside of their “internal” 民族 system of racial/ethnic classification. The mere fact that the P.R.C. government is not collecting information about 民族 or 种族 which fall outside of their official system does not, of course, mean that it is not discussed, or that racialized images are not circulating within

¹²⁹ As demonstrated previously, the word “American” here functions as “white.”

China. In fact, I argue that since the aggressive adoption of capitalist policies by the PRC government in the late 1970s, white supremacist imagery has become ubiquitous throughout PR China, especially its growing cities, and has deeply impacted both 种族 and 民族 racial projects. In this section, I will consider a series of racialized images that I encountered while traveling throughout China and Tibet in 2010-2011, and comment briefly on the value of analyzing such images using a feminist critical race framework which acknowledges the continued and current strength of white supremacy on a global level.

Racialized Images of Non-Asian People of Color

First, consider the new line of yogurt with racialized “flavors” encountered on the shelves of a Chengdu grocery store:



130

¹³⁰ Flavors, from left to right are Fig-raisin, watermelon-apple, and peach-strawberry



131

The chocolate bar bought in 迪力 (Ziling) in 2011:



132

A clothing advertisement on the streets of 昆明(Kunming):

¹³¹Text reads:大果粒酸牛奶 (Dà guǒ lì suān niú nǎi) “real fruit yogurt” Flavors, from left to right, are raspberry-strawberry, kiwi-aloë, and mango-peach

¹³²Text reads: 泓一 “醇黑诱惑” (Chún hēi yòu huò) “Pure Black temptation”



133

A clothing company on the streets of 广州(Guangzhou):



¹³³ Text reads: 夏天来了 (Xià tiān lái le) “Summer has come!”



134

Posters covering the walls of stores in ཟི་ལིང། (Ziling); 成都 (Chengdu); 北京 (Beijing);
and རྒྱལ་ཐང། (Rgyalthang)¹³⁵:



136

¹³⁴ text reads: “稻草人” (dao cao ren) or “scarecrow”

¹³⁵ In Chinese 中甸, recently renamed “Shangri-la”.



¹³⁶ Text reads “史诗对决” (Shǐshī duì jué) “Epic duel”



It may occur to most readers that there is little essentially Chinese in origin about the gendered and racialized images featured above. Caricatures of Native American women and men with face paint and feathers, associations of Black women with chocolate, portrayals of “the sleeping Mexican”, or the constant association of Black men with basketball; all are the documented result of white supremacist racial projects in white-dominant countries, especially the U.S., and are just as likely to show up on the streets of most white-dominant countries as they are now in PR China and Tibet¹³⁷. Before we consider the meaning of such images, it is important to understand another, equally insidious set of racialized and gendered images alongside which they appear. These images feature white people.

Racialized Images of White People

In 成都(Chengdu) and ཟླ་ལིང་། (Ziling):

¹³⁷ See, for example, <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/03/04/racist-sleeping-mexican-mural-draws-tx-protest/>



138



¹³⁸ text reads: “缔造美胸奇迹” (Dìzào měi xiōng jì jī) “create beautiful breasts to send a message”.



139



140

¹³⁹ Text reads “专业母婴护理品牌” (Zhuān yè mǔ yīng hù lǐ pǐn pái) “Professional maternal and child care brand”.

¹⁴⁰ Text reads: “家庭服文化” (jia ting fu wen hua) “Home clothing culture”.



141

¹⁴¹ Text reads: “传奇品质百年鞋匠” (chuanqi pinzhi bainian xiejiang) “legendary quality, century shoemaker”...”专业制鞋” “specialized shoe manufacturer...”

obolee
欧宝丽

尽享闪耀时刻

厂家直达	品质保证	私密定制
省钱易起来	尊贵易起来	个性易起来

3888 0095

142

obolee
欧宝丽

3888 0095

维多利亚广场A塔1层

绝代倾城 50分钻戒
雪亮H色 八心八箭切工

市场价：26000元
¥11299

¹⁴² Text reads: “享闪耀时刻” (xiǎng shǎnyào shí kè) “enjoy the shining moments”



143



¹⁴³ Text reads: “早用早好” (zao yong zao hao) “use it early, get well early “ or ” the sooner you use it, the better”



144



145

¹⁴⁴ Text reads: “超轻盈防晒全天候白皙” (chao qing ying fang shai quan tian hou bai xi) “ultra light sun guard, all weather white (complexion)”

¹⁴⁵ Text reads: “臻白底妆系列” (Zhēn bái dǐ zhuāng xìliè) “whitening liquid foundation collection”

Here we encounter another set of images that should strike residents of most white-dominant countries as familiar: the hyper-sexualized (and photoshopped) white woman, white woman as ideal mother, and white family as ideal, the white man as adventurous, rugged, skilled, and professional and finally, the white skin of a white woman itself as representative of ideal beauty. In China and Tibet today, as in most white dominant countries, one can find a plethora of images which overtly sexualize white women or present them as idealized mothers or guardians of the ideal family, and images which associate white masculinity with adventure, skill, knowledge, and power¹⁴⁶. It is important not to understate the ubiquity of these images in cities throughout China and Tibet today. Unlike images of non-Asian people of color, images of white people are numerous and plentiful.

To establish baseline ratios from which to consider the sheer volume of such images, I spent several days from March through June of 2011 riding major bus routes in ཟི་ལིང་། (Ziling) and 成都 (Chengdu), and counting the number of images featuring white, Asian, and non-Asian people of color visible from inside of the bus. In ཟི་ལིང་།, I rode two major arterial buses, the 2 bus, from 北小街 to 东大街, and the #82 bus, from 五四西路 to 大十字. In 成都, I rode the #301 bus from 万年桥 to 新南门车站, and the #16 arterial bus from 火车北站 to 人民南路二段. Here is what I found:

¹⁴⁶ See for example, any number of entries on the popular websites sociological images, racialicious, or native appropriations, or in the popular magazine, bitch: feminist response to pop culture.

City/Bus	White people		Asian People		Non-Asian people of color	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
ཟླ་ལིང་།#2	97	35%	170	62%	9	3%
ཟླ་ལིང་། #82	45	31%	97	68%	1	<1%
成都 #301	33	24%	87	63%	19	14%
成都 #16	27	59%	18	39%	1	<1%

It is notable that on the number 16 bus in 成都, I actually saw *more* images of white people than any other race. This is because the 16 bus passes through an elite shopping area on 人民南路 around the 锦江兵官 (JinJiang hotel). In this area, there are several city blocks where images of white people are so dominant that it is actually *difficult* to locate images of Asian people (let alone images of non-Asian people of color). The white images in this area are huge, often several stories high, and have the effect of completely surrounding shoppers as they walk on streets

below:



Much has been written from a feminist/critical race theoretical perspective about the gendered and racialized meaning of such images within white-dominant countries¹⁴⁷, but little, if any scholarship exists which addresses the potential impacts of white supremacist symbolism both in and outside of Tibet and China¹⁴⁸.

White Supremacy and Han Dominance

¹⁴⁷ See, for example (Kusz 2007; Nederveen Pieterse 1992; Wolburg 2006; Staurowsky 2007)

¹⁴⁸ It may be clear from the previous chapter that I do not consider Louisa Schein's work on whiteness in China as one which takes seriously the implications of white supremacy on a global level.

One last set of racialized images which circulate throughout China and Tibet reveals the important linkages between practices of white supremacy and Han dominance in both the 民族 and 种族 racial ideologies:





¹⁴⁹ Text reads “低脂肪吃粗粮” (Dī zhīfáng chī cūliáng) “low fat whole grains”.

¹⁵⁰ text reads “欢乐谷。。。华侨城” (huanle gu...huaqiaocheng) “Happy Valley...overseas Chinese town”. The woman holds a sign saying “第二故乡—中国” (di er gu xiang yi zhong guo) “..second home China” This is a tourism ad.



The first image here, encountered in ཟླ་ལིང་།, is an advertisement for a fruit drink encouraging the celebration of the Christian holiday Christmas, with two young Han Chinese featured. It should be duly noted that in major cities across China and Tibet today, Christmas is a holiday increasingly celebrated by young people, and

embraced by merchants, who put up copious decorations featuring the clearly white face of Santa Claus, before the holiday:



Although it is important to underline the capitalist, and essentially secular nature of this holiday, it is also crucial to note the ways in which Christian missionaries in Tibetan areas have embraced the holiday's popularity as a vehicle for proselytizing. In ཟླ་ལྷེང་།, hundreds of Christian missionaries who work in the area take advantage of the holiday to throw parties and organize class lessons around the story of Christmas and the birth of Christ. Although missionary work is officially illegal in the PRC, the decision by colleges in the area to host annual Christmas parties for their foreign staff is evidence of the structural and institutional support available for a wide array of missionary activities, which become less illicit as missionaries gain wealth and power in China's capitalist economy. White supremacy is valuable to consider in the context of this advertisement because participation of young Han

Chinese couple in a white, capitalist Christian culture¹⁵¹ is what is being used to sell the fruit juice. Hence, white supremacy here is used to convey positive meaning as Han Chinese take up white cultural practices, and Han Chinese are portrayed as the ideal subjects to participate in a white supremacist version of capitalist “modernity”.

The second advertisement, encountered in the 北京(Beijing) subway, is for a range of products including yogurt and features a Han Chinese cowboy holding the reins to a horse. The text from a company named Yi Yu fang(億御坊) encourages consumers that their products are low fat, and whole grain (低脂肪吃粗粮). This image is striking because although the products being marketed here are “Tibetan,” according to the company, the image used to sell them appears to be one of a Han man¹⁵² positioned in such a way as to recall the western cowboy. In this image, I argue that Han and white supremacy are working together in striking ways. That is, Han domination and supremacy is affirmed and romanticized by appeals to white supremacist imagery that directly recalls the Colonialism/Genocide pillar of white supremacy.

The third image, encountered in 成都 (Chengdu) beckons Chinese viewers to visit “Happy Valley,” a “cultural tourism” resort chain with a location in the city. I first snapped this image because of the notable way that it repeated the common trope of Black people as “tribal”. When I looked into the background of the company that created the ad, however, I found something far more disturbing. According to

¹⁵¹ See (Ehrenhaus 2004) for a fascinating exploration of the links between evangelical Christianity and white supremacy.

¹⁵² To check the interpretation of this image by those at whom it was aimed, I asked several people who passed by what they saw when they looked at it. “Who do you think this person is? What minzu is he?” Of the eight people who replied, all saw a Han cowboy, or “牛仔”. The people who I asked identified as Han.

their website, the company 华侨城 Overseas China Town, (OCT) is a tourism, real estate and development company engaged in “market oriented” Chinese cultural tourism and development (<http://www.chinaoct.com/>). The Black people featured in this ad are actually a part of the “Happy Valley” tourism site in 成都. Such a practice of “cultural tourism” which features black and brown indigenous peoples as actual exhibits readily recalls the white supremacist practice of displaying “human zoos” at the world’s fair during the 19th and 20th century in white-dominant countries. Importantly, it appears from their website that OCT engages in displays of both minority 民族, such as Tibetans, and non-Asian people of color from a range of national contexts, or minority 种族:



An entire dissertation project could be conducted which looked at the racial practices of OCT alone¹⁵³. Suffice to say, the imagery produced by this company provides ample evidence of the importance of a discussion of white supremacist

¹⁵³ A number of projects have been conducted which look at race and ethnicity in minority theme parks in China, all of which limit their discussion of race and ethnicity to the national context of the PRC. See (Yang 2011; Yiping Li 2002; Ren 2007; Xie 2003)

practices within PR China, and the ways that white and Han supremacist projects are interwoven, especially since the adoption of capitalist free-market policies since 1979.

The fourth and final image was encountered inside of a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in 雀巢 (Ziling). This ad, which can also be found in KFC chains in 成都 (Chengdu), 广州 (Guangzhou), and 北京 (Beijing), features a “timeline” which details the company’s transformation from a small restaurant in the Southern United States into a global chain. Inserted into the timeline are various images of young Asian children delighting in the products offered by KFC. I find this image striking in its erasure, and re-writing of history. For example, as seen in the images above, shortly after 1930, when the Colonel developed his “secret chicken recipe,” we encounter four young Asian children enjoying KFC chicken. There is only one problem: In the 1930s, the south of the United States was racially segregated, and it is most likely that such children would not have been allowed to enter, let alone eat at, a KFC restaurant¹⁵⁴. Such erasure, as promulgated by a white-owned U.S. company for consumers in PR China, is important because it reveals the ways in which capitalism has provided entrance for one aspect of racial projects of the U.S.—ahistorical colorblindness—to enter the imaginary of people from 北京 (Beijing) to 雀巢 (Ziling). Such images also may provide valuable clues to understanding the erasure of Asian American struggle encountered in the previous chapter.

¹⁵⁴ For an interesting discussion on the regulation of Asian bodies in the U.S. during this period, see (Shah 2001)

The images discussed above illustrate the problem with discussing or understanding Han domination or supremacy in a vacuum, as many scholars of Tibet and China have done. As the previous chapter has shown, Han domination and supremacy has been deeply connected to the global project of white supremacy both before, during, and after the creation of the 56 民族 system. As the assertion of the Tibetan interviewee at the beginning of this section attests, Tibetans inside of Tibet are now pressured to assimilate into a Han Chinese culture which strengthens and emulates white supremacist culture in both its “internal” (民族) and “external” (种族) racial projects. These images also underline the importance of considering capitalism as a key player in transnational racial formations. As Karen Brodtkin has argued, “although nation and capitalism are separate projects, each depends on and shapes the other [and] capitalism is causally and systemically linked to the construction of race and racism” (Brodtkin 2000:239). In the face of a global mass consumer culture characterized by white supremacist constructions of race, as seen above, a wide range of discussions about transnational whiteness and white supremacy is necessary. At the present time, there exists little to no such discussion regarding whiteness in the context of Tibet. In the next chapter, I will explore the ways that whiteness and race have been taken up in Tibetan areas both in and outside of Tibet.

8: Whiteness and Racial Formation in the Context of Tibet

*“Lacking the oil of compassion that benefits others
With lightening methodologies of destructive magic
Showing zigzag directions to honest people
Pay careful attention to the yellow haired monkey people¹⁵⁵.”*

--Tibetan scholar དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ།¹⁵⁶ writing in the early 1900s (re-printed in Ngakmang Research Institute 2002:69)

*“I wish that Tibet had been colonized by the British”
--Tibetan interviewed in India*

“I had celebrated the beauty of Tibetan art and argued that the creation of such exquisite works of art, on a par with the Sistine Chapel and other contemporaneous western works, was strong evidence indicating a high civilization in Tibet, a civilization that must survive, that should move the heart of the world, that should be of great concern to all as a unique part of the patchwork quilt of human cultures” (Robert Thurman 2001:198).

The line “pay careful attention to the yellow-haired monkey people” from the first quote featured in the opening of this section is one with which most Tibetans, in the US, India, and Tibet, are familiar. The quote is from the well-known scholar དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) and was written as a warning to འཕྲིན་ལས་འོད་ཟེར།¹⁵⁷ the leader of རྫོང་དཔོན།¹⁵⁸ county in Bhutan at the turn of the century, during a time when the British had colonial intentions for Bhutan. Although most Tibetan people are familiar with it, many of those sharing it with me often whispered it, or looked

¹⁵⁵ གཞན་མན་སྟིང་རྗེའི་སྐྱམ་དང་བྲལ་བ་ཡི།
རིག་འཕུལ་ཐབས་ཤེས་སློག་གི་སྒྲོན་མ་ཡིས།
བྲང་པོའི་མི་ལ་འཁྱོག་པོའི་ལམ་སྟོན་པའི།
སྐྱ་སེར་སྟེའུའི་རིགས་ལ་ཐུགས་ཐོན་འཚལ།

¹⁵⁶ Dge-‘dun Chos-‘phel

¹⁵⁷ ‘phrin-las-‘od-zer

¹⁵⁸ rdzong-dpon

uncomfortable to know that I was familiar with this bold statement about white people. In working out the correct translation of the original quote from Tibetan to English, I was even encouraged to omit the word “monkey” when sharing the quote with others, because of the impolite feeling it conveys. Although it is indecorous, “monkey” is the correct translation of the word “སྤྲུ”¹⁵⁹ in Tibetan, and important to share because of the loathing it conveys. More significant than the words of དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) are their enduring popularity, evident in the fact that most Tibetans who I spoke with both in and outside of Tibet were familiar with this particular saying. I argue here that the quote is evidence of a longstanding critique of white supremacy that exists in Tibet, a critique that has endured despite the rise of another, more flattering, strategic embrace of white supremacy since the start of the People’s Republic of China in 1949.

The second quote featured above provides evidence of this strategic embrace, and of a connected pattern of racial formations in Tibet as they concern whiteness: the strikingly uneven treatment of white and Han Chinese forms of domination by Tibetologists of all racial backgrounds since the start of the P.R.C. in 1949. While conducting fieldwork in India, the United States, and Canada, I came across several different versions of the idea that Tibet would be “better off” if it had been colonized by the British, from a number of people, and I began to see that this notion fits into a larger pattern wherein racial ideologies projected by white

¹⁵⁹ Spre’u

dominant empire states like the U.S. are taken up uncritically in Tibetan denunciations of the Han domination of Tibet.

The third quote displayed here, a response to Donald Lopez' critical book *Prisoners of Shangri-La* by white Tibetologist Robert Thurman, evidences an important phenomenon which is connected to the first two described here: a discourse of advocacy which fails to address the systemic shifts that made Tibetology possible within the US University, and which gave rise to the strategic embrace of whiteness among Tibetan elites. In chapter three of this dissertation, I explored the "objective" and "impartial" role that the particular framing of "the Tibet Question" has made available for white Tibetologists, and how those Tibetologists have responded. In this final chapter, I will explore how another group of Tibetologists have responded to the space created by Tibetan-Chinese relations since 1949. Rather than striving to claim objectivity, these Tibetologists, (who more often than not often double as Buddhologists and religious practitioners) have positioned themselves clearly on the "side" of Tibetans, as fierce advocates. Below, I will explore the ways in which this advocacy is enabled by white privilege and supremacy, fueled by anti-Chinese sentiment, and forged in a set of relationships between elite white and Tibetan men¹⁶⁰.

Historical and Present Day Tibetan Critiques of White Supremacy

¹⁶⁰The decision making bodies involved in the founding of Tibetology within US Universities, such as the Bellagio conference in 1959 in Italy, were populated exclusively by men.

An exploration of Tibetan writings from the late 1800's on the topic of “foreigners” reveals a variety of open critiques of white supremacy in the form of colonial domination. This is unsurprising when we consider that at this time period, Tibet was in direct military conflict with colonial Britain. These critiques emerge from the time period just before དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) wrote his scathing warning—the time of the Anglo-Tibetan war of 1888, and the British invasion of Tibet in 1904. At this juncture, several powerful members of the Tibetan elite expressed their frustrations at the colonial machinations of the British. For example, a series of letters written by བཀའ་བླུང་འོ་འཇམ་དབང་འཕུས་ཚེ་རིང་།¹⁶¹, the secretary to the Tibetan cabinet, to the regent and རྒྱུ་དཔོན་།¹⁶² of Bhutan in 1888 reveals the openly critical sentiments. The very first paragraph of this letter reads:

Those called foreigners¹⁶³, such as these, do not tolerate the perfect wealth of others. Hence, except for whatever lands and peoples they can conquer in all neighboring nations through deceit and coercion, they are widely known to be evil deceivers, not of the sort that have learned contentment to their desires and the good customs of shame, modesty and prudence which are suitable as the mark of a great nation (Beckwith, Nornang, and Epstein 1982:78).

¹⁶¹ In Wiley Bka'-drung Nor-nang Dbang-'dus-tshe-ring

¹⁶² Krong-dpon. Leader.

¹⁶³ ཕྱི་སྲིད་། In Wiley, phyi-gling

Another letter from the secretary, written that same year, to ལྷན་གྲོང་¹⁶⁴ staff member of the ལྷལ་ཕྱེ།¹⁶⁵ office of military food supply, expresses in verse the exasperation felt by the Tibetan army against the “foreigners”:

Our generals have the courage of their hot-tempered rage.
Their fiercely angry hate against the hateful enemy
Is like smoke from the burning of inborn tongues of flame
It transforms their qualities; they have become familiar with knitted brows
Furrowed in anger [...] the time has certainly come for them to drive away
the English army, which, drunk on pride, has broken its promises (Beckwith,
Nornang and Epstein 1982: 82).

The strong Anti-foreign sentiments expressed in these letters were mirrored by Tibetan policy from the turn of the century until 1949. For example, English schools in Gyantse and Lhasa were closed down in 1920 and 1944, due to belief within monasteries that the schools would “inculcate alien, atheistic ideas and would thus harm the religious value system” (Goldstein 1989:821). Such critiques are well known by both Tibetan and Chinese authorities. The Chinese government has even used them in attempts to foment pro-PRC nationalist sentiment among Tibetans. For example, the anti-imperialist Chinese film “Red River Valley,¹⁶⁶” about the British invasion of Tibet in 1904, is familiar to many Tibetans in Amdo¹⁶⁷.

Such critiques have not disappeared. This much is clear from the widespread knowledge of དགོ་འདུན་ཚོས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel’s) remark. Current versions of such

¹⁶⁴ Snyan-grong

¹⁶⁵ Rgyal-rtse

¹⁶⁶ 红河谷

¹⁶⁷ As evidenced by repeated mention in both interviews and surveys

critiques can also be seen in the annual performances¹⁶⁸ of Amdo comedian མལ་ལྷ་སྐྱབས།¹⁶⁹ (Manla Kyab) which are known all over the Tibetan plateau and in exile. In 2005, མལ་ལྷ་སྐྱབས། (Manla Kyab) began a series of skits featuring white foreign men who speak ཨ་མདོའི་ཁ་སྐད།¹⁷⁰. In one skit, from 2005, known as the གེ་སེར་རྟེན་གྱི་¹⁷¹ performance, a white British man named “Jersey”¹⁷² has the following exchange with a nomadic character named uncle རྟེན་གྱི་:

རྟེན་གྱི་: Where are you from?

Jersey: England. English country.

རྟེན་གྱི་: where?

Jersey: 英国

རྟེན་གྱི་: England. OK. Then at the time of the Cultural Revolution, I heard that you invaded us. YES! The English invasion! You came from *that* place! A little farther from our Lhasa [རྟེན་གྱི་ reaches for a weapon to hit him with] Many Tibetan people died from your bombs.

This portion of the performance serves as a reminder of the sentiments expressed nearly a century earlier by དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) and བཀའ་བླང་འཛོམས་ལྷན་དབང་འདུས་ཚེ་རིང།, (Nornang) when the British were in direct military conflict with central Tibet. The second part of this three-part performance, unveiled in 2006, directly critiques the practices of “foreigners” that have played out more

¹⁶⁸ བཞད་གད།

¹⁶⁹ in Wiley Sman-bla Skyabs, commonly transliterated as “Manlakyab” in English

¹⁷⁰ in Wiley: A-mdo’i-kha-skad. Amdo dialect of Tibetan.

¹⁷¹ Rta-rdzi. A Tibetan name that means “black necked crane”

¹⁷² “རྟེན་གྱི་ Rgyu-rdzs or “stuff that is valuable”

recently over the past two decades. In part two of the གེ་མེར་རྟེན་¹⁷³ performance, Jersey returns with a book in which he has published uncle རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་'s photo without permission. When he is given royalties of 800 yuan by Jersey, རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་ jokes, “If they have so much money that they don’t know what to do with it, maybe I will take the money on purpose!” Later, Jersey hands him a piece of paper, and the young Tibetan English teacher who has brought Jersey advises uncle རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་: “Uncle Tarze, you should take it. That is a letter. You just make a signature, and then they will give you as much money as you want” He finds out that it is a contract from a “protect the cranes” foundation in the West, they want to buy his grazing land because it is the summer home of the endangered black-necked crane. རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་ responds to the offer:

You [people from] powerful countries come here to count how much you can get [...] we don’t have anything, you can’t get anything [...] before your country’s army came to take [the land], but they couldn’t take it from my hands!

He refuses the offer, and Jersey protests that he is there to “help”¹⁷⁴. Uncle རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་ suggests that if he really wants to help, he should support the five poor families in the village, adding, “He always looks at the sky, but doesn’t look at things on the ground.” The critique offered here by མཁའ་ལྷ་སྐྱབས་ལྷོ་མཚོ་ (Manla Kyab) complements a variety of academic assessments of development and philanthropy, including those which reveal the white supremacist objectives that often lie just beneath the surface

¹⁷³ Rta-rdzi. A Tibetan name that means “black necked crane”

¹⁷⁴ རྟེན་པེ་ལོ་འཕྲུལ་

of the non-profit industrial complex¹⁷⁵. In addition, this second installment of the performance is also very critical of Tibetans who work together with, and accept money from “foreigners.” In it, Hong Mei, the first teacher who brought Jersey to རྟེན་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་ས་ཁོངས་, is described as being “sick with desire¹⁷⁶” for money, and the new English teacher who took her place appears similarly eager to accept Jersey’s offer. རྟེན་ལྗོངས་ is not impressed by the money, stating that “They say foreigners are terribly rich. When I hear how rich the western countries are, I feel afraid”.

In the third installment of this skit, a new white male character appears. His name is Richard, or “richa,¹⁷⁷” and after he insults uncle རྟེན་ལྗོངས་ by ice-skating on a sacred lake, they have the following dialogue:

རྟེན་ལྗོངས་: Your kind of people is interested in everything! You have to have a look at everything you have heard about. I know why people from everywhere come here. I know the reason. First they will ask you [if they can] look at the birds, then they will ask you to eat the meat, then they will ask you to dig the earth. If they don’t have a purpose, why do they come here from so far away? They are foreigners. If they were not smart [cunning], they wouldnt have yellow hair”

Richa: I don’t have any purpose, just came here to play!

Young Tibetan boy: He is traveling to Lhasa from here, playing all the way!

རྟེན་ལྗོངས་: Huh! I thought you play all the way up to the sky! You should see from the movie Red River Valley. First came a person with this bag [backpack], and after that so many invaders came. They were also going to Lhasa!

Richa: I watched that movie, but its just a movie!

Boy: have you seen a slingshot like mine in the movie? Its made of soft wool

རྟེན་ལྗོངས་: The stone will go very far, if you throw the stone from the bottom of the spring, you can reach the English people’s nose. We sang a funny song, the English invaders didn’t like it. Afterwards, their noses were bleeding. They went back home.

¹⁷⁵ See the work of Uma Kothari, Sarah White, and Dylan Rodriguez

¹⁷⁶ རྟེན་ལྗོངས་

¹⁷⁷ a bright multicolored cloth

In the conclusion to this skit, Uncle རྟེན་ཅི་ encourages the young boy to injure Richa's leg with a stone from his slingshot, which he does. This third installment underlines a need for the same kind of prudence with white people that དགོ་འདུན་ཚོས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) urged. He underlines that foreigners never do anything without a purpose, and that small requests can escalate into large demands at an astonishing speed.

The Meaning of ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།

The critical portrayal of white people that is present in ལྷན་ལྷ་སྐྱབས།'s (Menla Kyab) comedy exists alongside another, far more flattering understanding that currently thrives in Amdo and other Tibetan areas. This second understanding links white people with positive traits such as generosity, intelligence, and courage. Before discussing this understanding within Tibet, it is important to look at linguistic patterns surrounding race and whiteness. The word for white person མི་དཀར་ is very rarely used. Instead, the preferred terms ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།¹⁷⁸ or ཕྱི་སྤིང་བ།¹⁷⁹ are used to refer to white people. These terms, which mean “foreigner” are used in much the same way that the term “Western” is used in English to refer tacitly to

¹⁷⁸ phyi-rgyal-ba

¹⁷⁹ phyi-gling-ba

white people¹⁸⁰. Although the official definition of the term “foreigner” generally can be used to refer to outsiders of any race, in practice, it is almost exclusively reserved for white people. Tibetan interviewees reported that they do not call Black people foreigners, but instead refer to them more commonly as “མི་ནག” or “black people”, which carries a negative connotation. They also reported no linguistic differentiation between Asians and Asian Americans. Instead, they reported using terms associated with certain countries of origin when they were talking about Asian people. For example, someone whose family was originally from Korea would be identified in relationship with “ཁའོ་རེ་ཡ།” (Korea) no matter how they personally identified, and someone with Chinese ancestry would be called “རྒྱ་ནག” or “Chinese”. When I asked people what words they would use to refer to Native Americans, many had no immediate answer, or answered using a Chinese term such as “美国土著人¹⁸¹” or “印第安人¹⁸²” rather than a Tibetan term. After some thought, a couple of interviewees reported terms like ཨ་རིའི་གདོད་མའི་མི་རྒྱུད།¹⁸³ a literal translation of the term “Native American”. More telling than the information gathered from formal interviews was the actual experience of traveling in Tibetan areas with someone who is Asian American, but does not identify as Chinese American, and hearing Tibetan people consistently assert that only I was “ཨ་རི་བ།” (American) or “ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།”

¹⁸⁰ see Chapter 3

¹⁸¹ american indigenous person

¹⁸² Indian person

¹⁸³ A-ri'i-gdod-m'i-mi-rgyud

(foreigner), and that an Asian American person cannot be a “foreigner”, but must be Chinese “དེ་ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་མིན། རྒྱ་རྒྱལ་རྒྱ་རྒྱལ་”.

In Dharamsala, India, I encountered similar linguistic patterns around white people and other foreigners, except that perhaps in connection with the British invasion of Lhasa at the turn of the 20th century, people speaking the Lhasa-based exile dialect of Tibetan use the word “ཨིན་ཇི”¹⁸⁴(Inji) far more commonly than “ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།” (foreigner) “ཨིན་ཇི” literally means “British,” but I witnessed it being used for any person who is white, including Russians, French, British, Australians, South Africans, and white people from the U.S. Similar to patterns encountered in Amdo, I also noticed that people from Asian countries such as Japan and Korea were *not* called “ཨིན་ཇི,” nor were Asian Americans. Rather, these outsiders were called according to a perceived Asian country of origin. The work of Peter Moran on “Western” Buddhists in Kathmandu, Nepal confirms this pattern (Moran 2004:41).

Data from the 269 surveys conducted in Amdo revealed a related pattern which also says something valuable about white privilege and supremacy. When asked to list the first five words that come to mind upon hearing the word “ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་བ།” (foreigner) the following responses were most frequently given:

¹⁸⁴ in Wiley, ain-ji. Also spelled དབྱིན་ཇི། dbyin-ji.

Response	# of occurrences	Percent
Yellow hair	111	41
Tall	103	38
Blue eyes	69	26
Open/ open-minded	44 (31/13)	16
White skin/white	32 (27/5)	12
Strong	29	11
USA/American	26 (19/7)	10
Rich	21	8
Smart	20	7
Brave	20	7
Developed	19	7
Free/freedom	19 (13 /8)	7
Humorous	17	6
Generous	16	6
Hard working	15	6
Happy	13	5
Honest	11	4
Knowledgeable	9	3

tall blue-eyes



As one can see from the above percentages and wordle (which displays the most common responses in larger text) the word “foreigner” is intimately linked to whiteness, with racial descriptors such as “yellow hair” “blue eyes” and “white skin” among the top responses. Another important part of this pattern is the additional top responses, positive words like “developed,” “strong,” “hard working” and “free” appearing among top responses. Although there were a small number of negative critiques included among the surveys, (with one notable survey listing “exploit, oppress, and cunning” as the first three words) the overwhelming majority of responses directly associated whiteness with positive characteristics. In the

following section, I will explore a similarly flattering portrayal that I encountered among Tibetans living outside of Tibet.

The Strategic Embrace of White Supremacy

In February of 2012, I came upon a very interesting YouTube video that, in addition to displaying some of the tensions that exist between Chinese and Tibetan communities in the United States, readily details a very positive understanding of the United States. In the video, titled “藏人调戏小五毛 wumao IOWA Xijinping,”¹⁸⁵ a middle aged Tibetan man holding a Tibetan flag leads a crowd of young Tibetan men holding Tibetan flags and banners that condemn Chinese policy in Tibet. Across the street from them, a larger group of Chinese supporters stand with flags welcoming Xi Jinping, the upcoming General Secretary of the CCP and President of PR China , and declaring their alliance with various organizations who support their position. They hold large Chinese and U.S. flags. The video is narrated in Chinese, and is extremely critical of the Chinese protestors, who are deemed “wumao,” a derogatory term used to connote worthlessness. The video contains several clashes between the protestors. After the Tibetans begin voicing protests, several Chinese protestors cross the street and attempt to cover the Tibetan flag with their Chinese flag. They do this while smiling, and loudly insisting, “We come here in peace!” several of them carry both Chinese and U.S. flags, which they wave in front of the Tibetan protestors.

¹⁸⁵ Záng rén tiáoxì xiǎo wǔ máo “Tibetans take liberties with the little wumao”

Near the end of the short video, the Tibetan man leading the Tibetan crowd addresses the young Chinese man who is holding the U.S. and Chinese flags:

Mic check. Mic check. China. This is America. This is America. Land of freedom. The flag that you hold, next to your bloody flag, many people have died for it. You have no idea what that flag means. When you put it next to your bloody flag, you rob that flag, you mar that flag.
[Young Chinese man:] it means freedom! It means democracy!
Don't put that flag [U.S. Flag] next to your bloody flag.

This video elucidates clearly a Tibetan view of “foreigners” which differs markedly from the scathing critique of དགེ་འདུན་ཚེས་འཕེལ། (Gendun Choepel) and ལྷན་ལྷ་སྐྱབས། (Menla Kyab) In the view of this protestor, the U.S. is defended as a benign democracy whose policies differ markedly from those of China. This is not surprising, given the organization of the current Central Tibetan Administration is one modeled after U.S. democratic ideals. In 2010, when I attended the International Association of Tibet Studies conference, I was surprised to hear white Tibetologist Christiaan Klieger arguing that the P.R.C. government should take an approach to Tibet similar to the one that the United States has taken with Native Americans, stating that because of current U.S. policy toward Native Americans:

[Native American] people have acquired resources that would not normally be available for them. [There now exist] a tremendous amount of language preservation and other opportunities that wouldn't otherwise be available.

I protested, asserting that the U.S. policies have been far less beneficent than he had presented, that many recognized tribes still face unlivable conditions on their reservations, and that many more still had not been recognized by the state and so could not access such “opportunities”. At this time, a Tibetan man who currently

holds a high position in the Central Tibetan Administration stepped in to defend Kleiger's argument, stating:

Just the fact that you [Kleisath] are talking about these poor conditions and you are American shows that there is a different approach in the U.S. to these issues. You can't find a Chinese in this room who would say the same thing.

I find this juxtaposition important, because it underlines a pattern wherein critiques of P.R.C. policy, and indeed, of Chinese people, become far more powerful than critiques of whiteness, to such an extent that they can eclipse crucial critiques of white supremacist¹⁸⁶ policies promulgated by the U.S. government. From within this context, the sentiment shared with me by several Tibetans in India "*I wish that Tibet had been colonized by the British*" gains momentum. Rather than proving the truly benign, democratic, or egalitarian nature of white colonial states, I argue that such a sentiment provides evidence of a strategic disregard of white supremacy which currently predominates in Tibetan public discourse about white people both in and outside of Tibet. It is my contention that since 1949, Tibetan critiques of Han dominance and supremacy have created a vacuum in which white people's current power and privilege goes largely unchallenged, as it may have before 1949. This is not to say that nuanced critiques and complaints about white supremacy do not exist, but that at the level of public discourse such critiques are often strategically put aside, in favor of a more flattering portrayal of "the West" as an enlightened democracy, especially in comparison to PR China. When one understands the former and current funding structures that support the Tibetan community in exile, which

¹⁸⁶ See (Moon-Kie Jung 2011; Smith 2006; Smith 2005) for detailed information about this use of the term "white Supremacy" in connection with US government policies.

in turn, influences ideas inside of Tibet, this strategic embrace of white supremacist ideology begins to make sense. In the following section, I will explore this history and the ways in which white Tibetologists, have responded to this vacuum.

Advocating or Taking Advantage?

In a proposal titled “Pertinent Consideration Relative to a Crash Program of Tibetan Research” written in 1959 by white Tibetologist and Robert Ekvall to members of the Rockefeller Foundation to encourage their support of a Tibetan studies program at the University of Washington, Ekvall states:

A unique opportunity has arisen. The highest Tibetan leaders, including four cabinet members of the government, the two very learned tutors of the Dalai Lama and other notables, have accompanied the Dalai Lama as political refugees and *are now accessible*. They are also *psychologically forced* or, prepared, as never before, to face the problems of:

- A. Making the West really understand what Tibet means. This on all levels and in all fields of research.
- B. Undertaking a serious assessment of what the West means and what adjustment to the modern world must take place to give Tibet a chance to survive. In addition to *the obvious fact of easy accessibility, the psychological moment is ripe* (Ekvall 1959 emphasis mine).

This formal proposal eloquently outlines an aspect of Tibet studies which has been under-discussed in Tibetology literature, perhaps because of its unpleasant implications. Ekvall’s strikingly honest proposal describes clearly the rationale behind the centers for the study of Tibet which spread throughout the United States in the early 1960s—a rationale marked not by a commitment to compassion, empathy, or admiration, as the work of Tibetologists like Robert Thurman would

lead us to believe, or by objective impartiality, as that of Melvyn Goldstein would assert—but of taking advantage¹⁸⁷ of the difficult situation faced by Tibetans in order to further objectives outlined in “the West [sic]”. We now know that some of these objectives included anti-Chinese communist state policy as evidenced by the clandestine CIA operation in Tibet, and by undercover CIA funding of Tibet studies programs like the one at the University of Washington (Conboy 2002:15). In addition to the institutional support of anti-Chinese sentiment¹⁸⁸ at the state level, there also exists a clear history within white-dominant countries of unrelenting orientalist “interest” in accessing information about Tibet¹⁸⁹. Indeed, in all the years leading up to 1959, the white explorers, scientists, adventurers, missionaries, and politicians deeply interested in Tibet had never had such an “opportunity” to interact with elite Tibetans. The situation created by the Chinese-Tibetan conflict made even the most powerful Tibetan leaders vulnerable, and anxious for support, or in Ekvall’s words “psychologically forced” to pursue relationships with powerful people in white-dominant countries.

In such a situation characterized by immense structural inequity, it is understandable that Tibetan critiques of white supremacy such as those expressed at the beginning of this chapter would fall by the wayside in favor of more flattering ideologies concerning whiteness. In addition to the (unacknowledged) presence of explicitly anti-communist Chinese U.S. foreign policy which we now know stood

¹⁸⁷ Ekvall uses the phrase in his original document

¹⁸⁸ See (Moon-Ho Jung 2011) (Prashad 2007) for details about the complex ways that anti-communist and anti-Asian/ anti-Chinese state projects have often merged in US history.

¹⁸⁹ As documented by Donald Lopez (Lopez 1998)

silently behind Ekvall's proposal,¹⁹⁰ there exists another important pattern worth exploring: the explicit interest in forging relationships with *elite* members of the Tibetan government and religious institutions. When we look at the history of Tibetology in the United States, we see this pattern emerge as foundational.

According to Donald Lopez:

It was only after 1959 that a significant number of Americans began to study Tibet, its language, and especially its religions, in earnest and in an academic setting, an opportunity *made possible in many ways by the presence of Tibetan lamas in the United States* (Lopez 2008:180 emphasis mine).

When we look more closely at the history of Tibetology in white dominant countries, and the “Western” Buddhist enterprise which often accompanies it, we can see that it is firmly rooted in relationships between elite white and Tibetan men¹⁹¹. In the words of Peter Moran, “Western Buddhist subjectivities are produced largely cleaving to elite Tibetan Buddhist normative discourses” (Moran 2004:186). This set of relationships is important to consider critically because it has forged a constellation of epistemologies and practices that have come to define Tibetology and Tibetan Buddhism in white dominant countries.

It is important to look at the elite status of the first wave of Tibetan lamas who came to the United States because it was they who shaped a context into which later generations of middle and working-class Tibetans would enter. Thanks in part to generous U.S. state sanctioned funding schemes, these lamas did not have to wait tables, butcher meat at the local supermarket, or pawn postcards on city sidewalks.

¹⁹⁰ Ekvall was on a retainer from the Committee for a Free Asia (CFA) which was funded by the CIA (Conboy 2002:15)

¹⁹¹ See note 162. I am referring here to the historical roots of Tibetology in the US, in which participants were exclusively men. This is not to discount the current participation of white women in both Tibetology and white Buddhism.

Instead, they spent large amounts of their time teaching Buddhist philosophy to elite young white men like Gene Smith, Melvyn Goldstein, and Robert Thurman, among others. As Ekvall's proposal makes clear, this schedule was not their *choice*, rather, it is one imposed on them by the budding Tibetologists (and the state) who recruited them. For example, consider the following excerpt from the book *Saint in Seattle* by Peter Jackson:

Poised for contact with Asia, Seattle had seen brutal anti-Chinese riots in 1886, and as late as 1942, summary wartime detention of its six thousand American citizens of Japanese descent. Its Asian residents mainly lived in a small Chinatown ghetto, where the Japanese community had adapted by founding a Seattle Buddhist church: a temple with a Sunday school. [Dezhung] *Rinpoche sped by car not to Chinatown but to a thoroughly white neighborhood north of the University of Washington in the district of Wedgewood* (Jackson 2003:250 emphasis mine).

Thus, at a time of intense anti-imperialist activism and Asian, Black, and American Indian movement building, the elite Tibetan lamas who came to the United States in the early 1960s to do the founding work that would shape Tibetology and Tibetan Buddhism were insulated from just such groups. When we combine a consideration of the insular environment in which many of these elite teachers found themselves, especially upon first arriving in an array of white-dominant countries¹⁹², with the now openly acknowledged funding from major foundations linked to state agendas, we begin to see a picture which explains clearly why many of these elite teachers might strategically embrace white supremacist ideologies and discourage students from considering the structural nature of oppression outside of the context of Tibet and China. To this day, the strategic framing of the U.S. and other white dominant

¹⁹² It is also useful to consider the insular environment in which they likely found themselves in Tibet, before they left. Gendun Choepel wrote voluminously about the dangers of insularity among Tibetan Elites in Lhasa, and was harshly recriminated as a result.

countries as benign is foundational to a number of teachings from elite Tibetan lamas. See for example, the letter that Lama Zopa wrote to U.S President George Bush shortly after September 11th, 2001:

I have particular concern for the American people. This country gives so much freedom for peace and happiness. There is total religious freedom and also freedom of speech. I do not know why Mainland China cannot give the same freedom to the Tibetan people and others (Thubten Zopa 2007:112).

The comparison presented in this letter is strikingly similar to the one presented in the Wumao video featured above. Its author, head of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, a large Tibetan Buddhist establishment focused on teaching to people from white-dominant countries, articulates a scathing critique of PR China at the same time that he validates the benevolent nature of the U.S state.

This strategic critique of structural and systemic oppression only as it pertains to PR China is problematic in at least two fundamental ways. The first is that a strategic embrace of white supremacy often works against and undercuts the very reasons why many white students become attracted to Tibetan Buddhism. In interviews and during participant observation with white Buddhists in Dharamsala, many expressed a loss of faith in the white-dominant countries from which they had come, and indeed named the desire to escape systemic racism, classism, and endless imperial war as the very inspiration for their journey to India. While more experienced students were already well versed in ideologies which explained systemic violence as mere “acts of karma,” I spoke with several newer students who

were surprised, dismayed and disappointed to encounter teachers like Lama Zopa validating the ideologies of the very systems that they were seeking to escape.

The second, and perhaps more urgent problem with a strategic critique of structural and systemic oppression *only* as it pertains to PR China is the way that it can negatively influence discourses about Tibetans. As I have witnessed and as Peter Moran has documented, a discouragement of attention to structural power inequities has often been turned against Tibetans themselves, with many people in white dominant countries feeling ambivalent or even hostile to Tibetan political struggles for independence:

Even as many Western [sic] Buddhists lament the terrible destruction that Tibetans have suffered, some also referenced notions of karma in their discussions with me. They reasoned that if past actions had ultimately borne fruit as the devastating Chinese occupation, at least the suffering of Tibetans has not been in vain; it is this tragedy that enabled Tibetan lamas to come 'out' from behind the Himalaya and bestow their culture, their treasure, on the world. (188).

Such self-centered framing of the complex struggles of the exile Tibetan community echoes the feeling conveyed by Ekvall when he frames the difficult situation faced by Tibetans in 1959 as a "unique opportunity". It also helps to shape an unforgiving discourse about the material reality with which non-elite Tibetans living outside of Tibet must contend. While many Lamas and Rinpoches outside of Tibet have access to donors, students, and institutions that can support a reasonably comfortable lifestyle, their working-class counterparts often do not. This is reflected in an interview done with middle-aged Tibetan man who has been living in Seattle for nearly a decade:

Paycheck slavery [...] we really didn't have much freedom of our own [...] maybe in America we have really hard times, you know. They have no country, people don't know how to speak English and they have to work as janitors, dishwashers. Myself, I was a dishwasher, janitor, and now working [...] in produce. Most people holding two jobs. I myself am holding two jobs, to live (Dexter and Gyatso 2010).

Within this acknowledgement of class based struggle and hardship, the strategic embrace of liberal, white supremacist narratives about the U.S. are also evident. In this same interview, before acknowledging the difficulty of daily survival as a part of the immigrant working class, this interviewee makes the following comparison between the U.S. and China:

In US, you can express. Your right is to express your feelings. And you fight for your views if they not listen. In China—I call the second Hitler. It only has one view, their view, that's it. Sixty to Seventy million of their own people they killed(Dexter and Gyatso 2010).

It is important to note here the similarities between the discourse of elite Lama Zopa, the protestors featured in the wumao video, and this working-class Tibetan interviewee. As the wumao video and this quote demonstrate, facing the structural realities of “paycheck slavery,” does not necessarily lead to a critique of US white supremacist and imperialist policies. Paradoxically, as Peter Moran has documented, this uneven application of structural violence only as it pertains to China can have negative effects on the very Tibetans who are attempting to forward their cause in white-dominant countries. In my own interviews with white Buddhists, I encountered a significant level of ambivalence regarding the lives and political struggles of everyday Tibetans in white dominant countries, with several white people maintaining intimate relationships with Tibetan teachers while remaining oblivious to the local Tibetan community and their struggles. Such struggles are

reflected on an institutional level within academia—with white men still constituting the majority of tenured professors of Tibetology. Hence, although Robert Thurman’s words present an eloquent plea in advocacy of the cause of Tibet, it is crucial to consider the complex structural powers at work that have allowed him to make his argument that Tibet is “*a civilization that must survive,*” and how such powers have colluded to negatively impact the lives of everyday Tibetan, Chinese, white, and Asian American people on the streets of རྗེ་ལིང་།, 北京, and Seattle.

9: Conclusion

The ideas explored in this dissertation are the beginning of a conversation. Put another way, this dissertation aims to provide the vocabulary and sociohistorical context necessary to begin a conversation about whiteness and Tibet; about Tibet beyond black and white. It is my hope that the arguments presented above may provide a new context in which to discuss the structural power relations evidenced in the memories which opened this work: an *e-mail*, a *paycheck*, a *doctor's visit*, a *story*, and a *question*.

Talking about whiteness and Tibet allows us to acknowledge the racial dynamics inherent in the global project of development, a project which poised me as a young white woman to become the ideal “expert” on gender and Tibet, and which undoubtedly influenced the stream of e-mails that now fill my inbox. Talking about whiteness and Tibet allows us to question the discrepancies in salary between white and Tibetan teachers and NGO workers, and consider the complex roots of systemic privileges that are too often brushed aside as mere matters of “the exchange rate.” It allows us to question the ways in which transnational racial formations in white dominant countries have colluded with those in Tibet and China to value some human bodies more highly than others, while at the same time erasing entire communities and their struggles for recognition.

Talking about whiteness and Tibet allows us to question the racialized nature of expertise, and uncover the legacies still active in academic disciplines forged in the fires of colonialism. It allows us to question critiques of Chinese domination in a

way that the black and white paradigm for Tibet does not allow; cautions us to check for traces of anti-Chinese racism, anti-communist statecraft, and post-racial forms of Orientalism before railing against Han supremacy. Talking about whiteness and Tibet pushes us to ask why so many Seattleites are concerned with the plight of Tibet, but not with that of the Duwamish. Or why so many people who practice Tibetan Buddhism aren't so concerned with the plight of Tibet.

Talking about whiteness and Tibet pushes us to ask questions when elite lamas like Dzongsar Khentse Rinpoche say, "I like teaching my students in many different situations. In a garden, in the bar, in a toilet. I think in a modern way and I'm quite proud of doing that. This is a different time. We have to think differently, we have to communicate with the people in a different way" (Martin 2008: 32:20).

It pushes us to ask what thinking in a "modern" way means, and why the "different" situations in which many elite lamas teach their students often look more like the World Cup Playoffs¹⁹³, and less like a protest rally. It pushes us to ask why the issue of Tibet rarely comes up at anti-oppression trainings and anti-racist meetings, where the practice of meditation is common.

While this dissertation does not provide clear answers to the questions that began it, it strives to provide an alternative framework from which we can begin to explore the complex racial projects that are entailed in an *e-mail*, *a paycheck*, *a doctor's visit*, *a story*, and *a question*.

Considering Tibet beyond black and white means talking about Tibet and PR China as considerably more complex than common tropes allow. It means talking

¹⁹³ Where Dzongsar Khentse Rinpoche took his students for a lesson on Buddhism (Martin, 2008)

about Tibet as more than just an issue internal to China, and more than a utopian Shangri-la. It means talking about PR China as more than just a victim of imperialist “Western” powers, and more than just an agent of colonial violence against Tibet. Considering Tibet beyond black and white means talking about whiteness, and the complex ways that white supremacy has contributed to the stories and debates that shape current understandings of Tibet. It means seeing, perhaps for the first time, the patterns that others have made, the small betrayals, and shrugs that have sent us wayward past our star:

I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider—
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give—yes or no, or maybe—
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

List of Works Cited

Adams, Vincanne

1996 Karaoke as Modern Lhasa, Tibet: Western Encounters with Cultural Politics. *Cultural Anthropology : Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*. 11(4): 510.

Anand, Dibyesh

2006 *In Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*. Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer, eds. M.E. Sharpe.

2008 *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination*. Univ Of Minnesota Press.

Anzaldúa, Gloria

1987 *Borderlands : the New Mestiza = La Frontera*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.

Baker, Lee D.

1998 *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*. 1st edition. University of California Press.

Barlow, Tami. E

1993 Colonialism's Career in Postwar China Studies. *positions.: East Asia Cultures Critique* 1(1): 224.

Barthes, Roland

1957 *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Beckwith, Christopher I. (ed.), N.L. Nornang, and L. Epstein

1982 *The Journal of the Tibet Society Volume 2*. The Tibet Society.

Blommaert, Jan

2004 *Discourse : a Critical Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Blondeau, Anne-Marie

2008 *Authenticating Tibet : Answers to China's 100 Questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Du Bois, W.E.B.

2008 *The Souls of Black Folk*. Arc Manor LLC.

Bonilla-Silva, E.

2006 *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo
2001 *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-civil Rights Era*. Boulder Colo.: L. Rienner.
- Brodin, K.
2000 *Global Capitalism: What's Race Got to Do With It?* *American Ethnologist* 27(2): 237–256.
- Brown, Mark
2001 *Race, Science and the Construction of Native Criminality in Colonial India*. *Theoretical Criminology* 5(3): 345–368.
- Brown, Melissa
1996 *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of California Berkeley Center for Chinese Studies.
- Brown, Michael K., Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, et al.
2003 *Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society*. 1st edition. University of California Press.
- Chan, Sucheng
2008 *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Chang, Robert
1999 *Disoriented : Asian Americans, Law, and the Nation-state*. New York: New York University Press.
- Chen, Xiaomei
1995 *Occidentalism : a Theory of Counter-discourse in post-Mao China*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chou, Chih-p'ing, Perry Link, and Xuedong Wang
1997 *Oh, China! Elementary Reader of Modern Chinese for Advanced Beginners*. Princeton University Press.
- Chow, Kai-wing
1995 *Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Bilin and the Invention of the Chinese Race in Modern China*. *In Racial Identities in East Asia = Tung Ya Chung Tsu Ren Tung*. Barry Sautman, ed. Hong Kong: Division of Social Science Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.
- Chung, Yuehtsen
2002 *Struggle for National Survival : Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts, 1896-1945*. New York: Routledge.

Collins, Patricia Hill

1986 Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. *Social Problems* 33(6): S14–S32.

Conboy, Kenneth

2002 *The CIA's Secret War in Tibet*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

CWS

1995 Challenging White Supremacy Workshop :: Resources :: What Is U.S. White Supremacy? <http://www.cswsworkshop.org/resources/WhiteSupremacy.html>, accessed March 22, 2010.

Dávila, Arlene

2008 *Latino Spin : Public Image and the Whitewashing of Race*. New York: New York University Press.

Decker, Peter

2004 "The Utes Must Go!" : American Expansion and the Removal of a People. Golden Colo.: Fulcrum Pub.

Deloria, Vine

1999 *Spirit & Reason : the Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader*. Golden Colo.: Fulcrum Pub.

Dexter, Katherine, and Thinley Gyatso

2010 Wing Luke Museum Refugees Exhibit. March 31.

van Dijk, Teun

1996 *In Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Malcolm Coulthard, eds. Psychology Press.

Dikötter, Frank

1992 *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* = [Jin Dai Zhongguo Zhi Zhong Zu Guan Nian]. Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Dikötter, Frank

1994 Racial Identities in China: Context and Meaning. *The China Quarterly*(138): 404–412.

Dirlik, Arif

1993 Review Article : The Discourse of Race in Modern China: FRANK DIKOTTER, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, London: Hurst and Company 1992. Illustr. 251 Pp. ISBN 1-85065-135-3. Price: {pound}18.50. *China Information* 7(4): 68–71.

Ehrenhaus, Peter

2004 Race Lynching and Christian Evangelicalism: Performances of Faith. *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24: 276–301.

Ekvall, Robert

1959 Pertinent Consideration Relative to a Crash Program of Tibetan Research. 85-42. UW special collections, Inner Asia Colloquium.

Fanon, Frantz

1951 *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Farough, Steven

2006 Believing Is Seeing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(1): 51-51-83.

Feagin, Joe

1995 *White Racism : the Basics*. New York: Routledge.

Foreign Enrollment Skyrockets for UW

N.d. *The Seattle Times*.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2016769522_international15m.html, accessed May 11, 2012.

Fox, Richard

1992 *In Edward Said : a Critical Reader*. Michael Sprinker, ed. Oxford UK ;;Cambridge USA: Blackwell.

Frankenberg, Ruth

1993 *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. University of Minnesota Press.

2001 Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness. *In The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, ed. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

French, Patrick

2003 *Tibet, Tibet : a Personal History of a Lost Land*. 1st American ed. New York: Knopf ;Distributed by Random House.

Gallicchio, Marc

2000 *The African American Encounter with Japan and China : Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Gladney, Dru

2004 *Dislocating China : Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goldstein, Melvyn

1989 *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951 : the Demise of the Lamaist State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

1994 *In Resistance and Reform in Tibet*. Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner, eds. Indiana University Press.

1998 *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet : Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goldstein, Melvyn C.

1999 *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*. 1st edition. University of California Press.

Goldstein, Melvyn C., Ben Jiao, Cynthia M. Beall, and Phuntsog Tsering

2003 Development and Change in Rural Tibet. *Asian Survey* 43(5): 758–779.

Haiyang, Zhang

1997 Wrestling with the Connotation of Chinese “Minzu.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 32(30): PE74.

Han, Almaz X.

1999 *Split Identities: Making Minzu/Ethnic Subjects in Inner Mongolia, People’s Republic of China*. PhD Dissertation, University of Washington.

Hao, Yan

2000 Tibetan Population in China: Myths and Facts Re-examined. *Asian Ethnicity* 1(1): 11.

Haraway, Donna

1985 A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s. *Socialist Review* 80(2): 65–108.

Harrell, Stevan

1995 *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

1996 The Nationalities Question and the Prmi Prblem. *In Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*. Melissa Brown, ed. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of California Berkeley Center for Chinese Studies.

Harrison, Faye V.

1995 The Persistent Power of “ Race” in the Cultural and Political Economy of Racism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24(1): 47–74.

Heberer, Thomas

1989 *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* Armonk N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Hershatter, G.

1993 The Subaltern Talks Back: Reflections on Subaltern Theory and Chinese History. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 1(1): 103.

Hill, Jane

2008 *The Everyday Language of White Racism*. Chichester U.K. ;;Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hong, G. K.

2008 "The Future of Our Worlds" *Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge in the University Under Globalization*. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8(2): 95–115.

Hooks, B.

1989 *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. South End Press.

1990 *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. South End Press.

1992 *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. South End Press.

Jackson, David

2003 *A Saint in Seattle : the Life of the Tibetan Mystic Dezhung Rinpoche*. 1st ed. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Jameson, Frederic

1984 *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. *New Left Review* 146: 53–93.

Jones, Jason Jonathon

1992 *Eugenics at Harvard*.

Joseph, Ralina

2009 Keynote Address. Paper presented at the Dialoging Difference, 1st Annual Conference of the Women of Color Collective, University of Washington Ethnic Cultural Center, June 5.

Jung, Moon-Ho

2011 *Seditious Subjects: Race, State Violence, and the U.S. Empire*. *Journal of Asian American Studies* 14(2): 221–247.

Jung, Moon-Kie

2011 *State of White Supremacy : Racism, Governance, and the United States*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press.

Kapstein, Matthew

2006 *The Tibetans*. Malden MA ;;Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

Kendall, F. E.

2006 *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race*. Routledge.

Kevles, Daniel

1985 *In the Name of Eugenics : Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf.

Kroskrity, Paul

2000 *Regimes of Language : Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe NM ;Oxford: School of American Research Press ;;J. Currey.

Kusz, Kyle

2007 *Revolt of the White Athlete : Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America*. New York: Peter Lang.

Lamphere, Louise

2004 *Unofficial Histories: A Vision of Anthropology from the Margins*. *American Anthropologist* 106(1): 126–139.

Levine-Rasky, Cynthia

2002 *Working Through Whiteness: International Perspectives*. SUNY Press.

Li, X

2007 "I` Know Why the Caged Bird Sings!": Dunbar in China. *African American Review*. 41(2): 387–394.

Li, Yiping

2002 *The Impact of Tourism in China on Local Communities*. *Asian Studies Review* 26(4): 471–486.

Lieberman, Leonard

1997 *Gender and the Deconstruction Nf the Race Concept*. *American Anthropologist* 99(3): 545–588.

Lipsitz, George

1998 *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness : How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lopez, Donald

1998 *Prisoners of Shangri-La : Tibetan Buddhism and the West*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2008 *In Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Monica Esposito, ed. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.

Lugones, M.

1996 *Playfulness," WorldT'-Traveling, and Loving Perception*. *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*: 419.

MacKenzie, D.

1976 Eugenics in Britain. *Social Studies of Science* 6(3-4): 499–532.

Makley, Charlene

2007 *The Violence of Liberation : Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in post-Mao China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

2009 REVIEWS - On the Cultural Revolution in Tibet: The Nyemo Incident of 1969, by Melvyn C. Goldstein, Ben Jiao and Tanzen Lhundrup. *The China Journal = Chung-kuo Yen Chiu*.(62): 127.

Martin, J. M

1993 The Notion of Difference for Emerging Womanist Ethics: The Writings of Audre Lorde and Bell Hooks. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9(1/2): 39–51.

Martin, Kent

2008 *Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Oakland, CA :: Festival Media,.

McIntosh, P.

1992 *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack: White Privilege*. Creation Spirituality.

Merriam-Webster, Inc

2003 *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed. Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Moran, Peter

2004 *Buddhism Observed : Travelers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu*. London ;;New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen, Maryrose Casey, and Fiona Jean Nicoll

2008 *Transnational Whiteness Matters*. Lexington Books.

Morrison, Toni

1992 *Playing in the Dark : Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Mountcastle, Amy

2006 *In Contemporary Tibet : Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*. Barry Sautman, ed. Armonk N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Moya, Paula M.

1997 Postmodernism, "Realism," and the Politics of Identity: Cherrie Moraga and Chicana Feminism. *In Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. M. Jaqui Alexander and Chandra T. Mohanty, eds. New York: Routledge.

Mullaney, Thomas

2011 *Coming to Terms with the Nation : Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mullaney, Thomas S., James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche
2012 *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/07s1h1rf#page-266>, accessed May 8, 2012.

Mullaney, Tom

2001 "Saidian Orientalism and East Asian Studies, or"Can Orientalism Survive?". *Columbia Historical Review* 1: 55-76.

Mullings, L.

2005 *Interrogating Racism: Toward an Antiracist Anthropology*.

Nederveen Pieterse, Jan

1992 *White on Black : Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ngakmang Research Institute, and ལྷགས་མངའི་བུ་ལོ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, eds.

2002 ལྷགས་པའི་ཤེས་རིག་དུས་དེབ། 3. ལྷགས་མངའི་བུ་ལོ་ལྷན་ཁང་ .

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant

1994 *Racial Formation in the United States : from the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Petrilli, Susan

2007 *White Matters*. Meltemi Editore srl.

Powers, John

2004 *History as Propaganda : Tibetan Exiles Versus the People's Republic of China*. New York N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Prashad, Vijay

2001 *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting : Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*. Boston: Beacon Press.

2007 *The darker nations : a people's history of the third world*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Rabgey, Tashi

1999 *Review of Tibet Through Dissident Chinese Eyes: Essays on Self-Determination*. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58(1): 187-188.

Rabgey, Tashi, and Tseten Wangchuk Sharlho
2004 *Sino-Tibetan Dialogue in the Post-Mao Era: Lessons and Prospects*. East-West Center Washington.

Radhakrishna, Meena
2001 *Dishonoured by History: "Criminal Tribes" and British Colonial Policy*. Orient Blackswan.

Ren, H.
2007 *The Landscape of Power: Imagineering Consumer Behavior at China's Theme Parks*, *The Themed Space: Locating Culture, Nation, and Self*: 97–112.

Rothenberg, Paula S.
2004 *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. Second edition. Worth Publishers.

Said, E. W.
1978 *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Pantheon.

Sandoval, C.
2000 *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Univ of Minnesota Pr.

Sautman, Barry, and June Teufel Dreyer, eds.
2006 *Contemporary Tibet : Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region*. Armonk N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Schein, Louisa
1994 *The Consumption of Color and the Politics of White Skin in Post-Mao China*. *Social Text*(41): 141–164.

1997 *Gender and Internal Orientalism in China*. *Modern China* 23(1): 69–98.

2000 *Minority Rules : the Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Shah, Nayan
2001 *Contagious Divides : Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shakya, Tsering
2001 *Who Are the Prisoners? Review of Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69(1): 183.

Shanklin, Eugenia
1998 *The Profession of the Color Blind: Sociocultural Anthropology and Racism in the 21st Century*. *American Anthropologist* 100(3): 669.

Sharma, Aradhana

2006 *The Anthropology of the State : a Reader*. Malden MA ;Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

Sleeboom, Margaret, and Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner

2004 *Academic Nations in China and Japan: Framed in Concepts of Nature, Culture and the Universal*. Psychology Press.

Smith, Andrea

2005 *Conquest : Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge MA: South End Press.

2006 *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy*. *In Color of Violence : the Incite! Anthology*. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence., ed. Cambridge Mass.: South End Press.

Spivak, G. C

1993 *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. Routledge.

Staurowsky, E. J.

2007 "You Know, We Are All Indian": Exploring White Power and Privilege in Reactions to the NCAA Native American Mascot Policy. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 31(1): 61–76.

Steyn, M., and D. Conway

2010 Introduction: Intersecting Whiteness, Interdisciplinary Debates. *Ethnicities* 10(3): 283–291.

Stoetzler, M., and N. Yuval-Davis

2002 Standpoint Theory, Situated Knowledge and the Situated Imagination. *Feminist Theory* 3(3): 315–333.

Takezawa, Y.

2005 Transcending the Western Paradigm of the Idea of Race. *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 16: 5–30.

Tapia, R. C

2001 What's Love Got to Do with It?: Consciousness, Politics and Knowledge Production in Chela Sandoval's Methodology of the Oppressed. *American Quarterly* 53(4): 733–743.

Teng, E. J

2006 Eurasian Hybridity in Chinese Utopian Visions: From "One World" to "A Society Based on Beauty" and Beyond. *positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 14(1): 131.

Teufel Dreyer, June

2003 Economic Development in Tibet under the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Contemporary China* 12(36).

Thubten Zopa, Robina

2007 *Dear Lama Zopa : Radical Solutions for Transforming Problems into Happiness : Answers to Letters on Anger, Animals, Children, Death, Depression, Divorce, Dreams, Drugs, Fame, Fear, Forgiveness, God,.* Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Thurman, Robert

2001 Critical Reflections on Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69(1): 191.

Tiffin, Helen, Bill Ashcroft, and Gareth Griffiths

2009 *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Second Edition. 2nd edition. T & F Books UK.

Trinh, T. M. H.

1989 *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Indiana University Press.

Twine, F. W., and J. W. Warren

2000 *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*. New York University Press.

Upton, Janet

1996 Home on the Grasslands? Tradition, Modernity, and the Negotiation of Identity by Tibetan Intellectuals in the PRC. *In Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*. Melissa Brown, ed. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies University of California Berkeley Center for Chinese Studies.

Visweswaran, Kamala

1998 Race and the Culture of Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 100(1). New Series: 70–83.

Vukovich, D.

2009 *Uncivil Society, or, Orientalism and Tiananmen, 1989*.

Vukovich, Daniel

2012 *China and Orientalism : Western Knowledge Production and the P.R.C.* Milton Park Abingdon Oxon ;;New York: Routledge.

Walker, A.

2003 *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Harvest Books.

Ware, Vron

1992 *Beyond the Pale : White Women, Racism, and History*. London ;New York: Verso.

Willis, William Jr

1972 *Skeletons in the Anthropological Closet*. In *Reinventing Anthropology*. Dell H. Hymes, ed. University of Michigan Press.

Wolburg, Joyce

2006 *The Demise of Native American Mascots: It's Time to Do the Right Thing*. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 23(1): 4–5.

Womack, Brantly

2007 *Resolving Asymmetric Stalemate: The Case of the Tibet Question*. *Journal of Contemporary China* 16(52): 443–460.

Xie, Philip Feifan

2003 *The Bamboo-beating Dance in Hainan, China: Authenticity and Commodification*. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11(1): 5–16.

Yang, Li

2011 *Minorities, Tourism and Ethnic Theme Parks: Employees' Perspectives from Yunnan, China*. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 28(2): 311–338.

Yeğenoğlu, Meyda

1998 *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Yeh, Emily

2007 *Tibetan Indigeneity: Translations, Resemblances and Uptake*. In *Indigenous Experience Today*. Marisol De La Cadena and Orin Starn, eds. Berg.